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I am writing this on Easter Sunday. The papers over the last few days have been commenting on the general ignorance among children of the significance of Easter, an ignorance which must stem largely from ignorance or indifference among teachers and parents. The lack of knowledge about the religious aspect of our cultural heritage contrasts with the popularity of its physical remains. Cathedrals are packed with tourists; art galleries, with many religious paintings, are full; CDs of church music are popular. But what do those enjoying the aesthetic experience understand of its meaning? While I have no desire for schools to indoctrinate their pupils with religious belief, knowledge of Christianity is essential to make sense of our cultural heritage.

Harold Copeman has sent me the opening and closing chapters of his new book *Singing the Meaning* aimed at the many singers now who are not brought brought up with the religious background that older singers take for granted. The sample he has sent promises well. Whether belief itself is necessary for a good performance may be doubted; but understanding certainly helps.

A topic that emerges from several contributions in this issue (and will recur next month) is the way that what is written in one language does not work in another, however well translated – I'm referring not to high-quality literature but mundane bits of prose like notes accompanying CDs. There need not even be a change of language: England and America are still divided by a common language. I sometimes read a book and article and wonder: has the author ideas that could not be expressed more simply, or is it essential to learn new words to understand new concepts? A simple example is *closure*: I don't remember seeing it when I first read descriptions of musical form, but now it is ubiquitous. Can any reader explain the difference between close, closing, cadence, closure, finish and end? As George Herbert didn't write,

My musick shows ye have your closures
and all must die.

CB

BOOKS AND MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

MUSIC in the CASTLE

F. Alberto Gallo *Music in the Castle: Troubadours, Books, and Orators in Italian Courts of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries* translated from the Italian by Anna Herklotz. Translation from Latin by Kathryn Krug. Chicago UP, 1995. 147pp. $45.00/£35.95. ISBN 0 226 27968 5 (pb $19.95/£15.95 0 226 27969 3)

Originally published in Italian as *Musica nel castello*, this is based on three lectures given at Harvard in 1988. The chapter titles, which correspond with the three subjects and periods of the subtitle, are 'The Provençaux in Italy', 'The Visconti Library' and 'Orpheus Christianus'. The book has high claims, aiming to complement the normal run of political and cultural studies that ignore the musical dimensions of Medieval and early Renaissance Italian culture. What emerges is in fact similar to so many other books on the 'music in society' theme: illuminating in a very general way but frustrating because of the non-specific nature of most of the musical references. One never knows how typical the examples quoted are: do all authors imply the significance of music? If not, why are the ones quoted so unusual? The first two chapters relate to surviving music, but 15th-century Italian humanist music was an improvisatory art, so all we have are descriptions. In an appendix Gallo prints (along with an English translation) a series of encomia on the famous Pietrobono, some of which may have been written up from an improvised commendation of an improvised performance. These are tantalising: if only they were more specific. But Latin elegiac couplets were not devised for the conveyance of precise information. They must have been difficult enough to improvise (my own attempts at Latin verse gained one of the lowest exam marks I ever achieved, unsurpassed only by my attempts at classical Greek verse), and right from the first century BC were used for deliberately artificial and 'poetic' material.

Music creeps into the humanist agenda of convincing the ruling classes that culture should be part of the ruler's lifestyle. This was remarkably successful, and only quite recently has it been acceptable for the 'great and good' to prefer popular culture to high art. Our artistic institutions are having enormous problems in adjusting. If we regret the change, perhaps we should be learning from how the humanists imposed the paraphernalia of the second-hand Roman culture onto their world.

The pictures of *cantus, organare cantum vel sonare* and *sonare et balare* are interesting, and players of medieval dances may like to look up *Calenda maia* in the index; they should also consult page 54: *Isabella* and *Principio di Virtu* are not indexed.

MONTEVERDI *Nisi Dominus*

Monteverdi *Nisi Dominus, Psalm 126... for six Voices and Basso continuo (1650)* edited by Rudolf Ewerhart. Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 5322) 1996. 27 pp + bc part, £12.00.

I have some embarrassment in reviewing the series of Monteverdi church music that Breitkopf have been issuing over the last few years, since almost invariably they are of works that I have already edited. Monteverdi's posthumous collection is not immaculately printed, but there are no serious editorial problems in this piece unless you feel that a handful of parallels should be corrected. Ewerhart does not say which copy of the 1650 print he used. My version takes note of a few added accidentals in the Wroclaw copy, which suggests, for instance, a ♯F in bar 129; even though these accidentals were added by someone without benefit of score who did not realise that the bass was A, it is probably justified by the genuine ♯F the following bar. Ewerhart does not show that the penultimate note in Alto bar 48 is sharpened editorially. The introduction mentions *tutti* marks at bars 10 and 27 (though they are omitted from the edition), but assumes they refer to the number of singers to a part rather than telling the organist that all the parts are together at those points. The observation that pause marks are placed after the cadential notes, not on them, is interesting, but does not affect performance since the function of the mark is to denote the end of a section, a meeting of voices, and a sign that everyone comes off together (without, I think, implying that the note is held any longer than written: sometimes it could be shorter).

I have only seen the large-print score, but judging from other issues in the series there is also a cheaper, smaller version for choirs omitting the organ bass and realisation. If you want the complete version, mine is cheaper (£3.00), but the Breitkopf choral copy is probably cheaper still. I'm not sure why a separate bass part is included. Were it figured, it would be helpful for theorbists or for organists who don't like page-turning; but there is no need for a melodic bass instrument in this repertoire. Whichever edition you buy, this is a fine piece (for SSATTB + organ); I presume that Monteverdi intended it for six solo voices, but it can be sung by an articulate choir.

CHARPENTIER

Marc-Antoine Charpentier *Messe de Minuit à 4 voix flûtes et violons pour Noël H 9*, edited by Jean-Paul Montagnier. Eulenburg (No. 8041), 1996. xiii + 71 pp, £16.95

Te Deum H 146, edited by Jean-Paul Montagnier. Eulenburg (No. 8042), 1996. xiii + 80 pp, £16.95

Catherine Cessac *Marc-Antoine Charpentier* translated from the French by E. Thomas Glasgow. Amadeus Press, 1995. 558pp, $39.95. ISBN 0 931340 80 2

Considering the extent to which Charpentier's music has been recorded, the availability in print is amazingly sparse. These are two works of which tolerable editions already exist (and another *Te Deum*, prepared for the CD reviewed on p.17, will be published soon by Faber Music), so one may wonder whether it might have been better to concentrate on new works. But there are weaknesses in the existing edition, Walter Kolneder's for Universal Edition. The score is expanded so that there are separate staves for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, cor anglais and bassoon as well as the necessary staves for strings and, in some movements, trumpet and timps. The new edition is not quite so bad, in that the pairs of flutes and oboes are each given a single stave; but it results in each page containing a spread-out single system rather than two compact systems. It also means that for the Eurovision *Prelude* (taking less than a page in the autograph, which both editions reproduce) anyone using the score has to turn the page 10 times, one being an awkward turn back of two pages; by contrast, the King's Music edition (just of that movement) has the *rondeau* repeats printed in full and takes only three pages.

I fail to see what is wrong in leaving the score as notated by the composer: i.e. string parts only, with verbal cues for doublings and wind parts only when they are distinct. This is usually when the strings are silent, so they can use the same staves. It is more flexible for the movements where the doublings are not explicit and does not clutter up the page with redundant information. In the score, the 2nd treble solos may for economy of space be placed on the second stave, but in the parts both solo lines must be in the *tutti* treble part. To print prefatory staves for parts that are extrapolated from other parts strikes me as dishonest.

The Universal score does give the original instrumental instructions, but only buried in the introduction. The new edition has more information on the page, but interprets it a bit. There is some ambiguity in the solo designations. After the *Prelude*, at a glance, it looks to those who don't realise that French adjectives inflect as if there is one solo 1st violin, but 2 players for the second violin. *1. seule* in the bass solo part would seem to be just an indication for a solo bass, but in fact means 1st bass solo. Like the Universal edition, Eulenburg has no movement numbers and a single barring sequence (but the two differ, since the former has the *Prelude* written out).

A question to the experts. It has puzzled me that the *Prelude* has a single part for *trompettes* in the plural and another for *timballes et basse de trompette*. In most parts of Europe, trumpeters were capable of playing un-notated middle parts: should this be done here?

In the case of the Midnight Mass, the rival edition (ignoring a French one in impossible keys) is published by Harmonia Uitgave (like the Philharmonia score, also available in the UK from A. Kalmus) edited by Dietrich Krüger. In common with Kolneder in the *Te Deum*, Krüger made the mistake of assuming that the second recorder doubled the part he labelled violin 2 in *tuttis* rather than the top part. But unlike Kolneder, Krüger had the good sense not to write out the wind parts on separate staves, so it does not seriously affect his score, even though it makes it difficult to use the parts.

The new editions seem to be superior in most respects, despite my concern with the lay-out. They are clearly printed and the Mass is supplemented by two organ and one orchestral carol as required by the score; I hope the instrumental one is printed in sequence in the parts. They are perhaps slightly expensive, but worth buying. Performance material is stated to be available, though it is not clear whether that includes vocal scores.

I have somewhat belatedly been reading Catherine Cessac's fat book on Charpentier, published in 1988 in France and last year in English. It is a thorough and informative survey of his extensive works, with the meagre biographical information also thoroughly dealt with. The basic text covers 377 pages. The following material includes Charpentier's brief theoretical writings and a thorough listing of works mostly in the order of the 28 autograph volumes; they are also listed by Hitchcock numbers (which she does not cross-reference to her main catalogue) and alphabetically, and there is a classification of works by scoring – all very useful to those struggling with the index-less thematic catalogue as well as for those who don't have access to it. The writing about the music itself is not very sophisticated. But there is a wealth of background information and there is enough said to encourage the reader to look out some works more than others. We were, for instance, thinking of editing *Esther* for one of Andrew van der Beek's summer courses, but decided from the book (subsequently backed by looking at the score) that the double choir & orchestra *Caecilia Virgo et Martyr* (H. 397) was a more exciting prospect, if forces permitted. All Charpentier-lovers will need a copy.

The *Oeuvres complètes* in facsimile has been progressing quite slowly, with volumes in 1990, 1991 and 1995. Vols. 4 & 5 are promised shortly and I will write further about the series when they appear.

FINGER TELEMANN HANDEL

Three more items from the rapidly-expanding series of Performers' Facsimiles. Finger's *Dix Sonates à 1 Flute & 1 Basse Continue* op. 3 was published by Roger in Amsterdam in 1701. There are various modern editions, but there is no great problem in using the facsimile – not, at least, for the recorder-player, though the harpsichordist must be confident enough to play with just a bass part in front of him. (PF 169; £17.00)

We already have a facsimile of Telemann's *Sonate metodiche* op. 13 (Book I, 1728) from Alamire at 390 Belgian francs or

$US 12.00, so £12.50 for PF175 is not in itself a bargain. The American version does, however, have a stronger image, and matt cream paper is better on the eyes than glossy white. With their embellished repeats, these are basic study material for the baroque violin and flute; recorder players may prefer the transposed edition (Dolce DOL 120).

Various bits of what became known as Handel's op. 1 have appeared over the years, separated off so that flautists didn't need to get the violin sonatas. PF 151 has the lot at £17.00. This is, however, a case when the scanty prefatory information that is normal with the series really does need elaboration. For a start, the publisher's name on the original title page is phoney: the perpetrator was Walsh in London, not Roger in Amsterdam. Then two of the violin sonatas are not by Handel, and were replaced when reprinted (this time under Walsh's name) by two others equally dubious. Also, unlike most of the other publications in the PF series (with the notable exception of certain Handel works), the printed edition has no particular authority. Use it if you prefer a score without an obtrusive keyboard part, but modern editions like the Faber ones are far more accurate and comprehensive.

SEIXAS SONATAS

Carlo Seixas *12 Sonatas* revisão critica por João Pedro d'Alvarenga. Lisbon: Musicoteta (MUS 026), 1995. xiv+ 54pp.

Seixas's sonatas are likely to be known chiefly through Kastner's *Cravistas Portuguezes* vol. 2 (Schott 4050), which includes 12 of them. This new edition is based on a MS discovered only in 1994: Biblioteca Nacional de Lisboa (Área de Música) MM 5015. A facsimile was published by the library last year, with an introduction by the editor of this edition. The MS belonged to Dom Jerónimo da Encarnação (an organist who became a monk in 1729) and on his death in 1780 it passed to the monastery of Santa Cruz, Coimbra. Eight of the sonatas are unknown in other sources. Of the other four, only one overlaps with Kastner's edition: his no. 6 is no. 1 of the new edition. The double publication in facsimile and edition is commendable (a nice contrast with the 40-year gap of Louis Couperin's organ music). The sonatas are well worth playing, and the edition seems reliable (though I don't have the facsimile to check). It is nicely produced, with clear print and a binding that stays open on the music stand without breaking the back.

LANDON at 70

Studies in Music History presented to H. C. Robbins Landon on his seventieth birthday edited by Otto Biba & David Wyn Jones. Thames and Hudson, 1996. 272pp, £24.00. ISBN 0 500 01696 8

Three musicologists had a significant influence on the direction my musical interests followed: Thurston Dart, Winton Dean and H. C. Robbins Landon. What they all had in common was the ability to excite interest in study of musical sources. I bought Landon's massive *The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn* about 35 years ago when I was an undergraduate and was particularly interested in his criticisms of the current editions; so all my Eulenburg miniature scores of the symphonies are marked with corrections from the book, even though my interest was entirely amateur. It was his enthusiastic belief that accuracy to the sources was necessary for meaningful performance (a belief shared by Dart and Dean) which, I think, was largely responsible for my finishing up as an editor and publisher. Sadly, the only time we have met had me in the role of pedant while Robbie was enjoying his habitual one of enthusiast.

Robbie's industry is shown by the bibliography, which comprises 516 items, despite excluding newspaper articles, programme notes, record and concert reviews, sleeve notes, lectures, broadcasts, correspondence and some minor articles. As author, it is primarily for the five massive volumes of *Haydn: Chronicle and Works* that he will be remembered, though *1791: Mozart's Last Year* is his best seller. What seemed to be a one-man attempt to edit Haydn's complete works was usurped by a committee and a more formal organisation – I suspect that if it had been left to him it would be complete by now.

This Festschrift is appropriately half in English, half in German. It begins with a former Cardiff colleague Malcolm Boyd reporting the discovery of a score of D. Scarlatti's *Tolomeo et Alessandro* in Belton House near Grantham. (Its lively Sinfonia is familiar from Paris Conservatoire Rés. 2634.) Geoffrey Chew categorises and discusses Haydn's early Christmas pastorals. His remarks about the extensive adaptation of the material reminds me of what happened to English country anthems. A. Peter Brown relates Haydn's London symphonies to concepts of the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ornamental. Albi Rosenthal gives in facsimile and transcription the rare contract from 1796 between Haydn and a hopeful London publisher, useful for showing the relative value of symphonies (£100 for 3), piano sonatas (£60 for 3, but £75 if with violin and violoncello accompaniments), English songs (£75 for 6, as opposed to £60 for Italian songs), string quartets (£75 for 3), etc. David Wyn Jones shows what music by Mozart became available in London thanks to a deal between Longman and Artaria. London seems to have been well supplied in the later 1780s, but by the time Haydn arrived the trade had diminished. Christopher Hogwood advocates the performance of arrangements and writes about the Salomon quintet versions of the symphonies. The textual problems seem quite complex so I look forward to the forthcoming Oxford UP editions; meanwhile, one of the several editions owned by the author is available in the King's Music facsimile.

Turning to the German articles, Walther Brauneis attends to Masonic matters (a subject on which Robbie produced a small book in 1982), Otto Biba produces some new biographical references to Mozart and the Haydn brothers, Gerda Mraz describes some portraits of musicians in the

Lavater collection, Robert Münster lists the availability of information about music in Bavarian monasteries and cathedrals and Jirí Sehnal describes aristocratic musical establishments in Moravia. The book ends with more general reflections on music by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and a survey of Robbie's activity with the Haydn Society (1949-51). He has always been concerned with getting music performed and communicating with the public. I wonder whether he might find this collection just a little too introspective.

