

# Early Music

## REVIEW

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We began this month with a trip to the Paris exhibition. It felt smaller than two years ago – perhaps its coincidence with the feast of All Souls didn't help. We were puzzled as we drove into Paris on the morning of Friday 1st that there was so much traffic in the opposite direction; we had not realised that it was holiday. We were told that families gathered together in their place of origin to remember their dead. Perhaps, as memories of the World Wars fade, our Remembrance Day might be expanded to include the honouring and recollection of all our dead, not just those who died in war.

The exhibition was centrally placed in Le Carrousel du Louvre, an underground exhibition space alongside the Palace; it was central and well-appointed, though arrangements for unloading and (especially) loading up at the end left something to be desired. It was an opportunity to see customers and subscribers and to attract some new ones. I was glad to meet Françoise Lasserre, who directed her ensemble for the main concert (mostly Monteverdi's 1650 Vespers from our editions). I have enjoyed Akademia's discs, but was not entirely convinced by the concert. The church of Saint Roche may be smaller than San Marco, but the audience cannot be placed in the ideal position of the Doge (or God) and the sound was a bit muddy and distant. I hope the engineers for the forthcoming disc will grant me a more exalted position and enable me to enjoy the music while sitting in comfort.

In view of my involvement in *Early Music News* from issue 2 until we set up our own magazine, I was interested to hear that it is changing to become almost entirely a listings magazine. We do not want to become London-centered (our audience is international), but we are concerned at the lack of reviews of early-music performances. So we have asked Shane Fletcher to write regularly about London concerts that might be of more general interest. His first review article will appear in February.

We wish our readers a happy Christmas and New Year; we have no January issue so that we can enjoy Christmas. CB

## BOOKS AND MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

## SINGING EARLY MUSIC

*Singing Early Music: the pronunciation of European languages in the late middle ages and renaissance* edited by Timothy J. McGee with A. G. Rigg and David N. Klausner. Indiana University Press, 1996. xiii + 299pp. ISBN 0 253 32961 2. In UK from Open University Press, £39.50

All singers of early music now need to acquire a much greater understanding of language than in the past. For some years, ensembles have called on language coaches to be on hand; I suspect that soon that will become an expensive luxury and that singers will be expected to be able to turn on the appropriate vernacular or Latin dialect for the major music centres in the same way as keyboard tuners are expected to temper instruments to temporal and regional customs. (The singers should, of course, be able to adjust to the pitches as well.) Ability to do this depends on the availability of comprehensible and coherent information from linguistics scholars and the ability of singers to understand their language. Singers will need to learn the International Phonetic Alphabet. This is listed on pp 297-9. It looks off-putting for some diphthongs to be described only in terms of old pronunciations, but all is made clear in the first track of the accompanying CD (included in the price of the book). The CD continues with readings of a variety of texts which have been selected to illustrate the various chapters; these comprise a fair number of popular items, vernacular and Latin. Each is printed in the book both as in an authoritative source and phonetically; it is a pity that the two versions could not have been placed side-by-side, even at the expense of a slightly smaller type-size. The heading on p. 44 might have mentioned that *Balulalow* is based on Luther's *Vom Himmel hoch*.

I found the book extremely informative, though not dogmatic, since so much is not precisely known. The reader is treated in an adult way by being informed of the sources of our knowledge, which are often far from comprehensive. Singers of English will need to learn more about dialects than is given here, and will need to consider periods later than the renaissance; it would be interesting to take the one text that was sung everywhere in the 18th century, *While shepherd's watched*, and hear it in the appropriate accent for the innumerable published settings. Those who assume that the language has not changed much in the last few centuries should note a remark on p. 22: 'the long *a* of Modern English (as in *name*) did not exist until the nineteenth century'.

For those singing Latin, historical awareness is necessary even for 20th-century music. Stanford's motets demand

traditional English Latin. Did Westminster Cathedral use an Italian style for Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G minor* and, if so, would the composer (who disliked Italian consonants) expect anyone else to imitate them? Harold Copeman mentions on p. 203 of *Singing in Latin* (which is about to be reprinted with corrections) that he knows of no written instruction of how Britten wanted his *Cantata Academica* pronounced: I should be able to help, since I sang in the first UK performance under the composer, but I have absolutely no recollection of that aspect of the performance. Presumably the Swiss premiere sounded different. Christmas brings with it the Poulenc motets, which need to be sung as French. Apart from Anglo-Latin (by A. G. Rigg), the Latin sections of the book are contributed by Harold Copeman, who amplifies the information in *Singing in Latin*. Does *omnipotens* really have a long *o* for its third syllable (p. 213)?

This may seem a little expensive (though not if you allow for the CD), but it is a book that all singers will need to absorb. It doesn't answer all questions, but provides enough examples to raise many of them and to suggest solutions.

## APPRENDRE LE LATIN

Monique Goullet & Michel Parisse *Apprendre le Latin médiéval: manuel pour grands commençants* Paris: Picard, 1996. 216pp, FFR 140,00. ISBN 2 7094 0508 X

I was intrigued by the advert but have not actually seen this manual for learning medieval Latin aimed at those who do not already have a knowledge of the classical language. Set out in 23 lessons, to match the number of weeks in a French university year, with various texts appended, this would be worth investigating by francophones needing to acquire a knowledge of the Latin for singing or study. If anyone wants a copy, we would be happy to order it.

## ENGLISH MASQUE

Peter Walls *Music in the English Courtly Masque, 1604-1640*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. xix + 372pp, £40.00. ISBN 0 19 816141 7

There are two ways of approach to a topic like this: to take a particular work/event and bring it to life by a thorough edition with supporting studies of the sources, performance situation and the input of the other art forms, or to isolate the various aspects which relate to the genre and discuss each separately. It would be fascinating if Peter Walls were to take the former course in a subsequent publication, but it is the latter task that he has undertaken here.

We are continually kept aware that music is only one parameter of the genre, but its symbolic importance is established before we embark on detailed investigations of what it comprised and how it operated. The masque is a difficult genre to study since an essential character was its transitoriness: Prospero's 'Our Reuels now are ended' is very properly quoted as the 'expression of ideas which are truisms about the masque's impermanence' (p. 17). It is thus the antithesis of the normal modern concept of an artistic event, which can generally be recorded for posterity, if not live, at least in some form of re-creation in vision and/or sound. Reconstruction, whether in imagination or for performance, therefore requires approaches from many directions. The printed texts of the masques can have a bias (Ben Jonson's agenda was not that of Inigo Jones) and most modern writers underplay the Revels, which in some accounts can seem to be an appendage to the artistic work but to the participants may have been its *raison d'être*, whether they finished sober or in drunken chaos.

Performers have been intrigued by the vast forces involved in masque performances and have not always realised that they are grouped into distinct ensembles with different functions: scoring by compositorial choice was not an option. The way the system worked is as important as study of the music itself, and both sides are fully covered in this excellent study.

#### CHARPENTIER & MARAIS

Charpentier *Confitebor tibi... in concilio H. 225* (Grands motets, vol. 4). Salabert, 1995. xii + 28pp. In UK from UMP, £12.70.  
 Marais *Première suite du quatrième livre, 1717, pour la viole et la basse continue* Zurfluh, 1996. 11pp + part. In UK from UMP, £8.80

This is the normal Psalm 110 text (familiar from Monteverdi), so I'm not sure why we need the complicated title: Charpentier did not set *Confitebor... quoniam* and his own title is just *Confitebor a 4 voix* which, despite the ambiguities of the digit, is adequate. Quoting clefs rather than voice names, it is set for two ATB solo groups and SATB chorus, though the second group of solos can be sung by the first trio. There is a four-part string group (G1, C1, C2 & F4, i.e. violin, 2 violas and *basse de violon*) with a pair of recorders and violins accompanying the first bass solo. The second bass solo (*Sanctum et terrible*) is accompanied by muted strings. There is a similar line-up for the Magnificat H. 79 (with an overlap in named singers), so the pieces may have been sung at the same service. It is an attractive setting. One editorial point: since the edition follows the details of the source so closely (even to the odd beaming in bars 2 & 5), the reader would expect the notation of accidentals to be similarly as in the source, but they are modernised.

There is little help available for those who want to play Marais with a keyboard but cannot find anyone who can play from the bass, so this edition will be useful in some

quarters. The part has the original gamba and bass parts in score, while the score also includes a third stave between them giving a keyboard part. The whole is in the stylish calligraphy of Nathalie Le Gaouyat, which has an authentic feel and is clearly legible. Catherine Samouel's realisation is better than most: simply chordal and properly low on the instrument. My only doubt is whether the upbeat leadbacks provide an unnecessary problem of co-ordination between keyboard and viol.

#### RECENT RESEARCHES

Antonio Bononcini *Complete Sonatas for Violoncello and Basso Continuo* edited by Lowell E. Lindgren. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 77) A-R Editions, 1996. xxiii + 157pp, \$57.60. ISBN 0 89579 333 4

Christoph Graupner *Concerti Grossi for Two Violins* edited by John E. Lindberg. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 78) A-R Editions, 1996. xv + 188pp, \$62.40. ISBN 0 89579 334 2

*Ballet Music from the Mannheim Court Part I* edited by Floyd K. Grave. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era*, 45) A-R Editions, 1996. xlix + 144pp, \$62.40. ISBN 0 89579 330 X

The category of our own publications which sold most quickly at the Paris exhibition at the beginning of November was our cheap reproduction of books of sonatas for bass instrument and continuo, so perhaps the time is ripe for an expansion of the amount of early cello music available in good editions. Whether the students who were happy to pay FFR40 for Corette's *Les délices de la solitude* would pay FFR300 for Bononcini is another matter: apart from the cost, the French do seem rather nationalistic in their purchases. But any student of the early cello should get hold of the Bononcini volume, even though it is not entirely user-friendly: page-turns could have been made a lot easier if space had not been wasted by separating the staves so far. (Perhaps the parts are better, though the 18th century tradition is for such music to circulate in score, not parts.) The main group of sonatas here is a set of 12 from the library of Sainte-Geneviève in Paris. MS 1090 has a variety of solo sonatas, mostly derived from printed sources (including three of the four Barrière sets for cello; for printed versions of these see the advert on page 5). About half the MS is devoted to a set of 12 cello sonatas headed *di antonio bononcini*. The editor argues that the cello style is similar to that in the composer's earliest known work, a *Laudate pueri* performed on 22 February 1693. The music is virtuosic with double stops, repeated notes and embellishment. Three further items are added from other MSS and a facsimile is appended of the only sonata by 'Bononcini' to have entered the cello repertoire: *Sonata I* ascribed to Sig<sup>r</sup>. Bononcini in *Six Solos for Two Violoncellos, Composed by Sig<sup>r</sup> Bononcini and other eminent Authors* London [1748] – the complete set is (or was) available from Grancino. This is more likely to be by Antonio's brother Giovanni. The edition has the thorough scholarly introduction that we expect of the series, though it is going a bit far to footnote the source of 'nothing will come of nothing': there is no



point in that sort of quotation if the reader is not expected to recognise it, and if the editor must be pedantic, he could trace it beyond Shakespeare back to Aristotle.

The table on p. viii listing the 44 concerti by Graupner which survive together in Darmstadt shows a surprising number which have been published in modern editions. But the five works for two solo violins have been neglected, so their presentation here is welcome. I am puzzled why the editor has decided to call them *concerti grossi*. It wasn't that common a term in Germany and Graupner seems not to use it himself, as far as I can see. The critical commentary regrettably does not quote the headings to the scores; the one given in facsimile is *Concerto a 2 Violini conc, 2 violini, viola e cembalo*. Since the introduction discusses the extent to which the concertos are italianate, it is a pity to bias the user's concept by an inappropriate title. The absence of exact transcriptions of the titles also impinges on another topic of discussion: the importance of the *cembalo*. Sadly, no parts survive, but details of the instrumentation might have been illuminated by comparison with contemporary sources of similar works by other composers for which parts are extant. The introduction implies a maximum of 5 tutti violins, 3 violas and a cello (with perhaps a bassoon); but a quartet accompaniment would work equally well. I seem to be nit-picking round the edges of the edition; it adds five fine concertos (two with canonic movements) to the repertoire and is very welcome. Parts are available.

The Mannheim Ballet edition is valuable for the wealth of information it contains about 18th-century dance. It has three separate introductions, one by Sibylle Dahms on ballet reforms in the 18th century and ballet at the Mannheim Court, one by Paul Corneilson and Eugene J. Wolf on the sources for the Mannheim ballets, and the usual introduction by the editor on the two works in the volume. Mannheim was an important ballet centre in the third quarter of the century. Sadly, the remains are fragmentary: some libretti survive, there are some scores, but not necessarily of the same works. There is a list of 36 ballets known to have been performed between the acts of Mannheim operas and a catalogue of 46 works for which there are 'texts' or music surviving. After all that, I'm not sure if two hunting ballets are worth the bother. Both composers do the best they can to achieve variety in a series of brief binary movements, but I don't find myself longing to hear a performance. The most interesting music in the volume is a 20-bar excerpt of Vogler's overture to *Hamlet*. The volume is, however, an important one and fills a gap in our knowledge.

#### PERFORMERS' FACSIMILES

We noted in May that there were now two facsimiles of Telemann's *Sonate metodiche*, from Performers' Facsimiles and Alamire. The former has now issued the sequel, *Continuation des Sonates Methodiques*, a further six à Flûte traverse ou à violon avec la Basse schiffrée (Hamburg, 1732). As

with the first set, slow movements are printed with alternative embellished versions. Incidentally, the contents are numbered 1-6 not, as in some modern editions, 7-12. (PF 176; £12.50)

I mentioned above the interest we are noting in facsimiles of cello sonatas; here are some more. Benedetto Marcello's *Six Solos for a Violoncello with a Thorough Bass for the Harpsicord* op. 2 (PF150; £12.50) are not virtuoso works; as Eleanor Selfridge-Field remarks in her Marcello catalogue, 'they rarely venture out of first position'. The edition reproduced is the Walsh rather than the Witvogel, both [1732], or Paris. *Six Sonatas for the Violoncello* by Boccherini (PF 174; £12.50) published in London by Bland have an unfigured bass, so may be intended just for a second cello as accompaniment. New Grove mentions 34 sonatas for the combination, so it would be nice to be told which these are. There is some double-stopping and generally these look rather more advanced. In the case of *Six Solos for the Violoncello; composed by Stephen Paxton... opera prima* (PF184; £12.50) published in London by Longman & Broderip we are told that there is doubt whether some or all of the sonatas might have been composed by William Paxton, Stephen's brother, but not their date (1772). These have a figured bass. They look interesting. (For further cello music, see the King's Music advert on p. 5.)

#### NEW SEASONS

Antonio Vivaldi "The Four Seasons" and other Violin Concertos in Full Score. Opus 8, Complete edited by Eleanor Selfridge-Field. New York: Dover Publications, 1995. xii + 238pp, £8.95 (\$10.95). ISBN 0 486 28638 X

I had a pleasant surprise when I ordered a score of Vivaldi op. 8 from Brian Jordan recently and received, not the old two-volume Ricordi miniatures, but a nice new edition from Dover. The editor has consulted all the sources, not just the published edition, and this score incorporates some variants from, for instance, the Manchester parts and has a thorough critical commentary. The cello solo part in the slow movement of *Winter*, missing in most editions, is included. The project is based on work done for the music database at the Center for Computer Assisted Research in the Humanities, and those who do not wish to use any of the three facsimile editions (Alamire, Broude & King's Music) can obtain performance materials from the Center at 525 Middlefield Road, Suite 120, Menlo Park, CA 94025-3443: tel (if you have a dial with letters) +1 800 JSB-MUSE – but there is no international standard for the placement of letters on phone dials. It will be interesting to see how this compares with the forthcoming new edition from Ricordi. This is a most useful publication, and I hope it becomes a precedent for a link between the Center and Dover, most of whose scores so far have been reprints of older editions. (The most notable exception is an idiosyncratic *Messiah* with the unique feature of a written-out continuo realisation.) Comparison with the new edition from the Vivaldi Collected Works will be interesting.



