

# Early Music

## REVIEW

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I was intrigued by an advert in *The Musical Times* a couple of months ago for a new Internet journal called *sonus* (no initial capital) devoted to 'critical musicology' (what is 'uncritical musicology'?). It claims that it will be divided into 'themed areas', so articles on novel subjects will presumably be inadmissible. It disclaims 'dogmatically adopting a single party line' (what respectable musicological journal does?). The themed areas are listed, in this order: 'gender, sexuality, cultural politics, national and ethnic identity, popular music, historiography, critical analysis, postmodernity, technologies of music, philosophy and music, literature and music'. Am I the only person who thinks such an order perverse, implying, indeed, if not a 'party line', at least a clustering of viewpoints somewhat different to my own?

I have recently had conversations with the student daughters of two friends. One, reading music, phoned to ask for help on an essay on female musicians before the 12th century (i.e. pre-Hildegard and pre-troubadour). Possibly a challenging subject for a higher degree, is it really a sensible use of the time of someone who has little knowledge of vast tracts of our musical culture? (She chose Rebecca Clarke as an alternative. I could help a bit there: although my knowledge of her is tiny, I've written notes for three CDs of her music.)

The other conversation was with a girl with no musical training who was reading physics and philosophy but spent an afternoon a week on recording and stage technology as a way of avoiding games. Her instruction included listening to whether pop singers were in tune. I mentioned that some classical studio managers seemed to lack that ability, which led her to comment on the failings in that respect of a currently-favoured pop group. When asked what was her favourite group, after some thought she came up with a name unknown to me (that doesn't, of course, mean that it is obscure), with the justification that their live show was much better than their CDs. I find that encouraging when so much of the live music we hear is preparation for or repetition of recordings.

CB

## BOOKS AND MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

## SUMER'S COMPANIONS

*Expedition nach der Wahrheit: Poems, Essays, and Papers in Honour of Theo Stemmler* Herausgegeben von Stefan Horlacher [&] Marion Islinger. Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1996. xxxii + 650pp ISBN 3 8253 0382 9

As a whole, this is not a book of relevance to our readers. There is a contribution on 'George Eliot und die Musik' with a literary approach rather than an explanation of the details of her sympathy for village church music, and another on 'Poetry and Song on the Isle of Wight' which is not an ethno-musicological study but an account of the visits by an exile from the 1848 political disturbances, Eugene Oswald, who spent the rest of his life in London. It is amusing to see a German expert in English completely misunderstanding the rhythm of the limerick (p. xxxii). But the reason for making sure that your library acquires this volume is the contribution by John Stevens: 'Sumer is icumen in: A Neglected Context'. No medieval piece is better known, not only by sound, but visually: a thorough bibliography of reproductions would take several pages. It comes from a group of 11 songs and three instrumental duets. Some of the pieces are well-known (the opening *Samson dux fortissime*, for instance), thanks in part to having been reproduced a century ago in *Early English Harmony*. But many are not, and this substantial essay (pp. 307-347) deals with each piece in turn, discussing words and music, generally printing the former and in one case (*Dum Maria credidit*) giving the music as well. This is a foretaste of the author's forthcoming edition and study of the whole repertory of songs in England (in Latin, French and English) from the two centuries from c.1150. It is useful for providing a context for the familiar canon and for the clear descriptions of the poetic form and musical style. The preceding essay, incidentally, discusses one of the poems featured in Dronke's *The Medieval Lyric* (see *EMR* 28 p. 7), the aubade (?) *Phebi claro*.

## SECULAR DUFAY

Guillelmi Dufay *Opera Omnia* edidit Heinricus Besseler. Tomus VI *Cantiones Renovavit* David Fallows (*Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae* 1, vi) American Institute of Musicology/Hänssler (60.106), 1995. 117pp, DM98.00 ISBN 3 7751 2390 3  
David Fallows *The Songs of Guillaume Dufay: Critical Commentary to the Revision of Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae ser. 1, vol. VI (Musicological Studies and Documents, 47)*. American Institute of Musicology/Hänssler (68.747), 1995. 276pp, ISBN 3 7751 2134 X

Having decided that it really was time to pension off the series of photocopies of the original Besseler edition I

accumulated during the late 1960s, I thought it worth drawing attention to these volumes, if only to suggest that it is possible to buy such musicological tomes: they are not the prerogative of libraries. They may seem expensive, but think how much a recording of the 94 songs would cost. David Fallows did not have a completely free hand; it is apparent from his commentary that in some cases he would have started from a different source, so the printed version can be a compromise. But the spacious commentary enables the reader to make alternative choices. Source divergencies are discussed, not just listed, and most pieces give rise to general observations. The texts are printed as poems but not, alas, translated: for that, one must turn to the Decca complete recording on five LPs. Word had got round that Besseler's Dufay was not all it should have been, and perhaps that has kept people away from what is immensely rewarding and attractive music. There is now no excuse.

## BYRD ANTHOLOGY

*A Byrd Anthology: 14 Anthems and Motets* Selected by John Milsom. Oxford UP, 1996. 114pp, £8.50 ISBN 0 19 352007 9

There are several criteria which may make you decide whether you want to buy one copy or a set of this. Quality of the music is not one of them: that can be taken for granted as, with John Milsom in charge, can the competence of the editing. How many of the 14 items am I or my choir's library likely to have already? I would guess that none except the best-stocked collection is likely to have sufficient to make this anything other than good value. If you only want English pieces, five (including *Sing joyfully*) may not be enough; Latin or bilingual singers are better catered for, which is only to be expected considering the nature of Byrd's output. Note values, except for *Haec dies*, already in *note nere*, are halved. All pieces, whether for four, five or six voices, are at pitches suitable for SATB and most are transposed. So those of our readers who are growing to like less-modernised scores won't be happy, and they will wonder at the point of the piano reduction. But an anthology like this is only viable if it reaches the non-specialist market. Use in church might have been facilitated by a table showing suitable occasions for seasonal texts. As with some previous Oxford anthologies, new editions are mixed with existing ones in a variety of typographies. *Iustorum animae* looks particularly out of place, and at only six pages might have been reset. John Milsom touches on the fact that much of what looks like church music by Byrd is in fact for chamber ensemble; the pieces here, however, all work chorally. At 61p per item, this is definitely good value if you have a group of singers who will enjoy the music edited thus. Were I writing elsewhere, I would end there. But for

our specialist readership I will add that, if you are a real Byrd enthusiast, the six partbooks of one set of *Gradualia* give you a lot more music at less than the cost of four copies of this anthology. Learn to read C clefs and save money!

#### OXFORD CHORAL CLASSICS OCTAVOS

I am a little embarrassed that Oxford University Press has sent me a couple of these to review, in that the series will eventually include some editions of mine, though the impetus and most editions come from John Rutter. It derives in part from the *Oxford Choral Classics* series, compendious and amazingly-cheap volumes of which I am associate editor. So far, two have appeared, one devoted to opera choruses, the other to European sacred music. The notorious Allegri *Miserere* (ISBN 0 19 3417790; £2.25) comes from the latter volume. It is good value for 24 pages and gives as authentic as possible an edition of the standard modern version (popularised in the 1960s by the King's College recording with the young Roy Goodman taking the top Cs), even if it has not much more to do with the 17th century than Albinoni's *Adagio* with the 18th. A more authentic version, without top Cs, is also given in small print and there is a choice of two psalm tones (or three if the monotone option is adopted). The three-page introduction gives a history of the piece and prints two verses from the earliest MS source. My own involvement was primarily the serendipitous sighting of the Rockstro article in 'Old Grove', misguided source of the top C. [I will write next month about an edition by Ben Byram-Wigfield, who sang the C at King's more recently than Roy.]

I have had nothing to do with *Eleven Gregorian Chants selected for choirs* (ISBN 0 19 3417804; £1.40), whose arrival was a complete surprise. This is intended for those who would turn aside in horror at four-stave notation, and even probably at stemless black blobs. Its function is musical rather than liturgical, so don't try to find precedent for unexpected voice-alternations in rare monastic uses. It is to be hoped that choirs who have not experienced chant will take this chance to sing music that is intrinsically rewarding and, incidentally, good for choir-training. When I first looked at it, I wondered why the verbal stress-marks of modern chant editions were omitted and why the quaver beams did not relate to the original note-groups. The single page of introduction does not explain, but it seems that the first quaver of each group is intended to be stressed. This does not always work: the opening piece, *Hodie Christus natus est*, implies Britten's odd accentuation (*natús est, Archangéli, dicentés*) and the stress pattern of *Veni Creator Spiritus* is not at all regular (i.e. *Véni* at the beginning of verse 1 corresponds to *Accénde* in verse 4). So perhaps the grouping mean something else. Conductors who are not familiar with the stress of church Latin should consult a *Liber usualis*. Apart from the pieces mentioned, there are three more hymns, the *Kyrie De angelis* and the four Marian antiphons. If this is successful, perhaps a second volume might offer more melismatic pieces.

