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A headline in *The Sunday Times* of Singapore (30 August) intrigued me: 'Big boost to creative arts education'. The rest of the world is deboosting arts education, so it is encouraging that there is at least one government in the world that wants to develop 'a creative nation and a renaissance city in the knowledge era': most governments assume that knowledge is more important than creativity. The downgrading of art is neatly pinpointed in the plans for the millennium dome at Greenwich. There was lots of publicity about a vast statue, but nothing about any artist: a statue put together by a committee is hardly likely to be a work of any distinction, even if it might be the monument the 1990s deserve.

The attitude of recent UK governments (irrespective of party) to the arts is negative. The short-term bonanza from the lottery seems to be over. Despite some improvements in the curriculum presence of music in schools, the essential individual teaching of instruments is only for those who can afford it, while provision of instruments is of state concern only if you are in a brass band: cornets are OK, but violins are associated with art music, so are irrelevant to our brave new world. Covent Garden, torn between its own incompetent management and the government's scorn for anything it thinks elitist, will have its restored building but can't afford to use it. I am from a generation whose aesthetic awareness came, partly from the church, but mostly from the subsidised arts: the BBC, cheap tickets at Sadlers Wells and the Proms, free libraries, free art galleries. But now subsidy is outmoded: we all have money and should choose to spend it how we like. But is it wise for the young to be pushed towards the short-term and fashionable? There are two classical tags I remember from my schooldays: Thucydides writing a history that he wants to be a *κτημα ες αει* (a thing for ever – sorry for the lack of accents) and Horace's 'Exegi monumentum aere perennius' (I have created a monument that will last longer than brass): both arrogant ambitions that have so far succeeded. We need to know the cultural monuments of the past to put into perspective the ephemeral elements of our own culture; we need to know them even more now that we have politicians believing in a facile modernity.

CB

Books and Music

Clifford Bartlett

NEW NOTATION

Richard Rastall *The Notation of Western Music: An Introduction. Second, revised edition*, Leeds UP, 1998. xiv + 309pp, £15.00 pb. ISBN 0 85316 180 1

The first edition was published by Dent in 1983: I wrote in *Early Music News* in June of that year that it was 'an excellent summary of over a thousand years' habits, conventions and ingenuity'. Although the length is virtually the same, the layout is completely different (making it difficult for a reviewer to home in on the revisions), with footnotes in their proper place and the general bibliographic comments for each chapter placed at their head. These improvements are counterbalanced by an overall decrease in page and type size. It is a book that I have found useful over the years, and its re-availability is welcome. I hope its publication by one of the lesser-known university presses will not hamper its circulation; with the decline of general publishers and the increase of computer-literate academics with some sense of lay-out, this will inevitably become a more frequent practice. There are two particular points which the author might like to consider for further expansion, the first at least as a separate pamphlet. With the growth of singing 16th-century polyphony from facsimiles, a short guide concentrating on the notation of that period in itself rather than as a continuation of earlier practice would be helpful. And jumping to the 18th century, it would be interesting to examine whether the way quavers and semiquavers are beamed has any effect on performance. From working on Handel sources, I would say that there is no complete consistency in how he writes similar passages, but there is a general tendency in any piece for four semiquavers to be beamed either as a single group or two pairs. Should editors and players ignore this (like most contemporary scribes)? Incidentally, the remark on p. 214 that Handel erred on the side of under-figuring is misleading: the figuring in Walsh's publications mostly came from the publisher, while his manuscripts are scores, so did not need consistent figuring for performance. Similarly with Bach, it is parts that are figured, not scores. The cover seems to have been printed a year before the rest of the book.

BYRD DANCES

William Byrd *Pavans and Galliards in five parts* Edited and Reconstructed by Richard Rastall. Leeds: four-fifteen press, 1998. Score: xii + 33 pp & 6 parts, £15.00.

Like his notation book, this shows Richard Rastall as an experienced self-publisher, the general appearance and setting being excellent. I'm not sure about imprint title: if it's a pun

on A=415, I suspect that experts might take issue with it: I prefer to believe that it refers to the department's afternoon tea-break (not, I'm sure, its clocking-off time). Readers will have seen the Fifth Pavane in *EMR* 31; it is now slightly revised. The volume contains versions of the sequence of pavans and galliards for keyboard in *My Lady Nevell's Book*, of which the first survives in what is likely to have been its original form in five parts. The fifth, of which fragmentary parts for mixed consort exist, was also originally for five-part ensemble, and the attempt to present those of the rest that can plausibly be transcribed may be considered a matter of reconstruction rather than arrangement. The edition includes versions of Pavans and Galliards I-VI, Pavans VII & VIII (which do not have galliards) and a Pavane and Galliard in Bb from BL Add. 30485. This is a worthwhile exercise, and releases some fine music for instrumental consorts. The score is in TrTrAAB clefs, but octavetreble alternatives are supplied for parts III & IV. Quick allocation of parts to recorders would be easier if the compasses had been given. There is a lengthy introduction fully justifying what has been done and pointing to the problems – chiefly passages where there are not enough parts to occupy the five instruments though the dance as a whole requires them. The keyboard figuration for repeats has rightly been omitted: players must invent their own that is idiomatic to their instrument.

SILVER SOUND – LEAD SENTENCES

Sebastian Klotz *Music with her silver sound: Kommunikationsformen im Goldenen Zeitalter der englischen Musik*. Bärenreiter, 1998. 329pp, £17.50. ISBN 3 7618 1353 8

This is an extremely intense volume, concerned equally with rhetoric and music. Few pages do not make direct reference to either primary sources or an extensive modern bibliography (there are 19 pages of it as an appendix). The six chapters deal with the functions of music in rhetoric in the humanist literature, the various contexts in which music was performed in the chosen period, the English madrigal from Morley to Wilbye, the epigrammatic ayres of Campion and Rosseter, melancholy *delectatio* in the works of Dowland and Daniel and a comparative study of the social functions of the madrigal and the ayre. Although I consider myself a fairly fluent reader of German, I found this a hard slog: understanding the words is one thing – understanding the idea is quite another. If I quote an English citation and you then imagine dealing with the text in German, then you may have some appreciation of the problem: 'Indeed, in the matrix of auralist discourse the whole development of the polyphonic madrigal across the sixteenth century, with its insistent exploration of a wide

range of text-music affinities, takes on the appearance of an elaborate musical revelation of the epistemological and ontological equivalence of words and music and of the magical, phantasmic power of both.' Such musical analysis as there is comes in the form of such and such being a symbol for such and such which, like most of the actual text, had me scratching my head. I have no doubt that the book contains a well-reasoned argument if you have the necessary philosophical insight into the subject and a keen interest in musical sociology. For lesser mortals like me, it's just an intimidating collection of big words. BC

CORNETTO

I have been very slow in reporting on the new batch of Cornetto publications which arrived some months ago: my apologies to Wolfgang Schäfer. His 1998 catalogue is very impressive, with interesting facsimiles of 16th and 17th century music. It is slightly odd to arrange them according to the town of the library the originals come from: in some cases they are apt, but the connection between a Walsh edition of Handel's *Orlando* and Ulm is entirely fortuitous. I'm also a little puzzled at the point of selling incomplete sets, e.g. only three partbooks of Hassler's *Lustgarten*. A series devoted to Capricornus should be worthwhile.