## BACH'S CHOIR

We aired this topic in an article by Simon Ravens last April. There are articles by Andrew Parrott and Joshua Rifkin in the latest *Early Music* and there was a Taverner conference on November 10th in which they were the main speakers. My impression was that some people were there with open minds, some were already predisposed to accept the one-to-a-part argument, but there were none who had considered the matter in depth and disagreed. So it was not a representative gathering of Bach scholars or of current Bach performers (at least, of those sufficiently established to be recording Bach's vocal music). This was a pity, since it was an ideal opportunity for them to explain why they disagreed with the apparent evidence of the sources. Another disappointment was the absence of members of the Oxford music faculty, although the conference was held on their premises; I was reminded of my comments about the Cambridge Medieval Festival.

I had intended to write a report on the event, but with so much detail in the two *Early Music* articles, that is unnecessary. The two main speakers approached the topic in two ways. Andrew discussed how Bach had to roster his performance forces, rejecting the unmusical and dividing the rest of his youths ('boys' is an inaccurate term) among the four other Sunday functions for which he had to supply singers. There were precious few left by the time he reached the top group which sang his new cantata, and provided some of the instruments for it as well. Joshua showed us the parts which the singers used. In some cases, one might plead special circumstances, but cumulatively the evidence was clear: each part was intended for one singer who performed the solo and 'tutti' sections of one 'voice' for the complete work. No practical composer would have omitted indications of *solo* and *tutti* if the parts were shared between singers, since the distinction between the two functions is not always obvious. On the fairly rare occasions when there was a ripieno 'chorus', separate parts of the ripieno sections only were copied.

The evidence seemed to leave no doubt: if it can be countered, I hope those who know better will rapidly come forward. From my own limited knowledge of German source material of the period (and Brian Clark, with his much greater knowledge agrees with me), virtually all sets survive with single copies of each part. Joshua conclusively squashed the objections that several could sing from them, and the absence of *solo/tutti* indications is similarly a strong argument against the idea that multiple copies were copied *ad hoc* but not considered worth keeping.

So we are left with the question: if Bach seems to have written on the assumption that (apart from certain known and explicable exceptions) his vocal music was for an ensemble of soloists, why do 'authentic' performers almost invariably use choirs? The considerations surely cannot be entirely economic. Answers would be welcome.



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**Key As shepherds watched their fleecy care** £1.00

According to the booklet, Hugh Keyte's Westminster carol arrangements are published by King's Music. But don't try to order them for this Christmas: we haven't even seen them yet.

Performance materials are available for sale where appropriate

We are grateful to our readers for the compliments and messages of support that so many of you send us when renewing your subscriptions. Since most of you do renew (eventually!) from this month we will be sending invoices rather than less formal reminders. If you do NOT wish to renew, could you please let us know at once so that we do not waste effort reminding you.

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# KÖNIG ARTHUR

Alan Hacker

Following the *King Arthur* review from Florence in an earlier issue I thought it might be of interest to write about the musical side of the current Stuttgart production. The most important thing about my work there has been to develop expressive classical and baroque styles with an orchestra who in the same period of time are playing *King Arthur*, the complete works of Webern and Strauss's *Salome*. It is exciting to consider that not only have we given seven performances of the Purcell but have also for three seasons had Monteverdi's *Ulisse* in our repertoire.

The concept of the director is most important today. Tolerance and compromise is required from the music. In *King Arthur* we had to cope with a narrow pit because priority was given to a revolving stage design. Contact between singers and players was only possible through the conductor. Nor was there room for a string size of half the 'blackbird pie'. Amplification (and not just for stage foldback), which was essential, gave patchy results in an auditorium already pepped up with artificial resonance. I was pleased with my use of a 17th-century flageolet (made by Charles Wells) which played with Cupid in the Frost scene, but its icicle idea was somewhat blunted by the amplification – which in turn made the recorders sound rather lurid and larger than life. After doing some research on the bassoon of that time I thought I was justified in occasionally using it as a solo instrument in 'Woden's Hall' (I had transposed the solo opening up a fourth to suit our counter-tenor David Cordier) and in Grimbald's marshy 'moonbeam' music, as well as a bass to a band of two oboes and cor anglais.

The Opera Director decided not only that the play should be translated into German but also the text of the musical sections. This gave the director the opportunity to change parts of the story and to introduce other wishes. He had told me quite early on that he wanted to remove Englishness where possible. Aeolus, after reaching his top G with the bass violins playing their low B natural, then turns into an Austrian businessman accompanied by the two English flutes. Moreover, he wanted 'Fairest isle' to be sung both at the beginning and the end. Most of the 5th act was turned into a 1920's party. Emmeline's scene was set to music, the dramaturge transferring 'How blest are shepherds' into 'Ach, Emmeline'. Although this worked effectively it made the now shorn Kentish entertainment scene somewhat difficult when presented in ABA pattern: 'Come shepherds lead up' – 'Pipes are sweet on summer's day' – 'Come shepherds lead up'. How effective is Purcell's unique construction and rhythmic pacing!

Before the director came on the scene I myself made a few

changes to the King's Music score. I removed the spurious 'Saint George' and replaced the last Chorus/Hymn with the end of Queen Mary's Birthday Ode. When there was a chance that the music might be in English I simply related 'Day' i.e. her birthday with Saint George's 'Day' of King Arthur. For the 'Soft Music' I used 'Parnassus' from Handel's Julius Caesar (I thought that Handel would have liked this). I used Peter Holman's suggestion from 'Bonduca' and also the trumpet tune which begins the duet 'To Arms'.

I made a hornpipe for myself to play with the Kentish lads but which ended up with 'Ach, Emmeline' – also to open the Harvest Song. Martin Kusej, the director, liked my idea of using the *Fantasia on One Note* for magic with the C doubled 8va. I included this at various places, which helped to unify – music hardly in Purcell's theatre style, but I thought it would be nice for German audiences to hear more of Purcell. For the same reason I used the *In Nomine* a7 (also because it is one of my favourite pieces). *Queen Mary's Funeral Music* too, the opening on the reed band for a 'Bloody Field' and the canzona in a scary scene which preceded the Frost scene. One of the two bass violin players doubled gamba and so we could play the canzona with two treble recorders, viola and gamba.

I think we experimented successfully with the tremolo indication in the canzona with the recorders articulating on their breath, smorzato. This matched our style for Cold Genius, where the slurred quavers were articulated with the bow on the string. We played this faster than is customary, not only to make the 17th century tremolo work (Handel used this in Parnassus) but also because Purcell has indicated ♢. (Mozart also indicates this in the Commendatore's scene in *Don Giovanni*.) In both cases the two-in-a-bar actually comes over slower than the conventional four-in-a-bar interpretation. This tempo also allows the crotchet of Cold Genius to relate to Cupid's dotted minim and then to the minim of 'Great God'. The Overture is also written in ♢ and here likewise the harmony usually moves on the half bar. Thus we played the opening with about the same minim pulse as the fugato and allegro. First time round we began till bar 9 with wind alone.

It is clear that Purcell used recorders in Aeolus's scene. I have already said that I used them more frequently in the Sacrifice scene. Bearing in mind the implication that they were used with oboes in 'Pipes are sweet on summer's day' I followed this elsewhere in the Sacrifice Scene where the reed band, contrasting with the recorders at the opening, answer the Chorus 'We have sacrificed'. It could be argued that I ended up with a scoring that was too colourful but I think this helped to balance the director's extras.

Recently in Handel's *Serse* I found myself countermanning much of the 'dot everything where possible' convention. There are more than a few occasions where the Italian expression sounds better the way Handel wrote it. In preparing the *King Arthur*, I frenchified a great deal, sometimes even more to suit the German text. The more we played and sang, the further music veered in that direction. I was interested to read that Curtis Price had made this point. How curious when the subject is so English.

My work in the department of music at York from the mid-70s onwards resulted in a number of students taking up baroque and classical instruments. Early on we came to the conclusion that it was inappropriate to play the modern string instrument with no vibrato in earlier music. In the 80s the music critic of *The Daily Telegraph* told me he had letters from music students who as a result of people like us felt unable to play classical music on their modern instruments. This is such an important subject for modern orchestras, which should not be marginalised by authenticity. Even putting aside metal strings and greater tension, I really think it is wrong to say negatively no vibrato; rather say 'please play this passage or these notes with vibrato'. More emphasis is placed on the right hand for variety of articulation and colour and the use of a lighter bow is helpful. In the Cologne *Serse* performances I have noticed how fundamental the kind of bow stroke is for non-vibrato on a modern instrument. Ultimately it is how a particular orchestra of players respond to the music. The German system – different players in the orchestra night after night – makes this the only possible and trustworthy approach, with the conductor giving a clear lead with regard to *Affekt*.

It is a pleasure to see my German friends and colleagues enjoying this music – and great that Purcell is now part of the Stuttgart repertoire. Some years ago Freiburg did a full-scale production – and so did Stuttgart in the 1960s, choreographed by the legendary John Cranko.

*I first encountered Alan Hacker in our school orchestra, where he was a brilliant clarinettist and I was a bumbling violist. He went straight from school into one of the major London orchestras, but was forced to leave when he became paralysed from the shoulders down. His playing career developed in several directions: he was the clarinettist for Peter Maxwell Davies's The Fires of London and he also became a pioneering performer on early clarinets. He now works extensively in Germany as an operatic conductor, and has a gift for getting stylish performances of baroque and classical music from modern-instrument players. Our paths crossed again after a gap of 35 years or so; he turned up unannounced at our house and asked if I would edit Il Ritorno d'Ulisse for a production he was conducting in Stuttgart; König Artur was our second collaboration. This article shows the limits of the conductor's control in a modern opera-house. Like Alan, I believe that it is important that non-specialist musicians and audiences should benefit from the increase in our understanding of music of the past; sadly, the obsession of directors to be fashionable makes matters more difficult than need be. CB*

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## VARIATIONS ON A THEMATIC CATALOGUE

Brian Clark

The International Fasch Society (yes, such a thing really exists!) has asked me to compile a thematic catalogue of the works of Johann Friedrich Fasch. Being a German society dedicated to promoting the works of a German composer, as well as that of his son, they have stipulated that the main text of the volume is to be in German, with an English translation of the introduction.

As I feel that the use of German will unnecessarily exclude large numbers of people from using the book properly, I am trying to think of ways to construct the book that it is not dependent on *any* language.

The pre-existent text-only index of Fasch's works is divided into categories: A for Operas, B for Serenades, C for Secular Cantatas, etc. This is followed by the initial letter of the title for vocal works other than masses or the home key for other genres and a number. Thus a concerto in D major might be referred to as FWV L : D 13.

I am proposing to maintain this basic structure. Each category will have a separate chapter, introduced by a list of the relevant literature and the abbreviation by which it is referred (e.g. "cf. Raymond Dittich *Die Messen von Johann Friedrich Fasch* (1688-1758), Phil. Diss., Hamburg 1991" will become ⇒DIT 91) [or do you prefer ⇒Dit 91?].

Each piece will be listed with thematic incipits of all movements with texts in original orthography, plus:-

- Title-page text,
- Scoring,
- Source (with details of paper sizes, watermarks, number of pages, copyists, as well as an indication of whether the source is a score or a set of parts),
- Source of text (and, where known, author),
- Date of composition,
- Known performance dates,
- Modern editions,
- Recordings,
- Specific literature.

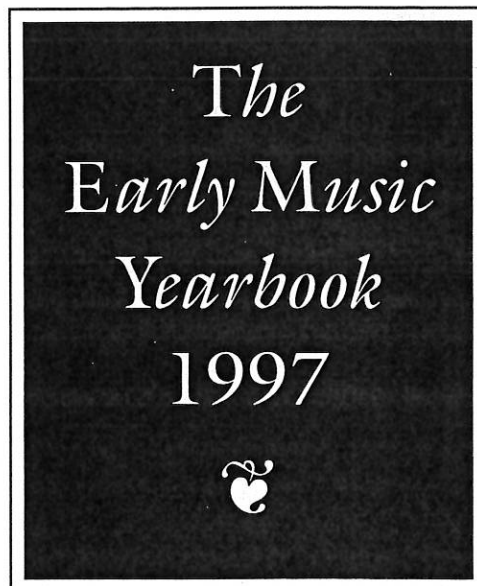
For each of these, I would like to use a symbol: – ♪ for copyist, ω for watermark, etc. I am looking for suggestions (preferably single characters from standard fonts) for suitable icons, such as a pair of headphones for recordings. Would users be happy, for instance, with the BBC orchestral catalogue symbol of Ø for score?

I would welcome general comments on and/or criticisms of thematic catalogues which are currently available, or other information which people might find useful in a thematic catalogue to which I may not have referred above. Please contact me at 55 Ballindean Rd, Dundee, DD4 8NS, +44 (0)1382 500296.



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# TWELFTH NIGHT PAN SPEZIALE (or what you will).

Jennie Cassidy

This recipe is for an Italian renaissance cake. It is nutty, spicy, fruity and aromatic, like a cross between panforte and Christmas cake, and makes a rather special cake for the festive season.

- 3 oz raisins
- 3 oz mixed peel
- 3 tablespoons Amaretto
- 8 oz honey
- 2 oz butter
- 10 oz wholemeal flour
- 2 teaspoons of cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon of whole aniseeds
- pinch of nutmeg
- pinch of freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large apple grated
- 3 oz toasted flaked almonds
- 3 oz whole almonds, roughly chopped
- 2 oz pecans, roughly chopped
- 2 oz pine nuts
- 3 oz ginger preserved in syrup
- 2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda dissolved  
in a tablespoon of warm water
- 1 dried bean (optional)



Heat the Amaretto gently with the raisins and mixed peel. When warmed, pour into a small bowl and leave to steep. Melt the honey and butter slowly in the pan. Meanwhile, weigh out the flour and spices in a large mixing bowl. Add the apple and nuts. Chop the ginger roughly and add along with the Amaretto and fruit. Finally mix in the bicarbonate, honey-butter mixture and dried bean if required. Place mixture in a greased and lined 8-9 inch cake tin and bake for about 2 hours at 140°C / 275° F / Gas mark 1. Cool on a wire rack.

The cake matures well when wrapped in foil for a few weeks, but also tastes fabulous straight from the oven!

If you would like to try this cake without the hard work, it will be included as part of an Italian renaissance feast of food and music-making to be held at Beccles (Suffolk) on 4th January. The music will be led by Philip Thorby and details are available from Stephen Cassidy on 01473-718811.

Traditionally twelfth night (January 5th) was the magical grand finale of nearly two weeks of frivolous festivities. It was celebrated with games, feasting, drinking, fooling and masques or plays. A twelfth night cake baked in honour of the three kings of the Epiphany (the following day) contained a dried bean and pea, the finders of which (presumably nursing broken teeth) were crowned 'King Bean' and 'Queen of the Marrowfat' and led the jollifications.

Now, now the mirth comes  
With the cake full of plums,  
Where Beane's the King of the sport here,  
Beside we must know  
The Pea also  
Must revell, as *Queene*, in the Court here.

