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tel +44 (0)1480 52076 fax (0)1480 450821

Subscription details on page 14

Regular readers of my book reviews here and previously in *Early Music News* will be aware of my concern that much writing on music is becoming unreadable. So I was intrigued to see in the September *Musical Times* the following two sentences juxtaposed. The first is by critic Paul Griffiths, the other is by the composer, Peter Maxwell Davies.

Davies warned listeners against pinning all their harmonic expectations on a cadential bass line, saying that its function may be redefined in terms of another voice, the tenor, for example.

If you try to get into the work at the bottom, in the bass, you find the door shut.

Griffiths is, in fact, one of the clearer writers on 20th-century music and there would be nothing exceptional about the sentence quoted here except that the composer says it so much more directly. So much writing about music of all periods has become a complex way of coteries talking to coteries and excluding the general music lover who, judging by the sale of CDs, exists in quite large numbers. Non-specialist publishers of intelligent books on music are declining – Dent's *Master Musicians*, for instance, have been swallowed up by Oxford UP. Considering the general standard of academic prose, it is not difficult to see why sales are inadequate. Perhaps a positive spin-off from the current attempts to make university staff more 'efficient' will be that jobs will depend on an ability to communicate with students and consequently with the public as well. The danger is that the best communicators will have nothing original to communicate while those who are sacked will found and edit incomprehensible magazines! Meanwhile, all power to the blue pencils of the unseen copy-editors who try to make writers say clearly what they mean.

Although I know from non-musical friends and relations that much of EMR is incomprehensible to them, we try our best to be as straightforward as our topics permit. If any reader wants to write a page for us about where to get into a Dufay Mass, perhaps Max has given a good opening sentence. CB

BOOKS AND MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

"All the earth sings..."

Having so often complained that the proportion of books and editions now produced is the wrong way round, it is refreshing this month that there are far more editions of music than new books. Indeed, I was even able to read a history rather than a music book last week while sheltering from the rain on the camp site at Wassenaer (for a review of the *Concertinos* by Count Unico of that ilk, see page 15). "All the earth sings..." (Seaford Music Publications, 24 Pevensey Road, Eastbourne, BN21 3HP; £7.95) is by Brian Robins, one of our CD reviewing team, though I read the book without registering the connection. It is an introduction to medieval and renaissance music linked with recommendations to available CDs. It is an excellent idea, well carried out. Even the most learned reader might find it useful, if only as a way to avoid looking up record numbers. There is perhaps an excess of enthusiasm, but the object of the book is not to castigate the bad. One of his remarks should perhaps be quoted at the head of our CD review section: 'the majority of medieval and renaissance music consists of relatively short pieces, not best heard over the entire duration of a compact disc. Appreciation will be greatest when listening to a few pieces at a sitting – too few owners of CD players seem to appreciate that such equipment can be programmed!'

REVELS at COURT

Court Revels, 1485-1559 by W. R. Streitberger (University of Toronto Press; £48.75) is a thorough survey of all sorts of entertainment at the courts of the Tudors, continuing just long enough into Elizabeth's reign to cover her coronation year. The core of the book is a 'Calendar of Court Revels, Spectacles, Plays, and Entertainments', covering pages 233-299. Some flesh is put on this in the first 232 pages, with a clear account of how entertainment at court was organised. There are 100 pages of notes, 30 pages listing documents, a concise alphabetical survey of the activities of the playing companies, lists of Abbots and Lords of Misrule and of the Officers of the Revels and of the Tents and a thorough index. Music is not given isolated treatment, and for a musical and literary rather than an institutional approach, one needs to turn to John Stevens: *Music & Poetry in the Early Tudor Court*. Information overlaps with the material in Andrew Ashbee's *Records of English Court Music* vol. 6, the two books often complementing each other. Streitberger, for instance, tells us that at Christmas 1528 the 'Kyng kepte his Christmas at Grenewiche, with muche solempnitie'; Ashbee tells us that the 'gentilmen of the chapell for thair payntakinge this Cristmas' received £13 16s 8d. This is a history of the organisation of the arts, not of the arts themselves; in a period where the artistic

records are so scanty, it is only by studying the documents that Streitberger brings together that we can link the scattered fragments of music and poetry with the other elements to be able to imagine how they worked.

TRICINIA

Vols. 1 & 2 of *Italian Instrumental Music of the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Garland; \$55.00 & \$66.00) are devoted to two mid-16th century collections of tricinia. Vol. 1 contains the first 21 items of Giuliano Tiburtino's *Fantasie, et recerchari a tre voci* (Venice, 1549). There are 13 contrapuntal pieces by Tiburtino, all except the last titled by the solmisation syllables of their incipits. It has been suggested that these are based on tags from Josquin, who at this period had a status such as Palestrina was to take in the following century. These are followed by 8 three-voice madrigals by Donato, Rore, Willaert and Nadal (who is otherwise unknown). The 1549 volume also contained 7 recercars by Willaert, but these are omitted from the edition since they occur in vol. 2. There is a vast difference between the works here and the well-known collection of tricinia published in Nuremberg by Formschneider just eleven years earlier. That was retrospective; this is up-to-date (or at least, as up-to-date as one would expect a didactic publication to be). The title page says the music is 'accomodate da cantare et sonare'; if the former option is taken, they make excellent exercises in solmisation.

Vol. 2 contains another Venetian set, Gardane's *Fantasie recercari contrapunti a tre voci*, 1551. After settings of *Regina celi* by Willaert and Rore it contains 15 recercars, 9 by Willaert, 2 by Antonio Barges, one by Cavazzoni and 2 anon. The volume is completed by four untexted items by Willaert from the end of Gardane's *Motetta trium vocum* of 1543. It seems to me to be superfluous; the 9 Willaert recercars, the main interest in the collection, are widely available to performers in Schott's *Antiqua* series, while the collection as a whole has been issued in facsimile by Alamire. This is an expensive way of acquiring the 10 pages of Robert Judd's excellent introduction.

RICHARD MICO

I think that over the years I must have collected together and played most of Mico's viol music. Now we have it all assembled into one volume, edited by Andrew Hanley for Music Britannica LXV (Stainer and Bell; £58.50). Instrumental parts are also available in two sets, each costing £18.50: set I contains the music for four viols, set II comprises the rest. No organ part is included (more essential for the three-part works than the rest), so scores of these pieces can be obtained separately. Members of the UK and USA Viola da Gamba Societies get a 10% reduction on

parts, and there is a leaflet available giving charges including post. I remember from my violing days that Mico was always very satisfying to play, even if a little staid. The liveliest piece (uncharacteristically so) is *Fantasia a 2 no. 4*: it would make an excellent exercise for a treble-bass pair. The most curious (and perhaps impressive) piece is *Latral*, part II of a Monteverdi madrigal (shorn of its text) with Mico's continuation. Monteverdi's singers would almost certainly have sung the high-clef piece considerably lower: would Mico's players have done so as well? Why do all Mico's five and six part fantasies have high clefs? Unlike some previous MB volumes, the score is set out with meticulous care for sensible page-turns. The four-minim bars beloved of viol players are avoided, except in *Pavans*. The numbering is confusing: the Gamba Society numbers are given below a new numbering series which, like that, is according to the number of parts but doesn't include *as* or whatever within the title. There is also a consecutive numbering through the volume. The editor does not seem to have thought through how the compositions are to be identified simply in concert programmes and CD booklets.

KERLL

'Time has not dealt kindly with Johann Caspar Kerll'. So begins the preface to a new edition of his *Sämtliche Werke für Tasteninstrumente* by John O'Donnell (Doblinger: Diletto Musicale DM1203-6; £18.00 each). I'm not so sure. I now have three editions of his *Modulatio organica* (1686), which is probably more than it deserves. The opportunity for performers to play alternatim Magnificats is not very great and it is not a work that presents any great editorial complexity. The authoritative 1686 edition is available in facsimile from Garland (\$20.00). The cheapest transcription is the E. F. Kalmus reprint of the edition by Rudolf Walter first published by Coppenrath in 1956; this has ugly print and superfluous fingering. A good edition by Francesco Di Lernia appeared in 1991 as vol. I of *Sämtliche Werke für Tasteninstrumente* from Universal Edition (UE 19 541): it is most confusing that the two editions with the same title are distributed in the UK by the same firm, A. Kalmus. O'Donnell, whose fact-full preface is dated 1993, fails to mention his rival. His edition has *Modulatio organica* in vol. 4. It looks neater on the page, though hides at the end the variants that UE prints on the relevant page. Strangely, none of the editors include chant for the alternate verses.

The Doblinger's vol. I contains 8 Toccatas: I have not seen this. Vol. 2 has 6 Canzonas plus Kerll's most popular works, *Capriccio sopra il Cucu* and *Battaglia*. The previous main collection of Kerll's music, DTB II/2, prints three versions of the *Cucu*; O'Donnell contents himself with one, rejecting the others as early or corrupt. The *Battaglia* is often falsely ascribed to Cabanilles (who did, however, write an authentic one). Vol. 3 has the *Ciaccona* and *Passacaglia*, along with the piece Kircher prints for mechanical instrument. These pieces are all in DTB, but vol. 4 also includes four Suites discovered since that was published in 1901. O'Donnell's modernises the notation as little as possible, apart from using the modern five-line

staves and two clefs. Non-specialists will find the white notation of the *Ciaccona* confusing, and it seems illogical, having gone so far in this direction, to follow modern conventions for accidentals. It is, however, excellent that a complete modern edition is available. Handel found Kerll a good enough composer to borrow from, so harpsichordists and organists should acquire vols 1-3 at least.

PURCELL AYRES

These columns are likely to be bulging with Purcellian matter over the next few months. As with Monteverdi, I will try to minimise any conflict of interest by describing my own editions separately in adverts, though will not be able to avoid mentioning them in comparisons. For my recent offerings, see the advert on page 12..

Performers Facsimiles have just issued *A Collection of Ayres, compos'd for the Theatre* (PF 110; £48.00). This is quite a substantial collection (each violin part has 48 pages, *Tenor* and *Bassus* have 40) of instrumental music from *Dioclesian*, *King Arthur*, *The Fairy Queen*, *The Indian Queen*, *The Married Beau*, *The Old Bachelor*, *Amphitryon*, *The Double Dealer*, *Distress'd Inocency*, *The Gordian Knott unty'd*, *Abdelazor*, *Bonduca* and *The Virtuous Wife*. It has its disadvantages, especially in the presentation of everything for strings. But for some items it is the only source, and for all it has the authority of coming from Purcell's widow, even if the major complete sources of the operas may offer a preferable text. In view of the unavailability of the Purcell Society edition of the incidental music (the old edition has long been out of print, though Novello will produce photocopies on request, and the new one is not imminent), its reprint is particularly useful. It is perfectly readable, but the snag is that viola players will have to read C2 clef (or perhaps be forced to copy their parts out till they learn it!) Incidentally, the Parley of Instruments are recording it this month.

