

Early Music REVIEW

Number 36 December 1997

ISSN 1355-3437

Price £1.50

Editor: Clifford Bartlett
Associate editor: Brian Clark
Administration: Elaine Bartlett

Reviewers:

Andrew Benson-Wilson
Robin Bigwood
Peter Branscombe
Margaret Cranmer
Stephen Daw
David Hansell
Anthony Hicks
Selene Mills
Robert Oliver
Tristram Pugin
Noel O'Regan
Marie Ritter
Alison Sabedoria
Lynda Sayce

2 Books & Music
8 De Vlaamse Polyfoni
D. James Ross
10 Beethoven's fortepiano
sonatas *Eric Van Tassel*
12 *Sances O Deus meus*
15 CD Reviews
23 Letter
24 Orange Pudding *Jennie Cassidy*

Early Music Review is published on the first of each month except January and August by King's Music, Redcroft, Banks End, Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2AA tel +44 (0)1480 52076 fax +44 (0)1480 450821 e-mail cbkings@ibm.net <http://phn.indiana.edu/~elliottp/Kings/>

Subscription rates
UK: £10.00 Europe: £13.00
Rest of World:

£20.00 (airmail), £13.00 (surface)

Cheques payable to King's Music
except French francs (FFR115) and
\$US (\$30.00 airmail, \$20.00 surface)
payable to C. A. J. Bartlett

It was reported at the National Early Music Association AGM that the South Bank management was intending to change the name of the Purcell Room to the Goodman Room – not after Roy, but after a lawyer who achieved some prominence during the Wilson government and went on to run the Arts Council. What does this say about the 1990s: administrators are more worthy of honour than composers?

Over the last few years I have been hearing of problems at the BBC Music Library. An article in *Classical Music* (15 Dec, p. 11) and another I haven't seen by Norman Lebrecht have now rung publicly alarms about how the BBC's management is dealing with a unique cultural asset, one of the world's great music libraries, with valuable material of many types, ranging from inter-war light-orchestral music (never published in score so the parts must be preserved) to a large number of 18th-century printed editions. I can well believe that the library is so large that it is not justified under the system that the BBC has devised to cost its activities. But it is a national asset and the solution to its financing must take that into account.

If you can't afford to run a national asset, what should you do? Throw bits of it away and hope no-one notices? There would be a storm if the Duke of Devonshire pulled down a wing of Chatsworth House. Yet the BBC seems to have already started throwing away part of its heritage. It has ditched its entire military band library, which should at least have been offered to the Royal Northern College, which specialises in the wind-band. Similarly, the outmoded sets of vocal scores of Bach cantatas should have been offered elsewhere. Surely the solution is to work with the heritage experts, the British Library and the UK Branch of the International Association of Music Libraries to set up an independent body to own the library and to try to secure a lottery grant to preserve it. It could continue to be of use to the BBC and, if the running cost were more broadly based, might even cost less than the library service the BBC's continuing music output will need.

At least two of our subscribers deposited music in the library because they believed it was of more use to musicians there. They should ask for it back before it is destroyed. CB

Books and Music

Clifford Bartlett

BRASS COMPANION

The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments Edited by Trevor Herbert and John Wallace. Cambridge University Press, 1997. xviii + 341pp. Hb £14.95 ISBN 0 521 56343 7; pb £14.95 ISBN 0 521 56522 7

The Cambridge instrumental companion that *EMR* readers are most likely to know is that for the recorder. This differs, not only by covering a group of different instruments but by concentrating more on the instruments themselves, with repertoire mentioned when appropriate, but not in such detail, and with a less integrated approach to the use of illustrations. Not that those here are irrelevant. It is, for instance, interesting to see Markus Stockhausen playing with his hand at the bell of his trumpet; one couldn't do that with the long baroque trumpet, but perhaps Reiche's coiled instrument might have been handstopped. The editors, themselves distinguished players, have assembled a fine team of contributors, those on 'early' chapters including Keith Polk, Bruce Dickey and Edward Tarr. Lip-service is paid to non-western lip-vibrated instruments, but this is primarily a book about European and north American brass, including the cornett, and covering the brass band and jazz as well as the classical tradition. The editors have been a little casual in sorting out overlaps between chapters; we are told on both page 141 and 145 that Berlioz used ophicleides in C and B_b in the *Symphonie fantastique*. There are also a few more slips than one might expect: Monteverdi's *Orfeo* performed rather than published in Venice in 1609 (p.79), Purcell odes called dramatic works (p. 90), text missing between pages 109 & 110, and the serpent invented in the late 15th (rather than 16th) century (p.143). Sometimes links are missing; on p. 88 we go from Kremsier to Bologna with no clue why the trumpet was so prominent at San Petronio.

These defects, though, are trivial; this is an excellent book, giving a surprising amount of information and relating technique and technology to the music. Modern players venturing into earlier music on modern instruments should note two remarks on volume. 'Primarily they [trombones] were instruments of medium to quiet dynamics, suitable for intimate and delicate ensemble playing' (p. 74). On the baroque trumpet: 'performers should remember the differentiation made in those days between the soft, singing *clarino* style and the more robust, militaristic *principale* style... It is devoutly to be wished that in future, sensitive trumpet soloists will derive pleasure from producing high notes "as softly as a flute"' (p. 102). The chapters on the modern instruments make it very clear that they and the style of playing them have changed considerably since most of the standard orchestral repertoire was written.

REPRINTED PAGES

Christopher Page Music and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Studies on Texts and Performances Variorum, 1997. viii + 328pp, £49.50. ISBN 0 86078 623 4

I mentioned when commending the collection of Richard Crocker's journal articles in this series in October that I hadn't seen the Christopher Page one; lo and behold, it soon arrived, just too late to catch the November issue. There is little that needs to be said about it. I suspect that sales among our readers will be low, not because of any fault in the book itself, but because those of you who are interested will already have most of the articles. Nine of the twenty are reprinted from *Early Music*, four from the *Galpin Society Journal*, two from the *Proceedings of the Royal Music Association* and one from *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, of which the author was co-editor, leaving only three that are less accessible. There is also a technical problem. *Early Music* has an odd format which has to be reduced to fit the proportions of this volume. Consequently the print is a bit small, and readers like myself whose eyes are suffering from many decades of overuse will almost certainly prefer to read the original format. The brief introduction is written specifically for the academic community: not a hint that you can find the name Christopher Page on concert adverts and record displays and that he is responsible for a distinguished series of recordings and performances which complement what he has so eloquently written. The more recent polemic articles have been excluded: the items here are solid contributions to the increase of knowledge. So we have here only one side (I'm not sure whether the *verso* or *recto*) of an author who can make the dry bones of musicology live. That side is impressive enough, and all music department libraries will need to buy it. There are some indexes, including one of instrument names; but the voice isn't counted as an instrument and there is no short cut to finding matter that deals with the English *a capella* heresy.

FLEMISH POLYPHONY

Ignace Bossuyt Flemish Polyphony Leuven: Davidsfonds. 174pp, £24.99. ISBN 90 6152 995 6 [Free with the 10-disc set of CDs: see p. 8]

This has all the appearance of a coffee-table book, perhaps not quite full size for the genre, but beautifully illustrated and a delight to dip into. Such books are often dipped into rather than read, and this is in fact organised with short headlined sections that make it possible to take it a snippet at a time out of order. But there is some point in reading it through. The first half comprising a general introduction to

the subject while the second has ten chapters corresponding to the ten CDs. These can be read in isolation, even if some of the comments on individual pieces may not be fully clear without the music, though scores would be as useful as discs.

Ignace Bossuyt does his best to write in such a way that the non-specialist can follow him, and he does very well. Inevitably in such a complex and subject whose music is still being absorbed into our ears and minds and about which there is still so much to be understood, one might disagree with emphases and judgments, even occasionally facts. But anyone who buys the ten discs will find this a helpful companion. There is one general point that is not sufficiently stressed. The foreword links music and the visual arts. More important is the way music reflects one of the basic ideas of the Renaissance: the importance of the word. This is touched on in the Josquin chapter, but in a detailed way. There is a fundamental relationship between the closer linking of notes to the underlaid texts, the growth of humanism, and the reform of religion, which is at least in part a change from ceremony to word. Luther's admiration for Josquin is for a composer for whom words mattered. Early composers provided an ambience, music sanctifying the atmosphere like incense. Composers after Josquin became more involved in proclaiming the text, whether they were protestant or counter-reformation catholic. On the subject of texts, I am puzzled at the idea that catholic composers drew texts from the Bible (p. 39); surely they almost invariably came from the liturgy? I also wonder how often composers actually chose texts for themselves. In some special cases, perhaps; but I imagine that normally the words will have been specified in the commission for the composition or prescribed by the liturgical occasion. And remaining with words and Luther, the translation is generally very good, but the chapter on Josquin begins 'No one less than Martin Luther' instead of 'One no less than...'

One specific weakness: the book is continually referring to the *formes fixes*, but the poetic and musical forms are not set out anywhere. And a general one: the absence of specific references to where the reader and listener can find editions of the individual pieces of music mentioned and recorded. Not everyone has access to the relevant collected works. When David Munrow produced his *Art of the Netherlands*, he asked me to provide such a list. (It was omitted from the CD reissue.)

The lavish illustrations are impressive and attractive. But I wish they had been used more fully. For a start, despite the large number of facsimiles, nothing is said about notation. Could not the listener be encouraged to try following it? If so, help over ligatures might be welcome. An eager student might want to transcribe a piece for himself; but generally only one page of an opening is reproduced, so half the piece is missing. This also may spoil the artistic balance when the object to be seen is an opening, not a single page. Even the endpapers provide from Petrucci two parts of one piece,

two parts of another. Designers should realise that musical notation means something and pages of facsimile might have meaning. Also, points that could be made from the pictures are missed. On p. 45, the picture of Antwerp shows a service taking place in a small chapel: these needs pointing out. Captions to portraits might be a little more honest: e.g. that the portrait of Josquin is from a source nearly a century after his death; and surely the startlingly modern (in this context) Titian portrait of Charles V (p. 111) might have the artist named on the page, not relegated to the credits?

But this is a fine book at a remarkably low price (free if you buy the ten CDs; if you want it separately, you can order it from King's Music). It would make a good basis for an undergraduate course and will add background to those who love the music of the period.

HARPSICHORD GUIDE

Ann Bond *A Guide to the Harpsichord* Amadeus Press, 1997. 267pp, £22.50. ISBN 1 557467 027 1

This is in the 'what you wanted to know but never dared ask' category, a clear, simple book for non-experts giving information as clearly as possible so that the enthusiast without the sort of background that most books we review here take for granted can read and learn for themselves. It covers the instrument(s) and the music written for it. The author is adept at summarising complex arguments without over-simplification. As with the *Flemish Polyphony* volume reviewed above, there are inevitably statements with which the specialist will disagree; but few of them could have covered the ground here in so direct, well-organised and approachable a way. I noted only three items for comment. It would have been helpful to have made clear that *Gloria tibi Trinitas* was the same as the *In nomine* (p. 124), the Early Music Fora are not in any way under the auspices of NEMA (p. 247) and King's Music hasn't yet published music with blank staves for continuo players to scribble in (p. 209). Thanks for the compliment to *EMR* on p. 248.

Jon Laukvik
Historical Performance Practice in
Organ Playing

Book and anthology

A major addition to the world of organ teaching
Andrew Benson-Wilson, *EMR*

Published by Carus-Verlag

Available from King's Music

£50.00 + post

INSTRUMENTAL GABRIELI

Following on the complete vocal music of G. Gabrieli's *Sacrae Symphoniae* 1597, Alan Lumsden has now completed his version of the 16 instrumental canzonas and sonatas. They have had the advantage of trial in action at the Beauchamp course this summer (where I played some of them), on the Hyperion CD reviewed last month, and no doubt at various Lumsden courses. The scores are compact, running to eight or twelve pages per piece, and notated in treble, octave treble and bass clefs; all parts are practical, with a choice of clefs for the middle parts. As with the vocal items in the series, time-values are reduced in triple sections. Transposed versions are also available for high-clef pieces. Enjoyable though the other canzona literature of the period is, nothing else matches Gabrieli for profundity, imagination and wit. Although intended for cornetts and sackbuts with the occasional violin or viola, players of other instruments might also like to try them; they are very satisfying to play on recorders and lower viols. I was hoping to be able to compare these with the other new edition, but I still haven't seen the London Pro Musica's complete Gabrieli instrumental music (apart from a brief glance at an exhibition stand). The Beauchamp versions can certainly be recommended, and are good value. The disadvantage of the 1597 set is the cumbersome titling by mode. Perhaps Alan Lumsden and Bernard Thomas could have got together and decided that they would agree to call them Nos. 1-16 to make things simpler for us all. (Beauchamp Press, Churcham, GL2 8AA, tel +44 (0)1452 750253, fax ... 750585.)

CHORAL BREITKOPF

The latest Breitkopf batch includes a booklet with three spiritual madrigals from the 1580s by Costa (*O sacro santo SATTB*), Agostini (*La morte è morta SSATTB*) and Gastoldi (*Salve de' peccatori SSATB*). These are not, like the Monteverdi disc reviewed on p. 17, contrafacta but settings of original poems which show interesting features of their own: the second, for instance, is a sonnet with only two rhymes, *morte* and *vita*. No prizes for guessing the first four notes of the Gastoldi which, incidentally, is in high clefs and not transposed. These look well worth singing and would make a good concert group. (DVfM 7715; DM7,50, which is well under £3.00). Another sacred Gesualdo offprint from the Collected Works includes three rather shorter pieces for SATTB from his *Sacrae cantiones I* (1603): *Reminiscere miserationum tuarum*, *Dignare me* and *Peccantem me quotidie* (DVfM 7732; DM 3,50).

C. H. Graun's motet *Machet die Tore weit* for SATB x2 survives in two rather dubious sources: a print by Rochlitz from 1840 (about a century after composition) and an allegedly inaccurate MS from c.1805. Herbert Lölkes bases his edition on the former, though from his brief description of the latter I would guess that many of the differences, such as the dynamics, are the result of Rochlitz the editor rather than the omission of the scribe. So conductors should feel free to make their own decisions. The score

does not indicate the need for any continuo, though the editor states that was probably censored by Rochlitz. Nevertheless, it is a piece worth singing, though not as an easy alternative to Bach: there are some formidable semi-quaver runs. (ChB 5274; DM7,50).