(Robert Herrick, 'Twelfe night, or King and Queene', 1648)

## HANDEL OPERA TALKS

There will be a weekly series of musically illustrated talks starting in the coming New Year which will look chronologically at Handel's thirty-nine operas in turn. Particular emphasis will be given to the English translations, including those of Alan Kitching (Unicorn Opera) and of Charles Farncombe (Handel Opera Society). The talks will be held in the vicinity of Barn Elms in S.W. London where both Handel and his collaborator Heidegger had strong associations. Further information can be had from: Richard Soar, 30 Torridon Road, London SE6 1AQ (with SAE).

## MUSIC for CHRISTMAS

Clifford Bartlett

*Adeste Fideles! Christmas down the Ages* Emma Kirkby, Westminster Abbey Choir, Martin Neary 74' 12"  
Sony Classical SK 62688

*A Christmas Celebration* Winchester Cathedral Choir, David Hill 71' 30"  
Virgin Classics 7243 5 61314 2 2

*While shepherds watched: Christmas Music from English Parish Churches, 1740-1830* Psalmody, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman 67' 25"  
Hyperion CDA66924

I was brought up on the 1928 *Oxford Book of Carols*, but gradually found myself moving away from it without finding any satisfactory substitute until becoming involved with the *New Oxford Book of Carols*. The *Carols for Choirs* style never convinced me; so many of the arrangements belong to no particular time or place and are neither good pastiche nor characteristically modern. It is the CfC hymns in the Winchester anthology that strike a particularly false note. Otherwise, though, it is a nice mixture, with good chant, renaissance polyphony sung a little self-indulgently, a couple of organ pieces and items by Britten, Gardner and Leighton – genuine modern compositions, not rehashes. It should sell well, but lacks the organic coherence of the Westminster Abbey disc.

The 'Psalmody' recording takes a repertoire that has only recently reached the general public. Until NOBC, it had appeared in mainstream anthologies only in bowdlerised form, though there have been groups of enthusiasts around the country studying and performing mostly the later examples, in particular carols associated with Thomas Hardy and the novel which gives them a context, *Under the Greenwood Tree*. Our regular readers will know that various strands of research came together at the Clacton Conference last year (see Peter Holman's article in last month's *EMR*). This CD exemplifies his belief in the unbroken chain between the wide variety of music-making in Georgian England and his reluctance to type-cast West-Gallery repertoire as incompatible with the cathedral/theatrical/drawing-room style. It is based on 18th- rather than 19th-century practice and presupposes a very different social milieu from previous more rustic and folk recordings.

This is emphasised by the explicit intention to avoid Mummerset and regional accents and adopt standard modern English. But in the 18th century regional accents permeated the upper classes far more than now (I imagine that the main cause of change was the Victorian growth of public schools), and with our concern over correct pronunciation of Latin and of earlier English (cf p. 2), it seems odd to eschew a chance to avoid modern English diction. The

choice of accent does not matter very much, since the music circulated widely round the country. Most of the singers are from the Essex/Suffolk area, so a current dialect from there could have been chosen. In fact, some of them use it anyway; it is detectable in *Cranbrook*, for instance, (which is taken at the fast tempo one associates with television hymn-singing). The use of accents is also helpful in creating a bolder way of singing, though the sound here is pretty firm. On the other hand, there is much to be said for not making the music just sound quaint, and the difficulty of consistency is shown by Emma Kirkby in the Westminster Abbey CD.

The West-Gallery enthusiasts who found the Taverner *Old Foster* excessively fast will have apoplexy at this performance – perhaps there's an element of *épatez les socialistes*. But the version as published clearly requires a proficient band and choir. I haven't commented on any other pieces: needless to say, as with any Holman anthologies, all the music, however obscure, is worth hearing, the sequence works well, and the performances are convincing. But you must have in your mind, not an isolated Wessex village, but a cultured community that regularly has professional musicians, aristocrats, business people and trained servants assembling to play the standard concerti grossi. And the religious environment is clearly an Anglican one, where the congregation left music to others, rather than Methodist, where all would have expected to sing.

The Westminster Abbey recording takes much of its repertoire from NOBC and the innovative mind behind it is one of its editors, Hugh Keyte. He rightly believes that, in the absence of a compatible, genuinely 1990s style, tunes should be presented in a way that relates to their harmonic implications and style. His mastery of pastiche (which can also be heard this month in his version of the incompletely-extant *Magnificat* a33 by Giovanni Gabrieli; see p. 14) is amazing, and extends to words as well as music. I'm sure many will want to take advantage of his invention of two more stanzas for *Sweet was the song the Virgin sang*. I suspect that one of Martin Neary's main roles (apart from securing excellent results from the performers) was in restraining Hugh's enthusiasm for the over-ambitious; the convincing 17th-century (to me sounding more German than English) setting of *The boar's head* has too prolonged an ending and the last verse of *While shepherds watched* is also out of scale. But these are small blemishes in so fine an integral programme. For once a long CD of short items really should be heard as an entity; each new item is a contrast but follows on so rightly, sometimes with linking material. I strongly recommend that you listen to it complete before you look at the contents list or notes.



For a brief demonstration of the importance of a firmly-rooted style, consider *Silent night*. This used to be my most-hated carol, and the Winchester version does nothing to change my mind. But it is absolutely charming in the contemporary orchestration (the composer's own) on the Westminster disc; the introduction immediately gives it a temporal and geographic location. Two of my favourites come side-by-side. I've sung Hugh's inspired matching of the Irish words *The darkest midnight of December* with a tune related to *This is the truth sent from above* at every Christmas musical gathering I have been involved in for the last seven years (it could be sung slightly more flexibly than here). It is followed by Cererols' bewitching *Serafin*. I don't recall having heard Emma Kirkby singing folksy music before (except for a lovely *Turtle dove* once emanating unself-consciously from her kitchen); she really should do more of it. Definitely the best Christmas CD since the Taverner series (which EMI never marketed effectively so were difficult to buy). There is just one defect. The print on CD booklets is small enough without the additional impediment of printing text over pictures: designers evidently consider legibility a minor consideration.

\*\*\*\*\*

Blaise Compton has asked me to point out that a comment I made in *EMR* 23 p. 20 in connection with the quotation by Andrew Law on the sound of early Amercian hymnody suggests that he is writing about triadic harmony. In fact, the harmony of Billings and his contemporaries is explicitly concerned with fifths, not thirds. This has, of course, considerable implications on tuning, and may also bear on how to perform Georgian Psalmody in that there may be a difference between music that requires perfect fifths and triadic music implying tempered chords. Peter Holman's approach is obviously suited for triadic settings, but does the more 'primitive' repertoire, sung with a coarser tone, sound better with pure fifths?

In the last issue we gave an incorrect phone number for the course Peter Holman and Sally Drage are directing for Thames Valley Early Music Forum on 8th December: it should be 01494 721582.

On 7th December Blaise Compton is organising a day's workshop at St Andrew's Church, Enfield, with sessions at 11.00 am and after lunch. There is a concert at 7.00 pm. involving participants of the course and two local choirs. Details from Blaise at 0181 882 5976.

\*\*\*\*\*

I noticed after completing the formatting of the CD pages that I should not have left till the next issue *Sequentia's Shining Light: Music from Aquitanian Monasteries*, an anthology of Christmas music from what are generally known as the St Martial MSS. It is an exciting disc; with only a brief time to hear it, I haven't chased up facsimiles and editions to see exactly what they have done with the ambiguous notation, but it sounds very convincing and I recommend it strongly (deutsche harmonia mundi 05472 77370 2).

I should also have mentioned Estevão de Brito's *Officium defunctorum* by the Grupo Vocal Olisipo, an ensemble which attended the Hilliard Cambridge course this summer; Selene Mills kindly lent me the CD. The group certainly sings well enough to make the music enjoyable, but I have a couple of

reservations. I haven't seen the score, but it sounds as if the music needs ATBarB and with SATB the women are rather growly. They tend to make the deliberately more routine settings too musical, which in turn makes the music seem duller than it is. But it is a disc that is well worth seeking. (Movieplay Portugal MOV.3-11037.)


## Charpentier: *Salve puerule*

This is the conclusion of one of three settings which Charpentier made of the Christmas text *Frigidae noctis umbra* a versification of unknown authorship based on Luke 2, verses 8-16, though this section has no Biblical origin.

*In nativitatem D[omini] N[ostri] J[esu] C[hristi] canticum* (H. 414) was written in 1684 when Charpentier was attached to the household of the powerful, cultured and devout Mlle de Guise. Charpentier's autograph (*Mélanges*. VI, 89-96) allocates parts to singers in her service. Each verse should be sung first by a solo soprano with continuo, followed by a repeat to the same text by five voices with two unspecified instruments doubling the two soprano parts. The closing *Ritornelle* is presumably played after each verse. Each solo verse was allocated to a different soprano: [Antoniette] Talon for verse 1, Isabelle [Élisabeth Thorin] for verse 2 and [Jacqueline-Geneviève] Brion for verse 3.

The complete work can be heard on Taverner's *The Christmas Album* (EMI 0777 7 54529 2 1); a recent recording of the section edited here is on Ex Cathedra's Christmas anthology *Sanctus* (ASV CD GAU 166).

Clifford Bartlett, Nov. 1996

1. *Salve puerule, Salve tenellule,  
O nate parvule, Quam bonus es.  
Tu coelum deseris, Tu mundo nasceris,  
Nobis te ut miseris Assimiles.*
  2. *O summa bonitas, Excelsa deitas,  
Vilis humanitas Fit hodie.  
Aeternus nascitur, Immensus capitur,  
Et rei tegitur Sub specie.*
  3. *Virgo puerpera, Beata viscera,  
Dei cum opera Dent filium.  
Gaude flos virginum, Gaude spes hominum,  
Fons lavans criminum Proluvium.*
- 
1. *Hail, little child, hail, tender one,  
Born tiny, how good you are.  
You leave heaven, you are born in the world  
to make yourself  wretches.*
  2. *O highest good, lofty deity,  
you assume today vile humanity.  
The eternal is born, the boundless is confined  
and clothed in material form.*
  3. *A child-bearing virgin and a blessed womb  
by the work of God give a son.  
Rejoice, flower of virgins, rejoice, hope of men,  
spring washing the tide of sin.*

## Charpentier: Salve puerule (H. 414/7-8)

S1

1. Sal-ve pu - e - ru-le, Sal - ve te - nel - lu - le, O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es;  
 2. O sum - ma bo - ni - tas, Ex - cel - sa de - i - tas, Vi - lis hu - ma - ni - tas Fit ho - di - e;  
 3. Vir - go pu - er - pe - ra, Be - a - ta vis - ce - ra, De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um;

S2

1. Sal-ve pu - e - ru-le, Sal - ve te - nel - lu - le, O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es;  
 2. O sum - ma bo - ni - tas, Ex - cel - sa de - i - tas, Vi - lis hu - ma - ni - tuas Fit ho - di - e;  
 3. Vir - go pu - er - pe - ra, Be - a - ta vis - ce - ra, De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um;

A

1. Sal-ve pu - e - ru-le, Sal - ve te - nel - lu - le, O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es;  
 2. O sum - ma bo - ni - tas, Ex - cel - sa de - i - tas, Vi - lis hu - ma - ni - tuas Fit ho - di - e;  
 3. Vir - go pu - er - pe - ra, Be - a - ta vis - ce - ra, De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um;

T

1. Sal - ve pu - e - ru - le, Sal - ve te - nel - lu - le, O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es;  
 2. O sum - ma bo - ni - tas, Ex - cel - sa de - i - tas, Vi - lis hu - ma - ni - tuas Fit ho - di - e;  
 3. Vir - go pu - er - pe - ra, Be - a - ta vis - ce - ra, De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um;

B

1. Sal-ve pu - e - ru-le, Sal - ve te - nel - lu - le, O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es;  
 2. O sum - ma bo - ni - tas, Ex - cel - sa de - i - tas, Vi - lis hu - ma - ni - tuas Fit ho - di - e;  
 3. Vir - go pu - er - pe - ra, Be - a - ta vis - ce - ra, De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um;

Bc

9

O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es. Tu coe - lum de - se - ris, Tu mun - do nas - ce - ris,  
 Vi - lis - hu - ma - ni - tas Fit ho - di - e. Ae - ter - nus nas - ci - tur, Im - men - sus ca - pi - tur,  
 De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um. Gau - de flos vir - gi - num, Gau - de spes ho - mi - num,

O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es. Tu coe - lum de - se - ris, Tu mun - do nas - ce - ris,  
 Vi - lis - hu - ma - ni - tas Fit ho - di - e. Ae - ter - nus nas - ci - tur, Im - men - sus ca - pi - tur,  
 De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um. Gau - de flos vir - gi - num, Gau - de spes ho - mi - num,

O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es. Tu coe - lum de - se - ris, Tu mun - do nas - ce - ris,  
 Vi - lis - hu - ma - ni - tas Fit ho - di - e. Ae - ter - nus nas - ci - tur, Im - men - sus ca - pi - tur,  
 De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um. Gau - de flos vir - gi - num, Gau - de spes ho - mi - num,

O na - te par - vu - le, Quam bo - nus es. Tu coe - lum de - se - ris, Tu mun - do nas - ce - ris,  
 Vi - lis - hu - ma - ni - tas Fit ho - di - e. Ae - ter - nus nas - ci - tur, Im - men - sus ca - pi - tur,  
 De - i cum o - pe - ra Dent fi - li - um. Gau - de flos vir - gi - num, Gau - de spes ho - mi - num,

17

No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les; No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les.  
Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e; Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e.  
Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um; Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um.

No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les; No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les.  
Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e; Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e.  
Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um; Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um.

No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les; No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les.  
Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e; Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e.  
Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um; Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um.

No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les; No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les.  
Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e; Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e.  
Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um; Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um.

No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les; No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les.  
Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e; Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e.  
Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um; Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um.

*Ritornelle*

9

No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les; No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les.  
Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e; Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e.  
Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um; Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um.

17

No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les; No - bis te ut mi - se - ris As - si - mi - les.  
Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e; Et re - i te - gi - tur Sub spe - ci - e.  
Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um; Fons la - vans cri - mi - num Pro - lu - vi - um.



## RECORD REVIEWS

## CHANT

*Chant in honour of Anglo Saxon Saints*  
Magnificat, Philip Cave 58' 58"  
Cantoris Griffin CGCD4004

The disappointment here is the pronunciation. We know roughly how Anglo-Saxon sounded; I imagine we know how Alcuin taught Charlemagne to speak Latin. From the two, it should be possible to make a guess how to sing the words here. Another grouse: it would help if the booklet numbered the texts and stated what sort of piece each was (antiphon, hymn, etc). That apart, there is much to be said for this anthology. The repertoire is off the beaten track, it is well sung, and worth getting. The editions are by David Hiley, so can be trusted. I presume the inclusion of a Magnificat is a sort of pun. CB

## 15th CENTURY

*Ockeghem Missa De plus en plus* The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham 72' 23"  
ASV CD GAU153  
+ Barbiereau *Osculetur me*; Binchois *De plus en plus*; Ockeghem *Credo de Village*, *Gaude Maria* (attrib); Pipelare *Salve Regina*.

This is the third in a projected series juxtaposing the masses and motets of Ockeghem with works by his contemporaries. The Clerks' Group now sing this difficult music with such ease and nonchalance that we can hear beyond the superficial virtuosity to the soul of this remarkable repertoire. Particularly impressive is the concluding *Gaude Maria*, a complex and demanding piece given here a splendidly extrovert performance. It is interesting to see Matthaeus Pipelare's work receiving further exposure in the wake of the recent Huelgas Ensemble disc devoted to his music, and the motet by Jacobus Barbiereau suggests that here is yet another Franco-Fleming well worth investigating. D. James Ross

*Sweet love, sweet hope: Music from a 15th-century Bodleian manuscript* The Hilliard Ensemble 70' 36"

Isis CD030

Music by Brollo, Dufay, Hasprois, Malbecque, Paulet, Prepositus Brixiensis, Rezon & anon.

