

Early Music

REVIEW

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Concert programmes and CD booklets often contain pictures of the performers. Occasionally you get a simple mug-shot that fulfils the function of showing what the subject looks like. But photographers want to do something more creative, and eye-catching images that help to establish product identity can be better publicity for the performers. No doubt recordings advertised by scantily-clad ladies fondling their instruments sell better (though not, of course, to readers of *EMR*), and witty pictures like the art gallery from the Dufay Collective certainly make a group memorable. But failures are more likely than success. Once the money has been spent, there is pressure to use the result, whether effective or not?

But you only see the pictures inside CD booklets when you have bought the recording, and surely the major function there is to enable the listener to identify the people portrayed as an ancillary to the biographies (and they usually do need enlivening). An example from a disc reviewed in this issue has six players assembled round a sofa, but the list of names does not relate to their positions.

That picture at least implies a group of people which has some coherence: in fact, there is nothing wrong with the picture, just the captioning. But I puzzle at what images of singers scattered round a church or field are supposed to convey; in *campo aperto* for reconstructions of early chant, perhaps! One of the earliest of these irrelevant pictures I can remember is a Carver LP with a group of singers in academic dress forming a (magic?) circle on the beach at St Andrews (mentioned specifically to make BC blush). Is it not beyond the wit of photographers to provide images that enable the individual performers to be identified and show them either in the appropriate musical activity or otherwise in a relevant setting rather than in a pose which conveys nothing apart from incongruity? Admittedly, singers with gaping jaws do not look particularly elegant (perhaps we should heed renaissance strictures about not opening the mouth too wide); but if photographers claim to be artists, they should remember the maxim *Summa ars est celare artem* (the greatest art is to conceal art). That sounds like a suitable text for a puzzle canon; any offerings will be gratefully received and may be published. CB

Books and Music

Clifford Bartlett

LUTE & VIOL

Robert Dowland's *Varietie of Lute-Lessons* (1610) is familiar to most lutenists in the facsimile Schott produced in the 1950s (currently reprinting and likely to be available again very soon at about £13.50). There is now a rival from Performers' Facsimiles (PF159; £17.50). This is larger in page-size but a bit more expensive, and presumably (I don't have a copy of the Schott at hand) reproduces a different copy, one in the Library of Congress. The 1610 publication is certainly an essential document for lutenists, though I would have thought that a list of misprints and of differences (if any) between copies would have been more use than another facsimile.

I mentioned a pair of the recent *Lute Society Lute Editions* last month (omitting the price of the second, which is the same as the first). Since then I have received *Duets by Francesco da Milano and Joanne Matelart* edited by Gordon Gregory (£6.00, or £4.00 to members; ISBN 0 905655 08 7). It contains six duets comprising solos by Francesco with a *contrapartie* by Matelart, one by Julio da Modena/Matelart and two duets entirely by Francesco. The edition is transcribed into French tablature, and with some alternative transposed versions for lutes at the same pitch. This is an extremely practical edition, printed in a clear computer font, with editorial decisions annotated; very good value. The current Lute Society catalogue also includes a useful list of the articles in the first 34 volumes of *The Lute Society Journal*, with an offer of complete sets for £100 + post.

A few years ago there was quite a heated meeting of the Viola da Gamba Society, at which I was a provocative chairman, over teaching and learning the viol. John Catch, then and subsequently, has left no opportunity unturned to stress the importance of studying scales. I personally am more interested in the techniques by which students learned in the 16th & 17th centuries than those which developed during the 19th: if you acquire an irrelevant facility you might be tempted to use it, and it may be argued that what looks to us like a group of eight notes may in the past have been broken up into something else. But I seem to be in a minority, and for those who want to practise scales John has produced *An Apology for Scales: a viol player's method for the confident mastery of scales and for banishing all fear of shifts* (Corda Music Publications, £2.00). John's gift for the apposite quotation is revealed on the cover: 'What one fool can, another can' from a book on Differential & Integral Calculus (I must confess that my ability at calculus is even below my ability to play scales). Seriously, it is a useful booklet for anyone wishing to take the viol even moderately seriously, and the merit of this book is for the facility it will give in shifting position.

One PRB item got slipped into the wrong pile, so I missed out Daniel Norcombe *Nine Divisions for Bass Viol* (PRB Baroque Music Series No. 16) edited by Patrice Connelly, who has also been publishing her own editions and is a player and specialist early-music seller in Sydney. Such ground settings have the advantage of providing simple music for a beginner who can learn musicianship and ensemble playing (and be given a target of attainment) by accompanying a virtuoso. These are certainly intended for skilful players. One practical point: isn't consecutive bar-numbering confusing? If the soloist has got out from the ground, shouting 'Bar 94' is no help when the latter only has 16 bars: it would be easier if numbering started afresh each variation. The score would look cleaner with only one set of numbers and references in the critical commentary could have 5/14 instead of 94.

ROMAN MONODY

John Walter Hill *Roman Monody, Cantata, and Opera from the Circles around Cardinal Montalto* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. 2 vols, £80.00. ISBN 0 19 816613 3

It is an unavoidable feature of the music business: some musicians are more successful than others, not because of their superiority as performers, but because of their ability to manipulate the media. The same happened in the years around 1600; everyone knew about the invention of recitative and monody in Florence, and the Florentine publicity has prevailed until fairly recently. Not that there is anything inferior in the music, but similar performance manners were in use elsewhere. Hill shows here that the background to the Florentine revolution (perhaps now too strong a word) can be traced to Naples and Rome and that there was similar activity in Rome around 1600. There is a stimulating survey of the various ways in which songs were performed and published in the decades before 1600, with the use of guitar accompaniment postulated rather earlier than has generally been assumed. Cardinal Montalto took Ferdinando de' Medici (of 1589 *Intermedi* fame) as a model for his patronage and there was until about 1607 a two-way movement of singers. He was secretive about his musical activity, and did not sponsor publication of his private repertoire. Fortunately, Hill was able to identify a group of manuscripts that preserves a substantial number of songs, though not complete operas.

This is in many ways an ideal model for an academic publication. The editor has discovered a new group of sources; he explains their context, analyses the musical styles, and edits them so that they can be studied and performed. He is sensitive to the difference between notation and performance,

and even draws attention to resemblances with other sorts of Mediterranean singing – Sicilian and Arabic (p. 200-1). At times I wondered whether it might have been easier for the reader if each chapter been divided into discrete sections, and more care could have been taken to link the music in vol. 2 with the discussion of it in vol. 1 – most simply by combining the index of compositions of the two volumes to give page references to vol. 1 and piece numbers in vol. 2 together, alternatively by adding 'see vol. 1 p. x' in the heading to each song. It is also odd that the contents lists of the sources does not refer to vol. 2. A final petty criticism; since the poetic form is so important a part of the musical analysis, that too would have been a useful supplement to the headings.

Vol. 2 is a marvellous anthology: 422 closely-packed pages of 164 mostly-unpublished songs and duets (the only familiar item being a version of the *Lamento d'Arianna*). The composers' names will also be new to most singers – Ippolito Macchiavelli (no relation), Giuseppino Cenci, Raffaello Rontani, Cesare Marotta, G. B. Nanino, Pellegrino Mutij and Orazio Michi. The music is simply edited, using an odd computer system that gives over-long note-stems. I haven't quite worked out how original accidentals are treated. On p. 52 bar 54, there is an editorial natural for a note that has been flattened earlier in the bar, but on p. 193 bar 3 are the second and third Fs still sharp or natural? It doesn't matter what policy is used as long as we know what it is. The volume ends with examples by G. M. Nanino of how a singer can improvise above various bass intervals. It is a pity that this volume is not available separately, since it extends by several hundred percent the amount of Roman song of the period available in transcription. If I were a singer with £80.00 to spend, my first priority would be the Olschki volume with D'India's five books of *Musiche* (which costs just over £70.00). The quality of the music Hill has edited is not quite at that level; but it is certainly worth studying.

I recently and belatedly read Frederick Hammond's excellent account of the musical patronage of a slightly later Roman ecclesiastical family, the Barbarinis. Hill's study is different in scope and emphasis, but both are outstanding studies which enrich our understanding of Roman cultural politics and the music which emerged from it.

PS. Has anyone tried winding the lower strings of his harpsichord with gold to improve its tone (cf. p. 32)?

STROZZI & LEONARDA

Barbara Strozzi 14 *Arien aus opus II für Sopran oder Tenor und Basso continuo* [edited by] Richard Kolb. Furore-Edition, 1996. 38pp. ISMN 50012 561 7

Isabella Leonarda Sonata Prima opus 16 für 2 Violinen und Basso Continuo [edited by] Ingrid Grave-Müller. Furore-Edition, 1996. ISMN 50012 101 5

Isabella Leonarda Sonata Duodecima opus 16 für Voline solo Basso Continuo [edited by] Ingrid Grave-Müller. Furore-Edition, 1995. ISMN 50012 105 23

Barbara Strozzi has been well served by facsimile editions but is less accessible to non-specialists. This edition needs an accompanist who can play from the bass, but the task has been made easier by ample (but not pedantically frequent) editorial figuring. It also needs singers who are prepared to tackle unreduced note-values with twelve minims to a bar. There have been enough recordings to whet any singer's appetite for a chance to try the music out for herself – or, indeed, himself, since there is no objection to transposing down an octave – so this selection is most welcome. I personally welcome this level of minimal transcription and hope that performers will make the effort. The texts are also set out as verse with English and German translations.

Isabella Leonarda spent her life in a convent in Novarra, where she became Mother Superior. Most of her considerable output was sacred, and it is likely that her one instrumental print, op. 16, was intended for church use. So the editor is unnecessarily surprised to find her turning from vocal to instrumental music, and is a bit naive when she tries (by using an exclamation mark) to imply that there was anything odd about publication *con licenza de' Superiori*. The same common phrase happens to be on the first 17th-century title page I checked, Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione*. Despite being 'almost fully ignored by today's musicians', this is the third edition of the solo sonata to come my way. It appeared as No. 16 in Dovehouse's *Baroque Chamber Series* (available from Recorder Musicmail, Scout Bottom Farm, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W. Yorks HX7 5JS @ £6.20, as is the rest of the Dovehouse catalogue, which is particularly rich in viol music). In view of the overlap between Furore and A-R over Martines (see below), it is a shame that Isabella Leonarda's *Selected Compositions* (A-R Editions RRMBE 59) includes both sonatas 1 & 12; but there is no indication that parts are available from A-R. Editorially, Furore's change of signature at bar 65 of the trio is less fussy than A-R's bracketed accidentals, even though the latter does give the status of each note more precisely. The differences between the editions seem to be marginal, with the Furore slightly preferable at the discrepancies I have checked. Apart from the odd flourish, neither piece is very difficult and both are well worth playing.

MARTINES DIXIT

Marianna von Martines *Dixit Dominus* edited by Irving Godt (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era*, 48) A-R Editions, 1997. xiii + 4 facs + 93pp, \$33.60. ISBN 0 89579 384 9

I have mentioned Marianna Martines several times in *EMR* (20 p. 21, 21, p. 3) and have already noted one publication of this *Dixit Dominus*, edited by Conrad Misch for Furore Edition (*EMR* 23 p. 5). I suspect that the two versions were too far advanced by the time the duplication was apparent for either to cancel. A-R has the fuller introduction and the editor seems more aware of the composer's biography; he prints her autobiographical sketch and the correspondence over her election to the Bologna Accademia Filarmonica. Misch is not aware of the Bologna source for the work, nor

does he realise that the setting must be the one which she sent after her election for performance there. Godt takes the Bologna score as his copy text rather than the MS in Berlin that is described as autograph. The differences are minor. Godt prints dynamic marks in each part while Misch in his score follows the source and leaves one mark to apply to the stave above and below; presumably this is adjusted in the parts. Godt's commentary is fuller, but the variants are of no great consequence. Misch keeps the trumpets and drums in C; Godt's way of describing their original notation (in C) is back-to-front in that normally notation in C is called untransposed and at sounding pitch transposed. The sources only occasionally show a viola part; Godt has it doubling the continuo throughout, which seems sensible, but users of the Misch edition won't know what is in the viola part until the parts arrive. A-R's engraving is more elegant, Furore's is bold and probably easier to read while conducting. I can't compare the performance material; the wherewithal to judge the practical convenience of an edition is rarely made available. Godt's version is valuable for its additional information and is part of a continuing programme of publications about Martines, which explains why his list of acknowledgments is more than the edition itself requires. I am puzzled that he thanks Helene Wessely because 'her gracious assent allowed my work to go forward': how come she can exercise some sort of *licenza de' Superiori*?

