

# Early Music REVIEW

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NB. There is no August issue. However, it is likely that the September issue will be sent out quite early in August, so diary entries for September should reach us by 15 July.

Criticism is easier in a conforming society where arbiters can impose a taste that is accepted by the rest of us. But in our pluralist world, there is no common consent on aesthetic matters, merely a series of pressure groups and cliques, of which the loose conglomeration of people playing and enjoying early music is one. To some extent we are a mouthpiece for that group, in that all involved with *EMR* have in common some concept of the desirability of performing music with respect to what can be discovered about how it was performed originally, on the grounds that it will consequently sound better and mean more to us now. However, there is still plenty of room for disagreement within that vague consensus.

Our reviewers have been chosen, apart from the negative reason of not being regular reviewers for other UK publications, from three categories. There are scholars with a keen interest in performances practice. There are professional performers (at least four of them appeared in concerts covered by Andrew Benson-Wilson's reviews this month); they are obviously in a difficult position in writing about colleagues, but seem to be able to manage it without embarrassment. And there are enthusiastic amateur performers with specific knowledge of certain areas of the repertoire. The extent of their musical qualifications does not concern me, especially since I don't have any myself; I am more concerned with their enthusiasm and powers of discrimination. This variety means that not all reviews will pick up the latest academic points, and some will be more explicitly concerned with theories of performance practice than others. But collectively they offer a variety of approach.

If we sent the same CD to two reviewers, we might well get two contradicting evaluations. (See the alternative concert reviews on pp. 17 & 28.) A review is more useful if you know the taste of the reviewer. So we have tried to maintain continuity and typecast reviewers to a narrower field than they might perhaps like; the regular reader then has enough of a feel for a reviewer's taste to be able to say: 'if x doesn't like it because of y, I'll probably enjoy it.'

CB

## Books and Music

Clifford Bartlett

### DIVINA & MUNDANA

*Musica Divina: Antologia di musiche polifoniche dei secoli XV e XVI* a cura di Giovanni Acciai, Marco Berrini e Marco Boschini (*I Quaderni della Cartellini: Polifonia sacra, vi*). Milan: Suvini Zerboni (S.10962 Z.) 1995. xxxi + 228pp, L60,000

*Musica Divina: Messe polifoniche dei secoli XVI, XVII e XVIII* a cura di Giovanni Acciai, Marco Berrini e Marco Boschini (*I Quaderni della Cartellini: Polifonia sacra, viii*). Milan: Suvini Zerboni (S.11204 Z.) 1997. xlv + 266pp, L60,000

*Musica Mundana: An Anthology of Secular Polyphonic Music of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* edited by Giovanni Acciai, Marco Berrini e Marco Boschini (*I Quaderni della Cartellini*). Milan: Suvini Zerboni (S.11130 Z.), 1996. lxxvii + 285pp, L60,000

These three paperbacks are elegantly produced and firmly bound in sections, not just glued. The use of an English title page for one of them and the presence of a translated introduction in that and the mass volume suggests that the intended market is international. But in some ways they are very Italian, and the critical aspects of the following comments are intended as positive suggestions to make a good series more acceptable in the transalpine world. A great attraction is an approach to repertoire which is very different from most anthologies of polyphonic music that I have seen. A problem is the price. Each volume comes out at about £22.00 (with a slight reduction if you buy all three, but none for multi-copies of a single volume). In comparison, the *Oxford Choral Classics* anthologies run to about 400 pages, have a slightly larger format to take much more music, and cost £8.95. Having some involvement with that series, I'm perhaps biased. But I am happy with the way it is based on solid editorial work on the sources but wears its learning lightly. The Italian series, however, takes its musicology so seriously, even in the advertising brochure, which describes the music as 'transcribed in accordance with the most modern philological criteria', although the only oddity in the transcription is the inclusion of what seem to be modern Italian sol-fa signs on semitones (not renaissance solmisation syllables, whose importance one preface stresses). English tends not to use 'philological' in that context, and no English singer will be enticed by an edition in which the editor mentions his 'semeiographic and semeiologic standpoint'.

Despite this, there are several weaknesses on the musicological front. Can there be no textual *cruces* anywhere in the three volumes? There is not a single variant reading quoted. Nor are sources consistently given. *Musica Mundana* gives a list, the *Musica Divina* mass volume specifies them for only two of the five works, while the motet volume (as I will for brevity call the *Antologia di musiche polifoniche...*) only betrays

sources when it happens to include a facsimile of a page from one of them. In fact, it and *Musica Mundana* are usefully adorned with many facsimiles of title pages and individual parts, though the quality of the reproductions is variable. Texts are printed separately at the end of the introduction. For the sacred works, this seems a waste of space; there is no verse structure to be clarified, nor are there extra verses that are not underlaid. It is odd that the sources of the texts are not even identified; only from the facsimiles does the user know that *Cantantibus organis* is for St Cecilia and *Sancta Maria succurre miseris* for St. Mary of the Snows. The user who is so unfamiliar with the mass that the text has to be printed separately is unlikely to be aware of the liturgical function of other texts. The secular texts have additional verses, which would be far more use placed near to the music, preferably underlaid. They are difficult to find, since there is no item number to link text to music.

Each piece has the customary prefatory staves, but the compass of each part, in most editions also placed at the beginning of the piece, is set here out separately, with great wasting of space: that of *Musica Mundana* takes ten pages. I suppose it makes it easier to see at a glance suitable ranges when selecting pieces, but that could be done much more economically by listing original clefs after each title in the index. The editors are clearly aware of *chiavette*, but make no recommendation concerning transposition and print everything at the original pitch-notation. I presume that the sol-fa syllables imply that Italians don't read to a fixed pitch, so it is no problem to them. But it is to us, and there should certainly have been some explicit remark on the subject. Note values are halved. There is no consistency in the octave at which the C3 clef is transcribed. I can see no point in devising a new way of giving time signatures:  $\mathbb{C}$  and 3/2 are perfectly acceptable.

Turning to the music, the Mass volume is very varied. Anyone who has sung Italian madrigals will know Arcadelt's *Il bianco e dolce cigno*, so a parody mass on it by Stefano Bernardi (1624) for C1, C3, C4, F4 (voice-parts are indicated in this review by the original clefs), old-fashioned as befitting the treatment of an 80-year-old original, would make singing it an interesting experience. A three-voice mass (C4, C4, F4 & bc) in C printed as by Carissimi only appears indirectly under dubious works in *New Grove*. The Sartori *et al.* 1975 catalogue lists two MSS in the British Library and three at Christ Church, plus a single 18th-century tenor part in Pistoia; only two of the sources have it in the three-voice form. A note on p. 111 about a bar being illegible in the source (in the singular) suggests that the editors have only seen one of them. The introduction says nothing about the mass's authenticity, but claims that scholars agree on their

conviction that it is a work of the composer's maturity from around 1665. Since we are not given the original mensuration signs, we can only guess what is happening at the changes to triple time and whether the editorial  $\text{min} = \text{minim}$  is correct. Since there are no solo/tutti marks, one presumes that it is intended for soloists; I suspect that it could easily become heavy with a chorus.

Orindio Bartolini's Mass a5 (G2, C2, C3, C4, F4 & bc) was published in Venice in 1634; he was a singer at San Marco, then was *maestro di cappella* at Udine from 1609-1635. The continuo part has *piano* and *forte* depending on whether all parts are singing, except curiously the opening, in simple block chords, is *piano*: a romantic, quiet start? The introduction talks of expansion from four to five parts as if it was a recent invention rather than a standard 16th-century texture. I don't see much Gabrielian influence, and rather than pointing generally to the spaces in the texture the editor might reflect whether it is for solo voice or tutti, and if the latter, whether the dynamic marks indicate the changes of texture. I'm puzzled about the clefs: G2 & F4 together are odd. As it stands, it fits SATBarB; the table of ranges is wrong to extend the middle part a fourth higher in the Gloria.

A *Messa a due soprani e basso* (with bc) by Durante leads us into the next century: is it for two castrati, or would the upper parts have been sung by the boys who were trained in church to see if it was worth giving them the operation? Several pages of the source are reproduced but not identified. The work does not seem to relate to any of those listed in *New Grove* unless it is another version of one for TTB; there certainly seems to be no reason why it shouldn't be sung thus; it looks worth singing, at whatever octave. Finally comes a short *Missa 'Stylo a cappella'* (without Gloria) by Salieri for C1 C3 C4 F4 without continuo, written in 1767 when he was in his late teens: a fluent exercise.

I had better be briefer about the other volumes. The motet collection avoids many of the pieces that recur from anthology to anthology. The order is very roughly chronological. There is an untypical preponderance of pieces for four voices, though the most substantial item is the last of Andrea Gabrieli's six-voice penitential psalms (G2 G2 C2 C3 C3 F3). The edition gives the original clef for the bass wrongly as F4, but the conjunction of G2 and F4 is right in Tallis's *O salutaris*. The most curious inclusion is Victoria's *St John Passion* with none of the chant and no indication that the polyphony doesn't continue at each double bar.

*Musica Mundana* is not just secular, but rather secular Italian music of the lighter forms and styles, even if not always technically *villanelle* and the like. Consequently, there is a fair amount for three voices and nothing for more than five – the opportunity to include one of the reworkings a6 by Lassus of *Chi chili chi?* or the like is missed. The longest piece (291 bars) is Verezore's *La bataglia taliana*, useful since otherwise the only publication I know is of a lute version; it is important because of its association with Jannequin in

the battle-piece tradition. If the English title-page is a serious bid for the Anglo-American market, it would be sensible to print the separate texts in smaller type and add a translation alongside them. This is a refreshing collection, though its levity prevents it being recommended to those who don't know the more serious fare. Our reader who had never heard of *Girometta* will find Azzaiolo's setting on p. 49.

In conclusion, these are promising anthologies, but editorial procedures need tightening up, with essential information given concisely. Of the others in the series, two devoted to the motets of Lotti (composer of some very fine madrigals) are tempting. There is also a volume of *Villanelle e villotte*, Salieri's *Scherzi armonici* and a Magnificat by A. Scarlatti.

#### ROSSETER FOR LUTE

*The Lute Music of Philip Rosseter* Edited by Robert Spencer and revised by John H. Robinson and Stewart McCoy. The Lute Society, 1998. xiii + 21 + 8 pp.

I associate Rosseter with lighter lute songs and the sadly-fragmentary *Lessons for Consort* (1609). I suppose I assumed that he wrote a lute solo or two, but this assembles 13 pieces, one a Prelude only 13 bars long. The edition was originally prepared by Bob Spencer in 1989; an appendix contains his own synthesis for the pieces that have more than one source: the edition itself prints versions separately. As well as the tablature, with fold-out pages to avoid turns, there is an introduction and critical report, with blank pages filled by facsimiles from Rosseter's publications. The March edition of *Lute News* mops up the complete lute music of Edward Blanks, Jeremy Chamberlain, Daniel Farrant, Andrew Marks, Henry Porter, William Simmes, Thomas Smyth and Thomas Vautor (the lot taking only 16 pages of it), plus 16 pages of Holborne. There is also an article by Ephraim Segerman on gut stringing and a consumer's guide to summer schools.

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#### FA-LA-LA

Lionel Pike *Hexachords in Late-Renaissance Music* Ashgate, 1998. viii + 237pp, £49.50. ISBN 1 85928 455 8

I should have written about this last month, but abandoned it for the *Atlas* history, which seemed more tempting fare. I suspect many readers share my worry about solmisation, feeling that they should take it more seriously, yet not really getting it into their system. Perhaps there should be a summer school with sol-fa replacing texts every morning before the coffee break. Some scholars argue that the system was just a way of learning the notes and that composers were its masters rather than its servants; I suspect that they may be making excuses for their inability to think in its terms. What Pike shows is that some pieces by major composers of the renaissance yield a richer meaning if examined through solmisation. This is effectively illustrated in the

long chapter on various emulating settings of *Cruda Amarilli*, culminating in Monteverdi. Some of Pike's analytical points are apparent from any theoretical standpoint, but others depend on the hexachordal structure and the syllables which it implies. Some pieces, however, seem deliberately to ignore solmisation possibilities. It is quite a tough book to read, but worth persevering. The index regrettably omits individual titles and the list of pieces discussed, which could have been used to refer to the relevant page in the book, just lists editions. This has some curiosities: no edition of Avery Burton's hexachord mass is quoted and there are entries for Casimiri and Haberl as editors of Palestrina, but for no other editors, not even Haberl as editor of Lassus. Returning to its substance, the reader will continually be checking Pike's readings of some famous pieces against his own experience: does his explanation of how the music is working give, as they say in other contexts, added value? Do we care that we are missing points that the original singers (perhaps more than listeners) would have appreciated?

#### ESCORIAL LITURGY

Michael Noone *Music and Musicians in the Escorial Liturgy under the Habsburgs, 1563-1700* (Eastman Studies in Music, 9). University of Rochester Press, 1998. xvii + 396pp, \$99.50 (UK £55.00). ISBN 1 878822 71 3

What do you do when you find yourself well into your doctoral research and find that your subject does not yield what you were expecting? It was reasonable to assume that the lavishly-endowed Escorial Palace and Chapel would have been a centre for the performance of music by the distinguished composers of the Spanish *capilla real*. But in fact, not until after the death of Philip II and its decline in importance was polyphony performed to any great extent. Indeed, the regulations stated 'that there be in no manner, neither in any day or feast, polyphony' (p. 87), though this could be slightly mitigated by the use of *fabordón* and simple settings which preserved the chant as *cantus firmus* without modifying its notation. So Noone manages to write an interesting book showing that what he and most potential readers expected is not true. For a start, he demolishes the alleged musical interests of Philip. Even the separate Spanish and Flemish chapels in Madrid are a myth: the Flemings were paid separately, but sang with the Spaniards (p. 76, quoting research by L. Robledo). Apart from a carillon, the only instrument Philip permitted was the organ, seven of which apparently played together: one wonders what and how? Was *alternatim* organ polyphony permitted or did they play the chant unadorned?

There is much interesting information on tempo: the speed of chant could be determined by the time available for the service, including imperceptible changes if proceedings were not running to time. Maintaining pitch was also important. The authority of the written chant-book is interesting; monks must still have mostly known the liturgy by heart, since the books, large though they were, cannot have been visible to all; but uniformity was important, especially at a

time of chant reform. I presume that Noone's background did not prepare him for writing a book on chant. Consequently there is no comparison between the practices at the Escorial and those elsewhere, so the reader never knows whether the information quoted shows practice that was standard or exceptional; this affects conclusions the reader might make about chant performance in other contexts.

During the 17th century, the Chapel fell more into line with practice elsewhere with regard to instruments and polyphony. The documents quoted from the 1630s (pp. 130-147) are of enormous interest, and by 1690 we have an account of an event with nine choirs, including violins, clarines, harps and archlute.

About half the book is devoted to narrative, full of often-lengthy and always fascinating quotations from the sources. This is followed by catalogues of polyphonic MSS from the Escorial, biographies of the musicians, the Spanish texts of some documents and two samples of music from the MSS: a simple Mass from the time of Philip II and a double-choir (Tr Tr + harp; Tr, ATTE) Magnificat by Pedro de Tafalla. I found it interesting and readable. One hopes that the author can follow it with a study of an institution that was not quite so odd as El Escorial.

#### LUPO & COLMAN

Thomas Lupo *The Five-Part Consort Music* edited by Richard Charteris. Fretwork Editions (FE13 & 14), 1997. 2 vols, 1997. Each vol: score £13.00, parts £19.00, both £29.00. Charles Colman *The Four-Part Airs* edited by David Pinto. Fretwork Editions (FE15), 1998. Score £11.00, parts £14.00, both £23.00 – extra bass for theorbo: £3.50.

The names of the editors attest the reliability of these further systematic publications of the once-scattered early 17th-century repertoire. The Lupo fantasias are probably among those that established the form, though so-far, research on dating has mostly concentrated on the 1630s and onwards. One can probably say that the first 23 of the 35 pieces here date from before 1620, since they are in Egerton 3665. Ruby Reid-Thompson has been dropping hints for at least a decade that Tregian's death in 1619 is not significant for dating the MS (presumably arguing it is not in his hand); but her information seems to be in the same category as Richard Lucket's dating of *Venus and Adonis* to 1681, and gets less credible the longer it remains a rumour. Since the main source for most of the contents of the edition is a barred score, it is odd that the introduction does not discuss the editor's different barring practice. (Tregian has two-minim bars, Charteris has four, in accordance with the taste of modern players; sources in parts, of course, are unbarred). As with Coprario, some pieces have Italian titles, and some relate to specific Italian settings of those texts. Choosing a piece to check that has only 3665 as source (No. 17; VdGS 30) showed that the square-bracketed additions in the opening section, while in a narrow way accurate, did not show in full the adjustment needed to the

original. The introductory reference to mis-aligned parts is an understatement, since the errors cross the barring, and must imply that the scribe was copying from parts without considering the vertical sense of his score. The piece uses *chiavette*; as far as I can see, clef-code transposition isn't relevant to the fully-fledged fantasias, but it might be to pieces related to Italian madrigals, even though some of the parts have quite wide ranges for vocal pieces. Charteris began his attempt to publish a compete Lupo edition some time ago with Boethius; it is nice to see it continuing so effectively with Fretwork.

Colman's Airs appear in connection with Lawes's *Royall Consort* in MSS of the 1630s and circulated for the next 20 years or so. There is overlap between his three-part and four-part pieces, though no adaptation for TrTrBB as in the Lawes. This includes 27 Airs for TrTrTB, with five more of dubious authorship. They can be played with or without continuo; for the latter, first choice would probably be two theorbos, as in the Lawes, but there is some evidence for the use of harpsichord. The minimal differences of the theorbo parts is noted in the bass part. The dances that look most interesting are the two in the centre spread of the score, where the book falls open. Colman is generally fond of snatches of imitation, never taken very far but effective enough in music of this light style. Incidentally, Fretwork has now produced parts of both versions of the *Royall Consort*.

*Fretwork Editions*, 16 Teddington Park Road, Teddington, Mddx TW11 8ND. Tel +44 (0)181 977 0924, fax 404 2414, e-mail [billhuntfretwork@compuserve.com](mailto:billhuntfretwork@compuserve.com)

#### LAWES ESSAYS

*William Lawes (1602-1645): Essays on his Life, Times and Work*. Edited by Andrew Ashbee. Ashgate, 1998. xvii + 386pp, £45.00 ISBN 1 85928 354 3

This derives from the 350th anniversary Festival in Oxford in September 1995, the publication coming almost half-way between it and the next anniversary in 2002. It would be nice if that could be made a target for the publication of all his music. Andrew Ashbee begins with a brief discussion of Lawes's place in court. Julia Wood catalogues and surveys his music for the plays; previous writers have tended to associate this activity with the court, but he was clearly the main composer for the Blackfriar's and Phoenix theatres from 1634. Anthony Milton's discussion on the theological background to the court and chapel royal is perhaps a bit peripheral, but shows far more complex patterns of thought and belief than expected. David Pinto (in a paper not given at the conference) finds a context for various carols surviving in the works of Herrick, Cartwright and Lluelyn in courtly Christmastide celebrations. Jonathan Wainwright considers the Italian music performed in Oxford while the court was based there from 1642-46. As one would expect, Robert Thompson deals with the paper Lawes used. Layton Ring squeezes the sources to extract something about Lawes's death and sets out the topography. The biographical section

ends with Andrew Robinson's account of the memorial *Choice Psalms*. The second half of the book is more directly concerned with the music, with Christopher Field on the Fantasia-Suites (the part of the book that gets nearest to the heart of the music), David Pinto on the two versions of the *Royall Consort* (having quoted Edward Lowe's note in a CD booklet without really believing it, I'm delighted that David finds the relationship more complex), Mark Davenport on the Aire in the Consort Setts, Annette Otterstedt on the division viol, and Frank Trafficante on the lyra viol music. Much of the content is primarily of academic interest; the contribution that should most inspire players is that of Christopher Field on formality and rhetoric, since that has implications on how the music is felt and performed.