As samples for review he has sent three modern editions. Manfred Hug has edited two substantial Lamentations by Pierre de la Rue and Isaac from Rhau's *Selectae harmoniae quatuor vocum de passione Domini* (of which Cornetto publishes a complete facsimile for DM180). La Rue's setting is of three sets of verses not in later versions of the Holy Week liturgy: singers are not used to Hebrew letters Ain, Phe, Zade, Resch and Schin. The Isaac is the *Oratio Jeremieae*, the third lesson of Holy Saturday. Apart from not showing the original mensuration signatures and clefs (it would be nice to see at a glance whether the two middle parts are terraced or not), this is a welcome edition: far too little music by both these two composers is readily available (CORN-10-1-0037; DM60 for a set of four scores).

Johann Lytich (1581/4-1611) included 6 intradas, 3 pavans and 4 galliards a5 in his *Venus Glöcklein* of 1610, which have been published as CORN-10-1-0035 (DM50 for five scores, though two of the pavans have bad page-turns). Some are rather homophonic and solid in appearance, but they are worth an airing. The opening of each piece would look less odd if the indication of range had been given in small black blobs rather than full-size semibreves.

A selection from the Neresheimer Orgeltabulatur (Regensburg Thurn und Taxis Hofbibliothek FK 21) of around 1600 includes a variety of embellished settings. Not all are of consummate skill: there are a few awkward snitches in the almost-unbroken quavers of *Douce memoire*, with parallel fifths below that Sermisy would not have countenanced. There is no editorial identification of the pieces, which is a pity, since one obvious use for them is to play them in conjunction with performances of the vocal originals.

Other editorial neglect is the absence of any sign that bars 29-32 of *Susanna ungiur* should be played first time only. The contents seems to be an unsegregated mixture of chanson and liturgical settings. How were such MSS used? Surely not to play the chansons on the 1627 instrument whose registration is listed in the introduction? Or were the monks so unworldly that the corrupted titles conveyed nothing secular? (CORN-10-1-0156; DM20.)

MONTEVERDI MADRIGALS

Claudio Monteverdi *Il secondo libro de madrigali a cinque voci* (*Venetia, 1590*) a cura di Andrea Bornstein (*Odhecaton 04A*) Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 1998. viii + 112pp, £17.50

Claudio Monteverdi *Il quarto libro de madrigali a cinque voci* (*Venetia, 1603*) a cura di Andrea Bornstein (*Odhecaton 06A*) Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 1998. x + 93pp.

Ut Orpheus Edizioni have embarked on a new edition of Monteverdi's madrigals. I picked up a couple of samples at the London Early Music Exhibition, the modern-clef scores of Books II & IV. I think there were also old-clef scores, presumably at the same price, and separate parts, those for Book II costing £17.50; I only have the modern-clef scores at hand, and don't remember whether the parts were in old or modern clefs. Book IV is probably a similar price to Book II, but I didn't note the price and it is too recent to be in their 1998 catalogue. The scores are reasonable value at under £20 each, and singing from parts would be an interesting experience: the expectation of scores by choral singers is a very Anglo-Saxon extravagance.

With the new Cremona edition of Monteverdi coming out at so slow a rate (and in volumes far too cumbersome and expensive for practical use – the difference between a musicological and a practical edition now is primarily one of price, not of content), this is a most welcome enterprise. The Malipiero madrigal editions go back to the 1920s and need replacement for several reasons, not least for the words. Editors are now more concerned with the poems as poems, and they are here edited separately and ascribed to their poets when known, though not to their specific sources and with no comment on whether what Monteverdi set differs from the standard version of the poem. Beneath the poem is a very concise critical commentary, chiefly devoted to comments on original accidentals, since modern practice has been used in the edition. I presume that the use of quotes in *Sfogava con le stelle* comes from modern punctuation practice. The most obvious difference of the transcriptions from Malipiero is that the alto is transcribed into octave-treble clef. This is fine for low-clef pieces, but looks odd for high-clef ones, with top Cs in *Ah, dolente partita*. Since a version is available in old clefs anyway, couldn't the performer-oriented modern-clef edition have them transposed into the same tessitura as the low-clef madrigals? In general, the alto parts seem to need either a high tenor or a low female voice rather than a falsettist. The books are well printed and should be a pleasure to use. I look forward to the other books and hope that all will be widely bought.

UT ORPHEUS EDIZIONI

Apart from the Monteverdi reviewed above, there are plenty of other new items from Ut Orpheus Edizioni – a remarkable number, in fact: I wonder how they sell enough copies to survive! All that I have seen are well edited and produced. Most have introductions in English as well as Italian. I'll run through a few items of interest.

Orazio Vecchi *Madrigali a cinque voci* (Venezia, 1589). This follows the editorial treatment and style of the Monteverdi books mentioned above. One wonders how obvious it was at the time that Monteverdi's Book II of the following year was the work of a composer of such greater potential distinction. The book begins with a reworking of Arcadelt's famous *Il bianc'e dolce cigno* for five voices and ends with a dialogue from Sannazaro's *Arcadia*: the editor assumes that we know who the characters are, since the edition of the text just gives the abbreviations *El* and *Oph*; the setting respects the dialogue without allocating specific voices to each. The introduction includes some English translations from London reprints of the period. Peter Holman and I were wondering a few weeks ago whether the reason why so many publications have 21 items is symbolic (3x7) or practical (needing an economical number of sheets of paper). Peter tells me that Tim Carter has thought about the problem and come down in favour of the latter. The Vecchi and Monteverdi II follow the convention, but Monteverdi IV is one short. (ODH 03; £IT40,000 score, £IT25,000 parts). The series also includes Vecchi and Capilupi's *Canzonette a tre voci tutte diligentemente e con molto spirito vestite con la intavolatura del liuto*, Venice, 1597 (ODH 01; £IT35,000 score, £IT25,000 parts).

Fantini's *Modo per imparare a sonare di tromba* has been reproduced twice in facsimile and has now been transcribed in full by Igino Conforzi. Since there are differences between the surviving copies (paste-overs and MS changes), as well as obvious printing errors not thus corrected, this is a case where a careful edition gives a better representation of the original than a facsimile, so this is greatly to be welcomed. The only regret is that, although the introduction is bilingual, there is no translation into English of the introductory material of the original. (Tib 01; £IT40,000). All trumpeters need a copy.