I am less enthusiastic about other recent Performers Facsimiles. Both Royer's *Pièces de clavecin* and Loeillet's *Six Suits of Lessons for the Harpsicord or Spinnet* are already available in good editions and facsimiles. Flautists who can manage the French violin clef will welcome Mouret's *Sonates à deux Flutes-Traversier* of 1725 (omitted from the work-lists in Viollier and New Grove).

CHARPENTIER

At our present stage of knowledge of Charpentier, with no collected works and only two volumes of the proposed facsimile of his autographs available, any edition is to be heartily welcomed. David C. Rayl has edited Nine Settings of the *Litanies de la Vierge* as vol. 72 of *Recent Researches on the Music of the Baroque Era* (A-R Editions; \$82.95, with parts an additional \$32.00). This is a substantial volume of 242 pages. The nine settings (H. 82-90) range from three to eight voices & continuo. In addition, H. 83 & 84 require two treble instruments and H. 85 needs pairs of violins and recorders. It is marvellous to have the music, and the editing seems to be well done. But the 'notes on per-

formance' raise questions. It is, for instance, odd to discuss types of voice without first establishing what pitch they are singing at, an example of the editor's confusion between stating how he thinks the music might have been performed originally and his suggestions for how it might be performed by non-specialists now. Without seeing the rest of the MS it is difficult to be sure, but it is probable that the instrumentation for the bass part at the opening of H. 85 refers just to the introduction and that the clavecin is joined or replaced by organ when the voices enter. What instruments played the bass line would normally be determined by the custom of the institution where the performance took place and specific instructions in the score would only be to countermand expectation. Surely if H. 83 were performed as a *grand motet*, treble viols would have been replaced by violins? The idea of three treble viols to a part reminds me of the orchestral sessions of the viola da gamba society under Natalie Dolmetsch in the 1960s! It is a pity that the indications of voice ranges and clefs do not appear in the expected place, at the beginning of each piece. Why should spelling follow the *Liber usualis*? We should at least be told if any of Charpentier's spellings give a clue to pronunciation. Finally, with only two facsimiles, it is a shame that one is of a page reproduced elsewhere.

None of these are serious problems (though surely these points could have been anticipated by an alert subeditor). The volume is still usable, and I hope it will be used. The sound of Charpentier that we have, at least from records, is very much one man's vision, and we need a far wider range of performances to get the measure of him.

OVERDOTTING

Flexibility in the length of notes is under attack again. The Spring 1994 issue of *Early Music America* (vol. 7/1) contains an article by that provocative scholar Frederick Neumann (who died on 21 March aged 86) questioning many of our assumptions. I am not going to take sides here: merely point the reader to the article, which is a lengthy reply to Stephen E. Hefling's *Rhythmic alteration in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music* (Schirmer 1993), a book I have not had sent for review. As always, Neumann is guided (and led astray) by treating musical notation as a precise coding system, and had he been more in touch with modern performers he would have seen that groups of players do not need precise notations. That doesn't prove they are right, but it undermines one of his arguments that they are wrong. I suspect he believed that players used parts with every double-dot and inequality carefully marked, which they don't. But however much one might agree or disagree with him, he has kept performers and scholars of performance practice alert: I hope someone equally knowledgeable and argumentative takes up his mantle. The issue also contains a reply by Malcolm Bilson to an earlier article on assimilation of rhythm in Schubert.

On the day *Historical Performance* arrived I also received a pamphlet entitled *Unequal Notes: The Inégales Newsletter*. The first issue (June 1994) comprises 12 A5 pages and is produced by John Byrt, 4 Melbourne Cottages, Tiverton,

Devon EX16 5LE. It is intended as a quarterly newsletter, annual subscription £2.00 (non-Europeans should perhaps pay a bit more to cover post); he also issues a cassette of Bach played *inégale* as a basis for discussion (£6.00). John Byrt used to be conductor of the Schola Cantorum of Oxford: I have just been reminding myself of him by playing their 1973 LP of Taverner's *Corona spinea* mass, and very impressive it sounds (if a shade fast).

HANDEL'S AUTOGRAPHS

Apparently casual notation of dotted rhythms is a particularly serious problem in Handel, and there is a limit to what the editor can do to show precisely how he himself wrote out his music (and whether that is significant or not). It is fortunate that most of his autographs have survived, many in the single collection that was in the Royal Library until it was presented by the Queen to the British Library. But there are of fragments elsewhere, so one virtue of *A Catalogue of Handel's Musical Autographs* by Donald Burrows and Martha J. Ronish is that we can see at a glance what autographs survive. That, however, is a very minor use for this magnificent volume (Clarendon Press, Oxford; £95.00). It lists all manuscripts in order of their present location: any attempt at a chronological order would be futile; despite the copious composition dates, most of the bindings are later, so individual volumes can contain material from different times. Much of the material is now accessible on microfilm from Research Publications, and if you go to the British Library, you will be shown a film, not the original; apart from any natural decay, a consequence of the growth in musicology is the deterioration through use of such valuable objects of study (just as beauty spots are ruined by the visitors they attract). This book gives the user of a film much of the information that is lost by that means of transmission. (I hope, however, that within a few years it will be possible to scan such valuable documents and make them available cheaply on disc at a far better resolution than on any microfilm.)

There are full collations of each manuscript with references to pages in the Chrysander edition; this is also useful in reverse for finding an individual aria quickly in a manuscript. These are accompanied by detailed notes which explain irregularities and quote or expand odd comments that are not clear. The tables contain much information tightly compressed, so thorough reading of the introduction is required to understand how they work. This also gives a concise history of the collections (not all in *Handel Collections and their History*). The final third of the book contains reproductions of the watermarks of all the English papers found in Handel's MSS.

This massive book (landscape A4; the pagination stops at 332 but there are 40 prelims and the watermark pages are unnumbered) will be of immense value to Handel scholars and will save them an enormous amount of time. (I can remember how long it took me to work out a table to show the structure of the *Tamerlano* MS when I was working on an edition of it.) I have only one serious complaint: the indices would have been more convenient at the end after

the watermarks. And a flippant one: cannot we be more specific about the circular stain on the first page of *Zadok the priest*? Was Handel drinking wine, beer or water? This is the essential nitty-gritty of musicology. To those who just listen to his music, it is utterly irrelevant, but I suspect that I will refer to it more than to any other book I have on Handel except the thematic catalogue. And all scholars on English 18th-century music will need to use the information on watermarks.

BAROQUE INSTRUMENTAL

Giovanni Battista Bassani's *Sinfonie* op. 5 (Bologna, 1683) are a not entirely unknown. Scores of five of them were published by a century ago by Wasielewski and Torchi, and the parts of the Amsterdam reprint (where the title is changed to *Sonate da chiesa*) are available from King's Music for £10.00. But it is nice to see the compete set in modern score and parts (Hug: Edition Pelikan 2042-4, 3 vols @ £19.25 each from A. Kalmus). The editor, Josef Schinkowitsch, seems to have done a good job, though the score looks odd with the keyboard part printed larger than the strings as if it were a piano quartet, not a piece where the right-hand part is editorial. If your knowledge of late-17th-century Italian trios is confined to Corelli, give these a try.

A Sonata (original title *Sinfonia*) in G minor by J. C. Pez is claimed by its editor, Christian Schneider, to be the earliest German oboe sonata, a claim difficult to justify since no date is suggested for it and Pez lived until 1716. I'm not convinced that it is 17th century in style: if the MS had Handel's name on the top, although one would have been sceptical, the idea would not have been *prima facie* preposterous. It is well worth playing. (Universal UE 30 129/A. Kalmus; £9.90).

Universal has already issued a version of Bach's Partita in C minor, which Schmieder placed among the lute music with the number BWV 997, for flute and keyboard. Sensibly, in view of the paucity of genuine recorder music by Bach, this has now appeared in D minor for recorder. (UE 19 939/A. Kalmus; £6.75). The only problem for the player is that he has to take Siegfried Petrenz's right hand part on trust: no typographical distinction is made between material derived from the sources and continuo realisation. Telemann's recorder sonata in F minor TWV41: f2 has a simpler origin, its only source being the well-known Brussels anthology of sonatas (published in facsimile by Editions Culture et Civilisation in 1979) where it is no. 37. The music is good, the edition is fine, (UE 19 937/A. Kalmus; £6.75) and as with the Pez, the parts comprise two copies of a two-stave score. Sensibly, this includes the bass figures in the Pez: the Telemann MS has none.

DILETTO MUSICALE

Mozart's *Gran Partita* for 13 instruments K361 has caused much scholarly activity, even though there is a facsimile of the autograph and a good edition in the NMA. Bastiaan Blomhert has edited for *Diletto Musicale* (DM 1173/A. Kalmus; score £30.00, parts £35.00) a version for wind octet

of movements 1, 2, 3 and 7 which may throw some light on the origins of the work: in fact, he suggests that it may have been Mozart's original composition, later expanded (both vertically and horizontally) into the 13-instrument version. The sources are quite early, probably from the 1790s, so the work circulated in this form before the original was available (that was not published till 1803). Blomhert claims that the new version is far more like Mozart's octet writing than the other early arrangements of the work for octet. We must await the verdict of the Mozartean scholarly community; meanwhile, here is a welcome extension to the wind octet repertoire and groups with the 13-instrument version in the repertoire might well find this a useful budget-version to take on tour.

It is nice to see that the publication of Boccherini's symphonies is continuing, even though the failure of the 250th anniversary of his death last year to stimulate much public attention must have been a disappointment to the editor (Antonio de Almeida) and publishers. This month brings one earlyish work, *Sinfonia* No. 7 in B flat (G 507), written in 1771, and No. 25 in A (G. 518) from 1787 (DM 607 & 625; scores £30, parts £39, extra strings £3.50). No. 7 is unusually scored for 2 flutes, 2 horns and strings, No. 25 more conventionally for one flute with pairs of oboes, bassoons and horns. I must confess that I am not yet convinced that Boccherini's symphonies are as deserving of revival as his quartets or quintets, but performance might convince me. It is a pity that there are so few opportunities of slipping works of this period into low-profile concerts now the modern-instrument heavily-subsidised orchestras are scared of doing anything early.