THE KEYBOARD'S GARDEN OF DELIGHT

Hans Leo Hassler „*Lustgarten Neuer Teutscher Gesang*“: 25 *Intavolierungen aus der Turiner Tabulatur herausgegeben von Martin Böcker*. Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 8674), 1997. 46pp, DM27,00 [about £10.00]

Hassler's *Lustgarten* of 1601 was popular in its time (with reprints in 1605 and 1610) and contains many pieces that have become widely known in modern revival – everyone knows *Mein gemüth ist mir verwirret*, though not necessarily in Hassler's setting. The whole collection survives also in the Turin organ tablatures, copied for the Fugger family between 1637 and 1640. All 39 vocal pieces (though not the fine 6-part intradas) were included there; this edition prints 25 of them. Most of the transcriptions are straightforward, with just an occasional cadential trill added; more elaborate versions of two pieces, *Ach Schatz ich sing und lache* and *Ihr Musici*, are appended as editorial models for imitation. I'm not entirely convinced at the value of the edition. A sensible option for performing some of the pieces, especially the short ones, is to alternate or precede the vocal versions with keyboard. But the player can easily use the same editions as the singers, and there is no need to have a special edition merely to show the standard cadence formulae. The tablature transposes some pieces; these are not indicated in the edition, so check before you decide to get your harpsichord to introduce a performance: the singers might get a nasty shock. Not all high-clef pieces are transposed. On the same page we have *Dantzen und Springen* at the vocal pitch and *Mein gemüth ist mir verwirret* down a fourth; both have G2C1C2C3F3 as original clefs.

Francesco Geminiani

A Treatise of Good Taste in the Art of Musick

London, 1749

Facsimile edition: £7.50

also available

The Art of Playing on the Violin

London, 1751

Facsimile edition: £10.00

King's Music Redcroft, Bank's End, Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 2AA, UK. tel +44 1480 (0)52076, fax +44 1480 (0)450821

NEW SEASONS

Antonio Vivaldi *Le Quattro Stagioni/The Four Seasons...*
Edizione critica/Critical Edition a cura di/by Paul Everett e
Michael Talbot Ricordi (137300), 1996. x + 175pp, £14.95.
 ISMN M 04137562 5

This is the third time recently that an important publication concerning this much-publicised work has been discussed here and recommended highly. Paul Everett's *Cambridge Guide* (EMR 21, p. 2) provided information, discussion on the music and much else and Eleanor Selfridge-Field's Dover score (see EMR 26, p. 4) was the first edition truly to represent the original edition and has the advantage of including all 12 concertos of op. 8 in a single, amazingly-cheap volume. This new edition does not invalidate that, though gives a wider perspective, is good value (especially considering the length of its editorial commentary) and has the advantage of matching performance material.

Opus 8 was published by Le Cène in Amsterdam in 1725; this has generally been assumed to be an authoritative edition, though it was only realised quite recently that virtually all copies and modern editions omitted the cello solo part in the slow movement of *L'Inverno*. Several performances and recordings have been given over the last couple of decades based on the version surviving among a large set of concertos in Manchester Public Library which came from Italy and was once owned by the *Messiah* librettist, Charles Jennens; study by Paul Everett has shown that the Vivaldi MSS there were closely connected with the composer.

This new edition is the first that is based on both sources. The presence of two sources with independent and equally valid transmission from the autograph enables various small errors to be identified and corrected. The editors have decided that their main text should be based on the printed version, though state that both versions may be performed, though not mixed. It is suggested that the Manchester version can be created by substituting the variants from the critical commentary. This is not a user-friendly procedure, and is complicated by the fact that not all the readings marked B (the siglum for the Manchester MS) need restoring; they can't just be substituted without thought. Perhaps those that are relevant could have been marked with an asterisk or have been in a different font. The differences are, in fact, not very numerous.

Having commented a couple of times recently that it is difficult to evaluate a new edition from the score alone, I am glad to be able to report that I have seen the parts for this edition – not because Ricordi or their UK agents Boosey supplied review copies (of either parts or the score) but because I bought a set. For £39.50 you get a solo part, three each of violin 1, 2 & bass and two viola parts. Where necessary, three-page spreads are used to avoid turns. Vivaldi's verbal cues are included. They look easy to play from and are good value, even if you don't want more than single strings.

PS I've just had an e-mail from Paul Everett in which he notes a misprint: there is a natural missing before the E in bar 52 of the finale of *L'Estate*.

C. P. E. CADENZAS

Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach *75 Cadenzas* (H. 264/W. 120) for keyboard Facsimile edition with an introduction by E. Eugene Helm. Utrecht: STIMU, 1997. viii+ 23pp, Dfl 20,-.

This is a collection prepared by Bach, copied by his regular scribe Michel and preserved by his great fan Westphal, of a retrospective collection of cadenzas. Most are for specific works written much earlier in his life; indeed, although all but two of the named original works were composed before Bach moved to Hamburg in 1768, the cadenzas may be later. Helm states that they were written for revised versions of the works, though doesn't say whether the earlier versions have notated cadenzas or not: his penultimate paragraph needs clarification. Michel's hand is perfectly clear, so facsimile is the most sensible way of publishing this intriguing document, though players will find that the upper stave more often than not has the soprano rather than the treble clef. Players of C. P. E. Bach will find it invaluable; it also gives ideas for performing other music of the mid- and late-18th century, and is a reminder of the neglected art of cadenza playing. One wonders why Bach wrote these down; did he not believe in improvisation, or are these models for pupils? I expect that the topic was discussed at the improvisation symposium at the Utrecht Festival, whose papers STIMU will no doubt publish. At the current exchange rate, this costs under £6.50, and the price includes post. STIMU's address is Postbus 565, 3500 AN Utrecht, Netherlands, tel +31 30 2362236, fax ... 2322798, e-mail oom@oudemuziek.nl

WIENER URTEXT

Following Breitkopf's advert-cum-justification for their new orchestral editions, Wiener Urtext Edition has produced a pamphlet on the principles behind its long-running series. I'm not quite sure how long-running. The oldest of the series I can see on my shelves is Christa Landon's Haydn Sonatas from the mid 1960s, when the series was issued by Universal; it became a joint project of Schott & Universal in 1972. The pamphlet is useful in that it gives a simple explanation to pianists and others of the functions of such an edition and what players can (and cannot) expect from it, with facsimiles making several valid points. It is, though, perhaps unfortunate that a Handel overture is chosen to illustrate double-dotting at a time when ideas about the performance of them are less certain than when Peter Williams prepared his edition. And it is odd that there is no discussion of fingering, the addition of which undermines the whole concept of Urtext. We don't expect an Urtext edition of a string quartet to be bowed: why should keyboard players need such help? As the pamphlet says of other interpretative advice, 'the place for instructions of this kind is in the accompanying text'. It is careless to refer to

the facsimiles by number yet not to include numbers in the captions, and the pamphlet's usefulness as a catalogue would have been helped if a price list had been added. But it's a good idea: if you see one lying around in a shop, take it.

VENETIAN POEMS

Uwe Dick *Der Tod der Königin; Die venezianischen Gedichte. Umspielt von Michael Steinkühler (Viola da gamba und Violoncello): Ein Hörbuch 57' 15"*

Bad Nauheim: Asku-Presse, 1997. 62pp. ISBN 3 930994 05 4

Comprises a book and a CD which includes the poems read by the author, Virgiliano Ricercata per Viola Bastarda in d, Rore/Dalla Casa Ancor che col partire, Bassano Ricercata prima in a, D. Gabrielli Ricercata 2 in a, Frank Corcoran Venetian Mediations on 'Occhi sereni' (comp. 1987).

Here is a most unusual issue. Uwe Dick, a lively, very much alive German poet, here reads five of his poems and groups of poems more or less loosely connected with Venice, each reading being preceded by Michael Steinkühler's poised, eloquent playing of a solo piece for one or other instrument of the gamba and cello family. Appropriately, most of the music too is connected with Venice; the one modern composition is Frank Corcoran's *Venetian Meditations* (1987) on Andrea Gabrieli's madrigal *Occhi sereni*. The little book, beautifully presented apart from a couple of misprints, contains not only the poems with an appendix (of notes, but also a transcription of the Rore madrigal on which dalla Casa's diminutions are based). The recording is kinder to the instruments than the voice – Dick is so close to the microphone that he rasps once or twice. The poems are taxing, but read with much skill (apart from one little slip that might readily have been corrected); this is a fascinating issue, but not for those with sketchy German.

Peter Branscombe

BRITISH MUSIC LIBRARY ON CD

CPM^{PLUS}: *The Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Library. 2nd edition.* Bowker Saur, 1997. CD-ROM in pack with users guide.

I wrote a few slightly disparaging remarks about RISM and CPM on CD-ROM in July (p. 8). I still feel very strongly that, if the idea is so marvellous, those marketing it should have sufficient confidence to try to reach large sales and keep the prices low. I have now received a copy of the British Library's music catalogue on CD, and I'm most impressed. I'm not very PC literate, since our music programme, PMS, uses Acorn, and if we change to another, that will be another Acorn system, Sibelius. But at least we managed to load it onto the PC we bought our son for his birthday because he wanted a golf game, despite the apparent need for a CPM disk as well as a CPM CD-ROM (p. 5 of the *User Guide*) which we didn't have and which was unnecessary. (We had less success with Sinfonye's CD, see p. 15, since we could not get sound and pictures together.)

With so many means of access to information, one's first reaction is to use it as a toy; I'm sure that, unless I discipline myself, I'll spend hours playing with it. In fact, my first check was on how many King's Music titles it contained. Have we really sent no copyright deposit material (except books and *EMR*, which of course are not shown here) since 1991? If not, our apologies to the British Library: we will remedy that as soon as we can. Although I am not an absolute luddite, I haven't had much experience of handling databases and was caught out by how different this is from the familiar printed version of the catalogue. I didn't expect that the standard means of ordering each list that one calls up is not the sensibly-contrived alphabetical order of the printed CPM but in date order, starting with the latest. It also takes a bit of ingenuity to spot many works from the amount of title shown on first sight; it surprised me that the brief cue that is initially visible isn't what in my librarianish days we used to call a uniform title so that, whatever any individual edition calls itself, all editions of a work will appear together. One can, of course, easily call up the full entries, but on a long search this takes time. Searching by date, instrument, publisher, plate number etc. allows for all sorts of fascinating research. But I suspect that for the simple question of whether a known work or edition is in the BL, I'll still first reach out for the British Union Catalogue of Early Music.

I am aware that this is a trivial report on a thousand pound's worth of data (the full price is much higher, but there are special offers). I will in fact return to the subject when I have had a chance to use it more and learn what sort of questions produce the most useful results. I doubt whether many individuals will be in a position to buy it; but libraries should have it, so use your influence to persuade your local one that it is an essential reference work (or tool, if you like being fashionable: interestingly, that seems to be a word that was once a *double entrendre* but has now cleaned itself up).

GREGORIAN CHANT AND 16TH CENTURY POLYPHONY

Church of our Lady, Lisson Grove, St. John's Wood

Excellent amateur choir needs sopranos and altos (some vacancies for other voices). Applicants should have a straight and clear tone and be good sight-readers.

Services: Sundays 10.45 am (with 9.40 am run-through)
Rehearsal: Fridays 7.30 - 9.30 pm

There are over 800 works in repertoire, mainly from the Renaissance. Applicants need not be Catholic nor be committed to every Sunday.

For further details please ring
 Claude Crozet 0181 888 6509 or
 Katy Meiklejohn 0171 262 8493

Lindum Records

suppliers of Early Music Records

You have read the reviews in Early Music Review?

You wish to buy a record?

We will:

supply records favourably reviewed in recent issues of Early Music Review.
gradually increase the stock list to include other quality records.
supply any other record you may wish subject to availability.

Send SAE for current stock list

One call, fax or email to

**Aldhundegate House
Beaumont Fee
Lincoln LN1 1HB
U.K.**

Tel/Fax 01522 527530

Email: peter@aldhund.demon.co.uk

B.V. MUZIEKHANDEL SAUL B. GROEN

Saw it in Early Music Review?



- We have a large stock of early music
- We understand the requirements of the early musician
- We can send music, books and CDs quickly worldwide

Saul B. Groen, tel +31 20 6762240

Ferd. Bolstraat 8, fax +31 20 6711223

1072 LJ Amsterdam, e-mail:-

The Netherlands groencd@worldonline.nl

Nema

NATIONAL EARLY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

An essential reference book for the world of early music. Packed with information, including:

- surveys of various aspects of the early music world
- the *Register of Early Music*, now listing over 3,000 individuals and ensembles worldwide, both amateur and professional, including performers, teachers, instrument makers, scholars and listeners, with sub-listings by activity and location
- a comprehensive *Buyer's Guide* to over 900 early-music instrument makers worldwide, with the types of instruments offered for sale

The Early Music Yearbook 1998



Priced £14 (plus p&p £1.50 UK/£3.50 overseas), copies of the 1997 NEMA *Early Music Yearbook* (ISSN 0967-6619) are available from:

NEMA (R), Holly Bush House, Caythorpe,
Grantham, Lincs NG32 3BS.

Registered Charity No. 297300

Ba numquam audio, numquam considero, quin laetior ac doctior evadam.

D. James Ross

DE VLAAMSE POLYFONIE

1160 Adriaan Willaert en Italië 75' 12"
Willaert, Macque, Rore, Wert

1161 Philippe Rogier en Spanje 61' 11"
Hèle, Manchicourt, Rogier, Romero, Turnhout

1162 Orlandus Lassus 60' 38"
Lassus, Fossa, Hoyoul, Vento

1163 Liederen en Dansen uit Vlaanderen 73' 48"
Pierre de la Rue, Clemens non Papa, Boscoop, Episcopius, Isaac, N. Liégeois, Phalèse, Susato, Venders

1164 Philippus de Monte en de Habsburgers 76' 53"
Bruck, Luython, Monte, Regnart, Sayve, Utendal, Vaet

1165 Nikolaas Gombert en het Hof van Keizer Karel 72' 21"
Clemens non Papa, Crequillon, Gombert

1166 Isaac, Obrecht, de la Rue 70' 18"

1167 Josquin des Prez 61' 37"

1168 Johannes Ockeghem en Frankrijk 76' 53"
Compère, Divitis, Févin, Ockeghem, Prioris

1169 Guillaume Dufay en Bourgondië 72' 35"
Agricola, Binchois, Busnois, Dufay

All numbers prefixed EUFODA

rrp of the set £139.99 (boxed in an elegant casket and including a substantial illustrated book see pp. 2-3) or individually rrp £13.99.

With the recent appearance of a number of collected editions by the King's Consort and the Cardinall's Musick and the re-release of the revelatory David Munro collections of the 1970s, the recording industry seems to be firmly back in anthology mode. It is in this climate that Eufoda have finally staged a UK launch of their ten-CD survey of Flemish polyphony. Performed by a number of the excellent early music ensembles currently flourishing in the Low Countries, it is part of a remarkable programme of investigation into some of the neglected corners of Franco-Flemish composition in the 15th and 16th centuries, one of the more attractive consequences of resurgent Flemish nationalism.