Nicolò Corradini's 12 *Ricercari* (1615) come from a print which survives without title-page; a contemporary reference describes them as being for *clavacino* but their self-conscious contrapuntal manner may suggest that organ is more likely. Originally printed in open score, the twelve pieces follow the twelve modes and are headed according to the number of subjects (*fughe*) upon which they are based. They are a bit relentless, but not unattractive (ES18; £GB10.00). More interesting for the harpsichordist is an edition of the first of Lebègue's *Pièces de clavessin*, Paris 1677. This has a substantial preface, and great care has been taken over the layout. One statement of editorial technique puzzles me: preservation of direction of stems. If a clef is

changed, surely that has implications on stem directions when there are not over-riding polyphonic considerations? I like the note on the Amsterdam reprint of the book: 'Since many people don't know how these pieces should be played and, therefore, cannot understand their beauty, those who are curious to hear them should turn to Monsieur Marquis, harpsichord-master in Amsterdam'. Perhaps, now that editions are so Urtext, they should be accompanied by a CD to give the inexperienced user some idea of how to realise the beauty of the music. (ES17; £GB10.00).

Alessandro Scarlatti's *Stabat mater* for SA, two vlns & bc is, I suppose, a useful companion for recordings of the Pergolesi. It is one of a series of settings written for the same Neapolitan institution, all featuring suspensions like the Scarlatti and Pergolesi, which was written to replace it. They make an obvious pairing for a CD, though I wouldn't want to hear both pieces together in a concert – not that there is anything wrong with the Scarlatti, just that one *Stabat* is quite enough for one sitting. There is a nice, compact score, and parts are available. (MS07; score £IT28,000, voice & piano £IT30,000, set of parts £IT40,000).

Finally, a Partita in B flat for lute by Weiss from Warsaw MS RM 4137 edited by Terrell Stone. The preface (only in English) does not explain why the Warsaw MS is treated as the main source rather than the London MS. The layout is not entirely satisfactory: the opening movement needed to be printed on the blank, left-hand page to avoid three turns if the repeat is played, with the Courante squashed to fit on two pages. The Gigue is less easily dealt with. Also, the staff-notation version (very sensibly not printed in score with the tablature, since that would have made turns impossible) would have been more useful if it had been stapled separately, like a part, to facilitate comparison with the tablature. Technical matters apart, it is nice to see separate editions of Weiss's music available. (SDS01; £GB7.50)

DOWLAND TO PURCELL

I've mentioned the Lute Society quite a lot recently, but have ignored the Viola da Gamba Society, whose committee I was on for about twenty years. The most recent issue of its journal *Chelys* (vol. 25 for 1998/97) came out a little while ago, but I must confess that I was put off reading it by the small print. It looks OK now on my desk in broad daylight, but I did find it difficult in artificial light, not helped by the rather faint impression. The smaller type of the latest Newsletter (103, which includes reports of a conference at Limoges in May on the Viol in Germany and Austria) is stronger and more legible. But, like *EMR*, the Gamba Society has to balance legibility against costs. The contents of *Chelys* 25 comprise some of the papers given at a conference in York in 1995 on the Fantasia in England from Dowland to Purcell. Sadly, there is no announcement of the discovery of any viol fantasias by Dowland. Michael Fleming reports the paucity of viols in English paintings c.1580-1660; he doesn't deduce that the instrument was rare, but I wonder, in view of the close inter-relationships between sources of

the music that are becoming apparent, whether viol-playing was a hobby of a very small clique. Should we even assume that the description 'for voices and viols' means more than for any string instruments? (I was reminded of a later example of the imprecision of terms by an advert for a bass violist for a west-gallery group on p. 5 of the Newsletter, since the term seems to have been used for any bass string instrument: Hardy's 'viols out of doors' should not be taken as organologically accurate.)

Two articles refer to the organ. Dominic Gwynn tries to give some idea of how the English chamber organ of the period sounded. Interestingly, the surviving instruments have at least four stops, more than one might expect if their function was to accompany consorts or small groups of singers. Did they have other functions, or are we accompanying too discreetly? Annette Otterstedt discusses how organs might have been tuned for the consort repertoire. I wonder whether those who tuned organs were necessarily aware of the mathematical theories but rather evolved practical, rule-of-thumb methods handed down by word of mouth. Certainly, if organs really did play the round-the-clock modulations, they must have been tuned to a fairly sophisticated temperament. So something like her suggested adaptation of an easy basic pattern is plausible.

Andrew Ashbee describes the late fantasias by Jenkins and Matthew Spring surveys the English lute fantasia before focussing on the eight examples by Cuthbert Hely. Cathie Miserandino-Gaherty suggests that viol manuscripts may have been produced by a more commercial process than we usually assume, taking Bodleian Mus.Sch. c.64-9 as a test case. Similar suggestions have been made for the Notre Dame polyphony MSS 400 years earlier. Her terminology is confusing: why should the term 'transmission theory' apply to one particular means of transmission? Robert Thompson manages to extract more information from the autograph and other sources of Purcell's Fantasias than previous writers and Peter Holman reports a copy of two of the Fantasias a3 in a keyboard MS by Joseph Gibbs. David Pinto wonders whether Purcell knew the massive collection of *In nomines* etc. from a century earlier, Add. 31390; he also points out that the title-page, which describes the contents as 'solfaiinge songes', was written after 1590, so may not be an authoritative indication of what the original compiler intended. Finally, Graham Nelson associates the Cartwright lyra-viol MS (British Library Add. MS 59869) with a family in Ossington in Nottinghamshire.

DÜBEN FOR ORGAN

Organ Works by the Düben Family... edited by Pieter Dircksen (Bibliotheca Organi Sueciae, I). Stockholm: Runa Nototext, 1996. xxvi + 45pp. 1997.

Runa Nototext is a firm new to me, seeming to specialise in 20th-century Swedish organ music. This is the first of a more academic series, of which vol. II is devoted to the complete organ works of Gottlieb Nittauff (too obscure to

be in New Grove), vol. III to Emil Sjögren (1853-1918). Düben is a familiar enough name to anyone who has needed to investigate sources of German music of the latter half of the 17th century. The music here mostly survives, not in the Düben collection in Uppsala, but in the Lynar B tablatures and is by the brothers Andreas (1597/8-1662) and Martin (1598/9-c.1649). There are four chorale-based pieces, three *praeludia* and a nice little suite, this last being by the Andreas's son Gustav (c.1629-1690) and including copious fingering. An appendix has extra variations of a chorale and the only piece in Lynar B1 that has no attribution but may be by a Düben. The edition is clearly printed, and the whole book is well produced (though library binders will need to watch cutting the outer edge too enthusiastically). There are thorough introductions in Swedish, German and English. The music is variable, but of interest in that there is considerable information about an instrument on which it may have been played.