MASTER AND PUPIL

Haydn *Il Maestro e lo Scolare: Sonata a quattro mani Hob. XVIIa:1* edited by Franz Eibner. Wiener Urtext (Schott/ Universal Edition), 1996. 27pp, £7.15

Howard Ferguson *Keyboard Duets from the 16th to the 20th Century for One and Two Pianos: an Introduction* Oxford UP, 1995. 103pp, £9.99. ISBN 0 19 816544 7 pbk (hardback 0 19 816549 8)

There are earlier pieces for piano duet (see below), but Haydn's is the first that falls naturally on the piano and has remained in the repertoire. At least, it was first published for 'Piano-Forte or Harpsichord'; from the text as printed here, I don't follow the suggestion that it must have been written for the latter instrument because it needs a short octave. Its value is that it provides two different ways of letting the teacher impart touch and phrasing. In the Variations, he plays a phrase which the pupil then has to repeat, while in the Minuet both players have to move together in thirds. The notes on interpretation rightly stress what is needed for the Variations (deliberate variation by the teacher), but I'm puzzled at the suggestion that thirds can be varied by sometimes making the lower notes more prominent. Would one really play chains of thirds like that in solo or orchestral music? The edition is set out in upright format but keeps the tradition layout of lower part on the left page, higher on the right.

I am puzzled to find that so eminent a musician as Howard Ferguson includes in his preface a plea for publishers to abandon this arrangement in favour of score. It may make it easier for each player to know what the other is doing; but many pianists have so little chance to benefit from ensemble music and playing from parts that it is a pity to deprive them of this substitute. Playing from score is a disincentive to listening. It is interesting that string players, with a few exceptions (some quartets paste up miniature scores of 20th-century works), prefer to use parts even for short pieces which could fit onto a single opening. That apart, this is a useful book full of succinct comments, even on such apparently simple matters as how to sit and who is to page-turn. Apart from the title, the word 'piano' is used throughout, though a fair number of pieces from the pre-piano period are included. The most notable omission (less relevant for pianists than harpsichordists) is the group of pieces for two figured basses by Pasquini. There is a concise historical summary and an informative repertoire list.

DANCING KIRNBERGER

Johann Philipp Kirnberger *Recueil d'Airs de danse Caractéristiques* edited by Ulrich Mahlert. Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 8612), 1995. 36pp, £9.35.

This is edited from an edition printed by Hummel in 1777. The original has a title page showing an elegant couple dancing outdoors, with violinist under a tree on one side, bassist on the other. The subtitle gives as the collection's function 'pour servir de modele aux jeunes Compositeurs et d'Exercise à ceux qui touchent du Clavecin'. The four-page *Vorrede* is given in facsimile (more legible than one might expect because the original uses Roman, not Gothic type) and in an abridged English translation. This is interesting for the way it stresses the dependence of all sorts of music on dance rhythms. 'It is particularly futile to compose or execute a fugue well if one does not know all the different rhythms.' Kirnberger is aware of the variety of different types of dances lurking under the same title. 'An experienced ear can easily distinguish between a Viennese minuet and one from Prague or Dresden. Minuets from Dresden are the best, those from France the worst.' Two of the 26 pieces are by other composers, Couperin's *L'Arlequine* and the Gigue from a Handel Suite in d (HWV 437/5), here entitled *Les Forgerons* (The Blacksmiths), though it has nothing to do with the notorious harmonious one. The music itself is a bit variable in quality. It is mostly quite easy, which has already led the Associated Board to it, with an edition by Richard Jones. This offers help to the beginners but does not include the introductory material which gives the collection a broader interest, so for those more concerned with the original function of Kirnberger's publications the Breitkopf edition is preferable, if more expensive.

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ARMINIO TRIUMPHANS

Glyn Williams

Handel *Arminio* London Handel Festival, Royal College of Music Britten Theatre, 26-29 March 1996

The opera is rather grave but correct and labour'd to the highest degree...But I fear 'twill not be acted very long. The Town don't much admire it.

Lord Shaftesbury's verdict on Handel's Arminio, which he heard soon after it's première at Covent Garden on 12 January 1737, proved portentous, the work enjoying only six performances during the composer's lifetime. Nor did Handel's other new works for 1737 fare better; *Giustino*, premièred on 16th February, received only nine performances, whilst *Berenice* (18 May) was given on only four occasions. Listening all of these works now, over 250 years later, their failure seems incomprehensible, for they are all fine operas in their own way and given a sympathetic audience and intelligent production will thrill the ear and work well on stage. Competition with Farinelli (despite what viewers of the film reviewed opposite might surmise) seems not to have been the cause, since the Opera of the Nobility was also in decline and Farinelli left soon after. *Arminio* was Handel's 30th opera composed for the London theatre and tells the story of a German hero Hermann (Arminio) and his victory over the usurping Romans in 9 A.D. The libretto, after Book 1 of Tacitus's *Annals*, was adapted from an earlier text by Antonio Salvi. It is easy to imagine its appeal to the German-born Handel, battling as he was at this time against the rival Opera of the Nobility. Easy also to imagine its potential (unfulfilled as it turned out) to flatter the Hanoverian establishment, forever struggling to maintain its supremacy, albeit on British soil.

A new production of *Arminio*, staged as a curtain-raiser to the 19th London Handel Festival, was presented in collaboration with the Royal Schools' Vocal Faculty and conducted on 27 and 29 March by its deputy director Michael Rosewell and on 26 and 28 March by the Festival's co-musical director Denys Darlow. The producer was Olivia Fuchs, designer Andrea Carr and lighting director Ben Ormerod. Costumes and set were unfussy but effective. The Roman army of occupation was suitably dressed in navy blue military uniforms with plumed helmets and greatcoats; senior Romans Varo and Tullio also wore light blue silk victory sashes. In complete contrast, the Germans posed as gypsy-style freedom fighters, with costumes (according to Olivia Fuch's notes) intended to emphasise their Celtic origin and nomadic lifestyle. The set amounted to little more than a wooden scaffold on which a guillotine stood ready for Arminio and his confederates. Varo tests the blade menacingly early on in the opera, though when it comes to the crunch he postpones Arminio's execution – a big mistake on his part. (I was a little confused by the sudden addition of a noose in Act 3. Were the Romans going to hang or behead Arminio and Sigismondo, or was it going to be a double execution in both senses?)

Musically, the performance underlined Handel's virtuoso technique, with moods ranging from anger to joy, from the mournful to the heroic. In most of the composer's serious operas one expects a fair number of pugnacious arias with swords held aloft, and this was no exception (the best one was Tusnelda's *Và, combatti*). The sword in question here of course is a symbol of Arminio's sovreignty. His quisling father-in-law Segeste has possession of it in Act 1; his wife Tusnelda captures it in Act 3 Scene3; and it is finally given back to Arminio two scenes later. Wherever it appears, and whoever holds it, the sword is accompanied by some stunning and heroic music. The cast on March 29 consisted largely of young British singers. Arminio, composed originally for the alto castrato Domenico Annabali, was played on this occasion as a trouser role by Claire Williams and his sister Ramise by Alison Kettlewell; two promising talents from Northern Ireland, Mary Nelson and Victoria McLaughlin, sang the roles of Tusnelda and her brother Sigismondo; Varo and Segeste were played by the Scottish tenor Mark Wilde (deputising for the indisposed Henry Moss) and his fellow countryman Richard Morrison; and Tullio was sung by Plamen Beykov. I was unable to hear the other cast (which included Lawrence Zazzo as a countertenor Arminio, Franzita Whelan as Tusnelda, Jeni Bern as Sigismondo, Kathryn Turpin as Ramise and James Rutherford as Tullio), but the one on duty for the final performance on March 29 was in good voice. The pick of the bunch was undoubtedly Mary Nelson, who executed the role of Tusnelda (originally written for Anna Maria Strada) with a vocal dexterity equal to Handel's virtuoso music. By chance, I found myself seated in the Britten Theatre next to Andrew Jones from the Cambridge Handel Opera Group, talent-spotting no doubt for his May 1997 production of Alcina. He could do no better than cast his net around Nelson, Williams, McLaughlin and Kettlewell.

As Lord Shaftesbury concluded,

Harmony is harmony tho' all the world turn goths...or fine gentlemen...I think there is rather more variety and spirit in [Arminio] than in any of the preceding ones and 'tis admirably perform'd.

The London Handel Festival revival of this fine but neglected masterpiece was more than 'admirably perform'd': it was excellent.

FARINELLI

Clifford Bartlett

Only once previously have I been sent a video of a film (I still use the old-fashioned English word) to review. I can't remember its title – it was set in 17th-century France and had a score by the man who writes music for pianos on New Zealand beaches – but it was so nasty that I sent it back after watching only the first few minutes. *Farinelli* is visually far more attractive. The story is a fictional one, and I think I would have enjoyed it more if there had been no attempt to link it with historical figures; I would much rather have an accurate background but foreground figures with whom I can relax rather than wonder whether *a* actually happened and was *x* really like that. That artistic imagination can become truth in the mind of the general public is evident from *Amadeus*, and even though I have read most of the original sources, my image of the Emperor Claudius derives chiefly from Robert Graves. Farinelli is not so well known that a film taking ideas from his biography for a fictitious castrato would have affected sales.

The film is built round two relationships: between Farinelli and his brother Riccardo Broschi, and between Farinelli and Handel. Both raise artistic issues. Broschi tries to be the dominant partner but restricts Farinelli's artistic fulfillment by his limited talent as a composer. (The scene where Handel improves one of his pieces was no doubt inspired by *Amadeus*.) Farinelli is drawn to Handel and his superior music, but there are always barriers between them. Handel can imagine what Farinelli might do with his music, and longs to write for him, but Farinelli is employed by the rival Opera of the Nobility. By an implausible twist of the plot, Farinelli is given the chance to sing Handel; Handel is overcome and gives up writing opera. (In fact, *Faramondo, Serse* and *Deidamia* date from after Farinelli left London.) The contrast of virtuosity and substance is well presented with an expressively-embellished version of *Lascia ch'io pianga* as the operatic climax. I hope that Handel collapsed in horror at the crudely-high final cadenza, out of tone with the rest of the ornamentation (apart from some silly long notes), though I think we are meant to assume that it was the *coup de grace*. What an aria from Handel's first London opera was doing in his last isn't explained.

We are given several extensive scenes that recreate what an opera house of the period might have looked like and how the audience behaved. This seems in general to have been well researched, and it would be nice if the film was popular enough to encourage period staging (though not perhaps period audience behaviour). The musical directors, however, conducted rather more than I imagine would have been the case at the time; the actor playing Broschi was utterly unconvincing in his arm-movements, Porpora was far better.

For most viewers, though, the main interest will be in the sex. I suspect that this is a calculated follow-up to *Tous les matins du monde*. I can imagine the initiators discussing how to go one better and coming up with a neat way of getting three in a bed without being downright pornographic. The answer is a pair of brothers; one of them has sex appeal but can't deliver, so the other takes over at the climax. Make the fully equipped brother responsible for the castration of the other, and you get an intriguing emotional situation. The film is ambiguous about how far Farinelli can actually go: perhaps being more specific would have gone beyond whatever limits there are for sex on European screens.

In musical magazines, it is the voice that has received the publicity. Now we don't castrate brilliant choirboys (Roy Goodman and Richard Farnsworth, top C-sters on the classic and the latest Allegri *Miserere*, how lucky you are), so technology was called on to re-create the sound. IRCAM's computers were enlisted and what we hear is based on the combined sounds of a soprano and a male alto. I was surprisingly impressed, especially when I shut my eyes to avoid seeing the actor pretending to sing. The problem, though, is that modern singers do not spend an hour a day learning to trill, so the main ornament was conspicuously absent. Couldn't the computers have generated trills?

The musical interest is fascinating, and done rather better than I feared. The film is full of interest, but I wasn't convinced by it as an aesthetic experience. Pacing must have been difficult, with quite long stretches static for Farinelli to sing, but the narrative content and characterisation are exiguous and not adequately developed. I couldn't help comparing it with the TV play I had watched a couple of nights earlier. Low-budget in comparison with *Farinelli* and utterly unpretentious, Jack Rosenthal's *Eskimo Day*, about rather different family problems, was funnier, more stimulating to the mind, more revealing about the human condition, more moving, more entertaining. The music was delightful but unobtrusive: Purcell revamped by Dominic Muldowney. It was just heard as a background until, at a moment when one character has a sort of vision (in fact, sees the situation as it really is), attention was seized by a sudden change to *Spem in alium*. But it is probably far too low-key to travel well and lacked violence and sex: the nearest it got to the latter was a fully-clad kiss that shyly broke off before it began. I think that the subsidies that *Farinelli* no doubt received would have been better spent on reconstructing the voices and staging to film a genuine baroque opera, leaving kinky sex to the commercial, unsubsidised cinema.

Farinelli il castrato Guild Home Video G 8862 S £15.95

WAGNER MEETS NORRINGTON

Eric Van Tassel

The *New York Times* of 26 January 1996 (I learn via the Internet) ran a particularly vitriolic review of this CD, the latest stanza in the *altes Starenleid* of Richard Taruskin's continuing assault – scintillating, witty, and fundamentally dishonest – on historical performance. Norrington's recording of Beethoven's Ninth had restored to me a work I had become unable to enjoy, and I disagree with Taruskin almost as a matter of course, so I expected to like this CD. But I can't.

Several of the pieces display Norrington's weakness for speed[1]. In the earlier works, it highlights Wagner's indebtedness to Rossini and Weber, and though Taruskin objects that the tempo of the Liebestod 'greatly cheapens the music by calling unwanted attention to its glaring overreliance on melodic sequences', that is Wagner's fault not Norrington's.

To be sure, Bayreuth does report ever-slower performances after Wagner's death (Toscanini's 1931 *Parsifal* ran, I believe, 45 minutes longer than Levi's in 1882). But I find on rereading Wagner's essay *On Conducting* that grumbles about conductors who drag are outweighed by complaints about Allegros and, especially Adagios that go too *fast*: 'In a certain subtle sense, one can say that the true Adagio cannot be taken slow enough'.

And throughout *Über das Dirigiren*, tempo as such matters less than nuance and shading: *'Only a proper understanding of the* melos *can reveal the proper tempo*: the two are inseparable... The correct speed for any piece of music can be determined only by the character of its particular phrasing.' And phrasing demands flexibility: *'modification of tempo* [is] a thing not merely quite foreign to our conductors but stupidly avoided by them ... we are dealing here with a true life-principle of our music'. Above all, *'our conductors know nothing about proper tempo, because they understand nothing about song'.*

More's the pity, then, that only one extract here incudes a singer. For my money, it's the best thing on the CD: in the Liebestod, at least, the admirable Jane Eaglen forces Norrington to give and take a little – to let the music breathe, in fact, sing.

Even on grounds of 'authenticity' there's much to be desired here. Norrington rightly questions the ubiquity of vibrato; but is the string playing now *too* austerely 'white', as in the violin figure 6-7 bars from the end of the *Liebestod*? More important, a few timid dabs of portamento don't begin to suggest the heart-on-sleeve playing that Wagner must have expected: even the late and relatively 'modern' Reiner (in a complete *Tristan* at Covent Garden in 1936) uses a much richer portamento to help us come down after the climax at 'in der Welt-Atems wehendem All' 13-15 bars from the end. The string section may be too large for the earlier works; and isn't the *Siegfried Idyll* both more effective and more 'authentic' with single strings?

On the plus side are some illuminating details of articulation and colour. In the *Siegfried Idyll*, the phrasing of bar 76 – three slurred quavers, the third with a dot over it – is delicately precise; and at the end of the 'Schar einfach' cradle-song (bars 981) the 'biting sheep' in cello and bass (cf. Newman's *Life*, vol. 4 pp. 717ff) is utterly winning. In the *Parsifal* Prelude, the rhythmic ambiguity of odd duplets and triplets on repeated chords at the end of the first motif (bars 6-15 etc.) is lost when the usual blur covers the articulation: Taruskin may find these rhythms 'minimally nuanced', but I have simply never heard them until now and don't believe Wagner intended them to be nothing but aural fog. The mellow, resonant brass have none of the brazenness of (for instance) Toscanini's NBC Symphony, and they are richer in sonority than even German players of postwar Bayreuth.