#### A few miscellaneous comments:-

- p. 108. In my childhood, it was always an old silver threepence that was put in Christmas puddings, since they were believed to be pure silver and so more hygienic than non-genuine 'silver' coins like sixpences, perhaps a rationalisation of the belief that silver brings good-luck.
- p. 124. Since Hawkins has been undermined on pp. 97-98, what is the reader to make of him being quoted at length on the same subject on pp. 123-124, with only a hint of doubt?
- p. 198. Note a contemporary account of Tomkins's *When David heard* being performed by 'sweete wel governed voices (with consonant Instruments)' – at what transposition?
- p. 309. Transposition again: Otterstedt seems to be thinking from a modern viewpoint in the first section of her article; I suspect that Italian players in the 16th and early 17th centuries would have placed the music at the appropriate position on the instrument they were using whatever the notated pitch. When the original pieces were notated in *chiavette*, embellished versions would probably have been played with the habitual transposition.

#### SHORTER BWV

*Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis Kleine Ausgabe (BWV<sup>2a</sup>)* herausgegeben vom Alfred Dürr und Yoshitake Kobayashi unter Mitarbeit von Kirsten Beißwenger. Breitkopf & Härtel, 1998. xxvii + 490pp, DM98.00 (£37.70). ISBN 3 7651 0249 0

This is an abridgment, with some revisions, of the second edition of BWV, which appeared in 1990 (though its preface is dated 1985). The pruning has not, in fact, been so drastic as to produce a pocket-size companion; this is clearly in the image of its parent, even if totally reset. For a start, the incipits of each movement have been retained, though mostly shortened and reduced to a single stave. Other information has also been reduced – even the references to BG are shortened by using arabic rather than roman for the volume numbers. I wonder whether it might have been cheaper to have made minimal corrections to the 1990 edition and issued that in paperback: technically perfectly possible, since each of the New Grove Dictionary of Opera paperback volumes are longer than the full BWV. Despite all the effort in economising space, has the price really been brought low enough to extend the circulation or will

most copies still be bought by libraries who need, not so much an abridgment, as the changes in numbering.

When reviewing the 1990 edition (for *Early Music News* in April 1991 when it was a rather different magazine from what it is now), I commented on the confusing numbering system. This is not entirely corrected and there still is the curiosity of 1087 appearing between 1078 and 1079; but the double number 1087/1078→ has mercifully vanished. Less useful, whatever the objection in principle to including editorial reconstructions in the system, the R suffixed to show e.g. the oboe/violin version of 1060 as 1060R has been abandoned: 1060R neatly showed the status of the work in a catalogue or on a CD cover, without having to use a language-dependent term (*after/nach*, etc). Numbering each of the four sections in which the B-minor Mass MS is grouped is somewhat academic: it is tempting to say 'What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder'; despite their disparate originals, Bach did assemble these sections into a single piece. I'm also not convinced that the notation of the majority of parts at *Chorton* should be changed in, e.g. Cantata 106, just because the recorders are at *Kammerton*; it is misleading to print the incipits in F without stating that voices and strings are in Eb.

I have just written a note for the York Festival on a programme including the violin sonata in c BWV 1024, so we can take that as a sample of how works of dubious authenticity have been treated. Both the 1950 and 1990 editions made clear that BWV 1024 falls into that category, but included it in the main sequence. In accordance with a tougher policy of dealing with such works, in 1998 it has been removed to the appendix of doubtful works. This is helpful in making its status obvious, but a consequence is that there is no incipit or list of movements, no information on sources, and no reference to editions – just a brief bibliography of items from the mid-1950s. I had, fortunately, pencilled a few comments in my copy of the 1950 edition: the Dresden MS is apparently in Pisendel's hand and dates from around 1710. My source for that information was, I think, a booklet accompanying a CD (which also includes a facsimile of a page of the MS); if there is nothing better, surely that should have been quoted? The listing of the dubious works is much simpler than in 1990, despite the chaotic appearance of the numbering. Ironically, since information on them elsewhere is scarce, one is particularly reliant on such catalogues.

The indexes are drastically reduced. The thematic index of instrumental works goes completely, losing the chance to check through a lot of incipits quickly to identify a piece; more worrying is the enormous diminution of the index of verbal incipits from 42 to 3 pages – from an index of the first lines of individual movements to one just of the opening of complete works. This is partially compensated for by an 11-page index to chorale texts, but that is less useful to those who are not German Lutherans who do not necessarily know whether what they are looking up is a chorale. *Es war ein wunderlicher Krieg* (verse 4/movement 5

of Cantata 4) is a chorale verse: which index should I use? It is in neither.

I commend the desire to produce a simplified and cheaper version of this major catalogue, though am not entirely convinced that it has taken the right balance. Had just reprinting the 1990 edition cheaply not been economically viable, I suspect that a more drastic reduction, abandoning thematic incipits except perhaps for instrumental pieces with the same key and title, but with full indexes, selling at about £10.00 would have been far more useful. I expect that only serious Bach scholars will buy it, not students or enthusiastic church organists. A pity.

#### BÄRENREITER BAROQUE (& LATER)

A boxful of practical editions, mostly related to collected work publications, arrived from Bärenreiter a few weeks ago. All are useful, well-produced and worth having; critical comments made below should be set against that.

*Bach Herz und Mund und Tat und Leben: BWV 147. Study Score.* TP 114, £7.95

The first miniature scores from the NBA, printed at the traditional size, had horribly small print, so it is not surprising that a larger format was subsequently chosen. Study scores (a useful term to distinguish such scores larger than miniature) are only gradually appearing of the cantatas (only about an eighth of the church cantatas so far), in conjunction with vocal scores and instrumental parts. It is taking a long time to get round to this, so ironically, although Bärenreiter has published the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, in many cases performance material that takes account of its research is available from Breitkopf and Carus. It seems that Bärenreiter can only fit a couple a year into its schedule; but I wonder whether there is room at all for competing editions. Cantata 147 is among the best-known, thanks to *Jesu, joy of man's desiring*, the chorale which ends each part. It is reprinted from a recent NBA volume (I, 28.2) with an introduction on the complex compositional history. The conscientious performer will want to know how many copies of each part survive. The text is general enough to be usable on occasions other than the Visitation. The vocal score is available at the same price and parts are on sale.

*Bach Preludes and Fugues composed in conjunction with the Well-Tempered Clavier II.* BA 5200, £5.95

This derives from the ancillary material printed in Alfred Dürr's edition of Book II of the '48' (NBA V: 6.2). It begins with five Preludes and Fuguetas BWV 870a and 899-902, plus an alternative Prelude to BWV 902. Then follow five early versions of Preludes from Book II, and finally four Fuguetas from a MS copied by Agricola which were expanded (and in two cases transposed) for Book II. Presumably omitted from the cheap edition of Book II based on NBA, it was well worth issuing them separately; if we did not know the later versions, we would not scorn them,

they are of interest for composition students in that they can see how Bach improved them, and they are pieces well worth playing in their own right.

*Bach Flute Solos from the Sacred and Secular Vocal Works.*  
Vol.1, BA 7400; £14.95. Vol. 2, BA 7401: £11.95

I used to find the series of arias for voice and obbligato instruments published by Breitkopf early in the century very useful for ensemble music-making with singers. I think I would find them unusable now, since they were heavily adorned with editorial slurs etc. I hoped these two volumes would be their successors; but since they contain just the flute parts, along with the vocal solo parts which they accompany (or vice versa), they have a different, more didactic function. They will be extremely useful for flautists learning repertoire, or practising for a performance without having to pester the orchestral librarian for a part way in advance, though they do not provide the wherewithall for performing even arias accompanied just with continuo. It would have been helpful to have listed the scoring for each movement. Vol. 1 contains movements from the church cantatas, masses and Matthew Passion, vol. 2 the John Passion, Magnificat, oratorios and secular cantatas; a pity that the movements needing two flutes are not all in the same volume. The editions are taken from NBA, and there is an introduction by the editor, Evmary Pfundl-Frittrang, which gives some ideas on the mood of each aria.

*Handel Alcina.* Vocal score. BA 4061a, £25.00

On the evidence of their published scores, one associates Bärenreiter with editorial and visual excellence. But an area in which the firm operates that is outside the public (and, indeed, my) eye is less satisfactory. I gather from conductors and players that its instrumental parts for Handel operas are not always as good as they should be, although their recent *Tamerlano* was reported to be excellent. I hope the orchestral parts of *Alcina* have also been redone to the standard of the new vocal score (BA 4061a; £25.00) – if they haven't, we will sell more of ours. The previous vocal score (hire only) was a MS copy that retained Chrysander's keyboard part and had a German text (not Chrysander's) printed above the Italian. The new score has a new German text less obtrusively placed below the Italian. The general appearance is excellent, and if you want a vocal score, this would probably be the best even if there was any competition (which there isn't). But I question the need for a vocal score at all. Very few movements have more than four instrumental staves for the accompanist to read; surely any répétiteur at a professional opera house can manage that and play the right chords when there is just a continuo part? The vocal parts are far too virtuosic for performances by your local amateur operatic society! But as one of his most popular operas, this deserves a vocal score more than most, and it is done well, except that a few clues to the instrumentation could have been included. Wouldn't it help Morgana to know that *Credete al mio dolore* is scored for a solo cello and continuo? *Di te mi rido* is printed in F only

and there is no appendix with the alternative (op. 4/4) setting of the Act I Scene 2 chorus or *Bramo di trionfar*, cut before the premiere but sometimes sung. There is no introduction. A detailed review of the edition would be more appropriate for the full score, which I haven't seen.

*Handel Eleven Sonatas for Flute and Basso continuo.* Revised Scholarly Edition 1995. BA 4225, £10.65

Bärenreiter's previous edition of Handel's solo sonatas in the *Hälsche Händel-Ausgabe* appeared at the very early stages of that edition and was not at all satisfactory. In fact, it was Thurston Dart's review of this and the companion edition of the violin sonatas that first interested me in editing Handel. Its chief merit was to pioneer the practice of providing for the soloist a copy that included the continuo part, i.e. which recreated the layout of 18th-century prints; this has now become common, though imitators often suppress the bass figures, not realising the value of the 'part' for keyboard players who would rather avoid the editorial realisation in the score. This new version has been prepared by Terence Best, so the scholarly aspect can be trusted. The problem is the retention of the original contents. The title is misleading: there are in fact four sonatas for recorder and four for flute, plus an appendix of three dubious pieces (HWV 374-376, once called the Halle Sonatas) for flute. So although the price is very reasonable, recorder players won't know that it includes four recorder sonatas while the flautist will get only four authentic sonatas for his instrument, despite the 'eleven' stated on the cover. Much from the 1955 edition remains. The titles of each piece have been updated but, confusingly, the continuous numbering has been removed – fine as a way of preventing a spurious numbering system being quoted in programmes and CD backs, but not so helpful for the quick matching of score and part. The realisation by Max Schneider from the 1955 edition has been retained: good by the standards of its time, it needed to have some of its higher passages rewritten. The original layout is preserved, though the musical text has been updated and there is a good introduction on the sources, which also reminds us that there is no need to assume that a cello is needed in addition to a harpsichord. I don't think this will entice me from the Faber separate volumes for recorder and for flute, which also contain in total 11 sonatas, but all by Handel.

*Tartini Sonata in G minor for Violin and Basso continuo*  
»Devil's Trill«. (Hortus Musicus 278). £7.50

A decent edition of the Devil's Trill has long been needed. The first printed edition, in Cartier's *L'Art du violon* (1803), is readily available (from King's Music, for instance, at £2.00), and that was the basis for the versions overlaid with bowings by various performers. The 18th-century sources have not been used for a proper edition, so this is most welcome. There is, however, no source with any particular authority, and this is based on a collation of half a dozen manuscripts which seem to stem from the circle of Tartini's pupils. The edition prints two pages of discussion of the sources and

another two pages of critical commentary (more is available free on the net from <http://baerenreiter.com> or by contacting the publisher by more traditional means). Interestingly, the Cartier version has fewer slurs, and it seems odd to me that he should have deliberately simplified the notation; might not he have been using a copy dating from early in Tartini's life (the alleged visitation by the Devil occurred in 1713) and the MS versions be updatings, either by the composer or his pupils). Cartier would seem to have preserved an independent line of transmission, so it is odd that his edition is not evaluated as a source. There is no mention of performance without continuo, as on Andrew Manze's recent recording (see *EMR* 40, p. 23).

**Telemann Concerto in A for 2 Violins (Flute and Violin), Viola and Basso continuo TWV 43: A4. BA 5873, £10.50 (score & parts)**

Vol. 29 of Bärenreiter's *Musikalische Werke* of Telemann contains half of his 24 known quartets with viola. They look as if they might be string quartets, and indeed make sense played thus, though the basses are figured; but they can also be played orchestrally. We are told that they are early works, written by 1708 (i.e. earlier than Vivaldi's ripieno concertos). This is a separate edition of one of these quartets. The editorial suggestion of flute as an alternative to the first violin seems somewhat implausible for a German work from the first decade of the century; if used, it should certainly be *tacet* for the first two bars and a note. Far better to play it with strings.

**Haydn/Salomon Symphony Quintetto after Symphony No. 94 'Surprise' for Flute, String Quartet and Piano ad libitum. Edited by Christopher Hogwood. BA 6432; £17.50.**

I've been telling people for years that Christopher Hogwood was editing the Salomon versions of the London symphonies for Oxford UP; perhaps I misremembered a conversation or maybe there was a change of plan. When I borrowed a set of the early prints for our facsimile, I found the Hogwood library well equipped with a variety of early editions. These have now been supplemented and corrected by Salomon's own manuscript at the University of Southern California. That has no keyboard part, which is incorporated from the printed sources; its absence from the MS emphasises its ad-libbedness. This is a welcome edition, since the arrangement is intelligent and appealing, and is good value for score and six parts – a separate piano part with sensible page-turns is included.

**Haydn Cäcilienmesse, Missa Cellensis in honorem Beatissimae Virginis Mariae Vocal score. BA 4643a; £13.50.**

The title may confuse, and there is no mention in the edition, which has no introductory material, that this is not the *Missa Cellensis* Hob. XXII,8 of 1782 but what used to be known as the St Cecilia Mass, Hob. XXII,5, though that title had no early authority. Perhaps the date should have been included in the title. It is based on the Henle Complete Works, with performance material available on sale.

**Schubert Symphony No. 5 in B flat major. TP 405; £6.95**

**Schubert Symphony No. 7 in B minor 'Unfinished'. TP 407; £7.90**

The first miniature score I bought was of the *Unfinished*, in the Penguin edition in landscape format with transposing instruments notated at sounding pitch. That was over 40 years ago. A few years later I replaced it with the *Philharmonia* edition, because it included what was then known of the *scherzo* (another few bars turned up later). On looking these out, I was intrigued to find a photocopy of a brief article 'Editing Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*' from *The Musical Times* of March 1954 by Adam Carse. (Older readers will remember the vast quantity of now-useless editions he produced for Augener; he was, however, interested in editorial techniques and performance practice, and his histories of the orchestra are still of value.) The three scores I have each print something different for the two bars before the 1st time bar at the end of the exposition of the first movement; the new one agrees with Carse. The *Philharmonia* editor spotted the horn in bar 201, the right trumpet note at 252, and footnotes the horn II original at movement 2, bar 278. The new edition, of course, gets these right, and footnotes the inconsistent bowings of the phrase first heard at mov. 2 bar 90. The perennial problem in editing Schubert – accent or diminuendo – occurs at, e.g., the end of the first movement; the new edition plumps for an accent, which seems sensible. Apart from a more accurate text, this new edition steals a march on the others by including, not just the fragment of the *Scherzo*, but the two-stave draft of the work from bar 249 of the first movement, through the second and into the *Trio* of the third. Pages 45 & 50 have no footnotes, though the preface refers to them. Definitely the score to have; don't be confused by the number. There is no such problem with No. 5. The Preface has no information about sources at all; there is an autograph and it seems to present few problems. The only difficulty is knowing where to put the scores: they are too big for my miniature score shelves, but get lost among the full scores. But I wouldn't want them smaller.

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*I was hoping to catch up on the backlog this month, but through lack of space have had to cut a page on new facsimiles (Fuzeau, Performers' Facsimiles and Merton Music), a group of books on opera, notably the paperback New Grove Dictionary of Opera, are also held over, as are Timothy McGee's The Sound of Medieval Song: Ornamentation and Vocal Style according to the Treatises and the papers from a 1993 symposium on Papal Music and Musicians in Medieval and Renaissance Rome. There are also books on playing the flute and the cello, and a new edition of that indispensable publication The Bach Reader. No doubt other material will turn up as well.*

*A brief mention of the belated The Early Music Yearbook 1998. There have been many difficulties and delays in production, partly because the 1997 edition had computer problems. We (I say this as a member of its Council) hope that the 1999 edition will be prompt. I would find life much easier if all UK professional groups and individuals would have their details included (the christian names and initials cut from the 1997 issue by the stroke of a computer have been restored). There is much other useful information. It is available from NEMA, 18 High St, Caythorpe, Grantham, Lincs NG32 3BS. Tel & fax: +44 (0)1400 273795.*

## WARWICK EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Andrew Benson-Wilson

For a number of years, Warwickshire has hosted early music events, whether through the Warwick & Leamington Festival, Concerts in Warwickshire churches, or the Early Music series in St Mary's Warwick. But this year, for the first time (and possibly the only time, according to the introductory article in the Festival programme), the enterprising Warwick Arts Society have put their early music eggs into the single basket of a Warwick Early Music Festival, held for five days around the early May Bank Holiday weekend. Richard Phillips (Festival Director) and Lucy Miller (Administrator) deserve to be proud of the result – an intelligently thought-out series of well-attended concerts, which included an impressive number of newly-hatched groups as well as more established favourites. If an omen for the future of Early Music Festivals in Warwick was needed, what better than the rainbow that broke through the black clouds over St Mary's Church just as the audience arrived for the first concert.