The Currende Consort, a flexible group of solo voices, join forces with the choral ensemble the Capella Sancti Michaelis and a variety of instrumental line-ups including the Concerto Palatino all directed by Erik van Nevel in a series of CDs exploring the work of a veritable who's who of Flemish masters – Willaert, Rogier, Lassus, de Monte, Gombert, Isaac, Obrecht, de la Rue, Josquin, Ockeghem and Dufay, but fascinatingly juxtaposing music by virtually forgotten composers such as de la Hèle, de Févin, de Vento and a host of others.

Those listeners familiar with the work of the other van Nevel, Paul, and his Huelgas Ensemble will feel particularly at home in the sound world of present recordings, a rich and ardent choral sound recorded with definition and

warmth, flowing tempi, convincing and precise solo singing, generous use of instruments in entertaining although not bewildering variety, and finally a disposition towards the slightly quirky that is sometimes annoying, often convincing and always thought-provoking.

The series opens with the rich music of Adrian Willaert and charts his influence on his fellow Flemish exiles in Italy, Cipriano de Rore and Giaches de Wert. To punctuate the lavish church music, which so obviously influenced the Gabrieli and Monteverdi, we are given small-scale madrigals and some interesting organ music by the Neapolitan-Fleming Giovanni de Maque. Judicious ornamentation decorates but never obscures the monolithic textures of the large-scale works, which are given impressively sonorous and beautifully blended renditions. The madrigals are expressively sung and vividly characterised.

From Italy to Spain, and to the less familiar Philippe Rogier, whose *Missa Philippus*, introduces the work of the *capilla flamenca*, a group of ex-pat Flemings cultivated by the Spanish Habsburgs in the 16th century. The performance of Rogier's Mass features one of the van Nevel quirks I mentioned earlier – the tenor cantus, already distinguished by its own text 'Philippus Secundus Rex Hispaniae', is further emphasised by doubling at the octave on a descant recorder. I think it works well, but some listeners may have reservations. The output of the *capilla flamenca* ranges from beautifully-crafted chansons and sparklingly-Spanish songs, imaginatively performed by a variety of voices and instruments, to full-scale church masterpieces embodying the sort of flamboyance one would expect of counter-Reformation Spain. The music of Pierre Manchicourt is a revelation in this respect, while Rogier is vindicated as a composer of the first rank.

Orlando Lassus is a composer whom we may feel we know well, and yet a thoughtful programme of his music can always bring out unexpected aspects of this musical chameleon. Here the emphasis is on his sumptuous choral music, given muscular performances devoid of the stodginess into which lazier ensembles sometimes lapse. But between these towering musical columns are tucked little treasures in the form of chansons, Lassus in miniature, ranging from the melancholy to the raunchy, scored and performed with delightful humour – how about a nun's indiscretion with a priest accompanied by an organ and a fragment of plainchant? The many faces of Lassus are complemented by the music of his pupils Ivo de Vento, Johannes de Fossa and Baldwinus Hoyoul, whose idiosyncratic names are about all that distinguish them from their all-pervading master.

A general disc of songs and dances from Flanders allows the instrumentalists to come into their own, and sensibly avoids the temptation of becoming a gratuitous catalogue of obscure instruments. The dances are grouped into plausible sets and given highly idiomatic performances; no effort is made to gloss over the resulting rhythmical transitions, and the scoring within a set is relatively uniform (with the exception of the concluding set which compromises integrity in pursuit of the 'big finish'). The chansons too have the ring of truth about them and are beautifully sung. All in all this is as persuasive a snapshot as one could hope for of secular music-making in the Renaissance.

In line with their Spanish cousins, the Austrian Habsburgs supported a band of Flemish singer/composers, the most famous of whom, Philippus de Monte, has recently enjoyed something of a revival. His church music is immediately attractive and consistently inventive, and it is scarcely surprising that he was also a master of the madrigal. Examples of both genres alternate with music by his clearly very capable Flemish contemporaries at court, Jacobus Vaet, Arnold von Bruck, Alexander Utendal, Lambert de Sayve and Jacob Regnart, whose *Litanie Deiparae Virginis Mariae* is a masterpiece. The performances are suitably extrovert.

It is this aspect which is also unexpectedly to the fore in a selection of music by Nikolaas Gombert and his countrymen at the court of Charles V. A composer whom I had hitherto associated with sombre not to say lugubrious textures is here given much more up-beat treatment, including a curiously punchy but ultimately rather unconvincing performance of the twelve-part *Regina caeli*. A selection of Clemens non Papa, sacred and secular, and chansons and Mass movements by the enigmatic Thomas Crequillon illustrate the remarkable insularity of the early *capilla flamenca* – there is no sense that these men were aware of being outside their native land.

For the four concluding discs we are taken back to the roots of Flemish polyphony. In a disc devoted to the music of Heinrich Isaac, Jacob Obrecht and Pierre de la Rue we have a welcome cross-section of their church music, performed with great refinement by the Capella Sancti Michaelis ably supported by a variety of instruments. This sacred repertoire is interspersed with lieder, presented in a number of guises including the completely instrumental. The performers clearly warm to this earlier idiom, and a more forthright sound emphasises the open textures.

As the linchpin of Flemish polyphony's international status, it is only fitting that Josquin de Prez has a disc devoted exclusively to his own music. Among the familiar chansons and motets lurk unexpected delights such as a charming instrumental fantasia. Further illumination is provided by the juxtaposition of a lute intabulation of *Adieu mes amours* and the original chanson, and these performances can only enhance Josquin's prestige as the best of the Flemings.

Johannes Ockeghem's individualistic compositions are usefully compared and contrasted with his contemporary compatriots in France, Loiset Compère, Antonius Divitis, Antonius Prioris and Antoine de Févin. The performances are splendidly vigorous and the tempi compellingly urgent, although this leads to some uncharacteristic raggedness in Compère's contribution to the celebrated Scaramella showdown with Josquin, *Scaramella fa la galla*. As so often in this period the 'lesser masters' prove to be so by neglect rather than by quality: the music by Divitis and Févin confirms both to be composers who merit further investigation.

Finally and rather touchingly we return to the wellspring of Flemish polyphony, Guillaume Dufay, and his remarkable associates in Burgundy, Gilles Binchois, Antoine Busnois and Alexander Agricola. The extraordinary essence of medieval Burgundy is evoked with energetic singing and with the bright tones of shawms, cornetts and regals. Diffident phrasing and infectious enthusiasm make this disc a crowning splendour in a set which has consistently impressed me with the very high standard of its performances, the inventiveness of its programming and its compelling advocacy of splendid music.

The one minor reservation that I have concerns the inlay booklets. There is no problem for those who buy the whole set, since the beautifully-produced companion book includes much introductory material and a chapter on each disc. But those buying individual discs, although they get four-language texts, are left a little short on background information. Listeners may also feel that some of the more unorthodox performance decisions, such as the bizarre cadential trills on the Dufay Gloria or the occasional deployment of voices (and therefore text) on only one of the polyphonic lines, could be usefully explained in a note.

Notwithstanding its rather esoteric title, *De Vlaamse Polyfonie*, the mock-tapestry box in which the ten-CD set is presented is very eye-catching, and indeed its contents are an absolute treasure-trove of music of which Flanders can be justly proud. Recalling as it does the era when Flanders provided musicians to the greatest sacred and secular powers in Europe, it is a splendid achievement that an enterprise such as this can call upon some of the finest musicians in Europe to present this remarkable musical heritage to a modern audience. I think this is the finest anthology of the music of this period that I have so far come across, an absolute must for anyone interested in renaissance polyphony, but it is also by virtue of its programming accessible to the non-specialist.

And me? Well, I'm going to listen to it all again in chronological order.

The Tinctoris quote of our title (the epigraph of the companion book) may be translated I never hear these works, I never think about them, but I become happier and wiser.
Lindum Records are offering a discount price and also an instalment scheme for the set. For address, see advert on p. 7.

BEETHOVEN'S FORTEPIANO SONATAS

Eric Van Tassel

Beethoven *The Complete Piano Sonatas on Period Instruments*
 Malcolm Bilson, Tom Beghin, David Breitman, Ursula Dütschler, Zvi Meniker, Bart van Oort, Andrew Willis Claves CD 50-9707/10 688'50" (10 discs)

Instruments: Paul McNulty (1996) after Anton Walter (1795), 5-octave
 Chris Maene (1991) after Anton Walter (1795), 5-octave
 Chris Maene (1996) after Anton Walter (1795), 5-octave
 Thomas & Barbara Wolf (1990) after Johann Schantz (c1800), 5-octave
 Rodney Regier (1992) after Anton Walter (c1790), 5-octave
 Salvatore Lagrassa (c1815) restored Beunk & Wennink (1993), 6-octave
 Gottlieb Hafner (c1835) restored by Beunk & Wennink (1993), 6½-octave
 Johann Fritz (1825) restored by Beunk & Wennink (1991), 6½-octave
 Rodney Regier (1995) after Conrad Graf (c1824), 6½-octave

This extraordinary enterprise grew out of a concert series in New York and became a recording thanks to an anonymous patron of the old-fashioned kind. The use of so many and such diverse instruments is endlessly illuminating, though it made me long to have a multi-disc CD player to allow even more immediate comparisons.

Purely in didactic terms, using seven different players is less valuable: one can't know – particularly, but not only, in the matter of pedalling – just how much certain differences are owing to the instruments and how much to the interpreters. But I can't seriously complain, since this release has also introduced me to some talented players and deepened my acquaintance with others.

All these instruments represent, in varying degrees, the salient virtues of the Viennese fortepiano: the quick speech, the differentiation between registers, the clear forthrightness of the lower octaves, the special quality of a genuine *una corda*, the value of a 'moderator' pedal tastefully deployed. The Viennese fortepiano's rapid decay, especially in the treble, is of course a mixed blessing, but one thing it does is to give new life to the 'sustaining' pedal.

The recordings show, above all, how strongly Beethoven was influenced by the Viennese fortepiano's ability to (as Malcolm Bilson once memorably put it) stop a note dead in its tracks. I once wrote that an English grand, with its greater resonance, might suit late Beethoven better than a Graf or a Fritz; I now think that I was unwittingly patronising the composer's hearing loss. If he did like English instruments late in his life (which is far from certain), it was only because of his deafness: nothing in the music suggests any inclination on his part to forsake the more open texture of the Viennese instrument.

Most of us who have passed a certain age had learnt to love some pieces in traditional 'modern' performances first, and period performance can sometimes make such a familiar piece seem suddenly once alien. These recordings suggest to

me that in the last sonatas Beethoven is no longer trying to communicate at all. In the sparseness alternating with density in Op.109/iii, or in the obsessive spinning-out of Op.111/ii, it is as if he is talking to himself, exploring the abstract idea of music. Yet this isn't, so far as I can tell, because of his deafness, for the colours (on the Fritz, in these two examples) are still as infinitely and magically various and subtle as in the composer's heyday as a public pianist.

Among the instruments there are notable differences in high treble resonance – the point on which an early piano most often seems to fall short of what the composer apparently wanted. On several pianos (e.g. the Wolf-Schantz in Op.7/i bars 51ff), sustained notes above about *e'''* just don't ring as I think they should. The McNulty-Walter is a little better in this respect, though a couple of dampers sound wonky in Op.10/2/ii; but the 1991 Maene-Walter is a different animal and gives a wonderfully balanced Op.10/1. Among the later instruments, the Fritz is especially good in this respect; on the Lagrassa, a muscular though magnificent beast, the left hand occasionally overwhelms the right.

The most eminent player in the group is Malcolm Bilson; the others are all former pupils of his. Although I accept that (as Bilson says) there's no 'party line' here, he seems to share one trait with several of his students: a nervy, high-strung rhythmic sense that can sound snatchy or unsteady – Thelonious Monk when I'm hoping for Art Tatum. The effect is disappointing in some florid movements (for instance, the downbeat quavers in Op.110/ii bars 18ff, 26ff); but it suits such deliberately 'awkward' music as the schizoid Op.109/i. And there is some evidence of a shared or prevailing aesthetic in matters of tempo. Basic movement tempos tend to be on the fast side, sometimes weakening the effect (Op.7/i), though the breakneck speed of Op.10/1/iii is just what's wanted. More importantly, several players seem reluctant to vary the tempo as much as I suspect Beethoven did. I believe we still have a lot to learn about the earliest antecedents of certain practices which are well documented for the later 19th century, such as taking sonata-form second subjects slower, and linking a notated *cresc.* with an unwritten *accel.*

If the purpose of this release were purely didactic, it would have included some direct comparisons – say, Op.14/1/i played on three or four different 5-octave pianos, and Op.110/i on three or four 6½-octave instruments; but that would have stretched the patience of most potential buyers too far. This is much the best presentation of the Viennese fortepiano available, and I recommend it wholeheartedly to everyone who cares about how instruments and musicianly sensibility conspire to bring musical thought to life.