DIDELOT BALLET

Didelot, active chiefly in France and Russia, was important as the director of ballet at the King's Theatre, London, from 1796 to 1801. Although a regular part of the theatrical experience of the 18th century, the ballets played during or after operas have been generally neglected by musicians and few scores have been published. *Three King's Theatre Ballets, 1796-1801* by Charles-Louis Didelot have been edited for *Music for London Entertainment* by Roland John Wiley (Series D vol. 3, Stainer & Bell; £65.00). *Flore et Zephire* and *Ken-si and Tao* are by Cesaro Bossi, *Sapho et Phaon* by Joseph Mazzihghi. Musically they have little to commend them, though they might be worth reviving if orchestrated stylishly and well danced. The plots are also naive (the original French/English playbooks are reproduced here). But that in itself is no reason for an opera or ballet to be ineffective. There is an extensive and informative introduction. The word 'composed' is used ambiguously both for creating the ballet and writing the music. The description of how Didelot instructed his composers what he wanted is fascinating. (One of the tunes that must have stuck in his mind was the opening of Handel's op. 4 no 4: just two bars are quarried for No. XVII of *Sapho*.) Whether or not this volume will provide the basis for a rich theatrical experience, it is important in showing what an operatic entertainment incorporated two centuries ago.

LETTERS and COMMENTS

Dear Clifford,

Sometimes it pays to read rival publications.

In *Early Music* (November 1993, p. 566) I mentioned that what you describe (EMR September 1994) as 'the quartet of Monteverdi' consisted of at least five and (assuming Claudio could sing) possibly six voices. The official account of the Hungarian campaign states that he travelled as 'director of music with five musicians'. I suggested that when this group sang vespers on the eve of the battle of Vysegrad they would understandably have used Monteverdi's own six-part psalms and Magnificat, since throughout his life he made a habit of collecting compositions over a lengthy period and only publishing them at an opportune moment, usually when a commission came along. The occasion [for the 1610 Vespers] for which most writers, including the excellent Signor Fabbri, have looked in vain will never be found for the very simple reason that it never existed. The Mass and Vespers grew gradually over fifteen years and finally saw publication in 1610 without any particular performance in mind.

Professor Denis Stevens

Sadly, reading does not always imply remembering. My file of Early Music goes back to issue 1. But the one you mention is sitting in a pile of journals (growing fearsomely in size) whose contents I need to digest more thoroughly than an initial read. The point from your article that stuck in my mind (to the exclusion of more important ones) concerned the modern history of the 1610 Vespers. The publicity around the first performance of your edition in 1961 made much of your rejection of the nonnullorum sacrorum concentuum, which you argued were irrelevant to a Vespers. So it was astonishing to be told that the reason for their omission was really to avoid having so long a concert that the absence of toilets in Westminster Abbey would cause the audience discomfort. The musicological argument was carried on so vehemently (see, for example, the letter of Hans Redlich and your reply in The Musical Times, September 1961) that I am still sceptical that the inadequacy of the toilet facilities in one building has caused so many performances of the Vespers in the last 30 years to be bereft of their antiphon-substitutes (or cost a fortune in wasted rehearsal time because choirs have used your edition and soloists have used complete ones with incompatible bar numbers and different readings). We now know that in north Italian churches the liturgy was treated less rigidly than the published service books demand; we can (if we choose) perform the Vespers with the proper chants and with the sacred concertos. But why not take credit for your initiative in taking liturgical matters seriously? Don't try to hide it!

As for whether sections of what was published in 1610 were performed at 1595, that depends on detailed arguments on what sort of church music, if any, Monteverdi might have been writing as early as that. My hunch is that the style of the 1610 music is too modern to go back further than a decade at the most, but to

establish that needs fuller research than I can give it. That the 1610 music was assembled over some years seems highly probable; but that need not exclude the possibility that it was assembled for some particular purpose before it was sent off to Venice to be published. The fact that Monteverdi only provided a single set of Psalms for one feast (Antonio Mortaro's similar publication of 1610 has 8 Psalms) might imply a specific reason for assembling the pieces. I have an open mind on the matter. CB

Dear Clifford,

It is good to see the question of clef-codes (*chiavette*) at last being taken seriously, even taken for granted, in your most recent issue. Among the references is one, in the review of the recording of the *Prophetiae Sybillarum* of Lassus, to Peter Berg's recent edition and his study of the tessiture. I did a similar exercise recently when preparing performances of Lassus' *Lagrime di San Pietro* with the Campion Singers. This is a cycle of 21 pieces, 20 from the Italian of Tansillo, concluding with a Latin motet with a text probably by Lassus himself. The work is clearly written for a continuous performance by the same seven voices, yet the apparent written pitch makes nonsense of six movements. However, with the customary transposition of a fourth downwards from the written G2/F3 clef configuration, the voice ranges are completely consistent. (Curiously, the motet requires transposition down a fifth to fit the ranges of the 'key scheme'.)

We corresponded earlier this year about my recent edition of the *Missa Papae Marcelli* of Palestrina, which proves to be ravishing at the transposed pitch. I recently performed (in St Mark's, Venice) a much misunderstood work, the 6-part *Missa In tempore* of Monteverdi, in a transposed edition (which the Beauchamp Press will publish later this year). The performance reduced several of the singers to tears, which I find is always a good sign.

Michael Procter

Yes, the Monteverdi mass does sound a terrible strain untransposed: we look forward to reviewing your edition. We will hear further from Michael in later issues.

For sale:

Renaissance viola after A & H Amati 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ " by Paul Denley, 1985. With case and Aquila strings. Used in recordings by The Parley of Instruments.

£1900 ono.

Peter Holman tel 0206 43417

SINGING 15th-CENTURY MUSIC IN CYPRUS

Harold Copeman

The Schola Polyphonica held an International Summer School at Paphos from 2-10 July. What this means is that Doris and Stephen Willis, thinly disguised as Arcadia Music, are retiring to a wonderful house perched above the sprawl of the town, and had long planned to entice their equally deranged friends and singing acquaintances. Fifteen English and Dutch singers actually turned up and were coached by Michael Procter.

Accommodation was in a spacious and airy school boarding house with a pool. In July one easily gets over-heated and pace was appropriately gentle. A car is needed for spare-time activity: over-70s beware – you can't hire there. We all managed excursions to the NW coast and the central mountains. We had supper at friendly, English-speaking restaurants: our 'less Greek' didn't get much exercise.

We had been invited to sing Mass for the regular Roman Catholic service in Ayia Kyriaki, a 12th-century church belonging to the Cyprus Orthodox Church. The Palestinian priest – born in Bethlehem – was joined by a visiting German one; the service was in Latin, English and German. The church is by the pillar where St Paul is reputed to have been scourged (part of his list in 2 Cor. 11,25), and Paphos was the ancient capital where Paul and Barnabas converted the Roman proconsul Sergius Paulus (Acts 13, 4-13) who became the first Christian ruler of the country. (The other distinguished Cypriot is, of course, Saint Aphrodite: Botticelli shows us how she rose from the sea off Paphos.)

The repertoire included a little Venetian music of the 16th-century (those who are completely ignorant of Cypriot history are at least aware from Shakespeare or Verdi that the island once had a Venetian governor). But the main focus was the early 15th-century. Most academic music libraries have four volumes entitled *The Cypriot-French Repertory*, editions of a MS now in Turin. What lies behind the title? In 1373 the Genoese invaded Cyprus and took part of the royal family hostage. Janus (king 1398-1432) had thus

been brought up in Genoa (he was indeed named after it) and ran a sophisticated Catholic court, taking advantage of marriage alliances with the Latin West to preserve his wealth and influence. In 1411 he married the daughter of the Duke of Savoy, Charlotte of Bourbon. The names of 19 of her retinue of 60 survive; two were priests and some may have been singers. One name is Gillet Veliout, perhaps the composer Gilet Velut. The repertory of the Cypriot court chapel expanded at this period. It was interrupted by a Muslim invasion in 1426, when the palace was destroyed and Janus captured. The sumptuous manuscript may have been prepared for Charlotte's daughter Anne to take to Turin in 1434 as a gift on her marriage to Louis, the son of the King of Savoy.

We sang a mass setting (pronouncing the Latin in the French manner) and two motets from this manuscript, adding the rather later *Agnus Dei* from Dufay's mass *Se la face ay pale* along with appropriate chant and hymns by Dufay and Binchois. Motets of this period were still solo pieces, with lower parts vocalised or played on organ or instruments. They can be challenging to sing, even with a small choir, and there was some stylistic incongruity. *Dignu, summo patri/Dulciter hymnos* (Motet 34) is short and brilliant; *Comme le serf/Lunne plaine d'unilite* (36) is long, complex and beautiful. My ear picked up suggestions of Berlioz or Duparc in its thrown-away phrases: has French rhetoric been so powerfully continuous? (Richard Hoppin, the editor of the repertoire, says that the poem seems to be a distant echo of Machaut.)

There is much still to be learnt about the Cypriot manuscript. Scholars met in Cyprus for a conference on it a couple of years ago and apparently made great progress in understanding it. A report is expected soon: *The Cyprus-French Repertory of the Manuscript Torino J. II. 9* edited by Ursula Gunther and Ludwig Finscher (Musicological Studies and Documents, 45), Hansler-Verlag, Stuttgart. And the next musical party at the Willeses? Probably (learning from the heat this year) late-October 1995.



The Communion of the Apostles: 15th-century frescoes in the Church of the Holy Cross, Platanistasa, Cyprus

SUFFOLK VILLAGE FESTIVAL

Anthony Rowland-Jones

Although I only attended three of this year's five concerts, I have been to most of the festivals, which in itself is a recommendation since each visit involves a 100-mile round trip from Cambridge to the Essex/Suffolk border. There has often been a theme to the concerts: this year it was, broadly, German music, ranging from Biber to Schubert, almost too wide a spread.

The backbone is provided by members of Peter Holman's fine group The Parley of instruments. Their quality and Holman's contacts bring in other outstanding performers, among them this year Stephen Varcoe (with his sensitive fortepiano accompanist Christopher Roberts) and Crispian Steele-Perkins, whose morning lecture-recital overstretched the capacity of the little church in the fields at Assington. The main concerts took place in the churches at Boxford and Stoke-by-Nayland (with cushions much in evidence).

A feature of the festival has been the mixture of amateur and professional performers: the tenor soloist Patrick McCarthy lives by his voice, the bass Alastair Chapman works in the City. They have the gift of being able to make the audience share a tremendous sense of enjoyment in the occasion. There is an excellent period band, players from the area being supplemented by regular visitors from a wider distance. The high level is brought about by the vitality of Peter Holman's inspired direction. He has the knack of communicating his profound knowledge of and enthusiasm for baroque music to his players and, in proper baroque fashion, through them conveying its affect to the audience. He often directs, with great modesty and unshowiness, from the keyboard, controlling but never dominating – the reverse of two recent baroque concerts in Cambridge, where the conductor dominated without controlling. The listener is totally involved both in Holman's concepts of the music and his commitment to it. Only occasionally is a tempo too ebullient for full justice to be done to its expressivity.