GERMAN CRITICS

Mary Sue Morrow *German music criticism in the late eighteenth century: aesthetic issues in instrumental music* Cambridge UP, 1997. xiii + 253pp, £40.00 ISBN 0 521 58227 X

I liked this book for two main reasons. First, I am generally sceptical of aesthetic theories, which so often have failed to give a full and complex enough account of what music *was* and *is* about. For a start, are *was* and *is* quite as different as what is written about music at various periods might imply? So it is comforting to read that during the period in question, despite the unhelpful idea of music as imitation of nature still holding general sway, the consensus of German reviewers ignored it and were perfectly happy to consider instrumental music valid in its own right. Indeed, the image of serious music on which I was brought up was largely established during this period: the most significant type of music is instrumental (not quite The Symphony yet) and German; Italian music is trivial (French music is mostly ignored); the standards are set by the Great Composers (initially C. P. E. Bach, whose reputation barely survived his death, then Haydn and Mozart – the line continued with Beethoven and Brahms). And this consensus seems to have been established, not by the influence of any particular writer or thinker, but by a host of independent reviewers working throughout Germany. The Spirit of the Age in operation!

My second reason is for the comparison I can draw between the existence of common assumptions shared by the German critics and those rather different ones of *EMR*'s CD reviewers. There is a fair consensus among us, but similarly we don't

have conferences to decide on policy: indeed, some I have met for only a few minutes or not at all. Nor is there any philosophy of early music that we can fall back on (as the interviews by Bernard Sherman that we reviewed last month shows), apart from a belief in the performance of music with due regard to the available historical information about instruments and performance style. The ideas of the German critics seem to have developed over the period (1760-98) covered by the book: I wonder if ours will.

They had the advantage of being anonymous. Having once written anonymous reviews (I covered early music, Vaughan Williams and Varèse for *The Monthly Guide* after Basil Lam died), I am aware of the freedom that anonymity gives. Some of the German critics were known at the time, others have been identified by Mary Sue Morrow. But it is not their individuality that is in focus here but their collective assumptions. I wondered at the methodology behind the book. Were all the reviews scanned onto computer and searched by significant words? If so, the files would be worth circulating on disc so that readers could do their own searches, and also check reviews of individual works.

There is a political dimension here. The establishment of German hegemony is likened to Hitler's methods (see p. 46), and the concept that change occurs by ignoring rather than confounding the prevailing thought-patterns is, of course, one with enormous implications for all walks of life. If I can praise a book on aesthetics, it must be exceptionally good.

ARTARIA EDITIONS

Artaria was one of Vienna's most distinguished publishers, dealing with art and maps as well as music from the 1760s until this century; original publishers of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, they also produced the earlier volumes of one of the pioneering series that revived early music, *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich*. The name has been revived by Allan Badley for a series of music from the later 18th century. The new Artaria Editions come from Wellington: it's a pity neither I nor Brian Clark knew of them on our separate visits there in August 1996 & 1997. I recently received a catalogue, along with a couple of samples linked with a new Naxos release. I was impressed by the quality of the music on the disc of five Sinfonias by Leopold Hofmann (details on p. 18). The two for which I was sent scores (F2 and C8 in Badley's numbering, which confusingly is different from that in the Garland symphony catalogue though uses the same system) date from around 1760 and compare very favourably with those by Haydn of the same date. F2 is particularly interesting in that the first movement runs directly into the slow movement (does that tell us anything about the observance of repeats of the second half of sonata-form movements?) The minuet has a genuine trio for viola, cello and double bass. The music is well-composed, and Hofmann is good at avoiding exact repeats of phrases.

The playing of the Northern Chamber Orchestra is convincing. A period band might have given the horns more

character, but I was not otherwise worried; the sound and phrasing were good. The conductor, Nicholas Ward, disagreed with the editor in some places, showing that the score probably went too far in adding editorial dynamics and phrasing. Ward, for instance, took the end of the slow movement loud; the editorial *p* is not an extrapolation from any parallel passage, so would be better absent. In the finale, Badley consistently adds dotted slurs to the first two quavers of each bar of the opening triadic theme. The composer, however, only slurs a different pattern in the next phrase, one which players would be likely to slur anyway. Since Hofmann bothered to slur the obvious, it is unlikely that he expected players to add them in less obvious places. Seeing them added editorially at the beginning, I assumed that they must have been in the source at some later point in the movement, but I can't see any. So I think that the editor has slightly overstepped his function. Otherwise the editions are fine, with excellent printing on nice paper, large enough to conduct from, neatly ring-bound in standard covers. I didn't detect any page-turn noises on the recording, but that could be a problem.

The Artaria catalogue has about a hundred titles, with orchestral music, mostly symphonies, by Samuel Arnold, Beck, Cannabich, Dittersdorf, Dussek, Gossec, Hofmann, L. Mozart, Ordonez, Richter, J. Stamitz and Vanhal, along with many concertos by Hofmann. An intriguing forthcoming series will be devoted to music that the Mozart family knew, edited by Cliff Eisen. Prices (in New Zealand dollars) are in four categories between \$75 and \$135, which includes score + wind + strings 3.2.2.2.1; you only save a few dollars by ordering score only. Catalogue and orders from Artaria Editions, P. O. Box 9836 Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand. tel +64 4 380 8569 fax +64 4 380 8769, email orders@artaria.com, homepage <http://www.artaria.com>

FUZEAU FACSIMILES

The tunes of French carols are familiar from the various sets of organ *Noëls* as well as from Charpentier's mass, but vocal versions are extremely difficult to come by, as are the words. So Fuzeau's reproduction of *Chants des noëls anciens et nouveaux de la grande bible* (Ballard, 1703) is most welcome and is good value at around £10.00. The *grande bible* refers to the standard collection, *La grande Bible des Noëls*, which appeared in many editions from 1554; the editor does not specify a specific one whose page numbers tally with those quoted in the facsimile. Ballard's prints melodies with bass for 19 carols, some familiar in English, other from organ settings, the latter being listed in the introduction. Some of the bass parts are labelled *Basse-Continue*, others have the full text instead and are marked *a2* in the contents list. If the carols are meant to be sung as notated, even allowing for low French pitch the ranges are often quite high, especially since most are of a small compass; but the keys generally correspond with other settings. Who sung them?

Baston's set of *Six Concertos in Six Parts for Violins and Flutes* has been quarried for individual editions which have taken

different decisions on how to accommodate the non-standard size of solo recorder (the plural in the title means that the type of recorder varies, not that any concerto is for two or more players). Concertos 1 & 3 are for a *Consort Flute* (treble or alto depending on the modern terminology you favour), 2, 4 & 5 are for a sixth flute and 6 for a fifth flute. (The sixth and fifth flute parts are transposed and need to be read with treble fingering.) There are no problems at all in reading the orchestral parts, so for those who can manage the notation and have a sixth flute, the facsimile is by far the cheapest way (about £12.00) of performing the pieces and is perfectly clear; alternatively, you can use the orchestral parts with the recorder parts from the modern recorder-piano editions. I wish other publishers would follow our practice of including extra bass parts; it is needed by the harpsichordist as well as cello and double bass.



Facsimiles and other music reviewed are available from various specialist dealers around the world. If you do not have a satisfactory supplier, they can be ordered from King's Music (address as *EMR*). We do not keep a large stock, but can obtain orders quickly and cheaply, and are well informed about who publishes what, prices and quality. We charge post from us to you but generally retain foreign publishers' list price unless the expense of delivery or exchange is high.

PERFORMERS' FACSIMILES – Keyboard

A fair number of new titles have appeared since I last wrote about this series. The largest of them (15½" high) is Georg Muffat's *Apparatus Music-organisticus... Liber primus* (1690) – sadly there was no *Liber secundus*. This was his only printed keyboard publication, an elegant engraving prefaced with two titlepages, one crammed with type in typical Muffatic fashion, and a Latin introduction with some points of practical interest. There have been no shortage of editions (Peters, Coppenrath/Kalmus and Doblinger, to name only those on my shelves). The notation presents no problems apart from clefs: a lot of C1 and some C4 (PF181; £21.00).

A complex Latin title page also distinguishes J. C. F. Fischer's *Ariadne Musica Neo-Organodum* 1715, which is remembered chiefly for its systematic presentation of 20 preludes and fugues in different keys. The fugues are brief statements of a single point and the scale is very different to Bach, but Fischer's little book (it is in small oblong format) may have sparked off an idea. There are also five Ricercars on liturgical melodies. Clefs are consistently C1 & F4 (PF197; £14.50).

Johann Krieger's *Anmuthige Clavier-Ubung* 1699 is messier in appearance, printed from type rather than engraved, though there are no serious problems in legibility; clefs are again C1 and F4. It is on two staves, but pedal is sometimes specified. Krieger's interests are chiefly contrapuntal; there are, for instance, four separate fugues followed by a fifth incorporating all their themes (PF162; £14.50).

Maurice Greene's *Six Overtures for the Harpsicord or Spinnet* [1745] are arranged from his orchestral set of the same date; apart from being attractive to play in their own right and offering no clef problems, they can serve as a substitute for a score for those using our facsimile of the orchestral parts (PF161; £12.50).

Elizabeth Weichsell (born 27 Dec. 1765 – a more precise date than in *New Grove*) wrote two sets of keyboard sonatas before she was twelve. Her *Six Progressive Lessons of the Harpsichord or Piano Forte* are rather more mature works, published after 1783, when she had become Mrs Billington. The Performers' Facsimile catalogue gives a date of c.1793, but that might be of the particular Library of Congress copy which is not a first issue, since Sonata III is printed from a plate that has been used separately after the first publication. I'm not sure in what way they are progressive: they don't seem to get any more difficult. But they are more interesting than the accompanied sonatas of a contemporary woman composer, Mrs Barthelemon (see below). Again, no problems for the inexperienced reader (PF 194; £12.50).

Albrechtsberger is best remembered as having taught Beethoven counterpoint, though he also had a very successful career as a composer of instrumental and church music. His *Douze Fugues Pour le Clavecin ou l'Orgue... Oeuvre Premier* (1783) continue in the Bachian tradition, artificially cut off from the normal music of their time, but not too crusty. Apart from the occasional tenor clef, there are no notational problems (PF172; £12.50).

PERFORMERS' FACSIMILES – Violin, Recorder, Oboe

Until recently, the earliest edition of Tartini's *L'Arte del Arco* that one could buy was, as far as I know, the 50-variation version in Cartier's *L'Art du Violon* issued by another imprint of Broude Brothers, Performers' Editions, in a volume with two sonatas from op. 1 (the whole set is available from King's Music) and the Devil's Trill. An earlier version with only the first 38 variations is now reproduced from a Paris edition of 1758 (PF 168; £8.50). Neither edition has any particular claim to authenticity and I don't know whether there are better manuscripts (people sometimes ask, so I'd appreciate a more information), but at least these two facsimiles show how the work was known in the 18th century.

Mary (or Polly) Young was one of several Young sopranos from two different families who were popular in the London pleasure gardens and opera houses. She married one of the leading musicians, Françoise Hippolyte Barthélemon in 1766. Her *Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte with an Accompaniment for a Violin* were published under the name Maria Barthelemon (without accent); the cover of the facsimile has the fuller name Mary Young Barthelemon. The Performers' Facsimiles catalogue gives [c.1785] for publication date, the British Union Catalogue has [1776], the precise date presumably based on some evidence. The edition is a single score. The violinist

(normally then male) needs to look over the shoulder of the (female) keyboard player, giving a chance for flirtatious accidental contact. It's music to play through rather than rehearse (PF154; £12.50).

Schickhardt's *Six Sonates à Une Flute, deux Haubois, une Viole de Gambe & Basse Continuo* op. 5 [1710] are intriguing in instrumentation, though there are disappointingly few sections where the gamba is really independent. *New Grove* gives violins as alternatives to the oboes, though this is not mentioned in the parts. I don't know these pieces, but his solo music is usually worth playing (PF183; £29.50).

William Babell's *XII Solos for a Violin Hoboy or German Flute with a Bass figur'd for the harpsichord With proper Graces adapted to each Adagio by the Author* was published as the second of his posthumous works a year or two after his death in 1723. They have quite a high proportion of sonatas in the minor (5 out of 12) and only one is in a sharp key. Apart from being nice pieces, the main interest is in the 'proper Graces', which players would do well to absorb so that similar passages can emerge naturally in other music of the same place and time (PF187; £17.00). Part the First is also advertised at the same price (PF186).

Finally, I will say as little as possible about Handel's op. 2 (PF170; £29.50). The King's Music version is a little smaller, but for virtually half the price (£15.00) you get a set with a second copy of the continuo part. If your harpsichordist is using a score, you may prefer the extra elegance.

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MUSIC in LONDON

CORONATION AT WESTMINSTER

The annual opera at Westminster School is something of an institution. It is a notable synthesis of the drama and music departments, and always a phenomenal achievement, especially given the extremely limited time available for rehearsal. This year, news that the production would be 'something by Monteverdi' reached me in July, but casting decisions were barely complete before everyone had jetted off on holiday. It was September before the cast, depleted by the insatiable need of some of its members for sun, met to rehearse. It was recognised that, yes, it was only three weeks and a day to the first performance (how many hours?) But there was a determined attitude that we would do it.