A dazzling chapter in musical history presented
in 10 CDs and a richly illustrated art book

ADRIAAN WILLAERT AND ITALY

PHILIPPE ROGIER AND SPAIN

ORLANDUS LASSUS

SONGS AND DANCES FROM FLANDERS

PHILIPPUS DE MONTE AND THE HABSBURGS

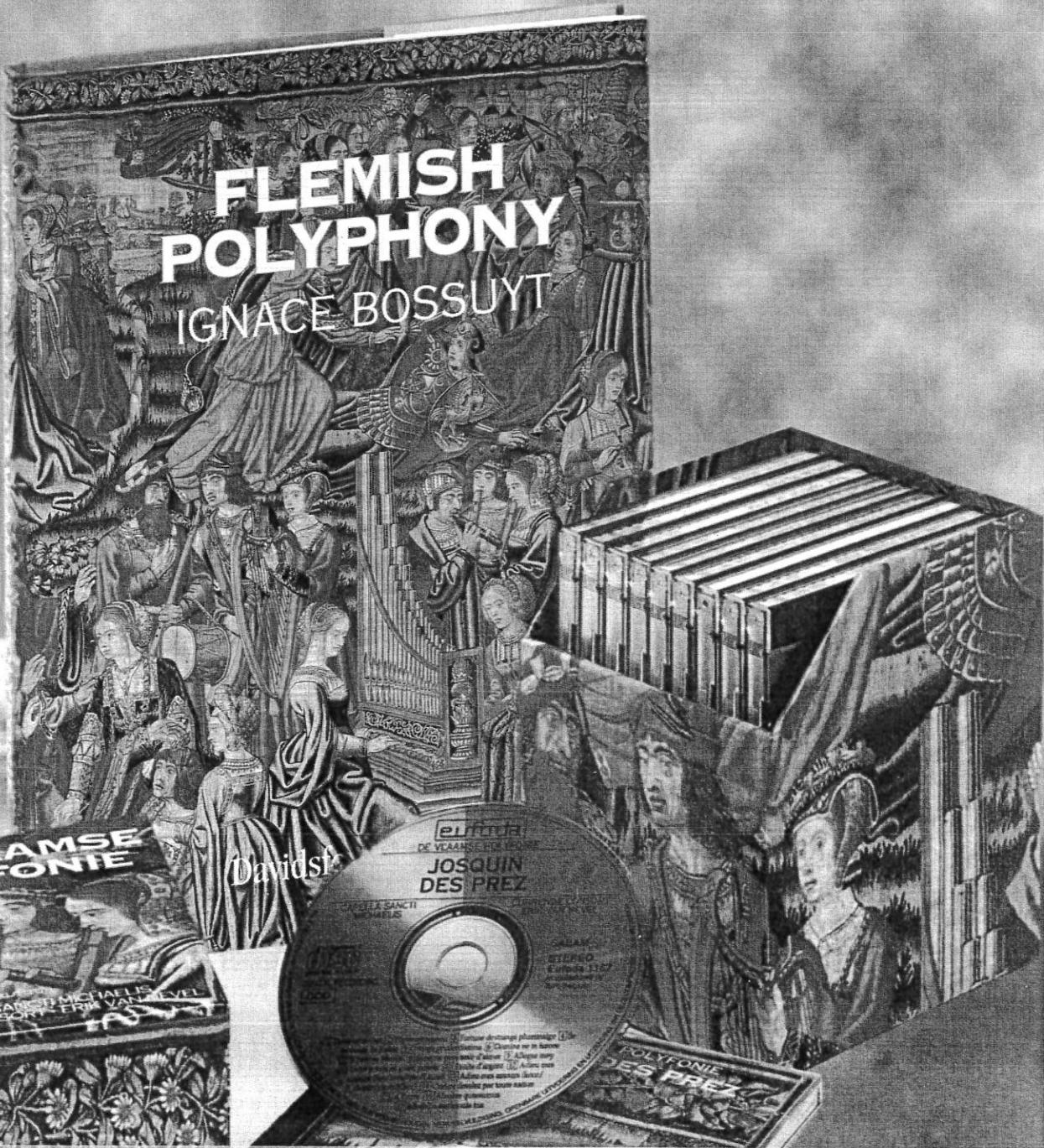
NICOLAAS GOMBERT AND THE COURT OF CHARLES V

ISAAC, OBRICHT, DE LA RUE

JOSQUIN DES PREZ

JOHANNES OCKEGEM AND FRANCE

GUILLAUME DUFAY AND BURGUNDY



RRP CD £13.99 - RRP BOOK £24.99 - RRP CDs + BOOK £139.99

AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD RECORD STORES AND ON THE INTERNET : [HTTP://WWW.1CD4U.COM](http://www.1cd4u.com)

DISTRIBUTOR: ONE FOR YOU 66 VINCENT ROAD NORWICH NORFOLK NR1 4HH

TEL. & FAX: 01603 70 1167

Sances – O Deus meus

8

O De - - - us, O De - - - us, De-us, De - us

me - us u - ni - ca spes a - - - - -

5 4 2

12

ni-mae me - ae, u - ni - ca

5 4 2

16

spes a - - - - - ni-mae me - ae, u - ni - ca

5 4 2

20

spes a - - - - - ni-mae me - ae

5

24

quam in-nu-me-ra - bi - li - a sunt be-ne - fi - ci - a tu - a, quam in-nu-mer-a - bi - li - a sunt be-ne - fi - ci - a tu -

6 5 6 5

29

- a in me

32

col-la - ta, quam in-nu-me-ra - bi - li - a sunt be-ne - fi - ci - a tu - a in me

37

col-la - ta. Pro om - ni - bus er - go, pro om - ni - bus er -

43 **Presto**

go ti - bi gra - ti - as a - go, ti - bi gra - ti - as a - go,

52

ti - bi gra - ti - as a - go, ti - bi gra - ti - as a - go.

60

Tu Do - mi - ne, tu de ni - chi - lo fe - ci - sti me tu ja - nu - as cae - lo - rum a - pe - ru - i - sti

67

mi - hi pre - ti - o - so san - gui - ne fi - li - i tu - i. Ro - go te, ro - go te dul -

76

- cis - si - me pa - ter, ro - go te, ro - go te dul - cis - si - me pa - ter, ut

86

a - blu - as om - nes i - ni - qui - ta - tes me - as, ut a - blu - as om - nes i - ni - qui -

95

- ta - tes me - as, i - ni - qui - ta - tes me - as et pec - ca - ta, pec -

104

ca - ta me - a de - le - as, et pec - ca - ta me - a de - le - as,

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

Anno Domini 997: Millennium of devotion to Saint Adalbert Schola Gregoriana Pragensis, David Eben 55' 44" Supraphon SU 3288-2 231

The front of the disc has the simple title *Anno Domini 997*, which is unlikely to be a meaningful date for most of our readers. The subtitle probably leaves you little the wiser and for foreign consumption it might have helped if the booklet had printed a clearer account of the saint, who was the second Bishop of Prague. According to *The Words-worth Dictionary of Saints* (good value for £1.00) he had a tough time there, twice fleeing to Rome for safety. The first time, he was sent back; but after his second retreat he was sent as part of a missionary team to Hungary, Poland and Prussia. He was killed by the Prussians (who thought he was a Polish spy) in 997. Despite having been something of a failure in life, he had a successful posthumous career as a saint.

As for this disc, it takes extracts from his Office as sung in Aachen (which acquired a relic of Adalbert as early as 1000 and had a church consecrated to him) and Prague, along with parts of the common of martyrs at Easter. These are sung in a firm, flowing manner that is attractive in itself and which shows awareness of current thought on chant performance practice. The disc is framed by short choral pieces on Adalbert by Petr Eben (b. 1929), a nice gesture. CB

Chants des voûtes cisterciennes (Chants from the cistercian vaults) Venance Fortunat, Anne-Marie Deschamps 68' 07" rec 1990 L'empreinte digitale ED 13073 £

This bargain reissue comes with L'empreinte digitale's catalogue instead of information about the music. If you are happy to enjoy it without information or texts, this is a good opportunity to sample the group's individual style. Much of it is impressive and imaginative – in one respect too much so, since I doubt if monks and nuns sang in mixed choirs even in ambi sexual monasteries. There are patches of odd intonation. The Ensemble has improved since 1990, but this is still worth hearing. CB

MEDIEVAL

Hildegard of Bingen 11,000 Virgins: Chants for the Feast of St. Ursula Anonymous 4 Harmonia Mundi HMDU 907200 72' 07"

This might be worth getting for the booklet, with its reproductions of paintings by Hildegard and others (and a photograph of Anon 4 before a stained glass rose window, which should satisfy even CB's criteria), texts and translations, and notes and commentaries by three of the singers. As for its musical content, it fulfills what the

critics lead us to expect – straight tone and impeccably rehearsed performances – but not much more. In fact the purity of the tone is marred by stridency in one of the voices, particularly in the higher notes, which I found increasingly irritating, though others might feel it added character to the sound. I would have preferred more human warmth to give life to Hildegard's marvellous words and melodies. The music is carefully researched and attributed to its various sources, but one feels that scholarship has just gone a bit too far: the occasional use of vocal drones and polyphonic embellishment is defensively justified, but more extensive usage of these devices would help to alleviate the listener's boredom. Anyway, they have missed the main point: four nuns would not have had infinite rehearsal time at their disposal. It's great as background music, if that's what you want, and it is good to hear new music by Hildegard; but I kept thinking wistfully of Emma Kirkby and her less-than-perfect but spirited choruses.

Selene Mills

Hildegard of Bingen Ordo virtutum Vox Animae dir Michael Fields & Evelyn Tubb Etcetera KTC 1203 68' 53"

This derives from a summer workshop at Dartington in 1993. The striking feature is the unison ensemble singing, which is most impressive. The soloists are more variable, and unfortunately I'm not too impressed with the leading role, *Anima*: I gather that she is more impressive in live performances, so perhaps one should wait for the forthcoming video. The other solo singers are fine, and include Evelyn Tubb, Vivian Ellis and our culinary correspondent (who also supplies an anonymous tenor low C). The instrumentation is discrete and the rhythmic interpretation works well. The performance has a dramatic momentum that is often missing in monodic music. It is hard to find a particular section on a track that is 24' 39" long. CB

Mirror of Light: Cantigas de Santa Maria III The Renaissance Players, Winsome Evans Walsingham WAL 8035-2 61' 24"

Another well-performed collection of this Australian group, striking an appropriate balance between liveliness and a sense of religious devotion, both so central to these pieces. The original text introductions are effectively spoken and the large church acoustic gives a mellow wash of sound. I would have liked to hear more of Mara Kiek's voice, though the higher voices are interestingly used in drones and organum-style lines. There is enough variety for the arrangements to be interesting without becoming bitty. The use of Arab instruments is well-justified; my only niggle is that Balkan tapan and specifically Turkish saz and baglama seem out of place alongside such otherwise fine scholarship. Alison Sabedoria

Red Iris Sinfonye 53' 11" Glossa GCD 920701

This contains 9 of the 15 Italian instrumental pieces in British Library Add. MS 29987. (surely anonymous rather than traditional). Familiar from innumerable recordings, they are more often interspersed with other music rather than the solo focus of attention. The performances are by Stevie Wishart on the medieval fiddle, with two tracks on the symphony; Jim Denley and Pedro Estevan add percussion in some items. The fiddle is more sombre than the wind instruments we sometimes hear; its use has documentary justification. But we found it difficult to summon up much enthusiasm for the disc as a whole ('we' includes my wife and my mother, who had no choice but listen to it as we drove round the foot of Mount Washington in the snow at the end of October). I'm not convinced by Wishart's claim: 'by focusing on a single genre, each piece informs the other'. While the disc is certainly worth hearing, a couple of tracks at a time was as much as I could take. There is also visual companion material accessible through a computer. I didn't find out how to use it properly, failing to get sound and vision simultaneously, and was disappointed that there was only one page of the MS; a friend did manage to make it work and was only moderately impressed. CB

Codex Chantilly: ballades et rondeaux de l'ars subtilior Ensemble Organum, Marcel Pérès 54' 11" (rec 1986) Harmonia Mundi Suite HMT 7901252 ££

This reissue is one of the best Ensemble Organum discs I have heard (perhaps because it is one of the more conventional). The fine group of singers (Gérard Lesne, Josep Benet, Josep Cabré and François Fauché) gets round the tortuous rhythms of this *fin de siècle* complexity with apparent ease and makes it really sound like music, while Pérès's clavycitherium is preferable in small doses as here than on a whole CD. Well worth acquiring. CB

16th CENTURY

Byrd Early Latin Church Music; Propers for Lady Mass in Advent (The Byrd Edition 1) The Cardinal's Musick, Andrew Carwood, David Skinner 69' 36" ASV Gaudeamus CD GAU 170

Reviewed in the Diary section last month.

Dowland Complete Lute Works vols. 1-5 Paul O'Dette Lute, Orpharion 333' 5 discs Harmonia Mundi HMX 2907 160-64 5 CDs for the price of 3 till end of 1997

Lynda Sayce has written with enthusiasm about each volume as it has appeared. There are recordings of Dowland by equally

fine lutenists; but this set is distinguished, apart from its completeness, by the player's uncanny command of his instrument, his deep understanding of the music, his wide experience of the music of the period (which enables him to treat the surviving notation with considerable freedom when appropriate) and his ability to project the music to the listener. If you don't have the set, get it while it is cheap; if you already have some volumes, still get the lot and give the spares to your friends. In this format, the notes are all in one booklet. The original introduction was by Robert Spencer; the set is dedicated to his memory. Vol. 5 may perhaps seem superfluous to all except real enthusiasts, since 'it is possible that none of the pieces were conceived by Dowland as lute solos in their present form'. Dowland's penumbra it may be, but it completes a set to buy and treasure. CB

Gabrieli Music for Brass, vol. 1 London Symphony Orchestra Brass, Eric Crees Naxos 8.553609 £ 52' 27"

'I doubt whether any of our readers will want to buy Gabrieli on modern brass. It's a bit like Dowland on the guitar: fine to include a piece or two in an all-period recital, but not a whole programme of it. Gabrieli's bottom-rich scoring is muddled with less-transparent trumpets playing the cornett parts and thicker trombones underneath.' When I type the headings of new CDs as they arrive I sometimes, before listening to them, anticipate a sentence or two of what I might write later. In this case, my draft was a gross overstatement. The players here do their best to overcome the problems of their modern instruments and anyone involved in playing Gabrieli with such forces will find inspiration from hearing what can be achieved. There is no serious comparison with the His Majesty's Hyperion disc of the 1597 set reviewed last month, which benefits from the occasional violin and some organ pieces (if not necessarily by Gabrieli) to vary the texture. The LSO disc mixes the 1597 and 1615 sets. I'm torn between admiration at what they achieve with regret that Naxos did not record these marvellous pieces with the proper instruments. CB

Mudarra Spanish songs & vihuela solos Catherine King, Jacob Heringman 69' 22" ASV Gaudemus CD GAU 162

The singing and playing are so pleasing that I could go on listening for hours. Mudarra is a familiar enough name, but only a few pieces are at all well-known from inclusion in more varied programmes. Almost half of his 1546 publication is here, with solos for vihuela and for four-string guitar as well as songs. But 32 pieces averaging just over two minutes each makes a lot of rather short-winded items. So for intent listening, a few at a time suffice; but it is a charmer. CB

Palestrina Missa Aeterna Christi munera; Missa L'homme armé a4 Pro Cantione Antiqua, Mark Brown 65' 30" (rec 1992) Carlton Classics 30366 00772 ££

Listening to this was not a pleasant experience. The CD begins with the hymn *Aeterna Christi munera*, which introduces some fine big voices, but sounds over-solemn and unblended. With the polyphony, the real problems begin: these highly experienced singers appear not to understand some of the basic principles of Renaissance music (to which PCA claims to be devoted): that line is all, that this music is not the place for individual voices to show off. The voices bulge on every note in a nauseous manner unworthy of the term 'baroque'. There is so much vibrato that congruences of voices make me squirm, and the 'unisons' at final cadences have an audible beat. The tuning is far from faultless, and in a few places the singers seem uncertain as to whether to obey the rules of facta or not, ending up somewhere between the two stools. In the plainchant sections one voice seems to be slightly out of touch with the rest: in a group of so few singers this seems unwarranted. My advice is for these singers to go back to Lieder and oratorio and leave this repertoire to the choirs who make it enjoyable. Selene Mills

Tallis The Complete Works, Vol. 2. Chapelle du Roi, Alistair Dixon 70' 32" Signum SIGCD002

We are fortunate indeed in the concurrent series which will give us the complete Byrd in a decade and the complete Tallis rather more quickly. This second disc includes the Latin *Mag & Nunc* (the pairing of these two items, separate in the Roman liturgy, is discussed in the excellent notes), the *Benedictus* and the *Te Deum for meanes* in English, the four-voice mass, several of the short, well-known English anthems and *Sancte Deus*. The last happens to be one of my favourite pieces, so I probably listened to it more critically. It is sensibly transposed down for male voices (thus avoiding the problem of the prominent soprano, who is still audible at times), but suffers from a weak bass line; whatever renaissance theory may be about the tenor being the most important part, the chords here need a firmer foundation. The short sections and fermata'd chords should make the work almost a dialogue between the singers and the acoustic, but that does not come over (not, at least, on any of our not particularly hi-fi systems), although the tempo would only work if it did. I have, however, enjoyed the disc as a whole, and anyone who loves Tallis need have no hesitation in buying it. CB

See also p. 27.