Another considerable strength of the festival is programme organisation and presentation. *The Bach Family at Home* was intended 'to give the flavour of an informal musical gathering in Johann Sebastian's household'. It comprised a mixture of sacred and profane vocal consorts and arias, with Mark Caudle interspersing movements from the third cello suite, which themselves range from the deeply serious to the liveliness of the Bourrées (perhaps here not quite dainty enough) and the Gigue. The programme was well researched and beautifully balanced, and one did in fact get the feeling of overhearing an actual occasion. Similarly, Stephen Varcoe's recital told 'The Art of the Storyteller', with songs by little-known contemporaries of Schubert, sometimes settings of the same poems, leading up to a

carefully chosen group of Schubert songs. This gave us a greater understanding of Schubert's genius, while the 'lesser' songs were enjoyable in their own right. All was clearly explained by this fine singer in his own well-judged narrative. Moreover, unlike Holman's introductions, it was clearly heard in all corners of a difficult church acoustic.

The festival culminated in a 350th birthday concert for Heinrich Biber. This year we have heard a lot of Biber, but no other concert I have been to succeeded so well in celebrating the composer. Again it was excellent planning, with music by Biber's contemporaries Finger and Muffat (the last Sonata with the magnificent *Passacaglia* from *Armonico tributo*), combined with the sheer enjoyment of all the players, that brought about this effect. Not surprisingly, Judy Tarling's performance of a violin sonata with scordatura tuning was not effortless, but this in no way diminished – perhaps it increased – its impact. The trumpet music was splendid, and the closing *Nightwatchman Serenade* an utter delight.

Before the Early Music Centre's Network Committee wound itself up we were concerned with fostering local-based activities as a way of enlarging the audience for early music. The Suffolk Villages Festival is a fine example of what can be done with enthusiasm, ability and very little public money. It amazed me to find a church in an unknown village virtually full for a concert of Biber – I thought that sort of thing only happened in France and Holland. But several things have come together to make such an event viable and successful.

The main reason for this is the way an internationally-famous performer and musicologist, Peter Holman, who has always had a flair for building interesting programmes, has managed to work with amateur performers and enthusiasts to build up an ensemble of a very high quality and an organisation prepared to do the necessary administration; that it is just an annual event probably also helps.

Although the orchestra is there to give concerts, the players feel that the time spent rehearsing is of immense value to their musical development, and the continuity of membership has helped it to reach a standard rarely attained by other, if not entirely amateur, at least unpaid bands. The sense of it being a local activity has also encouraged greater audience involvement than might have been expected. This is a fine model for similar development elsewhere. But beware – it is a long process, and the resources and needs of each area will be different.

CB

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Purcell: Dioclesian – ‘Two in one upon a Ground. Chaconne for Flutes, in the Third Act’

Recorder 1

The musical score consists of eight staves of music for Recorder 1. The score is in common time, with a key signature of one flat. The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Numbered boxes (1 through 8) are placed above certain measures to indicate specific performance cues or events. Box 1 is at the beginning of the first staff. Box 2 is in the middle of the first staff. Box 3 is in the middle of the second staff. Box 4 is in the middle of the third staff. Box 5 is in the middle of the fourth staff. Box 6 is in the middle of the fifth staff. Box 7 is in the middle of the sixth staff. Box 8 is in the middle of the eighth staff.

There is no cue for this in the 1690 Libretto; it probably opens Act III, Scene I, the supernatural association of the recorders suggesting the enchanted state suffered by Maximinian, whose soliloquy opens the scene.

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PURCELL: DIOCLESIAN

Our main musicological activity over the past few months has been directed towards Purcell. We produced the *Masque* from *Dioclesian* last year for the recording by Richard Hickox (which our reviewer did not like, so we cannot be accused of favouring our customers!) The rest of the work is being recorded this month for release in November, so we have just completed our edition. We have decided to keep the two parts separate – the *Masque* is Purcell's most substantial single sequence of dramatic music and may well be performed separately.

Uniquely, Purcell published a full score of the work (it was a financial failure and not repeated). So there is an authoritative musical source. This has been collated with the libretto. The edition does not supply a full text of the play, though we can provide slightly faint copies of the 1690 libretto if required.

	Acts I-IV	The Masque
Score	£12.00	£12.00
Parts (set)	£60.00	£60.00
Extra strings	£6.00	£6.00
Chorus score	£2.00	£2.00

Scoring 2 oboes, tenor oboe, bassoon, 2 recorders, 2 trumpets [timp ad lib.], strings

PURCELL: THE INDIAN QUEEN

The source material for this work is, in contrast with *The Indian Queen*, complicated. There is no score with any demonstrable close connection with the composer and there was no text of the play published at the time. Our edition is based primarily on one of the most reliable manuscripts, British Library Add. 31453, collated with Add. 314449. We include the additional music in the last act 'by Mr Daniel Purcel, (Mr Henry Purcell being dead)'.

Score	£12.00	Parts (set)	£60.00
Extra strings	£6.00	Chorus score	£2.00

Edition of the play £5.00

Scoring 2 oboes, tenor oboe, bassoon, 2 recorders, 2 trumpets, temps. strings.

We can also supply Purcell's other theatrical works. *Dido & Aeneas* is at present in the form of corrected versions of early modern editions: we may well have computerised it by the end of the year. *The Fairy Queen* will be available in a new edition shortly. For *King Arthur* we have at present only a scissors-and-paste set of parts prepared by Peter Holman; we may have vocal copies available soon.

A note on our Purcell parts

Since the instrumentation of the English theatre orchestra is still not entirely clear, our parts allow for flexibility. For each work we sell a basic set, and can supply extra string parts as required. Full scores should be ordered for continuo players. All material is A4 size (i.e., the size of this page) but larger B4 scores can be provided if conductors find the A4 ones too small.

Violins/oboes/recorders Our basic set contains 4 copies of a part including all the treble music. This allows for flexibility in instrumental allocation. It is left to the performers to decide when oboes double strings or alternate with them. It is also possible that, when there is no tenor oboe and no explicit oboe parts, the 2nd oboe should double violin 2 rather than violin 1. Recorder parts, no doubt originally played by oboists, are also included.

Violas/tenor oboe. In *Dioclesian* the use of a wind quartet (2 oboes, tenor oboe, bassoon) is explicit; we supply two copies of this part in other works too to allow for that. They are in the alto clef, familiar to tenor oboists and to cor anglais players from Bach's oboe da caccia parts. We may eventually have to produce them in cor anglais transposition, so ask if you need them thus.

Bass There is controversy whether a 16' pitch instrument was used as well as bass violin/cello during the 1690s. A bassoon was used as well (though we don't know how much). The standard set includes 3 bass parts.

Recorder, trumpet and drum parts are supplied as required, (the recorder is also in the treble instrument parts). We have sometimes added editorial kettle drum parts, though the musicological pendulum has recently swung against that (we hope to publish an article by Crispian Steele-Perkins on the topic next month.)

Our editions differ from those of the Purcell Society in two main ways:

- we do not include keyboard reductions. This enables us to provide a more compact score, often with movements set out on a single opening, making their overall shape more visible and avoiding awkward page-turns.
- orchestral parts may be bought, not hired. (Anyone seeing our house will understand why we do not want it to become the repository of other performers' discarded parts!) Our parts correspond with the score, have no superfluous performance instructions, and will not have anyone else's pencil marks on them; your labour in marking them can be preserved for your next performance.

UTRECHT FESTIVAL

James Chater



Musical Babel or an exercise in trans-cultural ecumenism? In terms of the huge range of events on offer (with as many as three running simultaneously) the Utrecht Early Music Festival goes from

strength to strength, with more visitors attending more events than in previous years. Not that numbers of people or concerts are the whole story. It is pleasing too that the Festival's main themes – French baroque music, double-reed instruments (the Festival also hosted an International Double-reed Symposium), the entire cycle of Beethoven's piano sonatas, Lassus, story-telling and non-Western music – interlocked and dovetailed in a number of fascinating ways, whether it was Armenian music played on loud and soft reed instruments, French baroque battle music for wind and brass, or unfamiliar styles of musical narrative, ranging from *Beowulf* to the melodramas of Georg Benda.

Just as the Utrecht festival programme tends to disregard distinctions such as 'old-new' and 'east-west', so one is challenged to make new connections across old barriers and to view the western musical tradition in a global context. It is well known, for instance, that in the middle ages many instruments came to Europe from the east and from Moorish Spain and that the sound-worlds of east and west were not as polarised than as they were later to become. And there are other ways in which early-modern western music has grown apart from music of the rest of the world: an emphasis on literacy rather than orality, on music as art object rather than activity, and a tendency to stress music's ontological significance more than its social context or its connection with the other performing arts. While these trends are not in themselves unhealthy, it is salutary to be reminded that they are not universal norms, being concentrated in 'western' countries at a certain point in their development.

Sequentia, a well-established group whose interpretations of the medieval repertory are perennially vital and stylish, have for several years been at the forefront of the return to an oral approach to music-making. In their programme of laments by Notker, Hildegard von Bingen and other composers of the 10th to 12th centuries (Pieterskerk, 26 August), organum technique was convincingly applied to music that has been preserved in monophonic form. These vocal pieces were linked by instrumental interludes, Elizabeth Gaver giving superb improvisations on the fiddle. The group's leader, Benjamin Bagby, is already familiar to festival-goers for his recitation of part of *Beowulf* to the accompaniment of a six-string lyre pentatonically tuned.

His performance (Catherijneconvent, 1 September) blends song, tone-painting, recitation, mime and mimicry with outstanding verve and mastery. In accordance with true oral tradition (and Bagby is himself descended from Danes who settled in England around 630) no two performances are the same, being variations of poetic formulae supplied to new music.

Other ways of combining narrative and music were demonstrated by groups from India, Korea and Zaire. Closer to home was Red Byrd's sympathetic account of English ballads (Tivoli, 2 September), which presented favourites like *Greensleeves* and *Lord Willoughby* alongside the haunting *There were three ravens* and the *Pleugh Song*, a captivating example of 15th-century sales patter from a Scottish ploughman.