Most of the concerts were based on historical themes of local interest, and many were linked in some way to the buildings in which they were held. The first concert was music from the time of Richard Beauchamp (1382-1439), the 13th Earl of Warwick and a big noise locally and nationally. His remains lie quietly in St Mary's exquisite Beauchamp Chapel, with its famed array of musical instruments in the mid-15th century stained glass windows. The Friday evening concert was shared between two opposite poles of the early music world, The Orlando Consort and The York Waits. As Beauchamp was instrumental [or perhaps vocal] in brokering the marriage of Henry V and Queen Katherine, it was fitting that the opening section was of vocal music with royal connections, including Bittering's *En Katerine solennia*, jointly dedicated to Saint and Queen Katherine. The floating sounds of the four male vocalists of the Orlando Consort were followed by the York Waits' rather alarming tuning-up fanfare on 2 shawms and a sackbut. But the ear quickly got used to the contrast of volume and texture, and the idea of a short collective jam session to get the instruments in line is a sound one. The York Waits showed remarkable versatility on a variety of instruments. The recorder consort interpretation of *Pia Mater* from the Old Hall manuscript sounded particularly mellifluous in the clear acoustic of St Mary's Church (although I did wonder about temperament and/or tuning of the four recorders in a later *Gloria* from a Fountains Abbey manuscript). A group of instrumental dances featured a very sonorous bagpipe and a battery of shawms in two pieces from the *Glogau Liederbuch* and the delightful combination of flute, harp, lute and bells in a lyrical Italian *Amoroso*. Pieces by Dunstable and various mass settings were ideal material for The Orlando Consort. This is obviously music very close to their hearts and they communicate it beautifully. I particu-

larly liked the *Gloria* by Roy Henry [currently thought mostly likely to have been Henry V], Leonel Power's *Sanctus/Agnus Dei* and a *Sanctus* by Soursby (a musician employed by Beauchamp in Warwick, and sung to the distant sound of the 9 o'clock bells). In these pieces, the tenor voice of Charles Daniels was slightly more in evidence and the group sounded more of a consort – in earlier pieces the distinctive alto tone of Robert Harre-Jones had been a bit dominant.

The late-night candle-lit concert by The Konevets Choral Quartet from St Petersburg opened with 15th century Russian chants that could have been heard by Beauchamp as he journeyed through Russia to the Holy Land in 1407. The unison phrases of a chanted Hymn to the Mother of God our Defender (from the Konevets monastery) and a 15th century chant to the Only Begotten Son were both memorable. The programme glided almost imperceptibly into 19th-century Slavonic church music and then, rather more perceptibly, into a selection of folk songs and comic verses, sung with gusto and humour.

The homely atmosphere of the Friends Meeting House was an ideal venue for a Saturday morning concert by the two French-Canadian gamba players, Susie Napper and Margaret Little, who make up Les Voix Humaines. Their programme of music from the period of the building of the Meeting House in 1695 included pieces by Schenck and Saint-Colombe. There were also three very convincing arrangements (by the players) for two equal viols of pieces by Marais, including the 32 variations of *Les Folies d'Espagne*. Their rich sonorities and liltingly rhythmic playing were ideally suited to the often intense mood of the music.

Saturday's lunchtime concert was in the Beauchamp Chapel itself, and demonstrated the saucier side of Elizabethan England. Michael Fields' sensitive lute playing accompanied the wooing and rueing of soprano Ansy Boothroyd and baritone Phillip Conway-Brown. In this small venue, some of the expressions and acting got a bit close to the top – but not quite over it. Eyes flashed suggestively, foreheads were furrowed and brows raised in astonishment as a Mistress was urged to try a little higher to find cupid's fire; various sweet loves came away; a spinster recalled her past lovers whose parts had moved her; and a lover faced a future with no more a-maying. After a final burst of weeping and languishing, it was something of a surprise when the fair cruel nymph finally accepted her man! There was some unsteady intonation and enunciation from the soprano, and the baritone tended to push the pace occasionally, to the detriment of the musically-important lute accompaniment. But good fun, nonetheless.

The main Saturday evening concert was *An Evening with Henry Purcell*, presented by the Yorkshire Baroque Soloists and culminating in *Dido and Aeneas*. With a few exceptions, it was the instrumentalists that were the stars of the evening. Lucy Russell, Jonathan Sparey, Alan George, and Daniel Yeadon (who collectively form the Fitzwilliam Quartet) gave supremely confident and lyrical performances of Purcell's Sonata in a (Z804) and Chacony in g (Z730). Approval was even acknowledged by the perfectly timed and pitched car horn that tooted just as the Sonata ended. Throughout the evening, these young players demonstrated a marvellous sense of consort playing, their beautifully delicate and unforced tone backed up by solid musicianship. Peter Seymour, the director of the Yorkshire Baroque Soloists, played the harpsichord. I found the vocal works of the evening less effective, largely because of a lack of consistency of vocal style amongst the soloists. Yvonne Seymour gave an operatic portrayal of Dido, using almost continuous vibrato to project her powerful voice. The famous lament was in this strain, turning the usually pathetic plea to 'Remember me' into something approaching a grand-operatic imperious command. Belinda was sung in a milder version of the same style. I much preferred the clarity of those voices that were floated into the acoustic in an unforced, clear and natural way. In this manner, Helen Neeves made a delightfully coquettish 1st witch and 2nd woman and Thomas Guthrie was beautifully expressive as Aeneas. He and Dido seemed an ill-matched couple – it was bound to end in tears.

The high quality of the instrumentalists continued with reduced forces in the late night concert. Lucy Russell gave a beautifully fluid and musical performance of Bach's Violin Sonata (BWV1015). She seemed to know intuitively how to project the sound into the acoustic of the large church. Daniel Yeardon displayed an amazing sense of structure and musical direction in his performance of Bach's first Cello Suite. The opening *Prélude* showed his instinctive feel for the relative importance of notes and their place in a musical hierarchy, which he indicated expressively by gentle inflection, placing of the note or subtle use of tone colour. A talented pair.

Sunday afternoon saw a return to the Beauchamp Chapel for a rather lengthy concert of Late Medieval Harp Music by William Taylor, the 'US National Clarsach Champion' of 1992 and a familiar figure at early music exhibitions. The distinctive buzz of the brays on the gothic harps and the resonant twang of the wire-strung clarsach came over very attractively. Curiously, I found the most effective pieces were those normally considered to be keyboard works, from the *Faenza Codex* and *Buxheimer Orgelbuch*. The harp pieces from the Robert ap Huw manuscript were harder to appreciate. In particular, the repetitive final piece overstayed its welcome.

The late medieval Great Hall of King James, which adjoins the Tudor Lord Leycester Hospital, was the idyllic setting for the Sunday evening concert by the Rose Consort of Viols (John Bryan, Alison Crum, Sarah Grosser, Roy Marks

and Peter Wendland) with Catherine King, mezzo soprano. The concert was based on the vocal and instrumental entertainments that might have been laid on when King James I dined in the hall in 1617. This well-planned concert attracted more young people than most of the other weekend concerts, and they were rewarded by a thoroughly professional performance. Catherine King has the ideal clarity of voice to project the often complicated emotions of this repertoire, and she made very effective and subtle use of period pronunciation. The highlight was her singing of Byrd's beautiful lament on the early death of Henry, Prince of Wales in 1612. The Rose Consort played with characteristic lyricism and metrical flow. They produce a quite unearthly sound – or do I mean heavenly. Anyway, I cannot think of many better ways of spending a sunny Sunday evening.

There were four concerts on Bank Holiday Monday. At the first, the Quartetto Otto (Marianna Szucs and Rachel Harris, Lucy Theo and Tatty Theo) performed quartets by Haydn, Mozart (*The Dissonance*), a youthful Charles Wesley and some jolly Variations on *Adeste Fideles* by Samuel Webbe the Younger. Playing to a capacity audience in Warwick's Unitarian Chapel, these young players gave a very creditable performance on that most exposed of instrumental consorts, the string quartet. Introductions to the pieces were effectively presented, and it was nice to hear the quote from Mozart's dedication to Haydn of his six quartets that '...they are my children ... they may misbehave'. What a contrast between the Haydn of 1781 (the year the Unitarian Chapel was started) and the intensity of the opening of Mozart's *Dissonance* of just four years later!

A much smaller audience attended the lunchtime concert in the Friends Meeting House given by Charivari Agréable. The title for their programme, 1695: *Four Funerals and a Wedding*, was catchy, but the link with the pieces was tenuous and required lengthy explanation – the readings from various fables and other texts were also rather overlong. The playing of Susanne Heinrich (viols) and Lynda Sayce (theorbo) was the most successful – including an exquisite instrumental version of Dido's Lament, full of pathos and in complete contrast to that sung earlier in the Festival – but why miss out the four-bar bass introduction? Generally, however, the viol and theorbo were overpowered by rather heavy-handed harpsichord playing.

Another capacity audience gathered in the Unitarian Chapel for the afternoon concert by the recently formed group, The Galeazzi Ensemble (Lesley Holliday *flute*, Richard Wade *violin*, Virginie Guiffrey *viola* and Gareth Deats *cello*). They based their concert on two flute quartets written by Mozart in the same year as the chapel was built, and also included works by Dittersdorf, Hoffmeister, Haydn and Pleyel. These young players are a talented lot – their playing was delicate and sensitive, with a good sense of light and shade which was particularly effective in the quieter moments. They played well together – the final movement of Dittersdorf's *Divertimento*, in particular, was riveting.

Monday's candlelit evening concert in St Mary's Church took us back to the banks of the Rhine in the 12th century for a programme of ravishing music by the increasingly revered visionary and mystic, the Abbess Hildegard von Bingen (who would have been 900 years old this year). The performers were Sinfonye (Stevie Wishart, Vivian Ellis and Sara Stowe) with seven members, aged 14-18, of the Oxford Girls' Choir (Georgia Black, Vickie Couper, Louise Eekelaar, Clemmie Franks, Emily Levy, Camilla Scarlett and Katherine Taylor). Responsories, antiphons and hymns from the *Symphonia armoniae celestium revelatum* were interwoven with extracts from Hildegard's writing, spoken in a most effective and dramatic way by Ali Troughton as Hildegard, expressing the anguish and amazement of her often bizarre and exotic visions. There are many ways of performing the music of Hildegard: Sinfonye have hit on one of the most effective with the sensuous combination of women's and girl's voices. Sympathetic accompaniments were in the form of an occasional gentle drone from a rather chunky hurdy-gurdy (why not a *sinfonye*?), or by vocalised drones and counter-melodies. The interpretation was gently rhythmic (but avoiding a real pulse), allowing the music's sweeping and soaring lines to ebb and flow in a most convincing way. Melody notes were occasionally doubled on the hurdy-gurdy, whose (not-yet-invented) *trompette* made a brief and devilish appearance in the antiphon *Sed diabolus in invidia*. The girls sang beautifully throughout – indeed, the concert opened magically with the unaccompanied voices of two of them. Amongst the adult singers, Vivien Ellis had the ideal evocative voice for this music – she gave an exquisite performance of the antiphon for the Virgin *O tu illustrata*, following a reading from Hildegard that suggested that she knew rather more about the mechanics of sex than might be expected of a nun.

The Tuesday lunchtime concert in St Mary's church was by Tintagel: Clara Sanabreas *voice/oud*, Rebecca Austen-Brown *fiddle/flute*, Rachel Hamilton *harp/flute*, and Louis Strickland *symphony/recorder*). Their programme, *The Ark of Noah*, was a cleverly devised run through the various animals mentioned in music from the 13/14th centuries, ranging from mussels to bullocks. It was good to have the words for the songs – they were the only group in the Festival to provide them. Clara Sanabreas has a natural and exotic voice, which she used most effectively. But the accompaniments might have been a lot more imaginative. This would also have given them a greater chance to display more of their playing skills, particularly on symphony, harp and fiddles. A more confident stage presence would also have helped in communicating with the audience.

The two evening concerts on the final day of the Festival were given in St Mary's by The King's Consort and a selection of their soloists. The main concert was of seven concertos by Vivaldi (RV 574, 563, 579, 566, 97, 555 and 562). Robert King told us that he wanted to disprove the notion that Vivaldi wrote one concerto 500 times – and he succeeded. His main ingredient was the use of a wide palate of instrumental colour and texture, and the enthusi-

asm and verve of a tremendously talented group of players, practically all of whom had a solo role at some stage during the evening. They all bounced along with infectious glee and bonhomie to produce a concert perfectly matched to the mood of a last night audience. Most of the players stood, aiding cohesion and projection; although people sitting elsewhere may have thought differently, from my seat the balance was perfect. I particularly liked the muted strings [specified in the autograph CB] in the opening *Largo* of the *Concerto Funèbre* (579) for the exotic combination of oboe, chalumeau, violin, two *viole all'inglese* and strings, and the concerto (555) for everything but the kitchen sink (two recorders, oboe, chalumeau, violin, two *viole all'inglese*, two *violini in tromba marina* and two harpsichords). Elizabeth Wallfisch's wildly virtuosic violin playing in the concluding Concerto in D (562) was a real showstopper.

The Festival concluded with Tuesday's candlelit late night concert by soloists from the King's Consort: Rebecca Miles and Emma Murphy *recorders*, William Carter *archlute/guitar* and Susanne Heinrich *gamba*. With such talented players, it is difficult to pick out specific highlights. But I did enjoy William Carter's exquisitely delicate endings to solo guitar pieces by Francesco Corbetta and was also impressed by the superb control of recorder intonation in Emma Murphy's delightfully-musical playing of Richard Carr's *Divisions on an Italian Ground*. With such a consistent level of excellence, it would be a great shame if this really was the last Warwick Early Music Festival.

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## Haydn, his London Friends, and Improved Psalmody

Peter Holman

Much of the music Haydn wrote for his two visits to London in 1791-2 and 1794-5 is extremely well known today. The twelve London symphonies are at the core of the orchestral repertory; the string quartets opp. 71 and 74 occupy a similar position in the chamber music repertory; even the long-neglected London piano trios and the opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1791) have become familiar in recent years in performances and recordings. But one group of works written by Haydn in London is still virtually unknown, and has yet to appear on CD: the six English psalm settings he wrote in 1794. Their composition and publication make an interesting story.

English parish church music or 'psalmody' was reformed several times in the eighteenth century. Until the early eighteenth century the 'old way of singing' prevailed in parish churches. The Elizabethan metrical versions of the psalms by Sternhold and Hopkins were sung to a small repertory of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century psalm tunes. The norm was a very slow manner of unaccompanied unison singing, with the parish clerk 'lining out' or declaiming the text before each line. In the first reform the plain and rather rough 'old version' of Sternhold and Hopkins was gradually replaced by the smoother and more poetic 'new version' of Tate (Nahum Tate, the author of *Dido and Aeneas*) and Brady (Nicholas Brady, the author of *Hail, bright Cecilia*), published in 1696. (*While shepherds watched* comes from the 1700 supplement.) This reform also involved the formation of parish choirs to support and improve congregational singing. In time, they inspired a repertory of polyphonic psalm settings, called psalmody at the time but popularly known today as 'gallery music' because the choirs often performed in the west galleries of country churches.

By the middle of the eighteenth century Tate and Brady had begun to seem rough and antiquated, and attempts were made to replace it with yet more elegant and poetic versions. The most successful was the one published as *The Psalms of David Translated or Paraphrased in English Verse* (Reading, 1765) by the Rev James Merrick (1720-69), fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. Efforts were also made to make psalmody more elegant and correct. The repertory of vigorous but homely four-part fuguing tunes with the tune in the tenor, developed mainly by provincial composers from the middle of the eighteenth century, began to give way to a lighter, more galant type of music. It frequently borrowed tunes from secular art music, and it typically used the 'trio sonata' texture of two soprano or tenor parts and bass. In its early stages it was associated with dissenting chapels or the chapels of the various charitable hospitals in London, though by the 1790s it had been widely taken up in ordinary Anglican churches.

A landmark in this respect was *Improved Psalmody* (London, 1794-5), a comprehensive setting of Merrick's version of the psalms published by Rev William Dechiar Tattersall (1752-1829). Its three parts are described as volume 1, and include settings of psalms 1-75; a second volume, presumably planned to cover Psalms 76-150, never appeared. Tattersall described himself on the title-page as 'LATE STUDENT of CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD; Rector of Westbourne, Sussex; Vicar of Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire; and Chaplain to the Honble. Mr. Justice Buller', and was evidently as well connected as he was a successful pluralist. The volume was dedicated to George III, and the massive subscription list includes the queen, seven princesses, the archbishops of Canterbury (6 copies) and York (10 copies), virtually the full bench of bishops, the chancellor of Oxford University and many heads of colleges, and an impressive list of aristocracy, gentry and clergy. This is all so much departed glory for us today, but one name stands out among the humble commoners: 'Haydn, Giuseppe, Mus. D. Ox.'

I will return to Haydn's connection with the collection in a moment, but first we need to consider what Tattersall was trying to achieve in *Improved Psalmody*. One motive for publishing it, of course, was to promote Merrick's version of the psalms as an alternative to Sternhold and Hopkins and Tate and Brady, but it was also to improve the standard of church music. In an interesting address to some of those who contributed to the collection, John Wall Callcott, Thomas Sanders Dupuis, Philip Hayes, William Parsons, William Shield and R. J. S. Stevens, the Rev Osborne Wight, and Samuel Webbe senior, he describes the defects of parish church music as he saw it, and suggests remedies. In London churches the metrical psalms are sung too slowly, the parish clerk and the charity children are almost the only people who sing, and the children 'most commonly rise beyond the natural pitch of their voices, and it becomes rather a general unisonous scream, than either concord, or harmony'. In country parishes the problem is that the choirs are instructed by peripatetic psalmody teachers whose music is 'seldom correct'. As a result, 'the harmony is very indifferent', and in particular 'the counter tenors are for the most part poorly managed'.

One solution was to 'restrain the tunes to two trebles and a bass, that singers of this class may not attempt things beyond their ability'. This scoring, the dissenting 'trio sonata' texture, was used virtually throughout the collection, and Tattersall suggests that the congregation and charity children sing the first soprano part, while the choir sings both upper parts in octaves, effectively producing five parts out of three. There are no figures in the score, though Tattersall presumably expected the organ to accompany the

pieces in town churches, and a group of instruments would probably have performed a similar function in rural churches without organs, as the 'violoncello' accompaniment to the opening of Shield's setting of Psalm 68 suggests. Tattersall also writes that 'particular care should be taken to have the melodies pleasing, and the harmonies easy', and that 'we are all perfectly agreed that plainness and simplicity are the grand criterion'. Looking through the first part (Ps. 1-25) one wishes the composers had disagreed a bit: most of them are too simple and homophonic to be interesting, with plain harmonies and the upper parts moving predictably in sixths and thirds. But the second part (Ps. 26-50) is considerably more interesting, and this is perhaps because the first four of Haydn's contributions, settings of Ps. 26, vv. 5-8, Ps. 31, vv. 21-24, Ps. 41, vv. 12-16 and Ps. 50, vv. 1-6, inspired his English colleagues to be more adventurous; he added two more in the third part (Ps. 51-75), Ps. 61, vv. 6-8 and Ps. 69, vv. 13-17. In these six pieces he demonstrated that it was possible to be plain and simple while maintaining musical interest. Ps. 26, 'How oft, instinct with warmth divine', is in the minuet rhythm of much dissenting hymnody, but Haydn uses an extraordinarily wide-ranging harmonic plan, and introduces a surprising amount of counterpoint in a fundamentally homophonic texture (see p. 14). Similar things could be said of Ps. 50, 'The Lord, th'almighty monarch, spake', a delightful anticipation of 'The Heavens are telling in The Creation' (see p. 15). By 1794, of course, Haydn was incapable of writing anything boring or predictable. But his example also inspired his English contemporaries to write some pieces that are both simple and memorable, such as Samuel Webbe's beautiful setting of Ps. 39, vv. 9-14, 'Where, Lord, shall my refuge see?' (see p. 15).