Rehearsals for the *Coronation of Poppea* involved, almost immediately, both music and blocking on the stage. We were learning exits and entrances even before we had learnt our parts by heart. This actually proved quite useful, as it is always easier to remember lines when one has movements to associate them with. As the days flew by, the band began to form. Our divinely patient musical director, Shauna Beesley, on the harpsichord, was joined by a cellist, an organist and two violinists. Nero's bodyguard (Toby Benton) started flitting to and from from stage to band to play an exquisite baroque guitar. One afternoon we arrived to discover a man playing what looked like a deformed banjo: we were quickly told that one called it a *chitarrone* – of course. The growth of the band was simultaneous with the development of the acting and singing that it would accompany. Slowly Seneca's students began to remember the meaning of the words 'pitch' and 'upset', and, as Seneca himself recovered from a cold, the production as a whole came together. And just in time.

The first night proved what we could do as a cast. There was an incredible sense of cooperation both on stage and off, and everyone sang brilliantly. Perhaps most notable were Ben Linton and Simone Benn, playing Nero and Poppea, who wowed the audience (and the rest of the cast, backstage) on every night. The performances were over before most of us realized, and, suddenly, we were all crowded in the wings, listening to the lover's final duet for the last time. My most lasting memory of the opera will be hearing that beautiful music drift out into the mild evening, as Westminster Abbey stood in view, silhouetted against the sky.

Jenny Haydock

The deformed banjo man was Michael Fields – an intermittent subscriber and contributor to EMR. The Coronation of Poppea was performed in Geoffrey Dunn's translation (the second Monteverdi opera this year to match King's Music notes with Faber words, after Kent Opera's Orfeo). I thought it would be interesting to get comment from one of the participants. Whether Jenny, who played

Athene, genuinely volunteered or was volunteered by the Director of Music, Guy Hopkins, I don't know. I went to one of the performances, hoping that teenagers could solve some of the problems that adults find difficult. In some ways it is an ideal work for schools, in that there is quite a lot of action, voices need not be well-developed and there is no complicated accompaniment and staging can be simple. I enjoyed hearing the work in English and was, surprisingly, not upset by Nero singing at the wrong octave (there's a neat phrase about counter-tenors singing above their natural territory in one of Anthony Hicks's Handel reviews on p. 16). But the whole cast found intonation very difficult, the reverse side of a refreshing absence of wide vibrato. The other disappointment was dramatic. The first time I saw the work was with students a few years older in a performance that oozed sexuality. (A rumour that Poppea had real-life interests in both Nerone and the conductor no doubt helped). The Westminster production was disappointingly dead in this respect: just a little warming in Pur ti miro. Perhaps the end-of-production party should have happened at the beginning of the week: I can't believe the cast was really as shy. I loved the confidence of Meera Kumar as Arnalta. It was a brave attempt, thoroughly worth undertaking.

MAXIME FABULOSA ?

I made one of my rare visits to a London concert, not to one of the main halls, but to the Old St Pancras Church, up Pancras Rd north of the new British Library; perhaps it could become a site for concerts of rare music from its collections once the music library gets sorted out. The advance publicity wasn't very explicit, and there was no programme available to the sparse audience, so I'm a bit vague about items outside my experience. But the essence was a mixture of music by Sances and vocal jazz (in some cases, just a single, unaccompanied soprano). Generally, the styles existed side-by-side, but one Sances piece was enhanced by a free second voice and there was a very subtle ensemble improvisation on the descending tetrachord ground. The attempt by the jazz specialist to sing Dowland didn't work: the husky, low voice was fine, but there was not enough added value to compensate for her inaccuracy. The highlight was a magnificent performance of a fine Sances motet, introduced with impressive enthusiasm by its singer, tenor Wills Morgan. (I've sent the facsimile to Brian Clark to put on the computer and we will produce an edition in due course.)

Musica Fabula is directed by the harpist Jan Walters. I'm not sure if this particular concert was entirely a success. Sances came out of it well, and the cross-over was mostly stimulating. But the atmosphere with a small audience in a church was not ideal; low lights and a bar would have given a better ambience. A programme like this could be an enormous success at festivals, especially tightened up a bit and presented as a late-night show: it could run in a suitably alcoholic venue for a week at York or Utrecht. CB

BELCHER SUPPLIED

Blaise Compton

Supply Belcher *The Collected Works* Edited by Linda G. Davenport. (*Music of the New American Nation*, vol. 5) Garland, 1997. xxv + 165pp, \$65.00 ISBN 0 8153 2427 8

I first became interested in early North American music while still at school: the chapter *After Handel – in Britain and America* that E.F. Goldman contributed to Arthur Jacobs' Penguin symposium *Choral Music* (1963) contained the intriguing comment, that Billings' harmony was 'crude, but occasionally forceful'. Could music be good and bad at the same time? Was this a way of justifying the obvious but apparently irremediable deficiencies of my own literary and musical compositions – 'Well, sir, it may not work, but it's sincere and vigorous' Having obtained some appropriate scores I was impressed by the music's rhythmic vigour and its frequent 'modal' inflections. I was content to believe the then generally prevailing view, somewhat stridently and chauvinistically proclaimed by certain American musicologists, that the fugging tune was an all-American invention, and I didn't uncover the English roots of the American repertoire for some time.

Now the republication of the early American psalmists has become something of a growth industry: as well as the series of which this volume forms part, there are the two interlinked major series currently under way from A-R Editions: *Recent Researches in American Music* and *Music of the United States of America*, the latter under the auspices of the American Musicological Society. (Wouldn't it be nice if an English publisher felt able to undertake a similar series?)

Supply Belcher's somewhat unusual name, when placed alongside those of some of his American colleagues, who frequently sport first names like Ebenezer, Asahel, Eliakim, Hezekiah and Zedekiah, might very well reinforce the impression that he belonged to a cracker-barrel school of 'backwoodsmen' composers who probably spoke in a dialect like that affected by Ezra Pound: 'Waal, of I weren't eggzackerly de-si-rous of gwine back to ole Murky [America]...': but his Christian name must reflect his parents' Biblical reading, and has more to do with gratitude for Divine Providence than with economics. 'Belcher' has been derived from the French 'Bel sire'.

Linda Davenport briefly sketches Belcher's career: born in 1751 in Massachusetts he enjoyed 'a superior English education', and served as a captain in the Revolutionary War. He may have been a pupil of Billings in Boston. After working as a farmer and tavern-keeper he moved to Maine, where he became town clerk of Farmington, the same town's representative in the Massachusetts legislature, selectman and J.P. He was referred to as Squire Belcher and

Captain Belcher, and once, by a local newspaper, as 'The Handell (sic) of Maine'. He was apparently a school-teacher as well as a music-teacher and choir-leader and had a local reputation as a musician. Most of his work is contained in his only known publication *The Harmony of Maine* (Boston, 1794), a collection of mostly sacred vocal pieces, but a handful of other works appeared in general anthologies.

The Harmony, which necessarily provides the backbone of this new edition, was republished in facsimile by Da Capo in 1972. It is a collection of plain-tunes, fuges [the spelling preferred in this context] and anthems with a few secular pieces. The range of styles is impressive. Compare BATH, a plain-tune featuring the American vernacular-modal style, wherein Belcher manages to evade conventional cadence-formations almost entirely (rather like the ever-surprising Timothy Swan), with HEROISM, a setting of a militantly anti-British text by Nathaniel Miles, which includes the following Sapphic stanza:

From the dim caverns made by ghostly miners,
Let the explosion, dreadful as volcanoes,
Heave the broad-town, with all its wealth and people,
Quick to destruction!

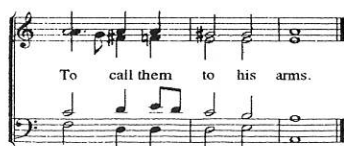
This has a vigorous and pungently-harmonized fuge, complete with aggressive stamping rhythms and some rich *divisi* in the counter. Then turn to INVITATION, a secular glee complete with pretty galant appoggiaturas and dainty embellishments. Modulation is supposed to be largely foreign to American psalmody; but THE REQUEST has a clear progress through a string of successive keys. Notable also are ADMIRATION, with its bold melodic leaps of an eleventh, and THE LILLY, with its transparent part-writing.

Davenport includes about a dozen pieces from other sources. There seems no reason to doubt most of them, but I have reservations about JEWRY, a setting of 'Hark the herald angels sing' from an 1819 source: it is too refined for Belcher, the modulations and 6/4 resolutions a trifle too conventional (or has Belcher self-consciously brought himself up to date, as we know Read and Jenks did?)

Psalmody was for church use, wasn't it? Unfortunately Davenport doesn't reproduce Belcher's title-page (nor any of his prefatory matter), so those who might use her edition as their initiation into American psalmody will remain unaware that as well as being suitable for 'Divine Worship' *The Harmony* also contains pieces for 'Singing Schools and Musical Societies' – in other words, it is suitable for teaching as well as concert use. The unsigned foreword on performance practice (presumably common to the series) makes no mention of this but firmly places the music in the

context of the church choir. Information on the uses of psalmody is available elsewhere: but this is one area in which the supporting information to the transcriptions is inadequate. The A-R volumes are exemplary in the provision of facsimiles and extensive quotations from contemporary sources about performance: Belcher included some information in *The Harmony* and that should have been reproduced, not just vaguely paraphrased. Belcher also included an Errata list: this should have been mentioned in the section of the commentary that discusses the misprints.

Davenport is possibly right in saying that *Harmony* 'was arguably one of the most poorly printed tunebooks of the time' (She suggests, following Karl Kroege, that this was due to the distance between Boston and Maine and the resulting difficulty of proof-reading), and explains clearly the problem of sorting out whether the many dissonances were intended by Belcher or simply printing errors. Her emendations are extremely successful, though whether choirs of the time would have made them is another matter: she lets several simultaneous false-relations (paralleled in other American tune-books) stand, and preserves the delicately dissonant – and to my mind unique – close in FUNERAL HYMN:



A few more points. According to Davenport: 'prior to the Second World War, little notice was taken of early American psalmody.' This needs qualification: there was a famous revival movement in the USA in the middle of the last century, when 'Father' Robert Kemp promoted a number of successful 'Old Folks' concert tours which presented American psalmody in costume, and later in the century enthusiasts printed several wide-ranging anthologies, such as the *Harmonica Grandaeva Rediviva*. In the 1930s G. P. Jackson showed the continuing vitality of much of the tradition.

Similarly the claim that American psalmody composed the voice-parts successively needs explanation. Can it be that the fuges and canonic passages were thus constructed? Did the composer say 'Now I've put the bass down I can't change it, so I'll have to forget about that nice treble bit'? (Davenport draws attention to the accomplished canon in APPEARANCE). Billings says in his *Continental Harmony* (Boston, 1794) 'the grand difficulty in composition, is to preserve the air through each part separately, and yet cause them to harmonize with each other at the same time'. And, while we're on Billings, where in that same collection does he make the statement Davenport attributes to him on p.xvi, that 'the seventh scale degree in minor was usually raised in performance whether it was indicated or not'?

Appoggiaturas and grace-notes figure in Belcher's style: surely it would have been easier to print suggestions for realisation (if really needed) above the stave in small notes

rather than to keep repeating them in the commentary. Notes like the following many pages away from the music are not much help to a singer; there is now no difficulty in using a setting programme that can manage to do so.

m. 7, treble, the grace notes are transition notes, performed as thirty-second notes with the preceding half note performed as a double dotted quarter note.'

And surely a catch-all note somewhere could have prevented the ritual repetition of

The wedge-shaped signs are 'Marks of Distinction' and are to be performed as accents, not staccato marks.

The French sixth chord in FUNERAL ANTHEM can be paralleled in English psalmody collections: William Cole (fl.c.1760) used them a lot.

The text of RAPTURE, beginning 'Then jointly, all the harpers round...' is obviously a fragment, and Davenport has located no more verses: it is the 14th of 16 stanzas of a quaint text set as THE HEAVENLY CONTENTION by Jeremiah Ingalls in his *Christian Harmony* (Exeter, 1805) Generally, her supplying of missing texts is well done (Belcher only provides one stanza of a text); though why are slurs censored?

To conclude, this is a good edition; but to be really useful and informative, the prefatory, bibliographic and critical matter needs to be brought up to the standard of the comparable A-R series.

The following selection of evaluations of the 'Handell of Maine' shows the difficulties scholars have had with his style. I go along with Chase, for some of Belcher's melodies have a genuine folk-like quality that I find irresistible, though it is not until Ingalls (1805) that American psalters become repositories of real folk airs.

R.T. Daniel, considering just the anthems, wrote that they 'bear witness to Belcher's meagre musical training... The harmonic language is marred by many incomplete triads... by a preponderance of ungrateful chord progressions... and by too many unjustified dissonances... There is not even any redeeming increase in expressiveness gained by emancipation from "correct" procedures'

Nicholas Temperley and Charles G. Mann regretted that 'Belcher's composing technique is shaky. Even allowing for misprints it is hard to make sense out of many of his progressions... He is a throwback to some of the early English psalmody like Evison and West' (previously mentioned as composers whose 'technique is inadequate' for polyphonic composition).