Runa Nototext, Smala Gränd 5, 3tr, S-111 39 Stockholm, Sweden
tel +46 8 22 02 43, fax... 22 02 53

VIVALDI INSTRUMENTAL

Cesare Fertonani *La musica strumentale di Antonio Vivaldi (Studi di musica Veneta: Quaderni Vivaldiani, 9)* Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1998. vi + 621pp, £115,000 ISBN 88 222 4598 9

As well as being the thorough and systematic survey of Vivaldi's instrumental output which the title would suggest, this remarkably straightforward book (for someone whose command of Italian is not 100%) also places it within the context of music generally in the first half of the 18th century (with the increase in demand for instrumental music and the resultant publishing boom), as well as giving a general discussion of Vivaldi's compositional style. Separate chapters discuss (and partially analyse) the sonatas, the *Concerti da camera*, the published sets of concertos (and Bach's transcriptions), other solo and double concertos and finally the concertos for several soloists, *in due cori*, and those without solo instruments. These are followed by an extensive bibliography, a list (by RV number) of the sources including the vocal music, a second list of the instrumental music giving Fana and Ricordi references and additional notes. Fertonani does not, I think, produce any wholly original thought here, but this is nonetheless an extremely valuable and important work, compressing all the available information to date in a form which is both readily accessible and easily assimilated, making an ideal companion volume to Talbot's book on the sacred music. Is an opera volume planned?

BC

CONCERTO EDITIONS

We printed last month a whole-page advertisement for a new publisher, Concerto Editions. Maxwell Sobel has worked in conjunction with us for a while, having perfected his typesetting on our *King Arthur* and subsequently edited the complete works of Bonporti. He has now branched out on his own, and has sent us a sample of his first batch of titles.

These are sold in a more substantial transparent envelope than our plastic bags, each set comprising score and parts. The scores have elegant cream covers. The typesetting is clearly legible, and score and parts are printed on sturdy paper. Much of the repertoire is from Dresden, though there is no explicit information in the editions of Heinichen and Pisendel. A number is printed beneath the title and at the foot of the first page of music, which the user may well interpret as the publisher's number, though in fact it is the library pressmark. (With potentially lots of similar titles, it would be sensible for a clear order number system to be started and printed visibly on the cover, a practice we should also have followed.) In the absence of commentary, with the Heinichen *Sinfonia in D* (2398-N-1), which has a middle movement not much longer than Brandenburg 3, the user may wonder whether the bottom As were in parts specifically designated for flutes. A word of explanation of how the horn parts work might also have helped those not used to clef-substitution. (For sounding pitch, read as written in alto clef, but to play on a horn in D, read it in treble clef.) Pisendel's violin concerto in Eb (the two-flat signature is preserved) is less virtuosic than I expected, but certainly looks worth playing. An alternative setting of a few bars is sensibly printed where it can be played without fuss. The pagination 2-5 when the first two pages won't take a page turn is not uncommon, but the use of 2-9 may perhaps puzzle players, though the reason for it is clear enough.

Albinoni's op. 10 has been unjustly neglected, so I hope that the edition of no.1 will be followed by the rest. This has a brief introduction, which is just as well, since without it the user would not know that the source had separate *violoncello* and *organo* parts: are the *Senza Contrabasso* and *Violoncello solo* marks original? Two bass parts are supplied with the edition, neither figured, so if there is a conductor, another score is required for keyboard. This Concerto has no solo writing and can work with just two violins, viola and cello, so can be used by ensembles (whether solo or tutti) that lack a harpsichord.

Giuseppe Valentini's op. 7 is a set of concerti grossi in what one might call the standard Corellian layout, except that they were published in 1710, four years before Corelli's posthumous op. 6. No. 1, however, can mostly be notated on four staves, and has very little solo writing once the opening violin cadenzas are over. It is odd that, in the one movement where seven staves are required, the concertino and ripieno are placed alternately on the page: normal practice is to separate concertino and ripieno in two blocks.

On this sampling, this is going to be a worthwhile project, extending repertoire with some fine music. In addition to the titles listed in the advert, Manfredini's op. 3 is available, either each concerto separately or complete for \$95.00 (score and parts). The prices are incredibly low: I suspect that they will not last long, so buy quickly. Those outside America can order through King's Music, though we will have to charge for post.

Concerto Editions, 8730 Lafayette Road, Indianapolis, IN 46278, USA.

FASCH & TRIEBENSEE

Edition Molinari sent me two new publications in the summer: apologies for their late appearance here. Fasch's Concerto in G minor for two oboes and strings (FWV L:g4) is not one that we have done. It is not particularly virtuosic for the oboists, but attractive to play. The editorial remarks might have mentioned that the autograph score bears various additions by Pisendel, though it is right not to include them in the edition. (Score: DM25, parts DM4; there is also a piano reduction + two oboe parts for DM28.)

Triebensee looks very modern, with his dynamics and hairpins. He was an oboist, and played at the first performances of *The Magic Flute* and is known, by those who know of him at all, for his wind-band arrangements of Mozart. There's no date for the Partita No. 1 in B flat which, since the composer lived from 1772-1846, gives quite a wide range for its time of composition. This is a pity, since one instruction is of general interest: the requirement to play the first section of the Minuet twice at the *da capo*, the second section only once. It is a four-movement piece with slow introduction, though it is not as pretentious as that symphonic format might imply. Wind octets can't play K.388 all the time, and this would make a pleasant change. (DM47 for score and parts).

FACSIMILES

Orazio Vecchi *L'Amfiparnasso: Commedia armonica*, Venezia 1597. (Archivum Musicum, Musica Drammatica, 3) Florence, Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1997. 5 partbooks, £IT35,000. ISBN 88 7242 768 1

Issued to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the original publication, this facsimile of the most popular of the madrigal comedies this will be useful to those who have passed the initial stage of reading the notes in original notation and need to gain confidence in singing with expression and rhythmic freedom. A snag is that the music is notated in high clefs and the Quinto is not of a consistent range. The illustrations and independent printing of the texts (familiar from the 1953 De Santis edition) appear in each part. Incidentally, Cornetto-Verlag advertises facsimiles of Banchieri's *La pazzia senile* at DM75 and *Il Zabalone musicale* for DM 95 while Ut Orpheus has an edition of his *Barca di Venezia per Padova* for £IT35,000 - score, £IT25,000 - parts.