But historical performance isn't about 'authentic' hardware, and I don't think Norrington and his team have yet found their way into the late-Romantic stylistic world. We have a little more of a Wagner 'tradition' than we have a Mozart or Beethoven tradition: Bayreuth is as much a trap as a gateway. (As Simon Ravens reminded us in April, Mahler was right: tradition is just laziness.)[2] Yet Wagner's meticulous performance rubrics, Porges's account of the preparations for the 1876 *Ring*, and the copious *Zusätze* from the Meister's lips which the 'Niebelungen Chancery' loyally entered in their scores all remind us that with Wagner we are deep in the realm of a conductor. It is a realm which historical performance has yet barely explored, not least because here, more than anywhere, the need for musicality and the need for responsible scholarship meet on equal terms.

[1] Epecially the *Tristan* 'Liebestod' (6 minutes – a minute shorter than Flagstad's RCA studio version of 1939) and the preludes to *Parsifal* (under 10 minutes) and *Tristan* (under 6½ minutes).

[2] Yet 'tradition' isn't wholly contemptible. In the *Meistersinger* Prelude, the q-sq-sq upbeat to the mastersingers' fanfare is so weightily single-tongued in certain Bayreuth recordings (Furtwängler 1943, Karajan 1951) that the brass reach the downbeat perceptibly, and convincingly, *behind* the strings.

Wagner *Orchestral Works* London Classical Players, Roger Norrington 63' 43" EMI Classics 7243 5 55479 2 7
Rienzi *Overture*, Lohengrin Act III, Meistersinger, Parsifal *Preludes*; *Siegfried Idyll*, Tristan *Vorspiel & Liebestod* (with Jane Eaglen sop.)

ON STARTING THE COMPLETE RECORDINGS OF J. S. BACH'S CANTATAS

Masaaki Suzuki

This note introduces the new Japanese complete recording of Bach's cantatas (see review on p. 20; vol. 2 was reviewed last month). It touches on some aspects of the discussion in our last few issues on liturgical reconstruction, which raised the question of the relevance of belief. So we have, with Mr Suzuki's kind permission, reprinted it from the CD booklet. CB

It may seem strange to think that the Japanese perform the cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach, who was one of the most important figures in the history of German music. 'How is it that the Japanese, with such a different cultural heritage, dare play the music of Bach?' – that is a typical sort of question I was often confronted with when living and performing in Holland a number of years ago. Although recently such questions have become less common, they have forced me to pause and reconsider what Bach and his music mean to me, and my motivation in choosing to conduct his cantatas.

First and foremost in easing my hesitation and diffidence in approaching Bach's music was my eventual complete conviction that the God in whose service Bach laboured and the God I worship today are one and the same. In the sight of the God of Abraham, I believe that the two hundred years separating the time of Bach from my own day can be of little account. This conviction has brought the great composer very much closer to me. We are fellows in faith, and equally foreign in our parentage to the people of Israel, God's people of Biblical times. Who can be said to approach more nearly the spirit of Bach: a European who does not attend church and carries his Christian cultural heritage mostly on the subconscious level, or an Asian who is active in his faith although the influence of Christianity on his native culture is small?

All the same, I do not hold with those who say that non-Christians can never approach Bach's cantatas properly, nor do I believe that adherence to the Christian faith is necessary for the beautiful performance of the music. Bach's cantatas are a true product of German culture, inextricably wedded to the German language. This presents the Japanese with some difficulty, since not only the pronunciation of the language itself but the sense of musical phrasing and articulation which emerge from it, and indeed the musical structure and counterpoint integral to Bach, are all alien to the Japanese musical tradition. We must investigate these aspects of the music's context carefully; however firm one's Christian faith may be, one cannot handle this music without an understanding of its purely technical and musicological side. Having said this, however, what is most important in infusing a Bach cantata score with real life in performance is a deep insight into the fundamental religious message each work carries.

The world already possesses several complete recordings of Bach's cantatas: Gustav Leonhardt and Nikolaus Harnoncourt completed this historical legacy, and Helmuth Rilling has also finished his set. Ton Koopman, who was once a teacher of mine, has told me that he is now pressing forward in recording the cantatas. Now, in the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, we are launching this new recording project of our own here in the Far East. It is my hope that in some way our venture may demonstrate that Bach's music contains a message which can touch the human heart, regardless of nationality or cultural tradition, filling hungry spirits and spreading inner peace.

The 50th anniversary of VJ-Day (15 August 1995)

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A not entirely flippant, if hypothetical, reconstruction of a week in Bach's composing life in the mid-1720s may suggest some practical considerations that influenced his work

Monday. Find the Minister and after interminable arguments decide on the text of next Sunday's cantata; agree that the melody of the closing chorale should appear in the subject of the opening chorus. Check on availability of players.
Tuesday. Compose most of the cantata in intervals between teaching Latin and how to play figured bass.
Wednesday. Hand out the music to be copied, except the organ continuo part, which Bach must do himself because it involves transposing and figuring the bass.
Thursday. Successful run-through, but one of the players in the aria for tenor and two oboes d'amore has lost his lip, so has to be rewritten for two flutes.
Friday. Virtually all the school down with flu. Luckily, one good boy alto still OK, so quickly rewrite a couple of arias (all he has time to learn) from an old Weimar cantata. Adapt a concerto movement as a sinfonia with solo organ, and make the closing chorale really simple so that the sexton can manage the tenor line. Parts copied by several pupils, but Bach adds the chorale direct to the parts, since he hasn't bothered to write a score.
Saturday. Rehearsal. Had intended to play organ from score to save copying and figuring a part for pupil, but viola ill so has to play it himself and quickly copy organ part.
Sunday. Minister commented on the originality of disguising the chorale melody in an instrumental movement, but confessed that he found it too embellished to follow easily. Refrained from telling him that the movement written as discussed wasn't performed and that there was no chorale in the substitute.

Sadly, both the masterpieces composed that week have been lost. *Douglas Bolingbroke*

LAMPE: THE DRAGON OF WANTLEY

Peter Holman

This is the introduction to a new edition published by King's Music. (Full score £25.00; parts also available.)

Nothing is known about John Frederick Lampe before he was admitted to the University of Helmstedt in May 1718, when he was described as 'Brunsvicensis' – from nearby Brunswick. Like his fellow Saxon Handel, he studied law, graduating in 1720. Whether he practised as a lawyer is not known, though he may have come to England as a result of meeting the diplomat Thomas Lediard in Hamburg, who was later to write a libretto for him. An early associate in England was the poet and composer Henry Carey, who referred to him in a poem of 1726 as 'my Lamp obscure, because unknown' who 'shines in secret (now) to friends alone'. Carey foretold fame for him:

Light him but up! let him in publick blaze,
He will delight not only but amaze.

and indeed fame was to come to him through his settings of Carey's comic opera libretti.

Lampe's first operas were serious. In 1732-3 he joined Carey, Thomas Arne and J.C. Smith in a project to put on English opera at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. Three of his full-length works 'in the Italian manner' were performed there within the year: Carey's *Amelia*, Lediard's *Britannia*, and *Dione*, an anonymous adaptation of Gay's play. However, Lampe discovered his true *métier*, the satire of Italian opera, with *The Opera of Operas*; or *Tom Thumb the Great*, an adaptation of Fielding put on in the Little Theatre in May 1733. He was a bassoonist in Handel's opera orchestra, and it is pleasant to imagine him doing 'research' for his parodies each evening during the performances of his compatriot's heroic operas.

The Dragon of Wantley came after a fallow period in Lampe's career, which was perhaps spent teaching, writing a thorough-bass treatise (published in September 1737), or even travelling abroad. It was first seen on 10 May 1737 at the Little Theatre, and was a sensation. Carey's text was reprinted fourteen times in little more than a year, the work was quickly transferred to Covent Garden, and it held the stage until 1782; it was the most popular English comic opera of the century after *The Beggar's Opera*. Lampe never had another success to match *The Dragon*. A sequel, *Margery; or, A Worse Plague than the Dragon* (1738) was only mildly successful, as was his Shakespearean parody opera *Pyramus and Thisbe* (1745). In 1748 he went to Dublin for two years, and then on to Edinburgh. Soon after his arrival he fell prey to a fever, and died there on 25 July 1751. He was buried in Canongate churchyard, and was commemorated by Charles Wesley in the hymn *'Tis done! the Sov'reign will's obey'd.*

Henry Carey's text for *The Dragon* is similar to Gay's for the Beggar's Opera in that Italian opera is satirized essentially by transferring its artificial conventions and high-flown sentiments to a down-to-earth English setting – in this case, the legend of Moore of Moore Hall and the Dragon of Wantley or Wharncliffe, set in the Rotherham area of Carey's native Yorkshire. The story was known nationally through a ballad printed by Thomas D'Urfey in *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1699), and, more recently, James Ralph had suggested it as the topic for a comic opera in *The Touchstone* (1728). Carey and Lampe worked on it together, and apparently offered it to Drury Lane as early as 1734-5. The early librettos and the musical sources show that it went through a number of stages before it reached its definitive form. There is a convenient edition of the text in its late form (which conforms almost exactly to the musical sources) in *Burlesque Plays of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Simon Trussler (Oxford University Press, 1969); this also includes the ballad version.

The title-role of *The Dragon* has been terrorising the countryside in 'that Part of Yorkshire near Rotherham'. The country people appeal to the local hero, Moore of Moore Hall, to do battle with it, and in return he demands the hand of Margery, a 'fair maid of sixteen', which arouses the jealousy of Mauxalinda, his 'cast-off mistress'. Despite these distractions, Moore ambushes the dragon at a well, and kills him 'by a kick on the Back-side'. The chorus celebrates the victory with the words:

Sing, sing, and rorio
An Oratorio
To gallant Morio.

The dragon was played by the bass Thomas Reinhold, and was partly inspired by a ridiculous monster currently appearing at Covent Garden in Handel's *Giustino*. Thomas Salway played the hero by taking off the great castrato Farinelli, while Margery and Mauxalinda, rivals for Moore's affections, were played by the sisters Isabella and Esther Young. Isabella, Thomas Arne's sister-in-law, married Lampe in 1738. Gubbins, Margery's father, was taken by Mr Laguerre.

Lampe published most of the music of *The Dragon* in two full scores. The first, *The Songs and Duetto's in the Burlesque Opera, Call'd, The Dragon of Wantley* (London, 1738), contains the airs and duets, while the second, which lacks a title-page in all the surviving copies, contains the overture and the choruses. A vocal score of the airs appeared at the same time. The work also survives in a manuscript full score, Royal College of Music MS 927, which includes the recitatives, missing in the prints. According to the RCM

library catalogue, it is in the hand of the countertenor singer and copyist Thomas Barrow. Barrow sang soprano in the 1732 version of Handel's *Esther* while a child in the Chapel Royal, and was a gentleman of the Chapel from 1746 until his death on 13 August 1789; he also sang at Westminster Abbey. The hand is practised and adult, so it is unlikely that the MS dates from as early as 1737, though it could have been prepared for one of the revivals in the 1740s. It contains some stage directions, and has a number of annotations in a second hand (possibly that of the composer) giving directions for transpositions and the copying of parts.

The main problem for the editor of *The Dragon* is that both the main sources are incomplete, and thus the only way of producing the complete work is to conflate them. The printed scores omit the recitatives, while the MS preserves a heavily cut version that omits one number and the middle sections of a number of others – and, of course, their *da capo* repeats. It reduces the work to little more than an hour, and may have been prepared for an occasion when it was used as an afterpiece. Also, the MS lacks some of the expression marks found in the printed scores, though it is musicianly and accurate, and occasionally seems to correct mistakes in them.

Furthermore, in the MS Mauxalinda's airs have been transposed down to suit a mezzo-soprano (her role originally went up to top C), possibly to bring them in line with the range of the second chorus soprano for a small-scale production in which the soloists had to sing the choruses one-to-a-part. Charles Burney wrote in his *General History* that 'In 1741, Lampe and his wife and sister, with Sullivan the singer, the two Messings, and Jemmy Worsdale, went to Preston Gild, and afterwards to Chester, where they performed the *Dragon of Wantley*, the Dragoness [*Margery*], Amelia, &c'. Burney added that he was at school in Chester at the time, and 'frequently heard them perform'. Perhaps the MS was prepared for this touring production, which is likely to have used fewer singers than the London one. The original full score would presumably have remained the property of Covent Garden, so Lampe would have needed a new one when he left London. For want of anything better, we have used it as our primary source, though we have used the printed scores for the missing music and as guidance for editorial expression marks.

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Two songs from the opera (chosen for their brevity) are printed on pages 12 & 13.

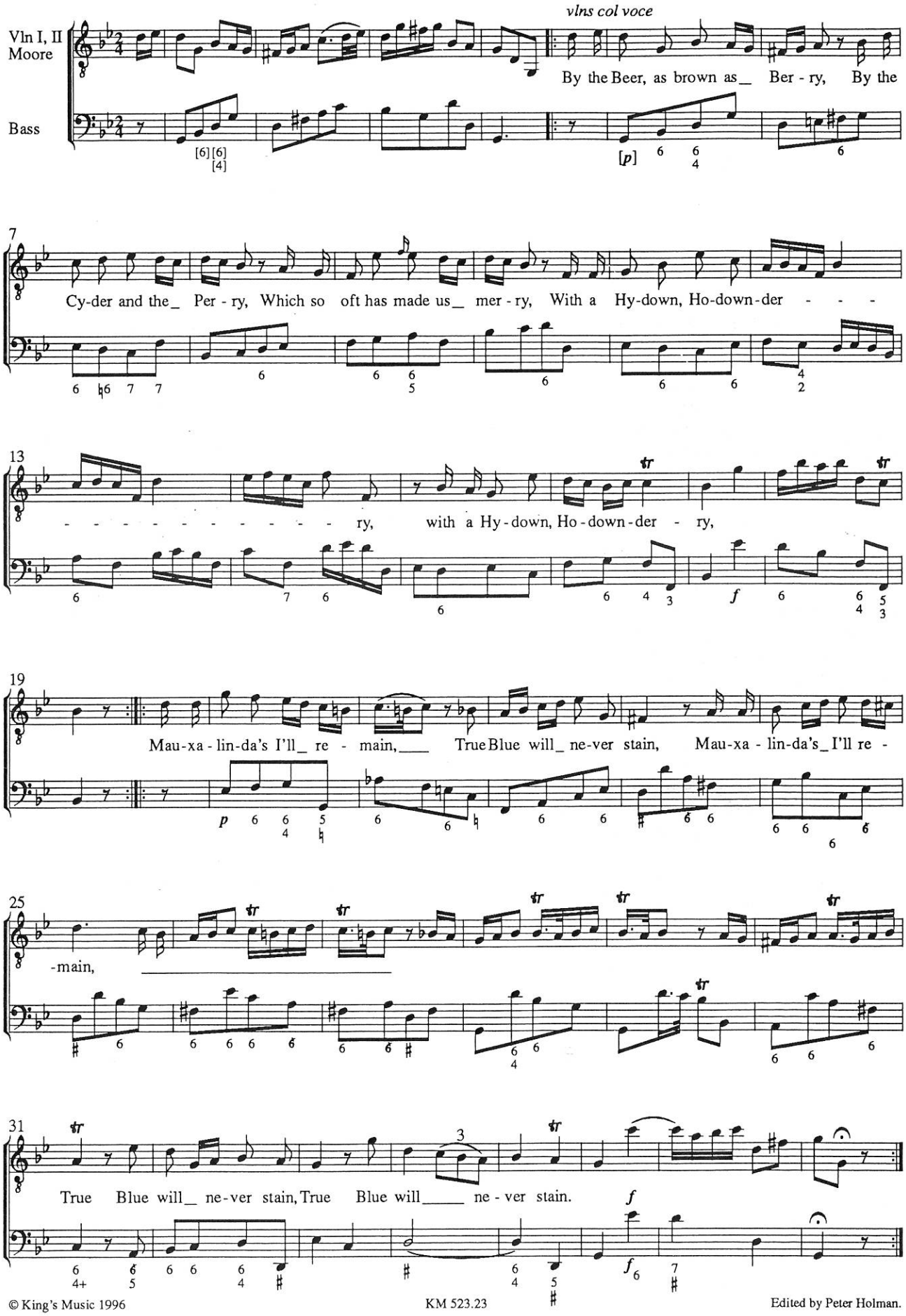
The Dragon of Wantley will be performed by Opera Restor'd at the Brighton Festival on 13th May, the Lufthansa Festival on 13 June and later in Deal, Cambridge, Stoke-by-Nayland and Utrecht. A recording by Hyperion has been scheduled for 1998.