The common factor to this music is its presence in Bodleian MS Canonici Misc. 213, which contains Dufay and much else besides. A facsimile was issued recently (sadly, I did not receive a review copy); this CD enables non-specialists to sample the delights of this marvellous collection of songs from the first half of the 15th century. The idea of libraries supporting CDs of their MSS is an excellent one, and the disc was launched in great style at the Bodleian in a room co-eval with the the manuscript. Musically, this suffers from a problem that

besets many recordings of this repertoire: my ears tire of the continual presence of a falsettist prominent at the top of the texture. The voice creates more tension than a soprano or tenor and almost invariably has less variety of tone, though some altos can overcome this better than others. Is this my problem or do others share it? So maybe short doses are recommended. But don't have no doses at all. The music is richly rewarding: congratulations to all concerned in making it available. CB

*Oswald von Wolkenstein Knightly Passions*  
Catherine Bott, Paul Agnew, Michael George, Simon Grant STBB, New London Consort, Philip Pickett 67' 05"  
L'Oiseau-Lyre 444 173-2

We have had a CD of music by the intriguing Oswald recently from Sequentia. Fortunately, only one item overlaps, so there is no excuse not to buy this too. David Fallows's notes make much of Oswald's sheer delight in words, something we can enjoy however minimal our knowledge of medieval German, and high-points of the disc are the amazing performances of some familiar French tongue-twisters, which are even more of a mouthful in German. If you haven't got the Sequentia disc and want guidance on what to buy, I prefer the *joi de vivre* here to the more serious approach of the rival group, though no-one can match Benjamin Bagby in the more declamatory style. CB

*Gothic Winds* Les Haulz et les Bas 53' 53"  
Christophorus CHR 77193

I heard Les Haulz et les Bas at Bruges in 1993 and was amazed: I had never heard a proficient *alta* ensemble before and the panache and improvisatory skill of this trio was absolutely outstanding (the fact that some of them also play jazz probably helps). This CD brings together various pieces from the 13th-15th centuries which shed light on what such an ensemble might have played, with a varied degree of reconstruction and improvisation. I don't believe the first track at all, unless I don't get a joke; but the rest is enlightening and enjoyable. This is a group to see, not just hear; so if they come near you (we have them in Cambridge next year) don't miss them. CB

## RENAISSANCE

*Byrd Mass for Five Voices Tallis The Lamentations of Jeremiah* The Sarum Consort, Andrew Mackay 66' 30"

ASV CD QS 6185

+Byrd *Infelix ego*; Tallis *O sacrum convivium*, *Sancte Deus*

It is a mark of how far recording of early choral music has come in the last twenty years that the first response to this disc may be to ask whether we need another recording

of these very well-known works. But this would be unfair to a disc on which the singing is consistently of a high standard, the expression varied and inventive and the recording vivid and sympathetic. At the risk of showing my age, the day was when that would have been quite enough! As it is, this budget disc is worth buying for Byrd's by no means over-recorded masterpiece *Infelix Ego*, and we should bear in mind that a disc in this price bracket is probably aimed not at the specialist poring over the density of *musica ficta* in the *Lamentations* (not always ones which I expected) but at the rapidly expanding number of general listeners with a growing interest in the early choral repertoire. D. James Ross

*G. Gabrieli Music for San Rocco* Gabrieli Consort & Players, Paul McCreesh 78' 15"  
Archiv 449 180-2

*Buccinate, Domine Deus meus*, *In ecclesiis*, *Jubilare a10*, *Magnificat a33*, *Misericordia tua*, *Suscipe*, *Timor et tremor*; *Sonatas 18, 19, 20, 21*; *Intonazioni 9 & 12 toni*; B. Barbarino *Ardens est cor meum*, *Audi dulcis anima mea*.

Also video Archiv 073 123-3

Taking their cue from Thomas Coryat, the Gabrieli Consort and Players seek to reconstruct the musical part of what must have been a service of music and readings at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in 1608. The contents of CD and video are the same, except for an extra organ toccata on the CD. The music is almost entirely by Giovanni Gabrieli, apart from two high solo motets by the falsettist Bartolomeo Barbarino, known to have taken part in 1608. These are sung with great aplomb by David Hurley; his performance is the highlight of the video, delivered from memory at the top of a grand staircase in what can only be described as Venetian high camp.

Many of the highlights of Gabrieli's 1615 posthumous publication are included here: *In ecclesiis*, *Buccinate*, *Jubilare Deo*. There are also some less familiar to me: *Misericordia tua a12* and *Domine Deus meus a6*. The latter, like the wonderful *Timor et tremor*, exploits low vocal sonorities. All of the singing is convincingly done by adult males, with excellent performances by all six falsettists. The instrumental playing is uniformly stunning, from the sonata *con tre violini* to the Sonata a 22. There is lots of competition among recordings of this music but this would certainly be my current choice. The programme ends with Hugh Keyte's reconstruction of the Magnificat a33 (expanded from that a17), bringing together all voices and instruments in a resounding testimony to Venetian sonority.

What of the video? I must confess to being an infrequent television viewer, and I found the visual images rather distracted from the music. Certainly, as a once-off it is fascinating: recorded mainly in San Rocco, there is the chance to view its Tintorettoes without neck strain – but one must do so at

the cameraman's pace. The temptation to look for parallels between art and music keeps one occupied, especially during *Timor et tremor*, which features Tintoretto's Crucifixion; however, Tintoretto is quite a bit earlier than Gabrieli. The constant move from modern choir (despite some fetching smocks from Simon Rattle's couturier) to 16th century paintings is a bit disorienting. But Venice always looks wonderful, and there are ample views of the city here, particularly during the opening *In ecclesiis*. The video has useful introductions to Tintoretto by Edwin Mullins and to the music by Paul McCreesh (the latter's words unfortunately rather drowned out by traffic noise); oddly, these come at the end of the video rather than at the beginning. It is of course a rare experience, as Paul McCreesh points out, to perform this music in its original location and, equally so, to view it thus from one's armchair. However, for repeated listening I would undoubtedly return to the CD.

Noel O'Regan

**Victoria Missa Dum compleretur** Choir of Westminster Cathedral, James O'Donnell  
Hyperion CDA66886 69' 51"  
+ Dum compleretur, Lauda Sion Salvatorem, Pange lingua, Popule meus, Veni Creator Spiritus, Veni Sancte Spiritus, Vexilla regis

This recording gives all one could ask for the performance of renaissance sacred choral music. The singing is full of life and vigour, but always tempered to the occasion. The motet *Dum compleretur* is sung with all the vigour which the text demands, in its description of one of the great dramatic moments in the New Testament – the coming of the Holy Spirit as a rushing wind. The parody mass is more restrained, but never stagnant: the individual parts rise, fall and intertwine, to create a substantial texture which is never more heavy than it is exciting. All the voices are bright and resonant. The men singing alone are well balanced; when the boys are added, the ear is always drawn to their lovely clear sound, but never loses the lower parts. The men's plainsong is polished and lyrical; the interplay between plainchant and four-part homophony in a main choir and a distant choir in *Popule meus* is beautifully conceived, and a good contrast to the complexity of the mass. The final piece, *Lauda Sion Salvatorem*, is exquisite. If I were a Catholic and lived in London, listening to this choir every day would bring me nearer to heaven. There are good notes, texts and translations (by Jon Dixon) for each piece.

Selene Mills

**Renaissance Love Songs from Germany, Spain, England and Italy** Hedos-Ensemble  
cpo 999 388-2 66' 15"

Hartmun Hein has an attractive voice, and sounds fine in the earlier parts of the repertoire here. But a sudden jump from Spain c.1500 to Dowland's *In darkness let me dwell* is too much for him; he is generally a somewhat placid lover and not given to despair. I'm not entirely convinced by the accompaniments, especially those for the 15th-century German pieces. A pleasant easy-going record, not too taxing.

CB

**La Spagna: Music at the Spanish Court** Amsterdam Loeki Stardust Quartet 67' 48"  
L'Oiseau-Lyre 444-537-2

Music by Aguilera de Heredia, Cabezon, Clavijo del Castillo, Cornago, Correa de Arauxo, Escobar, Ghiselin, Gombert, Ockeghem, Ortiz, de Silva, F. de la Torre, Victoria

Surely the best renaissance recorder disc out. A daringly-focused anthology – Spanish music within 50 years of 1500, played by four people on selections from nineteen recorders all by the same maker (Robert Marvin). Transcending this apparently small palette, the quartet offer a programme which carries sufficient musical conviction and energy to appeal to a much wider audience than simply recorder enthusiasts. The voice was held as the model for the members of the *basso* group of instruments to aspire to. The Gombert motet *Virgo Sancta Katerina* serves as but one example where the weaving melismas around the spacious cadence of the repeated motif rather places a challenge to present vocal groups to emulate. There are also the dazzlingly virtuosos *glosadas* and a bizarre battle piece; each is approached with fresh ideas. I am sometimes puzzled by the use of tremolo in the lower parts. These colorations seem to work best when used to dissolve tensions between a melodic crux and the pervading harmony. When the lower parts indulge, the harmony itself is weakened – the acoustic effect could be mistaken as having some other cause in a less illustrious group! Anyway, a superb recording which I especially recommend to viol players!

Stephen Cassidy

**Und wollt ihr hören neue Mär... Deutsche Tanzmusik, Liebes- und Scherzlieder des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts.** Knut Schoch T, Ensemble Galliarda Basel, Peter Croton lute Acanthus 94001 61' 21"  
Music by Brade, Forster, Friderici, Hassler, Heer, Hofhaimer, Isaac, Judenkünig, Newsidler, Praetorius, Senfl, Schein, Widmann

The repertoire on this recording is wide, represented at its extremes by Isaac and Brade. The treatment, however, is fairly uniform – recorder consort and tenor, with occasional lute. The voice has an attractive tone and resonance, but the style of delivery permanently straddles the fence (if there is one) between Lied and German chorale. Whilst this suited some of the songs, there is a limit in the musical weight which can be wrung from the words 'Fa-la-la'. The recorder playing is neat and produces a good smooth sound, though is sometimes a little strict – again especially in the more quixotic pieces, occasionally leaving some of the small notes starved and rhythmically unstable. The CD warms up as it progresses with some very satisfying chunky lute playing, and good renditions of the Brade pieces to finish.

Stephen Cassidy

## 17th CENTURY

**Biber Mystery Sonatas** [Nos. 1-7 & Passacaglia] Gabriela Demeterová vln, Jaroslav Tuma org 59' 33"  
Supraphon SU 3155-2 131

Gabriela Demeterová is an outstanding modern violinist, having won several of the major international prizes. Here she strikes a fine balance between gutsy modern playing and the inevitable compromises she has to make between richness of tone and using open strings (as required by Biber's extraordinary *scordature*). Most of what she does is stylish and clean; there are one or two strange readings of the original (she plays the bar of consecutive fourths in the solo *Passacaglia* which is surely a mistake) and very occasionally pushes her instrument too hard. Jaroslav Tuma's accompaniments are rather 18th century (at least!) for my liking; I will never be a fan of the *terce en taille* – or any other stop that allows me to hear the music in two keys at once for that matter! Too-deliberate mordents and prolonged, harmonically-inflected cadences are not what I associate with Biber at all and that alone would prevent me from buying this disc. That said, Demeterová's *Passacaglia* is excellent (the duff bar notwithstanding!) PS: Don't be put off by 'the performer as Transylvanian witch' cover illustration – there are photos inside to reveal a rather more serious side to her nature.

BC

**Dowland Complete Lute Works, vol 3** Paul O'Dette 65' 11"  
harmonia mundi HMU 907162

CDs have rarely been unwrapped as gleefully as this one, its arrival having been eagerly awaited since I reviewed vol 2 in June. Happily, this maintains the high standard of the previous volumes, and with three discs available one can now get a good sense of Dowland's stature as a composer and of the sensitive parcelling of the oeuvre into disc-sized units. The programmes carefully contrast and juxtapose so that tiny self-quotations are subtly revealed, whilst the lesser known or slighter works are not overshadowed by neighbouring pieces. Obvious highlights include a wonderfully exhilarating *King of Denmark's Galliard*, and a spacious rendering of *Semper Dowland semper dolens*, the quintessence of Elizabethan melancholia. Less obvious to non-lutenists are such delights as *Mr Langton's Galliard* with its ringing top notes and cunning metrical manipulation, and the beautiful pavan (Poulton 16) which shares the *Lachrymae* theme, and is thus often ignored as a pale imitation of the famous tune. Highly recommended.

Lynda Sayce

**Frescobaldi Partite e Toccate** Pierre Hantaï Auvidis Astrée E 8590 77' 44"  
Toccata 1, 3, 7, 8, Follia, Ruggiero (1615); Capriccio di Durezza (1624); Canzona 3, Toccata 1, 2, 7-9, 11, (1627); Balletto e ciaccona, Cento partite (1635)

To be able to decipher Frescobaldi's Toccatas is no mean feat. The four-square notation of block chords and elaborate *passaggi* belie the madrigalian freedom expected of the performer, in the same way that the seemingly arhythmic unmeasured preludes of Louis Couperin, friend of Frescobaldi's pupil, Froberger, require consummate fluency in the figural language of the period. Hantaï follows to the letter the performance



practice exhortations of Frescobaldi in his crucial Preface, the vagaries of which *Entstehungsgeschichte* are thankfully – although onerously – clarified in the notes. Hantai's impressive technique is complemented by his invention in arpeggiation and his ability not to lose sight of broader harmonics and voice-leading interests, so often girdled by virtuosic passagework, though the latter is handled logically with extreme rhythmic freedom. Some listeners may find that the overuse of agogic accents in the dances obscure their understanding of tempo relationships and changes; others may be bothered by more aggressive articulation and action noise in the releasing keys. The instrument is a copy of an original double-manual Italian from the Nuremberg *Germanisches Nationalmuseum*, which I take to be the one from c1650 (in the absence of details in the liner notes, this could be p.157 in my GNM catalogue) – a more subtle-sounding alternative to the oft-copied and better-known GNM treasure, the Grimaldi single.

Kah-Ming Ng

**Geoffroy Pièces de clavecin** Elise Goutet

Accord 205262 75' 03"

Allemande *La Réveuse* in F, Chaconne sur quatre notes in D, Passacaille in a, Suites in c, F & a (played in g) and Tombeau in c

Jean-Nicolas Geoffroy (d.1694) was an organist of Perpignan – where there are still several fine organs – at the end of the 17th century, a time when French music became highly decorated; it is often difficult to follow the suspensions and melodic tensions in the lute style unless they fall firmly and exactly on an accent after a silence or articulation, which helps to keep the momentum going. Most of the surviving harpsichords of the period are quite small and bright in tone, and it is more difficult to tie two notes together if they are too clear and positive, which is why the French used to use two thinner 8' strings for each note instead of the original Ruckers specification with one thicker string. This music works well in and after the Courante of the C minor Suite and in all the Suite movements with a clear musical beat and melody. The chaconnes (& passacaglias), of which there are six, are particularly fine musically and the harpsichord has a very pleasing sound and seems to suit the singing Saraband of the F minor Suite and pieces like it.

Michael Thomas

**Jenkins The Mirrour and Wonder of his Age: Consort Music.** Fretwork, Paul Nicholson  
Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45230 2 1 78' 15"

A disc to be hailed, welcomed, applauded, and widely bought. Perhaps now there will be no more histories of music written omitting the name of Jenkins. Because his music (mostly limited to viols and violins) was performed only by amateurs, because he wrote nothing for keyboard, and because it needed the hard labour of scholarship (scoring-up from parts) it has awaited this sort of recorded performance to demonstrate to those myriads who are not viol players what a wonderful experience awaits them in the music of this carpenter's son.