One of the more experimental forms of musical narrative is the melodrama, which combines spoken recitation with orchestral accompaniment. This was a particularly favoured form in the third quarter of the 18th century and two examples, Georg Benda's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Medea* were staged by the Opéra-Ballet Atlantique, accompanied by Musica Aeterna conducted by Christophe Rousset (Stadsschouwburg, 3 Sept.); both pieces were heard in their French versions. It is not difficult to understand why Mozart admired them: the orchestral writing displays motivic coherence and expressive power of a kind only Mozart was later to achieve. *Medea* has the more effective dramatic structure, *Ariadne* being hampered by the dominance of monologue.

France around 1700 was another place where new musico-dramatic forms were worked out: not only in ballet and the *tragédie lyrique*, but also the *comédie lyrique*. Jean-Joseph Mouret's *Le mariage de Ragonde*, performed by Les Musiciens du Louvre at the festival opening, is the first fully-fledged French comic opera, dating from 1714 (though it was the revised 1742 version, known as *Les amours de Ragonde*, that we heard). The rather feeble plot may be described as *The Marriage of Figaro* in reverse, in which village boy gets, not the village girl he wants, but an older woman who intimidates him with villagers disguised as goblins. The opportunities for comedy and mock merry-making were exploited to the full by the conductor, Marc Minkowski, and there were some tender lyric tunes. Other major composers of the French baroque represented during the festival were the Couperins, Leclair, Marais, Lully and Charpentier: can we expect more Campra, Du Mont and Delalande in future years? Charpentier's misfortune was to have been active at the same time as Lully and to have been eclipsed by him, a fate from which he has been rescued by the persistent advocacy of William Christie and Les Arts

Florissants. Their rendition of two mini-operas, the one-act *Les plaisirs de Versailles* and the incomplete *La descente d'Orphée* reflected a wide range of his personality, from the gently languorous, bordering on the bland, to the expressive harmonic writing of Act II of *Orphée*; particularly haunting was the richly sombre sound of Orphée's address to Pluto in the underworld accompanied by two bass gambas. Charpentier's sacred music was represented by the highly expressive singing of Le Concert Spirituel (Augustinerkerk, 28 August - how I wish I could have heard their Lully performance the day before).

Two events drew together both the thematic threads of the festival but the performers as well: La Symphonie du Marais performed open-air music from the grand siècle (Vredenburg, 31 August) and a specially-formed ensemble reproduced the original wind instrumentation of Handel's *Musick for the Royal Fireworks*. The first half presented a foray through the intricacies of French military manoeuvres and exploits from the time just before the Peace of Utrecht and included a graphic battle between the French and Dutch, represented by two simultaneously-played marches; the second half culminated in the detonation of some well-timed bangers during the final minuet.

Music-making and chronicle were also combined in the reconstruction (Vredenburg) of music for a wedding at the Bavarian court in 1565 by Concerto Italiano, the King's Noyse and Currende. If the music (mostly by Lassus, with some help from Rore, Striggio and Andrea Gabrieli) did not quite fit the contemporary description, this could easily be forgiven in the light of the splendour and conviction of the antiphonal accompaniment on strings and wind.

What are the chances our western 'classical' music-making and programme selection, already under siege from such phenomena as pop, cross-over and 'world music', developing along the lines pioneered in Utrecht in recent years? The answer depends not only on public awareness and taste but also on the level of subsidy. Although the festival ticket prices are remarkably cheap, and despite a level of private and public funding which appears to be lavish by British standards, the organisers struggle with the same financial uncertainties as elsewhere. Funding problems lay behind the indefinite postponement of one concert (Camerata Trajectina, 3 September). With next year's topics to include the voice, the madrigal comedy, Dufay and Purcell, there is ample scope for enterprising programming. A staged semi-opera of Purcell, perhaps? A lot depends on the generosity of donor institutions in various countries, and it is to be hoped that the British Council will do its best to ensure a strong British presence for the tercentenary of Purcell's death. The festival organisers also hope to explore the links between early and new music (to which one might add the links with non-western music are equally worth exploring). Groups like the Nederlands Kamerkoor, Red Byrd, the Hilliard Ensemble and Camerata Trajectina appear well qualified to take up the challenge.

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DUTCH RECORDINGS

Brian Clark

Holland has for long been a centre of excellence for Early Music, so it is a little surprising that, apart from Ton Koopman and the Amsterdam Baroque Ensemble, we very rarely hear recordings of Dutch artists and even more rarely music by Dutch composers. But now things look set to change. As well as Channel Classics (UK distributor Select), we now have NM Classics, a joint venture between Radio Nederland Wereldomroep (Netherlands Radio International) and CNM (The Centre for Netherlands Music); their UK distributor is Impetus. Although Hellendaal, Wassenaer and, of course, Sweelinck, (surprisingly nothing earlier, so far) are not in any way obscure, a series like this can only enhance the reputation of Dutch musicians and composers.

Hellendaal Six Grand Concertos, Op 3
Wassenaer Sei concerti armonici
 Combattimento Consort Amsterdam, dir J W de Vriend (74' 26" & 59' 30")
NM92019 & NM92030

These are the two most widely-known collections of 18th-century instrumental music by Dutch composers. Hellendaal's Opus 3 was printed in 1758 in England, where the composer had settled. They are quite clearly in the Corellian style, though influenced by works he had doubtless heard in London, where he established a reputation as a solo violinist (he had studied in Padua with Tartini). Movements are sometimes strangely juxtaposed: a wonderfully fluent fugal movement followed by a rather banal march. Wassenaer's concertos are the famous 'Are they or aren't they by Pergolesi?' set, half a dozen exquisite gems with four independent violin lines. They are something of a mixture of Corelli and Vivaldi, revealing a composer partial to graceful melodies, luscious harmonies and robust counterpoint. Combattimento, a new group to me, plays with great precision and a refreshing directness reminiscent of The Parley of Instruments. Their one-to-a-part Wassenaer is at times electrifying - try the very first track. Highly recommended.

Hellendaal Six solos for violoncello, Op 5
 Jaap ter Linden, Ageet Zweistra, Ton Koopman (64' 17")
NM92008

Rather less well known than the Grand Concertos, Hellendaal's sonatas for cello are quite clearly divided into two groups; the first four follow the slow-fast-slow-fast scheme and are technically less demanding than the remaining four, which are of the

more rococo three-movement variety. Sonatas 3 and 4 are omitted here. The performers are, of course, of the first order. Ter Linden is the consummate baroque cellist, as perfectly at ease with semi-quaver passagework (even in Hellendaal's violin-oriented style) as he is in lavish cantabile (and what ornaments!) Zweistra is no second-rater - the two work beautifully in duet. Koopman's continuo is first-rate but after hearing Florilegium's accompaniment in Vivaldi (see below) I tired a little of the constant harpsichord.

van Noordt Organ music
 Leo van Doeselaar (70' 20")
NM92024

The pieces here include four fantasias and various cantus firmus settings of psalm melodies, mostly in three voices. They are played on a restored organ in Leiden by a sympathetic player who not only appears inspired by the music of his countryman but also gives a good account of the instrument itself, exploiting the various stops with supreme judgment. Obscure, perhaps, but worthy of note: van Noordt's is a name which should be more familiar.

Baroque concerti from the Netherlands
 Musica ad Rhenum (71' 43")
NM92037
 Schickhardt, Solnitz, Groneman (2), de Fesch, Hurlebusch

Although these concertos come from the time the composers spent there, de Fesch is the only Netherlands composer and most of the performers have only tenuous links. Not that it takes anything away from the quality of this disc. The six concertos are engaging pieces in their own right and will afford treasure-hunters among the CD fraternity a ready source of rich entertainment. Musica ad Rhenum perhaps lack the sparkle of Combattimento, but these are thoroughly enjoyable performances.

Sweelinck Choral music, vols 1-3
 Netherlands Chamber Choir with various instrumental ensembles. Vol. 1 dir William Christie, Ton Koopman, Peter Phillips; vol. 2 Jan Boeke, Philippe Herreweghe, Peter Phillips; vol. 3 Paul van Nevel
NM92003, 92010, 92015 (3 CDs; 183' 09")

I was intrigued to note that *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* gives twice as much space to *Les Sylphides* as it does to Sweelinck. Almost as a PS the article concludes with the words 'Also wrote secular vocal mus. and sacred songs'. The three volumes of 'sacred songs' in this series set Latin, French, German and Italian texts; their styles are as diverse. The performances

are directed leading choral conductors and feature a variety of instrumental groupings. The Netherlands Chamber Choir is a finely-tuned instrument; only very occasionally the sopranos can tend to sharpness. Overall, though, their commitment is total, the recordings clean and, most importantly, the music is magnificent.

Vivaldi Recorder sonatas
 Walter van Hauwe, van Asperen, Wouter Möller, Frans Robert Berkhou (56' 25")
CCS 6194

There are six pieces on this, the fourth in a series called *Blockflutes*, played by the internationally respected player and teacher, Walter van Hauwe; two from *Il pastor fido* (Nos. 3 and 4), a trio with bassoon (RV 86), a piece from Stockholm (RV 50), and arrangements of a violin sonata (RV 16) and the concerto grosso in A minor (RV 522). Playing an assortment of instruments, van Hauwe confirms that he is technically at the peak of his trade, even if there are occasional lapses of intonation; the accompaniment is sympathetic and sharply focussed.

Vivaldi Six cello sonatas
 Pieter Wispelwey, Florilegium (65' 44")
CCS 6294

For fans of Vivaldi and the cello alike, this disc is a must. Pieter Wispelwey, surely one of the outstanding talents of his generation, teams up with the continuo players of Florilegium for marvellous performances of six sonatas attributed to 'il prete rosso'. Whether or not you agree with the sleeve-note's suggestion that the three dubious pieces (which appear here along with the published nos. 4-6) are by a German, this is quality High Baroque. Apart from the accomplished playing of the soloist, the recording is set apart from many others by the imaginative diversity of accompaniment the Florilegium players create. In particular, Danny Yeadon, whose cello accompanying in Telemann I criticised recently, here shows himself to be an accomplished and sensitive musician. He is well partnered by the keyboard player Neal Peres Da Costa, with Liz Kenny and William Carter on a variety of plucked instruments. I can't wait for the promised CD of Haydn's cello concertos!

UK Distributors

CCS: Select Music and Video Distributors, 34a Holmethorpe Avenue, Holmethorpe Estate, Redhill, Surrey (tel 0737 760020, fax 0737 766316)

NM: Impetus Distribution, PO Box 1324, London W5 2ZU (tel/fax 081 998 6411)

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

The Essential Gregorian Chant Pro Cantione Antiqua, James O'Donnell (71' 10")
United 88035
(James Griffett, Ian Partridge, Gordon Jones, Stephen Roberts, Michael George)

This is a compilation drawn from two existing CDs of chants for Easter and Christmas, and it includes a wide variety of genres and many of the finest Gregorian melodies. I would classify the performance style as 'received English'. Received from what, I'm not quite sure, and I think it would serve the early-music fraternity well to address this question before the Chinese whisper has gone too far down the line. That said, of its type the performance is excellent – both moving and technically immaculate. Although texts are not provided, there is a wonderfully illuminating note by Mary Berry.