Felix Austriæ Domus 1527-1621: Music in the 16th century Habsburg Empires Duodena Cantitans, Capella Rudolphina, Peter Danek Supraphon SU 3326-2 231 66' 36" Music by Gallus/Handl (incl. *Missa super Adesto dolori meo*), Clemens non Papa, Flecha (uncle & nephew), Gastoldi, Lerchenfels, Gombert, Lobo, Melli, Orolario, Willaert & anon.

It is always risky to name a choir after the number of singers: here they might better be called The Sixteen. The sound they make is fine in a non-English way (nothing wrong in that, of course), but they are a bit

relentless, especially in the mass. I wonder whether they are trying not to sound too old-fashioned without realising that flexibility has now returned. Nevertheless there is interesting music worth hearing, with only Handl's *Resonet in laudibus* and Lobo's *Versa est in luctum* likely to be familiar, apart from the concluding contrafacted Gastoldi. CB

Ther is no Rose: Renaissance music for the Christmas season Virelai 64' 17" Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45286 2 0

It is stretching 'renaissance' to include a plainsong hymn, Hildegard of Bingen, the title carol and Willie's tambourin. Use of the word may make some people miss a highly recommended, low-volume contrast to the normal Christmas fare. I enjoyed Catherine King and Jacob Heringman's Mudarra recording (see above); here they are joined by William Lyons, Susanna Pell and Sarah Cunningham on a variety of quiet instruments. A lack of variety is felt particularly because so many of the items would normally be performed with more voices; shouldn't these cut-down settings sell at half the price of the more lavish Taverner Christmas discs? But it is nice to hear *Swete was the song* in the version with embellished melody, lyra accompaniment and period pronunciation. This unacknowledged collection will certainly give a pleasing variety to your Christmas listening. CB

Venus-ghejancksel: chansons & madrigals from the low countries Peter de Groot, Otto Bouknegt, Hans Wijers, Donald Bentvelsen ATBarB, Toyohiko Satoh lute 45' 38" Etcetera KTC 1198

This is an attractive mixture of familiar and unfamiliar pieces by 'Flemish' composers, some in the vernacular, a few in Italian and French, beautifully sung by a Dutch quartet. The items by Josquin and Lassus are the obvious ones, with *Matona* sung rather too fussy for my taste. I don't think it was just because I don't understand the language that I found I liked the Dutch items best. CB

17th CENTURY

Biber Sonaten über die Mysterien des Rosenkranzes Gunar Letzbor vln, Lorenz Duftschmid bv, Wolfgang Zerer org, Wolfgang Glüxam hpscd, Axel Wolf lute 119' 40" 2 discs Arcana A901

This has caused me more difficulty than any other CD I have reviewed: initially I was quite horrified by the frankly pretentious notes (the background commentary was fine, but the accompanying 'The way I play Biber...' article was very off-putting) and some of the stranger consequences of the violinist's professed intention of giving his impressions of the sonatas. But ultimately I came to thoroughly enjoy an extremely virtuosic, if egocentric (in the positive sense of that word) account of 12 remarkable pieces. There are multi-stopping gambas, pizzicato string accompaniments, a 16-foot bass, repeated phrases with phased continuo entries (solo bass, then with gamba added,

and finally full-powered organ). The excellent playing, though, is what finally swayed my decision: almost meticulously in tune for the duration (amazing octave passages!), deft bow-work and, like last month's Biber, a commitment to decorated repeats – all in all (even if some of the quirkier tricks still have me rushing for the latest book on 17th-century continuo playing) a brilliant performance and one which no Biber fan should be without. BC

Brossard *Oeuvres chorales pour Bossuet, Évêque de Meaux* Les Pages et le Chantres de la Chapelle, Le Mercure Galant, Olivier Schneebeli 58' 50"

Auvidis Astrée E 8619

Missa V toni, Retribue servo tuo, Stabat mater

Seldom can the murkier corners of the French Baroque have been more brilliantly illuminated. Recently there have been discs of *grands motets* by Brossard and Mondonville; now comes this recording of choral works with continuo and (see p. 22) a further selection of Mondonville that complements rather than competes with Christie's October release. The most intriguing feature of this recital is the use of children's voices for the *deßus* parts. Although they sing with a rich tone, they do not consistently achieve the standards of blend and intonation we might expect from their best English counterparts. However, their singing is never dull, something that cannot be said of the adults who take the lower parts. The most successful performance is of the Christmas Mass, which, like Charpentier's, uses French *noël* melodies in an appropriately cheerful setting of the liturgical text which includes a lively motet for the elevation and the customary *Domine salvum fac Regem* prayer for the King. In the penitential music of *Stabat Mater* and *Retribue*, on the other hand, the singers sometimes struggle to sustain the phrases, though there are some good moments and the music itself is excellent. The booklet essay demonstrates an original approach to this genre, but a black mark goes to Auvidis for the lack of index points within the long motets. David Hansell

Cavalli *Messa Concertata* Seicento, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman 74' 08" Hyperion CDA66970
Also includes *O bone Jesu a2; Canzonas a3, 4, 6, 8*

This is a spirited and authentic-sounding performance by the newly-formed vocal group, Seicento (not to be confused with BC's Scottish group of the same name), and the very experienced Parley of Instruments. The singers (just one to a part) have perhaps not quite bedded down yet as an ensemble and there is some forcing of the tone in tutti passages with all the instruments. That said, there is also some splendid solo singing, especially in two small-scale concerto motets, and very poised and stylistic playing by the band. Tempi are just right and Peter Holman makes good use of the fuller and brighter sound of the continuo organ, an Italian copy by Goetze and Gwynn, which is just right for this music. An excellent debut recording and more is promised. Noel O'Regan
The editions are by King's Music

Delalande *Petits motets* Les Arts Florissants, William Christie 67' 40" rec 1990-92
Harmonia Mundi Suite HMT 7901416 ££
Heureux qui de la sagesse (Cantique IV), Miserator et misericors, Miserere, Vanum est vobis; Lemaire Assumpta est Maria; Morin Regina coeli

Lovers of the French *récit* who missed this disc first time round (1992) should not hesitate to take advantage of the reissue. Though not all of the music is of the highest class, it is never less than interesting and much of the singing, supported by tasteful and inventive continuo, is truly delectable. A pat on the back for HM too: despite the lower price, full texts and translations appear in the booklet. David Hansell

Legrenzi *Sonate e Motetti* Musica Antiqua Praha, Pavel Klikar 58' 48"
Supraphon SU 3185-2 931

As a self-confessed fan of Legrenzi I am absolutely delighted that, at long last, a record company has seen the merit in his music. And he could not ask for better advocates than Musica Antiqua Praha: the disc combines the three stunning sonatas for four violins and continuo and two further ensemble sonatas with four motets for solo voice with a pair of violins (of which I would mention *O dilectissime Jesu**, a ravishingly beautiful piece – especially the delightful 'O amor' aria at the centre), a duet and a trio. If you've never heard this music, buy this disc – only then will you know what you've been missing! BC

*BC's edition of that and several other items on this CD are published by King's Music.

Marais *Suite d'un Goût étranger (Pièces de violes IV, 1717)* Markku Luolajan-Mikkola gamba, Continuo Group of Battalia 71' 23" Alba ABCD 107

A remarkably interesting recording, definitely for viol-players, but also for non-fanatics. Luolajan-Mikkola is a very fine player with a commanding technique. The clarity of his left-hand fingering is brilliant, and he plays very expressively and beautifully in lyrical and languishing movements. There is a problem of balance: the continuo group of harpsichord, lute/guitar and bass viol sometimes threatens to overwhelm the solo viol (though on good equipment this may be less of a problem) and some of the subtlety Marais demands of his performers is lost. For example, in the brilliant playing of *Fête Champêtre*, the dynamics are submerged, and in *Le Tourbillon*, where all the interest is in the wild rapid semiquavers of the solo part, the accompaniment, particularly the harpsichord, is too much to the fore. But this is a minor point in the face of all the excitement. Bravura, virtuosic playing dominates, which is as much the fault of the suite itself as anything, but the moments of tenderness are very moving – notably *La Reveuse* and the Muzette section of *Fête Champêtre*. Robert Oliver

Monteverdi *Madrigali fatta spirituale* Ex Cathedra, Jeffrey Skidmore 67' 10"
ASV Gaudeamus CD GAU 174

I wonder whether the thinking behind this was: we can't record madrigals with choirs these days, but perhaps it's OK for the sacred versions. If so, it doesn't work: substituting holy Latin words doesn't turn them into motets. They are sung as well as can be expected, but tempi often are slow and the flexibility feels imposed rather than arising from the feeling of the performers. The pieces also sound too much like each other, far more so than in solo-voice performances of the original texts. The texts are often brilliant parodies of the original, and I am sure that these transformations are enjoyable for small choirs to sing; I hope that the transcriptions will be published. It is excellent that we have a chance to hear these versions, which remind us that not all who enjoyed his music had sex as their main interest. The grammar of the title is odd because it contracts the original *e Musica tolta da i Madrigali di Claudio Monteverdi... e fatta spirituale*. Despite some doubts, the disc is certainly worth hearing. CB

Nivers *Motets & Hymnes de l'Église* Les Deno:iselles de Saint-Cyr, Emmanuel Mandrin 69' 36"

Auvidis Astrée E 8621

Recorded at Guimiliau with the Thomas Dallam organ (1675-80)

There are many questions about the Brittany Dallam organs, including whether they are closer to the English or the French sound world of the early/mid seventeenth century. I have generally felt them to be more at home with the French repertoire, but that of 1630s Titelouze rather than 1690s Couperin. Although the stop lists are classical French, they do not have the wide scale flue ranks and fiery reeds of the later Parisian school. The organ versets on this CD help to reinforce that view. Nivers was one of the first of the French 'classical' school of organ composers that culminated in Couperin and de Grigny. He was organist at Saint Sulpice, the Sun King's Chapelle Royale at Versailles and the Maison Royale Saint Louis de Saint Cyr (a convent school for young ladies of noble birth) and published his *Livre d'Orgue* in 1665, 1667 and 1675. The programme on this CD is based around two *Saluts du Saint Sacrement*, each including three motets. The organ is used alternatim in the 4 hymns and the prose *Lauda Sion salvatorem*. The solo playing is sound, if a bit workaday – perhaps a bit more brandy was called for to bring out the sensitivity and emotional content of Nivers' masterly miniatures – but the organ continuo is effective in the motets. The singing of the eight young ladies of Saint Cyr is delightful (although I am no expert on seventeenth century French pronunciation, plainchant, singing style or, I suppose, young ladies). Each take turns in solo roles in the motets, and they form a appropriate plainsong choir for the hymns. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Purcell *Fantazias* Rose Consort of Viols Naxos 8.553957 £ 53' 06

This recording is very good value. The Rose Consort give a well-considered, expressively played performance of all the Fantazias and

In Nomines. The opus itself is of such stature that every student of music, not just viol players, should be familiar with these extraordinary pieces. I cannot accept the theory that Purcell never expected to hear them well-played – they have such intensity and sonority, and the players respond here to the demands of the music with a passionate and daring performance. There are a few unevenesses where caution is thrown to the winds, but it all adds to the conviction and power of the performance of this incomparably beautiful music. *Robert Oliver*

Purcell Suites and Transcriptions for Harpsichord Terence R. Charlston 63' 49" Naxos 8.553982 £ Z 660-3, 665-9, T628/2, T680, T682, T684, T692

This recording, made before the discovery in 1994 of the Purcell-Draghi manuscript, presents Purcell's eight suites along with some contemporary arrangements of movements (mostly overtures) from his theatre music. Terence Charlston's playing is honest and unpretentious but, most noticeably in the suites, doesn't really capture the richness and *gusto* of Purcell's keyboard style. This could, I think, stem from the harpsichord, a 1993 Bruce Kennedy instrument, which sounds to me like a softly-voiced Flemish or even a C17th French copy – not what I would choose for this repertoire. The problem is compounded by an unbelievably low output level from the CD, which does nothing to help convey a sense of acoustic 'space' – so essential for harpsichord recordings. Still, this is a good budget buy. *Robin Bigwood*

Schütz, Gabrieli A Christmas Collection Choir & Orchestra of The Academy of Ancient Music, Paul Goodwin 67' 13" **Harmonia Mundi HMU 907202**
Gabrieli *Canzon X & XI* (1615); Schütz SWV 38, 308, 315, 323, 327, 333, 382, 384-5, 395, 468; *Uspere Sonata a8*; *Weckmann Sonata a4*

No, this isn't an anachronistic performance by a baroque string orchestra: about the only AAM features are its two new associate conductors (Andrew Manze is present as violinist) and the management. The booklet informs us that the disc was recorded at St. John's Smith Square, and some background traffic makes that plausible; it also says 'recorded and produced in the USA'. This is a fine Christmas anthology, all the better for containing music that most seasonal discs have ignored. There are a couple of big pieces (the Latin Magnificat and Psalm 150) and some enticing smaller works. The voice that first caught my attention was Tessa Bonner in *Hodie Christus natus est* and there is a fine solo *O Jesu nomen dulce* from Andrew King. But the whole ensemble impresses; my recommendation for this Christmas. *CB*

De l'Orgue français en Cotentin: Christophe Simon à l'orgue de Notre-Dame de Carentan Pavane ADW 7262 75'50"

The organ of Notre-Dame de Carentan was built in 1805 by Louis Lair, who learned his trade from Henri Parisot. He added 13 stops to a 17-stop organ from the early 18th

century which had been transferred to the church to replace an instrument destroyed during the Black Terror. It was restored by Boisseau and Catiaux of Béthines and has 37 stops. It is one of the last organs in the French High Baroque tradition both in mechanism and timbral profile.