Why did Haydn write his English psalms? When he was given his D. Mus. at Oxford University in July 1791 he became eligible to join the Musical Graduates Society, a dining club for musicians with B. Mus. or D. Mus. degrees. It had been founded in 1790, and many of its members contributed to *Improved Psalmody*, including Samuel Arnold, Benjamin Cooke, John Wall Calcott, Thomas Sanders Dupuis, William Parsons and John Stafford Smith. Haydn gave a dinner for them on 20 June 1792 at a coffee-house in St James's at the end of his first visit to England.<sup>1</sup> It looks as if the members of the Musical Graduates Society prevailed on Haydn to contribute to the collection on his return to London in 1794. They were certainly grateful, as he recorded in the third of his London notebooks:

*In the year 1794*

Dr Haydn, Dr Arnold, Mr John Stafford Smith, and Mr Atterbury declared their readiness to cooperate with Dr Cooke, Dr Hayes, Dr Dupuis, Dr Parsons, Mr Calcott, the Revr Osborne Wight, Mr Webber, Mr Shield, and Mr Stevens in their Exertions towards perfecting a work for the Improvement of Parochial Psalmody.

as a Small Token of esteem for  
his abilities and of gratitude  
for his Services this Piece of  
Plate is presented to Doctor Haydn

[in another hand] by W.D. Tattersall.<sup>2</sup>

The piece of silver plate has unfortunately not been traced.

Why have I told this story at length? I believe that Haydn's six English psalms are much more than just simple hymn tunes, and deserve to be better known. They certainly come alive when performed with the sort of ensemble that Tattersall called for in *Improved Psalmody*. They are the centrepiece of a new programme that Sally Drage and I are preparing for Psalmody and The Parley of Instruments. The programme includes pieces by Haydn's London friends, Samuel Arnold, Charles Burney, Samuel Webbe senior, William Shield, and some remarkable devotional songs by Johan Arnold Dahmen, a cellist in Salomon's orchestra. There will also be Haydn's variations on the *Emperor's Hymn* and pieces by Samuel Webbe junior and William Gardiner of Leicester inspired by it. I hope the concert will illuminate a fascinating part of our musical heritage, and Haydn's surprising role in it.

1. P. Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney* (London, 1948/R1971), ii, 119-22

2. H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn in England 1791-1795* (London, 1976), 278-9

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Psalmody and The Parley of Instruments perform *Haydn and his London Friends* as the opening concert of the Suffolk Villages Festival (St Mary's Church, Stoke by Nayland near Colchester, Friday 28 August, 8.15 pm) and again at the Wigmore Hall (Sunday 20 September, 7.00 pm).

## THE SUFFOLK VILLAGES FESTIVAL

### *Haydn in London*

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*Haydn and his English Friends*  
Psalmody & the Parley of Instruments

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*O tuneful voice*  
Patrick McCarthy *ten*, Timothy Roberts *hpscd*

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D. Scarlatti *La Dirindina*  
Haydn *La Canterina*  
Opera Restor'd

30 AUGUST AT 7.30 STOKE BY NAYLAND CHURCH

Handel *The Choice of Hercules* – *Music from Comus*  
*Play Songs* – *Suite in D from The Water Music*

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*Boyce, Arne, Shaw, Haydn*  
Elizabeth Wallfisch & the Essex Baroque Orchestra

For a brochure, phone 01206 767895.

96 PSALM 26. {The Psalmist declares his Love for GODS}  
 Ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. {House and determines to bleſs GOD.} Dr. Haydn

Slow

How oft, instinct with warmth di-vine, Thy threshold have I trod! How lov'd the courts, whose walls inshrine The  
 How oft, instinct with warmth di-vine, Thy threshold have I trod! How lov'd the courts, whose walls inshrine The  
 How oft, instinct with warmth di-vine, Thy threshold have I trod! How lov'd the courts, whose walls inshrine The  
 Glory of my God! How lov'd the courts, whose walls inshrine The Glory of my God! O let me not O let me  
 Glory of my God! How lov'd the courts, whose walls inshrine The Glory of my God! O let me  
 Glory of my God! How lov'd the courts, whose walls inshrine The Glory of my God! O let me  
 Glory of my God! How lov'd the courts, whose walls inshrine The Glory of my God! O let me not the  
 not the vengeance share, That waits the guilty tribe, Whose murth'rous hands each mischief dare, And grasp the offerd  
 not the vengeance share, That waits the guilty tribe, Whose murth'rous hands each mischief dare, And grasp the offerd  
 vengeance the vengeance share, That waits the guilty tribe, Whose murth'rous hands each mischief dare, And grasp the offerd

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bribe. But pour, O pour, while thus I tread while thus I tread, The path by thee prepar'd by thee prepar'd, Thy beams of mercy  
 bribe. But pour, O pour, while thus I tread, The path by thee prepar'd by thee prepar'd, Thy beams of mercy  
 bribe. But pour, O pour, while thus I tread, The path by thee prepar'd by thee prepar'd, Thy beams of mercy  
 on my head, And round me plant a guard. Thou, Lord, my steps hast fix'd aright, And pleas'd shalt hear my tongue With  
 on my head, And round me plant a guard. Thou, Lord, my steps hast fix'd aright, And pleas'd shalt hear my tongue With  
 on my head, And round me plant a guard. Thou, Lord, my steps hast fix'd aright, And pleas'd shalt hear my tongue With  
 Israel's thankful Sons u.nite To form the festal Song. With Israel's thankful Sons u.nite To form the festal Song.  
 Israel's thankful Sons u.nite To form the festal Song. With Israel's thankful Sons u.nite To form the festal Song.  
 Israel's thankful Sons u.nite To form the festal Song. With Israel's thankful Sons u.nite To form the festal Song.

PSALM 50. The Solemnity and Righteousness of God's Judgment.  
Ver: 1.2.3.4.5.6.

Dr. Haydn

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## 166 PSALM 39. God alone can afford Men Pardon and relief.

Slow Ver: 9.10.11.12.13.14. Their frail Nature is unable to sustain the Effects of his Anger. S. Webbe.

## London Music

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Musical life in London gets very hectic in the early summer months, with a wide range of top class festivals on offer; and outside the festivals, individual concerts continue. On 8 May, the Wigmore Hall welcomed Passacaglia (Annabel Knight, *rec/fl*, Louise Bradbury *rec*, Robin Bigwood *hpscd* and Reiko Ichise *gamba*) for a bucolic romp under the title of *Musique Champêtre*. Passacaglia is a most impressive young group of players, thoroughly professional, musically sophisticated and confident. The balanced and well thought-out programme was extremely well performed under the onerous conditions of the first of London's hot and muggy evenings. The music was all written between 1713 and 1739, at a time when the Italian and French styles had generally resolved their differences and European minds turned to country pursuits. Boismortier's *Première Gentillesse*, written with this market in mind, was originally scored for hurdy-gurdy and bagpipe, but it transferred well to the less-earthy sounds of two recorders, as did Vivaldi's *La Primavera*. Pieces by Dornel, Handel, Leclair and de Bousset displayed Passacaglia's lyrical sense of amiable give and take, which entirely suited the music. Reiko Ichise's solo playing of Marais' *Quatrième Suite* (4<sup>e</sup> Livre) was particularly well received – I loved the bitter-sweet sonorities and delicate ending of *La Sautillante*.

A weekend exodus on Saturday 9 May took me to the beautiful setting of St Giles, Stoke Poges (Thomas Gray's elegiac resting place). The Marylebone Ensemble were performing just before their return visit to the Barcelona Early Music Festival. Secular cantatas by Handel, Clérambault and Montéclair, Buxtehude's *Singet den Herrn* and songs by Purcell were delightfully sung by their soprano, Rachel Gilliam. She has a fine sense of intonation and control of volume, and makes most effective use of vibrato as an expressive ornament. She was well supported by the instrumentalists (Geoff Baker *rec*, Melanie Beck *cello*, Andrea Morris *vln* and Hilary Norris, playing a lovely Andrew Wooderson harpsichord), who also played sonatas by Teleman and Purcell. This talented young group has a well-focused sense of rhythm, structure intonation and ensemble: watch out for them.

The Bach Players, formed early in 1996, are dedicated to the performance of their eponymous composer. Under their director, the harpsichordist Gary Cooper, they presented wonderfully musical performances of three cantatas (56, 57, 58), with Rachel Elliott and Thomas Guthrie as soloists, and the harpsichord concerto in F (BWV1057) at St John's Wood Parish Church on Sunday 10 May. Notwithstanding their aim of remaining faithful to Bach's original intentions, they seemed refreshingly uninhibited in exploring the emotional and romantic depths inherent in Bach's music. Their singing and playing went beyond scholarly intensity

and technical virtuosity to that hard-to-define coalescence that makes for musical performance of the highest standard. Two examples came in the opening cantata *Selig ist der Mann*, a dialogue between the Soul and Jesus. Rachel Elliott's scrunchingly exquisite aria 'Ich wünschte mir den Tod' was a lovely demonstration of this blending of baroque logic with romantic depth of feeling. Whilst retaining an entirely convincing vocal style, she was not afraid to imbue the music with an intensity of emotional expression. Particularly effective was the musical and spiritual sense she made of the *da capo*, avoiding the rather too frequent 'you've heard this bit before' approach. Thomas Guthrie's response as *Vox Christi* was equally emotive – he seems to become possessed by the part he is singing. The mood of the music and the underlying emotion pervades all of his being and he communicates this directly to the listener through vocal texture, posture and facial expressiveness. Two very talented singers! The instrumental support was first class (despite some intonation difficulties from the first violin), with some particularly effective playing by the continuo cellist, Alison McGillivray, and the oboists, Catherine Latham and James Eastaway. The concerto (Brandenburg 4 in Bach's harpsichord transcription) was given a stunning performance by all players, particularly by Gary Cooper in an outstanding display of playing in which technical virtuosity and emotional strength never overpowered the musical impulse of the piece. The church is next to Lord's Cricket ground, so cricket lovers would have appreciated the platform layout for the concerto, with the cellist at the bowling end of the harpsichord, and the rest of the players gathered like an array of slip fielders behind the batsman seated at the harpsichord.

I don't know how many Shredded Wheat the Dutch have for breakfast (apologies to those who don't see British TV adverts), but the energy of some of their musicians is astounding. Jaap ter Linden's direction and solo cello playing with the Newcastle-based period instrument group, The Avison Ensemble, at St John's, Smith Square on 11 May, was very much in this energetic style. He conducts with a bewitching combination of grace and vigour, whether clutching at an orchestral close, teasing out a long melodic line or, as in Charles Avison's *Concerto Grosso Op 6/8*, adding a pixilated frisson to the ending of the Italianate Allegro. This infectious *joie de vivre* was also evident in the blustering finale of C. P. E. Bach's cello concerto in A, although he also showed his ability to express wider emotions in the anguished *Largo con sordini, mesto*, with its painfully intense cadenza. The playing of the Ensemble was first rate, with some very stylistic playing by the first violinist, Anna McDonald, in another Avison concerto. It was also very good to see the leader walking round all the players to

ensure uniformity of tuning – a practice that is becoming more common and should be encouraged. A most invigorating concert of music to cheer the soul.

The second in the enterprising annual series of concerts at Hampstead's Fenton House (the National Trust home of the Benton Fletcher collection of early keyboard instruments) was given by the clavichord player, Paul Simmonds on 13 May. He played the collection's own delightful little triple-fretted 17th century clavichord, probably of German origin, and a larger 1986 Karen Richter unfretted clavichord (after Hubert 1771) in a programme called *The paths to Sensibility*. The first half, on the older instrument, included works by Bull, Sweelinck and the succeeding German composers, Scheidt, Weckmann and Froberger. Sweelinck's tour de force *Fantasia chromatica* was given a beautifully sensitive performance, the fluid playing bringing out the ebb and flow of this remarkable piece. 'Sensibility' apparently arrived in the second half with the extraordinary perambulations of C. P. E. Bach's Fantasia in C (Wq 59/6), Müthel's *Arioso* and a Sonata from a MS by Witthauer. I confess that my sympathies are inclined more towards the music of the first half, and I found the 18th-century pieces somewhat rambling. But the experience of sitting in a darkened room listening to the delicate and expressive tones of the clavichord was a real joy. All musicians, but particularly organists, should give themselves a periodic dose of clavichord music to reset the aural perspective.

I was rather disappointed with The Early Opera Company's concert performance of Charpentier's *Actéon* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at St John's, Smith Square on 18 May. Although there were some fine contributions from many of the individual musicians, as a group, I thought they didn't quite pull together until towards the end of the concert. Intonation problems sadly affected the instrumentalists for most of the evening, which the rather perfunctory tuning sessions did little to improve. I wasn't convinced of the sense of direction from their conductor, Christian Curnyn, who also struggled noisily with some unnecessarily complicated page turns. As some readers know, I am not a fan of strong and persistent vibrato – but much of the singing was in that style. The results were particularly noticeable in the Charpentier, where the typical French cadence (a suspension leaning onto a gently accelerated trill) can so easily be clouded by a vibrato strong in pitch variation and/or with a pronounced rhythm. That said, things did improve and there were some good moments, especially from Stuart MacIntyre as Aeneas. Sally Bruce-Payne was excellent as an imperious Juno in *Actéon* and as a beguiling Sorceress in *Dido*. Not only was her singing consistently good, but she was the most effective communicator of mood and emotion. The lead violinist eventually overcame diffidence and tuning problems with some demonic playing in the Witches' Dance and Lynda Sayce played a sensitive continuo theorbo (despite being left off the programme). It was a particular shame that the bass violin and bass viol were not in tune with each other during the opening bars of Dido's Lament. But why use both

anyway? It struck me as odd that one of the chorus of four nymphs who joined in Diana's skinny-dipping escapade was a male tenor – and a bearded one to boot! Have I missed some obscure corner of authenticity – or do I know less about nymphs than I thought?

*For another review of the The Early Opera Company's concert, see page 28. Quot homines tot sententiae!*

*Music for the Mona Lisa* was the enigmatic title for the Covent Garden Festival concert given by Concordia (their usual four viols augmented by lute, cornet, recorders, shawms, sackbut, slide trumpet and percussion) with the countertenor Robin Blaze on the stage of the Cochrane Theatre on 26 May. It was based on the premise that Leonardo da Vinci employed musicians and others to entertain sitters during his lengthy painting sessions. Imaginatively designed and directed by the young theatre director, Netia Davan Wetton, the performance also used a male dancer, some striking lighting effects and the disembodied (and occasionally disenmicrophoned) voice of an actor reading from Leonardo's notebooks. The music (which Leonardo might have known and enjoyed around 1500) included works by Desprez, Tromboncino, Cara, Busnois, Compère, Japart and Coppini. If the accent of the pieces tended towards the melancholy, it has to be remembered that the unknown model for the Mona Lisa was merely displaying a wry smile – Signor da Vinci would not have appreciated her rolling about on the floor in fits of giggles, or getting too excited at the sight of the half naked (waist up) dancer. The outstanding feature of the evening was the moving singing of Robin Blaze, his clear treble voice, almost like a boy treble, suiting the emotional intensity of the music and blending perfectly with the instruments. In the anonymous *Se mai per maraviglia*, he was supported by Elizabeth Kenny's delightfully evocative lute accompaniment and intra-verse interpolations. The instrumental playing was generally first class, although there were occasionally intonation difficulties with the treble viol. The programme is issued on CD by Metronome [review in the next issue CB]. If Classic FM doesn't give the haunting and hypnotic anonymous *Hor oires un chanson* the Górecki/Officium treatment, they will have missed a trick – and Concordia will have missed a fortune. It made a most effective opening, performed from behind a starkly-lit white screen. Authentic or not, it was certainly atmospheric, despite some out-of-tune suspended bells.

I reviewed Tintagel at the Warwick Festival (see page 16) with some reservations, so I wanted to give them a second try when they gave the last of the Early Music Network's lunchtime concerts at St Mary le Bow on Tuesday 28 May. Their line up was different from Warwick, with one of the four girls replaced by Harvey Brough (voice, psaltery and symphony) and Tim Rayborn (psaltery, 'ud, saz and percussion). The programme *Duty and Delight* was based round the sort of music that the 12th century troubadour and arts patron, Countess Beatriz de Dia, might have experienced had she journeyed through the Iberian peninsula. It included Cantigas from Alfonso X and songs by Martin Codax, the

dolesful *A chantar m'er* by Beatriz herself, and a wide range of traditional Arabic and Sephardic pieces from Sarajevo, Turkey, Istanbul, Cordoba and Beirut. To what extent such traditional songs, and the instruments upon which they are played, are representative of medieval music must continue to be questioned – but they certainly sounded effective in this context. Clara Sanabras has a lovely voice for this repertoire, and Harvey Brough added a folksy edge to the vocal tapestry. But it was Tim Rayborn who stole the show with some gutsy playing of the saz in *Delgadina*, a traditional Turkish Sephardic piece. Altogether a much more dynamic performance than at Warwick.