One of the anthems attacked by Daniel, *An Anthem of Praise*, is re-evaluated by Richard Crawford: 'Belcher's harmonious little anthem bears the stamp of a composer leaning towards harmonic orthodoxy...' and Gilbert Chase is predictably rhapsodic. To him, Belcher is 'a precursor of Stephen Foster... simple and close to the folk... tenderly lyrical or contagiously vivacious... some of his liveliest hymn tunes... would be equally suitable for a minstrel show... Supply Belcher is one of the most engaging figures among the primitives of American music...'

Martin Peerson – Upon my lap my Sovereigne sits

Up - on my lap my Sove-raigne sits And sucks up - on my
When Thou hast ta - - - - - ken Thy re - past, Re - pose my babe on
I grieve that du - - - - - ty doth not worke All what my wish - ing be
Yes as I am and as I may I must and will be

brest, Mean-time his love mayn-taines my life, And gives my sense her rest. Sing
my: So may Thy mo - ther and Thy nurse, Thy cra - dle al - so be.
would: Be - cause I would not be to Thee, But in the best I should.
Thine: Though all too lit - tle for Thy selfe, Vouch-saf - ing to be mine.

lul - la, lul - la - by, sing lul - la, lul - la - by, my lit-tle, lit-tle Boye, sing
Sing lul - la - by, sing lull, lul - la - by, my lit-tle, lit-tle Boye, sing
lul - la, lul - la - by, sing lull, lul - la - by, sing
Sing lul - la - by, sing lul - la, lul-la, lul - la - by, sing

lul - la, lul - la - by, sing lul - la, lul - la - by mine one - - ly Joy. sing Joy.
lul - la, lul - la - by, sing lul - - la - by mine one - ly Joy. Joy.
lul - la - by, sing lul-la, lul - la - by mine one - ly Joy. Sing lul - la - Joy.
lul - la - by, sing lul - la, lul - la - by mine one - ly Joy. Joy.

A. Campra – L'Europe Galante (1697)

Venus (C1)

Musical score for Venus (C1) in C major, 3/4 time. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: Tu ne peux ex-ci-ter que de vai-nes al-lar-mes, Tu ren-dras mon tri-om-phe en-cor plus glo-rieux.

Figured bass: $\flat 6$ 4, 6, 6, $\flat 6$ \flat #

AIR

Musical score for the Air, featuring Flute [I] (G1), Flute [II] (G1), [Venus], and Violins. The score is in 3/4 time and consists of three systems of staves.

Lyrics: Fai-sons re-gner l'A-mour, fai-sons bril-ler ses char-mes; Les doux plai-sirs, Les doux plai-sirs sont ses plus for-tes ar-mes.

Figured bass: $\flat 6$ 4, 6, 6, $\flat 6$ \flat #

RECORD REVIEWS

15th CENTURY

O Yesu dulce: Laudi italiane del quattrocento
Micrologus 53' 21"
Opus 111 OPS 30-169

It is refreshing listening to an anthology of utterly unfamiliar music, especially since the contemporary secular music is more familiar. But I'm worried that, despite enjoying the music and the impressive performances by the singers, a *basse* group of instruments and an *alta*, the music has not stuck in my mind. Perhaps the devil really did have all the best tunes and such *laudi* as were contrafacta borrowed material with a degree of polite respectability. There are few discs of *laudi* around, especially ones as convincing as this, and it usefully maps out the territory between secular and church music. CB

16th CENTURY

G. Gabrieli *The Canzonas and Sonatas from Sacrae Symphoniae* 1597 His Majestys Sackbutts and Cornetts, Timothy Roberts 74' 49"
Hyperion CDA66908

This recording distinguishes itself in a number of regards. First, it bravely presents the entire instrumental contents of Gabrieli's 1597 publication (aerated by a few toccatas), aloof from the prevailing appetite for reconstructions of historical events. Second, the musical approach is to distinguish the moods of the pieces as much as possible, rather than to simply render the architectural blueprints of the real thing as so often happens with this repertoire. Thirdly, the steady increase in the numbers of young players has enabled all the performers to be furnished from one city, giving a curious link with the past and hope for the future. The opening Canzona sets the mood by entering boldly at an up-beat pace, pulling the listener along with plenty of forward direction. The second contrasts by embodying a formal and restrained drama working towards a truly magnificent climax. The pace of ideas in each piece is very well judged and crucial to the creation of dramatic tension. The transpositions used are not too doctrinaire. *Sonata Pian'e Forte* is not transposed to the doldrums, but a less passive and more constant tempo would have given the theatre of entrances and exits a firmer stage. The pungent tone colours are exciting, but sometimes I wished the basses had been given more of a head. Overall an excellent production and worthy commemoration of the anniversary: definitely one for the library! Stephen Cassidy

Guerrero Missa Sancta et immaculata Westminster Cathedral Choir, James O'Donnell Hyperion CDA66910 64' 53"
Also includes *Hei mihi Domine*, *Lauda mater ecclesia*, *Magnificat VII toni*, *O lux beata Trinitas*, *Trahe me post te*, *Vexilla Regis*

Westminster Cathedral Choir has made the Spanish Renaissance repertory its own and this disc adds further lustre to its reputation. Guerrero's long sinuous lines flow effortlessly from boys and men alike. The five-voice mass is based on a four-voice motet by Morales, the extra soprano part adding wonderfully to sonority, imitative possibilities and dissonance treatment. The two motets which follow are classic Guerrero, still much neglected but every bit as good in his way as Victoria or Morales. Especially interesting are the Magnificat and the three hymns which alternate plainchant with polyphony based on it. Bruno Turner has provided the chant from contemporary Spanish sources, sung mensurally with tremendous conviction; chant and polyphony slide effortlessly from one to the other. Definitely a classic recording. Noel O'Regan

Handl/Gallus *Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetiae* Czech Philharmonic Chorus of Brno, Petr Fiala 57' 33"
Supraphon SU 3280-2 231
Lamentatio I, II, V, VI; Oratio Jeremiae Prophetiae, Miserere mei Deus, Pater noster

While it sounds unusual to us now to use a choral force of almost 100 voices to sing Renaissance music, the results here are not without merit. The singing is tightly directed and expressive throughout, and the tuning and focus are on the whole reasonable, although the recording is a little opaque. Certainly things have moved on mightily since the 1992 release of a Gallus collection on Supraphon for which René Clemencic seemed to have lured a handful of out-of-work opera divas into a small padded room! It is both encouraging and interesting to tap into the burgeoning Czech early music scene and to hear the music of the masters who worked in the Renaissance Prague sung by 'eastern' voices. And in Handl/Gallus the Czechs really *do* have a composer to crow about! D. James Ross

Victoria Marian Vespers; Palestrina Ad te levavi Edinburgh University Renaissance Singers *dir* Noel O'Regan, Scottish Gabrieli Ensemble, Leon Coates *org* 60' 03"
EURS 002

There are obvious problems in giving an unbiased review of a CD directed by the person whom I would be most likely to ask to review it, and it must be said that Noel O'Regan did not ask us to mention it. The choir is amateur (without the stiffening from the other two reviewers who accompanied it on the Italian tour described in *EMR* 30), and there are occasional spots of sagging pitch and intensity where it shows. But these are not enough to make any who love Victoria's music hesitate from acquiring a fine recording of a little-known aspect of his output, the double-choir settings of the psalms. The disc is set out as Vespers as sung at the convent of the Descalzas Reales,

Madrid, on the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin, the nameday of the dowager Empress Maria; Victoria was her personal chaplain at the convent. The antiphons are mostly cut back just to incipits. The polyphony is sung boldly but with sensitivity at a good tempo (though with slightly bigger final rallentandos than I like). One of the 12-voice motets by Palestrina whose third choir the director discovered ends the disc, with a rather abrupt last chord. This disc brings me nearer the experience of singing Victoria than those by more famous ensembles. CB

Available from Noel O'Regan, *The Faculty of Music, Alison House, 12 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9DF*, as is his edition of the three Palestrina motets a12.

Wert *Madrigali* Cantus Cölln, Konrad Junghänel 68' 19"
Harmonia Mundi HMC 901621

This is full of life and pleasures. Wert is endlessly inventive, and Cantus Cölln take every opportunity to being his music to life in the whole gamut of moods. The matching of performers to material (25 madrigals a5) is exceptional, and I was unable to listen straight through without replaying several irresistible items, such as the tiny gem *Voglia mi vien*. The singers have an instrumental approach, and their tightly rhythmic performance sounds at times like a lute band, with a hard attack to each note and a rapid decay, at times like a viol consort, with powerful crescendos and voluptuously legato lines. The addition of the lute to the vocal ensemble is unobtrusive, but points the rhythms even more: this is helpful in preventing the very smooth passages from becoming stodgy. These magnificent voices need no help in producing the richest of sounds, as in the sepulchral opening *Giunto all tomba*; but when the lute joins in halfway through it adds a touch of sparkle and helps to move on the narrative. However, I think Junghänel's chief contribution came before the red light went on, in unifying the individual ideas of six soloists to produce such unanimously delivered performances and such vividly-told stories. Selene Mills

ENGLISH ANTHOLOGIES

English Lute Songs and Six In Nomines Alfred Deller *cT*, Desmond Dupré *lute*, The In Nomine Players 53' 45" (rec 1954)
Vanguard 08 5095 71
Songs by Campian, Danyel, Dowland, Morley, Pilkington, Rosseter & anon; *In nomines* by Bull, Tavener, Tomkins, Tye, White

I don't know if I am feeling mellower, but I enjoyed this far more than most of the Deller reissues, especially the florid *Care-charming sleep* (ascribed here to Campion rather than Robert Johnson), though it is a pity it isn't tracked separately from the plain version, which is less impressively sung.

The hefty rallentando on the second line of the first track does not bode too well for the disc, but that is not typical. Many older listeners will have discovered this repertoire from Deller and Dupré's performances; the versions here provide a more convincing justification for remembering them than some of the other reissues in the series. The songs are mixed with six In nomines in a style that wears less well; I wondered why Taverner's original setting was left till last, but the extraordinarily treatment of the final chord could not have appeared earlier. CB

Music of the Spheres: English Consort Songs and Instrumental Music from the late 16th Century Maarten Koningsberger bar, BRISK Recorder Quartet, Mike Flentross lute 67' 09" Globe GLO 5163

Music by Bennet, Byrd, Dowland, Nicholson, Scheidt, Stroggers, Sweelinck, Wigthorpe

There is a fundamental problem with this record: the songs are played an octave too high and sung an octave too low. That they still work is a tribute to the human ear's ability to make sense of confusing input, but it strikes me as a bit pointless. It is not impossible that consort songs might have occasionally been performed thus in the Elizabethan period, but it is surely not the ideal combination worthy of recording, even if done as well as here. Is there evidence for lute continuo in England (as opposed to a lute instead of or perhaps doubling the other instruments)? Of course, anything goes, as so many titlepages imply, if you are singing and playing for your own amusement; but virtually none of the music here is likely to have been conceived with recorder consort as first choice; the Dowland/Simpson *Paduan*, for instance, sounds facile without the bite of bow on string. If you are a recorder fan, you will find this delightful; but I prefer Tallis to die above, not below the accompaniment, however symbolic the latter might be. CB

Royal Music from the Tower of London Choir of the Chapels Royal of St Peter ad Vincula and St John the Evangelist, HM Tower of London, Stephen Tilton 68' 20" Isis CD021

Chant & music by Byrd, Cornysh, Gibbons, Mundy, Sheppard, Tallis, Taverner, Weelkes, White

Incomparably better than the CD from the Royal Chapel at St. James's which we reviewed some time ago, this deserves to sell well to the vast numbers of tourists at the Tower and will give a favourable impression about English small professional choirs. It is good that chant is included, though a pity that there are no texts and translations, so we can only surmise whose friend Henry VI should be (the first piece is *Rex Henricus sis amicus*) and why its composer couldn't get *Victimae paschali laudes* out of his head. The singers don't do themselves any favour by pitching Cornysh's *Salve Regina* so high: apart from the strain on the sopranos, the lower parts are muddy. The two keyboard pieces sound a bit ecclesiastical. (Did Farnaby quill his harpsichord from the ravens at Tower Hill?) Otherwise, this is a pleasing anthology in content and performance. CB

17th CENTURY

Buxtehude Membra Jesu nostri Choir of Radio Svizzera, Lugano, Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca, Accademia Strumentale Italiana, Verona, Diego Fasolis 64' 58" Naxos 8.553787 £

It's only a couple of months since I listened to the Koopman recording (*EMR* 33 p. 23); the same page has a disappointed review of the Radio Svizzera's Monteverdi *Vespers*. The performances of the Buxtehude are distinctly superior. If I have doubts, it is because the *Membra* feel to me like solo ensemble music; but Koopman uses a choir too. The Sonatori are always enjoyable and they add as a sombre overture Rosenmüller's *Sinfonia XI* (1670), but not its Suite. Both recordings suffer from assuming that the alto part needs to be sung by a countertenor; in the last Member, Koopman's Michael Chance puts a phrase up an octave while Roberto Balconi just sings ineffectively in his boots. Apart from price, the choice is really between whether you want the highly-ornamented string playing of the Koopman disc (fine for a single hearing, annoying on repetition) or the equally fine but plainer Sonatori. The bargain disc can compete on musical as well as economic grounds. CB

Corelli 12 sonate a violino e violone o cimballo, op. 5 Trio Veracini 151' 18" Novalis 150 128-2 (2 CDs) ££

This is an important recording, presenting aurally the arguments in *Early Music* by the players (John Holloway, David Watkin and Lars Ulrich Mortensen) last year. Some embellishments to the violin parts are included in the standard editions and facsimiles. But there are far more, and these were assembled as preparation for the recording. The titlepage of the original publication is taken seriously: *violone o cimballo* rather than *violone e cimballo*; some sonatas have just cello, others just harpsichord; *La Follia* is recorded both ways. This, of course, has some implication for what the cello plays, since without a harpsichord there is space for him to expand his part and react to the figuring. The keyboard playing is also different from usual, in that the realisation by Antonio Tonelli (1686-1765), with far thicker (or richer depending on you viewpoint) chords than one might normally play, is used for Sonata 3 and imitated elsewhere. On paper, these looked ungainly and unsubtle. They work here, but that may only be because the balance has been improved by the recording, and I suspect that they only make sense in a large hall. This isn't only a didactic recording; the performances are extremely persuasive, and this pair of discs will provide enjoyment as well as stimulation. CB

Novalis has no UK distributor; copies can be obtained from Lindum Records.