The edition will also be used for a course/performance conducted by Paul Goodwin at the Dartington International Summer School in August.

More emerges about the lady baritone, Joan McDonough. It seems that her voice was not a natural one but the result of an operation on her vocal chords, making it as unnatural as that of, say, Farinelli. Since there was, in the days of Castrati, strong resistance from most religious authorities to letting unnatural voices perform in church, perhaps the Windsor authorities could have used a different defence if the laws on racial and sexual discrimination had applied to them. (Thanks to David Pritchard of Ontario for sending me the report in The Guardian*; we are not very good at reading daily papers even when we bother to buy them.)*

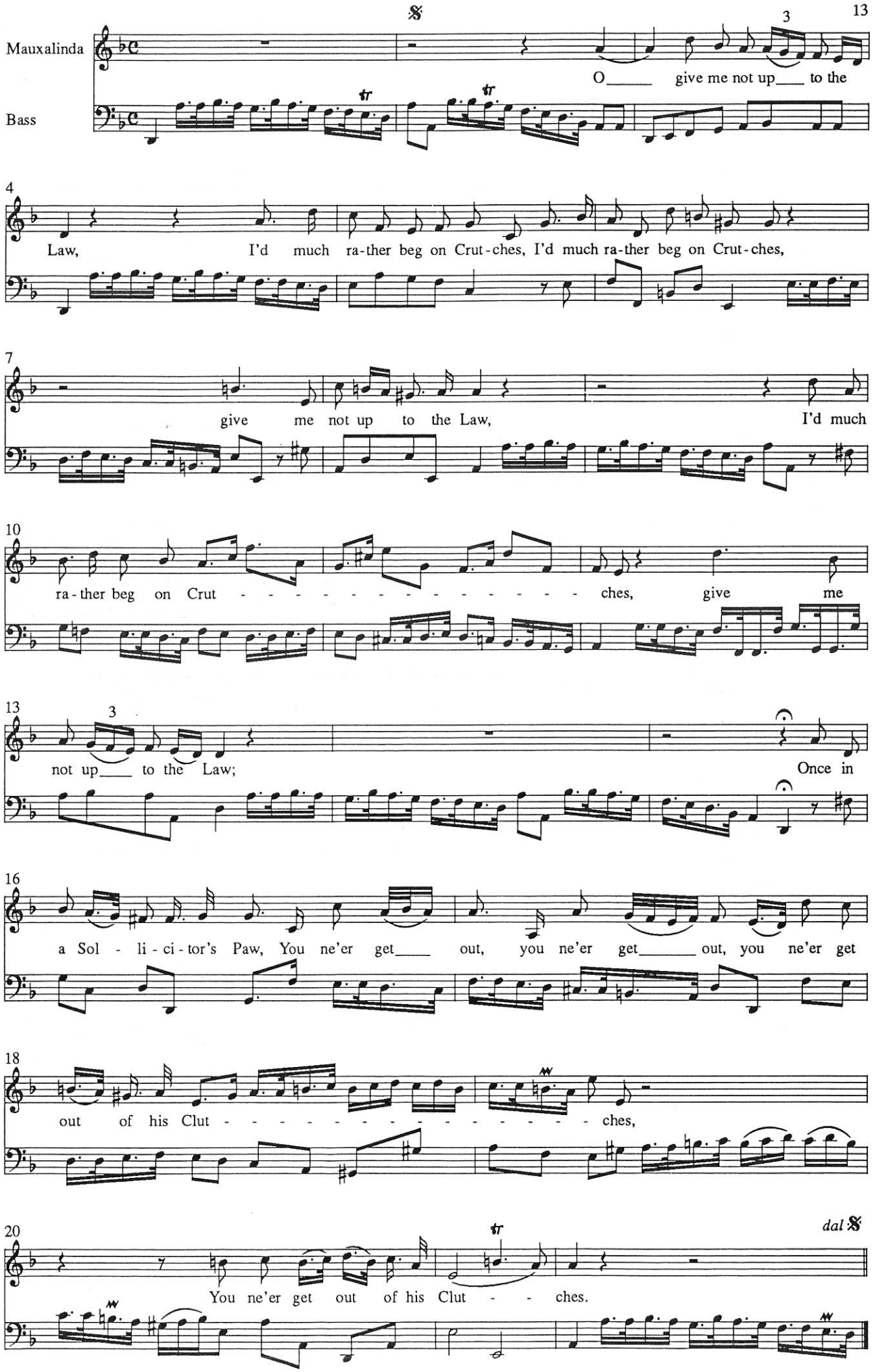
Lampe

2 Airs from *The Dragon of Wantley*



KM 523.23

Edited by Peter Holman.



Edited by Peter Holman.

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

Gregorian Chants for Palm Sunday Schola Antiqua, John Blackley 61' 06"
L'Oiseau-Lyre **448 606-2** (rec. 1987)
Gregorian Chants for the Paschal Vigil Schola Antiqua, John Blackley 56' 44"
L'Oiseau-Lyre **448 607-2** (rec. 1987)

These are reissues of important recordings that should be heard by all interested in chant. It is easy to look at the neums above the printed chant in the *Graduale triplex* and wonder how they might affect performance of the standard notation. Blackley starts from the neums themselves, and what he finds in them differs considerably from what one normally hears. I don't know whether he is right, and the Vollaerts-Gregory Murray approach, from which this is a continuation, has generally been treated as a nine-day-wonder by chant experts. But these CDs raise the problems in the most effective way, through convincing performances, and are somehow more startling than the Pérèz experiments because we are not distracted by exotic voice-production. The 1372 Engelberg Paschal Vigil play is, of course, too late for such experiments, and we are given a beautifully simple singing with none of the frills that such pieces are often given to enliven them. I like the rubric 'If anyone finds it, let him return it, under pain of the fire of hell': there are no such sanctions now to impress the return of borrowed books or CDs! *CB*

Resurrexi: Gregorian Chant for Easter, Ascension and Pentecost Scola Gregoriana Bruges, Roger Deruwe 63' 06"
René Gailly *Noblesse* **CD87 102**
Thesaurum Cantus Gregoriani Gregorian Choir Kalken, John Derde 70' 36"
René Gailly **CD87 112**

Both CDs cover much of the same well-trodden Easter-Pentecost repertoire, though the Kalken choir also includes some of the Palm Sunday plainchant, which is good to have. Both choirs sing in churches, with the Bruges group giving the impression of being much more immersed in the music. The Bruges singers are very strongly in the Solesmes tradition, but without any warts; their unanimity is almost unsettling, particularly as their photograph shows 22 men. They use a light and high vocal timbre and keep the music moving so that the words are carried effortlessly, sometimes relentlessly, along. The smaller Kalken Choir (10 singers) go for a more beefy sound with some irksome vibrato and a lack of unanimity of pitch and attack which is probably more authentic, but becomes irritating on repeated listening. One also doesn't always get the impression that they know what the words mean: not that plainchant expresses these in any way, but understanding the words is still vital for a convincing performance. So, of the two, I would recommend the Bruges group though I'm not sure of the value of these somewhat arbitrary mixed-feast compilations except as background music. Non-monastic choirs like this should be giving us more specialized fare, with so much of the more complex and later chant still unrecorded. The notes are largely a waste of space (apart from giving text and translations), with nothing on the sources, which is particularly regrettable for the psalm verses which the Bruges group include in some of their Communions. *Noel O'Regan*

MEDIEVAL

Les premiers polyphonies françaises: organa et tropes du XI^e^ siècle Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Dominique Vellard 70' 22"
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 45135 2** 7

On paper* the brief fragments of two-part organa look insignificant, almost random smatterings of notes above the chant. This CD is a vivid example of how imaginative performance can bring apparently dry musicological facts to life. Under Wulf Arlt's guidance, Dominique Vellard and his seven colleagues provide a vibrant, flexible chant in which to set these short gems. The chant moves fast, with a suppleness that makes Blackley's versions sound somewhat self-conscious and didactic, and the tiny fragments of organa flow out of it. Arlt's notes are excellent and the careful typography of the texts helps the uninitiated understand how richly the liturgy is adorned by tropes. *CB*

* Wulf Arlt 'Stylistic Layers in Eleventh-Century Polyphony' in *Music in the Medieval English Liturgy: Plainsong & Mediæval Music Society Centennial Essays* edited by Susan Rankin and David Hiley. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, pp. 101-141.

Eya Mater: Chant grégorien, polyphonies des XI^e^ et XII^e^ siècles Discantus, Brigitte Lesne
Opus 111 **OPS 30-143** 70' 31"

Discantus is another all-female medieval ensemble, saved from Anonymity by Brigitte Lesne. The programme concentrates on sacred texts concerning women (the Virgin, Elizabeth, Rachel), although it is not immediately clear why texts *about* women should be sung *by* women, nor that your everyday Medieval nun sang music as complex and up-to-the-minute as this. The singing is very beautiful, although it must be said that only Brigitte Lesne herself convinces me of the absolute rightness of the interpretation. When she sings (as in the Gradual verse to *Anima nostra*), we can hear clearly what is basic chant and what is fioriture, and as a result the mode, the melodic direction and the sense of the text all fall into place. The other singers, good as they are, do not quite achieve this sense of freedom. And when all eight of them sing together (in the unison plainsong pieces, for example) they sound merely very well rehearsed. I find it hard to believe that such a free and rhapsodic interpretation of plainsong is compatible with choir performance. I am also dubious about supposedly improvised suspended organum performed by a choir: surely the moving voice should be different in sound and quality, rather than making the second part of a perfectly balanced duo. Final negative reflection: there is no attempt at old Latin pronunciation, which makes it difficult to enter the medieval sound world that is presumably aimed at. All this music is so concentrated that every note and every interval has to justify itself. If the same standards were applied to most recordings of Renaissance and baroque music (see Weelkes review) very few would come as close to success as this one. *Graham O'Reilly*

Forgotten Provence: Music-making in the South of France, 1150-1550 The Martin Best Consort 64' 19" Nimbus **NI 5445**

Martin Best is a powerful performer, particularly in the flesh. Some of his presence survives the recording medium, and he particularly imbues the longer 'ballads' with a strange mystery and power – a type of 'fado'. He has an extraordinary ability to reach and touch a sort of archetype – a mix of historic and human depth rarely heard. The string band has a good forward motion, with the excellent foil of Giles Charbonade's vielle playing. In the slower songs phrases are followed by plucked swirls reminiscent of '70s Irish bands. Best dilutes himself on disc too readily with other voices in a form of 'community singing'. I am not unconvinced that this was the role of some of the songs, but they seldom move far enough from the territory of a modern singalong to match the passion of their leader. I did enjoy however the organum, which had a suitable reverence. *Stephen Cassidy*

D'Amor cantando: ballades et madrigaux vénetiens (anon XIV-cent.) Micrologus, Adolfo Broegg Opus 111 **OPS 30-141**

This is an impressive recording of a fascinating and historically-important repertoire – the first Italian source of the Ars Nova (a page is reproduced in *New Grove* 17, 666, and one of the pieces seen there – *Per tropo fede* – is transcribed in 2, 87). This is the hit-song of the collection which, as befits a *ballata*, is given an extrovert and rhythmic performance. One of the musicologically impressive aspects of this disc is the care taken to distinguish stylistically between the *ballatte* and the *madrigali*. The latter are usually performed with two solo voices only and sometimes (especially in the male-voice duet *Canto lo gallo*) create a seductive, almost hypnotic effect. Here the music underlines and reinforces the poetic metre in a way that must be right. Less convincing are the instrumental versions of such madrigals – which make them into enjoyable dance music

but nothing more (iconographical evidence cannot, of course, tell us what repertoire is being played). But it is interesting as an example of what can be done to hear *Piance la bela Iguana* in both 'pure' vocal and 'impure' instrumental versions, especially as there are not too many drums in this one (the instrumental version is in fact track 11 – the order 11 and 12 are exchanged between the notes and the record). I have reservations about the women's voices. Is there evidence for female *musici* and *histriones*? Their way of singing, exciting but sometimes aggressively throaty, also makes me wonder if they are pretending to sing outdoors. Surely this is indoor music? Otherwise, playing and singing are expert and committed. Recommended.

Graham O'Reilly

Suso in Italia bella: Musique dans les cours et cloîtres de l'Italie du Nord La Reverdie
Arcana **A 38** 74' 30"
Jacopo da Bologna, Marchetto da Padova, etc

The members of this extremely talented group of five stand equally well as vocalists and instrumentalists. They have the confidence to pace the music, using weighty rather than aggressive syncopation, imaginative arrangements and virtuosic (rather than flashy) playing. The vocal melismas are integrated into the line and subservient to it, rendering the words sensitively. The frequent harp accompaniment in monodic song is daringly independent of the melody, but works perfectly. The voices are clear, airy and well characterized. The often-obscure secular texts are given a languid treatment – a form of musical obscurity. Perhaps some could have been given more edge. However, the religious texts form a suitable balance in a good shape of programme. *Stephen Cassidy*

Middle Ages Music Trinity Baroque, The Forbury Consort, The Holbein Consort, Steven Player 58' 34"
Griffin **GCCD 4001**

The programme is a shopping list of music from the middle ages without any particular theme. The singing of Trinity Baroque (as the name may lead you to suspect) is accurate and well formed, but not particularly aligned to the period, feeling more like an extract of cathedral choir than a rounded entity. This is reinforced by the 'treble' pitching of some of the solo songs, not of course that there is anything wrong in itself with convenient transpositions. The voices, which work reasonably well as a group, do not sustain enough interest as solos. The recorder playing is neat and very well tuned but strangely passionless. A more medieval-sounding parallel-bore consort may have helped with brilliance. This made me wish even more that the Holbein Consort had used two shawms rather than one to give extra edge to their *alta capella* band – the highlight of the recording. The playing is shapely, the rhythms accurate and catchy. The reed playing is as artful as the best brass playing, without the feeling of pretension found in some other groups. I look forward to hearing the Holbein Consort again.