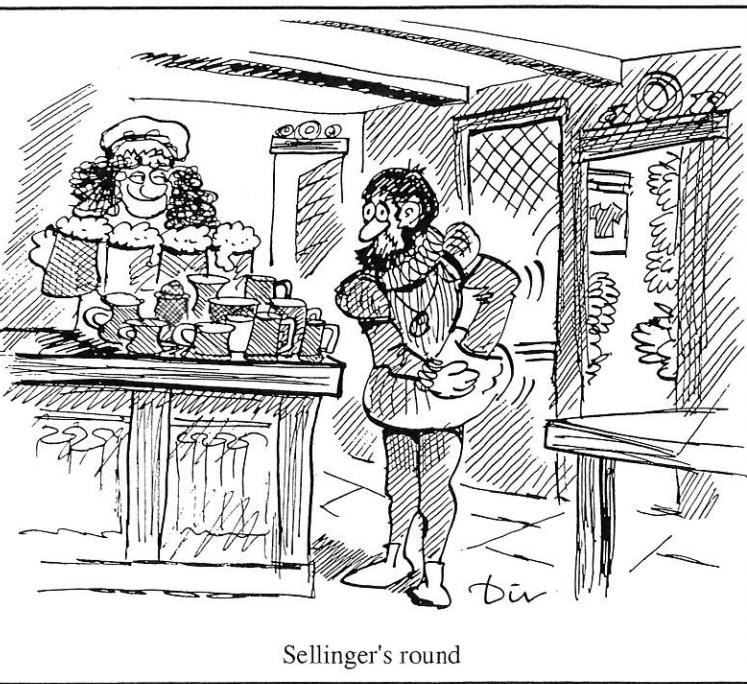
The Covent Garden Festival continued its merging of music and theatrical production with Handel's powerful oratorio, *Samson*, performed by The Sixteen on 2nd June in the appropriately Old Testament style surroundings of the Grand Temple of the Freemason's Hall (a professional eye noted the merciful lack of any structurally unsound pillars). The audience were in horseshoe formation around the long rectangular musicians' platform dominated by the theatrically-lit centre stage figure of Harry Christophers. The solo singers (who were more or less the same as on the recent CD) made full use of the whole of the auditorium, including the galleries in, for example, the dramatic vocal battle between Jehovah and Great Dagon. Samson was the only singer to adopt a fully operatic persona – the others sang from scores and largely restricted their theatrical contributions to positioning within and around the central figure of Samson. Thomas Randle was outstanding in the title role with a wonderfully emotional and musical performance. Lynda Russell portrayed the infuriatingly insinuating Dalila, and gave a spirited rendering of the vocal show-piece, 'Let the bright seraphim'. Peter Coleman-Wright and Christopher Purves (a last minute replacement) were excellent as Samson's father and the giant Harapha. The lighting was dramatic, to say the least, with sweeping spotlights of varying colours illuminating audience, singers and musicians alike in a sometimes startling way. Indeed, the disco-style lighting suggested that the 'it-will-all-end-in-tears' feast of the Philistines was set in Stringfellows. The singing of The Sixteen and the playing of The Symphony of Harmony and Invention were superb. Harry Christophers held the whole thing together with apparent ease; his relaxed and confident conducting style encourages performers to concentrate on the broad sweep of the music. A brilliant evening.

The production of Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* at The Barbican Theatre has received a lot of press coverage, mostly about the choreography of Trisha Brown (the American creator of 'post-modern' dance) and the striking design and lighting of Roland Aeschlimann. This production was a staggering fusion of music, choreography, lighting and design, but special praise must be given for the superb performance by all the musicians – the Concerto Vocale, the Collegium Vocale Gent, the

soloists and the masterly musical direction of René Jacobs. His 30 players were in three locations – in the front-centre stage orchestra pit and beyond the extreme corners of the proscenium, behind black curtains, 7 strings to the left and 7 brass to the right. Quite apart from dealing superbly with the logistical problems of keeping such a spread of sound together, he drew from the instrumentalists and vocalists a performance of exquisite musical integrity and absolute technical perfection. Indeed, despite the razzmatazz surrounding the choreography, it was the musicians that quite correctly received the loudest applause from the audience. Although the Trisha Brown Company of dancers had a number of walk-on (and even fly-on) parts, it was the singers that delivered most of the choreography, with its fascinating combination of gestures and body movements, reminiscent of oriental tai-chi and sign language. Choruses were sung while the performers moved through a variety of ever-changing geometrical patterns, often reflecting the musical symmetries inherent in Monteverdi's music. Producing such beautiful singing at the same time was a major achievement – one of them even had to sing standing on one leg!

Jacobs clearly took the plot seriously, with steady tempi (particularly in the triple-time sections) and delicate control of texture accentuating the emotional depth of the unfolding drama. His continuo forces were used to great effect, with a convincing palette of instrumental colour (apart from one curious-sounding stop on one of the two continuo organs, and a rather subdued regal). I was there on the second night, when the Orfeo was the Italian Carlo Vincenzo Allemano (he was alternating with Simon Keenlyside). He sang with stature and authority; the dialogue leading to his abandonment by Hope (Stephen Wallace in drag) was particularly memorable as the stage was transformed from white to black. Another brilliant evening.

Reviews of the Lufthansa and Spitalfields Festivals in *EMR* 43.



## RECORD REVIEWS

## PLAINSONG

*Chants de l'Église de Rome: Vêpres du jour de Pâques* Ensemble Organum, Marcel Péres Harmonia Mundi HMC 901604 79' 24"

I don't know if it is my fault or not, but I find something like a 50% success rate with Ensemble Organum discs; this is fortunately one of the successes, with direct, beefy performances of an Old Roman Easter Vespers service. Only specialists will understand (or perhaps refute) the claim by Péres that Old Roman chant cannot be performed in the traditional manner of Western chant; this certainly makes a strong case for his alternative. It requires very little knowledge of chant to recognise that, with its ecstatic Alleluias and the antiphons recapitulating the church year, this is not exactly like the Vespers one normally hears in liturgical reconstructions. Interestingly, although the singing could be described as strenuous, vibrant and stentorian, it is the antithesis to the SOVS type described on p. 27. CB

## MEDIEVAL

*Alba: Songs of Longing & Lustful Tunes: Music from medieval Spain and France* Agnetha Christensen alto, Poul Høxbro pipe- & tabor, perc. 61' 17" Classico Classcd 170

The pipe & tabor bits remind me of the Andean music David Munrow used to play in his talks on his trip there. The instrumental playing is sophisticated and the singer presents the music in so confident a manner that one feels it almost insulting to question whether her rhythms can be justified or not: who knows? This is not one of those discs that tries to squeeze in the maximum number of titles: Guiraut de Borneil's *Reis glorios* runs for 9' 20" and the set of seven songs by Martin Codax takes up to 15' 68" [sic]. As a change from instrumentalists pinching singers' tunes, here the singer takes part in some of the seven *Estampie Royals*. The programme ends with *Virgen Madre* (Cantiga 340). A most attractive disc. CB

*Carmina Burana* (XI-XIII Cent.) Theatrum Instrumentorum 68' 54" Arts 47511-2 £

A brilliant opening to the disc promises the versatility and imagination of an Italian version of a New London Consort production. The solo soprano (Gloria Moretti) shares Catherine Bott's sweetly astringent tone, but lacks its emulcent beauty. The second soprano has a marvellous way with the Arab-style decoration, beautifully matched by the accompanying lute in *Ecce torpet probitas*, but she cannot quite manage the lowest notes. The continual slips in timing (which Pickett would have eradicated) and disturb-

ing bulges of sound become insistently annoying. At one point the lower soprano misses her entry; the raw-voiced tenor is also well below the standard of Moretti. The instrumentation throughout is full of character, and well varied to add to the intoxicating build-ups of the songs; the percussion is especially adventurous. The opening of *Ecce torpet* is magically evocative, although – of course – made up by the performers. In the faster, rhythmic pieces, little attention is given to the characterisation of the words, which rattle along blandly; but, even in the slower songs, the instruments are more expressive than the voices. The booklet gives notes in English, German, French and Italian, but (atrocious) translations are only in English. The numerous misprints gave me much amusement. We are not told who sings or plays in which piece. An enjoyable recording, but not my first choice for *Carmina Burana*. Selene Mills

*El canto espiritual judeoespañol* Alia Musica, Miguel Sánchez 62' 30" Harmonia Mundi HMI 987015

I don't know what to do with this. Last time I tried to get an expert to review sephardic song, she wrote an article questioning the relevance of an early-music approach to what is a living folk tradition (Judith Cohen in *EMR* 31, p. 13). So I sent this disc to Alison Sabadaria, who has recorded the repertoire, but she was too busy getting married (congratulations), so has sent it back. Alia Musica are primarily an early-music group of four singers and four players: I'm puzzled whether we are hearing types of music which are current – in which case, I would rather hear it from practitioners within the culture rather than from outsiders – or whether this is a reconstruction of what Judeohispanic music was like before 1492. The performances are convincing in their own terms, and if you are attracted to a mediterranean sound with a Jewish accent, you'll enjoy it, apart from the booklet, which obscures the text by printing it over a distracting, if authentic, design. CB

*The Black Madonna: Pilgrim Songs from the Monastery of Montserrat (1400-1420)* Ensemble Unicorn, Michael Posch 56' 55" Naxos 8.554256 £

The repertoire is based round the *Llibre Vermell de Montserrat*, which contains ten pieces of music copied in the 1390s to enable pilgrims to the Black Madonna to sing and dance during their night vigil in the church. My guess is that the dancing was rather more sedate than on the first track, which has tremendous vigour. For good or ill, the editorial imagination is more prominent than in, say, Alba's pipe and alto disc. There are two soloists, Belinda Sykes (who is very impressive) and the countertenor Bernhard Landauer, with a choir of five and six instrumentalists. The tunes are catchy,

though the treatment seems a little too well-disciplined for them; the feel of a crowd of pilgrims enjoying themselves, to which the arrangements seem to be aiming, is missing. But try it for yourselves. CB

*Hildegard von Bingen und Birgitta von Schweden* Les Flamboyants 56' 46" Raumklang RK 9802

Birgitta of Sweden, born 100 years later than Hildegard, seems to have modelled her life on her predecessor's; her monophonic 'revelations' were compiled as the *Cantus Sororum* for use by the religious order which Birgitta founded. The writing is much more syllabic than Hildegard's, who definitely takes the palm for her beautiful melismas and wide-ranging lines, but Birgitta's music has its own tighter-knit elegance and beauty, brought out to full effect by these excellent German/Swedish performers.

The three singers share a maturity of sound which seems more appropriate for nuns than some of the thinner, younger sounds of other recordings. But this is not to say they sound old: the voices are flexible and expressive: the words are beautifully enunciated, and there are even dynamics! The intervals are clear and easy, vibrato is used sparingly, and the lines are smooth and graceful. The three voices are easily distinguishable, but this again seems right for 'nuns'. In some pieces a fiddle and recorder are added to the texture as drones or counterpoint, or play the tunes or improvisations on them without the singers. The playing is immaculate, blending in and out of the singing in a way that leaves the original line clear, but adds poignancy to its high moments, occasionally with naughty – but always tasteful – harmonies. Selene Mills

*Monastic Song: 12th Century Monophonic Chant, Peter Abelard & Codex Las Huelgas* Harmonia Mundi HMU 907209 66' 05"

I am reminded of the article by Christopher Page commenting on the wide circulation of medieval poetry in the booklets accompanying recordings. Unlike later musical settings, here the music expresses the form of the poem and does not hinder its comprehension; the difficulty is understanding a culture so different from our own. After listening to several discs this month which try to liven up the music and in doing so obscure the text, the purity of voices here, either solo or in unison, with the occasional drone to vary the texture, is refreshing, particularly when the voices are so good. It does, however, seem a pity to stretch out musically the single-stanza laments from *Las Huelgas* (why not commission further text?) and the notes might have explained why the words of *Quis dabit* seem familiar. The Abelard songs include his best-known text, *O quanta qualia*, three *planctus*, his *De profundis* and *Epithalamica*. CB

## 15th CENTURY

**Ciconia Sidus Praeclarum: Complete Motets**  
Mala Punica, Pedro Memelsdorff dir  
Erato 3984-21661-2

I have my usual problems with the Carthaginian evil, which falls on innocent music and distorts it. The music itself is marvellous, the performances are brilliant, but they don't seem to belong together. Instead of increasing excitement, I find the continual variety in tempo, volume and scoring distracting. Do other readers love them? The booklet has an ingenious way of numbering the pages, with -1 and 1 in the middle and working outwards: isn't it a bit late to change the usual convention? CB

**Dufay Music for St James the Greater** The Binchois Consort, Andrew Kirkman 66' 53 Hyperion CDA66997  
*Missa S. Jacobi, Rite maiorem Jacobum canamus, Balsamus et munda certa, Gloria/Credo, Apostolo glorioso*

Whatever we think of the apostle, it is Dufay who comes over as *gloriosus* here. The Mass includes propers as well as the ordinary, and *Rite maiorem* may have been intended for the same occasion, whatever that was. The *Gloria/Credo* pair quote popular songs in their *Amens*. This is an enthralling programme given a performance that does full justice to the music and, in a rich month for 15th-century music, this would be my recommendation if you can't afford the Faugues/Ockeghem and the Rue (can one say 'the la Rue'?), let alone the Josquin. CB

**Josquin Missa L'homme armé [etc]** Oxford Camerata, Jeremy Summerly 56' 01" Naxos 8.553428  
*Josquin Ave Maria, Missa L'homme armé sexti toni; Josquin or La Rue Absalon fili mi; Vinders O mors inevitabilis (Lament on the death of Josquin)*

Josquin's *Missa L'homme armé sexti toni* is given a very polished performance by the Camerata, but while the singing is very expressive, at points the *tempi* are rather languid for my taste – the mass itself never achieves the splendid vigour of the choir's modern-French rendition of the *cantus*. The reading of the motets also emphasises beauty of phrasing, occasionally at the expense of dynamism, and there is more *ficta* applied than I have heard in other performances of this repertoire. Very much to this recording's credit is the consistent excellence of the tuning and vocal blend, and Jeremy Summerly never seems to tire of interpreting even such unpromising material as the *dona nobis pacem*, a canonic tour de force which often sounds laboured in other performances. Jheronimus Vinders' lament on the death of Josquin, the seven-part motet *O mors inevitabilis*, although a rather static piece demonstrating competence rather than genius, provides a rarely-heard bonus. D. James Ross

*Half of the note is devoted to the Fallows revision of Josquin's birth date, but there is nothing on the attribution of Absalon and no explanation of the presence of the monophonic Laeta dies magna ducis.* CB

**Pierre de la Rue Missa de Feria, Missa Sancta Dei genitrix [& motets]** Gothic Voices, Christopher Page dir, with Christopher Wilson & Shirley Rumsey lutes 65' 35" Naxos 8.553874 £

Gothic Voices may find tempering their fifths and singing triads a novelty, but it doesn't sound a problem. The ferial mass isn't at all perfunctory in comparison with its Marian companion; both are fine pieces, though my favourite is the motet *Pater de celis Deus*. Three other motets are played in versions for two lutes, a refreshing texture in Christopher Wilson's effectively simple entabulations with only a modicum of embellishment. Like the Dufay CD, which I marginally prefer merely because Dufay is just a notch above la Rue, the sound is more French than that of the native group Obsidienne in the disc reviewed below. It would be nice to have a Josquin mass from Gothic Voices, but perhaps it is even better if their impeccable singing (I'm now used to the *tempi*) draws us towards the lesser-known masters. CB

**Vox aurea: Ockeghem Motets; Faugues Missa La basse danse** Obsidienne, Emmanuel Bonnardot 65' 54" Opus 111 OPS 30-222

Faugues was not much more than a name to me until I heard this; the name now represents a composer of considerable skill and interest, and this is a disc that deserves wide circulation – and not just for the presence of the basic corpus of Ockeghem's motets. There are 16 singers (3 3 6 4), who sing extremely pleasing, though perhaps just a little carefully. The Mass, based on dance melody that is not otherwise known, isn't treated as a *basse-danse* (the whole point of making a mass out of dance is, of course, not to make it too obvious), and this doesn't have an extractable trio section like the Isaac equivalent. With its thorough imitative technique, it would probably be dated later than the mid-1450s if it had not survived in Trent MS 91. It is well worth hearing (and, Peter Berg tells me, singing). An *alta* band is, however, needed in *Ut heremita solus*, a compendium of phrases for the slide trumpet and shawm which sounds feeble on recorders. CB

## 16th CENTURY

**Byrd Missa in tempore paschali** Chanticleer 51' 58" (rec. 1987)  
Harmonia Mundi Suite HMT 7905182 ££  
Propers for Easter Sunday & Assumption: *Ave regina a4, Regina caeli a3, Salve regina a4*

It is always interesting to hear performances of English church music from groups outwith the English cathedral tradition, and this mid-price re-release of a recording made in 1986 and featuring sequences of music from Byrd's *Gradualia* sung by the American ensemble Chanticleer has some commendable features. The attempt to give music a liturgical context as well as wide range of expression and dynamic variation is admirable, but the performance shows its age and sadly the intonation and some of the

articulation fall consistently short of what is acceptable today. Philip Brett's notes seem also to date from the original release and take no account of recent developments in Byrd research. As the Cardinal's Musick will eventually get round to all this repertoire in their complete Byrd edition on ASV, this is probably a recording for only the most dedicated Chanticleer fans. D. James Ross

**Holborne & Robinson Pavans and Galliards** Christopher Wilson, Shirley Rumsey 59' 44" Naxos 8.553874 £

The English 'Golden Age' lute repertory suffers from a widespread modern misconception which divides it into 'Dowland' and 'the rest'. This disc demonstrates what excellent music was produced by 'the rest'. Holborne was well known in his day, and an appreciable quantity of music survives, both for lute and for five-part ensemble. His is a distinctive tuneful style tinged with melancholy, especially in his pavans, but including also some delightfully catchy melodies. Robinson is best known for his *Schoole of Musicke* (London, 1603), an excellent lute tutor which is still used. This includes both duets and solos, some of considerable technical difficulty and musical worth. His duets have long been a favourite with lutenists, though his solos are less well known and recording of them was long overdue. In addition to the welcome choice of repertory, this disc is beautifully executed and recorded. The Rumsey-Wilson duo [also heard on the Gothic Voices la Rue] must be the longest-standing lute partnership around, and it shows in the faultless balance they achieve. Christopher Wilson gives a thoughtful and delicately-voiced performance of the solos, plumbing the considerable emotional depths of Holborne's pavans, and bringing a deftness and sparkle to the faster pieces. A very welcome addition to the catalogue, and an unmissable bargain.