#### SWEET SONG

*Con che soavità: Studies in Italian Opera, Song, and Dance, 1580-1740* edited by Iain Fenlon and Tim Carter. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. viii + 336pp, £45.00 ISBN 0 19 816370 3

I hope with this that we have caught up with various titles from the Clarendon Press that we have missed. The volume is dedicated to the pioneer of the study of early-17th century monody, Nigel Fortune, on his 70th birthday, but is not formally a *Festschrift*. The contribution which interests me most is Tim Carter's *Resemblance and Representation: Towards a New Aesthetic in the Music of Monteverdi*. It strives a bit hard to use the new terminology from the non-pendular Foucault and other fashionable thinkers, but it addresses an important point: the tone with which listeners might have heard the music. Were they amused by 'the literal mimetic gestures so redolent of sixteenth-century word-painting' in the duet *Zefiro torna*, for instance? Going beyond Carter, how does the performer interpret the tension between this aspect of the text and its underpinning by the popular *ciaccona* bass? And what do we make of the sudden change from ground in G to affective recitative in E? Is that a stunning surprise or, by this date, a cliché? If the latter, what does it mean? Do we even take the *Lamento della Ninfa* too seriously? Is it significant that it is a *Ninfa* rather than a *Pastore* who is lamenting? The lament as a genre is discussed by William V. Porter in a more conventional way than Carter or, in another study concentrating on tone, Paolo Fabbri's *On the Original of an Operatic Topos: The Mad-Scene*. John Whenham makes a good case for the revival of Rovetta's madrigals and Glenn Watkins shows how the language of D'India's madrigals is not divorced from that of his monodies. But I don't understand the sentence: 'These features include a high tessitura, readily confirmable in the choice of clefs'; has the discussion on the pitch implication of *chiavette* passed him by? Barbara Russo Hanning considers the meaning of paintings of monodic performance and Iain Fenlon discusses dramatic *Balli* from the 1589 *Intermedi* to Monteverdi. Modern audiences can take comfort that at least two members of the audience at the 1589 *extravaganza* were unaware of the symbolism. A brief contribution by F. W. Sternfeld, written during his final illness, is a refreshingly direct discussion of 'song' in early opera, though it is stretching a point a bit to find a similarity with the closing duet of *Ulisse* and the monologue that ends Joyce's novel, even if Molly Bloom is Penelope. But how nice to find a musicologist who could write so vulgar a phrase as 'a memorable tune'.

Few of us have a strong feel of continuity between the first half of the 17th century and the 18th, and this does nothing to remedy it, apart from Colin Timms' catalogue of Steffani's solo cantatas, dating from the 1670s & 1680s. One of the most widely circulated dramatic works of the first years of the 18th century was Albinoni's set of intermezzi *Pimpinone*. Michael Talbot supplements the introduction to his A-R edition, stressing that *intermezzo* in the singular should not be used for two or more *intermezzi*.



making up a single work, as in this case. It is particularly interesting that, unlike operas, the scores of *intermezzi* circulated through their singers. Reinhard Strohm approaches the question of whether the older assumption of the operatic changes of the 1720s were the responsibility of a Neapolitan School of composers through the politics and personalities of the Venetian opera houses. Eric Cross discusses Vivaldi's pasticcio *Tamerlano* and the volume concludes with Winton Dean on Handel's *Alcina*, as always extracting valuable information from his study of the autograph. Unlike some volumes of essays, this has a thorough index.

#### RECORDER SYMPOSIUM

*The Recorder in the Seventeenth Century: Proceedings of the International Recorder Symposium, Utrecht 1993* edited by David Lasocki. Utrecht: STIMU, 1995. x + 300pp, Dfl55,00 ISBN 90 72786 06 8

Whether you read any more of this or not, the first contribution, by Peter Van Heyghen, on 'The Recorder in Italian Music, 1600-1700' is sixty pages of essential matter, tough going in places, but fundamental in showing what (how little) Italian recorder music survives, what clefs the music was written in, and what instrument is appropriate (other contributors also emphasise the inappropriateness of the Ganassi model). I'm interested in the suggestion that, for recorders, high clefs imply unsuitable music rather than the need to transpose: if I had time to embark on research in this area, that is something I would like to investigate further. It is relevant also to string and cornett/trombone ensembles. The implication of the lack of recorder repertoire is taken up by Barthold Kuijken. The editor takes him to task for his pessimism, but whatever additional references emerge it will be difficult to show that the instrument was one for which there was a professional repertoire. Put another way, what is the justification for first-study recorder players now? Most of the famous players (Brüggen, Munrow, Pickett) moved on to directing ensembles and conducting. One hopes, of course that oboists or renaissance wind players who need to take up the recorder from time to time will be able to play it as well as possible, and it is a good instrument for amateurs; but giving students the impression that the recorder can provide a livelihood is misleading. After all, the only composer known primarily for his recorder music, Van Eyck, was a busker. [I've already compiled a list of subscribers whom I expect to write in protest!] There are papers on Van Eyck here by the two experts; Ruth van Baak Griffioen discusses the repertoire of tunes he used, Thiemo Wind stresses that we should not think of his works as improvisations and that his variations should not necessarily be phrased in accordance with the text (which text?) Patricia M. Ranum uses the patterns of French verse declamation to explain how Hotteterre's tonguing syllables work, which is different from the way that has generally been thought. The editor concludes by lamenting the lack of communication even among scholars, let alone between them and players.

#### UNACCOMPANIED VIOLIN

*Klagenfurt Manuscript: Dances and Scordatura Suites* Facsimile edition [by Pauline Nobes]. Rhapsody Ensemble Editions, [1997]. xiii + 60pp

The well-known early violinist Pauline Nobes has been working on a Ph.D. on unaccompanied violin music and has commendably decided to make her research readily available to other players. The item listed above is one of several publications she will be offering, including a *Catalogue of Unaccompanied Solo Violin Music before 1750* describing over 50 sources, which will be an essential purchase for all baroque fiddlers. The Klagenfurt MS has a mixture of scordatura pieces, mostly grouped into Suites, and individual dances, mostly in normal tuning. These are presented in facsimile in a similar way to the Gregg Press Matteis – with three small oblong pages per page, though here the resulting size is a more manageable A4. The facsimile is preceded by a thematic list, which gives modern page and original folio (the foliation is not visible in the facsimile) as well as length, key and tuning. The brief introduction (in English and German) does not, however, say anything about the source except that it is 17th century. No doubt this is remedied in the thesis, but just a little more here would make the volume self-sufficient. The original hand-writing is not of presentation quality but is perfectly legible, though transcriptions are also advertised. I hesitate to comment on the music itself (I'm no violinist and there was not time to get our assistant editor to try it on a brief visit); but even if it is dull – and it looks rather better than that – it is of interest in fleshing out the elusive background to Bach's masterpieces, and when more of the repertoire is published we may find that looking at it through Bach is as naive as the way organists used to think of Buxtehude as a precursor.

Available from 186 Christchurch Hill, London NW3 LG, tel/fax+44 (0)171 794 2998

Whether all the *Select Preludes & Vollentarys for the Violin being Made and Contrived for the Improvement of the Hand with Variety of Compositions by all the Greatest Masters in Europe for that Instrument* published by Walsh & Hare, [1705] are actually unaccompanied pieces by the composers named may be doubted. But they are a useful set for the lone player to practise upon, and have been reproduced by Performers' Facsimiles (PF 164; £14.50)

#### LECLAIR op. 4

Jean-Marie Leclair *Sonates en Trio Pour Deux Violons Et la Basse Continue Oeuvre IV...* edited by Richard Gwilt. RG-Editions (102-103), 1996. 2 vols, each score & 4 parts. £15.95 each

Richard Gwilt's second publication fills a notable gap, since despite competition between Fuzeau and Performers' Facsimiles for other works by Leclair, this set seems not to be available in facsimile. I'm sure that, apart from those



who favour facsimile on principle (I came across some of them at the Urbino summer school a couple of years ago, who preferred a facsimile even of a bad source to a good modern edition), this should satisfy anyone. The parts, while often compact, are clearly set-out and legible. There is the luxury of two copies of the bass, one with, the other without the figures. And there is a score. Like me (and using the same programme), Richard likes to squash notes closer together than conventional publishers. That is, of course, a feature of 18th-century printing and has the advantage of minimising page-turns. Sadly for the publisher's bank-balance, the music is instrument-specific – it cannot be advertised as suitable for flute, recorder or bagpipe. It is of very high quality, but not as difficult as Leclair's solos or concertos; so these six sonatas are ideal introductions to the composer.

#### FASCH CONCERTO

Johann Friedrich Fasch *Concerto in G* [2 ob, 2 fag, str, Bc] herausgegeben und Generalbaßaussetzung von Uwe Müller. Regensburg: Edition Molinari, 1996. Score DM 22.00 ISMN M-50062-038-9

Fasch's orchestral works are in the public eye at present with the new disc by the English Concert (to be reviewed next month). It is interesting when we have a box of our Fasch editions on show at exhibitions that there are two very different reactions; some ignore it, others pounce on it with enthusiasm. This Concerto would seem to me to justify the latter. It is not exceptionally virtuosic. In the shortish solo sections, the two oboes have independent parts (mostly in thirds or sixths) while the two bassoons generally continue in unison, as in the tutti sections. The balance must be a bit odd in the solos; the *p* marks cannot imply that one bassoon is tacet since in some places the instruments have separate parts in thirds, but the top Gs are likely to obtrude when played by two instruments together with only a pair of oboes above. Puzzling! Brian Clark has noted for me a few misprints or necessary emendments: in the first movement, bar 152, the lower bassoon should play G E E, in the first bar of the second movement the viola's last note should be a third lower, and in the last movement, bar 13, the bassoons should play the same as the Bc. Since the last movement is only in three parts, cueing the oboes to unison violins and bassoons to Bc could have saved space and avoided a page-turn in a repeated section. Otherwise, this seems a well-produced score, and parts are also available (a defect of the ISMN system is that, because of the final check-digit, one cannot simply list the inclusive number 039-043). Strangely, the FWV number (L : G12) is not given, though it is for the other Fasch piece from the same publisher, an Oboe Concerto in D minor, FWV L : d2). Edition Molinari specialises in music with wind, and other composers include Albrechtsberger, Dittersdorf, Fiala, Hoffmeister, Janitsch, Milling, Pokorny, von Schacht & Telemann (TWV 42:c3 & g1).