Dowland Consort Music and Songs Catherine King S, Jacob Heringman lute, Rose Consort of Viols 70' 10" Naxos 8.553326 £

Two lute solos and six songs from Books I, II and *The Pilgrimes Solace* frame the untearful dances from the 1604 collection. The overall impression is not so much that of Dowland the purveyor of melancholy, for there isn't a lot of pining for release from earthly hassles in this programme, but more of a portraitist of dance dedicatees. 'Pictures at an Exhibition' – or even 'Rogues Gallery' – might have been an apt programme title. The excellent line-up includes Pell, Manson and Groser on lower parts, Catherine King singing ravishingly (and mercifully not in RP), and Heringman providing a passionate Fancy. A bonus is two different essays, in English (the author spelt 'Brayn' in the French translation) and in German. A good as well as a cheap CD. Kah-Ming Ng

Marini Curiose & Moderne Inventioni Romanesca 71' 26" Harmonia Mundi HMU 907125

Marini is the composer nearest to Monteverdi in his ability to give meaning and emotion to the simplest of phrases; there are, indeed, a couple of pieces that listeners may take as Monteverdi since I have infiltrated them into versions of *Poppea*. He is, sadly, less consistent, which is perhaps why his music is recorded less often than it deserves. I cannot imagine better treatment than he receives here from Andrew Manze and his colleagues. If you want a sample, try the *Romanesca* or *Passacaglio*, and the *Retirata* of the *Balletto secondo* makes a memorable end to the disc. Most of the contents are from the 1655 collection. My recommendation of the month. CB

Monteverdi Ottavo Libro dei Madrigali Vol. 1 Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini Opus 111 OPS 30-187 75' 10" Monteverdi *Madrigali amorosi (from the 8th Book of Madrigals)* Alfred Deller, The Deller Consort, etc 49' 09" (rec. 1958) £ Vanguard 09 5095 71

We've learnt a lot over the last forty years about continuo scoring and playing. Deller has just a single, stolid harpsichord played unstylishly by Denis Vaughan (remembered for his campaigns against Ricordi editions of Verdi and for a National Lottery); Alessandrini uses the full range of lute, theorbo, archlute, guitar and 17th-century Italian harpsichord. But I wonder whether there are signs in the later CD that we are getting too sophisticated. With regard to sopranos, I find it difficult to accept a pre-Kirkby sound (I'd like to say pre-Noorman, since both discs include a work Jantina sang so revealing, the *Lamento della Ninfa*; but she did not set a trend), so the Deller record needs some allowance for its date in that respect as well. But the performance of *Mentre vaga angioletta* by Wilfred Brown and Gerald English is outstanding; the CD is worth buying just for that, and there is plenty more worth hearing as well. There are aspects which have not worn well, but the pacing feels to me so much better than the recent disc. Alessandrini has brilliant singers, equally good in solo and ensemble, the right instruments and stylish players,

and in many respects produces ideal performances. But I am continually disturbed by the way continuity is lost in the enormous changes in tempo; every detail of mood is expressed, but the madrigals become much more sectional than they need be. In *Vaga augelletto*, this produces ungainly transitions. In the opening of *Altri canti d'Amor*, the slow tempo is fine in itself, but the gaps between phrases undermine the mood that is otherwise so effectively created. The oddity of the *Lamento* is explicable in that it is an attempt to make sense of Monteverdi's rubric (and, indeed, the way he prints the music); but it sounds very odd and I'm not convinced. The speed of the ground is good, but so is Deller's, whose men are excellent, even if the soprano wobbles a bit. Neither disc is entirely satisfactory, though both outshine the Venhoda disc reviewed below; with their overlapping repertoire – all three discs have *Altri canti di Marte*, *Vaga Augelletto*, *Dolcissimo usignolo* and the *Lamento* – comparisons are interesting. The Deller and Alessandrini discs would make a good basis for a study of pre-authentic and post-authentic performance practice; the Venhoda recording isn't worth thinking about. CB

Monteverdi Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi
Prague Madrigal Singers, Miroslav Venhoda
Supraphon SU 32942211 45' 55 (rec 1972)

Whether you like them or not, the Deller and Alessandrini selections from Book VIII are performances that have something to say about the music. This just skates over the surface. Normally, I tend to favour fastish tempi and minimal rallentandos; but here everything is rushed and the words go for nothing. Compare the timings of *Vaga augelletto*: Alessandrini 5' 42", Deller 4' 40", Venhoda 4' 00" or both parts of *Altri canti di Marte*: 9' 02, 8' 34" & 6' 46". The solo singers are fine, with a nice lamenting nymph, but amazingly another piece is substituted for the third section. Even in 1972 it was clear that this isn't music for choir and orchestra. The harpsichordist is a disaster, continually tinkling when silence is needed. CB

Pachelbel The Complete Organ Works, vol. 2
Joseph Payne 71' 57"
Centaur CRC 2306

Volume I was reviewed in the June *EMR* (31). The organ used for Vol II is a modern American copy of the style of Zacharias Hildebrandt, a Saxon organ builder associated with Silberman and very much in the central German style so suited to the music of Pachelbel and Bach. Although the excellence of this organ does show through, it is often marked by poor playing. Payne frequently resorts to an overblown, almost parody style of articulation, totally unsympathetic to the acoustic or the musical line. This is reinforced by insensitive and over-emphatic touch. Quite apart from what it does to the music, this does little for the sound of the organ. A good organ, modern or historic, both demands and deserves sensitive touch and articulation. A shame, because Pachelbel is a composer worth listening to. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Poglietti Rossignolo: Imitation von der Nachtigall Joyce Lindorff hpscd 56' 21"
Titanic Ti-233

Despite Friedrich W. Riedel's claim in *The New Grove* that Rossignolo must rank as one of the most important cycles in the literature of keyboard music, I must confess that until a few weeks ago, when I received this CD, I'd never heard of it. Central to Rossignolo is the idea of *imitation* – of nature, embodied in the song of the nightingale (which crops up throughout the cycle) on the one hand, and of folk music and social customs, presented in a kind of musical tour of Bohemia, Holland, Bavaria, Poland and Hungary on the other. Two groups of shorter works (*Toccatas*, *Canzonas*, *Ricercars*, *Capriccios* and dances) surround the central *Aria Allemanda con alcuni Variationi*, which is a sort of 'Village Goldberg Variations' and contains the best pieces of Rossignolo. Joyce Lindorff's playing is neat but lacks a sense of drama – this is especially noticeable in the more rhetorical and gestural pieces, which sound rushed and confused at times. The harpsichord by Wolf & Wolf (after Dumont, 1707) is crisp but uninteresting, with a particularly undistinguished treble. Robin Bigwood

Purcell Ode for St. Cecilia's Day (1692); Music for the Funeral of Queen Mary; 2 Motets
Coro della Radio Svizzera, Ensemble Vanitas, Theatrum Instrumentorum, Diego Fasolis
Arts 47375-2 £ 72' 50"

An interesting, if uneven disc, of Italians performing English music. The choir is rather large (50 names are listed) but it doesn't sound that big – well-disciplined, with clear focussed sound, good English pronunciation, lovely phrasing and intensity of tone at all dynamic levels. The two Latin motets are very well performed, as are the two versions of *Thou knowest, Lord*; the full anthem is done with cornett and sackbuts. The instrumental playing in the St Cecilia Ode is also uneven (the names of the members of the orchestra are not in the booklet). The strings rather modern in style, but the wind are excellent, particularly the oboes. Of the soloists in the Ode, the countertenors are a bit wobbly, and sometimes their pronunciation is poor, but there is some lovely soprano singing, a nicely focussed tenor, and several very good basses. Worth hearing, but it cannot compete with the Paul McCreesh recording. Robert Oliver

Purcell Ten sonatas in four parts London Baroque 75' 00" (rec 1992)
Harmonia Mundi Suite HMT 7901438 ££

This re-issue, perhaps fortuitously, marks the tercentenary of these marvellous works' first publication. The interpretations strike me as thoughtful rather than sparkling, though can certainly be recommended as they give increasing pleasure on repeated hearings, rather like the music itself. CB's booklet note is characteristically concise but informative. David Hansell

Rosenmüller Lamentationes Jeremiae Propheetae; Trio Sonatas Ingrid Schmithüsen S,

Parnassi Musici 64' 44"

cpo 999 387-2

Also *Das ist meine Freunde & Treiffet ihr Himmel; Trio Sonatas 2, 4, 5, 6 (1682) & in e from A-Wn*

This CD combines music from an early print of vocal pieces with some of the composer's latest sonatas, as well as some Lamentations and a trio sonata from a manuscript source in Vienna. The ensemble combines two sweet-toned violins, cello, archlute and keyboard. The singer is also new to me and, although she carries off Rosenmüller's quite limited melismata well, her declamation is a bit too operatic for my liking (I confess I have never heard a convincing performance of the Lamentations, which is for solo voice and continuo). The trio sonatas are rather milder than the Ensemble Rebel performances which I heard recently in Boston, and I'm not sure that I like them so sedately played (nor am I convinced that a switch from harpsichord continuo to organ halfway through a piece – unless my ears deceived me – is entirely appropriate.) Although I'm delighted that yet another CD has been dedicated to Rosenmüller's wonderful music I'd love to hear them play some of his music for larger ensemble. BC

Theile Psalm Motets, Missa, Sonata Weser-Renaissance Bremen, Manfred Cordes 64' 21"
CPO 999 489-2

Beatus vir, Cum invocarem, Domine ne in furore, Missa (Kyrie & Gloria), Sonata duplex à3

Theile succeeded Rosenmüller in Wolfenbüttel and, while some of the psalm settings are similar to his predecessor's large-scale settings, he is definitely more of a conservative, as the mass here proves (for five voices and continuo and very much in the *stile antico*). The Weser-Renaissance is a group I have praised before and this live concert recording confirms their place in the top rank of early music ensembles: the singing and the playing, while perhaps not absolutely sensational, are everything Theile's music requires – beautiful phrases, striking balance and a real sense of giving pleasure (even if the texts are not exactly joyful.) Recommended. BC

Viadana Sinfonie musicali (1610) Accademia Strumentale Italiana, Theatrum Instrumentorum, Traverso Consort, Alberto Rasi dir Stradivarius STR 33431 58' 54"

The box shows an old map of Italy, appropriate since this is the set with 18 8-part Sinfonias named after Italian cities and, at least in three cases, include topical tunes. The music is enjoyable to play, if not quite good enough for extensive listening. The instrumentation is designed to maximise variety. We know very little of how such pieces were scored other than the normal ecclesiastical line-up of sackbuts & cornetts with the odd violin, as in Gabrieli's music. I can well imagine greater variety in secular settings, but not the allocation of sections of the same part to different instruments, as happens here. Even in the lavish *intermedi* that does not seem to have been a normal practice, and the *Quia respexit* of Monteverdi's

Magnificat a7, also of 1610, is not quite comparable. I'm not always convinced by the prominence given to the bass. This is nevertheless an attractive and entertaining recording; is my approach too puritanical? I would be interested to hear from anyone who can spot more tunes than those noted in the booklet. CB

Baroque Sublime for Trumpet and Bassoon Wolfgang Basch *tpt*, Jesse Read *bsn*, Doreen Oke *org/hpsc'd*, Nan Mackie *gamba* 58' 46" Etcetera C 1196

Music by Böödecker, Castello, Frescobaldi, Pezel, Prentzel, Rosenmüller, Spiegler, Valentini, J. G. Walther.