Simon Ravens

RENAISSANCE

C. Festa Magnificat etc Huelgas Ensemble, Paul Van Nevel (67' 45")
Sony Vivarte SK 53 116
Magnificat VII toni; Missa Se congis pris (Kyrie & Gloria); Motets Quis dabit oculis, Super flumina Babylonis; madrigals Chi vuol veder, Constantia'l vo' pur dire, E' morta la speranza, Madonna oymè, Quando ritrova la mia pastorella.

The consistent excellence of this Belgian ensemble makes it seem sometimes that anything they unearth and record will automatically be a delight. Costanzo Festa's music has, in fact, long been crying out for closer investigation. In the first half of the 16th century his work for the Sistine Chapel choir made him one of the most famous composers of his age, while modern scholars have hailed him as father of the Italian madrigal. His music is here shown to be consistently, sometimes staggeringly beautiful. The boldness and confident virtuosity of the Mass and Magnificat, superbly recorded here, whet the appetite for more.

D. James Ross

Lechner Historia der Passion...
see page 19

Palestrina Vergine bella; Motets Akademia, Françoise Lasserre (56'18")
Pierre Verany PV794041

This enjoyable recording will confound prejudices against Palestrina's music. It opens with clear, bright iterations of 'Ave' – affirmatively not an English sound – in a beautiful performance by unaccompanied upper voices in which the phrasing and word-colouring exemplify how renaissance sacred music can be both pure and passionate. The standard is not consistently high: the solo voices in Petrarch's 'Vergine' settings have a tendency to bulge and some careless editing rocks the stability of one

madrigal. But the speeds and forward momentum are compelling and the partsinging clearly defined, well-balanced and characterised, bringing out the madrigalian side of Palestrina's writing in both the sacred and secular repertoire.

Selene Mills

Canto del Cavallero José Miguel Moreno vihuela Glossa GCD 920101 (72' 48")
Music by Venegas de Henestrosa, Miguel de Fuenllana, Diego Pisador, Hernando de Cabezón, Enríquez de Valderrábano, Luys Milán

La Guitarra Española José Miguel Moreno vihuela, baroque & classical/romantic guitar Glossa GCD 920103 (72' 50")
Music by Narváez, Milán, Mudarra, López, Guerau, Murcia, Sanz, Sor

The elegant packaging, informative notes in four languages, and generous timings of these discs make an excellent impression, and the contents do not disappoint. The vihuela disc is highly recommended; many of the pieces are new to the catalogue, and all are beautifully played with considerable expressive range. The guitar disc includes more on vihuela plus de Murcia, Guerau and Sanz on 5-course guitar and Sor on a 19th-century instrument. Each group is played with a different historical technique, thus highlighting the distinctions between instruments. Each technique is impressively fluent, and the interpretations are thoughtful and sensitive. The baroque guitar pieces are a particularly welcome addition to this instrument's meagre recorded repertory. I find the programme rather difficult to take in one sitting as the indulgent Sor pieces are a real jolt after Sanz, but the individual parts are excellent. All credit too to Moreni for his skilful DIY production and sound engineering: close your eyes and it is easy to imagine you are in a very intimate concert.

Lynda Sayce

The Mannerist Revolution vocal works by Gesualdo, Monteverdi, Wert & Marenzio. Pomerium Musices, Alexander Blachly. Dorian DOR-90154 (63' 07")
Gesualdo Belta poi che t'assenti, Io tacerò, O vos omnes, Tenebrae factae sunt, Tristis est anima mea, Vulum templo scissum est; Marenzio Crudele acerba, Solo e pensoso; Monteverdi Io mi son giovinetta, Ohimè se tanto amate, Piagn'sospira, Si ch'io vorrei morire; Wert Ahi lass'ogn'or, Voi nemico crudele

The heavily chromatic and volatile vocal music of Gesualdo and others to which the term 'mannerist' is increasingly applied remains some of the most hazardous repertoire to perform. It must sound spontaneous to the point of impetuosity and yet the tuning must be absolutely secure. It is a pleasant change to hear this music sung well by a chamber choir, and these singers clearly have a feel for it and enjoy it. My ordered mind balked slightly at the arbitrary mixture of sacred and profane, but there are many precedents for such a stylistic anthology and this one works well.

D. James Ross

The Tallis Scholars Live in Rome Peter Phillips Gimell CDGIM 994 (73' 00")
Palestrina Surge illuminare, Missa Papae Marcelli, Stabat mater, Alma Redemptoris mater, Magnificat I toni a 8, Nunc dimittis a 8; Allegri Miserere

It is always interesting to hear live recordings, mainly to catch something of the unique dynamic of the concert but also to experience a group without the 'studio factor', that extra gloss with the sound engineer cannot resist, coupled with the endless editing facility a controlled studio situation offers. This recording of concerts given in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of Palestina is slightly less glossy than the standard Tallis Scholars' sound, but has an excitement sometimes lacking in the studio, even when the 'studio' is a sonorous church. Apart from applause, there is no intrusive audience noise and there is a feeling throughout of singers rising to a very special occasion. The recording duplicates some material first recorded by the Tallis Scholars in 1980, the Mass and Miserere, which now sound rather inspired by comparison. This recording is also available on video.

D. James Ross

EARLY BAROQUE

Allegri Miserere, Missa Vidi turbam magnam a 6, De ore prudentis a 3, Repleti sunt omnes a 3, Cantate Domino a 4. A sei voci, Bernard Fabre-Garrus (61' 37")
Astrée Auvidis E 8524

This offers two Misereres. First comes a reconstruction by Jean Lionnet of how it might have sounded with 17th-century embellishments. The CD ends with the standard version (i.e. the one with the top Cs, sung for King's in 1964 by Roy Goodman and for the Tallis Scholars in 1994 by Deborah Roberts); this was published by George Guest, who is very coy about his sources, and represents the end of the tradition. I have some suspicions about the 'early' setting here, and am generally more impressed by the Taverner version (EMI CDC 8 47699 2), even though its editor, Hugh Keyte, has second thoughts and is at present doing further research on the piece. He is sure, incidentally, that the 'chant' verses should be sung to a monotone: other recordings use a psalm tone. We also have half an hour of interesting and well-sung music by Allegri: more, please.

CB

Louis Couperin Harpsichord Suites in D, a, C, F; Tombeau de M. de Blanrocher Laurence Cummings (73' 50")
Naxos 8.550922

Lawrence Cummings was a very respected organ scholar at Christ Church, Oxford; he later studied with Robert Woolley and Jill Severs. This is a promising debut record.

There is a moving performance of the Passacaille in C which sustains its grandeur to the end and the bright pieces come off well. But some of the dance movements need more air to make the music swing. The accented notes can be longer and the shorter notes crisper. Even the sarabandes are dance music, so the first beats should be precise and not over-spread or come late after a sustained up-beat, as happens in the Sarabande in D. At seven minutes, the Tombeau for M. de Blanrocher is over-long. The grand pieces are helped by the sonority of the copy of the big Ruckers from Colmar. But the surviving French harpsichords of around 1660 are crossbarred with a more percussive and reedy tone, and usually with a 4' stop, which would clarify the texture in some places.

Michael Thomas

Frescobaldi Toccate, partite, Canzona, Balletto Laurent Stewart *hpscd* (60' 34")

Pierre Verany PV794032

Toccata 1, 2, 7, 8, 9; Partite sopra lamonicha & romanesca; Aria detta La Frescobalda; Balletto 3; Avidetemi passaggiato

Laurent Stewart discovered the harpsichord in Nice with Béatrice Clérici, who has an old Pesaro instrument. He later studied with Vantalo and Scott Ross and in Lille and Antwerp. Frescobaldi was one of the very influential early Italian keyboard composers who was able to communicate sensation and expression. He gives detailed indications for the performance of his music, but why bother to read these when you can listen to this recording instead? For Laurent Stewart transmits all this with his exceptional musicianship and technique, never allowing the latter to intrude. He contrasts the rhythmic with legato, fast with slow without ever losing the sense of unity of each the work. Particularly beautiful are the unusually slow sections (parts 4, 8 & 11 of *Lamonicha* and parts of the 9th Toccata). The re-iterating motifs build up to cadences, perhaps sometimes a bit hurriedly. The confinement of the mean-tone tuning (Frescobaldi is known to have recommended equal temperament) is broken by the chromatic notes of the *Romanesca* but sound so pure in the 14th part. I shall buy a few copies for my Frescobaldi students, and also for ordinary music lovers.

Michael Thomas

Schütz Geistliche Chormusik 1648 (the 6-parts motets) The Chorus of Emmanuel Music, Craig Smith (66' 37")

Koch 3-7174-2 H1

I first played this in the car on a wet Dutch camp-site and found it boring; returning to it at home with the score, I enjoyed it thoroughly. The moral is not so much that one should choose ones location but that the singing is not moulded precisely enough and that it needed the score to help imagine more fully what Schütz was intending. Details are passed over and speeds are a fraction slow. The enthusiastic notes by the composer John Harbison rightly state 'the real life of the music, rhythmically, harmonically, and finally spiritually, is in the exact setting of each word and line'. Sadly,

the choir (21 singers) does not project the German clearly enough. Worth having for the music; but I hope that by the time they record the rest of the set the conductor can tighten the choir's delivery.

CB

Stöeffken Suites pour viole seule Jonathan Dunford (60' 11")
Collection Alain Zaepffel 204382

Most readers will be more familiar with the spelling Steffkin, though only viol enthusiasts are likely to know much of his music. In fact, there was very little of it around until the discovery of the Goëss MSS. Of the 154 movements listed in the Gamba Society index, Dunford has recorded 27 divided into 5 suites. He is a pupil of Savall, but plays here in a suitably restrained way. Technically he is in complete command, and there is little feeling of hearing an instrument play beyond its natural capacity which has been common on other lyra recordings. I have a sneaking suspicion that that might not be a stylistic compliment: should a recording suggest some of the energetic movement that is so striking when one sees this repertoire performed? A valuable addition to the recorded repertoire.

CB

Viadana Vespri per l'Assunzione della Beata Vergine Vox Herperia, Cappella Musicale di S. Marco, L'Amalteo, dir. Romano Vettori
Fonè 92 F 08 CD (70' 42")
Vespers etc. from op. 27, 1612, with organ pieces by G. Gabrieli.