Thomas Ravenscroft. Performers' Facsimiles (226-228) 1998
Pammelia... [1609]. [51pp], £12.50 .
Deuteromelia... [1609]. [46pp], £12.50 .
Melismata: Musically Phansies... [1611]. [45pp], £12.50

These three publications were scorned by that indefatigable transcriber of music of the period, Edmund Fellowes, as being unworthy of his clerical taste; strangely, despite the revision and extension of his original series, the current *English Madrigalists* has not filled the gap. Peter Warlock showed more interest, and published an edition of the

rounds, which occupy all of *Pammelia* and part of *Deuteromelia*. His MS scores of the other pieces are in Westminster Public Library; I'm not sure how I acquired a photocopy of them, but have found them very useful. The books were issued in a single facsimile volume by the American Folklore Society as vol. XII of their Publications in 1961. It cost £3.60 when I bought a copy 15 years later; I don't know if it is still available. The new version has each book issued independently, and the slightly larger page size presumably represents the original better; it is also more clearly reproduced. The old facsimile, however, had a useful first-line index. Ravenscroft's other collection of popular material comprises a musical appendix to his *A Briefe Discourse* (1614); a facsimile was issued by *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (*The English Experience*, 409) in 1971. We include one piece from *Melismata* on pp. 12-13. The repertoire published by Ravenscroft needs both a modern edition and a commentary relating it to the popular and folk traditions. Incidentally, it is because of the familiarity of Ravenscroft's title that I use *melismata* as the plural of *melisma*, not just to parade awareness of its Greek declension.

Mattheson *Der brauchbare Virtuoso... mit zwölf neuen Kammer-Sonaten...* Hamburg, 1720. (Performers' Facsimiles 221). Broude, 1998. 14 + 65 pp, £21.00

Mattheson dedicated this set of 12 sonatas, his seventh published work, to two Hamburg brothers called Dobbeler, who played flute and harpsichord and, since none of the music exploits the upper or lower ranges of the violin (let alone double-stopping, etc.), we can really discount the prominence given to that instrument at the head of each piece as shrewd commercialism. There is no set pattern to the sonatas and they employ all the current formal and stylistic devices: binary dance movements, extended 'fugues', airs with variations, abstract Adagios. Sonata VI is the most overtly French sonata, with a 9/8 Gigue, and air with a petite reprise and a concluding menuet, while Sonata XII opens with a movement headed *Alla Corelli*. The foreword is laid out like an opera synopsis, beginning with a prologue, then three 'acts' and an epilogue. 'Nach beliebiger Überlesung der Vorrede' (After you've read the introduction, if you fancy it) tends to suggest that it is very much an optional extra and, given that the language and references are rather obscure (interesting as Mattheson's discussion of the roots of the notion of virtuosity in Eastern as well as Western traditions may be), there is not actually any practical advice or information for the performer. The music itself looks quite interesting and will certainly help to broaden the baroque flautist's repertoire. BC

JOSQUIN UPDATE

One would not normally turn to the pages of *BBC Music Magazine* for the latest research on a renaissance composer. But the November issue (it is one of those magazines that arrives long before its eponymous month) has an article by David Fallows which presents a new outline of Josquin's life. The change in his postulated birth date is not so drastic

as that of Andrea Gabrieli, who lost 23 years; Josquin only loses 15 or so, with a suggested date of c. 1455 instead of c. 1440. The change is because Fallows's hypothesis that the Josquin who worked at Milan Cathedral in the 1460s was a different man has apparently been confirmed. So the time-frame into which to allocate the music has been telescoped. His best-known motet, *Ave Maria*, now turns out to be one of his earliest. The narrower life-span, and the squashing of the period before we have precisely-dated sources (most notably Petrucci's edition of five masses on 1502) makes it easier to see a pattern in his work, and also changes his relationship with contemporary composers (and theirs with him: some compositional developments associated with him are now seen to antedate him).

There is no specific news on changes in attribution, but this is probably the most public statement that many works (including those in the old *Collected Works*) circulate under Josquin's name with no secure authority. *Absalon filii* (probably by Pierre de la Rue) is perhaps the best-known example, and Fallows predicts that 'such evergreen favourites as *Mille regretz* and *El grillo* will soon fall'. Scholars have been far too ready to believe any ascription, however peripheral the source, if there are none that contradict it. May I make a plea that any new catalogue of Josquin's works retains the dubious items: one needs to be able to check information about peripheral works as much as about the genuine ones.



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Edinburgh & London Music

Andrew Benson-Wilson

A weekend in Edinburgh for the conference of the British Clavichord Society allowed some brief forays into the early musical delights of the Edinburgh Festival. I couldn't get to the two Frans Brüggen concerts with the Orchestra of the 18th Century, but I did hear the wide ranging Festival Insights discussion with Brüggen and two of his colleagues. Brüggen spoke about authenticity, referring to 'unconsultable composers' and the need to avoid using, say, Mozart as a means for our own self expression. He described the workings of his orchestra which, three or four times a year, meets together for about five days of rehearsals before touring a programme. 98% of his players have stayed with the band since its foundation, a situation Brüggen contrasted with the British orchestral scene where, he suggested, personnel change far more rapidly.

In their late night performance in the packed Greyfriars Kirk on 28 August, the Catalonian vocal group, Lieder Camera (directed by Josep Vila i Casañas) contrasted the austere homophony of Juan de Antxieta's *Libera me* with the more sensuous music of his successors, Guerrero, Alonso Lobo and Victoria. Some of Guerrero's expressive *Canciones y Villanescas Espirituales* were particularly well sung. Their tone was harmonically rich and attractively buzzy, and the upper voices pleasantly restrained. A slight distraction was the conductor's habit before each piece of singing not only the starting notes for each voice, but also some of the first phrase, in a voice that was not always on pitch. But it didn't seem to unsettle the choir. A mention in dispatches also for Tess Knighton's masterly programme note and similarly Kate Bolton's for the La Pantera Imperial concert reviewed below.

Lieder Camera also featured in the homage to Bach by the wild Catalonian pianist, composer and director, Carles Santos. The astonishingly anarchic and surreal La Pantera Imperial signalled Santos's return to Edinburgh after apparently shocking the more upright citizens with his highly erotic *L'esplèndida vergonya* two years ago. I was relieved to read in the programme note that this time there was no 'golden rain'. What there was, however, was a vast grand piano (the black 'imperial panther' of the title) which cascaded around the stage with abandon, often pursued by a remote controlled player piano and several scantily dressed young ladies, frequently crashing into the 22 huge busts of Bach that enclosed the stage. The music was a medley of Bach, but with added visuals that might have surprised the master, including a tenor aria performed while the singer had his head thrust into a large bowl of water whilst kneeling on an increasingly rapidly revolving little stage; a two-part prelude played with each hand on a different piano, while kneeling between the two of them;

and the D minor harpsichord concerto which seems to have inspired several female members of the cast to walk to the front of the stage one by one and, in a wonder of fabric-fastening technology, whip off all their clothes in one gesture and toss them over the front of the stage.