Modern trumpet, of course, playing music for which cornett or violin would be more plausible. But Wolfgang Basch is extremely stylish and makes a good case for appropriating it to his instrument. The running order includes the recorded instrumentation as part of the title, misleadingly implying that it is genuine. There is some nifty fagott-ing – not quite nifty enough in Böödecker's *La monica*, leaving the trumpeter with a strangely irregular melody in one variation. The keyboard presence is often weak; I suspect that a 'natural' balance does not work with this combination. CB

The Bauyn Manuscript: Harpsichord Music at the Court of Louis XIV Byron Schenkman Wildboar WLB9603 74' 20" Music by Chambonnières, L. Couperin, Du Mont, Froberger, Haredel

A lovely CD, this, with a selection of Louis Couperin, Chambonnières, Du Mont and the elusive 'Haredel' together with a Toccata and Suite by Froberger. Byron Schenkman's playing is outstandingly musical – fluent and sonorous, with a beautifully-judged sense of pace and line. His *Tombeau de Mr de Blancrocher*, for example, is the best I have heard – contemplative, unpretentious and ultimately very moving. The harpsichord is a copy of the V & A Vaudry – a very good copy by the sound of it – and the recording quality is superb. Overall one of the best harpsichord CDs I have come across.

Robin Bigwood

Bell'Arte Salzburg: Salzburger Meister des Barock Annegret Siedel *vl*, Michael Brüßing *vdg*, *vlc*, Margit Schultheiß *kbd*, Thorsten Bleich *lute*, Christian Horn *vlne* 59' 06 ram 59602

Biber *Fantasia in D*, *Sonata in E*; Muffat *Sonata*; Vilsmaier *Sonata in A*; anon *Sonata über Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*

This CD features the nicest baroque fiddling I've heard in a long while. Initially I thought Annegret Siedel more than had her work cut out just to compete with the immense continuo section (*gamba* or cello, harpsichord or organ, lute or theorbo and violone) and I even had a good laugh at the image of Orpheus trying to charm a lumbering Charon. But charm me she certainly did! The Muffat sonata is a wonderful piece, with strange enharmonic shifts, astonishingly full circles of fifths and a curious absence of rests (like the scribe of the surviving MS, I

found it impossible when type-setting it to make manageable page-turns for either the violinist or the continuo). Here it is marvelously carried off, as are the following two pieces by Biber, a reconstructed sonata by his pupil Vilsmaier and the anonymous scordatura *Wie schön leuchtet* variations. While the bass seemed a little overpowering at the outset, I soon came to relish the richness without undue heaviness that one might expect from such a line-up. BC

Cantiones Nataliciae: Christmas Songs from the time of Rubens Camerata Trajectina 64'00" Globe GLO 6033

This is our first Christmas CD this year, apart from Koch International's *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht* (321 444), a strange German popular anthology which I asked for by mistake because it looked from the publicity as if it contained other music by Gruber. (That would have been of interest: I once got a group at one of Peter Berg's musical gatherings to sing through a mass by him and we found it quite attractive.) I can't imagine anyone except German buying the Koch disc.

Dutch 17th-century Christmas music was more refined, in a style that was not matched in England thanks to a somewhat puritanical attitude to the feast even in the established church – there are remarkably few Christmas anthems. I first encountered the repertoire about 30 years ago in a broadcast of a half a dozen edited by Frits Noske which Oxford UP published. This Globe disc has only *O salich heylich Bethlehem* in common with them. The music is delightful, as are the performances, though there is not quite enough variety for one to want to hear all 27 carols in one sitting. A few are versions of familiar tunes, others will be unfamiliar. If you want some tuneful and peaceful music for Christmas, look no further. CB

Origins of Bach's Genius Gavin Black *organ* Pro Gloria Musica PGM 104 64' 57" Buxtehude *Nun freut euch BuxWV 210* Toccata in F BuxWV 156; Lübeck *Nun lässt uns Gott, Praeambula in d, E*; Pachelbel *Was Gott tut; Tunder Komm heiliger geist, Praeludium in g*

Another fine-sounding American organ based on solid historical principles, this time after Arp Schnitger, the leading North German organ builder of the 17th century. The organ is tuned to Kellner's fifth-comma well-tempered tuning, and is well suited to this late 17th-century repertoire, mostly written after Buxtehude's apparent retuning of his own organ in Lübeck to a well-tempered system. I love this repertoire. It is so fresh and vibrant, ranging from the complex and inventive working-out of chorale melodies to the astonishing *stylus phantasticus* free toccata style. The playing is most impressive, with sensitivity and verve as appropriate. Apart from the odd moment when the speed goes a bit haywire, Black combines control of performance with the freedom so necessary for these exciting pieces. Well recommended.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Complete Cantatas Lisa Larsson, Sibylla Rubens, Anne Grimm, Els Bongers SSSS, Elisabeth von Magnus A, Christoph Prégardien T, Klaus Mertens B, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman Erato 0630 17578-2 239' 52" (4 discs)

Koopman's general consistency is admirable, but it also has its risks now that he is approaching those remarkable early Leipzig years. These secular occasional works are really varied in so many respects, yet somehow the packaging into batches based only on the rightly-questioned significance of the heading 'secular' somehow seems to have entrapped the performers (who are in general very good) into a kind of uniform and cautious respect. Does this do Bach adequate justice? The factual descriptions, from the very authoritative hand of Christoph Wolff, could, if more extended, have added so much more to the individual significance of each work. (The companion books avoid detailed discussion; vol. 1 was reviewed by CB in the last issue). The style of interpretation is, I feel, too similar between arias, recitatives, chorale settings, choruses and even within each of these genres. The seasonal or occasional event was an exciting part of ordinary life in those days. Now that we are learning to play Bach with fewer awkward notes, perhaps we are again beginning to take him for granted. Having written that, I must add that some, even most of these performances are the best available; but we should have the dynamism of Bach's imaginative zeal brought to our proper attention. Stephen Daw

Bach Toccata & Fugue Ton Koopman Teldec 0630 17369 2

According to the press release, this compilation 'kicks off with Bach's legendary Toccata and Fugue' – is 'legendary' meant to be a synonym for 'of dubious origin' – and contains 'all of Bach's greatest organ works'. I don't have a copy available to test the validity of that statement. But those who generally eschew organ music should certainly sample Koopman's Bach. CB

Bach Orgelbüchlein René Saorgin 79' 02" Harmonia Mundi *Musique d'abord* HMA 1901215.16 £ (2 discs) rec 1982

A reissue of a 1982 recording made on the then recently reconstructed organ at Luxeuil, which has roots back to 1617. Saorgin has a colourist and a very French approach to the music, aided by a very French organ. But the *Orgelbüchlein* is tricky to present in CD form. Most of the pieces are less than 3 minutes long, and they vary constantly in mood and style. I found the registrational contrast just a bit too much.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach A Musical Offering, Sonata in E BWV 1025; 14 Canons on the Bass-Line of the Goldberg Variations Music from Aston Magna, Daniel Stepner 60' 13" Centaur CRC 2295

This is a refreshing experience because of its imaginative programme, order, treatment of the 'new' repertoire (14 canons found in 1974), and its inclusion only of an early piano – very sensibly played – to the exclusion of the harpsichord and for the attractively honest unpretentiousness of all the playing. Some of the tone and occasional shade of the tuning is not as polished as we have come to expect, but at least the flautist plays without straining to be too loud, the violinists seem to realise that most modern players of any instruments tend to stretch sharp sides of major intervals and the flat of the minor which is improper for Bach and other important things. We have become so used to risky compromise. I really like this disc. *Stephen Daw*

Two Naxos Bach recordings have been repackaged. **Bach Orchestral Suites 1-4** Capella Istropolitana, Jaroslav Dvorak 79' 48" Naxos 8.554043 £ 1989 recordings previously issued on two discs.

Bach Favourite Cantatas 74' 19"

Naxos 8.554042 £ 82 *Ich habe genug* Nicholas Gedge B. Schola Cantorum Oxford, Northern CO, Nicholas Ward 147 *Herz und Mund* Ingrid Kertesi S. Hungarian Radio Chorus, Fülöp CO, Maryás Antal 202 *Weichet nur Friederike* Wagner S. Capella Istropolitana, Christian Brembeck

The Magnificat is coupled with Vivaldi Gloria *qv*

Couperin Messe à l'usage de la Chapelle de Versailles Marie-Claire Alain (*Cliquot organ at St Pierre's Cathedral, Poitiers*), Les Chantres de la Chapelle de Versailles, Emmanuel Mandrin cond 66' 10" Erato 0630 7581 2

The Poitiers organ has recently been restored, and it sounds magnificent – if you are not familiar with the French classical organ, this is the CD for you. The 100-year gap between Couperin and Poitiers means that this is not quite the historically ideal organ for the music, but it is close enough for me. And the later-18th-century additions to the classical French organ (lots more reeds) are used with discretion. One lovely feature of this CD is the plainchant verses, sung at the slow note-to-a-pulse speed that seems appropriate, both to the speed of the plainchant when it appears in the organ pieces and to the overall balance of the mass. The chant is from Nivers' *Graduale romanum* of 1697, with a *Prière pour le Roy* from a Paris manuscript of 1728; it is pleasantly ornamented in French style. The organ playing is of the superb standard expected of an artist of the stature of Marie-Claire Alain – she really is at home with this repertoire and makes effective use of the stops and acoustic at her disposal. The notes are intelligent and useful, with specification and registrations. I will cherish this most moving performance. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Handel Agrippina Della Jones Agrippina, Donna Brown *Poppea*, Derek Lee Ragin *Nerone*, Michael Chance *Ottone*, Alastair Miles *Claudio*, Jonathan Peter Kenny *Narciso*, George Mosley *Pallante*, Julian

Clarkson *Lesbo*, Anne Sophie von Otter *Giunone*, English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 217' 43" 3 CDs Philips 438 009-2

Mostly recorded in November 1991, this generally excellent performance has presumably been kept back by Philips to allow McGegan's decent recording on Harmonia Mundi, made a few months earlier, to run its course. It has one snag: the baffling casting of the counter-tenor Derek Lee Ragin in the soprano role of *Nerone*. The pinched tone which inevitably results from 'operating in that area above d' where counter-tenors can reach the notes but not make music with them is here extended to the whole of the part. If, however, you can swallow that as a bizarre characterisation – a foretaste of the demented *Nero* to come, perhaps – Gardiner's account of the opera is to be preferred for its otherwise superior cast and its keener sense of drama. It was a neat coup to engage von Otter for the cameo role of *Giunone* (who appears only at the end to bless the marriage of *Ottone* and *Poppea*), and Gardiner also scores with his own inclusion of three dances from the overture to Handel's *Rodrigo* to realise Handel's instruction for a concluding *Ballo*, which McGegan ignores. Della Jones is particularly successful in conveying (especially in recitative) the varying poses adopted by the scheming *Agrippina*. McGegan's recording is not completely outshone, and keen Handelians will need it because it includes an extra (unpublished) aria for *Claudio* and Handel's preferred (Bb major) version of *Nerone's* aria *Sotto il lauro* (Ragin's rushed account of the discarded E minor setting is the low point of Gardiner's performance) but Gardiner is overall the first choice. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel Herakles [Hercules] Hermann Christian Polster *Hercules*, Daris Soffel *Dejanira*, Eberhard Büchner *Hyllus*, Kari Lövaas *Iole*, Hebe Dijkstra *Lichas*, Rundfunk-chor & Sinfonie-Orchester Leipzig, Wolf-Dieter Hauschild 191' 45" 3 CDs Berlin Classics 0091132BC

This first appeared as a boxed set of 4 LPs on Eterna Edition, the label of the old East German state company. Eterna recordings were never easily obtainable in the west, and the CD re-issue may therefore be of interest to connoisseurs of Handelian performance as an exemplar of the East German style – earnest, slow, ponderous, but finely sung (in German), thoroughly rehearsed and now and again exhibiting a depth of feeling often missing from fleetier modern interpretations of Handel. It has some numbers missing from Gardiner's exciting but slickly trimmed account on Archiv, but is not a serious alternative. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel Lucrezia: cantate e sonate da camera Roberta Invernizzi, Retablo Barocco 58' 45" Stradivarius STR 33424 HWV 117, 141, 145, 361, 375, 386 & spurious Concerto a4 in d.