Edition Molinari, Wassergasse 15, 93059 Regensburg, Germany. tel +49(0)941 8 46 86, fax 89 12 82, e-mail molinari.reg@t-online.de

#### PERFORMERS' FACSIMILES

Proceeding anti-chronologically, first comes Schubert's *Trout Quintet* (PF160; £34.00). This can be recommended to players: there is no difficulty in reading the notation and Czerny's publication of 1829 is the primary source. There is a MS set of parts extant which may preserve an earlier version though it has a bass part adapted for an instrument with E rather than C as its bottom note. Conscientious players may like to check the Critical Commentary to the Bärenreiter edition, but for most purposes the parts are self-sufficient (though the pianist will need to get used to a part, not a score).

Further revival of the chamber music of Maddalena Sirmen will be facilitated by the publication of her *Six Trios à deux Violons et Violoncello obligé* op. 1 (PF 153; £21.00) and *Six Duets for two Violins* [op. 2] (PF 179; £17.00), both from the 1770s. In the latter, the second part looks as black as the first so is not noticeably easier, but much of the time it is accompanying. In the Trios, interest descends from vln I to cello. Slow movements are absent from both sets.

Two more of Rameau's keyboard works have appeared, *Pièces de Clavessin avec une Méthode* of 1724 (PF156; £14.50) – Fuzeau does the revised edition, so the rivalry here produces a choice – and *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin... avec des remarques sur les différents genres de Musique* of c.1728] – for which the only difference is Fuzeau's introductory material. The Fuzeau editions are cheaper, unless your dealer imposes a hefty mark-up for importation. Fuzeau, incidentally, has issued all Rameau's cantatas in one volume for about £35.00.

Moving back to 1710, Schickhardt's *Six Sonatas Pour un Hauboïs ou Violon & Basse Continue* op. 8 (PF171; £12.50) are, as one expects, in score and a useful addition to the available oboe repertoire – the violin is presumably just a commercial suggestion; most movements have a few notes below F so the normal treble/alto recorder is not an option. I have mentioned the Walsh & Hare *Select Preludes...* for violin on page 3. An earlier unaccompanied collection for the recorder *The Genteel Companion... Carefully Composed and Gathered by Humphrey Salter* 1683 (PF 185; £14.50) also includes a few pages of instruction and a few pieces have a fingering tablature. Most items would be improved by a bass, though only Mr Reddins ground has one.

The earliest item is Dowland's *A Pilgrimes Solace* of 1612, reproduced from a copy in the Folger Library (PF195; £14.50). The English jacobethan\* songbooks have been available in facsimile for thirty years, so the need for this is less urgent than for other repertoire; more of the madrigal books would perhaps be a better use of resources.

\* One of our proof-readers disliked this word intensely, a viewpoint with which I sympathise. But we do need a single word for the period from 1588 to 1612. We haven't offered a prize this month: we might find some reward for a plausible suggestion.

## DON FERNANDO DE LAS INFANTAS: COURTIER AND COMPOSER

Lynne Gamblin & Alistair Dixon

Many of us will know that feeling of letting slip at a party that one is interested in early music, only to receive a pitying glance and some expression of sympathy that one is stuck in such a limited and uninteresting area of the musical world. We know of course that the reverse is the case. Our 'early' period extends over many more centuries than the two or three claimed by the 'real' musicians, and the riches of repertoire and musical characters yet to be discovered are almost beyond quantification.

A 16th-century musical personality, the Spanish composer Don Fernando de las Infantas (1534 - c. 1610), certainly falls into the 'best kept secret' category, despite being known by some singers through Bruno Turner's *Mapa Mundi* edition of *Loquebantur variis linguis*. Infantas published three books of motets containing a total of 91 pieces and a book of 101 contrapuntal exercises based on a single plainchant melody. Some of the motets are dated, and can be related to specific and often significant state occasions falling between 1558 and 1575. Here then we have a musical canon which is not just intriguing because of the quality of the music that it contains, but also because of the political background to which it relates.

Don Fernando de las Infantas was born into a minor aristocratic family in Córdoba in 1534. He is thus a junior of Cristobal Morales (1500–1553) and Francisco Guerrero (1527–1599) but senior to Victoria (1549–1611) and Alonso Lobo (1555–1617). His family evidently had sufficient resources to give him a good education and to furnish a small patrimony on which he lived for most of his life. Having no need of an earned income he likewise had no need of any professional musical posts. He was recognised at the Spanish court both by Charles V (in retirement at Yuste) and Philip II, for whom he carried out some minor diplomatic missions in Naples. In the 1570s in Rome such was his influence with the King that Philip was persuaded to intervene with Pope Gregory XIII to ameliorate proposed revisions to the Gradual. Infantas's expertise in Gregorian chant seems to have been recognised by Palestrina, who was engaged on the revision.

Infantas lived in Rome from 1572 until 1592, serving first as a volunteer worker in a hospital for the needy and then, after taking Holy Orders in 1584, as chaplain in a poor suburban church. During his early years in Rome he arranged for two handsome manuscript choir books containing 53 motets to be made and presented to Philip II. These books contain four additional motets not in the four printed books of motets and exercises published by Infantas at his own expense in 1578 and 1579.

These manuscripts and printed books span the composing life of a gifted, learned, devout, and perhaps pedantic scion of the 16th-century Spanish aristocracy. Following his ordination, further publications were not of music but of matters of theological controversy; he fell into disfavour and he died in poverty.

Infantas's music presents a range of moods and compositional methods. An endearing feature of the motets is the diversity of styles and genre, although, sadly, he published no settings of the mass ordinary. His textures are often dense and rich with passages of short note patterns; one can contrast the moving simplicity of *Parce mihi Domine* with the ebullience of *Angelus ad pastores ait*. He preserves a stately conservative, even old fashioned style in his occasional pieces *Cantemus Domino* and *Congregati sunt inimici nostri*, using a long-note cantus firmus and making use of triplet figures, often to convey a martial manner. The device of writing simultaneously in different keys in *Loquebantur variis linguis* the better to convey the 'divers tongues' of the text, not only displays his predilection for such symbolism, but is also a technical tour de force since he writes the two bassus parts as a mirror canon. But most important to the character of his music is his use of plainsong; many of his pieces are inscribed 'Super excelso Gregoriano Cantu'. In the beautiful five part *Ave Maria* the chant moves effortlessly throughout the texture, influencing the melodic shape of the phrases in all parts.

As a gentleman composer it is not easy to assess his reputation in his own day; some re-issuing of his motets in German collections of 1583 and 1585 in the company of such composers as Palestrina and Lassus, together with the inclusion of some of his contrapuntal exercises in a 1591 compendium, are evidence that his work was held in some esteem. Closer to the present day, *Victimae Paschali laudes* was reprinted in 1869, Rubio published an additional ten pieces in 1956, and *Mapa Mundi* has to date produced performing editions of four motets. Certainly the quality of the music encourages further exploration of his the motets. So far as our contemporary assessment of his music is concerned, the signs are promising. *Mapa Mundi* and Cantiones Press plan to continue publishing his motets and so 20th-century choirs will be able to make their own judgements.

More immediately, Chapelle du Roi has planned two concerts which will begin exploration of Infantas's work. The first programme will present music with a Marian theme, based around his settings of the four Marian antiphons. We will intersperse music from those contemporaries named earlier in this article and thus

attempt to place him in context with his Spanish peers. We are honoured that the Master and Fellows of New College Oxford have granted permission for this programme to receive its first performance in their chapel on 27th April; it will be repeated on May 3rd at St James's Church Piccadilly. The second programme, of music for Advent and Christmas will be on November 8th at St John's Smith Square.

For further information on the *Infantas* project please contact us at Chapelle du Roi, 10 Kensington Hall Gardens, Beaumont Avenue, London, W14 9LS. Tel: 0171 385 6489. E-mail: [chapelle@wolrych.demon.co.uk](mailto:chapelle@wolrych.demon.co.uk)

## SQUARE PIANO FOR SALE

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## MUSIC IN LONDON

Shane Fletcher

It appears to be extraordinarily difficult to find appropriate concert venues for early music in London. The established ones all have their shortcomings; and while London churches provide a vast resource, few have the situation, facilities or publicity that performers and promoters need. It has been good in the past month to be able to hear 16th-century choral music in two churches with good acoustics. After all his work on Ockeghem in February, Edward Wickham conducted the Renaissance Singers in a programme of 'Music from Ely Cathedral', featuring music by Christopher Tye, Robert White and John Amner in Holy Trinity Church, Prince Consort Road, on March 8th. As is so often the case with recitals away from concert halls, the audience was disappointingly small. The choral items were interspersed with the extraordinary consort music of Tye played with great style and dexterity by Concordia.

Another Holy Trinity in the same part of London was host to the Chapelle du Roi, conducted by Alistair Dixon: the magnificent arts-and-crafts church in Sloane Street has the advantage of being close to an underground station and the comfort of concert-hall-standard seating. This was the last of the group's Tallis Complete Works recitals that have been taking place in various venues over the last year. The ensemble was expanded for *Spem in alium* and its rarely-heard English version *Sing and glorify* (the text underlaid in its earliest source). Alistair Dixon had bravely decided to perform both of these in a single-line horseshoe round the audience. I was sitting near the edge and close to one of the choirs and found that a few slips and unconfident leads were all too audible.