Although I had planned to review some of the informal concerts at the Early Music Exhibition, they generally clashed with the Heavenly Harmony concerts on the South Bank – and the one I could have got to failed to attract either performer or instrument. The Palladian Ensemble concert in the evening of 4 September over the road at Holy Trinity should have made up for this, but didn't. I have long admired this group for its vitality, stage presence and superb performing skills, but had not had a chance to review them before now. So it was sad that this performance just didn't hang together. The voluminous acoustics didn't help, but then nor did the band's position at floor level, just in front of a stage that might have made a real difference – the theorbo and gamba were barely audible from my seat. For a group with the normally superb professional standards of the Palladian's there were too many slips and false starts. The chat between pieces, laid back at the best of times, was lost altogether beyond the first few rows. As there were a number of programme changes, this was not helpful. Such a shame to catch such a good group on what, to me anyway, seemed to be an off night – but we all have them.

Heavenly Harmony was another of Philip Picket's inspiring themed concerts over the weekend of 4-6 September in the Purcell Room and Queen Elizabeth Hall. Rinaldo Alessandrini started the Saturday sessions with Italian harpsichord music from the early 17th century, including Frescobaldi's tour de force, the *Cento Partite sopra Passacagli*. There are interesting questions about keyboard temperament stemming from this piece, which the Valloti tuning (c1730) didn't address. Indeed, for a programme that cried out for meantone tuning, the performer's choice of a temperament so close to equal was particularly inappropriate. That said, the playing was masterly and full of expression, as was that of Hesperion XX with Jordi Savall later that evening. This featured music from 17th-century Spain, and displayed the multitude of exotic influences that produced that colourful and sensuous repertoire. José Marin (1619-1699) was a quite a character, by all accounts. Ordained a priest in Rome he returned to Madrid where his musical fame as a singer was soon overcome by his non-musical escapades. Eventually accused of several murders, tortured, defrocked, exiled he, nonetheless received a newspaper obituary reference to his 'exemplary life'! Such excitement in his personal life was clearly going to run over into his compositions, and his songs are indeed spirited and exotic. They

were beautifully interpreted by the equally exotic and spirited voice of Montserrat Figueras with notable contributions from Arianna Savall on double harp. Flamenco clapping, castanets and some very Moorish quarter-tone singing all added to the richness of the occasion. [See also p. 17.]

Pickett's home team, the New London Consort, fielded some fine performers in Songs of Angels, 13th-century songs of ecstasy to the Virgin by Gautier de Coincy. Following an instrumental introduction featuring successions of open 5ths and twangy things (dulce melos, gittern, clavicimbalum and wire strung harp), the nine singers, draped in robes, sang the first piece from positions encircling the QEH audience, and then took up various groupings on the stage. I had two main problems with this concert. The first was the choice of instruments, many of which seemed a couple of centuries or so too late for the repertoire. Increasing sophistication of musical understanding amongst early music punters means that this sort of 'all-purpose medieval' sound should no longer be acceptable. Fascinating as it was to see the first appearance of the latest plaything for keyboard players, the copy of Arnaut de Zwolle's c1440 *Dulce Melos* would not have been the first choice of instrument for a group of 13th-century Angels – and nor would the (very busy) 'clavicimbalum' (actually a 4' harpsichord, also similar to an Arnaut example) or, even worse, a huge continuo box organ. A portative organ would have been ideal, but there aren't many around or in use by early music groups, although we heard a lovely example in a later concert by Sarband. The other problem was the sheer repetitiveness of many of the pieces, with lots of stanzas, often sung twice, and similar instrumental interludes between them.

The Sunday sessions started with Phillip Picket's Minstrel's Gallery, an entertaining tour around the emptied cupboards of London early instrument makers and players – an amazing array, many of which Picket played with aplomb. Rinaldo Alessandrini reappeared with his group, Concerto Italiano, with Elisabetta Tiso and Rosa Dominguez singing some exquisitely expressive *Duetti, Arie e Lamenti* by Monteverdi and Frescobaldi accompanied by Luigi Piovano (cello) and Alessandrini (harpsichord). This concert revealed the importance of the recitative style in Italian vocal music of this period and the stress this placed on the improvisatory skills of the early Baroque continuo group in reinforcing the singer's expressive nuances without the assistance of the later Baroque beat. This was particularly apparent in Monteverdi's *Ecco di dolce raggi* and *Lettera amorosa*. Another style was vocal works based on pre-existing bases or melodic patterns and we heard examples of this by Frescobaldi, using the Passacaglia, Ruggiero and Romanesca. A delightful concert.

The third of the Sunday concerts was Sarband, a multi-national group of five singers and players in a programme that contrasted music of ecstasy and mysticism from the Sufi and medieval Byzantine and European Christian traditions. Instruments included a hammered dulcimer, bendir (a bodhran-like drum), ud, a delightfully expressive

portative and (a new one to me) a nay. This was a lengthy vertical flute-like instrument, and was played with a variety of overtones and producing a most unearthly sound. It was used by Dogan Dikman from Istanbul in some very evocatively-sung Turkish Sufi hymns and songs. The other highlight was music by two Byzantine nuns, the early 9th century composer Kassia and the 14th-century daughter of Ioannes Kafas. I was less impressed with the performance of music by the birthday girl, Hildegard von Bingen, which at one stage included a percussion accompaniment.

The weekend finished with Phantasm, the newish viol quartet directed by Laurence Dreyfus, in an excellent concert of Celestial Consorts by Mico and Locke, fantasias by Byrd and Purcell and contrapuncti from Bach's *Art of Fugue*. Having already won a Gramophone Award with their debut CD, this is clearly a group with a future. Their playing is rhythmically strong and tightly focused – it is evidently the result of hours of careful rehearsal, but retains the freshness, if not always the spontaneity, which makes for great performance. The sound they produce is unlike most viol consorts I know – their tone has a vigour and intensity worthy of the late Mozart quartets – indeed, no sooner had I jotted that phrase down in my programme, when they played some Mozart as an encore. This was viol playing with guts.