The initial disappointment of finding so much of this disc given over to frequently recorded instrumental sonatas (and including

the pleasant but undoubtedly non-Handelian *Sonata a quattro*) is relieved by the lively and affectionate performances. HWV 375 is the third of the so-called 'Halle' sonatas, not a product from Handel's youth as was once thought, but compiled partly from the C minor oboe sonata of c1712 and an earlier keyboard minuet, only the third movement being 'new'; Marco Brolli, the flautist, makes it more than usually convincing. Two of the three cantatas are first recordings, and it is particularly good to have *Handel, non può mia musa*, the composer's happily modest setting of a text in praise of himself provided by Cardinal Pamphili, one of early Italian patrons. This and *Non sospirar, non piangere* are well suited to Invernizzi, a lyric rather than a dramatic soprano, but her account of the famous *Lucrezia* cantata is correspondingly underpowered, with delayed recitative cadences further reducing impact. (There is a more passionate account by Julianna Baird on Dorian DOR-90104.) The notes regrettably accept conjectural Florentine origins for *Non sospirar* and *Lucrezia*, and equivocate over the attribution of the *Sonata a quattro*; and, alas, the anonymous English translations are in the bizarre style of those on Stradivarius's disc of Handel bass cantatas (see *EMR* 25, p.15). *Anthony Hicks*

Handel The Rival Queens: Opera Arias and Duets Catherine Bott, Emma Kirkby, The Brandenburg Consort, Roy Goodman 76' 06" Hyperion CDA66950 Music from *Admeto*, *Alessandro*, *Riccardo I*, *Siroe* & *Tolomeo*

We have had anthologies of the repertoires of individual singers, a fascinating way of bringing to life the character of lost voices. The problem here is that the two singers portrayed (*Faustina Bordon* by Catherine Bott and *Francesca Cuzzoni* by Emma Kirkby) were most famous for their rivalry. Whatever their personal relationship may have been, they were set up in opposition and there must have been an edge to their performance that could perhaps be matched by the careful casting of prima donnas but not by two such civilised ladies as these. The selection here is more coherent than isolated arias, though I'm not sure if it quite works. The music, singing and playing is generally of the highest order, though there are virtuoso runs and ambitious embellishments which reveal a touch of unsteadiness as well as a certain lack of panache. Admirers of the two singers, the Brandenburg Consort (which sports a pair of chalumeaux) or Handel should not hesitate to buy it. *CB*

Blind Love, Cruel Beauty: Vocal Duets of George Frideric Handel Favella Lyrica (Pamela Murray S, Pamela Dellal mS, Michael Beattie hpsd, Daniel Ryan vlc 58' 07" Koch International Classics 3-7298-2 HWV 179, 181, 186, 188, 189, 192, 197, 199

Four of the duets are from the often-recorded soprano/alto repertory, but the second voice of this Boston group is a mezzo rather than the usual counter-tenor, allowing the other duets to be chosen from those for two sopranos. Among the latter

are *Quel fior ch'all'alba ride* and *No, di voi non vo' fidarmi* (a line from which – 'cieco Amor, crudel beltà' – provides the title for the disc), fairly well known because they form the basis of four choruses in *Messiah*. Their inclusion is perhaps a pity, as they ideally need two equal high voices, but the other two-soprano duets are welcome first CD recordings of *Va, speme infida pur* and *Ahi, nelle sorti umane*. The performances sound carefully rehearsed and display high technical accomplishment (valuable in the demanding *Va speme*) but, for me, the slower movements are a shade too slow and the general approach rather too earnest. These late examples of the continuo-accompanied madrigal are, I think, more light-hearted than the performers are prepared to admit, but most of their musical delights can nevertheless be savoured enjoyably in these interpretations. *Anthony Hicks*

Mondonville Grands Motets Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 71' 50"
Erato 0630 17791 2
De profundis, Dominus regnavit, In exitu Israel

This fine disc features as large a body of *Les Arts Florissants* as I can recall hearing. They are certainly not wasted on this programme, initially prepared for the Versailles Festival. A major consequence of this sumptuous sound (choir and orchestra both number around 30) is an emphasis on how *grand* the *grand motet* can be. When one hears them like this, it is easy to understand their tremendous popularity at the *Concerts Spirituels* at which they were the core repertoire in the 1750s. Occasionally there is a price to pay for this luxury in the shape of some imprecision in the violins and diffuse soprano tone, but overall this is another winner for William Christie and his team. Amid the Handelian choral gestures (scarcely an insulting comparison) it is easy to overlook the more intimate moments though these are all well sung, to say the least: Paul Agnew's duet with bassoon (track 10) is truly delectable. The ultimate pleasure was to make the acquaintance of the music guided by James R. Anthony's authoritative essay. *David Hansell*

Platti Sonate & Trii con stromenti a fiato Ensemble Il Dardo, Maria Del Grosso 76' 04"
Stradivarius STR 33463

Born in Italy, Giovanni Benedetto Platti spent much of his life in Germany working as a musician at the court in Würzburg. Although played infrequently, his chamber music would seem to deserve more attention: it treads an intriguing path between baroque and galant styles, firmly rooted in the *da chiesa* pattern but hinting at a newer melodic delicacy. The chamber pieces featured here vary in instrumentation, and perhaps the solo flute sonata in G major is the most successful on the disc, played beautifully by Enrico de Felice. Unfortunately, the playing quality elsewhere is rather lacklustre, suffering from unreliable tuning and poor ensemble: the sonatas which include cello as a solo instrument alongside oboe and violin suffer the most – a shame, since these are potentially some of

the most interesting of the set. I would wait for Platti to be better served before investing in him
Marie Ritter

Rameau Le Rappel des oiseaux: Suite de clavecin en mi mineur (1724) William Christie 22' 14" £
Harmonia Mundi La Solothèque HMS 926018

Compared to Christophe Rousset's award winning, complete Rameau on Decca, this 1983 recording, reissued as part of harmonia mundi's one-CD-one-work *La Solothèque* series, is sadly lacking in poetry. Christie's playing is a bit notey, and whilst Rameau's extensive ornamentation is reasonably well executed, in Christie's hands it never manages to become truly expressive or exciting. Often the sense of melodic line is upset by a rather mannered and overstated style of articulation – this problem also extends to the wonderful *Gigue en rondeau II* which Christie renders in an over-fussy and rather effeminate way. But the two *Rigaudons* are fabulously jaunty and, well, gay, and I enjoyed the simplicity and sonority of *La Villageoise*. The sound of the Goujon-Swanen harpsichord is good, and nicely reproduced with a convincing sense of space and weight. *Robin Bigwood*

Telemann Kleine Cammer-Music Camerata Köln 63' 41"
cpo 999 497-2
Telemann 12 Fantasies à traversière sans basse Enrico di Felice 59' 29"
Stradivarius STR 33467

Critics of Telemann's music have long bemoaned a lack of profundity and depth such as that we associate with J. S. Bach. But as his *Kleine Cammer-Music* (and many other similar works) attests, this is to miss the point entirely. Telemann states time and again in his own prefaces an intent to follow the 'easy and singing style', to bring pleasure to the listener and present something to please all tastes. These six Partitas for various solo instruments and continuo are highly accessible – melodic and uncomplicated, yet abounding in inventiveness, colour and subtlety. The musicians of Camerata Köln capture the spirit exactly, with some outstanding performances by Hans-Peter Westermann (oboe) and Rainer Zipperling (Viola da Gamba). Telemann's 12 *Fantasies* for solo flute could hardly be more different: here is the same composer in a serious vein, making greater demands both for listener and player. These highly inventive and original pieces give the performer plenty of scope for personal interpretation and this recording by Enrico di Felice's is tame by some standards. But his ideas are clearly and musically presented with an air of authority. It is a shame that a somewhat forced tone detracts from an otherwise accomplished style and technique. *Marie Ritter*

Vivaldi Concerti e Cantate Sara Mingardo, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini Opus 111 OPS 30-181 59' 33"
Amor hai vinto RV 683, *Cessate omai cessate* RV 684; RV 117, 151, 134, 249, 422

Like everything this group produces, this recording brings new insight into what one might consider standard repertoire. The instrumental playing is excellent (though the solo cellist seems a little hard-pressed at times) and the singing good – Sara Mingardo has the plummy notes at the bottom of her register that are the bane of many a countertenor's attempts at the two cantatas she sings and she has enough vibrant sparkle to carry off the tricky passagework. If you think you know Vivaldi, listen to this and think again. *BC*

Vivaldi Gloria; Bach Magnificat Schola Cantorum of Oxford, Jeremy Summerly; Northern Chamber Orchestra, Nicholas Ward Naxos 8.554056 £ 59' 42" (rec. 1993-94)

This convenient pairing is taken from previously-issued recordings and is likely to prove popular with the general public, if less so with our readers, who will almost certainly have better versions of both works. No-one's taste will be irrevocably corrupted by first meeting them in these versions, but even apart from the issue of early instruments, there are more stylish performances available elsewhere. Philip Pickett's new *Magnificat* (the Eb version) will be reviewed next month.) *CB*

Vivaldi Dresden Concerti Vol. 2 Roberto Baraldi vln, Accademia I Filarmonici, Alberto Martini 56' 23"
Naxos 8.553793 £
RV 184, 241, 267, 292, 329, 363 (Posthorn)

My critique of the first volume of this series was rather non-committal: the modern instruments were tunelessly played but there was an unavoidable haziness about the middle parts and the harpsichord tinklings tended to distract from what Vivaldi actually wrote. Although the soloist is not always up to Vivaldi's expectations of Pisendel's abilities, this is not a bad recording. The continuo has been calmed down and there is a certain momentum about the performances, a slight over-mixing of the soloist only occasionally causing some discomfort and every movement ends... with... a... rit... *BC*

Geistliche Musik am Sächsisch-Polnischen Hof Heike Hallaschka, Kai Wessel, Marcus Ullmann, Frank Schiller SATB, Dresdner Kammerchor, Dresdner Barockorchester, Hans-Christoph Rademann 65' 43"
Raum Klang RK 9702
Hasse Miserere in c; Zelenka Missa Dei filii in C

When I last reviewed the Hasse *Miserere*, it was described as being in E minor (Opus 111, OPS 30-80): having compared the two recordings, they are the same piece in the same key, so someone slipped up somewhere. As I said of that excellent recording by Il fondamento, this is a marvellous work, originally written for the ladies of the Incurabili in Venice, it was reworked masterfully for the Dresden Hofkapelle and mixes lyrical solos, slushy duets and dynamic choruses. Likewise the Zelenka mass displays that composer's taut

counterpoint, dense harmony and wacky melody. The choir is beautifully in tune, forward projecting and crisp in their diction and rhythmic articulation. The orchestra is likewise as regimented as Augustus's original band – utterly unanimous in the most difficult passages, participants in the piece rather than mere accompanists: the flutes and violins in the Hasse merit particular mention. The soloists have a hard time following competing with previous recordings: although her voice is lovely Heike Hallaschka (in the Zelenka) does not have the effortless grace of Nancy Argenta, Kai Wessel (whose cadenza in the Zelenka was the most impressive attempt of the set) cannot match the never-heard-since Susanna Moncayo von Hase in the Hasse, while the tenor and bass soloists are really not the reason one would buy this disc. It is slightly frustrating that both the pieces are already available (the Zelenka on dhm with the tremendous Tafelmusik and the Stuttgart Chamber Choir), but I suppose that merely confirms that these are perceived as outstanding pieces from one of music's most neglected purple patches. Bonus points to the recording company for the most attractive packaging. Are Germans abandoning that great word *Bratsche*? The viola players are listed under *Violen*. If you have neither piece, buy this! I personally will listen to both recordings of both pieces frequently! BC

Italian Concerto: The Italian „gusto” at home and abroad... The Harp Consort, Andrew Lawrence-King 69' 42"
DHM 05472 77366 2
Bach *Italian Concerto, Aria variata* (BWV989);
Carolan *Concerto*; Handel *op. 4/1&6*; Vivaldi *op. 3/8*

There are probably a lot of people who will enjoy this disc – one can't help wondering if it is aimed at 'post-Seasons' public. There's nothing weighty or serious about it, nothing harsh or grating, nothing difficult or ugly. I guess the disc's aim is to give an all-Mediterranean flavour to the baroque: certainly it's full of the kind of sunny, southern colours that will brighten up any winter's day (even the cover design is all yellows and oranges). There is much protesting in the notes about the habit of baroque composers of adapting any piece to suit the available forces. Vivaldi's two solo violins in *Op. 3, No. 8* are given to an *arpa doppia*, Bach's keyboard *Aria variata* to a Davids-harfe. Handel's *Op. 4 No. 6*, published for organ (there was hardly a market for harp concertos then) is here given with a harp, as it was at its original performance. All these work well, as does the second Handel concerto, played upon the organ with a registration which matches perfectly the tone of the harps elsewhere upon the disc. What really does not work is turning Bach's Italian concerto for keyboard into a concerto for orchestra with a *concertino* of oboe and bassoon, a great idea in theory which simply does not come off in practice. Also, while it must have been fun to take 18th-century Irish harp music which 19th-century sources identified as the concerto extemporised by harpist O'Carolan in the Italian manner and orchestrate it with an

Irish band, I can't see, pleasant though it is, what the justification is for including a second piece of O'Carolan's music which by no stretch of the imagination can be thought of as having any Italian sound to it at all. Throughout, the playing is impeccable and the sound lush and captivating; providing they are warned to skip tracks 4-6, an ideal Christmas present for non-purist baroque lovers. Rosemary Druce

CLASSICAL

Hofmann Five Symphonies Northern CO, Nicholas Ward 71' 44"
Naxos 8.553866 £

See review of the edition on pp. 4-5

Mozart Sonatas for Fortepiano and Violin, Vol. 3. Luc Devos *fp*, Sigiswald Kuijken *vl*
Accent 95113D 63' 37"