This was not, however, to be an evening of all-opulent Tallis; the simplicities of Archbishop Parker's psalter tunes were delivered to stunning effect, though their tenor melodies should have been more prominent. The programme

also included the four secular songs from the Mulliner Book, expressively sung by Ashley Stafford. But the best performances in this varied programme were some of the hymns with alternate plainsong verses, a perfect balance between the flamboyance of the early style and the austerity of the Edwardine protestant writing. Here the flow of Tallis's music was counterbalanced by some of the best singing of plainsong I have ever heard. Only occasionally did the dynamics chosen for a particular verse seem arbitrary; it was odd in *Jesu Salvator* that we would want to 'rest with the peacefulness of night' at a mighty *forte*. The ten voices of Chapelle du Roi have a wonderful blend and balance. Coinciding with the launch of a Tallis CD [to be reviewed next month], this concert bodes well for the future.

This has been a good month for late baroque, too; fans of Handel arias were treated to a mixed programme given by Ann Murray and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on February 24th. The main business of the evening was preceded by a talk by Julie Anne Sadie about the hopes and plans for the Handel House in Mayfair – it does seem strange that while Germany and Austria are full of various composers' Geburtshausen and Wohnhausen, we have failed to create a museum for Handel. The concert itself was programming at its best and there was something delightfully eighteenth-century about the combination of Grand Concerts (Handel's English term) and arias under the enthusiastic Nicholas McGegan's direction. Ann Murray delivered the arias with tremendous attack and verve, though in the slower numbers there was too much soft singing to balance the large string numbers and McGegan's mannered approach meant that the music lost momentum. Nevertheless, I hope that the OAE repeat the formula: there are plenty more concertos and wonderful arias before the canon is exhausted.



The curiosity of the month must go to the reconstruction of the Bach *St Mark Passion* given at St John's Smith Square on March 15th, of which the libretto survives but the music is lost. It has long been known that the choruses framing the work and some of the arias were adapted by Bach from his *Trauer-Ode* of 1727 and so can be recreated. Other arias have been traced to cantatas (I wonder how? Couldn't one text be fitted to various arias in Bach's output, and doesn't this suppose that he wrote no new arias for the work at all?), including one soprano aria traced by Andor Gomme, who prepared the edition/reconstruction used at this performance. In the absence of a narration, the recitatives and crowd choruses from Reinhard Keiser's *St Mark Passion* were used. (This is a work about which Grove claims two things: that it dates from 1717 and also that it was copied out by Bach at Weimar in 1714 – there's genius for you!)

The use of the Keiser narrative produces problems because his version starts considerably later in the story than Bach's libretto. Consequently an aria and three chorales have been distributed in the text, which seems rather odd when the object of the entire exercise is to hear the arias in their proper context. The other problem is that the resultant key-structure is bizarre, with horrible jolts between recitative and chorales. The London Concert Choir is to be congratulated on managing these jolts as well as they did. Otherwise it was a pity that the committed singing of the choir under the excellent direction of Mark Forkgen and the arias from countertenor Charles Humphries and tenor James Gilchrist were supported by some poor string intonation. (I now wish that I had turned round and told the people behind me that it was not 'because they are using old instruments'). Jeremy Ovenden's fluent narration and Nicholas Gedge's rich bass Christus showed the strengths of the narration of the Keiser Passion, irrespective of the Bach chorales and arias, and the evening left me with a strong desire to hear Keiser's work in its entirety.

Pride of place this month goes to Ton Koopman's *Mass in B Minor* given at the Barbican on March 9th. The string playing of the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra was breathtaking in its unanimity. The performance was also beautifully shaped, with veiled Kyries making the excitement of the Gloria more exuberant, and wonderfully controlled climaxes in the *Gratias agimus tibi* and final chorus. The solo team (four in a work that always seems to me to need six) followed the conductor in beautiful shaping of long, weaving lines. The *Domine Deus* duet was outstanding – Paul Agnew on terrific form duetting with the clean, clear voice of Ruth Ziesak and luscious flute solos, always expressive without once losing forward momentum. Above all, nothing was forced, with every line, instrumental or vocal, choral or solo, holding equal status on the counterpoint. Bach at its best.

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We have not, as promised in our advert last month, given more information on Scarlatti cantatas but hope to print an article next month.



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[Not the version reviewed by Shane Fletcher in this issue but that of the European Baroque Orchestra CD]

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**David Montgomery *Historical Information for Musicians. Vol. 1 Musical Tutors, Methods and related Sources c.1650 - c.1915***

*Publication deferred. Those who have already been sent copies will receive replacements with some corrections and in a more generous format.*

## Ercole Porta

(1585-1630)

### *O Virgo pulcherrima*

This month's music is a motet on the Banchieri CD reviewed on page 12. Porta was born in Bologna and spent most of his life in that area. So it is not surprising to find a motet by him in a publication of another Bolognese composer, Adriano Banchieri.

*O Virgo pulcherrima, Angelorum decus,  
coelestis chori solamen, miseris solatium:  
O Virgo pulcherrima, fac ut in coelis tua tandem societate  
laetemur in saecula saeculorum. Amen.*

O most beautiful Virgin, delight of Angels,  
solace of the heavenly choir, comfort for the wretched:  
O most beautiful Virgin, grant that we at last may rejoice  
in heaven in your company for ever. Amen.

I haven't figured the bass. Players not used to the style should note that both the dominant and the tonic chords at cadences should be major, though in bar 24 it might be better for the first beat to be played unison. Bar 30 has to begin with a minor chord CB

## Ercole Porta – O Virgo pulcherrima: Concerto con duoi Sopr[ani] overo Tenori

O Vir - go pul-cher - - - - ri - ma, O Vir - go pul-cher - - - -

An - ge - lo - rum, An - ge - lo - rum de - - - - cus, coe - les - tis

- - - - ri - ma, An - ge - lo - rum, An - ge - lo - rum de - - - - cus, coe - les - tis

cho - ri so - la - men, mi - se - ris so - la - ti - um: O Vir - go pul-cher - ri -

cho - ri so - la - men, mi - se - ris so - la - ti - um: O Vir - go pul-cher - ri -

-ma, fac ut in coe - - - lis tu - a tan - dem so - ci - e - ta - te lae - te - - - -

-ma, fac ut in coe - lis tu - a tan - dem so - ci - e - ta - te lae - te - - - -

- - - - - mur in sae - cu - la sae - cu - lo - rum, in sae - cu - la sae - cu -

- - - - - mur in sae - cu - la sae - cu - lo - rum, in sae - cu - la sae - cu - lo - rum,

- lo - rum, in sae - cu - la sae - cu - lo - rum. A - - - - - men.

in sae - cu - la sae - cu - lo - - - - - rum. A - - - - - men. In sae - cu - la

## MEDIEVAL MUSIC FESTIVAL IN CAMBRIDGE

Stephen Cassidy

Music of the Angels *Les Haulz et les Bas*  
 Oracles, Miracles *Sequentia*  
 Sweet is the Song *Catherine Bott*  
 Nothing so good nor so sweet to hear *Orlando Consort*  
 6-8 March 1997  
 Presented by Magenta, hosted by Jesus College

The four concerts I attended (I missed *Virelai*, The Dufay Collective and *Saraband*) each presented an uncompromising paradigm for performance. The *alta capella* playing of *Les Haulz et les Bas*, centering on instrumental renditions of songs, could hardly have contrasted more with Catherine Bott's late-night performance of *trouvère* songs, standing alone and working on the intimacy of the poetry. This in turn followed *Sequentia*'s performance of Icelandic sagas and European music of miracles, with its emphasis on story-telling and strong personal presence. The *Orlando Consort* sang the highly-formalised works of Machaut with great grace and accuracy, but with detachment from earthly things. The festival repertoire covered large spans, geographically, temporally and culturally. The differing performance styles were partly a response to this fact, though I was also equally aware of an overlay of differing 20th-century traditions and ideals.

*Les Haulz et les Bas* performed entirely from memory. This increases audience involvement – visually, and also by sensing the commitment made by the musicians. Purely audibly, too, the performances flex together more cohesively. The laser tuning and atomic clock timing of the group creates an immediate presence. Indeed, the nature of shawms means that they are forgiving of little else. The result can be stark with gothic austerity. How in vocal repertoire is the effect to be softened? Most 20th-century shawm-playing traditions use bending of the pitch for effect, a luxury not afforded to groups in harmony playing to western concert-goers. However, apparent restrictions give rise to techniques and idioms of their own. For example, some pieces were (paradoxically) softened with delicate percussion. The same softening effect is also, again surprisingly, achieved by the use of divisions. The marvellous surviving divisions on Moulin's *De ce que fol penser*, far from adding instrumental fuss, allow a shawm to round off the edges of the chanson, using fixed pitches and rhythms. The singer achieves rounding by word-colour, pitch and rubato – the same aim achieved through utterly different techniques born of the nature of the 'instrument'. It is possible to see the roots and original purpose of the division style, a credit to the playing of the group. The more familiar dances and a spell-binding percussion solo (has Jesus College chapel ever heard the like?) brought a very warm reaction from the audience. [The group's second CD will be reviewed next month.]

*Sequentia*'s rendering of Icelandic sagas, European oracular song and *Cantigas de Santa Maria* was absorbing. Again performance from memory was an important ingredient. The highlight for me was Benjamin Bagby's delivery of the story of Thor regaining his hammer. We were drawn in by a mesmerising riff of the thumb-piano kind on a Sutton Hoo lyre, which continued to weave around the story and punctuate it, Victor Borge style. The instrument was used as effectively by falling into sudden silence as by producing accompaniment, and also simply as something to gesticulate with. His voice moved seamlessly from song to emphasised speech, and from thunderous baritone (the giant) to coy tenor (the wily maid). The total effect was transfixing. Despite only a brief reading of the programme notes before the concert, I was aware of where we were in the story line by line, including the *Just so story* last line: 'and that is how Othin's son got his hammer back'. Reflecting on the cultural importance of saga reciters, and the likely occasion of recitals, it is hard to disbelieve anything about Bagby's performance.