Lynda Sayce

**Lassus Missa pro defunctis, Prophetiae Sibyllarum** The Hilliard Ensemble 63' 16" ECM 1658 453 841-2 (rec. 1993)

There is a missing link between the two works. Lassus did not set the *Dies iae*, and it is not performed here in chant; but the line 'Teste David cum Sibylla' is the cue for the setting of the mysterious Sibylline prophecies; to quote John Potter's excellent note, 'the high point of their journey from pagan ramblings to Christian symbolism came when Michaelangelo put five of them on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel alongside seven Old Testament prophets': musicians might claim Lassus's setting to be an equally high point. An advantage of having the note written by one of the singers is that the extraordinarily chromatic introduction can be discussed from the point of view of how its intonation works in performance, a subject the usual annotator, in ignorance of the performance his notes will accompany, could not dare broach. (The Hilliard does, of course, have the benefit of that ambulant pitchometer, Roger Covey-Crump.) Despite an emphasis on the voice beautiful and a

tendency to choose tempi to demonstrate it, I find this a very moving recording. CB

**Victoria Vol. III: The Call of the Beloved** The Sixteen, Harry Christophers 68' 33" Collins Classics 15212

*Laetatus sum* a12, *Missa Laetatus sum* a12, *Ad caenam Agni providi a4*, *Magnificat sexti toni* a12, *Vadam et circuibo civitatem* a6, *Veni creator spiritus* a4, *Vidi speciosam a6*

Coming hard on the heels of Vol. II, this collection is quite different, though sharing the same very high standards of singing, precision and commitment. Otherwise, it's as if they had taken my review of Vol. II to heart (*EMR* May 1998 – impossible, because of the timing): tempi are much brisker and pitch is sensibly equalised (standard-clef up a tone, the one *chiavette* piece down a tone). The subtitle refers only to the two wonderful Song of Songs motets; the major part is taken up with the closely-linked trio of Psalm (not 'motive' as described on the cover), Mass and Magnificat, which share some of the same music. This is much more public Victoria, music written for effect on major feasts; instruments double Choirs II and III in accordance with known practice (occasionally perhaps a bit loudly). Though done very well here, this is not Victoria's finest music; one might have wished for more of the Song of Songs settings, but the two *alternatim* hymns provide a reminder of his more austere liturgical side. The three discs so-far issued in this series show very effectively the breadth of Victoria's imagination and the variety of his styles. Noel O'Regan

*All the King's Horses: Knights, Poets & Patrons of the Renaissance* I Fagiolini & Concordia Metronome MET CD 1013 66' 27"

France: Certon, Jannequin, Sandrin, Sermisy, anon

Germany: Finck, Isaac, Othmayr, Senfl, anon

Italy: Arcadelt, Cara, Patavino, Rore, Ruffo, anon

This is an enjoyable anthology, a mixture of old favourites and attractive novelties, beautifully sung with absolute clarity of the words, though sometimes a little po-faced. I have a few worries about pace: in *Puisque vivre*, for instance, the long mid-phrase notes seems just too long, so the upbeats might perhaps be even shorter and lighter (I'm on my hobby-horse of last month's editorial). The pieces tend towards the light, the most serious (and longest) being the Petrarch sonnet *Or che'l ciel* in Rore's setting. The next longest, with far more notes, is Jannequin's birds. The cover misleadingly has a photo of 11 singers, but don't be alarmed, only five are on this disc. CB

*Bibliotheca Cygneana: Music from Sources of the Zwickau Ratschule library* Ensemble Alte Musik Dresden, Norbert Schuster 73' 55"

Raumklang RK 9801

Music by Heiland, Höffler, Klemm, Köler, Kropfstein, Löhrer, Michael, Sachs, Schalreuter, Schein, Schütz (SWV 368 & 501), Stolzer, & anon.

This is a nice idea: the 500th anniversary of the library (or at least, of the book with the earliest dated inscription of ownership) of the school run by Zwickau's town council is celebrated with a fine recording of works

surviving in the library. Performances are stylish and effective, and the gap between the composers you haven't heard of and those you have is not as marked as you might expect. This shows the variety of German music rather more than any other single disc I know. Full marks for the alternative to a brittle plastic case and the excellent booklet, with a facsimile of one of the fugues by Klemm: what do *chiavette* mean to an organist in Dresden in 1631? CB

**Musik kring Vasa** Westra Aros Pijpare 53' 28" Caprice Records CAP 21567

This is a jolly romp through Susato and Attaingnant dances orchestrated in the way one remembers from the 1960s and may be entertaining as background music in the Vasa Museum, where a man-of-war that sank in 1628 has been preserved. Most of the music is a bit early for that date. The novelty is a group of six pieces from what used to be called the *Cançonner d'Uppsala* which are delightful, if rather free; where does the version of *Riu, riu, chiu* with a different text come from? Well enough done, but the kaleidoscopic scoring is nearer the Poulenc orchestrations than how I imagine they sounded in the 16th century. CB

## 17th CENTURY

**Banchieri Il Zabaione musical, Festino nella sera del giovedì grasso** Choir of Radio Svizzera, Lugano; Sonatori de la Gioiosa Marca, Treviso Diego Fasolis 62' 19" Naxos 8.553785 62' 19" £

Both of these pieces are supposed to be fun and it certainly seems as if the performers had a ball: the bright acoustic and recording lend an intimacy that throws the action forward in a most dramatic way. Instruments join in the fun, which is probably at its most evident in the animal impersonations of the *Festina*. There is some lovely singing from the choir, whose recordings on Naxos are proving extremely successful (I thoroughly enjoyed their Buxtehude recently) and I hope we can look forward to more couplings with the Sonatori, who seem also to be attracting more critical notice. At bargain price, this is tremendous value. BC

**Buxtehude Complete Chamber Music Vol. III: 6 Sonatas without opus number.** John Holloway, Ursula Weiss vlns, Jaap ter Linden, Mogens Rasmussen gambas, Lars Ulrik Mortensen kbd 52' 30" Marco Polo Dacapo 8.224121 £

This is a reissue of the disc originally released in 1995, packaged with a 204-page Dacapo catalogue, which lists 121 discs of Danish music and also includes biographical information about Danish composers and an article on Music in Denmark. Although one thinks of Buxtehude in connection with Lübeck, he had previously lived and worked in what was then Denmark. BC called this disc 'a great achievement' (*EMR* 19 p. 13); if you didn't follow his advice then, buy it now, especially at rock-bottom price. CB

**Desmarest La Diane de Fontainebleau** Françoise Maset, Raphaële Kennedy, Marie-Noëlle Maerten, Marie-Louise Duthoit, Christophe Laporte, Patricik\* Aubailly, Arnaud Marzoratti SSScTTBar, La Symphonie du Marais, Hugo Reyne 51' 00" Auvidis Astrée E 8633

This disc is almost worth buying for the account of the composer's eventful life with which the booklet begins! Should you make so rash a gesture do not neglect the music, much of which is ravishing – not only because it includes a rare appearance in opera of the bass recorder. It has to be cause of real regret that Desmarest was one of those composers whose talents were suppressed by the ruthless Lully: in this case, he certainly had reason to fear the competition. Unfortunately, the sound is sometimes a little strange. Diane may well have been recorded in Fontainebleau, but the orchestra sounds as if it were left behind at Versailles. But don't be put off by this. You'll miss a wonderful 'sleep' chorus and some of the silliest booklet photos ever.

David Hansell

\*A misprint? But it comes twice thus with the disc. CB

**A. Draghi La vita nella morte: Oratorio du Sépulchre** Soloists, Ensemble Baroque de Limoges, Christophe Coin 71' 06" Auvidis Astrée E 8616

'La vita nella morte is an astonishing and impressive work, firstly in its instrumentation, but also in the clarity of its language and the transparency of its emotion.' Thus writes Michel Uhlmann in his booklet note. While I do not dispute a word of this, I have to say that by the year of its performance, 1688, it was already part of an extensive tradition (with outstanding contributions by Bertali, Schmelzer, Leopold I and Sances) and it should be no surprise that music of such direct emotional appeal was written for the key annual church festival. Draghi's musical language is certainly more modern and the arias extended beyond the scope of anything written by the composers listed above. I was not initially very moved by this performance but, on repeated listenings, the slightly dry acoustic has become less of a problem and the attractive instrumental playing (the contrast in colour between *viole da gamba* and *da braccio* is nicely projected) has convinced me. BC

**Leonarda La Musa Novarese** Loredana Bacchetta, Caterina Calvi, Gianluca Ferrarini, Luca Ferracina SATB, Gruppo Vocale Musica Laudentes, Riccardo Doni dir, Cappella Strumentale del Duomo di Novara, Pailo Monticelli dir 70' 54" Opus 111 OPS 30-206 (*Tesori del Piemonte*, 5) *Ave, suavis dilectio* op. 6, *Litany BVM* op. 10/11, *Salve Regina* op. 11/12, *Sonata 3, 9, 12* op. 16, *Beatus vir* op. 19/4, *Magnificat* op. 19/10

I was slightly disappointed by this recording. The music is delightful and there are some lovely moments: Loredana Bacchetta's *Ave, suavis dilectio* includes some of the best singing (although she can hit just above high notes). The main problem is, I think, the instrumental playing: the violins try too

hard to articulate semiquaver passages and there's a certain cloudiness about their tone. The balance (and intonation) between solo voices is not ideal either. This is a pity because the music is very attractive. BC

**Leopold I Sacred Works** Jörg Waschinski, David Cordier, Henning Voss, Achim Kleinlein, Marcos Fink SSATB, Wiener Akademie, Martin Hazelböck 68' 11"

**cpo 999 567-2**

*Motetto de Septem Doloribus, Psalmus Miserere, Tres lectiones nocturni*

I was particularly pleased to be asked to review this, the second of the Viennese church music CDs this month. It was most interesting finally to hear Leopold's music, which is so similar to that of both Bertali and Schmelzer, on whom I spend so much research and transcription time. Large-scale church music of the period is constructed on the 'chunk' principle: each section of text triggers an idea which can last for two bars or two minutes, often without rhyme or reason. Whatever the musical substance, the performances here are excellent: the two male sopranos are only very occasionally slightly strained by the pitch, and it seems curious that the soprano section is completed by two females. The instrumental palette is typically rich: violins, viols, cornets, trombones and continuo. Such sumptuous resources lend a splendour all of their own. If there are still readers unfamiliar with this Viennese repertoire, they should definitely investigate; others will need no encouragement. BC

**Marini Canzonette Torri Trastulli**, Tania d'Althann S, Gian Paolo Fagotto T, Accademia Claudio Monteverdi, Hans Ludwig Hirsch dir 51' 46"

**ARTS 47399-2 £**

Don't be fooled by the layout of the back cover: music by Marini (performed by tenor, violin and continuo) is interspersed by that of Torri (for soprano, flute or recorder and continuo). *Sorghin pur tempeste irate* is for voice and harpsichord only in this recording, which was made in 1984 and is really very clean. Fagotto has a lovely, light tenor voice, which takes the ornaments comfortably in its stride. d'Althann's is a 'sweet' soprano, not always completely in the middle of her notes (especially in long melismas). It is quite a strange idea, combining the two, and this disparity is underlined by the better performances of the Marini. BC

**Muffat Toccatे & concerti da chiesa** Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester dir & org (1748 Organ by Samson Scherrer at Saint-Antoine-l'Abbaye, Isère) 73' 10"

**Tempéraments TEM 316013**

Toccata 1, 6-8, 11 & Passacaille from *Apparatus*; Concertos in D, G & G (1701)

This release is part of the Tempéraments series, endeavouring to place the organ within a broader musical context, so, as well as being used for the toccatas, the 1748 Scherrer organ at Saint-Antoine-l'Abbaye is also used in the concertos, sometimes as continuo, sometimes more prominently. In

the organ pieces, Martin Gester shows a masterful control of overall shape, within which he manages to push and pull the material, delaying a fugal entry by a millisecond with tremendous effect, squeezing a chord for added impact. (Listen to the *Passacaille*, track 2, for plentiful examples.) The three concerti are pieces that I know from their earlier incarnation as five-part sonatas from *L'armonico tributo* and, although the players of Le Parlement de Musique are utterly convincing in these performances, I'm afraid Muffat's 'improvements' don't always convince me. I was rather puzzled by the solo organ passages, though the idea of extending the organ concerto repertoire by replacing concertino violins by organ is intriguing. The string players are excellent; odd that they are not listed in the booklet, despite space for the exact registration of each section of the organ pieces. BC

**Provenzale La Colomba ferita** Roberta Invernizzi, Gloria Banditelli, Giuseppe De Vittori, Giuseppe Naviglio SmSTBar, etc, Cappella de'Turchini, Antonio Florio 113' 38" 2 CDs Opus 111 OPS 30-208/9 (*Tesori di Napoli* 4)

This is my recording of the month. Provenzale is unknown to me, apart from the previous Opus 111 CD, and this oratorio is enough to make me wonder why. I listened the first time without the libretto and was amazed just how much of what was going on I was able to perceive from the characterisation of the singing. The cast are, without exception, excellent. The band consists of strings with recorders and bassoon and a rich continuo team, including colascione. The dove in question is St Rosalia (sung beautifully by Gloria Banditelli). Provenzale's ensemble writing is delightfully simple but extremely effective. Essentially, this is a sacred opera, with full character interaction and a broadly believable plot – there's even a comic Neapolitan-dialect interlude. BC

**Purcell The Indian Queen** The Scholars Baroque Ensemble 78' 37" Naxos 8.553752 £

This is the economy model, which hardly seems quite right for a dramatic opera – a genre about which every contemporary account emphasizes the high-profile 'production values'. I admit to knowing nothing about the size of the band at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane in 1695, but I have a hard time believing it could only run to four string players and one theorist. And performing this kind of piece with just eight singers has a special pitfall of its own: a distinctively (albeit interestingly) coloured voice like those of the bass Adrian Peacock or the soprano Kym Amps tends to stand out a bit too clearly, not only in the excessively lean texture of the climactic choruses of Acts II and IV, but also when the singer has to double too many roles. That said, this small-scale recording (like the one by the Purcell Simphony under Catherine Mackintosh a few years back) has the great virtue of letting the instrumental writing, in particular, be heard clearly. And the playing

is very good indeed: I wouldn't have thought 20 years ago that baroque trumpets or oboes would ever sound this good. None of the solo or ensemble roles in the opera really belong to falsetto altos, and if the two here are (through no fault of their own) somewhat disappointing, they're the only singers in the company who are. I could wish many of the tempos were less rushed: often the words have to be gabbled and Purcell's rhythmic subtleties arbitrarily simplified, as in the tenor-bass duet at the end of the Act V masque. That masque, composed by Daniel Purcell (who was perhaps called into service after his brother's sudden death on the eve of the first night in 1695), was supposedly first recorded on Christopher Hogwood's *L'Oiseau-Lyre* version, which came out in 1995 and which, alas, I haven't heard. To judge only from its cast listing, Hogwood's is probably the recording to own; but at a bargain price this is a more than adequate *pis aller*. Eric Van Tassel

**Purcell Hail! bright Cæcilia (1692); Welcome to all the pleasures (1683): Odes for Saint Cæcilia's Day** Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe 72' 58" Harmonia Mundi HMC 901643

Since the 1995 glut I haven't spent all that much time with Purcell, so I've enjoyed revisiting the many recordings of these two odes – which are paired (apparently for the first time) in what now seems to me the optimum CD coupling. Herreweghe's soloists are all at least capable, and occasionally more than that. The credits name two 'contre-ténors' (Robin Blaze and Martin van der Zeijst) and one tenor (Mark Padmore), but we're not told who sings which airs. That's a pity; the falsettist in the 1683 ground 'Here the deities' is no match for the tenor Charles Daniels (who sings the air for Parrott on EMI), but the same singer must be one of the two falsettists I think I'm hearing in *Hail! bright Cæcilia*, who in that ode exhibit few of the usual flaws of their species. (Parrott's is the only recording I know that uses 12 soloists, as Purcell did in what was obviously an all-star show in 1692; the most any other recording uses is 8, as here, and several get by with 6, but it shows.) Indeed, 'Tis Nature's voice' is just about as strong and secure here as any high-tenor version, and far more satisfying than any other falsetto performance I know.\* I like Herreweghe's direction in many respects: the playing is of course first-class; there's a good balance between instruments and voices; and although the unequal rhythms aren't quite as relaxed and varied as they might be, it's hard to find any recording on which they are. The ornamentation is nice, generally unforced (though there are some slightly risible follow-my-leader moments in e.g. 'The fife'). I particularly notice that although some tempos are still too fast – Peter Harvey's 'Wond'rous machine', for instance, is almost out of control – Herreweghe gives way less than many conductors to what is perhaps the most widespread vice in late-20th-century Baroque performance, whether 'mainstream' or 'authenticistic'. If on balance Parrott's EMI versions are still my

first choice for these wonderful pieces, Herreweghe has a place somewhere at the top table.

\* This is a vexed question, but less so than some seem to believe. We do know who sang 'The airy violin' and the top part in 'In vain the amorous flute' in 1692, and we know that they were 'low countertenors', i.e. high tenors; it's just these two movements that Herreweghe's falsest(s) can't quite bring off. While listening to this CD I've dipped again into *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell*, the symposium volume edited by Michael Burden, which is one of the many publishing triumphs we owe to Bruce Phillips at OUP. In one of many valuable essays in that book, Timothy Morris is concerned that the top d" (written pitch) in 'The fife and all the harmony' has to be explained away in an air otherwise suited to the low countertenor Bouchier, but in its context the note is spot-on for a tenor: the slight squawk that Neil Jenkins (for Parrott) produces on that note (actually, he sounds as if he's been goosed) is just right to pictorialize (and send up) the climactic 'a-larm, a-LARM'.

Eric Van Tassel

*Apollo's Banquet: 17th-century Music from the Publications of John Playford* David Douglass vln, Paul O'Dette theorbo, Andrew Lawrence King harps 77' 42" Harmonia Mundi France, HMU 907186

I'm very puzzled by this: I would expect, from the names of the performers, to find this a lively and stimulating disc, a godsend to all who have danced the Playford country dances to joyless didactic tapes or a dull recorder, whereas in fact I was only moderately entertained. Perhaps this sort of improvisatory activity needs to be live. A non-musical reason may be that the violin sounds a bit too close and loud, except when self-consciously retreating to an accompanimental role. Curiously, the production team was the same as for the *Phantasticus* (see the next but one review), except that for this disc Robina Young is listed merely as executive producer with a separate session producer, that slippery word 'executive' presumably meaning 'doing something managerial rather than being at the sessions'; perhaps the players missed her. But don't be put off: there is stimulating music-making here from players who are not bound by the printed note and can interact with popular material with imagination and vitality. CB

*In Venetia* The QuintEssential Sackbut and Cornet Ensemble 64' 02" Meridian CDE 84367 A & G Gabrieli, Merula, Merulo, Picchi, Priuli

It was an excellent idea for a young group to devote its first record to a little-known composer who deserves revival. For although this is topped and tailed by Gabrieli, it is important for including eight canzons and sonatas by Priuli (together with a motet transcription), and sets it apart from other anthologies of Venetian instrumental music. This is not featured on the packaging, and Keith McGowan's otherwise excellent note only mentions him in passing; perhaps there was an understandable fear that Priuli wasn't a name to attract sales. He was probably closely associated with Gabrieli in his last

years and seems to be the instrumental composer who was most influenced by him. So this is a disc that expends the repertoire with really first-rate and imaginative music. QuintEssential have realised that the sparse evidence from Gabrieli suggests that a few string instruments were mixed with sackbuts and cornets in the larger pieces but that the simple contrast or choirs of strings and wind was not normal practice. Their scorings work, except for the theorbo; its sound doesn't relate to that of the wind instruments, it is erratically audible, and there is no need for its bass when you have sackbuts on bottom lines. The other featured composer is Picchi, with two pieces a6 and 2 a8 from his 1625 set. The a6 pieces have specific scorings. Strangely, the theorbo is tacet in these, though it is needed to fill the sparser textures. I don't remember hearing a tenor cornett so prominent as in the last track; perhaps modern brass groups are right to use horns! The playing is stylish and convincing, though I wondered whether there might occasionally have been just a little more legato, and the sackbuts need to hold back from blaring at loud cadences. I like the neat way the booklet so concisely shows who is playing what where. An impressive debut! CB

*Phantasticus: 17th-Century Italian Violin Music* Romanesca 72' 51" Harmonia Mundi USA HMU 907211 Music by Castello, Cima, Corradini, Fontana, Frescobaldi, Kapsberger, Pandolfi, Piccini

'Fantastic' describes music and playing in both the sense of the Latin title and the modern colloquial meaning. This includes the classics of the first stages of the Italian violin sonata: two examples by Cima, Fontana Sonatas 5 & 6, Nos. 1 & 2 from Castello's Book II, the latest piece being a Romansca by Pandolfi published in 1660. These are interspersed with lute solos by Piccinni and Kapsberger and a harpsichord Romanesca by Frescobaldi: not surprisingly, given the name of the group, romanescas are prominent on the disc. The three performers unite in their ability to play with poise and controlled freedom, getting to the heart of the music. If you want to sample a track, try the opening of the second with its beautifully simple Cima sonata, and if you can't resist letting it run on, you'll hear an amazingly-different Castello sonata after it. What the music may lack through its loose structure it gains in immediacy, its rhetorical gestures just waiting for players like these to seize upon and exploit them. Playing and music match perfectly. If you haven't yet sampled the delights of Romanesca or early Italian sonatas, don't miss this recording; if you have, you will need no recommendation. CB

*Tombeau: German Harpsichord Music of the Seventeenth Century* Sophie Yates Böhm Suite 8; Froberger Suite 18, 19, 30 & Meditation (20), Toccata 2, 5, Tombeau de M. Blancheroche; Kerll Passacaglia; Muffat Passacaglia; Pachelbel Aria 6

There's something wonderful about Sophie Yates's playing – it is sophisticated without being in the least bit pretentious, authoritative without being impersonal. On this

disc she brings a totally engaging and deeply expressive quality to repertoire which is often heard sounding very dull indeed. The Froberger is particularly good, with superb line and sense of phrase in the quasi-improvisatory Toccatas, the Meditation from Suite XX and the incomparable Tombeau fait a Paris sur la mort de Monsieur Blancheroche. The Kerll Passacaglia is given the real roller-coaster treatment, with ornamentation you'd die for and a great, satisfying 'thunk' as the jacks fall after the last chord. The harpsichords, copies of Vaudry and Grimaldi, sound very good in the clear Forde Abbey acoustic, although I must say I found the tuning in the Pachelbel Aria surpassed even my none-too-refined threshold for 'colourful' temperaments. It will be interesting to see what Sophie Yates offers next, now that she's recorded 'cross-section' discs of French, Italian, and Spanish and Portuguese music as well as pieces by the English Virginalists and Purcell. Whatever it is, though, I can hardly wait.