These mature sonatas start with two light, playful works (K 296 & 376) where the role of the violin tends to be secondary, although it occasionally takes the initiative. Presumably they were intended for the domestic market. The performers and the recording engineers take enormous care with the balance throughout the disc and the interpretation is first class. K.454 is a masterpiece and the instruments are more equal. It is full of interesting melodic ideas and the players express the cantabile of the opening largo and the vitality of the final rondo beautifully. The Giovanni Grancino violin c.1700 and the copy of a 1788 Stein fortepiano by Claude Kelecom complement each other perfectly. Margaret Cranmer

Paradies Sonate di Gravicembalo, vol. 1 Ottavio Dantone *hpscd* 54' 44"
Stradivarius STR 33420

These two-movement sonatas contain music that is pleasing and well ordered rather than profound, although the disc concludes with the splendid A-major allegro which many young pianist will have encountered under the apt title of *Toccata*. Ottavio Dantone shines in the very fast movements and his ornamentation is neat and tasteful. However, he employs too much rhythmic flexibility at the beginning and the ends of phrases in the slower movements, losing momentum in the process. The opening allegro is taken at a speed approaching andantino and a slightly quicker speed would have given it more rhythmic vitality. The copy of a 1733 Blanchet harpsichord by Olivier Fadini sounds excellent. Margaret Cranmer

C. P. E. Bach Cello Concerto in A (H439)
Boccherini Sonata for Cello & Bc in A (1775)
Haydn Cello Concerto in D (HobVIIb:2) Marko Ylönen *vlc*, Lauri Pulakka *vlc*, Ostrobothnian Chamber Orchestra, Juha Kangas 57' 56"
Finlandia 4509-96869-2

I must confess that if I saw it in a shop I'd probably pass over this disc of two 'lollipop' concertos and a solo sonata; but I would miss out terribly by allowing the curious programming to dissuade me. The playing

is absolutely first rate, showing that modern instruments are not of themselves unsuited to this repertoire. The tone of the solo cello is bright and resonant, the orchestral playing very stylish and the more intimate sonata allows for even greater freedom in performance. If Marko Ylönen does not have the same elasticity of Christophe Coin (see last month's Schumann review), his is still a persuasive voice: I particularly enjoyed the infectious vitality of the Bach concerto's last movement. If I had been compiling the disc, I would have placed the sonata centrally. As it is, I'll probably just play one work from the disc per session. BC

19th CENTURY

Beethoven Complete Works for Cello and Fortepiano Anssi Karttunen *vlc*, Tuija Hakkila *fp* 183' 19" 3 CDs
Finlandia 0630-17698-2 ££

These three discs were welcomed with increasing enthusiasm by Margaret Cranmer (see *EMR* 6, 19 & 19), so it is likely that regular readers interested in this repertoire will have bought them as they appeared. Those who did not can now acquire them as a boxed set somewhat more cheaply. Cellists seem to become type-cast as 'early' players less readily than violinists; it is interesting that a pupil of Jacqueline du Pré (whose live performance at Dartington of *op. 69* in the mid-1960s first impressed me with the work) should play so stylishly; modern players probably wouldn't dare to slide in the opening theme! CB

Schubert Winterreise, op. 89 D 911 Christoph Prégardien, Andreas Staier (Johann Fritz *fp*, Vienna, c.1825) 73' 58"
Teldec Das Alte Werk 0630-18824-2

This CD can be recommended without reservation. Prégardien has an ideal voice for this cycle – lovely easy top register, ranging from hushed pianissimo head voice to full robust tone, in turns rich and warm or forward and brilliant as the drama requires, and genuinely resonant low middle Cs. He has complete control over his vibrato, uses it rarely, and it becomes one of many tools in a formidable expressive technique. But nothing seems contrived, there is an immediacy and commitment, the music and the words feeding each other. Andreas Staier, a superb collaborator, plays a Viennese piano of 1825 with many interesting characteristics. Round in tone, with a warm and sonorous bass, its *forte* is not as bright as one might expect, and in the beautifully controlled phrasing away of the final songs, it produces a startlingly reedy *pianissimo*. Both performers take risks, test their own limits, in a performance that is powerful, and moving. Definitely the version to get. Robert Oliver

We apologise that we missed the October releases from Harmonia Mundi and other labels distributed by their London office. Our reviews of 11,000 Virgins, Red Iris and other less-advertised discs will not appear until December. There is also a backlog of Bach.

MISCELLANEOUS

Paul Hillier: Portrait 72' 16"
 Harmonia Mundi HMX 22907126 ££

Seven tracks are in English, one is textless, and the other nine have no translations; but with short extracts one can concentrate on sound and musical rather than verbal sense. They come from 11 discs with a range from the troubadours to Pärt via Mouton, Tallis, Lassus, Billings and Sibelius, with one carol by Hillier himself, and cover his work since he left the Hilliard Ensemble and settled in the USA both as soloist and choir director. I enjoyed these excerpts more than some of the original discs and can recommend it to those who like varied programmes. But I was distracted from the music by pondering on the significance of the picture on the back of the booklet (the *campo aperto* again: cf p. 1). CB

Simunye: Music for a Harmonious World I
 Fagiolini, The SDASA Chorale 68' 26"
 Detour 0630-18837-2
 Music by Cornysh, Gibbons, Howells, Machaut, Sheppard, trad & modern S. African

This is the product of two weeks of interaction between I Fagiolini and a choir from the Seventh Day Adventist Student Association in Soweto. Items from each group's repertoire are performed separately. The African singing is marvellous. The English group sometimes seems a little off-colour; I was most impressed by Howells' delectably simple *The Lord is my shepherd*. More intriguing is the imaginative interaction between the groups. Sometimes it

works, as in the *Te lucis ante terminum* chant and an elaboration of *Ah Robin* (after an undemonstrative straight performance). But the attempt to integrate the African group into *O clap your hands* doesn't work. I have still to decide whether the post-modern treatment of Machaut's *Douce dame jolie* is brilliant or irritating. This disc is exciting and enjoyable; the story behind it should make it a useful Christmas present for third-world-conscious relatives, but if you play it you will want to buy one for yourself too. CB

Sit fast Fretwork, Michael Chance cT, Paul Agnew T 76' 16"
 Virgins Classics 7243 5 45217 2 0
 Ferrabosco *Hexachord Fantasy*; Isaac O *decus ecclesiae*; Ockeghem *Ut heremita solus*; Tye *Sit fast* & music by Simon Bainbridge, Sally Beamish, Gavin Bryars, Elvis Costello, Tan Dun, Barry Guy, Poul Ruders, Peter Sculthorpe

In 1995 Fretwork commissioned a dozen pieces to play alongside those by Purcell. This disc includes eight of those, plus an additional piece commissioned by the BBC for another Purcellian occasion. Since Fretwork has already recorded the Purcell, they appear here with older works of interest particularly for their contrapuntal ingenuity (or in the case of the title piece, sheer cussedness). The Ockeghem has already become part of contemporary British music thanks to its treatment by Birtwistle; it is interesting that since the 'the notes on the individual pieces [are] by the composers' we have an authoritative statement of what Ockeghem was about in his puzzling piece! Most of the new pieces treat the instrument in imaginative ways, the most striking being

the opening item by Barry Guy; don't be put off if that doesn't appeal to you, since the others are not at all similar: indeed, the variety of inspiration is notable. Even more than with the recorder, there seems something unnatural in writing new music for instruments associated only with the music of the past. But these essays take advantage of the lack of a tradition to respond to the medium with imagination. CB

Spirit of Gambo Sarah Cunningham 71' 58"
 Seagull Records SGR-1
 Music by Abel, Demachy, Hume, Marais, Richard Cornell and John Joubert

I recently reviewed a disc, one of several with the same name, which perhaps is not a significant clash as one doesn't buy recordings by their title. On this one, Sarah Cunningham performs an eclectic selection of solo music: Tobias Hume (played on a John Rose copy strung with non-metal wound bass strings) de Machy, Marais, and Abel, and two contemporary pieces, on a 7-string Bertrand copy. She plays with exemplary technical command, with beautiful tone throughout, though for my taste too little variation of articulation and dynamics in the earlier pieces. The contemporary pieces by Richard Cornell and John Joubert are really interesting, genuinely idiomatic for the viol, both exploiting the warm and resonant middle range of the instrument, with the power of the bass resonance and its chordal technique. Though the market may well be small for them, they should both be published. She plays them very persuasively, and they, with the Abel, make for the most expressive playing on the disc. Robert Oliver

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LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

In my review of ACC94102D (*Effetti e Stravaganze* by Concerto Palatino, Accent ACC 94102 D; see EMR 32, p. 24) I intently made no mention of a poor edit point in track 6: a couple of bars are repeated. I contacted Accent before sending in the review, who conscientiously responded and informed me that a defective master had been used inadvertently. I was assured that stocks would be replaced by a new version in a matter of weeks. On that basis, and because I was so enthusiastic about the recording's other qualities, I sent the review without mentioning the flaw. Sadly I have not been sent nor have found any unflawed copy, and many copies continue to be sold. I recommend (with my apologies) that anyone who has purchased a copy should contact their distributor or Accent at their address on the sleeve notes.

Stephen Cassidy

Dear Clifford,

I don't really like responding to a review, but maybe it would be in order to clarify one or two points you raised in connection with my edition of Frescobaldi's *Fiori*. The page on the advert was not 'carefully selected to avoid showing one of the oddities of the edition'. I would like to know what you would regard as 'standard beamings' in the context of an edition that seeks to be faithful to Frescobaldi. I have spent a lot of time trying to understand the system as exemplified in the books of Toccatas and would ask you to compare, for instance, the canzona on page 24 of the edition with *Canzona Seconda* of the second book of Toccatas, or the 2nd and 3rd Elevation Toccatas with *Toccata Terza* and *Toccata Quarta* of the same book (as these appear either in facsimile or the Darbellay or Gilbert editions which reproduce the original beamings). My intention is to make the student of Frescobaldi feel at home. It would, I think, be odd to use modern standard beamings; even odder to print every semiquaver separately. That such separation as dictated by type-setting was seen to be an unwanted characteristic is suggested by the addition by the publisher of inked-in beamings in the 1626 edition of the instrumental canzonas. I would maintain that these beaming patterns in fact guarantee a 'clearer presentation of the polyphony'. I do not think there is any reason to assume that beaming has any bearing on phrasing in Frescobaldi's engraved editions, so here is no infringement upon any 'neutrality'.

The page in the advert demonstrated the 'flouting of the usual rules for the direction of the stem'; as I point out, initially this appears strange. But my experience with students suggests that it helps score-reading considerably and hence also gives a 'clearer presentation of the polyphony'.

The purpose of the edition is to encourage players to use the score, as Frescobaldi particularly wished. Further 'quirks' such as the absence of editorial accidentals are designed to put today's player in the position of his 17th-century colleague; thus all the information that a facsimile gives is made available in a form that invites easy reading.

Christopher Stenbridge

There is no space to reply here; I will try to do so in the Diary, which looks at present as if it will have room. CB

Dear Clifford,

While happily agreeing with much of Shane Fletcher's praise of Sir Charles Mackerras's account of Handel's *Jephtha* at the Proms, I was startled by his comment that the performance 'demonstrated the intellectual rigour of an oratorio whose text is "based" on contemporary writers such as Pope as well as the original Biblical story'.

Let us leave aside the question as to whether a musical setting can ever demonstrate (or refute) the intellectual content of the text, and also pass over the notion that the text is based on the work of writers from whom it borrows the odd line or couplet. What I would particularly challenge is the idea of Morell's text being intellectually rigorous. In Act I Jephtha swears an oath which is deliberately equivocal: 'What, or whoe'er, shall first salute mine eyes / Shall be forever thine or fall a sacrifice' (my italics). In Act II, without any explanation, he states unequivocally that he is committed to a sacrifice ('It was my daughter – and she dies'). In Act III the priests who are detailed to carry out the sacrifice point out what (amazingly) no-one has previously noticed: human sacrifice is contrary to Jewish law. They express their dilemma ('Check'd by thy all-sacred law / Yet commanded by the vow') and it is in answer to their prayer for guidance, not any plea from the wimpish Jephtha, that an Angel appears and explains to Jephtha that the vow 'when rightly scanned' does not require a sacrifice to fulfil it.

Thus, in Morell's telling, the story of Jephtha is that of a man who misinterprets his own vow to the extent that he believes he has to murder his own daughter – and when the murder is avoided, everyone rejoices that the innocent daughter is instead condemned to enforced chastity. Morell has picked up elements of an apologetic interpretation of the story current since medieval times, in which the daughter's sacrifice is notional rather than actual; but his treatment of it is his own, and 'intellectual rigour' can hardly be included among its merits. *Jephtha* works because we override Morell's text with the story as we think it ought to be. We are of course greatly aided by Handel's music, which impels us to grant Jephtha the compassion he has no right to expect on a close reading of the text.

Anthony Hicks