These Vespers of 1612, almost exactly contemporary with Monteverdi's 1610 publication, illustrate the fallacy of the 'big names' approach to performance and recording. Viadana too worked in Mantua and Venice, where he clearly had access to large choral and instrumental forces, and this impressive sequence probably provides a more representative picture of music-making in the Italy of the early 17th century than discs of the quirky Monteverdi. The groups who perform here are drawn from across the north of Italy and are marshalled for the recording in a layout which Viadana would have been recognised, namely *Choro favorito* with *basso principale*, *Capella*, and *Cori acuto e grave* with instruments *colla parte*. The resulting lavish textures are handled with authority by Romano Vettori.

D. James Ross

De Vitae Fugacitate: Lamentos, cantatas y arias Claudio Cavina alto, Concerto delle Viole, Roberto Gini (71' 17")
Glossa GCD 920901

Buxtehude *Jubilate, Klaglied*; Geist Es war aber, O Traurigkeit; Adam Krieger 6 songs; Schein Christ, unser Herr; Schütz *In lectulo per noctes* (SWV 272-3)

Musica en Tiempos de Valázquez Ensemble La Romanesca, José Miguel Moren (62' 45")
Glossa GCD920201

(Music by Bartolomé de Selma, Durón, Guerau, Hidalgo, Marín, Martín y Coll, Ruiz de Ribayaz, Sanz)

These two discs from a company new to me impress even before hearing a note, with their substantial, well presented book-

lets packed in a box, not squashed into the jewel case. The content too is impressive. *De Vitae Fugacitate* is a programme of German vocal concertos, mostly of a funeral nature, framed by half a dozen of Krieger's marvellous and sadly-neglected songs. The instrumental sound of viols, archlute, two theorboes and organ is bewitching. Claudio Cavina is the main singer; he is a fine falsettist, but I found listening to so much slow music that was high in his register created a sense of strain that was not inherent in the music. It is unfortunate that the cover picture upon which the note-writer enthuses is the forged portrait of the aged Schütz.

The Spanish disc has less familiar music (to me at least) but is all the more enticing for that. Again, it is the instrumental playing that struck me most (perhaps because I'm a continuo player, not a solo singer). But it is so refreshing to hear Spanish music without Mrs Savall that I am quite happy to accept Marta Almajano: she does, in fact, carry the record rather more successfully than the alto on the German companion. The 54-page booklet has a thorough introduction by Luis Robledo in four languages (though only Spanish song-texts): his opening words 'surprise and seduction' might have made a catchier title! Both records certainly deserve to sell well.

CB

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Ascension Oratorio (BWV 11), Easter Oratorio (BWV 249) Monika Frimmen, Ralf Popken, Christoph Prégardien, David Wilson-Johnson, Orchestra & Choir of the Age of Enlightenment, Gustav Leonhardt
Philips 442 119-2 (73' 23")

These are good accounts of Bach's less-known oratorios, but problems remain to be solved. To use organ terminology, it's the registrations that worry me. In the tutti movements it sounds as though the choir have to sing with rather unsubtle, unvaried emphases for fear of being swamped by the slightly too gutsy playing of the orchestra. Beautifully though all the soloists sing, I'm still not sure that mature males (whether haute-contre or countertenor) are, in Bach, a good choice. Accompaniment of some of the arias sounds as strained as we have come to expect (notably that for tenor in BWV249), but there is truly exquisite singing in the ensemble recitatives and playing on both oboes throughout.

Stephen Daw

Bach Cantatas Erschallat, ihr Lieder (BWV 172), Also hat Gott (BWV 68), Wie schön leuchtet (BWV 1) Arleen Augér, Ortrun Wenkel, Peter Schreier, Theo Adam (172, 68), Siegfried Lorenz (1), Thomanerchor Leipzig, Neues Bachisches Collegium Musicum, Hans-Joachim Rötzsch
Berlin Classics BC 2150-2 (59' 58")

These cantatas were recorded in 1982 and 1984 in the 'symphonic' tradition then practiced throughout East Germany and the other Eastern bloc states. It is easy to mock this tradition, but it is here comparatively refined and sounds strikingly sincere.

Balances and articulations, even speeds in the big movements, may strike us as unsuitable, but at least they are in themselves consistent and effective. More of an obstacle to enjoyment are the operatic vibrati of solo singers, awkward continuo realisations, sluggish recitatives and poor intonation. The Thomanerchor, however vast, nevertheless always makes one notice new felicities in Bach's setting of the words.

Stephen Daw

Bach Brandenburg Concertos Nos 1-6, Suites 2 & 3. Concentus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt (2 CDs: 157' 39") Teldec 4509-95980-2

This bargain reissue is not the historic first recording of the Brandenburgs made by Concentus Musicus in 1964 at the Schönbrunn Palace but of a somewhat less eventful, more routine version from 1984-5 (with the amiable but comparatively staid Herbert Tachezi no substitute for the dazzling harpsichord playing by Gerog Fischer in the earlier recording of Concerto 5). The two Suites remind us that the Harnoncourts always understood rhythm and dance and, unlike the Concertos, these compare with the best later recordings. I heard Concentus live around 1978, and then found them far slicker and less variable than they sound here. But I don't find these Brandenburgs their best Bach and would prefer to buy the Parrott or Goodman versions of the concertos. Stephen Daw

Bach Lute music (BWV 995-1000, 1006a). Jakob Lindberg (2 discs 110' 01") BIS CD 587/588

So high is Jakob Lindberg's reputation, both as a soloist and through the Dowland Consort, that I came to this recording with probably unreasonably high expectations. However, I was not disappointed overall. Many of these pieces are extremely difficult, but his technique was such that they flowed off his lute with extraordinary ease. Not only is he one of the neatest players I have every heard in terms of playing noise, but his skill in producing an incredibly clean and accurate rendering made for an enviable performance. My only criticism was that in places it lacked phrasing and subtlety in nuance. Some movements plodded out too slowly for the feel of the music, and each note sounded exactly as the last had done, losing the shape and lyricism of the line, both of which were surprising given his evident mastery of technical matters. Although I would recommend the recording as undoubtedly one of the best made of these works, I have to admit some reservations about its musicality, where overcoming the technical difficulties has overshadowed the music itself. Julia Craig-McFeely

Handel Concerti Grossi op. 3 & 6 Concentus Musicus, Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt Teldec 4509-95500-2 (4 CDs, 236' 54")

An economic reissue of recordings from 1981 & 1983 with 4 discs in a double box. These are marvellously lively performances,

catching every detail of musical interest with sparkle and vitality. But in the process we lose some of the nobility and grandeur of Handel's style – these are not just dispensable attributes of Handel the Victorian! Harnoncourt is sometimes aggressive, sometimes in a hurry (e.g. the *Andante* of No. 10, where Handel's transformation of Kuhnau, turning an 8-bar phrase into a 10-bar one, does not benefit from speed). I have no hesitation in recommending this to those who know the music already, but am dubious if it were to be anyone's main access to these works. The first-time buyer requires information, and the booklet here just lists movements with no notes. CB

Handel Jephtha John Mark Ainsley Jephtha, Michael George Zebul, Catherine Denley Storge, Christiane Oelze Iphis, Axel Köhler Hamor, Julia Gooding Angel; RIAS Kammerchor, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Marcus Creed (3 discs, 160' 07") Berlin Classics BC 1057-2

This is a winner: a recording that does justice to the last and perhaps the most deeply personal of Handel's great dramatic oratorios, the composer himself perhaps identifying with its opening words 'It must be so' (repeated at the climax of Jephtha's Act II *accompagnato*), a reluctant submission to the inevitable as his sight fails him. Marcus Creed directs a most moving performance with a strong cast of English and German soloists, ably supported by the Berlin choir and players. As the central figure, John Mark Ainsley makes a lyrical Jephtha; one might sometimes wish for a little more weight, but the singing is unfailingly committed and beautiful. Catherine Denley is a dramatic and urgent Storgè, Michael George a solid and dependable Zebul and Alex Köhler a more-than-usually-ardent Hamor. The *angelus ex machina* who saves the day is ably sung by Julia Gooding. The highlight for me however was Christiane Oelze's celestially lovely Iphis. Listen to her marvelous tragic scenes in Acts II and III, which would wring tears from even a 'vile Ammonite'. More, please! Alastair Harper

Handel Marian Cantatas & Arias Anne Sofie von Otter, Musica Antiqua Köln, Reinhard Goebel, (76' 20") DGG Archiv 439 866-2

Haec est Regina virginum, HWV 235; Ah! che troppo ineguali, HWV 230; Donna, che in ciel, HWV 233; Il pianto di Maria, HWV 234 [by G. B. Ferrandini].

I once went to a Musica Antiqua Köln Handel concert where every piece was in some way or other dubious: an excellent way of making people listen to good music unattached to a famous name! Here, HWV 230 survives in autograph and 233 & 235 have the hallmarks which confirm authenticity: ideas which Handel used again in later works. But 234 lacks these, so was obviously suspect even before the recent demonstration that it was by Ferrandini. No regrets that it was recorded, however: it is no anticlimax. As always, the playing is passionate and imaginative, if sometimes quirky and violent. At times, I felt that von

Otter might have made a better match with a more conventional group, but her singing is dramatic and stylish. CB

Handel Messiah. Barbara Schlick, Sandrine Piau, Andreas Scholz, Mark Padmore, Nathan Berg, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie (77'00 + 65'40) Harmonia Mundi HMC 901498.99

This is an operatic Messiah, full of Baroque gesture and with a slight but distinct French flavour. Christie directs a compelling performance with taut, crisp rhythms and well-contrasted tempi – though tending on the fast side (with some thrilling refiner's fire and raging nations.) The strings of Les Arts Florissants play like angels. Christie follows later performance texts (the '1742' on the cover is no indication of version) with horns reinforcing the trumpets in Parts II and III and woodwind double the choruses. The organ-accompaniment in the secco recitatives feels wrong, though, for a work designed for a secular ambience. Soloists are without exception tonally beautiful and commendably stylish. Nathan Berg in particular uses the full palette of his rich voice to good effect (listen to the hushed opening of his 'darkness' *accompagnato*). With the remaining singers, small doubts creep in; one occasionally feels that words have been sacrificed to beauty of line. The alto, Andreas Scholl, for example, has a searingly lovely voice and formidable technique, but often sounds curiously cool because key words (such as 'despised') don't make their presence-felt. Similarly the chorus, though unfailingly agile and secure (e.g. in the tricky dotted runs in 'His yoke is easy') are sometimes let down by insufficiently clear words, and some of the drama and urgency is lost. One Gallic touch which becomes a little wearisome is their insistent (choral) trilling (Behold the La-rib of God); how authentic are these? Overall, however, a commendably stylish performance. Alastair Harper