Christophe Simon, born in Carentan and currently organist at Mantesla-Jolie, has chosen for his recital the well known setting of *Veni creator* by de Grigny, five pieces from Marchand's *Premier Livre d'Orgue* and pieces by two lesser known but significant composers, Jacques Boyvin and Jean Adam Guilain. Boyvin was active above all on the Cliquot organ in the cathedral of Rouen from 1688 to which the Carentan organ in its present state bears a certain resemblance. Of the thirteen pieces selected from suites in tones 1-4 the various *Récits* and *Dessus* are especially well served by Lair's handicraft though the proud swagger of the *Fugue chromatique* will lodge in the memory of all who hear it. This is 'progressive' music in the terms of the closing 17th century extending the grandeur and pathos of Lully to the heart of the organ repertory. J.A. Guilain, a Marchand protégé, moved to Paris in 1702. His severe contrapuntal style, which generates harmonic clashes in part through an imaginative use of elided cadences, is here represented by a suite in the third tone to which two pieces in the fourth tone have been added. This disc would be worth having for the splendour of the organ alone, even if the performer and programme were not fully worthy of it. *Tristram Pugin*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Adventskantaten (36, 61, 62) Sibylla Rubens, Sarah Connolly, Christoph Prégardien, Peter Kooy SATB, Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe 62' 49" **Harmonia Mundi HMC 901605**

Philippe Herreweghe has developed a wonderful knack of performing Bach's cantatas effectively and expressively. This latest seasonal selection, which includes all three of the surviving pieces Bach composed for the first Sunday in Advent, is among his best. First, he has assembled an admirable mixed team of soloists, each with a very pleasing sound and a real understanding of the required style. Second, he is a remarkably effective trainer of singers and players across a very wide range of styles. There is romantic warmth in his Bach, just as there are classical balances and clear linear counterpoints in his Schumann. Somehow, his experiences are always effective directed in his next new project.

Cantata 36 is the least-well known here; there is wonderful oboe and string-playing as well as excellent singing throughout this interesting piece, which was composed to honour an academic lecturer and only lately turned into a recitative-less chorale cantata in 1731 – the supposed second chorale-cantata cycle. The other two cantatas both open with the first verse of the very same Advent chorale, *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland*, and each is really well managed here, too, with sensible tempi. As series seem to be

following series on disc, Herreweghe's slightly more cautious approach is making gentle progress, and the thoughtful expert notes by Dr Schulze of the Leipzig Bach-Archiv are an asset. Richly rewarding and always fresh – as those first performances, with all their faults, must, surely have been.

Stephen Daw

Bach Christmas Cantatas Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 3 CDs Teldec 0630 173662 ££

This is a midprice repackaging from the classic complete recordings

Bach Magnificat: A Bach Christmas Catherine Bott, Elizabeth Scholl, Christopher Robson, Paul Agnew, Andrew King, Michael George SSATTB, New London Consort, Philip Pickett L'Oiseau-Lyre 452 920-2 63' 40" BWV63, 238 & 243a

This disc brings together the three main choral (an appropriate word in this case) works that the Leipzig congregations would have heard on Christmas Day 1723, Bach's first as Cantor. Not all were newly written: the cantata was nearly ten years old, but its rich scoring and exuberant opening more than justified its revival. For this performance ripieno voices (as provided for by the surviving parts) are used but the 'orchestra' has only single strings, which does create some problems of balance in the fully-scored sections of both cantata and Magnificat, where the counterpoint is so complex. The cantata is followed by a Sanctus (not the Sanctus) which shows that not even JSB hit the bullseye every time, and then we have the earlier version of the Magnificat, complete with the Christmas interpolations. In both this and the cantata I found the discrepancy between the lean instrumental sound and the rather thick choral tone (especially the altos) disconcerting at first, and even after several listenings am not wholly convinced that they combine well. This isn't a problem in the arias, of course, where the small forces bring a welcome intimacy to the music-making. This, plus a few unusual performance decisions make this a disc well worth hearing, though it won't be at the top of my seasonal playlist.

David Hansell

Bach Weihnachts-Oratorium Dorothea Röschmann, Andreas Scholl, Werber Güra, Klaus Häger SATB, RIAS Kammerchor, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs 152' 23" **Harmonia Mundi HMC 901630.31** 2 discs

A performance of the *Christmas Oratorio* on only two discs is a tempting prospect in any case, and this one has many fine points. However, I found the actual management of the sound puzzling, lacking in musical consistency and so rather distracting. The larger movements sound false to me; the strings and singers are agreeable and close, but the woodwind are often quite remote and the brass somewhere in between, so that the trumpets sound quite aggressive, the horns somewhat remote and the massed pipes for the shepherd Sinfonia in G – so wisely highlighted in Hans Joachim

Schulze's scholarly notes – curiously obtuse and distracting. There are compensations. Tempi are wise, the singing is all good, with the altist Andreas Scholl in especially good form where his line is high enough. There is a pleasing sense of sincerity and devotion to compensate for that curious balancing, and much that I haven't space to mention is very good.

Stephen Daw

Bach Organ Works Vol. 6 Ton Koopman (Christian Müller Organ, 173/4, Waalse Kerk, Amsterdam) 62' 07" Teldec Das Alte Werk 0630-13155-2 Praeludia etc BWV533, 535, 537, 546, 549, 550, 568, 569, 575, 589

This is not a CD for the faint hearted. I admire Koopman's playing and the interpretive insights that he has offered in this Bach series. His style is personal – he plays from the heart and is prepared to take risks in order to portray the emotional intensity of the music. As his article in the sleeve says: 'Be bold, try it!'. Organists need this encouragement to move away from the mechanical and soulless nature of so many performances. Too often organists hide behind the technical complexity of the instrument and its music – indeed, they often literally hide away somewhere in the organ itself, as if afraid of showing anything of themselves or their personality, lending credence to the organ joke of 'the organ will now play'. So, for that I will forgive Ton Koopman anything – even some of the excesses on this CD. The main quibble is with the unrelenting nature of sound and touch. A bit more light and shade (emotional and aural) would encourage listeners to stay the course – I felt the need to lie down for a bit to recover from the massive opening c minor *Praeludium*. And rather less of the emphatic harpsichord touch and attack would introduce some much-needed subtlety. But that said, all organists should listen to Koopman – and non-organists will relish such an exciting and musical player. The programme is of mostly fairly early virtuosic *praeludia* and displays the ferocious genius of Bach as the young improviser. The organ is the magnificent Christian Müller instrument in Amsterdam's modestly sized Waalse Kerk. Müller was one of the most important of the Arp Schnitger inspired German builders that produced so many beautiful instruments in Holland.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Four Orchestral Suites Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs Harmonia Mundia HMC 901578 (nos 1 & 3) 901579 (nos 2 & 4)

Issued last year as a pair, these two discs are now available separately. Stephen Daw's review from *EMR* 21 is quoted in Harmonia Mundi's publicity: 'A good buy – especially if you thought you knew this music well.'

Bach Les Concertos pour orgue et orchestre André Isoir, Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester 62' 19" Calliope CAL 6720 Contents: BWV 29/1, 1052a, 1053a, 1059a; in a box with a complete Calliope catalogue.

These are reconstructions, but ones with pretty positive precedents in the form of preserved cantata movements which come from Bach's pen, including many minor differences in the keyboard writing – more than in the source accompaniments – to reveal that there are versions of what are collectively preserved as solo harpsichord concertos which certainly appear to have been intended for performance with an organist as soloist.

In this role, Isoir plays with glair and rhythmic life, although he does really push his tempi hard, sometimes appearing to hurry his orchestra unduly. I have also felt this to be the main risk of his solo organ playing of J. S. Bach. The orchestra sounds as if it includes doubling, as well as extra oboe lines, and these, together with the quite strong registrations used at the organ, lead to a stronger sense of equality between organ and orchestra than is usual in modern accounts of a Bach concerto. This leads me to some interesting and quite new, matters for profitable contemplation. Stephen Daw

Bach 6 Suites for Solo Cello Peter Bruns Opus 111 OPS 30 176/177 125' 56 2 discs

This is one of the best CD recordings of the year – possibly of the decade. The cover highlights the name of the maker – a distinguished Venetian – and, indeed, the tone is somewhat unusual, being slightly dry in timbre when compared to other period instruments played by Bylsma, Wispelwey, Ter Linden and others. But it is rather the player and the interpretations that should have been richly highlighted; here we encounter the closest we have witnessed in recent 'authentic' playing to a new Casals. The music is not simply played, it is re-lived. Perhaps the most obvious brilliant variety is to be seen in the six courantes, although no two movements here really sound very similar to one another at all. Those courantes are all played here rather faster than usual, but with such sensible rhetoric, such positive use of space and contrasted phrasing! The same applies in general to all of the dances, and even to the preludes. There are short fragments where intonation lapses very briefly, but this is true with all players of this music.

It is my opinion that J. S. Bach did not repeat himself as a composer in any genre; the challenge to continue inventively was for him as real as it is for composers today. But his unique problem was to do so whilst maintaining his own critical standards. Only this explains the music reasonably. Only performances that show awareness of it deserve applause. This is one of the special ones – and, for me, so full of lessons to savour.

Stephen Daw

Daquin & Balbastre Noëls à l'orgue d'Uzès: Christmas Organ Music Marie-Claire Alain Erato 0630-17823-2 62' 56"

Erato are not superstitious: here are 13 mostly-jolly pieces delightfully played on the organ of the Cathédrale Saint Théodorit in Uzès (a small town west of Avignon which was the seat of a bishop until the Revolution). Both organ and cathedral date

from the 17th century with substantial later alteration. The booklet gives specification and registrations. I usually find that the simplicity of *noël* melodies clashes with performance on large-scale instruments, yet the use of double echoes demands them. Here, perhaps because they are played so stylishly, there is no problem; this is a highly enjoyable disc.

CB

Handel Alexander Balus Lynne Dawson Cleopatra, Michael George Ptolomee, Catherine Denley Alexander Balus, Charles Daniels Jonathan, Claron McFadden Aspasia, Choir of New College Oxford, Choir of the King's Consort, The King's Consort, Robert King Hyperion CDA67241/2 155' 52" 2 discs

Robert King's most recent recordings of Handel oratorios have valuably brought previously unrecorded works to light in excellent performances. *Alexander Balus* continues the series – and perhaps concludes it, as all Handel's English oratorios are now available on CD (though not all in ideal performances or versions). Its predominantly homely story of a love-match blighted by political intrigue brings it close to an English opera seria. Though the dramatic structure is something of a shambles, the music is constantly delightful, with several memorable tunes for the pagan 'Asiatics'. King's soft-grained style suits the piece well, and he does not miss a sense of true tragedy in the final numbers. In the latter Lynne Dawson is also most impressive, but her whitish tone and a disinterested manner fail at first to convey Cleopatra's wayward charm. Denley is superb as Alexander, warm or imperious as required, and the chorus, with Edward Higginbottom's New College Choir as their backbone, assume their double role as pagans or Jews with lively assurance.

Unfortunately what might have been an exemplary production is marred by a few careless editorial errors. King claims that his 'new performing edition ... follows Handel's [original] 1748 version' with the addition of the two numbers from *Alceste* which Handel included in his 1754 revival. It doesn't, quite. Adding a D major fanfare for the unwritten 'Flourish of Trumpets' in Part I is a good idea, or would have been if it had ended in the tonic: a half-close on the dominant is the worst possible preparation for a recitative beginning in B flat. For the written text King seems to have looked no further than Chrysander. It may not matter that Aspasia's recitative 'Check not the pleasing accents of thy tongue' should be a tone higher, but the misplacing and shortening of Alexander's 'Mighty love now calls to arm' (a splendid reworking of the Angel's first aria in *La Resurrezione*) is most unhappy. In 1748 it followed the recitative for 'A sycophant courtier' and Alexander in Part II, after the words '... gratitude and love', and was sung with mid-section and da capo. Jonathan then sang a short recitative ('There is no greatness in mortality') and the aria 'Hateful man'. Chrysander printed 'Mighty love' in Part I, where Handel moved it in 1754, and ran the two recitatives together without indicating the original position of the aria. King keeps Chrysander's

composite recitative, and then has the first section only of 'Mighty love' (D major) followed immediately by 'Hateful man' (E^b major). The shortening of Alexander's aria may be pragmatic, as inclusion of the full version would require a third CD; but surely the right course would have been to ignore the Alceste items and present the complete 1748 text on 2 CDs. Perhaps Hyperion can at least put 'Mighty love' in its correct place in a future re-issue: it would be well worth doing so to enhance what is generally a most welcome addition to the Handelian recorded repertory.

Anthony Hicks

Handel Organ Concertos Paul Nicholson, The Brandenburg Consort, Roy Goodman Hyperion CDA67291/2 153'58" 2 discs Includes op. 4 & op. 7.

Handel Organ Concertos op. 7 Bob van Asperen, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment 153'42", 2 discs

Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45236 2 5

Also includes Nos 13-16 (HWV 295-6, 304 & 305a)

There are problems in deciding what to play in op. 7 and the other four concertos on the Virgin disc, since there are various sections left to the improvisatory skill of the player. Bob van Asperen improvises short links but complete movements are adapted from other pieces by Handel; their sources are fully listed in the running order and there is an informative note by Anthony Hicks (as with the cantata disc reviewed below, his involvement is why I am writing this and not he). The playing is immaculately neat and precise, but I eventually found the exaggeration of dotted patterns irritating in cumulation. Something more fundamental also seemed to be missing. Luckily, the Hyperion set arrived just in time to show what. That manages to preserve something of the grandeur that one used to associate with Handel in pre-authentic days without being in any way out of style. It also has the advantage of the organ at St Lawrence, Whitchurch with strong Handelian connections, though from before he had invented the organ concerto. It was then smaller than the present fine restoration. Bob van Asperen has to be content with what is described as a four-stop continuo organ by Mander – there's nothing wrong with it in itself, but it lacks the brilliance of the older instrument. Paul Nicholson is also somewhat bolder: the arpeggiated chord that begins op. 7/1, for instance, seemed odd at first, but grew on me. If you have a set of op. 4 with which you are satisfied, the Virgin set is a good way of getting performances whose merits I do not wish to undervalue of op. 7 and the other four concertos; but if you want exciting performances of op. 4 & 7 (including the Alleluia at the end of op. 4/4, sung by Clare College Choir, and with Frances Kelly harping in op. 4/6), have no hesitation in buying the Hyperion.