Fretwork have varied the contents to make the experience much like that of a concert: full consorts are mixed with trio-sonatas for two trebles and bass, or treble and two basses, plus solo lute pieces, and duets for bass viols. There are nearly 80 minutes of music here, much of it of sublime quality, and all wonderfully played. Viol players will love the variety of dynamics and articulation which Fretwork always bring to the music they play. To convert the doubters, play them the great 6-part fantasy in A minor, the so-called 'All in a garden green' fantasy a4, or the In Nomine in E minor. And they will join you in eagerly waiting for the next in the series. Bravo! Robert Oliver

**Landi Il Sant'Alessio** Maryseult Wiecezorek, Patricia Petibon, Mhairi Lawson, Sophie Marin-Degor, Stéphanie Révidat SSSSS, Steve Dugardin, Katalin Karolyi, Armand Gavrilides AAA, Christopher Josey T, Nicolas Rivenq, Clive Bayley & Bertrand Bontoux BBB, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 129' 03" 2 CDs  
Erato 0630 14340 2

This is the first recording of Stefano Landi's Roman religious opera of 1630. It tells the story of Saint Alexis, who according to legend leaves his wife and family to pursue an ascetic life of solitude. Plagued by numerous doubts, he returns to his father's house disguised as a beggar and lives this way for seventeen years in a cupboard under the stairs. He eventually dies of hypothermia, and when his true identity is revealed (his dead hand clutches a note written just before he expires), there is great lamentation but also great rejoicing as Alexis is lifted up into heaven and his sanctity is proclaimed. This bizarre and unlikely story was incredible even in Landi's day, so when Rospigliosi was commissioned to write the libretto, he milked it for all the entertainment value it was worth. Interleaved with the concerned and respectable citizens of Alexis' family, and Alexis' own anxious self-preoccupation, the pages Martio and Curtio appear at regular intervals for comic double-acts. The devil, disguised as a hermit, plants a seed of doubt in Alexis' mind about his wife's fidelity during his absence, while at the same time his wife is given doubts about Alexis' fidelity. There is a hilarious scene in which Martio, shivering in the cold forest, is tempted by the devil (again in disguise) to come to his house where there is a room 'as warm as you like'. Martio struggles with the devil, who turns into a bear. And so on. Contemporary engravings depict elaborate special effects, such as the fires of hell and the machinery for transport between heaven and earth. And yet there is much pathos in this story to move the heart: the opera aims not only to improve and to amuse, but to span the range of human experience in the way a well-constructed modern soap-opera might set out to do.

In the accompanying 119-page booklet, the context is set by an earnest historical study which, in its elaborate and pious prose, seems strangely disconnected from the opera and fails to do it justice. Happily,

the recorded performance is splendid in every way. It captures every element of the anxious depth of Alexis' journey, of the slapstick comedy, the solid citizenry, the snares of the devil, the lamentations of the family, the heavenly rejoicing, and the victory of Rome. Alessio is beautifully sung by Patricia Petibon, while the alto Steve Dugardi is perfect as the comic and histrionic Martio. Clearly much dramatic thought was put into the production, and it pays off. The orchestra is scored for three violins and two groups of multiple continuo instruments, although in this production only one of each continuo instrument is used. The well-known continuo company of Stephen Stubbs on chitarrone and baroque guitar and Erin Headley on her luscious lirone, here joined by harpist Siobhan Armstrong, is by turns sensitive and exciting in all the right places. Adding a recorder to the string band nicely softens some of Landi's somewhat strange (shall we say 'haunting') harmonies in the sinfonie.

Owing to the length of the score, some cuts were made in the recorded production, but as the note in the booklet correctly suggests, this was done in a way so as not 'to affect the work's dramatic intensity and structural balance in any way'. In other words, some of the more boring and repetitive recitative was omitted.

As Selene Mills and I made a complete edition of this opera and performed parts of it five years ago, permit me a quibble over one letter. In Alexis' beautiful lament 'O welcome death' (Act 2 Scene 7), it makes more theological sense that death unlocks 'il viver secondo', a second life, and not 'il viver fecondo' (a fecund, or fertile life). This must be a mistransliteration of the printed score (the usual *s* and *f* problem), as *fecondo* not only appears in the booklet and translated as such in German, French and English, but is also sung. There are a few other, less significant, mistransliterations.

This production has exceeded my high expectations, and those who can afford this two-disc set will find a great deal to entertain and impress them. William Clocksin

**Monteverdi Vespers (1610)** April Cantelo, Angela Beale, Paul Esswood, Ian Partridge, John Elwes, David Thomas SSATTB, Louis Halsey Singers, London Cornett & Sackbutt Ensemble, London Bach Orchestra, Louis Halsey. 95' 05" (2 CDs) rec 1970  
BBC Radio Classics 15656 91877

This is **not** suitable to be anyone's only recording of the work, but that said, it is a fascinating document. Who, for instance, would have thought that a recording of 1970 would get right the basic (but almost-universally misunderstood) point that small-scale ensembles do not need a string instrument to underline the bass? The musicological mind behind the performance was that of Basil Lam, an unjustly forgotten influence on early music in the 1960s and 1970s. He didn't try to record the work with solo voices (and with those sopranos, it is just as well); but there is much to enjoy. Tempo relationships, for instance, are not always those that are now conventional.



There are lute accompaniments for some solos (written out, of course: lute continuo playing had not developed then – Basil's MS lute parts were used for years thereafter, and got more and more tattered, since they were on larger sheets of paper than the rest of the parts), and he did not resist having a bassoon in *Laetatus sum* (played by David Munrow). It also sounds as if Christopher Hogwood's organ part is at times written out. It is for the tenors that this is particularly memorable; try *Duo Seraphim* (where they are joined by David Thomas) and *Audi coelum*. Some years later, I played my first *Vespers* under Louis Halsey. Here he produces a performance that was a step ahead of what others were doing with the work; we need to listen with historical ears to some of it, but parts work very well. CB  
For a more recent recording, see the list of Virgin reissues on p. 23.

**Pachelbel Keyboard Music** Sharon Gould  
hpscd 57' 33"

VIF VCRD 008

Aria 5 & 6 (*Hexachordum Apollinis*), Ciacona in C & D, Fantasia in d Fugue in a, b & C, Suites in b & e

I have long been a devotee of Pachelbel's keyboard music so I warmly welcome this very good recording. As Sharon Gould mentions in her notes, it is lamentable that Pachelbel is known to a wide public only for his hugely popular 'canon' and that his sacred vocal and keyboard music are so seldom presented. Pachelbel excelled in composing variations and we have some fine examples on this disc – the *Aria quinta* and *Aria sexta* from *Hexachordum Apollinis* (1699) and the Ciaconas in C major and D major. Pachelbel often lets the melody drop and keeps the harmonic scheme going into broken chords and scale passages, but the inner melody can always be brought out by careful articulation or accentuation (this music is, of course, particularly suitable for the clavichord). Sharon Gould keeps up the same tempo throughout each set of variations so that scale passages become very fast and virtuosic; but I feel she could have had more give and take in the tempi and perhaps more freedom in the cadences. In other places, however, we hear her imaginative use of different colouring of the textures by varying the sustained length of key harmonic or melodic notes. This recording shows us how the music of an imaginative composer is enhanced by the performance of an imaginative player.

Michael Thomas

**The Art of Improvising: Jacobean Masque & Theatre Music** The Extempore String Ensemble dir George Weigand, Manfred Harras rec. 67' 28"

Acanthus 94003

Music by, Adson, Bateman, Brade, Campion, Coprario, Johnson, Lupo, Morley

Not exactly a complement to Peter Walls's book (see page 2), since what we have here is not so much how music was played at the masques themselves but how a professional consort might have used the tunes as entertainment and background music. As such, this is immensely attractive; the group has

been extemporising for twenty years now and knows exactly what can and cannot be done. The six players produce a wide variety of textures, though sometimes the vertical emphasis of the plucked instruments leads to a slightly pedestrian rhythm. There is, of course, a fundamental inconsistency in listening to an improvisation more than once; but it is good to hear this neglected practice exercised so stylishly. CB

**Great European Organs No. 42.** Kristian Olesen plays the organ of Roskilde Cathedral, Denmark 64' 33"

Priory PRCD 444

Music by Buxtehude, J. Lorents, J. Praetorius, Scheidemann, Schildt, Sweelinck

The reconstruction (by Marcussen, 1991) of the 1654 organ in Roskilde Cathedral has recreated an organ of the utmost importance, capable of authentic interpretation of the North German organ school of the 17th century, culminating in Buxtehude. A steady flow of recordings testifies to the musical prominence of this instrument. It is not large, by some contemporary North German standards, but its 34 stops and 3 manuals, allows a wide tonal palette. Unlike some of the previous 41 instruments, the inclusion of Roskilde in Priory's *Great European Organs* series must be undisputed. The performer is the organist of the cathedral and inspiration for the reconstruction, Kristian Olesen, playing a wonderful selection of pieces more or less contemporary with the organ, including Schildt's delightful choral fantasia on *Herzlich lieb hab' ich dich, o Herr* (also included on a CD reviewed last month). This is one of four pieces in the choral fantasia mode, with others by Jacob Praetorius, Sweelinck and Buxtehude. Olesen makes very effective use of the registrational resources of the organ in these superb pieces, whilst still retaining their overall sense of architecture. And the registrational possibilities on this organ are also architectural, with a pronounced three dimensional difference between the *Ryg-positive*, close to the listener on the front of the gallery, the *Brysg-positive*, in a small enclosable case partly shielded from the listener (just playing above the organist's head) and the main *Manualvaerk*. Olesen's playing is quite excellent, avoiding the excesses of some interpreters, and displaying a real affinity with the music and the instrument – he allows both instrument and music to speak. For those of you who do not know Buxtehude's massive and magnificent setting of four verses of the *Te Deum* (his longest piece, at about 15 minutes), the CD is worth having for that alone.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

**La Passion selon Saint Matthieu: Manuscrit d'Uppsala 1667** Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester 74' 07"

Accord 205482

Anyone familiar with the Passion settings of Theile and Sebastiani will instantly recognise the style of this anonymous work. It consists of extended passages of accompanied recitative, interspersed with instrumental *sinfonie* and chorale settings for soprano and

viols and brief choruses. I can find nothing to fault the performances at all: the voices ring bright and clear, the dark timbres of viols, coupled with theorbo, harpsichord and organ (with a regal stop) continuo, lend a melancholic air to the whole. The revelation is the chorales, in which Caroline Pelon soars above the viols with poignant grace. A most moving experience. BC

## LATE BAROQUE

**Bach Cantatas, vol. V** [BWV 12, 18, 61]

Juliana Baird, Drew Minter, Benjamin Butterfield, James Weaver SATB, American Bach Soloists, Jeffrey Thomas 52' 40"

Koch 3-7332-2 H1

Jeffrey Thomas works from Berkeley on America's West Coast where there is a well-established consortium of Bach singers and players; they have recorded the B Minor Mass and a specially managed disc of Bach's Italian transcriptions besides a series of discs of the master's early cantatas, of which this is the fifth. If there is a 'state of the art' way of managing Bach in 1996, then this is it. All has been carefully considered, all very adequately prepared and managed, and the whole series is invested with a unique sense of authority. Perhaps Bach's performances of this music in Mülhausen's *Marienkirche* or in the Weimar *Hofcapelle* had less tidy detail and less beautifully-balanced overall effect, but maybe he could not have hoped for that. Most impressive is the clear dedication to Bach of all those involved; only the Japanese seem to rival the Americans in this respect these days.

Stephen Daw

**Bach Markus Passion** Rogers Covey-Crump Evangelist, Gordon Jones Jesus, Connor Burrowes, David James, Paul Agnew, Teppo Tolonen SATB, The Ring Ensemble of Finland, European Union Baroque Orchestra, Roy Goodman 101' 01" 2 CDs

Musica Oscura 070970

Simon Heighes's reconstruction is, whilst interesting and on the whole well-performed, inevitably patchy in overall effect. First, to use Keiser's *St Mark* recitatives, which had probably been composed as early as 1710, risks obvious charges of stylistic unsuitability; there may be little that is certainly closer, but the difference between Keiser's language of recitative and Bach's is readily apparent, though each is wonderful in its own way. Second, there is a serious problem concerning key. It seems extremely odd to hear an allegedly Bach Passion whose first half remains so low in spirit as well as low in pitch. Part 2 works much better. Third, there is the matter of effective continuity; this mostly works well, but at three points it doesn't seem to me to work at all.

Nevertheless, there are some very positive aspects. The expressive boy soloist Connor Burrowes reminds us that Bach used trebles, not sopranos, almost entirely. The other soloists sing well, although the main male singers, including the four Hilliards, sing in a manner that I find just too detached. The young orchestra and the even more remarkable young chorus play and sing

well, but there seems to be some degree of confusion concerning how best to treat chorales and how most appropriately to dispose the continuo. However, this is all very interesting.

Stephen Daw  
The reconstruction is published by King's Music.

**Bach Johannes-Passion** Evelyn Lear, Hertha Töpfer, Ernst Haefliger, Hermann Prey, Keith Engen SATBarB, Münchener Bach-Chor & Orchester, Karl Richter 128'57" 2 discs Deutsche Grammophon 453 007-2 (rec 1964)

Karl Richter's recordings of the Passion settings of Bach were made over 30 years ago: this one dates from 1964. In their day they seemed very impressive, with the drama clearly kept within conventional bounds and the expressive romantic warmth deriving, as it then seemed, directly from the text. The choir was quite well trained, the orchestra carefully balanced (partly by the engineers!) and much tasteful work, notably the sincerity of the tenor Evangelist Ernst Haefliger, whose authority, of its kind, rests unrivalled. But our ideas of appropriate style have moved on in thirty years, and now I regret finding the chorales treated sentimentally, the arias operatically in a more modern way than I then thought that Bach might have wanted his music to sound. Richter paid tribute to a certain view of Bach's faith. Perhaps his view was limited. Perhaps we, who belong to a less religiously-conscious society, nevertheless understand Bach better. This remains a useful record.

Stephen Daw

**Bach Weihnachts-Oratorium** Lisa Larsson, Elisabeth von Magnus, Christoph Prégardien, Klaus Mertens SATB, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 143'25" 2 CDs Erato 0630-14635-2

This really arrived too late for a review; but to delay mentioning it until after Christmas would be unhelpful. In connection with the subject discussed on p. 5, it is notable that the original performance material allows for four singers (apart from a separate part for the Echo in Part IV), this recording has 25. I found the opening chorus distinctly unmusical, with its equal stress on *Jauchzet, frohlocket, auf, preiset die Tage* and its excessively thrown-away *-ket* rather like a parody of the 'early-music' style of singing. It is not always so bad, but this manner is associated with 3/8, which happens to be the most common time signature for choruses in the work. The tyranny of the bar-line! The chorales, solos and instrumental playing are less afflicted, so otherwise this is a fine performance. But it seems to be very much the product of a performing orthodoxy that is instrument-based.

CB

**Bach Trio Sonatas** Musica Pacifica (Judith Linsenberg rec, Elizabeth Blumenstock vln, Elisabeth Le Guin vlc, Edward Parmentier hpscd) 70'17" Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45192 2

It's strange how neglected pieces suddenly provoke intense interest: Bach's trio sonatas

for organ have recently been subject to the scrutiny of three groups. The Palladian Ensemble recorded three, Robert King's Hyperion disc uses various instrumentations; Musica Pacifica opt for the same line-up throughout – recorder, violin and a continuo (cello and harpsichord). This constancy might seem like an ideal recipe for boredom at an early stage. However, the variety of playing is such that it never becomes an issue; rather, one is left stunned by Bach's technical virtuosity and, without there being anything to criticise about the performances, a clear appreciation of just how close to their limitations he pushes the instruments. There are every so often telltale signs of the violinist playing down so as not to drown the recorder, but is that such a bad thing? Surely chamber music is all about letting the individual voices be heard, and if this can be achieved without resorting to biasing the microphones, so much the better.