The new season of Wigmore Hall early music concerts opened on 20 September with Haydn and his English Friends, with Peter Holman directing Psalmody and the Parley of Instruments in a programme showing the change in style of Psalm singing during the late 18th century. The programme was centred around the six virtually unknown Psalm settings by Haydn, which were published in Tattersall's *Improved Psalmody* in 1794 (see *EMR* July 1998 for an article on this repertoire). Despite the interest of hearing how a master treats one of the simpler musical forms, the dramatic interest of the evening was in some of the works by lesser (known) composers. John Stafford Smith's blood-curdling eight-part anthem *Horrible is the end of th'unrighteous generation* (1793) was a fine example. A choir of three baddies of rollickingly bucolic character, on their own admission filled with parsley wine, sang of the joys of the life of temptation (very ably led by tenor Patrick McCarthy) while, on the opposite side of the stage, the stentorian bass Adrian Peacock led the goodies in warning that God will bring the baddies to judgment and it will all generally end in tears. Barely able to conceal their amusement at the whole affair, the two sides eventually got together and it all ended happily in a post-Handelian finale as the baddies saw the error of their ways. We also heard the arrangement by William Gardiner of Leicester of Haydn's *Emperor's Hymn*, preceded by the original and an example by Thomas Greatorex of the 'fuguing tunes' that *Improved Psalmody* was intended to replace. A fascinating evening, sung with evident enthusiasm by the mixed voices of Psalmody.

concluded on page 23

More about Locatelli

Barbara Gogolick Sachs

Intorno a Locatelli. Studi in occasione del tricentenario della nascita di Pietro Antonio Locatelli (1694-1764). Edited by Albert Dunning. Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1995, 2 vols, xiv + 599pp and vi + 651pp, £1750.000. ISBN 88-7096-143-5

The first volume of this beautiful pair of books was reviewed and recommended to readers of *Italian* in the May 1998 issue. The remaining ten studies written for or adapted for volume II merit similar attention. They concern Italian music of the 18th century in general, and violin technique or baroque instrumental composition in particular. Locatelli's music is discussed in three. Four studies deal with places where musical activity thrived and where Locatelli either worked or left some trace. Paola Palermo presents documentation on the musical environment of Bergamo, where he lived in his childhood. Based on her doctoral thesis, an archival study of *La musica nella basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore a Bergamo dal 1657 al 1711* (1994-95), it gives very specific information, including biographies of contemporary musicians. The *capella musicale* had an important role, not confined to the church, with numerous singers and players (constituting the *Sacra Orchestra*) at its disposal. Many of the documents are without great significance, but taken as a whole they shed light on what was done and by whom, even on how musicians were hired, and what they were paid and fed. Locatelli is mentioned in a few of them: he played *violino di ripieno* when he was 14, and after a year and a half became 3rd violin and was paid considerably more than other musicians from his very first engagements.

Franco Piperno convincingly shows why Locatelli chose to complete his studies in Rome (rather than in Venice, Bologna or Milan). His sojourn there (1711-1723) coincided with a brief and fertile period of cultural novelties. In 1710 Carnival was reinstated, along with many events which had been suspended for a decade due to natural disasters. With the re-opening of the opera theatre, there was a tendency for the musicians to return to the city. As a student and young musician Locatelli played in the court orchestra of Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (1717-1723), a Venetian francophile who sponsored grandiose events. Other Roman patrons, in rivalry with each other for attention, included Prince F.M. Ruspoli and Queen Marie Casimire Sobieski of Poland. Musically the spirit of novelty derived from a generational confrontation, both in opera (Caldara, Gasparini and Scarlatti *versus* Vivaldi, Vinci and Porpora) and in instrumental (Corelli *versus* Valentini and Vivaldi). Public manifestations saw the Piazza Navona flooded for music on water, and the Spanish Steps used as a stage for concerts. Piperno restricts the details he appends to a chronological list of 380 musical-dramatic events at this time. (Private and ecclesiastical records would require an immense amount of

research and space, however, so the limitation is quite reasonable). Rome returned to a sleepy artistic conservatism, however, which Piperno thinks might have been one of Locatelli's reasons for leaving.

Locatelli travelled first to Kassel, and in 1728 visited Dresden, where music contributed to the splendour of a highly ostentatious life-style. Music at the courts of Frederick August I and II in the first half of the 18th century (between 1694 and 1756) is discussed by Paola Pozzi. While French taste dominated the court under August I (he received manuscripts directly from Louis XIV), Italian musicians were nevertheless hired, a result of his son's visits to Italy. The taste for Italian music, especially instrumental concertos, was to prevail after 1733, under August II. A 46-page guide to all Italian concertos present in the Sächsische Landesbibliothek of Dresden (including some manuscripts of Locatelli's) is given in an Appendix. It is curious that even though an orchestra was available in Dresden, much of the concerto repertory has survived, here as elsewhere, in single parts, suggesting performance by chamber ensembles. [BC mentioned when phoning through his proof corrections that his experience of German repertoire contradicted this and that string parts were often duplicated.]

Locatelli then went to Amsterdam, residing there from 1729 until his death. Jan Wolter Niemeijer writes about the Holland which foreign travellers (especially Northern Italian diplomats, bankers, agents, businessmen, artists and musicians) saw. The colourful documents are given in their original languages only (English, French, German, Italian), but in compensation there are 26 illustrations. Various aspects of Dutch life are described from the foreigner's point of view: luxury and poverty in the cities, the flat but well gardened countryside, the use of boats, the 'solid and rational' inhabitants (along with other stereotypes imputable to the nationality of the observer), the elaborately furnished homes, the fairs, theatrical and musical life, even the psychology of why the Dutch put so much effort into gardening.

Three studies concern other figures. Giovanni Sgaria singles out the Roman composer Giovanni Mossi for our attention: as a post-Corellian, he should not be compared to Corelli, but evaluated for his contribution to the new tendencies in the first half of the 18th century. He discusses Mossi's 36 violin sonatas and 26 concertos, elaborating on part of his thesis *Giovanni Mossi (c.1680-1742): vita e concerti* (1991-92), a look at musical life in Rome in the period after Corelli. Agnese Pavanello writes on the figure of Cardinal Camillo Cybo (dedicatee of Locatelli's op.1) and Rudolf Rasch on the as yet unstudied body of manuscripts left by the Amsterdam publisher Michel-Charles Le Cène (successor

to Estienne Roger) – a gold-mine of published and unpublished works, some certainly unknown (sent by composers hopeful of having their work printed), now in the municipal archives of Amsterdam.

Locatelli had been a friend, advisor and proof-corrector of Le Cène and helped to estimate the value of the plates when an inventory had to be made prior to selling the firm. Rasch's study sheds light on how the most important printer of music operated, how drastically output dropped from 20-25 editions per year in 1700-1710 to 100 editions in the whole of the 20 years following 1723 when the house passed to Le Cène, and most interesting of all, how a large body of manuscripts (which were not particularly valued!) were amassed. Most of the manuscripts were of works to be published, or deemed publishable; some were used for performances and some were there simply as collectors' items. A study of the genres found among these unpublished works would be interesting: it would show what composers were sending in the hope of getting them published. (It seems, for example, that the SS/bc sonata was losing ground while many more S/bc sonatas, along with concertos and sinfonias for strings, were submitted.)