Robin Bigwood

## LATE BAROQUE

Clérambault *Orphée, Léandre et Héro, Sonata 1 in G, Suite 2 in c* Sandrine Piau S, Les Solistes du Concert Spirituel 61' 51" Naxos 8.553744 £

In the context of their sterling work to expand the libraries for minimum cost, it is a shame that small misjudgements sometimes mar Naxos productions. In this case the lack of index points in the lengthy cantatas and sonata caused frustration to the reviewer and may do the same to purchasers. The latter may also wish to note that the playing time creeps over the hour only by including some generous runs in and out – a practice that is far from uncommon with several companies. End of moans! This is an attractive recital of music by a composer who, if not absolutely first class, certainly had his moments. The substantial cantatas which open and close the programme enjoyed a number of performances at the Concert Spirituel for reasons that will be clear to every listener. In Sandrine Piau, they have persuasive – if slightly cautious – advocate who receives good support from the instrumental team, especially the harpsichordist. The sonatas are not without moments of harmonic astrangency à la Purcell and the suite is a noble example of the *clavecinistes* art, enhanced both by the skill of the player and the piquant temperament. At a fiver, definitely worth the (small) hassles. David Hansell

Eberlin *The 9 Toccatas & Fugues* David Titterington (Organ of the Dutch Church in London) 61' 49" ASV CD GAU 177

Eberlin (1702-1762) was a Swabian composer and organist whose professional life was centred on Augsburg and Salzburg. It was only a few months ago that I reviewed another CD of his Toccatas in *EMR*, and I am afraid that I was not impressed with them. Mozart had complained that Eberlin's fugues are 'nothing but versets drawn out in

length' and I thought that the Toccatas incorporated far too many mind-numbing sequences, often followed by fugues whose subjects also included sequences. The intervening months have seen no Damascene conversion as far as Eberlin is concerned. But two things make this CD even more depressing than the last one. First, it is recorded on a most undistinguished London organ built in 1954 by a Dutch firm which, it seems, were otherwise occupied replacing organs destroyed in the 1953 floods in Holland. Recently restored by Flentrop, the organ sounds harsh and unforgiving. This is not helped by the out-of-tune edginess of what sounds like equal temperament, combined with something very odd in the first few bars – perhaps the rhythmic beating from a poorly tuned pedal pipe. All this does poor Eberlin no favours at all, and nor does the playing by, we are told, 'one of Britain's leading musicians' *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

**Fasch Wind Concertos** Hans Peter Westermann, Piet Dhont *obs*, Karl Kaiser *fl*, Michael McGraw *bsn*; Mary Utiger, Paula Kibildis *vlns*, Hajo Bäss *vla*, Hans Koch *vlns*, Harald Hoeren *hpscd* 51'09" (rec 1988)  
**Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 310 0309-2**  
 Concertos for *fl*, *ob* & *str* D11 & e1; *ob* & *str* G2 & g1; *ob*, *2 vln* & *hpscd* G3; 2 *ob*, *bsn*, *str* c2

This disc is an excellent introduction to Fasch's concertos. They range from what is basically a quartet for oboe, two violins and continuo to the C minor concerto for bassoon with oboes and strings, which was clearly composed for a rather talented bassoonist! The central Largo is one of Fasch's most beautiful movements. The unnamed band consists of the leading lights of the German early-music network, most now having some association with Michael Schneider's La Stagione. Highly recommended. *BC*

**Handel Concerti grossi op. 6, vol. 2. (nos. 6-9)**  
 Collegium Musicum 90, Simon Standage  
**Chandos CHAN 0616** 57'42"

This is vol. 2 of Collegium Musicum 90's set of Handel's op. 6, and very nice it is too. I was immediately struck by the warm string tone and the intensity of expression. No. 6 also features the later oboe parts. At university, I shocked David Kimbell by telling him that I found the op. 3 set of concertos far more interesting than op. 6; he'll be glad to hear that this recording has swung the balance the other way. Regular readers will know that I am a great fan of Simon Standage, both as a violinist and as a director, and I think he paces these four concertos perfectly, the slow movements especially well. I look forward very much to hearing the conclusion of the set. *BC*

**Leclair Ouvertures & Sonates en trio op. 13**  
 London Baroque, Charles Medlam 66'20"  
**Harmonia Mundi HMC 901646**

The trios recorded here are arrangements of earlier solo sonatas (considered too difficult by most of the composer's contemporaries) and at least one of the overtures is from a known source (*Scylla et Glaucus*), with added

dance movements. Leclair was, on this evidence, a masterful arranger and, if you didn't know the originals, you'd be hard pressed to guess that he hadn't originally intended these works as trios. London Baroque are on good form here. The fiddles interact seamlessly and the continuo supports well, without an over-prominent cello line. The music, as you'd expect, is of the highest quality and no-one interested in the French baroque will want to be without these performances. *BC*

**Rameau Acante et Céphise, Les Fêtes d'Hébé (Suites)** Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Frans Brüggen 66'38"  
**Glossa GCD 921103**

**Rameau Suites from Platée & Dardanus** Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan 74'40"  
**BMG Conifer 75605 51313 2**

Wonderful though his vocal writing is, it is often the dances that make the strongest impression in Rameau's operas, and their separate performances is by no means a novelty. Both discs offer generous selections (29 tracks each) and the constantly varied scoring ensures that the ear remains attracted throughout. If it were not competing for the month's 'Best *Tafelmusik*' award with the Brüggen disc, that from PBO would receive an unqualified recommendation. As it is, the greater technical polish of the European team wins the prize, helped by their combining the rare (*A et C* with its spectacular overture complete with clarinets) with the composer's greatest hit (the *Tambourin* from *L'Fd'H*). Having said that, dedicated Ramistes will want to have their cake and eat it, as the American anthology includes three movements new to the recorded repertoire. Perhaps the answer is to buy the elegantly packaged Brüggen for your neighbour and McGegan for yourself and arrange regular swaps! *David Hansell*

**Rameau Castor & Pollux: version de chambre de 1754** Christophe Einhorn *Castor*, Jérôme Corréas *Pollux*, Cyrille Gerstenhaber *Télaire*, Mercure, Brigitte Vinson *Phœbé*, Claudine Le Coz, Serge Goubiou, Sandrine Rondot, XVIII-21, Musique des Lumières, Jean-Christophe Frisch *dir* 129'53" 2 CDS in box **Audivis Astrée E 8633**

*Castor et Pollux* was Rameau's second *tragédie en musique*, first staged in 1737. It was not successful, and for the 1754 revival the composer and librettist produced a substantially revised version which effectively won the *Querelle des Bouffons* and received 254 performances over the next 30 years. Perhaps to consolidate this success, Rameau also prepared a chamber version of the score for performance in the *salons*, in which inner orchestral and choral parts are replaced by a more fully figured harpsichord part.

Vigorously though this is played, one does inevitably miss the orchestral and choral weight in the battle and storm scenes, though the recitative, upon which so much of the drama hangs, is unchanged. So even more than usual, the project stands or falls on the singers' contributions. Though there is no

lack of drama or pathos in the performances I feel that there are too many moments where the male protagonists sound under pressure, where vocal vibrato does not complement the straight instrumental sounds and where intonation is sour for this release to be unreservedly welcomed. The solo players sustain their roles with considerable stamina and the interpretation is well paced but ultimately there are too many uncomfortable moments. *David Hansell*

**Telemann Six Sonatas for two flutes op. 2** American Baroque (Stephen Schultz & Mindy Rosenfeld *fls*) 67'50"  
**Naxos 8.554132** £

These unaccompanied duets have long been staple diet for recorder players, flautists and violinists alike. All are substantial, four-movement works, rich in melodic and harmonic invention and satisfying for both player and listener. Telemann consistently combines exciting imitative allegros with beautifully-crafted slow movements, matched in quality only by W.F. Bach's flute duets (F54-59), which tend towards the *empfindsamer Stil*. There are certain limitations to this genre, and whilst an isolated sonata can be interspersed very successfully into a varied programme, an entire disc is hard work. Nevertheless, this is good-quality playing with excellent ensemble and tuning between the two flutes, and plenty of musical ideas. A good budget buy. *Marie Ritter*

**Weiss Partitas pour luth** Hopkinson Smith **Audivis Astrée E 8620** 59'59"

Several players have recently chosen Weiss as a platform for showing off their virtuosity. This one sounds more like a master enjoying himself (whilst still giving them a run for their money!) and much of the opposition sounds brash in comparison. These are deeply-felt, expressive readings of great subtlety, and they demand repeated hearings. The dances really dance, aided by exuberant ornamentation and varied articulation. The recording is very clean; there are no splats or forced notes. Recent Weiss discs have tended to favour a brighter tone, produced by using an 18th-century-style technique rather than an early 17th-century one. This sounds as though Smith is using the latter technique, which produces a warmer, rounder sound, at the expense of some bass definition. The result is more intimate, and perhaps easier on the ear for prolonged listening. Though Weiss probably didn't sound like this, it captures the spirit of his music in all its richness; highly recommended.

*The contents or the recording are:*

Partita in d (D.A. Smith no. 11), Partita in G (Smith 22) and three movements in D, including the well-known Passacaille from the suite in D (Smith 18).

Most, if not all, have been recorded before; recent choices include:

d: Cardin *The London Manuscript Vol 3* on SNE, and the Dresden version of the same with several movements in common by Barto on Naxos.

G: Cardin's Vol 6

D Passacaille: Cardin Vol 5; Moreno *Ars melancholiae* (Glossa), in each case attached to a suite, and played more slowly than by Smith.

Lynda Sayce

*The Art of the Baroque Trumpet, vol. 3: Virtuoso Music for Soprano and Trumpet* Niklas Eklund tpt, Susanne Rydén S, London Baroque dir Charles Medlam & Edward H. Tarr Naxos 8.553735 £ 64' 27"  
*Caldara La vittoria seque; Fux Chi nel Camin d'onore; Handel Eternal source of light divine, Let the bright Seraphim, Lascia ch'io pianga; Predieri Pace una volta; A. Scarlatti Su le sponde del Tebro, arias Stradella Sinfonia avanti 'Il Barcheggio'*

This volume showcases two soloists. Niklas Eklund is a brilliant trumpeter, whose ornamentation is often astonishing; Susanne Rydén is usually an outstanding soprano. For some reason, however, she is not at her best here. The very opening piece is disappointing – in (perhaps) attempting to match the tone of the trumpet, her tuning is shady and, at such high pitch, the words do not always speak clearly. In contrast, her *Lascia ch'io pianga* (not with trumpet!) is beautifully controlled. The most successful piece in the recital is Fux's *Chi nel Camin d'onore*, with its curious structure and slightly faster triplet string ritornello (the aria is otherwise for voice, trumpet and continuo). Overall, not the best of these performers. BC

*Baroque Arias* Yoshikazu Mera ct, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki 71' 14 BIS-CD-919  
*Ahle Jesu dulcis memoria; Bach: Cantata 54 & movs from 12, 132, 161, 162; Handel Messiah excerpts; Schütz Auf dem Gebirge* SWV396

Yoshikazu Mera is rapidly becoming one of the stars of the Japanese early music scene. This compilation disc (which follows on from a recent sampler, including Japanese as well as Western pieces) is culled from Bach Collegium Japan's Bach series, and the same group's recordings of Messiah (where his English is not 100%, and the central section of 'He was despised' is a little too nice). Ahle (an outstanding set, although the trombones just bash through one of the most glorious moments of that composer's output) and Schütz. The highlight for me is the last, a setting for two altos and viol consort of *Auf dem Gebirge*. Voices and instruments blend beautifully – I had to wipe a tear from my eye at the end of my first hearing. If you're still undecided about his Bach, this is an ideal way to sample various pieces; otherwise, you probably have the set and you needn't bother with a highlights disc. BC

*Kapelmeesters in Brussel: Fiocco, Brehy, van Helmont* Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, Westvlaams Vocal Ensemble, Patrick Peire Eufoda 1133 64' 51  
*Hercules-Petrus Brehy Usquequo Domine, Joseph-Hector Fiocco Tandem fulget, Charles-Joseph van Helmont Cantate Domino, Magnificat*

This is an intriguing release: the three composers are little known and all of the pieces recorded for the first time. The solo singing is excellent (Guy de Mey is the star,

for me) and the choir and orchestra quite competent (though there is one horrendous final 's' which sounds as if a character from Disney's Jungle Book was guest-starring!) I quite liked Fiocco's *Tandem fulget* and van Helmont's Magnificat also sounds worth an outing. The archive of Sint-Goedele te Brussel (now divided between the royal library and that of the conservatoire) promises further riches, which may be recorded in due course. Very interesting. BC

*Londoner's Taste: Chamber Music London 1740: Sonatas for Recorder, Violins, Violoncello and B.c. Musica Alta Ripa* 67' 10"  
*Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 309 0779-2*

Babell rec. concerto op. 3/1; Boyce Trio sonata 11; Geminiani Variations on an English Tune (Rules for Good Taste); Handel rec. sonata in Bb HWV 377; Porpora Cello sonata in F; G. Sammartini hpscd concerto in G; Valentine rec concerto in Bb

Given the wide range of musical genres presented on this disc, its subtitle *sonatas* is curiously misleading. In a programme intended to show the varied musical life of London circa 1740, we hear solo concertos for recorder and for harpsichord by Valentine, Babell and Sammartini alongside solo sonatas by Handel and Porpora, a set of Variations by Geminiani and a Boyce trio sonata. And it is ironic that the booklet stresses Handel's central importance and influence over every other composer in London at this time, whilst representing him with only the shortest of recorder sonatas. I enjoyed all the performances on this disc very much, particularly the Porpora cello sonata, superbly played by Albert Bruggen, and the sparkling Boyce trio. All the members of this ensemble are obviously very fine players, but I felt that the nature of the programme was rather a showcase of individuals and that it called for at least one equally balanced work for the group as a whole. Nevertheless, several of the pieces are rarely performed and this is a good opportunity to hear them. Marie Ritter

*Music for St Paul's* St Paul's Cathedral Choir, The Parley of Instruments, John Scott cond 74' 13"  
*Blow I was glad; Boyce Lord, thou hast been our refuge; Handel Utrecht Te Deum & Jubilate*

Seeing that Handel wrote five settings of the *Te Deum*, it is surprising how rarely any are heard. The setting to commemorate the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 remained in use until replaced by the similarly commemorative Dettingen setting in 1743. What is striking in Handel's public style (of which this is his first attempt) is the way he manages to write music that is simultaneously obvious and yet unpredictable. Boyce manages more surprises in the amazing final chorus of his anthem for the Festival of the Son's of the Clergy of 1755, which was then sung every year for nearly a century (along with Handel's Dettingen *Te Deum* and *Zadok*). Other sections, however, although pleasing, are a bit on the level. The *Blow* was written for the opening of the Cathedral on 2 December 1697. I found the smaller-scale sections particularly impressive: a duet for two countertenors and a

striking trumpet duet accompanying a high tenor (Rogers Covey-Crump). Having noticed a second Holman in the orchestra list, I tried hard to listen for the second bassoon, but I won't criticise the balance for my failure to spot Sally. (The nominally angelic treble Bartlett is no relation.) Peter Holman is playing one of the organs and wrote the notes, but the resident conductor is in charge: the recording was made at St Paul's. I found the sound sometimes a bit confused listening through speakers, but fine with headphones – but I may just need better equipment. Musically, everything is fine. CB

## CLASSICAL

*Haydn Symphonies Vol. 19: Nos. 32, 33 & 34* Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl 53' 41"  
*Naxos 8.554154* £

We have here three early-ish symphonies played on modern instruments, conducted by someone who knows a thing or two about period instruments. The results are broadly very good: tempi feel right and the strings are bright and bouncy. It's only in the first movement of No. 34, where the tone is slightly darker, that he is tempted to become slightly more self-indulgent, the tempo drops a little and the colour becomes cloudier: a classic case of investing too much emotion into a light-weight structure. That aside, the remaining three movements (in D major!) pick up the pace again and the disc ends as happily as it began. BC

*Mozart Zaide, K. 344* Lynne Dawson Zaide, Hans Peter Blochwitz Gomatz, Olaf Bär Allazim, Herbert Lippert Sultan Soliman, Christopher Purves Osmin, Academy of Ancient Music, Paul Goodwin dir 75' 02"  
*Harmonia Mundi France, HMU 907205*

Announced as the first recording of the incomplete Singspiel *Zaide* to use period instruments, this issue has much more than primogeniture to recommend it. The libretto, and even the details of the 'Turkish' story, are lost, but the score is masterly, and it is here displayed to excellent effect in Paul Goodwin's incisive overall direction. The crisp, clear recorded quality lets some exquisite instrumental detail shine through, and balance between singers and orchestra is pleasing. The melodramas that introduce each of the two acts are strongly characterized and movingly effective, and though the balance of the work is odd (with the baddies not introduced at all until Act II, and with singers rather often employed in consecutive numbers), there is abundant material here for profound and extended study. Lippert sounds too benign (and too fond of unwritten high alternative notes) for the Sultan, but Bär is very impressive as the slave who sides with the captive lovers. Blochwitz is by turns elegant and incisive in the hero's arias, and Dawson in Zaide's three arias and the ensembles makes a superbly rounded heroine, with exquisite line and plenty of fire for her tigery outburst. If the designer of the otherwise valuable booklet really wanted to include a

picture of the Burgtheater (where Zaide would never have been given in a month of Sundays), she should not have chosen (and wrongly identified) the Riding School next door. But the last word must be of praise for a splendid CD.