Barbara Thornton seemed less at home with gesture, and indeed the pieces she sang did not make it necessary to bolt on any movement. For example, the sorceress's primordial account of the formation of the human world was more archtypical and less narrative: the intriguing use of language and voice colours were sufficient to deliver the mystery of the story.

The songs of the European oracles were supported with marvellously-fluid harp playing and medieval (Hardanger-influenced) fiddle. The *Cantigas* seemed stylistically a bit out on a limb compared with the rest of the concert, though I thoroughly enjoyed the wit and linguistic rhythm of their performance.

Catherine Bott's performance of *trouvère* songs included an invitation to us to listen to the poetry without the distraction of instruments, and to engage in 'the listener's task' of moving onto the performer's ground and not leave the performer to do all the projection. I was keen to hear the contrast with the other performance styles so far, and to hear the *trouvère* repertoire in its clearest form. But I found that this overt invitation, with its shades of (unintended) criticism, initially put a little extra distance between audience and performer. 'The listener's task' of moving ground became a longer journey, even given the enormous warmth of this performer. Much is made in this repertoire of formal abstraction from the baser aspects of life, and the interplay of poetic and musical forms. I cannot read the words of some of the songs in the male voice without thinking that an occasional splash of testosterone



would benefit. The tension of the whole form surely owes a great deal to what the audience knows is really being felt, pushing against a language whose codes are defined under close cultural norms. The interplay between poetic and musical forms needs strong vowel coloration to work. The emphasis of this performance was on beauty of tone, artful pace, small scale, and with it a conscious pulling of the audience towards her. This approach produces a lovely performance but tends to underplay underlying tensions.

The Orlando Consort sang predominantly Machaut. His music is structurally formal and, to modern ears, not very idiomatically natural. It seems at first glance to achieve its interest through form rather than content. The performance tendency therefore is to treat it formally and render what amounts to an image of the music. The Orlando style is naturally in this direction. The result for the musical game *Mon fin est mon commencement* is that the working of the words with the musical mirror images was clear and alluring. In fact, the effect of this piece was curiously warm and human. There are, however, phrases – most obviously in the solo songs, but in the polyphony too – which cry out for natural expression. The tendency was for these to be suppressed by too much technique. I wanted something to stir now and again. The French vowel *u* seems to have become accepted wisdom for unworded vocalisations. This is a pity, since it obscures the word colour in the upper texted line, and effectively removes the bass note. The result captured the reverberation but none of the resonance of Jesus College Chapel. The effect is like a weathered Fra Angelico with the gilt halos of the saints preserved but with the warm azure and gules of the fabrics lost. Accepting the overall ethereal sound and distillation of the music, the group produced a superbly focused sound of great beauty. The entrancing counter-tenor of Robert Harre-Jones is surely beamed down from heaven!

Each performing group transmits to us the coloration of the music like facets of a prism. I hope as the medieval field develops that all the groups find time to listen to each other and allow ideas to transfer between them. As the shades of colour mix, we achieve different measures of performance integrity.

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During the festival, Eastern Early Music Forum organised a short course for amateur shawmists with Les Haulz et les Bas, to which I paid a brief visit as eavesdropper. I was fascinated by the sound of one group comprising three shawms (one of which was Stephen Cassidy) along with Jennie Cassidy as singer. Normally, in any group of instruments with a single singer, he or she is perceived as soloist, but here Jennie, putting on a harder-edged tone than she might use for a lute-song, was a genuine equal with the three instruments, but providing a different texture. The piece I heard, incidentally, was Fayrfax's *O lux beata Trinitas*, not as implausible for the combination as it might seem. Ian Harrison detected figuration not unlike that of improvisatory shawm music. This is perhaps explained by the fact that the piece survives in a Scottish treatise of 1558 as a demonstration of *faburden*, a method of improvising parts on a chant. CB

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## RECORD REVIEWS

### MEDIEVAL

**Water & Baptism** Venance Fortunat, Anne-Marie Deschamps *dir* 47' 37"  
L'empreinte digitale ED 13060

The commonality in the material here is verbal rather than musical. I'm not sure if I can perceive the musical flow that is claimed to be present and there is little to suggest the 'rushing water' mentioned in the introduction. You only have to visit your nearest supermarket to realise that the motto from Machaut comparing the Trinity to water, which always has the same taste whatever form it takes, isn't true. But this is a disc of considerable interest, bringing together examples of Byzantine and Jewish chant with Western monophony and early polyphony. The performances have a distinct and original style which convinces as a whole, even if one might question individual items. I wonder that music from such different origins should sound so similar. CB

### 15th CENTURY

**Ockeghem Requiem; Missa Fors seulement**  
The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham 71' 11"  
ASV *Gaudeamus* CD GAU 168  
+ settings of *Fors seulement* by Brumel & la Rue

The disc starts with one of the most perfect fifths you are ever likely to hear on a choral recording and goes on to delight with its impeccable tuning, varied expression and perfect pacing. Intended as the crowning glory of the Clerk's Group Ockeghem series for ASV marking the quincentenary of the composer's death, it is indeed a worthy culmination of what has been a revelatory sequence of recordings. It is a source of slight regret that the Requiem was not recorded as a more complete liturgical reconstruction. The 1993 recording of the piece by the Ensemble Organum eloquently showed how effective a more complete plainchant context can be. However, with the possible exception of the famous virtuoso sections of the *Offertorium* where the French baritone is a model of effortless vocal agility, The Clerks' Group version is superior in every respect. D. James Ross

**Passion** Orlando Consort 62' 16"

Metronome MET CD 1015

Compère *Crux triumphans*; Dufay *Vexilla regis*, *Victimae paschali*; Josquin *Victimae paschali*; Isaac *Easter Mass Propers*; Obrecht *Salve crux*; Tintoris *Lamentations*

These are performances of rare masterpieces and of rare finesse. In particular the Orlando Consort are persuasive advocates for the melodic flights of Isaac's Easter propers and the intensity of Obrecht's *Salve crux*. Repertoire aside, careful thought has obviously gone into the texts and their pronunciation. I miss the the dramatic and textual variety which chant and a chant

choir would have helped provide (and which the composers would have known) but I should not let a personal predilection colour my response to an otherwise welcome release. Simon Ravens

### 16th CENTURY

**Io canterei d'Amor: Chansons e Madrigali 'da sonare'** Labyrinto (Concerto di Virole), *dir* Paolo Pandolfo 58' 31"  
harmonia mundi HMC 905234  
Music by Arcadelt, Crecquillon, Jannequin, Lasso & Rore with embellishments

The English repertoire for consort of viols is so well documented that one is apt to neglect to wonder what French and Italian viol players spent their time doing in their consort sessions. This recording supplies an answer to those viol players who find chansons and madrigals less fulfilling than Byrd fancies. A quartet of viols, with the occasional addition of a violone at 16' pitch, plays the vocal modes plain, followed by ornamented versions by Ruffo, Oritz or Bassano (but not dalla Casa). The approach, like the music, has that Latin intensity that some will find over-rich, but don't let that initial impression put you off. The use of vibrato, legato phrasing relying on dynamics, the lack of variety of articulation at first make everything sound a bit the same. However other qualities win you over as the recording progresses. There is deep involvement with the verbal phrasing and meaning of the words, and genuine virtuosity in the performance, not just in rapid playing (there's plenty of that in all parts) but in control of dynamics and intensity of tone. Andrea Gabrieli's keyboard arrangements of *Canzoni alla francese* sound very effective on viols, and offer opportunities for brilliant playing fully taken by this very accomplished group. But the best playing is the simplest – Arcadelt's *Il bianco e dolci cigno* performed plainly the way it is sung, and so lovingly expressed that it is irresistible. Robert Oliver

**Musiques de la Renaissance française** 125' 41" 2 CDs (rec 1963-83)

EMI Classics 7243 5 69555 22 3 ££

I commented in last November's editorial that record companies should be cautious about the old material that they revive. This compilation from EMI Music France (with brief notes in French only and no texts) is a mixed bag. The Munrow *Terpsicore* dances have already been re-circulated on one of the 20th-anniversary discs; they reappear here with some Ballard lute pieces from Eugen Dombois (nostalgic to those who were around in the 1960s) and a less interesting Praetorius selection from the Ricercare-Ensemble Zurich of 1973. Disc 2 begins with a 1964 anthology of Jannequin by the Roger Blanchard Ensemble. The brass pieces, with trumpets and trombones using

the detached manner that was then thought appropriate for early music, is an effort to listen to, but I found the singing, once I adjusted to the style, much more acceptable than I had remembered. If you want to hear each part clearly, this has the clinical distinction of voices that also characterises recordings of the Deller Consort, though the sound the voices themselves make is less precise than is now favoured and the tuning isn't always perfect. A group of chansons from the King's Singers (1984) is much cleaner and more accurate, but by comparison a bit slick. Worth buying only if you can find it at a really low price. CB

### 17th CENTURY

**Banchieri Vespro per la Madonna** Elena Cecchi Fedi, Anna Seggi Corti, Alfredo Grandini, Roberto Locci *SSBarBar*, Alfonso Fedi *org*, Gruppo Polifonico Francesco Caradini, Fabio Lombardo *dir* 63' 09"  
Dynamic CDS 176 ££