CB

Handel Italian Secular Cantatas Ann Murray, The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, Harry Christophers 67'27"

Collins 15032

Armida Abbandonata HWV 105, Clori mia bella Clori HWV 92, Delirio amoroso HWV 99

Several of us have heard this and agree that voice and orchestra don't match; Ann Murray and the English Chamber Orchestra would be OK, as would Emma Kirkby and the SHI (if that's how they abbreviate themselves). It is not that the singing is unstylish in itself; in its own way it is very impressive, with a dramatic flair that early-music voices so often lack. Ann Murray probably knows as much as anyone about how to express Handel's vocal lines, and she can produce affecting embellishment (e.g. in *Ah crudele*). I'm sure that many Handel aficionados will enjoy this immensely, but fear that our more fastidious readers will associate the sound with the modern opera house and will find it difficult to link it in their imaginations with the Pamphili and Ruspoli palaces. CB The performance material prepared by Christopher Brown is available from King's Music.

Mondonville Grands motets Chantres de la Chapelle, Ensemble Baroque de Limoges, Christophe Coin 60'09"

Auvidis Astrée E 8614

Cœli enarrant, Jubilate Deo, Venite exultemus

Three inspiring texts here, and neither Mondonville nor his interpreters fail them. It is the variety of the music that impresses as much as anything – similar words do not necessarily provoke similar music, and the performers are alive to all the nuances and more than equal to all the technical demands with which they are confronted. This is particularly true of the *haut-contre* soloist who, almost inevitably in this repertoire, carries a burden, and the violins, who are as heavily involved in the depiction of joy, mountains, sea etc. as any of the singers. The choir sings with discipline and enthusiasm and the forces are well integrated to produce highly satisfying overall results. If you can only afford one Mondonville disc this Christmas, this is it. David Hansell

J.-F. Rebel 'Tombeau': Sämtliche Triosonaten Ensemble Rebel, Jörg-Michel Schwarz 61'39" Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 05472 77382 2

I mentioned this outstanding group in my review of the Boston Early Music Festival in *EMR* 32. This splendid CD has none of the slightly rough edges I alluded to then and has all of the excitement of their live performances: stunning roulades, immaculately timed ornaments, beautiful phrasing. Rebel's trios are a curious mixture of the French and the Italian: the opening of *La Flore* features some of the harmonic daring for which the composer is probably best known, while *La Pallas* includes some wonderful martial effects. *The Tombeau de Lully* is a rich tapestry of ideas, some of it sounding like a viol fantasy. I have no hesitation in recommending this to anyone. BC

Telemann The Original Recorder Sonatas

Robert Ehrlich rec, Richard Egarr hpscd, Mark Levy vdg 64'07" TWV41: C2, C4, c2,d2, F2, f1, a4, B3 Glossa GLO 5161

It is refreshing to feel that at last the British have recorder players of whom they can

genuinely be proud. Robert Ehrlich has put together a superb collection of all the standard solo sonata repertoire by Telemann from *Der getreue Music-Meister* and *Essercizii Musici*. There are also two pieces from the lesser-known *Neue Sonatinen* from the 1730s, which survive without the original *basso continuo* part and here Richard Egarr obliges by reconstructing his own version – a task made less easy by virtue of Telemann's somewhat forward-looking approach. Ehrlich's recorder playing is highly expressive, sensitive and involved, whilst the fast movements capture a youth and verve ideally suited to this repertoire. Egarr's continuo playing is splendidly creative and Levy's viola da gamba is likewise no disappointment, as the Canonic Sonata in A major (TWV 41:B3) reveals. Thoroughly enjoyable.

Marie Ritter

Vinci & Leo L'opera buffa napoletana Roberta Invernizzi, Daniela del Monaco, Giuseppe de Vittorio, Rosario Totaro, Giuseppe Naviglio SATTB, Cappella de' Turchini, Antonio Florio Opus 111 OPS 30-184 78'13"

Arias by Leo & Vinci; Pergolesi *Scherzo al frati Cappuccini di Pozzuoli*; Auletta *Hpscd concerto in C*, Mele *Sonata XV* for rec. & str.

If you have questions about the character and quality of Neapolitan music in the early 18th century, this well-researched and well-planned programme will almost certainly answer them. The vocal numbers include ensembles and a recitative that could have escaped from an early version of *Carmen* as well as arias; there are also two substantial and interesting concertos for harpsichord and for recorder (the latter from the Scarlatti/Mancini MS mentioned in *EMR* 31 p. 3). Occasionally the singers' desire for characterisation results in some brief moments of coarse tone or wayward intonation, but my notes are full of words like lively, spirited, stylish and committed, a fair summary of the performances. A pat on the back too for Opus 111: the disc is full. David Hansell

Vivaldi The Four Seasons, Il Grosso Mogul, The Cuckow Elizabeth Wallfisch, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Paul Dyer 61'01" ABC Classics 456 364-2

Everyone has their favourite version of the Four Seasons: I remember, when I worked at Covent Garden Records, having to play a whole range of performances whenever anyone asked for the set and how diverse were the reactions to the various interpretations. Elizabeth Wallfisch is, of course, an outstanding fiddler, so there is no problem in recommending her playing – it's vibrant, rich in embellishment and does not take too many liberties with tempo (as some period instrument versions do). The small band also play well, though just occasionally I found the harpsichord a little distracting (slowly arpeggiated chords in slow movements in particular, though that's perhaps just one of my bug-bears). The other two concertos bound along joyfully, the cadenzas of *Il Grosso Mogul* bearing particular witness to the soloist's virtuosity.

BC

Vivaldi *Flute concertos* Janet See, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan 60' 03" (rec 1987)

Harmonia Mundi *Suite HMT 7905193* ££ RV 427-9, 436, 438, 440, 533

This is a re-release of the 1993 Harmonia Mundi disc, which had limited shelf life as part of a hard-back, oversized, CD catalogue. The programme notes have been padded out and the artists graced with their own biographies, but the content, recorded back in 1987, is identical. The tuning and ensemble are consistently excellent, and Janet See is a very able flautist, well-matched by Stephen Schultz in the attractive double concerto RV 533. The diet here is standard Vivaldi, including the famous *Il Gardellino* concerto RV 428. The playing is straightforward, no-nonsense, no frills eighties-style, but nevertheless solid and musically shaped. Don't expect a rollercoaster ride a la Europa Galante – just pure Vivaldi. *Marie Ritter*

Weiss *Sonatas for Lute*, Vol. 1 Robert Barto Naxos 8.553773 £ 71' 51"

Robert Barto won the Bruges competition a few years ago, setting the lute world abuzz with rumours of a new virtuoso. There have been very few opportunities to hear him live, so the rumours have of course grown. Producing a disc that lives up to such expectations is hard indeed, but this one will not disappoint. There have been many fine Weiss discs of late, but this stands head and shoulders above the competition. Barto's wonderfully eloquent playing is clear, precise and effortless; the disc is beautifully recorded, and has good notes, and is generously filled. It leaves one hungry for more, and I hope this will be the first of many volumes. It would be unmissable at full price; at under a fiver it's a sin to leave it in the shop. *Lynda Sayce*

Anne Froidebise à l'orgue Jean Baptiste Le Picard (1747) de l'ancienne cathédrale St. Lambert de Liège 55' 55"

Koch Schwann 3-1717-2

Music by Thomas Babou, Matthias van der Geyn, Lafosse, Hubert Renotte & anon.

Anne Froidebise plays the Picard organ (1747), built for St Lambert in Liège and later removed to the church at Elsaute, enlists the aid of La Schola Willibradiana de Luxembourg to present an anonymous Magnificat and Te Deum in the French style together with an *O salutaris* of Babou. Any reader who thinks this is a philological image of a liturgical practice abandoned long before Vatican 2 should stop by the church of St. Nicholas des Chardonnettes in Paris for twelve o'clock mass on a Sunday. Not only is the original time scale of the settings observed by organ and choir spread out naturally in the same acoustic instead of being recorded each by differently positioned equipment and then spliced together.

The Le Picard organ was subjected to a thorough going restoration which makes it incompatible with the music of the Fleming Matthias van den Gheyn, a younger contemporary of C.P.E. Bach active in Louvain. His three fugues, two preludes and *Coucou*

pour carillon are more conservative than 'transitional' except perhaps in their unruffled clarity. The two fugues and a *Cornet* by L. F. are attributed, on account of their French characteristics, to a certain La Fosse. Hubert Renotte (1694-1745), from Liège, shows a knowledge of Italian music in his *Andante* and *Presto* while the *Marche des chasseurs en fanfare* is an echo of the grand siècle by a composer named for their patron saint of hunters in northern lands. *Tristram Pugin*

Les Menus Plaisirs de Versailles: A Musical Celebration at Versailles 66' 41" Avidis Astrée E 8628 ££

This is a wide-ranging disc celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles, which has become a valuable centre of research. (If its editions have not featured at the front end of *EMR*, that is because we have never managed to get any review copies out of it.) This anthology of existing items in the Avidis catalogue is wide-ranging and offers a fine conspectus of music from the period from Louis to François Couperin. As a promotional hand-out, it is extremely attractive, though I doubt whether I would buy it unless it were really cheap. For the fruits of the new deal, see the reviews of church music by Brossard, Mondonville and Nivers. *CB*

Le Vertigo: Pièces de Clavecin by Royer & Rameau Annamari Pöhlö hpsc'd 68' 28" Alba ABCD 113

I'm afraid I didn't take to this one very much. Annamari Pöhlö's approach is lavish and indulgent, but I feel that real musical insight is sacrificed in an effort to overplay stylistic effects. Everything is rather 'full on' and over-rich. Whilst the Royer can take it (just about), the Rameau (*Nouvelles Suites* 1728) suffers because the sense of line is weighed down by a good deal of superfluous and noisy decoration. Equally, at times there is so much rubato going on that phrase structure is hard to perceive. Having said this, some of the slower movements, like the Rameau Sarabande, are beautifully crafted, with a lovely feeling for colour. Ultimately, Pöhlö's playing is probably better suited to the concert room rather than the CD – too many other good recordings exist for this one to be really attractive. *Robin Bigwood*

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *Sanguineus and Melancholicus* Florilegium 59' 30" Channel Classics CCS 11197 Quartet in D (H538), Trio Sonatas in C (H571 & 579), Sonata for fl in a (H562)

An interesting piece of technology, this. At the end of the 'official' recital (59') the disc stops. However, this is not the end of the music. A further four tracks follow, giving listeners the opportunity to sample some previous Florilegium recordings, but these will only play when specifically programmed. They're all very enjoyable and help to bring the total playing time closer to respecta-

bility, but are a poor substitute for the other movements of the G minor Wq88, of which only the lovely Larghetto is included in the main sequence, or, indeed, another complete work. The disc begins with a sparkling account of the quartet Wq94, in which the fortepiano sounds positively thrilled to have an obbligato role – this really is a fine piece. The contrast with the much earlier trio sonata Wq147 at the end of the concert could hardly be stronger: baroque blood still flowed powerfully in the 1730s. Between these two poles come a brave and eloquent account of the eccentric sonata for unaccompanied flute and the even wilder 'Conversation between a Sanguineus and a Melancolius'. This needs razor-sharp ensemble and Florilegium are more than equal to the challenge of all the changes of mood and tempo. More of the same will be welcome: more could have been on this disc. *David Hansell*

Haydn *London Symphonies 103 & 104* La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 57' 30" Deutsche Harmonia Mundi 05472 77362 2

With this delightful issue Kuijken and La Petite Bande complete their series of the *London* symphonies. These are marvellously innovative works (whatever the weird insert note says), and the performances respond imaginatively to the challenges, putting this familiar music across with the freshness and sense of daring that so excited contemporary audiences. There is nothing hasty here (except perhaps the well-sustained minuets); and the Andante of 104 is on the slow side. Spacious phrasing and meticulous articulation are striking features; there is excellent balance and recorded quality, and dynamics are unexaggeratedly broad. Above all, there is due awareness of scale and style and an infectious sense of joy. *Peter Branscombe*

Haydn *Lord Nelson Mass, Little Organ Mass* Tamara Matthews, Zoila Muñoz, Benjamin Butterfield, David Arnold SATB, American Bach Soloists Choir, American Classical Soloists, Pacific Mozart Ensemble, Jeffrey Thomas cond & org 55' 37" Koch 3-7407-2H1

This coupling of two of Haydn's finest yet strongly contrasted masses is perhaps an obvious one: unfortunately it also produces a rather short programme. The performances are carefully prepared with good attention to balance between instruments and voices save in the Benedictus of the *Little Organ Mass*, where the vital organ solo is difficult to hear in all registers. In this mass, too, the fairly large forces at times threaten to overwhelm the music, despite their highly disciplined approach. The grander gestures of the *Nelson* are more successfully projected, though there are several places where the collective virtuosity of choir and orchestra tempt the director into imposing some unconvincing changes of dynamic and, especially, tempo on the music: they are impeccably done but do impede what I have always felt to be the irrepressible surge of this piece. At times it almost sounds like Haydn as Bruckner

might have performed it, and that will not be to all tastes.

David Hansell

L. Mozart Symphonies New Zealand Chamber Orchestra, Donald Armstrong Naxos 8.553347 £ 53' 25"
Sinfonia di caccia in G, pastorale in G, in G, B♭ & F

Five sinfonias by the older Mozart feature the standard three-movement form with some nice horn playing (with what sounds like real gun-fire and a recorded pack of hounds in the opening movement as well!) and brisk orchestral string playing don't really manage to escape from their predictability (even if bits of the opening track sound like something his son may later have ridiculed.) As part of Naxos's commendable 18th-century Symphony series, this is worth having, but I fear I won't listen to it very often by choice.

BC

Mozart Piano quartets K. 478, 493 The Mozartean Players 64' 10" rec 1989 Harmonia Mundi Suite HMT 7907018 ££

It seems incomprehensible now that the publisher who commissioned three piano quartets from Mozart asked to withdraw from the contract because the first one (K.478) appeared to be 'too difficult'. Mozart never wrote a third quartet, but his inspired writing transformed the music for this medium by balancing and contrasting the strings with the piano. There is also a hint of virtuosity associated with his great concertos, which must have deterred the Viennese public. These performances are well paced, fresh and persuasive, with the subtle use of a few ornaments in the repeats of the K.493 larghetto. The K.478 rondo is on the fast side but Mozart's effervescence is captured.

Margaret Cranmer

Rolle Christmas Oratorio Gundula Anders, Britta Schwarz, Wilfried Jochens, Dirk Schmidt SATB, Kammerchor Michaelstein, Telemann-Kammerorchester Michaelstein, Ludger Rémy 47' 31"
cpo 999 514-2

Rolle's Christmas oratorio is a rather brief affair, consisting of only 18 numbers (a short sinfonia, followed by a chorus, recitatives alternating with arias, a duet and a trio, with a couple of chorales thrown in). There is some lovely music here (the ensemble pieces in particular) and the singers make the best of what is conceived in terms of lyricism rather than virtuosity. The instrumental playing is very good and the tempi seem ideal. Yet another discovery for the Middle German Baroque Music organisation I've mentioned several times of late and all credit to cpo for recording such an enterprising project.