Peter Branscombe

**Mozart Missae breves K. 49, 65, 194 & 220**  
Soloists, Arnold Schoenberg Chor, Concentus musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 68' 37"  
Teldec Das Alte Werk 0630-13152-2

Only a reviewer is likely to play four short mass-settings straight through, but so marked is the variety both within and between these works that the ear and mind are constantly stimulated. The first and third of the masses were recorded as long ago as October 1993, the other two fourteen months later, all in the Casino Zogernitz, a venue understandably favoured by Harnoncourt and his team. The performances are crisp, forceful where appropriate, eloquent elsewhere, and all the soloists are good. Instrumental textures are neatly characterized, predominantly austere, and there is proper impact when trumpets and timpani make their bow in the final 'Sparrow' Mass. I imagine Harnoncourt's current liking for modern symphony orchestras is borne of a desire not to feel restricted within the period instrument movement; there is a strong sense of excitement, even liberation, in these recordings made with his old colleagues of the Concentus.

Peter Branscombe

**Mozart Symphonies 13, 14 & 20** Concentus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 64' 15"  
Teldec Das Alte Werk 0630-17110-2

It is incredible that, within the space of barely a year, Mozart could have composed such stylistically-varied symphonies as these – and no, the numbers are not misprinted for 39, 40 & 41! The contrast is apparent in the instrumentation – K112 having the usual oboes and horns, K114 with added flute and prominent high horns in A, and K133 with added trumpets and drums. Using period instruments for the new symphonic style stretches the limits of baroque technique, particularly in the strings, whereas on modern instruments orchestras deliberately play down to the music in order to achieve the so-called elegance in the music. It is the former that is clearly evident in Harnoncourt's interpretation, where he aggressively drives the music forward, almost breaking the technique limit in the outer movements. This is clearly right for the music, which must have thrilled Mozart's audiences. Perhaps the recording is a little bass heavy, where the two 16' instruments (balanced by only two cellos) seem rather prominent. I enjoyed the historical chart of events surrounding the years 1770-1774 in the booklet – a small bonus.

Ian Graham-Jones

## 19th CENTURY

**Chopin Mazurken und Nocturnes** Zvi Meniker (fp by Tröndlin, 1828-9) 60' 35"  
Raumklang RK 9708  
Mazurkas op. 24, 50, 56; Nocturnes op. 27, 55, 62

The music on this disc spans ten years from 1836 onwards and is performed on the 1828/29 Tröndlin grand piano at the Musikinstrumenten-Museum in Leipzig. Dr. Eszter Fontana, the Museum's director contributes an excellent account of Tröndlin in the booklet; he was a fine maker, although the instrument used for Jan Vermeulen's CD of two Weber sonatas sounds better due to a superior recording. Zvi Meniker is researching the performance practice of Chopin's piano works and his performance of the F-minor nocturne illustrates his skill and subtlety in the use of rubato. Whereas his performance of the wonderful Op.24 No.4 mazurka is impressive, he does not quite capture the spirit or the poetry of Chopin's music in the way that Lipatti did using a modern instrument.

Margaret Cranmer

**Mendelssohn Concerto for pf & str in a, Concerto for vln, pf & str in d** Andreas Staier (Fritz c.1825 fp), Rainer Kussmaul vln, Concerto Köln 71' 30"

Teldec Das Alte Werk 0630-13152-2

Juvenile works these concerti may be, but their spontaneity and flair make them most appealing. Andreas Staier exhibits all the effortless virtuosity that we have come to expect from him, with a lovely turn of speed. Sparkling runs are coupled with some fine pianism and an understanding of these works which have their roots in the Classical era. Rainer Kussmaul is also an excellent musician and the tone of the Stradivarius violin that he is playing is heavenly. An outstandingly good recording in all aspects.

Margaret Cranmer

## SAMPLERS & ANTHOLOGIES

**Agnus Dei II: music to soothe the soul** The Choir of New College, Oxford. Edward Higginbottom 66' 09"  
Erato 3984-21659-2

This begins with an attempt to outdo the Barber *Adagio*, the striking eponymous item on the *Agnus Dei* [I]: in this case the big, emotional item is an arrangement of another *Adagio* with a text from the Beatitudes: I was looking forward to hearing how the Albinoni/Giazotto bass was treated vocally, but was disappointed to hear instruments as well – a cop-out like Evelyn Glennie's percussion versions from the '48' which retain a piano. It is sung too tastefully: an Italian composition of c.1945 surely needs much more beef and vibrato than this. (I don't object to vibrato in every context!) The *Agnus Dei* here is a very convincing reworking by John Cameron of an Entr'Acte (No. 15) from Bizet's *L'Arlésienne* – the second movement of Guiraud's Suite 2: an interesting example of the way dynamics can be a very superficial element in music, since you would not guess that in the original the opening is marked *fff*. (But does the reverse work with Fauré's pastoral *Pavane*?) Turning to a piece more in accordance with our period, Monteverdi's popular *Beatus vir* is done as well as one can expect with a choir, but the necessary

degree of regimentation makes it sound just a bit like a caricature. This is a nice anthology, and if it has a similar success to vol. I, a lot of good church music will reach ears that are normally closed to it.

CB

**Hopkinson Smith: Portrait** 65' 35"  
Auvidis Astrée E 8623 ££

This disc includes music for vihuela, 4- and 5-course guitars, 10-, 11- and 13-course lutes, and theorbo, taken from various recordings from 1976 to the present, with two tracks from the Weiss disc reviewed above. It seems to have been produced under the auspices of the Cité de la Musique (Paris). The music is by Milan, Narvaez, Mudarra, de Rippe, Gaultier le Vieux, Kapsberger, Gallot le Vieux, Mouton, Sanz, Guerau, de Visée, Bach & Weiss, arranged in approximate chronological order of composition (not recording). It includes many very fine performances, and demonstrates Smith's total mastery of a wide range of different instruments. However I am a little nonplussed by it. As an audio guide to the Paris museum's lute collection mentioned in the notes, I can think of nothing finer; but I doubt that that was the intention. I have to say that I feel the programme doesn't work; the constant changes of recorded sounds, acoustic, pitch, volume, instrument and musical style are just too much. It lacks the coherence of the old Amon-Ra 'collection' discs, and whilst the older performances have not dated, the recorded sound of some tracks has. Is this the first symptom of sound bite culture in the lute world? If so it is a pity, because there are some stunning tracks, notable de Rippe's amazing fantasia for a 4-course guitar, an instrument often viewed as a bit of a joke, but featured here as an instrument for considerable virtuosity and contrapuntal complexity. As a sampler for the mother discs this collection is quite revealing: I have long regarded Smith's vihuela discs as peerless, with the baroque guitar discs, Gaultier and the latest Weiss not far below. The Gallot and Mouton tracks were new to me, and I would buy the full discs on the strength of this taste. My recommendation is if you would like to hear Smith at his best, buy one of these, as they all offer a more satisfactory portrait than the present compilation.

Lynda Sayce

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In the next issue we will devote some attention to the 40th anniversary of Das Alte Werk. Robin Bigwood is busy listening to the 21-discs of the Gustav Leonhardt Edition and I will cover some of their other recent reissues of classic early recordings. We have been very slow in covering the DHM Century Classics set of six discs; I am tempted to put them aside until the end of July as varied fare to keep me awake as we drive to Caithness and back for the Poppea course, in which case my comments probably won't be printed until October.

CB

££ = midprice, £ = around £5.00  
Other discs are, as far as we know, full price

## LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

With Bruce Phillips's early retirement, Oxford University Press will no longer have a sponsoring editor for music books in this country.

I see this news through (as it were) two different windows. From one viewpoint, I'm a customer, as a musicologist and a critic. Not a week goes by without my consulting some book published under Bruce's godfatherhood, and his departure leaves the world of music books a bleaker place.

On the other hand, I've been involved in academic publishing for over 20 years, and we were (nominally) competitors for a while, in the 1980s; every American Musicological Society annual conference in those years ended with our comparing notes and gossip over a drink. Bruce has excelled at the publisher's balancing act: looking out for the welfare of 'his' authors and holding a humane brief on behalf of the discipline as a whole, while also cannily protecting the best interests of his firm.

Bruce's opposite number in New York, Maribeth Payne, is an astute editor and a good person, who has been and will continue to be a valued mentor to many an OUP author. But I don't think she will mind my saying that when OUP shuts down its UK-based commissioning of music books, a certain (is an immigrant allowed to say this?) uniquely English sensibility will be lost from our part of the OUP list.

Eric Van Tassel

*We have picked up considerable disquiet from English academics concerning the abrupt departure of Bruce and the closing of his department. We are grateful to Bruce for supporting us by making sure that we received all books we wanted to review and hope that will continue under the new management. We are sorry that he and others are departing: we wish them well in their early retirement (if that's the right word). Will Cambridge UP be expanding to satisfy British musicologists who would rather publish at home?*

Dear Clifford,

The music of the anthem 'He that hath my commandments' (June *EMR*'s music insert, accompanying the *Byrd Newsletter*) seems clearly to be Elizabethan in style, and its attribution to one 'Coste' appears likely to refer, not to an otherwise unknown Thomas Coste (this Christian name appears only in Myriell) but to a minor contemporary of Byrd called Richard Coste. I came across him when writing a chapter for *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (ed. P. Collinson: Oxford UP, 1995). Born about 1535, he served as chorister of Ely Cathedral under Christopher Tye during 1543-44 and as a lay clerk of King's College, Cambridge, during 1555-56. He became a lay clerk of Canterbury Cathedral in 1563; presently he entered priest's orders and achieved appointment in 1567 to the minor canonry which he held until a little before 1597, at which point he vanishes from the record. He was more than just a singer; he occurs as precentor during 1592 and served briefly as acting organist during part of 1588-89. Still more to the point, in 1566-67 he was paid the substantial sum of 43s. 0d for 'makynge and prycyng' - that is, for both composing and copying - polyphonic music for use by the choir at the liturgy.

While working on the chapter I made an edition of 'He that hath my commandments' (pitched a fourth higher for AATB and containing many fewer editorial accidentals than appear in *EMR*'s version) which, through the courtesy of the choirmen of Great St. Mary's church in Cambridge, got performed a couple of times. I can't honestly say it was worth the effort, and it does not seem as if the restoration of Coste's 'Save me, O God' is likely to do much for his reputation either. Nevertheless, the exercise did yield a certain insight into the likely quality of much of the music-making in provincial cathedrals during the gloomiest days of the reign of Elizabeth!

Roger Bowers

Dear Clifford,

With luck, John Potter's *Vocal Authority* will start a revolution. Having consulted over 60 sources, I agree that pre-1830 singing was relaxed, chaste, smooth and soft, i.e. diametrically opposite to the prevailing style which I term *Strenuous, Operatic, Vibrant, Stentorian (SOVS)*. It is understandable that John (1) takes care not to criticise SOVS exponents directly, (2) cloaks his findings in a sociological smoke screen and (3) presents them in diffident, uncontroversial fashion. Nevertheless, he has courageously put his livelihood on the line because the entity he describes as the *hegemony* is unlikely to take kindly to his findings, which carry particular weight coming from a trained and top-ranking professional singer. One is not surprised to see the slightly menacing letter from Robert King suggesting that it was OK for Andrew Benson-Wilson to dislike wobbly singing but not OK for him to take a singer to task for it. The SOVS hegemony has always resented criticism, especially from mere amateurs such as Andrew, whilst themselves rooting out any deviations from the SOVS party line with Stalinist thoroughness.

I did some work with a mezzo soprano who, although dyslexic and a poor reader, produces an absolutely lovely sound - creamy, pure, unforced and in tune. If she were time-transported to London circa 1750, Handel would have drooled over this voice and set Charles Burney to work overtime on her reading. At Dartington a few years back, she was admonished never to sing in public, ever again, and no longer does so. At the professional level, attempts to sing in a historically-correct style are discouraged by the critics. Even the dead are censured. Readers will know that Luisa Tetrazzini's voice, whilst conventionally SOVS for the most part, sometimes produced relaxed, fluty sounds, with soft, floating high notes reminiscent of earlier styles. John B Steane, a high ranking SOVS apparatchik, is obviously thinking of these passages in his reference (*Gramophone*, September 1997) to 'a colourless and infantile quality' in her work, which he blames (somewhat unconvincingly) on poor recording techniques.

In the early 70s, I played with *Musica Reservata*, where I also held the role of supernumerary copyist with unsociable hours. Then, the prospects for vocal reform were encouraging. In our discussions, Michael Morrow would argue the case for vibrato-free singing, mainly on intonation grounds (you made similar points in your February 1998 issue).

Although most of his singers did not take his ideas seriously, some like Jantina Noorman were prepared to experiment. Nor were her efforts restricted to the Genoese-docker-shouting style. I still recall her lovely, tranquil, vibrato-free delivery of a 2-part Perotin organum, self-accompanied on a portative organ, using Potter's high larynx position, if I am not mistaken.

Charles Ancillon's comments in *Eunuchism Displayed*: 'there can be no finer voices in the World, and more delicate, than of some Eunuchs, such as Pasqualini, Pauluccio and Jeronimo... Jeronimo (or Momo) had a voice so soft, and ravishingly mellow, that nothing can better represent it than the Flute-stops of some Organs'. Unfortunately, Michael Morrow's innovations were not followed up. Musical directors seem to have lost interest in introducing authentic vocal performances to the public, although I would exempt certain ensembles specialising in renaissance and even contemporary music (try the Hilliard Songbook for a persuasive vibrato-free account of works by Ivan Moody and others). Personally, I find most singing of baroque and early classical works so appalling that it puts me off the music altogether. As for Rossini, his vocal music is never performed, only vandalised. Besides the ugly continuous vibrato already noted, a tendency to swamp accompanying instruments is common. For example, the lute in early 17th-century song is invariably reduced to a faint background clunking. Rapid runs are either smeared or machine gunned, except where delivered by Emma Kirkby and one or two others. I can recall few sopranos, Tetrazzini apart, without a tendency to screech on top notes. Tenors uniformly belt out high notes from the chest, and never attempt the falsetto register (unlike some pop singers). Trills and other ornaments are generally unconvincing, and often indistinguishable from a wide vibrato. Failure to employ the  *messa di voce*, considered an essential skill by Tosi, is widespread. What can be done about this bleak situation, if anything?

I can think of one precedent where market failure caused by producer domination was successfully addressed by consumer action. Readers who enjoy a pint and were over 18 in the late 60s will recall visiting the average pub at that time. All too often, choice was limited to a cold, fizzy and tasteless keg bitter such as Watney's Red Barrel. Some drinkers got together, compared notes, and got really angry when they realised that the big brewers had withdrawn their favourite real ales. These activists, who incidentally included quite a few musicians, then launched the incredibly successful Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). We now desperately need a Campaign for Real Singing (CAMREALS?) aimed at (1) establishing a new vocal paradigm, as a viable alternative to fizzy singing, and (2) discovering/supporting tomorrow's Frasis and Pastas, whose efforts would be distributed to members by CDs or internet. Anthony Rooley's early attempts to lay on concerts in homes and other small spaces might be revived. Such a society would fill a real gap. I was surprised to see from the new *Early Music Yearbook* (just out) that there is not a single society, in the UK or overseas promoting historically-informed singing. Perhaps readers supporting this idea could write to me at 65 Meath Green Lane, Horley, Surrey, RH6 8HN or email richard.bethell@compeerltd.btinternet.com.

Richard Bethell

#### DIANE & DIDO

We are grateful for Jilly Spencer for sending in this review. At the time we did not know that Andrew Benson-Wilson was also writing about it (see p. 17), but in view of this month's editorial, we thought it worth printing two reports of the same event.

The sole cause of Acteon's dreadful fate was that he 'troubled Diana's bath', a faux-pas not to be compared with the crime of Aeneas, who left his lover after one night and then wept crocodile tears. Charpentier's lack of judgment in choosing a subject dooms *Actéon* in my mind. However appealing or touching his music (which it was on this occasion), one continues to question why the characters feel and behave as they do. Whereas *Dido* totally engages heart and head with its believable situations and perfectly-balanced tragic and comic genius.

For me, one of the things that makes vocal performance exciting is the awareness of reserves – reserves of volume and of projection. The singer should not have to push. The performances were excellent, but... given by a sparkling, responsive instrumental ensemble group accompanied by a line of splendid singers placed behind them and dimly lit. Actually, the musical balance was acceptable. But as a member of the audience, I shouldn't have been THINKING about balance. How much more would our minds have been blown (which is surely what we pay for) had the singers been physically prominent. It may be hard to achieve, and be necessary to plot and plan, ignore tradition and upset institutions; but it is vital.

Sally Bruce-Payne and Stuart Macintyre surmounted these problems effortlessly, characterising Juno, the Sorceress and Aeneas with tremendous impact. Also superb were James Oxley (*Actéon*) and Jeni Bern (*Arthebuze*, *Belinda*, a witch, etc): the slapping down by the Sorceress of two uppity witches who threatened to steal her thunder was tremendous fun. Louise Mott as Dido would have benefitted so much from observance of my first point: having to try a touch less, some breaths could have been eliminated in the Lament and we, the audience, would have been spellbound rather than admiring. Christian Cumyn drew a wealth of nuance from his team, but 'Haste, haste to town' and 'Come away, fellow sailors' were both a touch too fast – sad when so brilliantly sung, but one didn't have time to enjoy the 'boozy short leave' – while the final chorus was a touch too slow. But it is ungrateful to carp. We are so lucky in the London of 1998 to be offered performances of this calibre at prices which are so much more affordable than those at Covent Garden or its current substitutes.

Jilly Spencer

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The last few issues have shown that we are not guilty of a charge made by Disgruntled of Garrigill a few months ago that we must have been suppressing correspondence because the most interesting part of the magazine was omitted one month: we don't fake letters if no-one writes any. His latest complaint is at my carelessness in not pointing out that Hasse cribbed a movement of one of his flute sonatas from Domenico Scarlatti (or vice versa); compare op. 2/4 with K.63. Well spotted! Are other movements of the set borrowed?

CB