Banchieri's *Il Terzo Libro di Nuovi Pensieri Ecclesiastici* for one or two voices with *Clavacembalo*, *Tiorba*, *Arpichitarrone* & *Organo* is a fascinating collection of practical church music, including an *alternatim* set of the Marian vesper psalms. These are placed among what the booklet calls 'antiphonies' in chant and concertos (antiphon substitutes) from the same collection. The chant is sung by a distant choir in a style that sounds quite modern though takes account of the mensural interpretation suggested in the 1582 *Directorium Chori* (the relevant sections are transcribed and translated from the 1604 edition in my liturgical companion to Monteverdi's *Vespers*). The booklet does not mention that the feast chosen is Sancta Maria ad Nives (August 5th), and it would have been more use to have reprinted a page from the *Directorium* than an irrelevant page of Missal. This CD shows that the music for a small-scale Vespers can be as enjoyable as the more-frequently recorded polychoral settings with instruments. The piece that caught my ear particularly (perhaps because I've played it) was Guami's *O Maria gratiae* for two sopranos; another duet here is printed on p. 9 of this issue. An enterprising disc well worth hearing. CB

**Musique pour le Luth ou le Clavecin mises en Musique par le Sr. Perrine, Paris, 1680.** Paola Erdas (on Delin 1768 hpscd) 77' 42"  
Stradivarius STR 33433

Kbd versions of music by E. & D. Gaultier

I had several problems with this disc, not the least of which was describing what is on it. To summarise, the music is by the cousins Ennemond and Denis Gaultier, both key figures in the history of the lute, and the present collection was compiled by Perrine for the purpose of persuading lutenists to play from staff notation instead of tablature. (It failed, incidentally.) As the resultant

anthology is in keyboard-style notation it can be played on the harpsichord, as Perrine suggests on his title page. This does not necessarily mean that the music works well on the harpsichord, any more than Marais' viol music works well on the oboe (another option from a title page!) I have to say I am unconvinced. It sounds uncomfortably sparse on keyboard, the ornamentation is much more intricate than the lute equivalent and tends to overwhelm, and many pieces rely on a variety of stress and dynamic, impossible on the harpsichord, to make sense of the voice leading. The faster dances are on the whole more successful in transcription than the slower ones. These problems are all inherent in the music, and are no reflection on the performer.

Paola Erdas is a neat, accurate player but her *notes inégales* are sometimes so *inégales* as to be almost incoherent, and she sounds rather ill at ease in the idiom. She is also hampered by the somewhat bizarre choice of instrument – a 1768 Delin harpsichord, of which much is made in the booklet. It is neither appropriate for music written mostly before 1650, nor in tune. The point of arranging suites of dances by key, an innovation of lutenist composers, was partly to avoid retuning diatonic bass strings but also to enable perfect tuning in that key by dint of shuffling frets. The advertised 'meantone temperament' is no excuse; some intervals, including unisons and octaves, are so false as to make one wince. An interesting experiment, but alas, one whose results I cannot recommend.

Lynda Sayce

*A Trip to Killburn: Playford Tunes and their Ballads* The Baltimore Consort 60' 25"

Dorian DOR-90238

Not received for review

## LATE BAROQUE

Albinoni *L'opera completa per flauto traverso*  
Ensemble L'Apothéose 54' 54"  
Stradivarius STR 33441  
Sinfonie in C, F (x3), G, Sonata in d

Tomaso Albinoni is not a composer normally associated with the flute but these *Sinfonie* are to be found amongst a set of original and adapted works by early 18th-century Italian composers in the possession of the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma. Two items are transcriptions of Albinoni's violin sonatas from *Trattenimenti Armonici*. Enrico Di Felici copes admirably with the demands inherent in music conceived for strings, and the introduction of guitar to the continuo accompaniment more than makes up for the absence of an added bass.

Marie Ritter

Bach *Passio secundum Joannem* Ian Honeyman Ev, Werner Van Mechelen Christ, Greta de Reyghere, Steve Dugardin, Stuart Patterson, Dirk Snellings SATB, Il Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht 111' 53" 2 discs  
Vanguard Classics Passacaille 99712 ££

A batch of three items recorded by Il Fondamento arrived too late for this issue. But the covering letter from Tom Norden, who handles review copies for Vanguard

and Columns, was so enthusiastic that I listened to this straight away and share his enthusiasm. If you expect the opening chorus to present a reverent introduction, you are in for a shock: the oboe suspensions are harsh, the bass notes piercing. I'm not sure if this interpretation really fits the text, but it makes a fine introduction to this dramatic interpretation of the Passion narrative. Tempi are lively, but not excessively; I was very pleased that the chorales are more relaxed than in many 'authentic' performances. The only annoying mannerism is the gaps before some final chords. This is a live performance; I suppose the detachable applause is included to demonstrate that and excuse the few very minor blemishes. To have so fine a performance (recorded last April) at mid-price should make this a great attraction for those not concerned with exact reproduction of Bach's vocal forces: the choir here is 5.4.4.4 and the excellent Ian Honeyman is not given arias as well as the narrative to sing. The only concession to the price is the provision of the text in German only.

CB

Bach *Mass in B Minor* Manuel Frasek, Matthias Ritter Tr, Maximilian Fraas, Matthias Schloderer boy A, Anthony Rolfe Johnson T, Michael George B; Tölzer Knabenchor, Choir of the King's Consort, The King's Consort, Robert King, 110' 20"  
Hyperion CDA67201/2 2 discs

The special feature here, besides the general high quality in balanced recording and consistency of performing enthusiasm, is the use of an all-male cast of singers in both choral and solo numbers. This has been so excellently woven into the fabric that it lays bare the folly of those who have claimed that it is impossible and the lack of judgement of those who thought that it was undesirable. The boys of the famous Tölz choir sing well and with a wonderful spirit of celebration throughout: such is the spirit of Bach's great festal Mass. Perhaps the whole ensemble is a little too big, but at least it's unusually tidy and accurate in pitch. Perhaps the sound of today's Tölz boys isn't quite that which Bach expected from his comparatively undernourished and older *Kantorei*, and perhaps the blending of the tenors and basses of The Choir of the King's Consort do not sound the same as would have the low voices of choirs Bach knew in Dresden or Leipzig. Nevertheless, the new recording hints at a greater authority, and in my view it achieves it. This may not be quite perfect, but it's the closest yet achieved in any large-scaled Bach choral recording. All concerned, not least Hyperion, are to be warmly congratulated.

Stephen Daw

Bach *Motets* (BWV 225-230) RIAS Kammerchor, René Jacobs 72' 36"  
harmonia mundi HMC 901589

In view of the current discussion about Bach's 'chorus', this is a recording for those who want to sit on the fence. It includes every option: solo-ensemble, semi-chorus and full (30-voice) chorus (who sing very

stylishly), plus an orchestra of strings and oboes added to the continuo team, making it, at times, a very full sound. The choices are all justified in the music and the text, and it's all very well done – very expressive, words beautifully clear, and the director's impulsive musicianship lifting the choir out of the four-square phrasing I remember from other German recordings. However, the swapping within movements from solo voices to full chorus may well convince doubters that these wonderful pieces really flourish one voice to a part.

Robert Oliver

Bach *Organ Works* Franz Hauk the Great  
*Klais Organ of Ingolstadt Münster* 74' 46"

Carlton Classics 30366 00402 ££

BWV 532, 540, 542, 564, 565, 603, 608, 629, 653b, 659

It is often said that the acoustic of the building is the finest stop on the organ – although in this case, the organ itself is an impressive example of the German modern-post-neo-baroque, with warmth and richness of voicing replacing shrill spikiness. It is frequently recorded for Reger and suchlike, and owes no concessions to historical precedents (by today's standards, anyway). This CD, by the organist at the Münster, has the feel and programme of a bookstall CD, but is nonetheless fun. It makes full use of the resources of the organ, including the completely unauthentic use of a hair-parting (for those of you who are lucky enough to have hair to part) horizontal trumpet. The playing is exciting, if unsubtle. A good CD for power- and noise-crazed organists to impress non-organist friends with – or to annoy the neighbours and frighten the horses.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *The Young Virtuoso* Richard Egarr *hpscd*  
Globe GLO 5150 66' 36"  
BWV 832, 833, 894, 912, 914, 922

Richard Egarr's recital dedicated to the young Bach (but still including the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue as its final item) makes a wonderful continuous listening experience, besides forming an extremely useful reference disc for the Suites in F & A (BWV 833 & 832), the Toccata in D, e and the *Triple Concerto* source (894). Egarr plays with a wonderful sense of living expression, which results in a quality of interpretation so very ideal for Bach; this must, one feels, be how he would have played his music himself when it was new or newly improved. The sound is direct, clear and sweet, the temperaments have character and colour and the attack is far more subtle than that of many of his recorded rivals, so that all things hang together well. I cannot easily think of a better account of any of the pieces played on this CD.