BC

C. Stamitz Clarinet Concertos vol. 1 Kálmán Berkes clar, dir, Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia Naxos 8.553584 £ 63' 12"
No 1 in F, in B♭ for 2 clars (with Tomoko Takashima), in B♭ for cl & bsn (Koji Okazaki)

The three concertos on this disc follow the standard three-movement pattern and all seem to follow a set harmonic scheme too.

The solo playing is excellent: the Hungarian clarinettist and his Japanese colleagues match perfectly (the cadenza in the double clarinet concerto is an extraordinary example of duet playing). The first-movement cadenza of the solo concerto features some very high notes! (You'd be advised to keep your dog out of the room!) Ultimately though, it's all fairly innocuous stuff and, although my friends quite enjoyed it as background music while we were dining on Mull, clarinettists are probably the only people who'll buy this in any great numbers.

BC

Vanhal Sonatas for Viola and Harpsichord / Piano Karel Spelina vla, Josef Hála, kbd, Ladislav Pospisil vlc 66' 13" Supraphon SU 3285-2 131

18th-century viola sonatas are not exactly ten a penny, so these four pieces (only the last of which – played here with piano – is well known) will prove interesting for players of that most maligned of instruments. That said, this is not exactly top-drawer Vanhal (and there will be those out there, I know, who will doubt such a thing exists) but it's pleasant enough. The harpsichord is a little jingly, the viola sometimes too prominent and the cello might even be superfluous. For dedicatees of viola only, I suspect.

BC

Musical Classicism im Bratislava Zilina State Chamber Orchestra, Oliver Dohnányi 58' 39" Opus 91 2236-2 (031) (rec 1989) ££ Lavotta Nocturno hungariae in f & C; Sperger Symphony in Eb; Tost Divertimento in D; Zimmerman Symphony in B♭

This is a curious compilation which starts harmlessly enough with three straightforward pieces. The woodwind passages in Tost's divertimento (which seems to have been written with a specific group of players in mind, since almost everyone gets a solo) are unambitious but pleasant enough. Then it's as if the full moon puts in an appearance and Dvorak goes to Transylvania: try track 11 for size (or rather sub-track 4 01, if your machinery has the necessary gadgetry) and scare your socks off with some truly macabre sounds. Not quite what I'd expected, I have to say. Interesting.

BC

19th CENTURY

Berlioz L'Enfance du Christ Véronique Gens Marie, Paul Agnew récitant, Olivier Lallouette Joseph, Polydorus, Laurent Naouri Hérode, Frédéric Caton Le père de famille, La Chapelle Royale, Collégium Vocale, Orchestre des Champs Élysées, Philippe Herreweghe 94' 58" Harmonia Mundi HMC 901632.33 2 CDs

Berlioz' *petite sainteté* can seldom have sounded more beguiling than on this recording, derived from live performances. Though this is not obvious territory for them, Paul Agnew is excellent as the *récitant* and Véronique Gens touching as *Marie*. As usual, Herreweghe's choirs are well prepared and, apart from some slightly flat singing in the exposed *Chœur d'Anges*, make a fine contribution, sustaining the long epilogue with great control. With most Berlioz,

however the orchestra has to be the hero: those used to 'modern' performances of this work may find the climaxes a touch overwhelming, but will surely revel in the wealth of clear colour and detail here revealed. The spirits of Rameau and Charpentier surely smiled upon their successor and this addition to the season's musical charms. David Hansell

Schubert Sonatas in A (D 664) & e (D 556); *Impromptus* in Gb & Ab op. 90/3 & 4 (D 899) Olga Tverskaya fp 57' 10" Opus 111 OPS 30-193

One of Schubert's most attractive sonatas, D664, is coupled with a little known work, D566, which is listed as an unfinished composition. It is still a matter of debate as to whether the rondo which was published as opus 145 should form the fourth movement, and it is omitted from this recording. Olga Tverskaya is a fine Schubert interpreter and she produces lovely long phrases which are remarkable for their fine dynamic development. The G flat major impromptu is about a minute shorter than most other recordings, but this flowing speed suits the sound of the copy of a Brodmann forte-piano that was built by David Winston.

Margaret Cranmer

ON COUNTERTENORS (cf p. 23)

In the early days of 'authentic' instruments inadequate performances were sometimes justified on the grounds that, e.g. 'the cornetto is a difficult instrument and impossible to play without cracking a few notes'. Similar special pleading has also been used on behalf of countertenors, and I am convinced that critics should stand firm against it.

Readers may have noticed a certain amount of criticism in EMR of the recorder as well as the countertenor. They are both major elements in the general public's concept of early music, a misconception which I don't think benefits the cause (if that isn't an archaic concept) of early music. The problem with the countertenor is that, as a solo voice, it is heard almost entirely in repertoire that was written for other voices. We particularly associate Deller with Dowland and Purcell; virtually every song by them that he sang was transposed. Opera 'countertenor' roles were originally for castrati. The range of countertenors has been pushed upwards to encompass higher castrato roles (Deller's range was quite low by modern standards); critics must judge whether male voices are better than female ones for the purpose (Handel was prepared for ladies to appear as male heroes) and not accept lesser quality merely because countertenors have problems producing a full and expressive tone at the top end of his voice (or, for that matter, the bottom – in fact, the countertenor is much better suited to the more restricted ambitus of renaissance music, provided he is singing a suitable part). There are good and not-so-good countertenors, and even good ones can perform below their best. As for Derek Lee Ragin, I didn't hear Agrippina nor do I know his recording of the 1762 *Orfeo*. But I heard him perform that work live in a concert hall with good acoustics and was disappointed at the contrast between his reputation and the lean, inexpressive sound. CB

LETTER

Dear Clifford,

Please may we have a moratorium on the all too often negative remarks about counter-tenors by yourself and other reviewers. I refer mainly to pages 16 and 7 in the November issue of *EMR* but also to a lesser extent to pages 13 and 17 and to various derogatory and unduly critical remarks in previous issues too numerous to mention.

In Anthony Hick's review of the Gardiner Handel's *Agripinna* in a quite savage attack on the counter-tenor Derek Lee Ragin he refers to the 'pinched tone which invariably results from operating in that area above d'' where counter-tenors can reach the notes but not make music with them' - a remark which you refer to approvingly in an earlier article as a 'neat phrase about counter-tenors'.

Alfred Deller was capable of singing in this region of the voice with full power and also with a finely controlled diminuendo and pianissimo which produced a ravishingly beautiful effect. Admittedly for some, the latter was felt to be a mannerism but most singers would be only too happy to phrase so beautifully at the extreme end of their range. Today Andreas Scholl is beginning to develop a similar artistry in his upper register as was heard only recently in his singing of Handel's *Omnia mai fū* at the 1997 Gramophone Awards ceremony. James Bowman has a powerful and brilliant timbre in his upper voice which is totally effective musically in the bravura and furioso arias in baroque opera which he sings so well. Russell Oberlin, a different counter-tenor altogether, could produce some thrilling tones in his upper register. I remember particularly his accounts of *Dove sei?* and *Vivi, tiranno!* from Handel's *Rodelinda*. René Jacobs sang very expressively in his upper register and his phrasing was always musical, well thought out and to a purpose. Dominique Visse has a distinctive range of colours and expression throughout his voice which he exploits brilliantly to both serious and comic effect. Ugacheslav Kagan-Palei, a promising young Russian counter-tenor is capable of some very beautiful and moving singing in his upper register. He is able to swell, lighten, shade and subtly colour his tone in a very pleasing way as he is indeed able to do throughout his range.

Most of the younger professional counter-tenors nowadays are able to use e'' and e'' with ease and f'' and f'' on occasion (some even a g'') and it is a slur to suggest that they do not do so musically. It can also help when a lower pitch of a' 415 for example is used but this can cause difficulty with notes lying very low below the stave. Musically appropriate e''s, f''s and above are becoming not that uncommon in the decorated repeat of a da capo aria and the final cadenza.

In recent years David Daniels was widely acclaimed for his musically sensitive and dramatic portrayal of Didymus in the Glyndebourne Handel's *Theodora* in which he used his upper register to dramatic effect in ornamentation and cadenzas. Michael Chance has produced some deeply affecting accounts of the alto solos on the Bach passions etc. where his pure-toned e''s and e''s are entirely appropriate. He and Andreas Scholl are continuing the outstanding alto performances in the Bach repertoire by Paul Esswood and Alfred Deller.

Derek Lee Ragin, much criticised as Nerone in Anthony Hick's review, nevertheless has produced a deeply felt and moving account of Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo and Euridice* (1762)

where much expressive use is made of the upper register. This is a significant recording not only for the 'Guadagni' ornamentation but for the exceptionally dramatic and musically sensitive delivery of the recitative by Ragin throughout. The alto castrato part of *Orfeo* naturally has a lower tessitura than that of the soprano castrato of *Nerone* but the tessitura is nevertheless fairly high for a counter-tenor, requiring a firm and expressive command of d'' as well as a fair number of e''s and e''s. On the whole the tessitura of the part rises during the course of the opera, dropping only for the soft serenity of *Che puro ciel* and culminating in the famous *Che farò senza Euridice?* which requires 10e''s. In a passionate interpretation of the aria Derek Lee Ragin adds a few more in the ornamentation together with the 'Guadagni' f's without any problem.

In modern music for the counter-tenor voice I remember particularly Nicholas Clapton bringing much artistry and a distinctive mezzo range of timbres to a truly magnificently full-blooded performance of Nicola Lefanu's *Canción de la Luna*, which has a fairly demanding higher register.

Doubtless many of the new generation of counter-tenors possess one or two tones above f'' but as yet are unable to do so adequately in public performances; but advances are gradually being made in vocal technique in this area and on the whole I think counter-tenors of today are stronger in the upper region than in the past and are able to take on parts with a slightly higher tessitura, for example *Orfeo*, the higher alto and mezzo castrato roles in Handel's operas and the alto arias from Bach's *St Matthew Passion*.

Of course, for male sopranos the range above d'' is not so problematic as for counter-tenors and is a positive opportunity. In the case of the male coloratura soprano Chris Christophellos, the voice positively blossoms for an octave or so, which he is able to exploit dramatically and with increasing sensitivity, and many a female soprano would envy his command of high coloratura. Oleg Ryabets, the Russian male lyric soprano, has very attractive upper register that extends for a sixth or so above d'' which can be soft and beautifully mellow or bright-toned and ringing as the occasion demands.

Anthony Hicks should also bear in mind that the average counter-tenor has a baritone, tenor or bass range of up to an octave or so beneath the lowest note of his counter-tenor range. This means that when a counter-tenor sings from d'' upwards, he may be singing at between 2 and 2½ octaves or more from the lowest note he is capable of singing. Few voices of any vocal category are capable of singing as expressively and as musically as they would like in this part of their vocal range.

Perhaps a little but more understanding and tolerance of counter-tenors would not come amiss. They have enough ridicule and prejudice from the musically uneducated; they can do without unnecessarily negative remarks in music journals and reviews.

Trevor L. Selwood

We were delighted by a comment from Helge Therkildsen expressing delight 'how much you share my opinions of performance of early music. Often it appears to me as a sort of preplagiarism.' Preplagiarism is obviously a concept that would delight the legislators who devised the retrospective provisions of the European copyright law.

ORANGE PUDDING

Jennie Cassidy



'Blessed be he that invented pudding, for it is a manna that hits the palates of all sorts of people. To come in pudding time is to come in the most lucky moment in the world.'

Thus wrote Monsieur François Mission in the 17th century. Earlier in the century the invention of the pudding cloth heralded a grand age of puddings and ensured the future of boiled suet pudding as one of England's national dishes. Hitherto they were made in animal-gut containers which were not convenient, were hard to come by and which almost certainly imparted their own distinctive flavour to the dish they contained. One of the first puddings recorded was known as college pudding as it was made for students at Cambridge University. The pudding cloth enabled the sweet to be boiled or steamed in the same pot as the main dish. Each region had its own pudding recipe which could be sweet, savoury or a mixture, as the ingredients of this period's Christmas pudding show - ox tongue, chicken, eggs, raisins, orange, lemon peel and all sorts of spicery.

This recipe for orange pudding would have been a very extravagant dish including sugar, butter, eggs and exotic oranges. It would make a light but festive alternative to Christmas pudding.

We wish our growing band of readers a happy Christmas and an even happier new year, with civilised retirement for those of our age and continued employment for the young.

Our apologies to any readers abroad who may have received the November issue even later than usual. Despatch was delayed because we made a late decision to go leaf-peeping in New England. It was primarily a non-musical trip, though we did manage to taste mulled apple cider with the relevant Broude Brother and visited Eric Haas in his shop (we normally only see him at the BEMF exhibition.) We didn't catch any subscribers this time, but beware, you never know where we will call. We look

ORANGE PUDDING

4 oz butter
4 oz sugar
2 eggs, beaten
4 oz self raising flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 oz white breadcrumbs
2 tablespoon milk
juice & grated rind of 2 small oranges

Cream the butter with the sugar and add the eggs. Sift in the flour, salt and baking powder and mix. Add the breadcrumbs, milk and orange. Beat well.

You can steam the pudding in a greased basin, but it is more fun to use a cloth. Use any clean cloth you don't mind throwing away, but muslin is best as it is cheap. Rub the cloth with butter and sift a little flour over. Put the pudding mix in the centre and tie up the corners loosely with string to form a ball with room to expand. You can make individual size puds, which are nice as the recipient will be greeted by a small cloud of heavenly perfumed steam on unwrapping them (provide finger bowls though!) Steam the pudding(s) for two hours, making sure that the pan doesn't boil dry.

Serve the pudding with a marmalade sauce made by heating 3 tablespoons marmalade, 2 tablespoons sugar and 6 tablespoons of white wine together for a few minutes.

'Ah what an excellent thing is an English pudding. Give an Englishman a pudding and he shall think it a noble treat.'

This can be sampled at the Eastern Early Music Forum Epiphany Party, with Philip Thorby in charge of the music, at Beccles on Sat. 10 January. Details from Jennie at 01473 718811

forward to meeting our Austrian customers at the Vienna Exhibition on 17 & 18 January at the Wiener Konzerthaus (Clifford and Brian will be driving out there: offers of accommodation en route would be gratefully accepted!)

Our planning tends to be short-term, so it is difficult to say what we will be publishing next year. Bonporti's oeuvre will be completed and two operas that we currently have only in versions adapted for German opera houses will be done properly: Monteverdi *Il Ritorno* and Handel *Agrippina*. We will also have a new edition of his *Parthenope*. Frescobaldi's *Missa sopra l'aria della Monica a8* should be ready by the time you receive this.

CB/EB