Stephen Cassidy

RENAISSANCE

Dowland *Farewell, Unkind: songs & dances*
Boston Camerata, Joel Cohen 68' 44
Erato **0630-12704-2**

To begin with the Old Hundredth shows an originality which raises expectations for an unusual anthology which are not disappointed. Joel Cohen's prime aim is to present Dowland as the Elizabethan court composer he longed but (till his composing career was over) failed to be. Surprisingly, one obvious candidate, the marvellous wedding piece *Welcome black night*, is not included: *Humour say* is hardly a substitute. But there is plenty to attract. The middle parts are often written off as awkward fillers. But my own first acquaintance with Dowland was singing the tenor part of *Weep you no more sad fountains* and I feel that something is missing when it is sung just to the lute. Here it is sung, perhaps a little harshly, just by voices (the CD avoids the obvious voice and lute pairing). Most songs have viol, plucked and/or vocal accompaniments, with some purely instrumental items. Early pronunciation helps to avoid the preciousness that often afflicts the lute-song. Most enjoyable. *CB*

Gibbons *Choral and Organ Music* Oxford Camerata, Jeremy Summerly, Laurence Cummings *org* 65' 18"
Naxos **8.553130**
Almighty and everlasting God Great Lord of Lords, Hosanna to the son of David, Lift up your heads, Magnificat & Nunc dimittis (2nd Service & Short Services), O clap your hands, O God the King of Glory, O Lord in thy wrath, Out of the deep, See the Word is incarnate. org: *Preludes in G & d, Fantazia a4*

A blue-chip investment. The modest cost is more than repaid by the first track, the richly exuberant polyphony of *O clap you hands* projected with dynamic vitality unparalleled in my experience. Otherwise there is a judicious mixture of some of Gibbons' finest full verse anthems, professionalism brought to the solos of the latter being another source of immense pleasure. As so often with Oxford Camerata discs it is the impression of spontaneity that is so striking, the odd untidy entry being a small price to pay for such a valuable asset. Since the short interspersed organ pieces also come across extremely well, the disc is highly recommended to all except those who have irrevocable hang-ups about the use of women's voices in works that stand at the heart of Anglican liturgy. *Brian Robins*

Morley *Madrigals 'Now is the merry month of maying'* Deller Consort 48' 50"
Vanguard **08 9073 71** (rec.1958)

Having forsworn Deller reissues, I could not resist the temptation of listening to the latest pair, chiefly for the Lalande (see p. 17). The Morley is more problematic; I link his music, more than that of his contemporaries, with the sort of scene Kingsley Amis so wickedly portrayed, groups in the grounds of Dartington Hall, or Grantchester Old Vicarage on a mid-summer Sunday afternoon. The performances here are, of course, infinitely better, a good sense of ensemble permitting considerable freedom (a positive consequence of Deller's impish unpredictablity). The sopranos (April Cantelo & Eileen McLoughlin) are difficult to take – a shame, because we have the fine tenor line of Wilfred Brown and Gerald English. The piece that I really found moving was the unmadrigalian *Oh grief even in the bud.* *CB*

Weelkes *Anthems* Oxford Camerata, Jeremy Summerly, Gary Cooper *org*
Naxos **8.553209** 61' 36"
All laud and praise, All people clap your hands, Alleluia I heard a voice, Give ear O Lord, Gloria in excelsis Deo, Give the king thy judgments, Hosanna to the son of David, Lord to thee I make my moan, Most mighty and all-knowing Lord, O how amiable, O Lord arise, O Lord grant the king a long life, What joy so true, When David heard; A remembrance of my friend Thomas Morley *Death hath deprived me* Morley *Lachrimae & Passymeasures Pavans*

It is hard to imagine an ensemble more Oxbridge than this, so not surprisingly all the good and less good qualities of the 'English discovery' species are to be found here. The good ones are well-known to all: fine voices, beautifully tuned, singing well together in a recognisable tradition. The down side is that this tradition has little to do with Weelkes. To start with, why are his florid Amens always slower than the anthems they conclude? I'm not going to bang on about pitch, but some of these performances are up a major third. Has anyone anywhere ever believed in A=540+ ? *When David heard*, a high clef piece, is not transposed down at all. The sound of even as good sopranos as these at these silly pitches becomes very tiring very quickly. Solos which would sound dramatic when sung by tenors sound merely plaintive in the mouth of the (very good) alto. In the interests of ensemble, consonants are placed as late as possible. 'O Lord arise into thy rare-sting place' is one result (listen to how Alfred Deller used to do it, with some air before an early s: no need for translations there). Many consonants disappear altogether, but the involvement with the text is so minimal that it hardly matters. The gamut of the emotions runs from the A of an all-purpose sadness to the B of a kind of hearty jollity. There is a strange insistence on choral performance, even of pieces (*Hosanna to the son of David, Gloria in excelsis*) which survive in mostly secular sources. And *When David heard* is a spiritual madrigal, for heaven's sake. Easily the best performance on the record is *Death has deprived me*, written on the death of Morley, done in the right key with solo voices. In *When David heard* the lonely 'O' before 'O my son' is sung perfectly straight with no flicker of emotion. No-one would consider singing an equivalent passage of Monteverdi like this. Why should Weelkes suffer because he was English? The weird English sleeve-note (the French and German ones are different) perhaps gives some clue: '[Weelkes] was never particularly responsive to words... England... had its own sense of values and destiny according to a natural temperament, one which found continental histrionics and emotional out-pourings rather embarrassing.'

16th- and 17th-century Englishmen were notoriously argumentative, obstinate and passionate (none more so than Weelkes); perhaps Oxbridge pubs are too civilised.

Graham O'Reilly

A Royal Songbook: Spanish Music from the time of Columbus Geraldine McGreevy *sop*, Harvey Brough *ten*, Jacob Heringman *vihuela etc*, Musica Antiqua of London, Philip Thorby 68' 03"
Naxos **8.553325**
Music by Anchieta, Encina, Escobar, Fernandes, Gabriel, Garcimuños, la Torre, Mudarra, Ockeghem(?), Ortiz, Ponce, Roman, Vilches & anon.

In 1992, we were fairly deluged with recordings, concerts and festivals celebrating the 500th anniversary of the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. This is such a rich period, however, that there is always room for further celebration, and especially for an anthology of such variety as this. Philip Thorby and Musica Antiqua have taken the majority of their pieces from the *Canconiero Musical de Palacio*, songs collected in great number between 1500 and 1520, and composed from 1440 onwards They range from courtly love songs to earthier texts, along with haunting and passionate songs of religious devotion. Whilst the performances successfully reflected these differences of content and style, I would very much like to have seen the texts themselves (plus translations), rather than brief liner notes. Geraldine McGreevy's voice is expressive and well suited to the Spanish idiom, though it is difficult to tell a story if the listener does not know the language and is given no translation. I especially enjoyed the sensitive recorder playing in *Calabaça* and the *Passamezzo*, and Jacob Heringman's interpretations of Mudarra were poised and delicate. (Again, more information about the instruments wouldn't have gone amiss.) Altogether, an interesting selection presented with accomplishment and flair.

Jane Trewhella

Canciones, Romances, Sonetos... from Juan del Encina to Lope de Vega La Colombina (María Cristina Kiehr, Claudio Cavina, Josep Benet, Josep Cabré *SATB*), dir Josep Benet 60' 21"
Accent **ACC 95111 D**
Encina *Antonilla es desposada, Cucú, Mi libertad en sossiego, Pues que tú, Tan buen ganadico, Triste España*; Guerrero *Huyd huyd, Niño Dios, Prado verde y florido, Si tus penas no pruevo*; Mateo Romero *¿A quiéen contaré*, Vasquez *A hermosa, Buscad buen amor, ¿Con qué la lavaré? De los álamos vengo, En la fuente del rosel, O dolce contemplacióon, Si no os uviera mirado, Soledad tengo de tí, Torna mingo*; anon *Come suele el blanco zisne, En Beléen están mis amores, Las voces del fuego Soberano María*

Most of us are more familiar with the Spanish repertoire from c.1500, so a programme that starts with Encina and covers the next century or so is a valuable widening of our horizons. No jolly instruments here, and only a couple of well-known pieces, *Triste España* and the inevitable Cuckoo; Vasquez's *De los álamos vengo* is a familiar enough title and there's even an edition under my name in print, but it hasn't impinged on my memory. The music is sometimes a little self-effacing, and the quartet of singers is happy to go along with that – at times they could be a little more demonstrative. So the listener needs to relate to the words. Perhaps more help is needed than just translations, which don't always reveal what a poem is really about. I particularly liked *En Beléen están mis amores;* with the vast demand for seasonal *villancicos*, Spanish poets had plenty of practice at manipulating Christmas imagery. There are a few Italianate madrigals, but much of the music is homophonic, so there is less variety here than the chronological range might imply. It is, however, an engaging CD, attractively sung. *CB*

Beata es Virgo Maria: devozione mariana del rinascimento Corale Universitaria di Torino, Dario Tabia 57' 55"
Nuova Era *Ancient Music* **7257**
Buonaugurio da Tivoli: *Regina coeli*; Clemens non Papa *Beata es*; Gombert *Ave Regina caelorum*; La Rue *Ave Regina caelorum*; Lhéritier *Alma Redemptoris mater, Ave Domina mea, Ave Maria*; Merula *Ave Maria, Hodie beata virgo Maria, Maria Virgo caelos ascendit*; Morales *Salve Regina, Sancta Maria succere miseris*; Palestrina *Magnificat V toni*

The muddy singing of the university choir is a salutary reminder of how far chamber choirs have progressed in recent years, and makes it hard to believe that these are really Italians, of whose legendary diction British singers are so often reminded. Considering the modest ability of the 20 or so singers, the director has done a good job of moulding their singing, and there are some lovely moments, such as a beautifully controlled cadence a minute or so into the title piece, *Beata es Virgo* by Clemens non Papa, though the moment is completely spoiled by some rank tuning immediately afterwards. Some phrasing is disastrous: a thumping final syllable held for seconds, where we would hope for a feminine ending, or gasps of breath interrupting dramatic moments. But the balance of voices is good; the altos and tenors have a richness of tone which enhances the texture of the music, worlds away from the clean sound of English counter-tenors. The opening of the first piece by Lhéritier is ravishingly romantic, a very good contrast to the more severe Clemens which precedes it. The tuning is acceptable, although in places rather sad (the opening of Lhéritier's *Ave Maria* is the worst instance).

The notes explain the nature of this music well, though in the purplest of prose, as 'simple to all appearances but quivering with inner richness' (it sounds more reasonable in Italian). The presentation cannot compete with the typical products of the best English university chamber choirs, this recording gathers together an interesting group of pieces, none known to me except for the Palestrina *Magnificat quarti toni*, and mostly by composers whose work is all too rarely performed. *Selene Mills*

***Renaissance Masterpieces volume 1: Great Britain.* Byrd & Tallis** The Clerks of the Choir of New College Oxford, Edward Higginbottom 66' 10"
Collins Classics **14872**
Byrd *Lamentations, Mass a4*
Tallis *Lamentations I & II, Audivi vocem de caelo*

This avoids the problem of women or boys by keeping to a pitch that permits falsettists to sing the top part, and it works well. Its series title suggests that it is aimed at the popular end of the classical market, though I'm not sure that putting Byrd's Lamentations in direct competition with Tallis's is the best way of advocating Byrd. The Mass, a high-clef piece, is sensibly sung down a fourth, in a middle-of-the-road performance (no English pronunciation nor worries whether a group of recusants would have had a choir at hand) that is good of its type. The Tallis is steadier in tempo, perhaps not so passionate, as Paul Hillier's (see *EMR* 19 p.13), but more flexible than Parrott's. There are advantages in hearing it at notated pitch. I expect that most of our readers are likely to have both Mass and the Tallis Lamentations, so I would only recommend this to those who particularly want low-pitch, choral performances. *CB*

What is our life? Renaissance laments and elegies Cambridge Taverner Choir, Owen Rees 64' 42"
Herald **HAVPCD 187**
Byrd *Come to me grief for ever*; Cotes *Mortuus est Philippus rex*; Gibbons *What is our life*; Gombert *Lugebat David Absalon*; Josquin/la Rue *Absalon fili mi*; Josquin *Nymphes des bois* La Rue *Doleo super to*, Lobo *Versa est in luctum*. Ramsey *How are the mighty fallen, Sleep fleshly birth, When David heard*; Tomkins *When David heard*; Victoria *Versa est in luctum*; Weelkes *O Jonathan, When David heard*

In spite (or because) of the precision of the performance, this is passionate singing on a level not approached by the Turin university group reviewed above. This is partly because the music, mostly English melancholic, lifts at least this listener to a higher plain than Marian devotions; but the principal difference is that these singers know how to sing. Each voice rises and expresses its own anguish before subsiding beneath the others. The diction is meticulous, with careful distinction between French and English Latin, and good 15th century French (but 20th century English). Anyone who has been disappointed by live performances by the Cambridge Taverner Choir will find that they amply redeem themselves here.

Everyone's favourite gloomy pieces are here: two settings (Victoria and Lobo) of *Versa est in luctum*, three (Weelkes, Tomkins and Ramsey) of *When David heard*, and various lesser-known settings of David's laments for Absalom, Saul and Jonathan, used allegorically to mourn Renaissance princes and statesmen. Josquin's *Nymphes des bois* doesn't fit the general theme very well, being a direct rather than an allegorical elegy, and is less moving sung by 23 people than by four. The authorship of *Absalon fili mi* is disputed; once thought to epitomise Josquin's mature style, de la Rue is now thought a more likely composer. The music of the first part of Gombert's *Lugebat David Absalon* is a *contrafactum* of his chanson *Je prens congie*, and is identical to *Tulerunt Dominum* (also ex-Josquin), which ends with beautifully repeated diminishing alleluias; in

the Gombert motet these become 'O fili mi', and are followed by a dramatic section in a different style, which detracts from the simple beauty of the first part, but is sung with great warmth and gloriously full, furious sound. *Selene Mills*

17th CENTURY

Biber ***Requiem a15*** **Steffani** ***Stabat mater*** Marta Almajano, Mieke van der Sluis, John Elwes, Mark Padmore, Frans Huijts, Harry van der Kamp *SSTTBarB*, Koor & Barokorkest van de Nederlandse Bachveriniging, Gustav Leonhardt 63' 68"
deutsche harmonia mundi **05472 77344 2**

This is the larger of Biber's two Requiems, in A with trumpets rather than F minor with strings. Month after month, it seems, I stress the rhetorical side of this composer's output. Here the text is beautifully declaimed and there is a sense of noblility about the whole thing, which is as it should be. (It was most probably written as the culmination in a series of services marking the death of Salzburg's Archbishop.) The partner piece was new to me (though Oxford UP published a vocal score as long ago as 1938) and equally fine. There are 12 movements, including solos, duets and trios as well as six-part choruses, with five-part strings. Soloists, choir and players alike are in fine form. John Elwes's Biber is outstanding. *BC*

Cavalli ***Ercole amante*** Yvonne Minton, Felicity Palmer, Patricia Miller, Ulrik Cold, English Bach Festival Chorus & Baroque Orchestra, Michel Corboz 165' 21" 3 CDs
Erato **0630-12980-2** (rec. 1980)

I have a fairly clear image of how I expect one of Cavalli's Venetian operas to sound, but very little idea of how one would have sounded in Paris. Michel Corboz concocted an orchestration in a later style that reminds me more more of Respighi than Cavalli or Lully (who wrote the ballet music for the opera, sadly omitted here). This is a pity, since there is some impressive dramatic singing. Better than Leppardised Cavalli, but this was out of touch with current ideas of performance practice even in 1980: a replacement is needed *CB*

Charpentier ***Te Deum H.146; Missa Assumpta est Maria H.11; Domine salvum regem H.303*** St James's Singers, St. James's Baroque Players, Ivor Bolton
Teldec *Das Alte Werk* **0630-12465-2** 60' 16"

This conveniently arrived the day after the new Eulenburg score of the *Te Deum* (see p. 3), though that work was actually recorded from a new edition by Lionel Sawkins, who wrote the excellent notes. It is a generally vigorous performance, though strangely the sections in white notation are performed quite slowly: was that on his advice? I wasn't convinced. I don't know the Mass; it sounds extremely impressive, so the CD is worth getting even if you are equipped with other versions of the *Te Deum*. There is an attempt at French pronunciation of the Latin, but the overall feel is too English, in a wider sense than merely the vocal sound. The cue for an organ Benedictus is filled by a setting by Roberday, nicely played by John Toll. The soloists (from the 18-strong choir) are a well-matched group, emerging from the chorus rather than sounding like a completely different breed. *CB*

Lalande ***De profundis.*** Deller Consort, Vienna Chamber Choir, Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Alfred Deller
Music of Medieval France. Deller Consort, Concentus Musicus Wien, Nicolaus Harnoncourt 60' 18" (rec 1965)
Vanguard **08 5058 71**

The idea of Deller conducting the Vienna State Opera is intriguing. The result was, for 1965, commendable: I'm sure I would have enjoyed the performance then. But it needs historically-minded listening now to allow for the complete absence of *inégalité* and Herbert Tachezi playing note-for-note the realisation in the edition – since it is printed in B♭ minor, he had some excuse. It is nice to hear how well Robert Tear sang before his voice and vibrato expanded to fill the space available in the larger opera houses. The coupling with music mostly from around 1400 is curious. We are not told who in Concentus Musicus plays what. The star is the trombonist, who has an even more difficult job than the singers in negotiating the complex *ars subtilior* chansons. Their success is undermined by the omnipresent percussion, as crass as adding a non-stop triangle to a Haydn string quartet. *CB*

Locke ***Consort of Fower Parts*** Fretwork, Nigel North *archlute*, Paul Nicholson *kbd*
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 45142 2** 7 67' 14"
Also includes Duos 1 & 2 for 2 bass viols