Vivaldi Stabat mater, Nisi Dominus, Recorder Concertos in a (RV 108) & G (op. 10/4; RV 435) Charles Brett, Musica Antiqua, Christian Mendoze (director & recorder) (53' 04") Pierre Verany PV04033

Recorder players who metamorphose into conductors are a ubiquitous lot nowadays. Mendoze of Toulon, a self-taught musician, choreographer and director of an early music festival, conducts a sparse string band: though the continuo sound is good, two strings per part just doesn't make for acceptable intonation. He also throws in two cautiously-played recorder concertos to balance the two beautifully (and dutifully) sung motets. Not a disc to recruit converts to the male alto voice. Kah-Ming Ng

Vivaldi Le quattro stagioni, op. 8/1-4. Enrico Onofri, Il Giardino Armonico, Milan. Teldec 4509-96158-2 (60' 47")

This irrepressible Milanese avant-garde period ensemble's *Seasons* has been awaited for a long time with anxiety and trepidation. As

expected, no cross-rhythm is left unplayed, no ironic stone unturned and no rhetorical gesture un-reinterpreted. Winter seems to provide the best harvest for their modernist ways: it is viciously marrow-chilling. They haven't outdone themselves this time, but this band which dared to make an ugly sound - consequently taking Europe by storm - still thrills, showing that they are true ambassadors of their own culture. The absence of programme notes is compensated for by the inclusion of two extra concerti, nail-bitingly performed. Truly the Versace of all period groups! Kah-Ming Ng

The Amorous Flute David Munrow *rec.*, flageolet, Oliver Brookes *b. viol.*, cello, Robert Spencer *theorbo*, guitar, Christopher Hogwood *hpscd* (44' 18") Decca Serenata 440 079-2

First issued 20 years ago, this is an attractive anthology of music circulating in England in the decades around 1700, mostly in the Italian vein, starting with *Faronell's Ground* (e.g. *La folia*) and ending with an anonymous Italian sonata. There are sonatas by D. Purcell, Parcham and Handel, dances by Dieupart and unaccompanied pieces. Munrow produces a thinner sound than is now fashionable, not necessarily a bad thing. The variety of accompaniment was imaginative for the date, but the recorded relationship between instruments is not always convincing. CB

Mexican Baroque: music from New Spain Chanticleer, Joseph Jennings. (57' 41") Teldec: Das Alte Werk 4509-93333-2 Ignacio de Jerusalen *Responsorio II de S. S. José; Dixit Dominus; Mass in D*; Manuel de Zumaya *Solfa de Pedro; Hieremiae Prophetae Lamentationes; Celebren, publiquen.*

The American ensemble Chanticleer are here joined by a baroque orchestra for a fascinating collection of choral works by little-known Mexican masters of the mid-18th century. Jerusalem's works are in the grand baroque manner, including a fine poly-choral mass, in which the instrumental and vocal forces (including Chanticleer's remarkable male sopranos) acquit themselves very well. The real treasures of this collection, though, are by Manuel de Zumaya, whose mastery of baroque compositional techniques with a Latin American accent shines through in two thrilling vernacular motets, while an unexpected eclecticism is evident from a set of Lamentations in high renaissance style. D. James Ross

CLASSICAL

J. C. Bach *Sinfonias op. 6, 9, 18 (complete); Overture La calamità* Netherlands Chamber Orchestra, David Zinman (74' 58 + 71' 04") Philips 442 275-2

This 2-CD-in-one-box set is excellent value, with 15 Symphonies and an Overture, including the three double-orchestra pieces of opus 18. The performances (from 1974-6) are stylish, and remarkably little is lost by the use of modern instruments. It is very

bad timing for the English Sinfonia that their recent release of opus 18 cannot compete with this. CB

Haydn Concerti a due lire organizzate (H. VIIh: 1-5, London Versions). Haydn Sinfonietta Wien, Manfred Huss (61' 53") Koch 3-1379-2

The *lira organizzata*, a cross-breed of hurdy gurdy and portative organ (let the fact that not a single example has survived speak for itself) was designed for the music-loving Ferdinand IV, King of Naples, by Norbert Hadrava, a secretary at the Austrian mission. The five works written by Haydn for the pair to play are recorded here in their later version for flute and oboe, with accompaniment for string sextet with two horns. This really is music for an after-dinner play-along in the drawing room. It makes perfect background music: there is nothing to startle passive listeners, though anyone paying closer attention will be charmed by its simplicity. In these performances, they will also be charmed by the playing. Siu Peasgood and Paul Goodwin substitute for the *lire organizzate* (Reinhard Czasch plays Flute II in the first concerto) with the Haydn Sinfonietta Wien under the direction of Manfred Huss, whose excellent notes shine light upon the extraordinary background to the pieces. There are occasional blips in intonation between viola and basses, but this is a thoroughly enjoyable hour's entertainment. BC

Hasse Motetti virtuosi (Gentes barbarae, Alta nubes, Salva Regina in A & in G). Monique Zanetti (S), Jennifer Lane (A), Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester Opus 111 OPS 30-100 (66' 09")

The four pieces on this disc were written for singers at Venice's Ospedale degli Incurabili. While the *Salve Regina* settings treat the text in four sections, each more as *arioso* than aria, the two poetic texts are in the normal solo motet form of two da capo arias separated by a recitative and ending with an Alleluia. Monique Zanetti and Jennifer Lane sing beautifully throughout, coping equally well with the extended melismata of quicker arias and the elegant cantabile of the slower ones. I was rather disappointed by their apparent reluctance to exploit opportunities for cadenzas - surely the virtuose for whom the pieces were written would have been more imaginative. Martin Gester and Le Parlement de Musique (one player per part) produce some wonderful sounds - the dramatically contrasting sections of the opening aria will show what I mean. I hope we will have more of this repertoire from the same performers - how about some of the Galuppi mentioned in the informative sleeve-notes? BC

Jomelli La Passione di Gesù Sofia Mukhametova *Maddalena*, René Jacobs *Giovanni*, Gianni Puddu *Pietro*, Carlo de Bortoli *Giuseppe d'Arimatea*, Società Cameristica di Lugano, Arturo Sacchetti Accord 204352 (71' 27" + 60' 41") Metastasio's *La Passione* was set originally

by Caldara (1730), and at least 8 further composers used the same text. Jomelli's 1749 setting was particularly popular, and was even published in London (no oratorios were printed in Italy). But despite having the Garland facsimile to help sustain my attention, I found it very difficult to stay awake. Each aria seems interesting and inventive at first, but a lack of rhythmic impetus made me long for its end. The performers do their best. The playing is stylish (particularly for an Italian performance of 1983) and the singing good (particularly René Jacobs). But there are not enough strings: the music is clearly orchestral and the chamber sound feels wrong. An interesting issue: others may be more attuned to its mid-century musical language. CB

Mozart Coronation Mass K.317; Exsultate, jubilate K.165; Vesperae solennes de confesore K.339 Barbara Bonney, Catherine Wyn Rogers, Jamie MacDougall, Stephen Gadd, The English Concert, Trevor Pinnock DGG Archiv 445 353-2

This epitome of the best of British music-making is surely destined to be a best-seller, with its gut-strung clarity (good for Mozart string figurations) and expressively-incisive wind playing, along with the full-bloodied singing of a small professional choir. Pinnock favours soloists with a healthy throb in their vibrato. Don't be put off by Bonney's undulating opening syllable in *Exsultate*: she is a capable coloraturist who sports some pretty stylish embellishments. Kah-Ming Ng

MISCELLANEOUS

Musica-Kuora Fiamma Lucente dir. Pecca Kosti-ainen, Pekka Toivanen (67' 49") MUCD 1

arr. Toivanen *Old French Noëls*; Charpentier *Messe de Minuit*; Lechner *Passion*

This is worth getting for the Lechner, a motet-passion given a fluent performance by a Finnish amateur choir. Comparison with the American group singing Schütz (see page 17) is almost entirely in the Finns' favour: a far better tempo (it feels just a bit hasty, probably a matter of phrasing rather than tempo) and a better feel for German. There are no doubt better performances of the Charpentier, though this is effective enough. The pastiche noëls are probably more enjoyable at a Christmas concert than cold on a CD, especially at the beginning of it: start with the Lechner. CB

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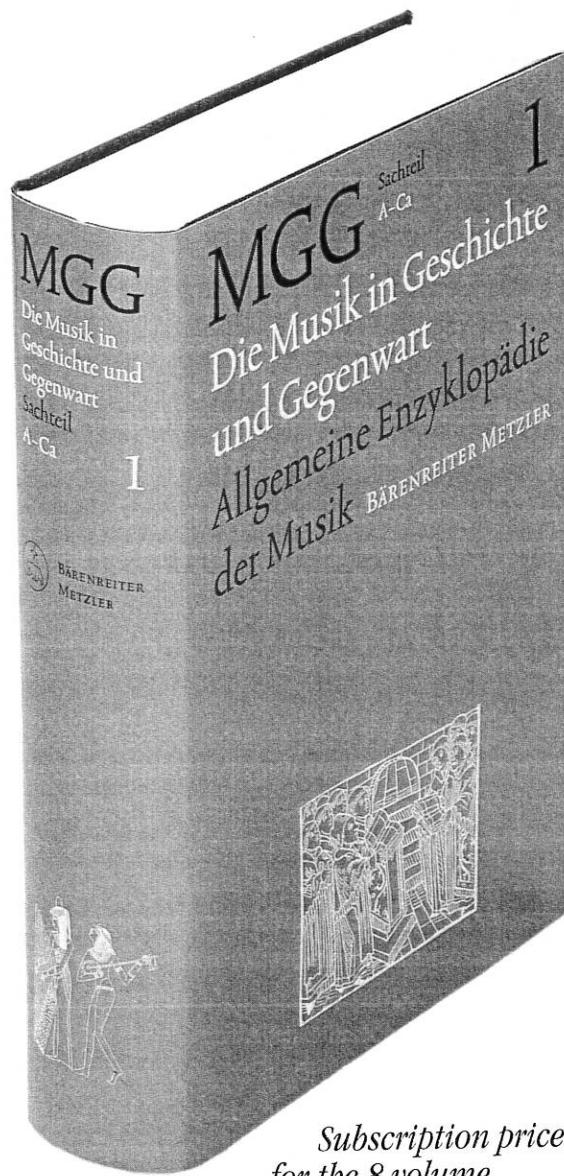
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