Stephen Daw

Bonporti *Invenzioni a violino solo, op. 10*  
Chiara Banchini vln, Jesper Christensen kbd,  
Gaetano Nasillo vlc 90' 34" 2 discs  
harmonia mundi HMC 905237.8

In his *Invenzioni* Bonporti claimed to have written 'in an altogether unusual style'. The music is clearly indebted to Corelli (but then what Italian music wasn't at that



time?) but individual movement names like *Bizarria*, *Capriccio*, *Ecco* and *Fantasia* suggest that these are no ordinary violin sonatas. J. S. Bach copied out four of the works and Veracini carried them about 'in his handbag' (as the notes put it), so they were clearly widely known and respected by the leading musicians of the day. The present performances are first rate. Chiara Banchini is undaunted by the technical requirements and is particularly successful in bringing out the various melodic lines in the texture. The cello is very occasionally a little less subtle, while the continuo part (as explained in the notes) is realised in a variety of ways in an attempt to convey the composer's precisely-notated dynamics. Recommended. BC

**Locatelli Opus 4** Raglan Baroque Players, Elizabeth Wallfisch vln & dir. 98' 28" 2 discs Hyperion CDA67041/2

This is really two sets within one: the six *Introduzioni Teatrali* (three movement Sinfonie) are followed by a hotch-potch of six Concerti, including one in imitation of hunting horns and another with four solo violins. The playing, as one would expect from a band whose personnel reads like a who's who of the English early music scene, is excellent, the recording bright and clear. The two sets are on separate discs in the casing and I found myself drawn more to the *Introduzioni* (at just over 34 minutes, far the shorter of the two discs). Another fine Locatelli release from Hyperion. BC

**Rameau Hippolyte et Aricie** (1733) Mark Padmore *Hippolyte*, Anne-Maria Panzarella *Aricie*, Lorraine Hunt *Phèdre*, Laurent Naouri *Thésée*, Eirian James *Diane*, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 182' 42" 3 CDs Erato 0630-15517-2

I had high expectations of this release. Christie's previous Rameau recordings on harmonia mundi have been outstanding, with his keen sense of dramatic timing playing as big a part in his success as some wonderful music-making. Here, both are present in abundance. Mark Padmore's is just the right voice for Hippolyte; time and time again I was reminded of Charpentier's *Medée*, particularly in Les Arts Florissants' second recording, in which he played Jason. The trio for the Fates and Theseus' ensuing arioso (again in Charpentier's style) is a stunning piece of writing, while the chorus near the end of Act III recalled Rameau's church music. Although I was not exactly smitten with Lorraine Hunt's Phaedra, it would have been inappropriate for such a disagreeable character to have a lovely, transparent voice. An absolute must for fans of Rameau and Les Arts Florissants. BC

**Music by Daniel, Thomas and Ralph Roseingrave** The Douglas Gunn Ensemble Melrose Music mm CD-101 52' 51"

This first disc in a series *Music from 18th Century Ireland* is welcome both in itself and for what it might portend. Dublin had a thriving musical culture in the 18th century which was not entirely dependent on visitors

like Handel, Geminiani and Arne. Daniel Roseingrave came to Dublin in 1698, and may have originated there; of his sons, Ralph succeeded his father as organist at Dublin's two cathedrals but Daniel spent most of his life in England. The music is certainly worth hearing and is nicely played in a manner that is perhaps a little staid by current fashion (no exaggerated paired quavers, for instance), though the singing could be more strongly characterised. The disc includes nos 2, 3 & 9 of Thomas's flute sonatas and some of his keyboard music, alternating with songs by Daniel and Ralph. CB

**Tartini 12 Violin Concertos op. 1** L'Arte dell' Arco, Giovanni Guglielmo 175' 34" 3 discs Dynamic CDS 160/1-3 ££

Don't be misled by the front cover: each of the three violinists involved (Giovanni Guglielmo, Federico Guglielmo and Carlo Lazari) is the soloist in four concertos. L'Arte dell' Arco play one-per-part and are generally successful in blending together (even though the acoustic is slightly unhelpful in this respect, particularly for the bass section). The music stretches ritornello form to allow for some extended passages of real virtuosity, which are successfully handled by the three soloists. Like most documentary sets, this is not intended as an evening's entertainment but rather as a dipping pot. As such, it offers a wealth of well-played good music. BC

**Telemann Chamber Music** Philidor Ensemble + Frans Brüggen fl, Marc Bestrubé vln, Richte van der Meer vlc, Titia de Zwart gamba Philips 454 154-2 60' 10"  
Bsn sonata in f (TWV 41:f1), trio sonatas in c (42:c2) & a (42:a6), quartets in d (Musique de Table II) & a (43:a3)

All these are works familiar to baroque wind players, so this disc covers territory already explored extensively in recent years; however, the appearance of distinguished performers such as Frans Brüggen, Richte van der Meer and others makes this a recording worth owning. The Quartet in D minor from Telemann's *Tafelmusik* II and the Sonata in F minor from *Der Gertreue Musik-Meister* each feature refreshingly in their alternative versions for bassoon; also included is the outstanding Quartet in A minor for recorder, oboe, violin and continuo. The playing is, as one might expect, of the highest calibre – poised, balanced and mature. Altogether a safe investment. Marie Ritter

**Vivaldi 6 Double Violin Concertos** L'Arte del Arco, Giovanni Guglielmi 69' 34"  
Dynamic CDS 167  
Not received for review

**Trios for 4** Palladian Ensemble 62' 34"  
Linn CKD 050  
Handel op. 2/1 & 4; Leclair op. 13/1; Quantz Sonata in C; Telemann Sonatas in g & a.

I look forward to each new Palladian disc with anticipation and feel I will be praising them unreservedly. This, however, is not the case. My main quibble is the balance,

which often has the violin sounding very bright and immediate while the recorder appears to be in another room and the continuo underwater. I wonder if listening on Linn hifi would really make this CD sound 'even better' as the booklet says. Matters are not helped by the fact that it sounds as if Rachel Podger actually puts more effort and exuberance into her playing than Pamela Thorby who seems to be playing 'second fiddle' as it were and, actually, quite often is flat. It is a delightful choice of music, if a bit dense for a whole hour, and there are lovely moments; but on the whole there is a lack of warmth and passion. Angela Bell

**An English Collection** Maurice Steger rec, Continuo Consort, Nayoki Kitaya 66' 51"  
Claves CD 50-9614  
Handel Sonatas in e HWV 375 & f HWV 369; Hilton 3 Fantasies a3; Locke Suite 4 'ffor seaverall ffreinds'; Purcell A New Ground; G. Sammartini Sonata in a op. 2/6; anon Masque Dances from BL Add. 10444

I worried about this before hearing a note. Does one recorder player really need six continuo instruments? Is there any place at all for a 16' violone in the Handel sonatas, especially since there is also a seven-string gamba? Does the use of 10 different recorders arise from musical requirements or is it a sign of conspicuous consumption? We are told that the music has been recorded 'using authentic instruments and according to historical performance practices while concurrently respecting modern listening habits'. There is plenty of evidence of the latter, and the innocent listener will find much to enjoy here. What is absent is a due awareness of the performing implications of the historical context of each piece. If you can afford seven musicians for the masque dances, for instance, the way to play them is not to use massive continuo but to write some middle parts (and, of course, use strings, not recorder). I'm not opposed to lavish continuo in the right repertoire, but doubt whether there is any music for solo recorder that requires it. Steger plays well, and he and Kitaya could have produced a fine record had they abandoned their backing group and confined themselves to music for recorder and continuo. CB

## CLASSICAL

**J. C. Bach Symphonies op. 8** The Hanover Band, Anthony Halstead 63' 41"  
cpo 999 383-2  
op. 8 (Markordt)/2-4; *Symphonie périodique* (Venier) 46 (2 versions), op. 6 (Huberty) no. 1

We have regrettably missed most of the enterprising cpo/Hanover Band/Anthony Halstead series of J. C. Bach's orchestral works, and I will need to use my space for this one explaining what it contains. Op. 8, as published by S. Markordt in Amsterdam in the early 1770s contains three symphonies which had already been published by Hummel as op. 6 so are recorded under that title rather than here. Markordt also

seems to have pirated nos 2-4, but no earlier edition survives. Venier was a Parisian who, like several publishers, produced subscription series of symphonies; this disc includes two versions of a symphony in C, with only the first movement in common. Another Parisian publisher, Huberty, issued a version of op. 6 with two works completely different from the authentic set plus an apparently earlier version of no 1 which is sufficiently different to warrant recording.

This series as a whole is an important one. J. C. Bach is a significant composer, not just in his own right, but as the major figure in what was one of Europe's major musical cities, London and as an influence on Mozart. A conspectus of his symphonies on good, modern-instrument performances under David Zinman is available on a cheap Philips 2-disc set (442275-2) of op. 6, 9 & 18. But anyone wishing to go further or wanting 1990s rather than 1970s performances will need to collect this series, and this particular disc does not overlap with the Philips. The Hanover Band and Anthony Halstead make the best possible case for music that is at times predictable though always delightful. Some of the slower movements are musically strong enough to deserve just a little more expression. CB

**Mozart on Organ** Leo van Doeselaar org  
Globe GLO 6041 66' 50" (rec. 1991)  
K 24, 356, 397, 399, 408/1, 574, 594, 608, 616, 620 (Chorale), Anh. 38.

Oh dear – this is unfortunate! I have a number of Leo van Doeselaar organ CDs, and found both playing and recordings to be excellent – particularly the two Handel CDs. But this is the first time I have been sent one for review, and I am afraid I am not impressed. The organ sounds remote and indistinct, and the articulation of the playing does not make sufficient recompense. I also had problems with some interpretations: for example, the over-use of romantic and pianistic rubato in the Fantasy in d minor. The programme is interesting and convincing and is a good solution to the problem of what to do with Mozart and the organ, an instrument that we know that he loved and played frequently: there are many laudatory descriptions of his virtuoso playing on many of the finest organs in Europe – we owe the designation of the organ as the 'King of Instruments' to him. But he left no written organ music. This CD contains a variety of pieces originally for harpsichord or fortepiano, orchestra or voices, glass harmonica or clock organs, including the two well known Fantasias. So, listen before you buy – and look out for the Handel CDs as well. Andrew Benson-Wilson

**Música en Tiempos de Goya** Marta Almajano S, La Real Cámara, Emilio Moreno dir.  
Glossa GCD 920303 52' 06"  
Music by José Castell, Nicolás Conforto Francisco Courcelle, Pablo Esteve, Antonio Guerrero, Blas de Laserna, D. Scarlatti & anon.