Quite why Virgin have sat on these performances (made at Snape Maltings in 1990) for so long is a mystery. No matter, they're here now and as one might expect are highly expert, the eloquent fluency of the music matched by the playing of an idiomatic assurance characteristic of Fretwork. I'm less happy, however, about the continuo contribution in several of the suites. Locke in fact allowed for an optional lute or organ continuo, but so beautifully are the four parts balanced that to my mind they work better without and the use of the spinet in the D major Suite becomes a particularly tiresome distraction from the finely wrought part-writing. Incidentally, the booklet wrongly suggests you will also hear an organ in the first of the virtuosic Duos, less satisfying pieces to my mind. Recommended despite the caveat, which is in any case a question of personal taste.
Brian Robins

Monteverdi ***Il primo libro de madrigali 1587; Tirsi e Clori, Tempro la cetra (VII, 1619)*** The Consort of Musicke, Anthony Rooley
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 45143 2** 6 56' 57"

A fascinating recording. Despite his youth, by the age of twenty Monteverdi had mastered virtually everything a successful madrigal composer needed to know, especially how to control the flow and pattern of phrases. What is not quite there is the ability to make the melodic matter rise out of the common style and affect the listener with the power he was later to acquire. So the change after 15 short madrigals to the 'Prologue' (formally similar to the Prologue to *Orfeo*) of Book VII is startling, with its shapely instrumental phrases and bold recitative. It is surprising that this isn't held back to begin a more substantial recording of Book VII, but otherwise no complaints. The Consort of Musicke are by far our most experienced madrigal ensemble; it shows in the way they can speak in five voices or one as appropriate, with a keen response to the text, though not overpowering the music with inappropriate expression, even if they sometimes over-elaborate the final cadences in comparison with the lesser degree of embellishment elsewhere. The pitch difference between the 14 madrigals in *chiavette* and the one in normal clefs is only a tone, the former feeling a little high. If you have recordings of the later books, do get this as well, don't just scorn it as being immature stuff; the cover painting (my favourite Italian prostitute – but face only) is enticement enough. *Tirsi* is disappointing. Evelyn Tubb was not the convincing soloist she now is when this was recorded five years ago, the repeats are all omitted, and each bar of the dances is monotonously overstressed. *CB*

Purcell ***Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, Te Deum, etc*** Choir and Orchestra of the Golden Age, Robert Glenton 62' 51"
Naxos **8.553444**
Te Deum & Jubilate in D, Raise the voice, Welcome to all the pleasures

The performances are are all unexceptionable. The major weakness is that all the alto-clef parts go to falsettists (none really needs them and some certainly shouldn't); a particular strength is David Staff's tunefullness in the Sonata. But most of the pieces can be heard in better performances elsewhere (*Welcome* and the *Te Deum* by Robert King and especially Andrew Parrott, *Raise* by Tragicomedia). But there is one novelty: *The noise of foreign wars*, the surviving portion of what must have been a fairly substantial ode. Bruce Wood has edited this torso from one of the Hayes MSS at Tatton Park; he assigns it conjecturally to James II's birthday in Autumn 1688, and I'm not about to quarrel with his ascription to Purcell. There's a nice ground-bass air and some excellent string writing; but the piece is so truncated (lacking both beginning and end) that I don't think it can find its way into the repertory. All the more gratifying that a record company can find room for such a fragment, even if the motive be to cash in (albeit lamely and belatedly) on the Purcell marketing boom of 1995. I must applaud Naxos's enterprise in including several period-practice performances in their bottom-price catalogue and in engaging young British artists who have learnt much from the developments of recent years. Is the lack of date for the St Cecilia Ode on the packaging intentional? *Eric Van Tassel*

A High-Priz'd Noise: Violin Music for Charles I Parley of Instruments Renaissance Violin Band, Peter Holman 67' 18"
Hyperion **CDA66806**
Music by A. Ferrabosco II, R. Johnson, W. Lawes, Nau, Notari, Webster

If you have never heard of Nau, now is the time to remedy your ignorance. He is the one composer here who was merely a name to me: listen to his *Ballet in F* and you will want to hear more. Although virtually all the music here is in the form of short, binary dances, the quality is extremely high. As always, Peter Holman has skilfully selected pieces that really work, and the sound, with a rich three-lute continuo in some of them, is enticing. This is the sort of music that you expect to be suitable as background but which suprises by grasping your full attention. *CB*

Four Dutch Composers of the Golden Age Ensemble Bouzignac Utrecht, Erik van Nevel 65' 23"
Vanguard Classics **99126**
Benedictus a S. Josepho *Magnificat op. 5/3, O sors optata op. 6/9, Salve Regina op. 1/3*; Hacquart *Domine Deus meus, Domine quae est fiducia tua, Sonata in c op. 2/5*; Servaes de Konink *Mortales sperate op. 7/6*; J. B. Verrijt *Filii ego Salomon.*

We reviewed with considerably enthusiasm a CD of Dutch instrumental music recently (*EMR* 17, p. 18). This reveals another aspect of the repertoire, and also shows that Dutch composers were not as dependent on ground and variation forms as that CD implied. I have long known how good a composer Hacquart is, and the three pieces here uphold his reputation. But the other items are also good; my only doubt was the first item on the CD, Benedictus Buns's *Magnificat*, which would perhaps sound stronger one-to-a-part rather than chorally; whether Dutch catholic establishments had polyphonically-capable choirs I don't know, but the point seemed less crucial in the other motets. I like the idea of an ensemble named after Bouzignac, and it makes a persuasive case for this unknown but expressive music. *CB*

La Passion selon Saint Matthieu: Manuscript d'Uppsala 1667 Wilfried Jochens *Evangelist T*, Dirk Snellings *Christus B*, Caroline Pelon, Martina Schänzle, Jan Caals, Bruno Boterf *SSAT*, Le Parlement de Musique, dir. Martin Gester 74' 07" Accord **205482**

This enterprising ensemble continues to bring to wider notice the jewels of the 17th century. Jean-Luc Gester, brother of the group's director, gives a general introduction to the genre in the comprehensive notes and suggests possible identities for the (at this stage still anonymous) composer. The piece is set as extended recitative with interjections by various named characters and *turbae*, interspersed with glorious chorale settings for soprano and viol consort, the latter being a particular joy. Whoever the composer was, he has a very direct voice – the choruses rarely repeat the text, so their presence is that little more immediate within the drama. Singing and playing are excellent, the pacing impeccable. The piece easily stands comparison with Theile and Sebastiani and is an important stepping stone towards later settings. *BC*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Cantatas 1 (BWV 4, 150, 196)* Yumiko Kuriso, Akira Tachikawa, Koki Katano, Peter Kooy *SATB*, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 45' 12" **BIS-CD-751**

This is not quite as exciting as vol. 2, reviewed last month (I thoroughly agree with Stephen Daw's assessment of that), but is still a creditable achievement. Irrespective of how cantatas were performed at Leipzig, I have little doubt that these early ones are for single voices and strings. Whether *Christ lag in Todesbanden* was performed by larger forces when revived in Leipzig is another matter, depending on whether the surviving set of parts – one of each – is complete and how many we think could perform from each of them. But to me the *Sinfonia* sounds wrong on a larger band, as does the violin figuration in the first verse. Nevertheless, it is an enjoyable recording with some fine solo singing and impressive playing. I took great delight in hearing Cantata 196 again, for the first time since it accompanied our wedding – here we have single strings but two-to-a-part voices – and 150 has been unjustly neglected. So worth buying if the one-to-a-part issue doesn't bother you. *CB*

Bach *Osterkantaten 4, 31, 134* 74' 01"
Berlin Classics **BC 2967-2** (rec. 1978, 1983)
Kantaten 31, 66, 106 77' 37"
Berlin Classics **BC 0090252BC** (rec 1977-8)
Kantaten 26, 173, 173a 57' 11" 57' 11"
Berlin Classics **BC 0090362BC** (rec 1975/8)
Soloists, Thomanerchor & Gewandhaus-orchester Leipzig, Hans-Joachim Rotzsch

Collecting Bach from the St Thomas's dark ages of the 1970s to 1983 is an enjoyable exercise, with rich rewards like the easy comparison between the largely-independent secular and sacred versions of Cantata 173. Strangely, Cantata 31 has been duplicated. Constant to all eight performances is the excellent choral singing by the modern version of Bach's own Leipzig choir, still sounding fresh even in the twilight of the communist regime, even if it hadn't yet acquired as much historical awareness as it has now (as those who heard their UK tour last year can testify). Also constant are quite stylish modern-instrument playing and a rather plummy set of otherwise competent soloists. BWV 173a has been put on disc before, and I think rather better, by Dorian (who have, incidentally, just relinquished their UK link with Select); there, it is alongside the Coffee and Peasant Cantatas, which are more likely to be familiar than the two companions here, and Cantata 26 is given the best overall reading on any of these discs. If you don't know it, this is a very good way to try it – it's a delight. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Messen BWV 233-236* Renate Krahmer, Annelies Burmeister, Peter Schreier, Theo Adam *SATB*, Dresdener Kreuzchor & Philharmonie, Martin Flämig 119' 35"
Berlin Classics **0091302BC** (rec 1973) 2 discs

The short masses were all copied by Altnickol in the mid-1740s, although autograph materials for those in A major (BWV 234) and G major (BWV 236) come from the last two years of the 1730s, in that order. They have had a rough time in comparison to Bach's other preserved Mass in B minor (BWV 232), undeservedly so, since they contain much excellent music and should be far more often performed and heard. There is a good account on the Virgin label under Herrewege. These Dresden readings are not all together uncompetitive, although for me the instrumental playing – far less aware than that of Leipzig players at around the same time – lets the side down when compared to the choral expression and to the distinguished group of soloists, operatic though they occasionally sound. But the Virgin discs, available separately, are in most respects to be preferred. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Johannes-Passion* Howard Crook *Evangelist*, Thomas Lander *Christus*, Christina Högman, Monica Groop, Gunnar Lundberg *SAB*, Eric Ericson Chamber Choir, Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble, Eric Ericson 106' 35" 2 CDs
Vanguard Classics **99047/48**

This is overall a fine recording, with excellent Swedish forces and good international soloists in a thoroughly integrated account. It was taped at a live performance; one would have liked to have been there. My only slight reservation concerns the rather operatic style adopted at times by all of the soloists. It is odd to hear the soprano warbling with such a wide vibrato alongside the discreet transverse flutes, and although she sounds better in the company of the wider range of colours in her second aria, the contralto hardly matches the gentle instrumental ensembles either. As for the chorus – I've never heard it better done. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *Mass in B minor* Barbara Bonney, Monica Groop, Klas Hedlund, Gunnar Lundberg *SATB*, Eric Ericson Chamber Choir, Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble, Eric Ericson 105' 24" 2 CDs
Vanguard Classics **99044/45**

Eric Ericson has made himself world-famous for his choral training and it comes as no surprise that his B-minor Mass is outstanding. It was recorded during a live performance, but it has been so scrupulously edited and produced that this is barely detectable. The solo singers all sing tastefully in the company of the Drottningholm Baroque Ensemble, which plays at its very best under the inspired leadership of Nils-Eric Sparf, one of the really special baroque violinists. The excellent oboists have not been named – a poor reward for much beautiful playing. The notes are outstandingly good. This is the best CD of the work that I have reviewed for EMR, probably the very best recording yet. A wonderful account – full of the richly *celebratory* aspect of Bach's Mass. *Stephen Daw*

Bach *auf der Orgeln seiner Heimat* [vol. 1] Jozef Sluys (Silbermann organ in Ponitz) Rene Gailly *Noblesse* **CD87 032** 60' 14"
BWV 531, 533, 539, 541, 590, 703, 711, 721, 727, 731, 766
Bach *auf der Orgeln seiner Heimat* vols 2-3 Jozef Sluys (Silbermann organ in Freiberg Cathedral) 118' 28" (2 discs)
Rene Gailly *Noblesse* **CD87 028-29**
BWV 546-7, 651-668

The 30 or so surviving organs of Gottfried Silbermann (1683-1753) are amongst the finest instruments in the world. They are in Saxony (in the south-west of what was East Germany) and it is only fairly recently that their true glory has become known in what was the west. Although Bach and his followers occasionally criticised them, they are the organs closest to Bach and the Bach family's Thuringian roots, and are particularly ideal for the performance of Bach's later works. One of his earliest organs (in Freiberg Cathedral) is his finest and largest – started when Silbermann was just 28. In the same way that Bach became one of the first truly European composers, Silbermann's organs are a synthesis of a number of styles, particularly showing his earlier training with his brother in Strasbourg. Many are in small country churches, sited high on the west wall, just below the typical wooden ceilings which aid the acoustics so well. However, Freiberg is an instance when Silbermann has the space and acoustic to develop a more substantial palette.

The double CD of the '18' chorale preludes, combined with the massive Praeludium and Fuge in c minor (BWV 546) and the joyful C major (BWV 547), shows the Freiberg organ off magnificently. The smaller organ in Ponitz was built in 1736, and is demonstrated in a mixed programme of choral preludes and free works, including the Italian *Pastorale*. Despite my comment above about Silbermann organs being more suited to Bach's later works, the early works on the Ponitz CD work very well. Although many early Bach works are written in the North German style of Tunder, Reinken and Buxtehude, it is for Thuringian and Saxon instruments that they would largely have been conceived. The sound is very different – and is capable of sustained *piano* playing in a way that some North German instruments are not. Sluys is of the generation to have been reared on romantic interpretations of Bach. He acknowledges his debt to the pioneers of the change in Bach interpretation in the 60s, but has managed to avoid the neo-baroquacy of some others of his generation. Sensitive and musical playing, although he occasionally allows the pulse to wander. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach on the Lute vol. 3: Suites for Solo Cello BWV 1007, 1008, 1010 Nigel North 63' 50"
Linn **CKD 049**

Following his transcriptions of the Bach solo violin sonatas and partitas, Nigel North now turns his attention to the solo cello suites, three of which are recorded here, with the remaining three to follow as vol 4. I can report that I have severely tested the claims for the non-degeneration of the CD format; if this were a black disc it would have worn out long ago, so compelling are these performances. The transcriptions sound thoroughly idiomatic, and the playing is superb. Some of the speeds will surprise cellists, but sound perfectly convincing on the lute. Buy it and revel in it. *Lynda Sayce*

Bach *Concerti* **[Triple Concertos]** Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl Naxos **8.553505** 66' 55"
BWV 1044 (Andreas Sperling *hpscd*, Felix Reimann *fl*, Ingeborg Scheerer *vln*)
BWV 1057 (Robert Hill *hpscd*, Nadja Schubert & Eva Morsbach *recs*)
BWV 1063 (Gerald Hambitzer, Andreas Sperling, Christoph Anton Noll *hpscds*)
BWV1064 (Winifried Radmacher, Elisabeth Kufferath, Christine Pichlmeier *vlns*)

This may not be a recording for early music specialists (although it's played stylishly, the modern instruments do make their mark at various points), but there is much to commend it. Tempi are well chosen and there is some very good playing, particularly in the Brandenburg 4 arrangement. There are tuning problems, though, (strings and harpsichords not always in unison) and just occasionally the balance is dubious (over-biased violas, for example). I have never been convinced by the reconstructed three-violin concerto and this performance did nothing to change my mind. Grouping the 'triple' concertos together is a nice idea and, at budget price, the disc is a worthwhile investment. *BC*

Bach *The Musical Offering* Ensemble Sonnerie 71' 41"
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 45139 2** 3

This recording puts me in an awkward position: I spend a lot of time trying to promote the music of those contemporaries of Bach who are totally overshadowed by him and yet am forced, by such wonderful performances as the present CD, to concede that no-one can hope to aspire to such heights. Ensemble Sonnerie, who opt for a colourful line-up in performing the pieces instrumentally (oboe da caccia and tenor viola both feature), cannot be faulted. For over 70 minutes (several times over) I found myself totally absorbed. Magnificent! *BC*