BC

**Bach on the Lute IV: Suites for solo cello** 3, 5 & 6 Nigel North 71'30" Linn CKD 055

This completes Nigel North's project to record all the Bach unaccompanied violin and cello works in new lute transcriptions. The present disc includes cello suites 3, 5 and 6, which are movingly performed and beautifully recorded, as one has come to expect from the previous discs. With the complete set now available it is clear what a substantial and lasting contribution North has made to the lute repertoire. All of the works are sensitively transcribed with Bach's and his contemporaries' precedents borne carefully in mind, so there are no stylistic infelicities, and a completely new dimension is given to these familiar works. I have never been able to listen to them on violin or cello without the sense of technical battles contained within them being uncomfortably close to the surface. The feel of an instrument being pushed to its limits is largely absent here, particularly in the cello suites, and some drama is lost as a result, but without exception the works gain from the rich harmonic possibilities of the lute, and from the spaciousness and grandeur of the interpretations. North is to be congratulated on an outstanding achievement, as is Linn for having the courage to release four discs of transcriptions in this increasingly dogmatic age. Will any publisher follow Linn's lead and make them available to other players?

Lynda Sayce

**Bach in Berlin: Flute music composed for Frederick the Great** Jed Wentz fl, Musica ad Rhenum 56'37"

Vanguard Classics 99130

C.P.E. Bach Sonata in C H.573 (fl, vln, bc); J.S. Bach Sonata from The Musical Offering; C.H. Graun Sonata in D (2 fl, bc); Janitsch Quartet in D (2 fl, vla, bc)

Jed Wentz, an American baroque flautist who has settled in Utrecht and has most especially studied tempo and metre in 18th-century music, leads this appealing record with humour, grace and dependability, despite some (by today's usual standards)

somewhat rapid tempi. His companion flautist Marion Moonen and his continuo colleagues support him very well, and his string duettist Manfred Kraemer sounds more at home (by far) on the viola than he does on the violin, but others may disagree. The zest with which the prettier movements are delivered is attractive at first; however, I did begin to wonder how sweetly and lyrically Wentz really can play as the recording proceeded; it's just all a trifle snatched.

Stephen Daw

**F. Couperin La Sultane** Jay Bernfeld gamba Capriccio Stravagante, Skip Sempé 61'17" deutsche harmonia mundi 05472 77315 2  
Trio sonatas *La Sultane* & *La Superbe*; 2 suites for gamba; *Le Dodo*

This is an enjoyable disc (including some music which is not generally available) excitingly played with the extravagance of gesture one would naturally expect. This is particularly appropriate for *La Sultane*, a marvellous piece for two violins, two bass viols and continuo, with a solemn, polyphonic opening, and then alternating fast-slow-fast movements, giving plenty of opportunity (fully taken) for contrasts of languishing tempi and rubato, and vigorous incisive playing. Your enjoyment of the recording will depend on how much you like Jay Bernfeld's performances of the *Pièces de violes*. It's not my favourite performance; despite his brilliance and expressiveness his playing is full of mannerisms, some of which I found bothersome. I prefer dance movements such as the *Allemande* and *Gavotte*, for example, to be played with stricter tempo, particularly when the latter is marked *sans lenteur*. He likes sometimes to emphasize final notes, a good effect once, but tiresome on repetition. He takes some liberties of which I totally approved, such as putting chords on the final notes of the *Courante*, and others of which I did not, like leaving out the final bars of *La chemise blanche* (which he plays brilliantly) the first time, so that it can be added like a coda to the repeat. I enjoyed the spontaneity of the ensemble, which carries one along, despite (or perhaps because of) imperfections; the CD feels much more like a performance than a recording.

Robert Oliver

**Handel Joseph and his Brethren** Connor Burrowes, Yvonne Kenny, Catherine Denley, James Bowman, John Mark Ainsley, Michael George TrSmSATB, Choir of New College Oxford, Choir of The King's Consort, The King's Consort, Robert King 164'02" Hyperion CDA67171/3 3 CDs

The least-popular of Handel's oratorios, though the composer performed it often enough: there has never been a Novello vocal score and this is its first recording. Winton Dean wrote 'The oratorio opens with a promise that is never redeemed'. That does not, however, justify ignoring so many good isolated movements, even if the work as a whole lacks adequate shape and the librettist is no Jennens, though a perusal of Ruth Smith's study (details in *EMR* 23 p. 3) may give the historically-informed some



ideas as to what he might have been trying to do. So it is a piece whose use as background music can be justified; but if you play it thus, you will frequently find it demanding to be fore-ground. The King team present the best possible case for the work. Perhaps it is only for real Handel enthusiasts, but if you are given it for Christmas, don't sell it off without hearing it (and then you won't want to). CB

**Handel Harpsichord Suites 1720 & 1733**  
Olivier Baumont 63' 27"  
Erato 0630 14886 2  
HWV 426, 432, 435, 437, 481, 490, 562, 574 577

This is one of those records which one can relax and enjoy for the natural way it flows. In England, one often hears Handel played in a rather rhythmically-staid way with the interest coming from the harmonic modulations. Mr Baumont seems to respect the playful beauty of Handel and his music, (which he wrote down after he improvised; showing a generous spirit and a desire to communicate) with amazing fullness, force, energy. We are reminded of Scarlatti who, upon seeing a masked performer, said it could only be the famous Saxon or the devil. Mr Baumont sees the brilliant side of Handel which suits his own technique. He plays the quite bright harpsichords by Dumont, Couchet and an Italian 'FA'. The Smith harpsichord in Oxford associated with Handel has quite a small tone and needs very clear playing and phrasing. It is not possible here to discuss each piece separately, but the Saraband and Variations in F major and the Capriccio in that key are very fine. This is a record that all people interested in Handel, and the reputation he has abroad, should have. Michael Thomas

**Leclair Sonatas for Flute** Christoph Huntgeburth fl., Mitzi Meyerson hpscd, Hildegard Perl gamba 61' 11  
ASV CD GAU 158

Although primarily regarded as the founder of the French 18th-century violin school, Jean-Marie Leclair's output includes a substantial number of pieces 'qui peut se jouer sur la Flute Allemande', the result of his collaboration with the French flautist Michel Blavet, with whom he performed frequently at *Les Concerts Spirituels* during the 1730s. This disc selects five of the most idiomatic sonatas from his op. 2 and op. 9 (on occasion Leclair even offers an alternative version for the flute) – all inventive and substantial works which demonstrate his remarkably successful synthesis of the French and Italian styles; the slow movements call for tasteful *sensibilité* whilst the faster dance movements draw on both the Italian sonata idiom and Lullian dance style. Christoph Huntgeburth's performances are instantly appealing, showing an extremely assured and well-developed understanding of the demands of the music; this is, surprisingly, his debut recording for ASV – as a soloist he is better known on the continent. He is backed up by a consistently imaginative, sensitive and characterful continuo team and the ensemble playing is excellent throughout. Highly recommended. Marie Ritter

**B. Marcello Sonatas for Recorder and B. C., Sonatas for Cello and B. C.** Collegium pro Musica (Stefano Bagliano rec), Enrico Bronzi vlc, Antonio Fantinuoli vlc cont, Claudio Tumeo lute, Piero Barbareschi hpscd 72' 19"  
Dynamic CDS 155

Rec. nos. 2, 3, 9, 10, 12; vlc nos. 1, 3-6

A direct contemporary of Vivaldi and Albinoni in Venice, Benedetto Marcello has been described as 'more famous than appreciated'. The works on this disc show a distinct understanding of both recorder and cello, offering the soloists plenty of opportunity for virtuoso display, as well as some expressive and harmonically adventurous moments; the F major sonata (No. 12) for recorder and continuo is also remarkable for its attractive extended *Ciaccona*, the only piece to break away from the usual four movement pattern. I was impressed by the technical and musical capabilities of both Stefano Bagliano and Enrico Bronzi, but the overall effect of the recording is somewhat disappointing; the instrumental balance is uneven, particularly in the recorder sonatas, where the harpsichord is rather trenchant and too close for comfort; extraneous noises also creep in from time to time. The opportunity for variety in the continuo afforded by the use of lute and harpsichord is in itself a bonus, but more subtlety within each texture was sadly missing, particularly from the harpsichord, and there seemed little real musical unity from the continuo as a whole. If these performances left me personally a little cold, there is much to enjoy in the inventiveness and character of Marcello's music and I hope this recording will encourage performers to explore his instrumental repertoire more extensively.

Marie Ritter

**Scarlatti - Hasse Salve Regina, Cantatas & Motets** Deborah York, James Bowman, Crispian Steele-Perkins, The King's Consort, Robert King 77' 02"  
Hyperion CDA66875  
Hasse *Salve regina*; A. Scarlatti *Infirmata vulnerata*, *O di Betlemme altera*, *Su le sponde del Tebro*;  
D. Scarlatti *Salve Regina*

This interesting programme alternates sacred and secular music and, if nothing else, demonstrates the virtual interchangeability of their idioms. Accompaniments range from a trio sonata ensemble to full string orchestra via the quartet with continuo and trumpet (played with both taste and panache by Crispian Steele-Perkins) that is used for A. Scarlatti's *Su le sponde*. Hard though Deborah York tries, she cannot persuade me of the attractions of this work, particularly when compared to the settings of the *Salve Regina* which flank it. These feature a compelling blend of rich harmony, elegant melody and vocal fireworks which James Bowman dispenses with a typical combination of heroism and restraint. He also savours the minor key angst of *Infirmata vulnerata* while his soprano colleague is most charming in the concluding Christmas cantata (A. Scarlatti again). A collection of almost constant attractiveness, this, and there's 77 minutes of it!

David Hansell

**Telemann Essercizii Musici** Camerata Köln 235' 55" 4 CDs  
deutsche harmonia mundi 05472 77361 2

Yet another mammoth undertaking from Camerata Köln – just under four hours of solo and trio sonatas (mainly in four movements, though some have only three) played by some of the leading European instrumentalists. Recorded over two weeks in 1994 and 1995, it is amazing that they manage to sustain the high standards they set themselves. I was also impressed that they project very clear individual voices in their respective solos and yet blend seemingly effortlessly in the various trio combinations. The continuo group includes theorbo and organ, as well as harpsichord and a stringed bass (sometimes cello, sometimes gamba), even in the pieces with obbligato keyboard (Trio three with two gambas and two harpsichords is simply marvellous). An astonishing collection of pieces played with agility and considerable flair. Highly recommended. BC

**Tuma Stabat mater** Prague Madrigalists, Pavel Baxa 61' 34"  
Matous MK 0801-2 931  
Tuma *Lytaniae Lauretanae*, *Partita in c*, *Stabat mater*, *Capricornus Dixit Dominus*, *Iustorum animae*, *Magnificat*

If I'd been played this setting of the Lorentine Litany or the *Stabat mater* at a 'Guess the composer' quiz, I would have plumped for Zelenka, for there is much here to remind one of his contrapuntal ingenuity and harmonic daring. The Prague Madrigalists, accompanied where required by a stylish string ensemble, are reduced to just eight singers throughout the disc, of which the women are particularly impressive. The string *partita* is rather esoteric, ranging from Fuxian counterpoint to Haydnesque dances. The CD is completed by three pieces by Samuel Capricornus, now claimed as a leading native composer by Slovakia. Anyone familiar with Le Parlement de Musique's disc devoted to Capricornus will enjoy the two *brevior* psalm settings and a delightful motet for SSAA, which was the highlight of the set for me. Another enterprising release from Matous – I look forward to hearing more. BC

**Vivaldi Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione, op. 8**, Enrico Onofri vln, Paolo Grazzi ob, Il giardino armonico, Giovanni Antonini 134' 25" (2 CDs)  
Teldec Das alte Werk 0630-14619-2

Anyone suffering from sea sickness should stay well away from this re-issued set: *La tempesta di mare* is positively stomach-churning and typical of the effect-driven performances. Paolo Grazzi's clean and poised accounts of the two oboe concertos added to the *Cimento* set contrast markedly with Enrico Onofri's fiery violin. The cadenzas the latter improvises owe more to Locatelli and Tartini than the booklet notes concede, but they seem entirely appropriate. I was not always convinced by the dramatic changes in tempo and/or dynamic level, but that is simply a matter of personal taste. What they do, they do well. BC



**Cantates françaises** Jennifer Smith, Mireille Delunsch, Thierry Félix SSBAR, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski 60' 08"

Archiv 449 144-2

Blamont *Didon*; Clérambault *Le Soleil*; Stuck *Héraclite et Démocrite*

Three of the lesser-known pieces from the repertoire of *Les Concerts Spirituels* are represented here, each in its own way a little masterpiece and deserving to be better known. The most unusual undoubtedly is *Héraclite et Démocrite*, published by the Italian cellist Jean-Baptiste Stuck (or Batistin) as one of his *Cantates françaises* in 1711: not really a cantata, since instead of a plot it has a philosophical argument on optimism (Democritus) v pessimism (Heraclitus). The latter's first air, *Pleurez mes tristes yeux*, is pure Corelli, but when the protagonists step out of character in their second airs, the music becomes more French. The performance is typical of the record: at first it felt stunning, and remained so in the slower movements, when we can hear some lovely playing from (among others) the flautists Kate Clark and Charles Zelby, the gambist Juan-Manuel Quintana and the oboist Jean-Philippe Thiébaud. But in the quick ones, it becomes sometimes merely polished, perhaps a bit mechanical and even relentless. Listening to some of the storm movements, for example (there is at least one in every piece) I was usually excited and swept away at the beginning but not really sorry when they ended. This may be partly due to the sometimes ungrateful violin sound: were the instruments a bit unhappy at the otherwise commendable pitch of 392? The acoustic of Studio 103 at Radio France cannot have helped either, and surely bears little relation to that of the *Salle des Suisses*, where all of these pieces were heard at *Les Concerts Spirituels* in the 1720s.