I don't know when I last heard a record of music that is so unfamiliar: apart from Scarlatti, I did not even know the names of the composers. My favourite is a Lamen-

tation by Courcelle for soprano, two violins and obbligato cello: I'd like to hear the whole set. Most of the rest is rather lighter, with plenty of guitar in the textures. The sound picture is of the world of Goya's youth (the booklet is full of dates, though not Goya's – 1746-1828), with no hint of the violence of his war pictures. Like all Moreno's recordings, it is well worth hearing. The short Scarlatti *Sinfonia* from a MS owned by Moreno himself is the same as No. 5 of the 17 in Paris Conservatoire Rés. 2634. CB

## 19th CENTURY

**Mendelssohn Piano Trios op. 49 & 66** Julian Reynolds pf (Erard, 1837) Johannes Leertouwer vln, Viola de Hoog vlc 52' 11"  
Globe GLO 5156

The spontaneity, energy and rhythmic vitality of this recording present Mendelssohn at his best, although the scherzo of Op. 66 is a fraction too fast for the listener to enjoy the repeated notes – the speed is more of a prestissimo than a presto. Julian Reynolds has a brilliant technique, and the 1837 Erard grand piano possesses a sound that is rounded but not heavy and blends beautifully with the strings. The musicianship of all the performers makes this a highly desirable recording. The splendid cello lead with its touch of humour in the Op. 66 finale made me wish that the recording had favoured this instrument a little more in the first movement of Op. 49. Margaret Cranmer

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Best of Yiddish, Klezmer and Sephardic Music**  
The Burning Bush 72' 30"  
ARC Music EUCD 1375

Not quite the team that brought you songs from Stuart brothels, but this has Lucie and Roderick Skeaping in common with The City Waites, and Robin Jeffrey as another early musician. I'm not sure what to make of the Sephardic element (we hope to have an expert on that repertoire writing in our next issue), but what I found fascinating and exciting here was the mid-European repertoire – far too modern in style to be really appropriate for an early music magazine, but highly recommended, with some tremendous clarinet playing from Merlin Shepherd (who shared the arranging with Roddie Skeaping). There is something we can learn from this revival of a style that is more recent and not completely lost. These performances sound just a bit too neat and polished compared with those of surviving rather than revival musicians. Is that something that afflicts all modern revivals of earlier styles? CB

Those interested in ethnic recordings may appreciate the offer of seven sampler CDs for £10.00 that comes with this disc.

**Romances y Villancicos de España y del Nuevo Mundo** Musica Ficta 60' 56"  
Musica Ficta MF001

Welcome to a new ensemble and new recording company from Bogotá, Colombia,

the first South American group I have heard. The influence of South America on the early music revival is quite considerable, since David Munrow's research into its instruments may well have set him on his way. The disappointing feature of this CD is that, despite the discussion in the booklet, there is so little of the vast quantity of South American villancicos included: just two from Bogotá plus three from Mexico and the rest of the disc is devoted to mostly-familiar items from the Palace and Columina MSS of c.1500. The style is original, with instrumental links between pieces (perhaps an idea that works better in concert than on disc), though I grew tired of the recorders and percussion. Was the recorder really so pervasive in Latin America? What about the shawms, cornetts, trumpets and dulcians mentioned in the booklet? I enjoyed the singing, and would have liked more emphasis on the voices. I hope future discs will explore the exciting local repertoire rather than try to entice listeners with music a century or two earlier, however well performed. They need a new designer: there is far too much white (or worse, gold) print on black for easy reading, though the disc itself is pretty. CB  
Readers can order from Lindum Records; USA orders can be placed direct with the group at e-mail gserran@javercol.javeriana.edu.co

**The Ultimate Recorder** Flanders Recorder Quartet 61' 25"

Digi Classics DC 97 AMB 10 018

Music by Byrd, de la Re, Guami, Scheidt, Telemann, van Landeghem, Warlock & anon.

This is a 'through the ages of recorder consort' disc. The Flanders Quartet is on great form: they play with sensitivity and superb phrasing. Their enthusiasm and musicality is evident from the very opening. Particularly effective are the contemplative Byrd settings and the improvisatory *Lamento di Tristano*, with its hauntingly lovely opening and rumbustious rotta, with added drum solo. The programme is carefully planned with the frenzy of the estampie followed by the relatively simple Scheidt, then an arrangement of a Telemann concerto for four violins which is skilfully executed. Of the 20th-century pieces, the Warlock is a delight and the van Landeghem, with its avant-garde effects, is most compelling. There is a great intensity in the playing, mixed with a relaxed sense of fun which, with superb technique, makes this a high recommendation. Angela Bell

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We were very sorry to hear that Michael Thomas is seriously ill and has been in a coma for some time. Reviews of several keyboard disc have consequently been delayed till next month.

£ = bargain price,  
££ = mid-price.

Other CDs may be assumed to be full-price, but we do not always have specific information.

## LETTER

Dear Clifford,

Having had an interest in the Biber Mystery Sonatas for some time I was most interested to read James Clement's article in EMR 28. Am I the only one who dares to ask precisely what a *circulatio* is? The New Grove is no help, so it might have aided our understanding of this part of the article if this figure could have been concisely explained to the ignorant. A quick listening to sonatas 11 and 15 didn't help, though there is a striking motif (not a figure, surely?) occurring at the start of No. 11. Is the *circulatio* the *cantus firmus* which is referred to? If the *cantus firmus* applies to the Easter Hymn used as the next, second movement, this is not made clear. (In any case, is this a true *cantus firmus*?) My copy of your facsimile of the sonatas seems to have got mislaid since a recent move, so this is of no help either. And what of an Enneachord? What was it, and how was it tuned? (Again no reference in Grove either as a separate entry or under Kircher).

Ian Graham-Jones

Let's hope the Newer Grove will be available on a searchable disc to compensate for the lack of index of the current edition. *Circulatio* is in fact described in the article 'Rhetoric and music' (vol. 15, page 798), with an example from Bach Cantata 131 and with musical precedent for the term given to Kircher. The old MGG has an index, which refers to vol. 4, column 178.

The Enneachord obviously inhabits the world of the 'old astronomy' which was by this time turning into mysticism and magic, as the reference to Joscelyn Godwin implied even before I crawled under an old desk to find his book. To expand the reference alluded to in footnotes 10 & 11:

Kircher's "Enneachord of Nature" is founded on the Hermetic doctrine of correspondences, here envisioned as an instrument on which every string, when plucked, resounds through all the levels of being in the universe.

I personally am very suspicious of invoking both rhetoric and mysticism too readily; but they were part of the world-picture of at least some musicians at this time and need to be explored. CB

NB There was a misprint in James Clement's article: the beginning of the third paragraph should read: *It is, I think, unlikely that Biber ever intended...*

## COMPETITION

Suggested repertoire for the Concentus Bestiales:

Settings of the *Agnus* by Johann Krebs, William Byrd, Jacob Handl (Gallus), Walter Lambe, Jean Mouton, Nicholas Sturgeon, Jean Maillard, John Bull, Cornelius Canis, Sebastain Ochsenkuhn, Orlando Gibbons, Francesco Cavalli, Thomas Lupo, Pierre Passereau conducted by Josquin des Pres, Alexander Agricola and John Farmer.

Kathleen Berg

There is no appositeness or hidden criticism in her prize, *To the Unknown Goddess: A Portrait of Barbara Strozzi* by Catherine Bott

## MISSA SANCTI HENRICI

Taunton Camerata (tel 01823 665798) will perform a concert of Royal Music of Salzburg in Sherbourne Abbey at 7.30 pm on Saturday, 12 April 1997. Directed by Adrian Carpenter, the programme includes Mozart's C major mass (K258), his father's Concerto in C for trumpet with Crispian Steele-Perkins as soloist, and what is reckoned to be the first British performance of Biber's *Missa St. Henrici*. Dating from 1696, this is scored for five soloists, five-part choir (both SSATB), with a six-part string band, five-part trumpet choir with drums and continuo. Anyone familiar with Ton Koopman's CD of Biber's extraordinary A major Requiem or Konrad Junghänel's stunning performances of the *Missa Alleluia* and the 32-part Vespers will not be disappointed by this fine work, which combines elements of the *stile antico* with concertato writing of considerable virtuosity.

## MISCELLANEOUS

A reader asks why the top note (A) in the first phrase of 'Fairest isle' is sometimes sung flat, sometimes natural. In terms of quantity, the early sources predominantly have no flat, but the very earliest source has it, and as a rule copyists are more likely to omit than add. (There is no autograph surviving and the MSS are particularly erratic for Act V of *King Arthur*.) The shape of the phrase makes the flattening of the leading note plausible; the decision has ultimately to be made from a feeling for what sounds better since the objective evidence is inconclusive.

A BBC programme on the *Salve Regina*, evidently sparked off by the Christopher Page discovery recorded on his latest CD (an aspect not mentioned in the review in EMR 27, p. 17), was notable for the way Radio 4 network presented a programme with a flair that often escapes the musical specialists of Radio 3. Not that the speakers were any less expert (at least four were regular readers of EMR) but the producer managed to present musical technicalities in a way that non-specialists could understand (music examples, for instance, were tellingly cut to show specific points). Back in my Radio 3 days, the controller of Radio 3 banned *cantus firmus* from all scripts. Here we had that and *alternatim* as well. Much as I object to unnecessary jargon, if there is a proper term, it is silly not to use it.

I was interested to read in *Choir & Organ* 5/2 that, when Peter Aston conducted choirs from Italy, Denmark, Germany and Slovenia in music by Britten, the pronunciation problems occurred in Latin rather than English texts.

Ian Graham-Jones reports the following student gems:

♯ is a MODEM.

A *tierce de picardie* at the end of a D minor piece was described as D major Napoleon.

The baroque violin has a smaller brass bra for support.