Forqueray *Suites de Claveçin 1747* Arthur Haas 63' 37" Wildboar **WLBR 9201**

This is another very good recording of Forqueray's adaptations for harpsichord of his father's viol pieces. We have here the 2nd and 5th Suites and also musical tributes to Forqueray by Duphly and Rameau. The Duphly has strong melodic material held in place by accented decoration, while the Rameau takes a simple piece of melody and decorates it beautifully with feeling and rising arpeggio figures. Both pieces are very good. Mr Haas's playing (on a beautiful harpsichord by Jaques Germain 1785 from the Shrine to Music Museum in South Dakota) is very rhythmic with a well-detached bass and the treble nicely separated in twos in the French style. *Michael Thomas*

Handel *Organ Concertos op. 4* Bob van Asperen, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 71' 13"
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 45174 2** 6

The Opus 4 concertos fit a CD well, and are largely free of textual problems, though the recorders and muted-strings orchestration of no. 6 should probably apply only to its original form as a harp concerto. Bob van Asperen plays (on a rather fierce neo-historical instrument by Goetz and Gwynne) and directs. His sober, well-drilled approach is most effective in the opening of no.1 and in no. 3, both in sombre G minor; but the major key Allegros lack vivacity and the overall effect is a shade dour. Embellishments in the organ solos are abundant and stylish, despite a tendency to overfill chords. The OAE show they can manage a true *pianissimo* in the final bars of no. 2, but decline to apply it in the concluding Andante of no. 1, let alone *per tutto* in the Andante of no. 4; both movements plod rather than flow. The last movement of no. 6 has a sense of playfulness which would have been welcome elsewhere. *Anthony Hicks*

Kuhnau *The Biblical Sonatas* John Butt *organ, hpscd, clavichord* 72'23"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907133**

John Butt is to be congratulated on producing a really positive account of the so-called programme music of Kuhnau, which may not all be on a consistent musical level, but is well worthy of attention. He throws himself with characteristic verve and spirit into these little gems with a special affection and relish. His playing is just a little too bouncy for my taste on both the clavichord and harpsichord, but the sense of contrast is maintained well within each piece, and this is certainly a very worthwhile performance – *jolly* worthwhile, indeed, because it remains good-humoured and optimistic throughout. A welcome and, at last, a complete issue.
Stephen Daw

Rameau *La Princesse de Navarre* Marilyn Hill-Smith, Eiddwen Harrhy, Frances Chambers, Judith Rees, Michael Goldthorpe, Peter Savidge, Ian Caddy, Richard Wigmore *SSSTBarBB*, English Bach Festival Singers & Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan
Erato **0630-12986-2** (rec 1979) 55' 43"

This is a digital re-mastering of a 1979 recording. Music comprised about half of the original *comédie-ballet* to Voltaire's text and most of it is dance music. Rameau's rich scoring (divided bassoons, flutes with violas, high horns, etc.) is much in evidence, as are the demands he placed on singers. Most of the soloists cope commendably, but there are occasional moments of strain and the horn playing in particular dates the performance slightly. But buy it, if only for the wonderful dance music (much of which may be recognised from other Rameau pieces). *BC*

Andrew Benson-Wilson plays Scheidemann (b. 1596) at the Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley St, London at 1.10 on Thursday 28 May.

CLASSICAL

Clementi ***Music for Fortepiano*** Gert Hecher (1819 Stein fortepiano, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) 62' 25"
Dorian **DIS-80134**
Sonatas in B♭ op. 12/1, ♯ op. 25/5, b op 40/2

The *al fresco* picture of the Matthäus Andreas Stein grand piano on the booklet brought pleasure mixed initially with surprise that the performer was not playing Schubert or other Viennese music. Those who have heard Clementi's music performed on an English action Clementi piano will know how good it can sound. However, this Viennese-action piano has an exquisite tone and Gert Hecher lets the music speak for itself with consummate skill. There are the fiendish double trills and trills against a melodic line all played in one hand in the B♭ major sonata, but what makes his playing so special is the way he subtly ornaments the repeats of some of the movements, bringing the music to life but never disrupting the line. He produces a few arpeggiated chords at the beginning of the B minor sonata to give it the quality of a recitatative – and there is a wonderful forward thrust to the allegro of the *Con fuoco*. The recording took place in a Marble Hall which enhances the sound. *Margaret Cranmer*

Galuppi ***Sonatas for harpsichord*** Betty Bruylants 67' 04"
Rene Gailly *Noblesse* **CD87 087**

Charles Burney wrote of Galuppi 'He is one of the last original geniuses from the best school Italy has ever known. His works are filled with talent and naturalness.' Those two words also spring to mind about Betty Bruylants' playing. The sense of the musical line is always clear and even the Alberti basses, which can sound so mechanical on the harpsichord, are executed with grace and musicality. Apart from a photograph, no information is given about the harpsichord, but it has a beautifully-sustaining, gentle tone which is delightful in the cantabile movements which begin several of the sonatas. Ms Bruylants studied with Aimée Van de Wiele (as I did briefly) and Kenneth Gilbert. From two very different traditions she has created her own style and is very convincing. *Michael Thomas*

Haydn ***String Quartets op. 33/2, 3, 5*** Quatuor Mosaïques 61' 04"
Auvidis *Astrée* **E 8569**

This is the third month in a row that I've had a disc of classical quartets to review. This time the repertoire is not obscure but stalwarts of the quartet circuit (excellent warm-ups for 'real' music!) The Quatuor Mosaïques, of course, has no such heretical view of these witty masterpieces. Opting to open with the fifth quartet – that is, with a quiet perfect cadence, as if one's CD player has jumped a bit – is, in itself, a humorous touch and sets the tone. The quartet, whose renown is truly justified, characterise each of the movements carefully – the slow movements are particularly poignant, the scherzi skip along mischievously and the outer movements are beautifully balanced. An absolute must for chamber music lovers. *BC*

Haydn ***Divertimenti vol. 3*** Haydn Sinfonietta Wien, Manfred Huss 55' 40"
Koch Schwann **3-1481-2**
Divertimenti (Cassations) in G & C, H. II:2 & 17; Variations in E♭ H.II:24

The three works on this disc are for various combinations of pairs of violins, violas, cor anglais, clarinets and horns with flute, bassoon and continuo (cello & double bass with and without harpsichord). There are two Cassations and an incomplete set of variations (even the theme – evidently a Menuet – is missing!) Once again, the thoroughness of Manfred Huss' booklet notes is to be commended. This is very much either background or participation music (just as Haydn intended, of course) and I found myself letting it wash over me. My reservations about the rough sound owe more to the acoustic of the hall than any fault of the players – I would have thought a large, probably carpeted, room with more than a few bystanders would have dampened things a little to advantage. *BC*

Marianna Martinez ***Psalm Cantatas*** Kölner Kurrende, Clara Schumann Orchester Köln, Elke Mascha Blankenburg 52' 59"
Koch Schwann *Aulos* **3 1788 2**
In exitu Israel, Dixit Dominus

An interesting issue for drawing attention to an obscure composer. Martinez was a significant figure in Viennese musical life: Metastasio lodged in the family house (with young Haydn a subtenant in the 1750s) and on his death bequeathed his considerable wealth to them. Burney visited her and describes her singing to her own accompaniment at some length, Michael Kelly heard her playing a Mozart piano duet with the composer. Her Mass was a great success at court when she was 16. The note (by the conductor) tells us little more than is in *New Grove*, with no clue why her setting of *In exitu Israel* (but not *Dixit*) is in Italian, not Latin. The music itself impresses, though is perhaps slightly old-fashioned (we are not told when between 1760 and 1812 it was written). The performance is good enough to let the music shine forth, but a period ensemble and more stylish singers would have presented the music more strongly than a group whose main qualification is being female, and there is room for at least one other work on the disc. *CB*

Mozart ***Die Zauberflöte*** Rosa Mannion *Pamina*, Natalie Dessay *Q of the Night*, Linda Kitchen *Papagena*, Hans Peter Blochwitz *Tamino*, Anton Scharinger *Papageno*, Reinhard Hagen *Sarastro*, Willard White *Speaker*, Stephen Cole *Monostatos*, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 150' 23" 2CDs
Erato **0630-12705-2**

What makes this *Zauberflöte* one in a hundred (well one in fifty anyway) is Christie's decision not only to encourage his singers to decorate the vocal line quite extensively, but even more to have the Three Ladies sing the cadenza that Mozart wrote at the end of the Introduction (he later cancelled it, with partial loss of the music). I've never heard it before; it's fascinating. Christie otherwise fails to go back to Mozart's first thoughts (the scoring of the Introduction is as usual, and the problematic wind chords at the opening of 'Bei Männern', not found in the autograph, are played). This set joins those by Norrington, Koopman and Östman as a commendable period-instrument performance: fine wind detail, alert playing, very good to goodish singers (Anton Scharinger as an endearing Viennese Papageno is the pick of them). The production (based on an unidentified French staging) has good thunder. Dialogue is far too wide; and several of the major roles are obviously spoken by actors. There is an attractive libretto booklet. The final word must be for William Christie's ardent yet relaxed musical direction; not everyone will welcome the agogic freedom, but it makes a very interesting *Zauberflöte*.
Peter Branscombe

18th Century Flemish Dance Music de kleine compagnie, José Wylin 62' 01"
René Gailly **CD87 117**
Music by André J. B. B. Dupont, Féret, Joannes de Gruytters, Willem Gommaar Kennis, R. D'Aubat St Flour, Petrus Josephus Van Belle,

De kleine compagnie play music from prints and manuscripts dated 1746-1800 in a variety of instrumental line-ups (violins, double bass, flutes of various types, clarinets, dulcimer, harpsichord and percussion). Despite its naive charm and undoubted interest for dance specialists and probably folk musicians, I find this disc little more than an obscure novelty. *BC*

19th CENTURY

Beethoven ***Complete Variations & Sonata op. 69 for Cello and Piano*** Wieland Kuijken, Jan Vermeulen 64' 17"
Vox Temporis/René Gailly **VTP CD92 019**

The recording of theses variations is excellent and enables one to enjoy the effortless virtuosity from both players. The cello (Amati? c.1570) has a gorgeous sound matched by the pearly quality of the Walter reproduction piano built by Chris Maene. Wieland Kuijken is expert at playing beautiful long phrases and his opening of the A major sonata is so good that one looks forward to the repeat. Although both players interpret the mood changes in the music skilfully, there is a touch of anger in the scherzo of the sonata in some of the chords played on the Tomkison piano, where I would have preferred capriciousness. The piano also momentarily obscures the lovely cello melody at the opening of the *Allegro vivace*. *Margaret Cranmer*

Carulli ***Guitar Sonatas op. 21/1-3, op. 5.*** Richard Savino 59' 42" Naxos **8.553301**

Carulli's larger-scale works are receiving much attention of late; his didactic works

and smaller pieces have been the mainstay of classical guitar students for decades. This enterprising disc gives us a good taste of the serious solos, particularly interesting in the case of Op 21, nos 1 and 2, which are better known in later arrangements for guitar and fortepiano. This first recording of the original solo versions is a must for the serious guitar aficionado, and an attractive bargain for anyone interested in the development of the classical sonata. The performances are crisp and technically assured, although sound quite heavily influenced by modern guitar practices to my ear. *Lynda Sayce*

Wagner ***Orchestral Works*** London Classical Players, Roger Norrington 63' 43"
EMI Classics **7243** 5 55479 2 7 *see page 8*
Karg-Elert ***Works for Kunstharmonium*** Joris Verdin 69' 26"
Vox Temporis [René Gailly] **VTP CD92 014**
Intarsien op. 76 on Mustel Harmonium à double expression 1891; *Sonatine op. 14/2* & *Kompositionen für Kunstharmonium op. 26* on Mustel Harmonium-célesta 1927

As ever, *EMR* is way ahead of the times by reviewing a CD of music by Karg-Elert (who died around 63 years ago) about 100 years ahead of the competition! But the issue here is one of authentic performance rather than vintage, and that is not only the preserve of early musicians. Karg-Elert (1877-1933), the lush Germanic impressionist, was first drawn to the Kunstharmonium (or Harmonium d'art) in 1904 by an instrument dealer in Berlin. The instrument itself was an advance on the early 19th-century harmonium, with an astonishing range of colours, textures and expressive devices. Double-expression, for example, is a device which allows a crescendo in the treble at the same time as a decrescendo in the bass; colour registers include the 2' Harp Eolièn̈ne in the bass and the 32' Baryton in the treble. The 15 *Intarsien* minatures include a wealth of short impressionistic pieces, with titles such as *Spring Feeling, Mountain Melody* and *Festival Time in Cologne* – they sound much better in German! The playing is superb. Whatever the complexities of playing the instrument may be, Verdin seems to overcome them with ease. And if you find the connection with early music too tenuous, remember that the stops on the Kunstharmonium include a Fifre, Musette, Hautbois, Baryton and Basson. And if there are also a Voix Céleste, Celesta, Forte expressif, Prolongement and Métaphones; so what – it is all good fun!
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Sor ***Duets for Two Guitars*** Peter Pieters, Micheline Dumortier 62' 56"
Vox Temporis/René Gailly **VTP CD92 027**
L'encouragement op. 34, Divertissement op. 38, Les Deux Amis op. 41, Fantaisie op. 54[bis], Souvenir de Russie op. 63

It is fascinating to hear Sor's familiar duets performed on two Lacote guitars, a maker whom Sor regarded as one of the finest around. These pieces reveal themselves as charming and beautifully-crafted works when shorn of the inappropriate grandeur and brash colours with which many players of the modern guitar seek to clothe them. Pieters and Dumortier are an accomplished duo, giving a polished and hugely enjoyable account of these works. This is one of the few recordings of this repertory I have heard which captures the fun and the sociable delights of such duets. More please.
Lynda Sayce

Weber ***Piano Sonatas I - II*** Jan Vermeulen (pf by Tröndlin, Leipzig, 1825) 65' 44"
Vox Temporis [René Gailly] **VTP CD92 007**
Sonata 1 in C, op. 24 (1812); 2 in A♭ op. 39 (1816)

Weber's irresistible wit and panache comes to life in these performances on a super Tröndlin grand piano. Jan Vermeulen has a superb technique; he takes the rondo of the C major sonata at a breathtaking speed but maintains an awareness of the composer's phrasing. There is rhythmic subtlety throughout the disc. The first movement of the C major sonata looks forward to the splendid trio for flute, cello and piano, and the rondo of the A♭ major sonata is a Schubertian grazioso, an excellent counter-balance to the bravura elsewhere. I hope this CD will go some way to making these unjustly neglected pieces better known. *Margaret Cranmer*

The Romantic Terz Guitar: original guitar duets by Giuliani, Mertz, Pettoletti Peter Pieters, Micheline Dumortier 69' 562"
Vox Temporis/René Gailly **VTP CD92 008**
Giuliani *Rondo 3 op. 66, Gran Pot-Pourri op. 67*; Mertz *Nänien Trauerlieder, Mazurka, Ständchen, Tarantella, Unruhe*; Pettoletti *Fantaisie sur un motif favori de Bellini op. 22.*

To the best of my knowledge this is the first time I have heard a terz guitar, a small instrument tuned a third higher than the standard concert instrument, and popular in the 19th century for child virtuosi and for ensemble music. This recording uses one original Lacote instrument and one modern copy. The higher tessitura is immediately obvious, and the result is a pleasant clarity with great brilliance in the treble. The performers have chosen to give a cross-section of the terz guitar's repertory rather than a single composer anthology, and this results in a very varied programme ranging from the virtuoso variations of Giuliani to the heavily romantic miniatures by Mertz. The highlight is Giuliani's 'Gran Pot-Pourri' Op. 67 which bounces cheekily in to the first movement of Beethoven's 7th. A fascinating disc, played with great panache, which well conveys the spirit of the salons of the age and their various vituosi. Highly recommended. *Lynda Sayce*

MISCELLANEOUS

The Mengelberg Edition, 6 Concertgebouw Orchestra, William Mengelberg 68' 42"
Archive Documents **ADCD.112**
Bach *Suite 2* (BWV 1066), *Piano Concerto 5* (BWV 1056) (live concert 17.4.39); Vivaldi *Autumn, op. 8/3* (rec. 1937); J. C. Bach *op. 13/4* (live 21-3-43); Mozart *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (rec. 1942)

These recordings of instrumental music played with various named and unnamed soloists and the Concertgebouw Orchestra date from the wartime years, with the Suite and 'piano' Concerto taken from a live concert on 17 April 1939. Both of these are rather well done, with the flute suite delivered with what the notes accurately describe as an almost authentic sense of 'ebb and flow'. Many a specialist baroque ensemble could learn from this with profit, and I was amazed to hear how well the good things about Bach playing from the pre-war period were preserved. The vibrato is constant, but fastish and still quite narrow in all of this, and the style already has the discipline we now associate with the Concertgebouw Orchestra. *Stephen Daw*

REISSUES

Decca
448 706-2 Bach *Cantatas 80, 140* Munchinger
448 716-2 Allegri, Cavalli, G. Gabrieli, Lotti, Monteverdi, Palestrina, Victoria (*Missa O quam gloriosum)* Westminster Cathedral & King's College, S. Cleobury.
[Beginning with the *Miserere*, this is presumably a counterblast to the new Westminster Abbey recording of it, which we hope to review next month: Sony haven't yet sent a copy, even though it includes some King's Music editions.]