The Clérambault, I suspect, is the piece which will wear the best, despite being on a rather conventional 'Court Ode' text. The music is on a higher plain of inspiration in general and Mireille Delunsch certainly possesses a voice which we will hear more (although I could do without the occasional 'chest-voice' effects). Jennifer Smith is also on fine form, and finds a moving *fragilité* at the end of *Didon*. Thierry Félix possesses a fine instrument, but probably feels more at home on the stage. His attempts at an intimate 'half-voice' are not very convincing. It is a little disappointing that Minkowski, in the vanguard of the current French baroque, is apparently not yet ready to grasp the nettle of old pronunciation of his own language (while it is now *de rigueur* for French music in Latin), nor to ask his singers (who certainly possess the requisite technique) to adopt a more flexible approach to the use of constant vibrato. In the current state of French baroque, this record is nonetheless in the A stream. *Graham O'Reilly*

**The French Harpsichord** Rosalind Halton 90' 31" 2 discs

ABC Classics *Antipodes* 454 502-2

F. Couperin: 8<sup>ème</sup> & 13<sup>ème</sup> ordres in b, *Le tic-toc-choc* (18<sup>ème</sup> ordre), *L'amphibie* (24<sup>ème</sup> ordre); L. Couperin *Suite* in G; Le Roux: *Suite* in D; L. Rossi: *Passacaille* del Seig' Louigi

This is a most enjoyable record which makes one want to sit back and relax. The harpsichord has a bell-like tone with a clear attack on each note, and the sheer flow of the music overcomes its slight lack of melodic quality. This is a sensitive player who picks up and reflects the mood of each piece and plays it with understanding and clarity. The French *Passacaille* is given commendable importance in the programme with excellent performances of François Couperin's *L'Amphibie* and the B minor pieces from 8<sup>ème</sup> Ordre as well as the melancholic grandeur of Louis Couperin's *passacaille* which ends the Suite in G major. Rosalind Halton also includes a very beautiful little *passacaille* probably by Luigi Rossi, the Italian who came to Paris in the mid-17th century and (as she explains in the notes) may have been instrumental in the introduction of the Italian *passacaglia* into the French harpsichord repertoire. I liked very much her playing of F. Couperin's *Tic-Toc-Choc*, taken at a tempo which allows the melody to come out and not rushed off as it usually is – a very good recording and very good notes. *Michael Thomas*

**Music for Holy Week at the Chapel of the Dukes of Braganza, c1736** A Capella Portuguesa, Owen Rees 73' 28"

Hyperion CDA66867

Music by Fernando & Francisco Almeida, Besson, Esquivel, Giorgi, A. Lobo, Malagaray, Mendes, Morata, Rebelo, Victoria

What wonderful discoveries Owen Rees and Bernadette Nelson have revealed in the three volumes so far recorded of Portuguese polyphonic music. This one is no exception, and the music is well-served by the musicality of the singers, who have evidently built up a good understanding and 'house-style'. In fact the programme, a 'reconstruction' (shudder) of Holy Week at the Braganza seat, the Vila Viçosa, in 1736, is more heterogeneous than first appears. When in 1640 the 8th Duke became King João IV (he who probably did not compose *Crux fidelis*), he took his entire library to Lisbon. Some was copied and returned in 1735/6 (the rest was lost in the 1755 earthquake), hence the putative date. Three distinct styles rub shoulders: real 16th-century polyphony (local and imported), 17th-century 'pseudo'-polyphony, and 18th-century *Stile antico*. Most of the best pieces on the record come from the middle category, especially the double choir Lamentations of Almeida – seriously stunning music which I hope Mapa Mundi will rapidly add to their Portuguese list (Bernadette Nelson's editions of the Lobo, Rebelo and Castro pieces are already available). My regret as I listen to this in many ways most enjoyable record is the opportunity that has been missed to reconstruct not just a programme but a performing style consistent with the given date. It is true there is a harp (the excellent Frances Kelly) and an organ. But the harp only plays in four pieces, the organ (inaudibly) in two; moreover, neither play in the older repertoire. Surely in 1736 they played in everything. And shouldn't there be at least a bassoon too. Problems of vocal

style are avoided by doing everything in general purpose 20th-century English. Choral sound is the norm (given that English singers are so wonderful, why are so many choir directors afraid to ask them to sing alone?) and keys are chosen to fit the usual SATB group – no boring details about original pitch, voicing or (perish the thought) *chiavette* are allowed to intrude. What is the point of a historical reconstruction which is not historical? Tuning is odd too. Whatever system the singers are (instinctively?) working to, it contains fifths and major thirds which sound anachronistically wide, and the harp's system is not the same. But enough carping. Within their chosen parameters, the performances are communicative and committed. A disc to enjoy. *Graham O'Reilly*

## CLASSICAL

**Graf Six Quartets for Flute, Violin, Viola and Violoncello** Konrad Hünteler fl, Festicities Quartet 74' 39"  
MDG 311 0570 7

Friedrich Hartmann Graf (1727-1795) showed an early talent for composition, and for the flute and timpani. He played the latter instrument in a Dutch regiment, but was wounded and taken prisoner at the battle of Berg op Zoom and decided in future to concentrate solely on composition and the flute. His six flute quartets (published by J. J. Hummel, Augsburg, c.1775) are, together with those of Mozart, the finest examples of the concertante flute quartet. The concertante quartet is the antithesis of e.g. Haydn's polyphonic op. 33 of 1781. J. J. H. Ribock in an article in Cramer's magazine of 1783 insists that to be a success it needed a wind instrument as a principle voice rather than the first violin. Graf achieves at times the effect of one-to-a-part baroque concertos like those of Michel Blavet which influenced the concertante flute quartet as it developed in France. The works show considerable originality in form.\*

The performances, by members of the Festicities Quartet, are admirable, with breathtakingly expressive and intelligent flute playing. The recording is natural in the sense that performance sounds are allowed to come through in an unobtrusive way so as to enhance rather than distract attention from the music itself. *Robin Freeman*

\* The author of this review supplied three further paragraphs on Graf's formal originality, which we can send to any reader on request. CB

**Haydn Schöpfungsmesse, Missa Rorate coeli desuper** Susan Gritton, Pamela Helen Stephen, Mark Padmore, Stephen Varcoe SmSTB, Collegium Musicum 90, Richard Hickox 61' 59"  
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0599

This as a much beefier performance than La Petite Bande's *Harmoniemesse*, reviewed last month. The chorus is athletic, with a full, rich sound which I find less attractive than that of the Chœur de Namur; the sopranos' top notes are strident (e.g. *glorificamus te*),

and the words of the mass are at times virtually unrecognisable. Hickox favours a rich tone in his soloists too, sometimes too rich for my taste. Mark Padmore and Stephen Varcoe sing beautifully in *Et incarnatus est*, one of the few moments when I felt convinced by what was being sung. The performance has great poise and momentum; the instrumental playing is lovely, when not drowned out by the choir, and there is some stylistic imitation between the solo singers and instrumentalists. Things are at their best when Hickox plays it cool – the arpeggios at the end of *Et vitam venturi*, and the marvellous *Benedictus*. But the recording is hard work to listen to, lacking the magic and elegance of Kuijken's, and inflicting those robust sopranos too frequently upon the ear. *Selene Mills*

**Jomelli *Vesperae in Sancto Petro Romae, Miserere*.** A sei voci, Bernard Fabre-Garrus. Auvidis Astrée E 8590 83' 17" 2 CDs  
**Jomelli** Psalms *Beatus vir, Confitebor, Magnificat, Miserere*; Antiphons *Bene fundata est Domus mea, Haec est domus Domini, Juravit Dominus. B. Constanzi Dixit Dominus, Laudate pueri*

One does not readily associate the ensemble A Sei Voci with music of the mid-18th century. The *Miserere* is very much a *stilo antico* piece, rather like harmonically spiced-up Palestrina, with occasional duet sections for the sake of contrast. As well as settings of *Confitebor tibi Domine* and *Beatus vir* by Jommelli, there are a *Dixit Dominus* and *Laudate pueri* by Costanzi (the former also a *stilo antico* work), plus four antiphons, which are far lighter and more of their time. The singing is excellent, especially in solo sections (though I would have liked a little more ornamentation at what are clearly cadential points) and the ensemble subdivides into choirs to wonderful effect. Anyone interested in this period or in first rate singing will find this hugely enjoyable (and the relatively brief duration of each disc might, in fact, be an advantage!) *BC*

**Mozart *Il re pastore: Serenata*** Roberto Sacca Alessandro, Ann Murray Aminta, Eva Mai Elisa, Inga Nielsen Tamiri, Markus Schäfer Agenore, Concentus musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 107' 29" 2 discs  
 Das Alte Werk 4509 98419 2

Mozart was nineteen when he set the Metastasian serenata *Il re pastore* for the Salzburg court in April 1775; apart from the aria *L'amerò* it is not well known (until now there was just the Marriner recording). This Teldec version, over-resonantly recorded at live performances in the Musikverein in June 1995, will make new friends for the piece. It is simple in story (Alexander the Great manages to unite the other four characters as two royal couples), rich in musical invention, and here played and sung with style, power and delicacy. All the singers earn credit for their commitment and, in most cases, beauty of phrasing and tone; the Concentus musicus make the most of Mozart's invention; and Harnoncourt, making cuts in the secco recitatives that will surely vex only the purist (and even conflating alternative versions of one recit

scene), directs the whole undertaking with warm, unfussy touch and proselytising enthusiasm. *Peter Branscombe*

**Mozart *Piano Concertos K 456 & 459*** Robert Levin, Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood 58' 36"  
 L'Oiseau-Lyre 452 051-2

This excellent partnership progresses well. Few players have such a full understanding of Mozart's style, both conceptually and at their finger-tips, than Robert Levin, and the partnership with Hogwood is perfect. These are performances that feel just right. I wrote at some length about Levin and Mozart in *EMR* 3; no need to say more. This is an immensely satisfying recording, with the added frisson for the first hearing that the cadenzas will be a complete surprise: perhaps a few alternatives could have been included too. *CB*

**Mozart *Symphonies 39 & 40*** Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, Ton Koopman 58' 28"  
 Erato 0630-12724-2

This is a safe and conventional reading, eschewing any dynamic extremities or Mannheim effects. The pared-down continuous orchestra – almost half of which is British – has a beautifully rounded sound; the strings (6-5-3-2-2) radiate a shimmering warmth, analogous to the once-famous Ormandy-Philadelphia string tone, and provide some sensuously quiet playing. Alternatively you may say that the ABO has neither bite nor bass definition. The tempi tend towards the upper limits of tolerance, especially the *Menuetti*, taken at *allegro* rather than a more usual *Ländler*-like *allegretto*. The winds delight in tasteful ornamentation and upper-auxiliary trills, and complement the brass well at the uncommon (for classical bands) pitch of A415. *Kah-Ming Ng*

**Schobert 4 *Sonatas op. 16*** The Four Nations Ensemble (Andrew Appel *hpscd*, Ryan Brown *vlm*, Loretta O'Sullivan *vlc*) 58' 59"

Mozart admired Schobert's sonatas and the excellent playing on this disc enables one to savour the variety and skill of his work. The first sonata has a fiery trio in an unusual key, B flat minor, which is followed by a presto where quirky rhythms contain more than a touch of humour. Although the harpsichord leads the ensemble, the strings provide more than sonority; their overlapping phrases add to the lyricism of the lovely andante in the F major sonata. The performers interpret the music with flair and understanding, and the recording is also excellent. *Margaret Cranmer*

## 19th CENTURY

**Bruckner *Symphony 3*** The London Classical Players, dir. Roger Norrington  
 EMI Classics 7243 5 56167 2 2 (57' 25")

With this first version of Bruckner's Third Symphony Roger Norrington extends yet closer to our own day the concept of 'early music'. The LCP use 46 strings here; their

litheness of attack allows the woodwind and brass to make their full impact. Tempos tend to be brisk, well sustained, in no case flippantly fast; the clarity of texture is admirable, and it is fascinating to hear this music as Bruckner originally conceived it, with the Wagner quotations all there, but without undue attention being drawn to them. Inbal, who has also recorded this version, takes some nine minutes longer but fails to reach the heart of the matter as Norrington does. The recorded quality is worthy of this outstanding performance. *Peter Branscombe*

**Dragonetti *Double-bass Concerto; Works for Double Bass*** Ubaldo Fioravanti *db*, Teodora Campagnaro *vlc*, Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, Claudio Martignon 71' 45"

**Dynamic CDS 133**  
 Concerto in G, Duo in Bb *vlc, db*, String Quartet 4 in e, Waltzes 7, 11 & 12 *solo db*, quintet in G *db & str qtet*

Not an early-instrument recording (though a stylish one), this is worth noting for its unusual repertoire: Dragonetti's name is familiar but not his music. Having begun his career as a double-bass player at San Marco, Venice, he spent most of his life in England. He left his MSS to Vincent Novello, who in turn left them to the British Library. These works give some idea of the degree of virtuosity to which he attained, but show a distinctive musical personality. *CB*

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Royal Composers** The Children and Gentlemen of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal, St James's Palace 63' 20"

Griffin GCCD4011  
 Byrd *Mass for four voices*; Gibbons *Hosanna to the son of David, O clap your hands*; Purcell *Hear my prayer, Rejoice in the Lord alway, Remember not our offences, Thou knowest Lord*

'The Chapel Royal must be London's best-kept secret' we are told in the notes. Thank goodness! Musical developments over the last few decades seem to have been kept secret from the Chapel's musicians (or at least their director, Richard Popplewell). The boys have a horribly bouncy style in quick movements and over-stress consonants (e.g. *kkking*), though when the conductor pulls them back to sloppy slow tempi, they sing smoothly and pleasantly. It is the slowness of the 'emotional' texts (with massive *rallentandi* in the mass) that makes it a penance to listen. There is just one excellent performance: *Hosanna to the Son of David*. A pity this royal establishment is so out of date! *CB*

**Sacred Serenity: A Collection of Memorable and Favoured Psalms and Hymns** 56' 32"  
 The Hit Label AHLCD 43

At first sight, this CD would seem beneath the attention of our readers, but in fact it would have been my outstanding recording of the month had not the Westminster Abbey carols arrived at the last minute. The title gives no clue as to what sort of settings



are included; of the 17 items listed (two of which are misprinted – *Panis angelicus* & *Ave verum corpus*, perhaps a version for singing in spring), the only Psalm is the ubiquitous *Allegrì Miserere* (written, we are told, for the Cistine Chapel). There is one mass, the very late plainsong *Missa de angelis*, which, according to the brief notes, was written a thousand years before the *Allegrì* (no doubt copied on rice paper by St Ambrosia [sic]). No composers are named (an erroneous note says 'all tracks are anonymous') nor performers, which is a pity, since the singing is most impressive: bold, strong and stylish. The chant (men only) mostly comprises hymns, with more melismatic (and difficult-to-listen-to) styles avoided. Women provide the upper parts for the polyphony. It is refreshing to hear the *Allegrì* sung with some ornamental freedom (the leap to the top C is on one occasion portamento and once filled in as a scale). I'll leave you to guess the composers of the polyphony – a party game with no crib, except that I'll let on that the motet with striking English cadences is by João Lourenço Rebelo – I hope Mapa Mundi get royalties. Despite everything, this really is worth having. CB

**Agnus Dei: Music of Inner Harmony** The Choir of New College, Oxford, Edward Higginbottom 72' 36"  
Erato 0630-14634-2

This isn't really within our normal scope; there are only a few earlyish items, notably the *Allegrì Miserere* (less interesting than on the CD reviewed above). Far more striking is the opening Barber *Agnus Dei* (the slow movement of a string quartet arranged for string orchestra arranged for choir), which has a strength far beyond that which one expects from a collegiate choir. The main reason for mentioning it is to congratulate an enthusiastic subscriber (the source of one of the anonymous compliments I quoted on the back page last month) for his success in leading his choir to the very top of the classical chart. Well done! CB

## SOUND ALIVE

The following mid-price discs from Sound Alive Music arrived together in time for last month's issue, but were deferred for lack of space. They are divided into four series, *Music Treasury Series* (prefix SAMMT/CD/101+), *Heritage Series* (SAMHS/CD/201+), *Famous Name Series* (SAMFN/CD/301+) & *Popular Past Series* (SAMPP/CD/401+). CD boxes tend to break at the hinges quite often, but I have never met a batch quite as bad as these, so treat them carefully.

- 101 *Music of the Age of Chivalry* Mary Remnant 28' 40" (1987)
- 102 *Music of the Middle Ages* The City Waites 36' 41" (1987)
- 103 *Renaissance Brass* 34' 02" (1987)
- 104 *Music of the Tudor Age* Skeapings/Barlow 44' 04" (1987)
- 105 *Music of the Stuart Age* The City Waites 40' 02" (1992)

201 *A Madrigal for All Seasons* Skeapings, Wootton 55' 14" (1995)

202 *Low and Lusty Songs from 17th Century England* City Waites 58' 40" (1995)

203 *A Heavenly Match: Georgian Music for Harp & Soprano* 74' 47" (1995) reviewed in *EMR* 22, July 1996 p. 16.