Philips
434 361-2 *The Golden Age of Harpsichord Music* Puyana
446 332-2 Vivaldi *Tito Manlio* Negri (4 CDs)

Teldec ***Das alte Werk*** (mid-price)
0630-12321-2 Bach *BWV 197, 205* Harnoncourt
0630-12320-2 Telemann *Concertos* Harnoncourt
4500--97503-2 Haydn *Canzonettas I & II* Griffett
0630-12324-2 Haydn/Danzi/Rosetti *Horn concertos* Baumann, Concerto Amsterdam

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We welcome a new CD company contributing CDs this month – new, at least, to us. René Gailly International Productions proclaims itself as 'the leading Belgian Classical Label'. Apart from its own issues it distibutes Vox Temporis (some of whose issues have the René Gailly logo, some don't). We include reviews of a dozen issues from the last couple of years; we hope to keep readers informed of their new issues in the future. If your local record shop doesn't stock them, try Lindum Records.

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We heard with interest from Dominic Wan who is involved in early music activity in Singapore. He invites musicians who are travelling to Hong Kong or the Antipodes to break their journey there: fax +65 2707696. We hope to do so in late August, perhaps repeating part of the introductory course on continuo playing that Clifford is giving at Beauchamp (July 21-27).

chiraviri agréable (Kah-Ming Ng, Lynda Sayce & Susanne Heinrich) are giving a concert with Sarah Cunningham of music by Jenkins & Simpson at Holywell Music Room, Oxford, Mon. May 27, 8.15 pm.

A MEETING WITH YOLANTA SKURA

Graham O'Reilly

Yolanta Skura is quite clear about why she founded her own record company, Opus 111: as fighter on the side of the artist. 'Sometimes fine but late-maturing artists have difficulty finding the platform they deserve. Thirty-five year old cellists (like for example Peter Bruns, whose recording of Bach and Beethoven will hit the stands from the end of this year) are not considered marketable by the big companies, who have not the imagination to see any further than young prodigies. I have followed the careers of all of our artists from their beginnings, as students, as members of other ensembles and as soloists. I judge from concerts, not from recordings. On the concert platform, exceptional artists always stand out, even if they are one among many. I first saw Peter Bruns playing first cello in the Dresden Staatskapelle orchestra. Like Fabio Biondi, Brigitte Lesne, Rinaldo Alessandrini [three of the house stars], it was immediately obvious that I had to record him separately.' Yolanta Skura trusts her own judgement implicitly. She is also convinced that an electrifying performer cannot fail to be a great artist on record. 'Grigory Sokolov (Brahms, Beethoven, Chopin etc.) creates such an atmosphere in his concerts that any woman more than eight months pregnant in the hall always gives birth the following day.' And I thought it was more to do with the phases of the moon!

There can be few people better qualified than Yolanta Skura for the delicate task of transferring the excitement of the concert platform to the ultra-clean modern product which is the compact disc, with 20 years previous experience as one of the most respected 'directeurs artistiques' in France, mostly with Erato. She is personally present at the beginning of every recording, to get the warm but precise sound which is one of the hallmarks of the label, and often stays to the end. The artists are relatively free to plot their recording careers as they see fit (Fabio Biondi has made a record recently of Respighi, Malipiero and Pizzetti on the house label). But every record (no more than 20 a year) is a joint adventure, involving all eight of the Opus 111 team. Records are made on location and edited in-house, on state-of-the-art digital machines (except for Sokolov, who refuses to allow any interference with his live recordings: if a note is missing, it stays missing!)

Musicologically speaking, it is the artists who make the decisions. For Mme Skura, this is as it should be: these decisions are an integral part of the artistic process. When I indicated reservations about the presence of percussion and bagpipes in the 'high-style' trouvère songs of Gaultier de Coincy, or Emmanuel Bonnardot's use of the choir rather than single voices for the so-called *Barcelona Mass*, it is evident that these are not questions she feels are in her domain (she does not pretend to be a musicologist). But she doubts that the public she knows would buy many entirely vocal records of medieval music, and is able to back up her argument by pointing out that *Dança amorosa* (Modo Antiquo – review in *EMR* 19, which described it as of the 'kaleidoscopic' genre of medieval music) is currently thirteenth in the Belgian classical hit parade just behind the Three Tenors. And she is also clued-up enough to point out that, *pace* Simon Ravens (also EMR 19), the *Barcelona Mass* is in fact of Avignonnaise origin and so old French pronunciation is entirely appropriate.

Why do people buy medieval music? She thinks that every other classical repertoire, from renaissance on, requires specialist knowledge and education that most of the public do not have (she is talking here about the French and Italian publics). 'Many people have just two or three records of medieval music alongside their pop albums. They buy them because they are not entirely satisfied with their lives, and are searching for that extra something they believe they have lost.' She does not say if this is, for her, a valid reason. She certainly doubts that more than one listener in fifty sits down to follow the texts. What is important is to transmit as much as possible of the total experience. For Brigitte Lesne and Alla Francesca in concert, this consists of darkening the church and playing spotlights on the faces of the performers. The audience is free to listen and either watch the source of the sound or close their eyes and imagine their own thoughts.

She acknowledges the tyranny of the record shops, and the necessity to do the 'complete' this and the 'collected' that. 'A compilation record is put in with "the others" – in other words, in the bin, although it is not so bad with medieval music.' She accepts that there is no present solution to this, and does not dwell on it. Her interest remains practical: to find a way to get her precious artists to as wide a public as possible. To this end she has one publicity approach for the public, and quite another for the record shops who will decide how and where to display the records. It is this latter market which receives the full-frontal 'populist' approach:

We are invited to take part in the Miracles of the Middle Ages, in the incredible and fantastic adventures of the rich, the poor, the emperors, the pilgrims, the maidens, the monks and saints who made their way across Europe and some parts of the East and we are led to share in the torments of Hell and the intimacy of Paradise! The violence and the horror of an epoch when life was hard and expressed to the full (the diseases, rapes, suicides, murders, incest, abortions and tortures of the infidels); at the same time there was the gentleness of a time when man invented, with the cult of the Virgin Mary, the love expressed by woman with whom he can obtain grace and which can in itself restore order to the universe.'

One feels that she has too much respect for the image of the artists she is selling to advertise to the public in this way. But to get the record in front of the eyes of the buying public, she has no qualms about a bit of popularisation. There are no compromises about repertoire, however: no cobbled-up compilations of 'Relaxation' music for Opus 111.

Naturally for an artist-led label, there are still gaps in the repertoire, notably the Renaissance. Her aim is not to be all-embracing but to say something new and original about the music that is done. When she finds a Renaissance ensemble which enthuses her in concert, Renaissance music will enter the catalogue. A conscious decision has been made to search out Italian Baroque ensembles, for that is where she feels the action is. She finds that Dutch and Belgian interpretations have become a bit set in their ways, and is content to leave English groups to the multitude of local companies. Future releases have a pronounced Italian accent: Marcello cantatas by Rossana Bertini and Claudio Cavina, 2 discs of Corelli's Opus 6 Concerti Grossi by Biondi, Scarlatti's *Oratorio per la natale* by Alessandrini, and these two artists together in Vivaldi. Also coming up: music of Gaetano Pugnani by Academia Montis Regalis, Schubert by Sokolov (pregnant readers – you have been warned), an authentic Brahms *Requiem* by Christoph Spering (who has already done a Mendelssohnian St Matthew) and more Russian orthodox liturgy by the extraordinary Russian Patriarchate Choir. Last but far from least, autumn will see the release of Christmas music of Christafano Caresana by Antonio Florio's Neopolitan ensemble Cappella della Pietà dei Turchini, whose recording has just been finished. 'Musical life in Baroque Naples was extraordinarily rich, and nearly everything that remains is still unknown. There's a lot to do.' I would bet on Yolanta Skura to do it with both expertise and enthusiasm.

Graham has provided a fuller review of the sampler disc, which we mentioned briefly last month.

Close Encounters in Early Music *64' 17" Opus 111 OPS 3000*

The horrible title (the French version 'le Temps des Légendes' is very slightly better) should not be allowed to put you off this attractive, bargain-price compilation of extracts from Opus 111's medieval catalogue. There are extracts from all the CDs reviewed this and last month, and from others by the same ensembles. All of Alla Francesca's work is interesting, particularly *Landini and Italian Ars Nova*, although the extract from their *Libre Vermell de Montserrat* contains a continually-used six-four chord which sounds anachronistic. The extract from Discantus's *Codex las Huelgas* pleases me more than their *Eya Mater*, simply because choral performance is more believable in the rhythmic context of a motet, and the singers sound more at ease. Lovers of bagpipes will also find much to please them, and Pierre Hamon's flute would charm the birds from the trees and the snakes from their holes. A curious aspect is the inclusion in all this of two Orthodox Choirs, one Russian, one Greek. The Greek one is a bit more throaty and 'rough'. The music sung by the Russian Patriarchate Choir is actually mostly 17th century, and hence only really belongs in this collection because of its 'otherworldliness'. But I suspect that the low-pitched male-voice colour, the sense of phrasing and the investment with the text takes us much closer to the ideal sound of Western Renaissance sacred music than many conventional recordings.

LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

Your recent articles and correspondence have raised several interesting issues on which I would like to offer a few, somewhat random comments. I agree strongly with John Potter's comments about liturgical reconstructions. I suspect that one of the reasons they have proliferated is the enormous commercial success of the New Age 'meditation' market represented by the Spanish monks *et al.* Recordings of this type certainly take up most of the space allocated to early music in my local non-specialist video and CD shop. I think that if some of those who are marketing liturgical reconstructions are doing so for religious reasons they are deluding themselves. The problem with assembling them for musical reasons is that the format frequently prevents us (yes, I've done it myself) from choosing the best pieces. How often have we had to put up with second-rate pieces because they happen to fit the requirements of a particular liturgical event? I'm all for separating out the sections of the mass or vespers with motets and sonatas to produce the sort of space between them that the composers envisaged. But unless we concentrate on performing and recording the *best* music we can find from any particular time or place, we will not deserve the public's attention.

As for Simon Raven's article 'Bach's Choir Revisited', the problem with Rifkin's arguments is that he spoils them by taking them too far. As you pointed out, a number of us thought long ago that the pre-Leipzig vocal concertos (shouldn't we start using the proper terminology?) were intended for single instruments and voices, as had been the tradition in German concerted music since the early seventeenth century. But Bach's way of laying out his vocal and instrumental forces changed fundamentally between Weimar and Leipzig, and it seems likely to me that this was partly a response to a change in size of his ensemble. A paper at the 1994 Baroque conference in Edinburgh on Zelenka's masses certainly showed that they were given at Dresden by a choir of about 15; the implication is that this group also performed the Kyrie and Gloria of the B minor Mass. Of course, the fact that only single vocal parts survive in Bach's handwriting proves nothing: Bach could easily have sent just a basic set to Leipzig, expecting a loyal copyist to add ripieno parts.

Incidentally, information about this subject in another context is in my 'Original Sets of Parts for Restoration Concerted Music at Oxford', which is just about to appear in *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, ed. Michael Burden (Oxford, 1996). Ripieno vocal parts are common in the Oxford repertory, and there are cases of both violin and voice parts marked with the names of two individuals. In one case a bass singer even had to share a part with a violinist; their music is on opposite sides of the opening, and presumably the singer acted as a human music stand!

Peter Holman

If we assume that several instruments/voices per part became Bach's norm, we get an interesting situation with Cantata 4 (cf p. 18). I assume that it was written for solo voices, but he seems to have been happy to revive it in Leipzig in 1723 with larger forces, adding cornett and sackbuts in 1724. Do we conclude that the difference between single and multiple voices/instruments was less important to him than it is to us?

Dear Clifford,

Perhaps I may add to the debate on liturgical reconstruction? I wish to do so because I feel that certain important points have not been made, or have not been sufficiently emphasised. The primary point, surely, is that plainsong is considered to be music: that is why musicologists study it, and is one of the reasons why those interested in early music are interested in it. Isolated snippets of plainsong are not particularly interesting (except for 'epicurean spirituality' or marketing purposes), so there is an impulse to construct (or reconstruct) complete services.

Unfortunately, medieval liturgy is extremely complicated. Liturgy, like railway timetables, and the Internet, attracts those who delight in complicated things; but that is hardly their fault. They would have no objections if things were simpler: there are enough complicated subjects to occupy their minds. The blame rather lies with those who devised the liturgy in the first place. Just as all those who wish to travel by train will have to grapple with the timetable, so those who wish to reconstruct the plainsong of a medieval service will have to grapple with the liturgy. (Incidentally, like the Efficient Baxter I have a suspicious mind, and I suspect that you started this debate to provide an 'appropriate context' for the publication of Vol. 4 of Nick Sandon's *The Use of Salisbury*, that Bradshaw of medieval music.)

Christopher Page is absolutely correct in pointing out that liturgical reconstructions are neither liturgical nor reconstructions, but the term is a convenient one (more so than 'plainsong context speculative re-creation') as long as it is remembered that the motives are musical and historical. It is the reconstruction of the plainsong elements that is important, the intoned and murmured parts of the service are added for completeness, that is to say to add (if necessary) to the historical understanding of the reconstruction.

Once liturgical reconstructions of plainsong have become established (for musical and historical reasons) they provide an appropriate (the most appropriate) context for the performance of ecclesiastical polyphony. (Snippets of polyphony are more satisfactory – with or without saxophones – than snippets of plainsong, but not greatly.) This is probably a re-writing of the actual history of liturgical reconstruction: it is what philosophers call a 'rational reconstruction', i.e. what ought to have happened!

Liturgical reconstruction has obviously been extended to periods later than medieval, and to other liturgies, but there are limitations. The Anglican liturgy is not (or is not perceived as being) particularly musical in itself. But when the Book of Common Prayer fades from living memory this perception may change, and its liturgical reconstruction become popular. Similarly, one can give an answer to A.D. Bolingbroke: yes, I would support an hour-long sermon in German, but only if it added to the musical and historical appreciation of the Bach cantata. Even then, I would expect the sermon to be itself of historical significance and of literary merit (and be delivered in an appropriate style).

I have argued that it is the historical and musical aspects of the liturgical reconstructions which are of importance to those interested in early music. The present-day religious beliefs (or otherwise) of both performers and audience need not, and indeed should not, be involved. After all, who would wish to listen to a Tridentine Mass performed by a choir of crypto-fascists and anti-Semites? The appropriate context for those whose motivation is religious is the liturgy of their own day, but viewed as liturgy rather than as a context for music. *John W. Briggs*

I am very happy to promote Nick Sandon's invaluable work, but was not intentionally doing so. For more on church music and belief, see page 9.

Dear Clifford,

A little point on April, p.12. Simon Ravens says that the Barcelona Mass is Spanish, and implies that French pronunciation isn't appropriate. I haven't heard the record, and I haven't looked into Catalan Latin: but isn't Catalan pretty close to southern French? Alternatively, and perhaps more cogently, didn't Spanish Latin come from Cluny monks who were influential in northern Spain after the Roman liturgy was introduced at the Pope's insistence in the late C11? Reformed Latin had for this purpose to be substituted for the local Romance language, and one must, I think, assume that it was taught with a French accent.

Harold Copeman