205 *Home, Sweet Home! The 19th Century Music Party* Lucie Skeaping, Ian Partridge, Richard Burnett, etc. 76' 47" (1995)

301 *Music from the Time of Henry VIII* The City Waites 58' 33" (1993)

302 *Music from the Time of Charles II* The City Waites 70' 20" (1995)

401  *Ghosts, Witches & Demons: From the Castle to the Graveyard* The City Waites 56' 44" (1995)

402 *Why, Soldier, Why: Songs of Battles Lost and Won* The New Scorpion Band 66' 52" (1995)

403 *Lads & Lasses: Music of the English Countryside* The City Waites, The Noise of Minstrels 58' 28" (1995)

Would any of you buy one of these in a shop? The information visible is lacking in two vital details: any identification of the performers and the duration. The more recent discs have timings for the individual pieces, which are commendably listed in full on the back of the box; but it is taking a record label's integrity too much for granted to assume that buyers will select a disc that has no indication of who is performing. There is no need for a thorough list of names, but if we see 'The City Waites' we will have some idea of the quality and style of performance to expect.

There is some very good stuff here. The City Waites in particular have had a vast experience of performing music on the borders between 'art' and 'popular' for a quarter of a century (sorry Lucie: you don't really look that old!) Quite rightly to my mind, they approach it from the 'art music' end and give spirited and convincing performances. Some are better than others, but there is plenty to enjoy on all their discs.

One must, however, consider the matter of value for money. The programmes running for about an hour seem to be a suitable length for collections of shortish items, and I would not complain that those discs of about that length could include another 20 minutes. But it is unfair to the customer to fob him off unwarned with discs as short as some of these. Admittedly, 28 minutes of Mary Remnant and Co are as much as anyone can be expected to take, and the Renaissance Brass is a con, since the ensemble consists of trumpets and modern trombones.

I imagine that these are intended primarily for selling at heritage sites, and at mid-price they will probably do well. But it is sad that the inserts (just two sides, one duplicating the list of pieces on the back of the box) give so little information; as always, music is isolated from the rest of its contemporary culture and there is sadly no book (as far as I know) that places this repertoire into any meaningful context. (If anyone wants to commission one, may I suggest Jeremy Barlow as author.) But one disc is better documented: Richard Burnett squashes

a vast amount of detail into the three pages with his 19th-century anthology (he spreads onto the back page, which is blank in other sets). That recording is interesting for its deliberate contrast of the distinguished singer Ian Partridge and the more folkly Lucie Skeaping. All in all, it is the most successful disc of the set, with some fascinating music that none of us would listen to unless programmed so brilliantly. But anyone interested in the borders between art and folk will find plenty of material here that is of interest. CB

## REISSUES

**deutsche harmonia mundi Baroque Esprit** (all have prefix 05472 and suffix 2 and are budget price)

77440 J. S. Bach BWV 951, 1020, 1031b, W. F. Bach F. 12/5, C. P. E. Bach Wq 135 [= F 549] *Chamber Music* Michel Piguet ob, Colin Tilney hpacd 54' 15" (rec. 1981)

77441 Haydn *Theresienmesse, Salve Regina* in g Tölzer Knabenchor, Collegium Aureum, Rolf Reinhardt 62' 37" (rec 1975, 1963)

77442 Mozart *Flute quartets K. 285, 285a, 285b, 298* Barthold Kuijken, members of Collegium Aureum K. 315 with La Petite Bande 56' 40" (rec 1976 & 1987)

77443 Dowland, Ford, Morley, Lanier, Lawes, Purcell, Ravenscroft, Tomkins *Musica Britannica* Deller Consort, Morley Consort, Pro Cantione Antiqua, Collegium Aureum 57' 07" (rec ?, 1973 & 1976)

77444 Ferrabosco, Gabrieli, Hassler, Lasso, Luython. Monte, Peeters, Vecchi *Vocal Music of the Late Renaissance* The Consort of Musicke, Anthony Rooley 61' 36" (rec 1985)

77445 Corelli *Concerti Grossi op. 6* Tafelmusik, Jean Lamon 65' 57" (rec. 1988)

77446 *Christmas Carols and Hymns of the XVth Century* Pro Cantione Antiqua, Bruno Turner 42' 50" (rec. 1975)

77447 *Handel Sonatas for Wood-wind Instruments* (op. 1/1b, 5, 6, 8, 9+ HWV 357, 363a, 378) Camerata Köln 63' 05" (rec 1985)

77448 Boccherini *Keyboard Quintets* (G.410, 412, 415, 418) *Les Adieux* 70' 18" (rec 1987)

77449 Biber *Missa Sancti Henrici, Sonatae Tam Aris quam Aulis 1 & 12* Regensburger Domspatzen, Collegium Aureum, Georg Ratzinger 46' 67" (rec 1982)

Normally when we receive notification of batches of reissues we tell the company concerned that we will list them but only review them if they send copies. That is usually deterrent enough, but this time they all arrived. I have enjoyed listening to them, though there is a problem with those that involve the Collegium Aureum, which was a sort of half-way house to being an early-instrument orchestra; it produced a higher technical standard than some of the more authentic bands of the 1960s and 1970s, but at the expense of considerable compromise. I found the Biber slightly disappointing, but the chance to get a rare work so cheaply should not be missed.

The seasonable disc by Pro Cantione Antiqua has a nice alternation of carols and



chant (not just hymns), though it exemplifies the same countertenor problem as the Hilliard disc (see p. 14). *Musica Britannica* is a varied anthology (with inadequate identification of who is doing what) with some items from Morley's *Consort Lessons*, part-songs, an over-stated version of Tomkins's fine *O let me live*, and songs by Lawes, Lanieri and Purcell. The Consort of Musicke anthology is inadequately described by its title: all the music is connected with the Fugger family of financiers at Augsburg. I suppose that one could be picky about the opening piece, G. Gabrieli's *Lieto godea*; in the source, each part is headed 'per cantar et sonar' and it is in high clefs, whose meaning is shown by Schütz, who quotes the madrigal down a fifth. But I'm not going to be pedantic: it works down a tone, and the disc is a bargain – perhaps the second in priority for purchase.

At the top of the list I would put the Boccherini keyboard quintets – music completely new to me and is well played. (*Les Adieux*, I gather, because each player has said goodbye to Musica Antiqua Köln.) Corelli op. 6 would really be a bargain if one could believe the front of the box, but the back lists only nos. 1, 3, 7, 8, 9 & 11 – still good value for first-rate performances.

Of the chamber discs, the Handel from Camerata Köln is the most appealing. Piguet is too overpowering in Bach, though Colin Tilney is always worth listening to, as of course is Barthold Kuijken's Mozart.

I have mentioned previously the tension between the desire of record companies to exploit their back catalogue and the weakness of some early 'early-music' recordings. These keep to areas where styles have not changed drastically, though there are problems in some of the older issues. But there is nothing disastrous; most discs are indeed genuine bargains. I wish record companies wouldn't use 'baroque' quite so vaguely. CB

#### Virgin Veritas

Reissues of Taverner Consort, Choir and/or Players recordings directed by Andrew Parrott

7243 5 61337 2 3 *Bach Mass in B minor* 103' 28 2 CDs (rec 1984)

7243 5 61340 2 7 *Bach Magnificat, Ascension Oratorio, Cantata 50* 54' 28" (rec 1989)

7243 5 61330 2 0 *Handel Messiah* 146' 15" 3 discs (rec 1989)

7243 5 61350 2 4 *Handel Israel in Egypt* (including *Funeral Anthem* as Part 1) 135' 14" 2 CDs (rec 1989)

7243 5 61347 2 0 *Monteverdi Vespro della Beata Vergine (1610)* 105' 31" 2 discs (rec 1984)

7243 5 61353 2 1 *Schütz Weihnachts-historie, Praetorius Wachet auf, Puer natus, Wie schön, In dulci jubilo (Polyhymnia 21, 12, 10, 34)* 60' 01" (rec 1985)

These are recordings with which I had some involvement, so I am not going to try to write an impartial review, merely draw the reader's attention to their renewed availability. Some we may cover more fully in the next issue (Anthony Hicks on *Messiah*, Eric Van Tassel on *Schütz*). All are classics in the

history of the revival of early music and performance practice, but unlike the Monteverdi *Vespers* reviewed on p. 16, these are still contenders for the most-favoured recordings. If you do not own good versions of these works, all of these are more than acceptable, indeed, may well be the optimum choice. CB

#### harmonia mundi Suite [mid-price] (all have prefix HMT)

7901240 *Bach Goldberg Variations* Gilbert  
7901334 *Boccherini Quintets with d/bass*  
Ensemble 415

7901233 *Boccherini Quartets for 2 hpscds*  
Christie, Rousset

7901296 *De la Rue Missa L'homme armé, Requiem* Ensemble Clément Jannequin

790245 *Dowland Lute Songs* Deller

7901320 *Gesualdo Sabbata Sancto* Herreweghe

7901249 *Lully Atys* (excerpts) Christie

7901108 *Monteverdi Ballo delle Ingrate, Sestina* Christie

790243 *Purcell The Indian Queen* Deller

7901078 *Rameau Grands motets* Herreweghe

7901072 *Les Cris de Paris* Ensemble Jannequin

7901575 *Jennifer Larmore portrait*  
(Monteverdi, Handel, Mozart)

7901353 *The Tournai Mass* Ensemble organum  
+ special low-price offer

HMX 2901418 *Rameau Pièces de clavecin en concert* Rousset, Terakado, Uermura

**Harmonia Mundi** also has packaged separate recordings into 3-disc low-price boxed sets. The numbers below are all prefixed by **HMX2908**. For a change from the usual Christmas sounds, try the first item on the list: Organum's *Mass for Christmas Day*, Paul Hillier's *Carols from the Old and New Worlds* and Anonymous 4's *On Yoolis Night* – marvellous value at little more than the price of single disc.

23.25 *Christmas Organum*, Hillier, Anon 4

26.28 *Bach Cantatas* Herreweghe

29.31 *Stabat mater* (Pergolesi, Boccherini, Poulenc)

35.37 *Alfred Deller* (Purcell, Dowland)

38.40 *Chansons de la Renaissance*

Ensemble Clément Jannequin

41.43 *Monteverdi Madrigals & motets* Jacobs

44.46 *From Lully to Rameau* Christie

50.52 *Te Deum* (Charpentier, Delalande, Bouzignac) Christie

53-55 *Italian Sonatas and Concertos* (Vivaldi, Corelli, Tartini) Banchini

**Teldec Das Alte Werk** mid-price (all with prefix 0630- and suffix -2)

13583 *Bach Gamba Sonatas* Harnoncourt

13573 *Bach Magnificat; Handel Utrecht Te Deum* Harnoncourt

13582 *Bach English & French Suites* A. Curtis

13574 *Handel op. 3* Harnoncourt

13572 *Vivaldi op. 8* Harnoncourt

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## LETTERS

Dear Mr Bartlett,

I am incensed by your dismissive treatment of Marion Verbruggen's recording of van Eyck's *Fluyten Lusthof* in the current issue of *EMR*. Of course there is a case to be made against complete recordings of anything, but it is something which happens all the time, and why this recording should be singled out as a scapegoat for this practice is beyond me. Are any such 'monographic recordings', and this is not the only dealt with in this issue, designed to be listened to at one sitting? One of the most beneficial developments in the CD player over and above other means of tone production is the ease with which it can be programmed. I certainly make use of it, don't you? I suggest that if there is no-one on your panel of reviewers prepared to take a recording of this sort there certainly should be.

Marianne Mezger

Dear Clifford,

The rapid rise of the medium of the compact disc can be assigned as much to the convenience of changing discs and moving tracks safely at the push of a button, as to the sound quality. This change in technology has made reference recordings a realistic proposition. Dipping into tracks on what would be, if listened to continuously, rather samey recordings, seems to have less in common with the vacuous activity of 'channel hopping' and more in common with leafing through a good encyclopaedia. It stands alongside 'a good read' or listening to a programmed concert. I have not heard the particular recording by Marion Verbruggen, but judging from others of her recordings I have heard, I expect the disc would be a must for students and serious amateur players of the instrument.

Stephen Cassidy

Dear Clifford,

I liked your comment about fraternity and equality, but perhaps some liberty was lost in the process? And even I wouldn't look forward to 74 minutes of solo Van Eyck!

Anthony Rowland-Jones

I deliberately raised this point in connection with a recording by Marion Verbruggen rather than a less distinguished player; I'm sure that all readers who want a complete recording of van Eyck will be confident that the performance is superb, while she is not likely to be upset by our review. Reviewers may use CDs differently from our readers. My own reference use of them tends to be for the ancillary material, especially texts and translations, rather than for the music itself; if I sit down to listen to something I don't want to be continually getting up to change discs. With four CD players in the house already, it would be extravagant to buy a fifth with a CD-stacking facility: perhaps when *EMR* makes a profit, I'll get one. But the poor reviewer has to listen to a recording straight through. If I were responsible for planning a van Eyck disc, I would get variety by including some of the source material so thoroughly listed in the notes; that would be instructive and much more interesting for the listener. CB

Dear Clifford,

I restrain myself most of the time from writing to you: there was a period when your correspondence page was virtually monopolised by our 'exchange of view'. However, the recent issue (25) includes a topic which prompts me to take up my word-processor again.

The question of transposition of 16th century music is something of a hobby horse of mine, on which we have of course touched in previous correspondence and in reviews. Mary Iden's letter brings it up again, and your reply is, I suggest, too concise. The case for downward transposition of 'high clef' pieces, i.e. those with a G2 (treble) top line and a C4/F3 (baritone) bottom line, by a fourth or a fifth is I think now generally recognised. It is therefore deeply regrettable that editors and publishers still ignore it, so that the only available recording of Monteverdi's *Missa In illo tempore* (for example) is at 'chipmunk' pitch. Transposing down a tone, which is often the concession to absurdly high written pitch, gives an impression of the work concerned which is still very false. The vocal tension required by sopranos and, especially, tenors to sing lines which are consistently too high, produces a sound (whether described it as 'brilliant' or 'strained') which is plain wrong. If pressed, I would also say that choirs wishing to sing this repertoire must not treat it as 'easy' music and look for 'simple' key-signatures, any more than violinists who can only manage first position should regard baroque repertoire as theirs by right. Of course F# minor looks odd, but that, as you indirectly point out, should not be a problem.

You overlook an important and large group of compositions requiring a transposition down of a third: much Continental church music (I have been working recently on Isaac, for example) comes into this category: the sign is that it looks like much later music, with a G2/F4 (treble and bass) combination: the G2 almost always indicates transposition, the lowest clef tells you how much.

Michael Procter

Michael also reminded me that we had received substantial criticism for a review – from him last year. I am interested in the remarks on transposition in Isaac: we would welcome an article on the subject.

Dear Clifford,

Thank you for the copy of *EMR* you sent with the subscription reminder. I had thought that I would not renew as part of a compulsion to simplify life (did I read every page?), but having just read most of the current number I've decided its too good/necessary to miss!

Your account on your travels brought back my own recollections of a visit to Bali and the enchantment I experienced whilst there. Despite some traveller's problems encountered, I was very struck by the way music and dance runs through their culture and how children can absorb it by sitting around the village dance pavilion and seeing the steps and rhythms being taught. Performances seemed to be a balance of complete conviction and verve combined with relaxed confidence. All this was 15 years ago so I am heartened to read your report suggesting the still-healthy state of the music.

Clive Dunkley

Dear Clifford,

Keep up the good work, you're the only magazine that covers new editions, facsimiles, books and recordings thoroughly. These are the stuff of life for the enthusiast and practitioner; without the *Review* we would all be the poorer and certainly less informed.

Chris Wilson