There are three studies of Locatelli's music. Enzo Porta gives us a very concrete account of Locatelli's violin technique as compared to Tartini's and Geminiani's, and as seen within the Italian tradition in general. He had briefly been a pupil of Corelli, and probably studied with Carlo Antonio Marini or Lodovico Ferronati, thus absorbing features of the schools of Lombardy, Bologna, Florence and Rome, not to mention the inevitable influence of Vivaldi and Tartini. Locatelli's left-hand technique was especially revolutionary, whereas his bowing and expressive techniques were evolving with his times; as Cantù showed (in vol. I), he opened the way for Paganini. Not being a string player, I appreciated this panoramic view and found the technical description very helpful. The conclusions are necessarily based on the music itself, as treatise and published exercises were superfluous when instruction was oral and lessons were daily.

Eugene Wolf, in the process of tracing the origin of the *Sinfonia*, discusses Locatelli's *Concerti grossi* op. 1 (1721). While the Italian word means 'symphony', it is usually applied to an operatic overture or an orchestral form which superseded other instrumental genres, but preceded the classical 'symphony'. Wolf describes the salient features of the *sonata da chiesa*; the *sonata da camera*; the sonata of the generation after Corelli, generally homophonic and in binary form, with fast-slow-fast movements and without dance movements; the *concerto ripieno*, a concerto without solo parts, a4 or a5, with brilliant homophonic writing; the *Ouverture*, which, unlike the *Sinfonia*, was intended for the theatre. He concentrates finally on Locatelli's *Concerti grossi*, in which the contrast between *tutti* and *soli* is more ornamental than structural. Their high artistic value and progressive tendencies attest to Locatelli's importance and place in a period of transition. Luigi Saccà analyzes the

Sonatas of op. 2 for flute. The information is condensed into tables, which facilitate perusal of the parameters considered. He concludes by 'constructing' a typical Locatellian movement of his own, an experiment of dubious utility.

As was said in the May review, the studies are to be appreciated for their very straightforward style, not typical of Italian musicological works. I surmise that credit is due to Albert Dunning, who edited the volumes. Every contributor was surely indebted to his *Pietro Antonio Locatelli: Der Virtuose und seine Welt* (Buren, 1981).

PERFORMING RIGHT SOCIETY

I received recently a copy of the latest grading table showing changes in how fees are calculated for composers and arrangers. Hitherto, editors were entitled to a small fraction, usually a twentieth, of the fee that would be paid to an original composer. But now the following activities will generate NO payment:

Transcription from one method of notation to another (eg plainsong to modern notation).

Re-creation of an original non-copyright work in its original form.

Choice of material from alternative sources.

However, the realisation of figured bass still entitles payment of 8/12ths of the fee, an extraordinarily high figure for what is really a performing, not a notational activity. (Its rating shows how out-of-touch those making this decision are from the world of real music-making.)

The PRS has a right to act on behalf of whoever it likes. But it seems to me to be extremely short-sighted of it to neglect the interests of editors, and perverse to encourage archaic practices like the written realisation of figured basses (let alone the concoction of superfluous string parts to Venetian operas). I don't know who was consulted over this decision. I was aware that changes were going to be made, but received no hint that they were going to be so drastic.

The only solution is for editors to get together to set up a new organisation to set rates for the public performance of edited music. I'm not sure how we go about it. Perhaps there should be an initial meeting of representatives from the Royal Musical Association and the major publishers who issue the sort of editions that are now excluded. CB

AT LAST...

...after listing it in our catalogue for 6 years, we have issued Rosenmüller's *Lauda Jerusalem* for SATB, five-parts strings and continuo (source: Uppsala vmhs St 66.2). The price is £5.00 for a score, £5.00 for a set of five parts and £3.00 for a vocal score (voice parts & continuo). Apologies for the long delay. We cannot assume that all who have ordered it over the years still want it, so please re-order if you do.

Thomas Ravenscroft
There were three Ravens

There were three Ravens sat on a tree, Downe a downe, hey down, hey downe. There
Downe a downe_ hey_ downe, hey downe,
Downe a downe hey downe, hey downe,
Downe a downe hey downe, hey downe,
were three Ravens sat on a tree, with a downe, There were three Ravens sat on a tree, they
With a downe,
With a downe,
With a downe,
were as blacke as they might be, with a downe der-rie, der-rie, der-rie, downe, downe.
With a down, hey der-rie, der-rie, downe, downe, downe.
With a downe, der-rie, der-rie, downe a downe.
With hey downe, downe, der-rie, downe, downe.

This is No. 20 (though the number is misprinted 22) of Ravenscroft's *Melismata* of 1611, the first item in the *Country Pastimes* section. It survived in popular tradition and emerges in the 19th century as a folk song. Charles Bronson printed 21 versions that survive with music as no. 26 in *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*, vol. 1 (Princeton, 1959). There has been considerable speculation on the antiquity of the words, especially in relationship with the *Corpus Christi carol* (Lully... He bare him up, he bare him down). The strong harmonic basis of the melody makes it improbable that it originated earlier than the mid 16th century.

Original part-names and clefs: treble G2, medius C2, tenor C3, bassus F4. The treble is printed on the left page, the other three parts on the right. Only verse 1 is underlaid, the other verses being spread across the bottom of the opening. The two middle parts have, after the minim at the end of bar 4, a barline, a crotchet (to the same pitch as the minim), and another barline. This may suggest an earlier version in which the lower parts were underlaid so needed a note when the next line had an upbeat.

2. The one of them said to his mate, down a downe hey downe, hey downe, The
 3. Downe in yon - der greene field, down a downe hey downe, hey downe,
 4. His hounds they lie downe at his feete, down a downe hey downe, hey downe, His
 5. His Haukes they flie so ea - ger - ly, down a downe hey downe, hey downe, His
 6. Downe there comes a fal - low Doe down a downe hey downe, hey downe,
 5
 one of them said to his mate, with a downe: The one of them said to his mate
 Downe in yon - der greene field, with a downe, Downe in yon - der greene field There
 hounds they lie downe at his feete, with a downe, His hounds they lie downe at his feete So
 Haukes they flie so ea - ger - ly, with a downe, His Haukes they flie so ea - ger - ly, There's
 Downe there comes a fal - low Doe, with a downe, Downe there comes a fal - low Doe As
 10
 Where shall we our break - fast take? with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.
 lies a Knight slain under his shield with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.
 well they can their Mas - ter keepe, with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.
 no fowle dare him come nie, with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.
 great with yong as she might goe. with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.

 7. She lift up his blood - y hed, down a downe hey downe, hey downe,
 8. She got him up up - on her backe, down a downe hey downe, hey downe, She
 9. She bu - ried him be - fore the prime, down a downe hey downe, hey downe, She
 10. God send ev - ery gen - tle - man down a downe hey downe, hey downe,
 5
 She lift up his blood - y hed, with a downe, She lift up his blood - y hed, And
 got him up up - on her backe, with a downe, She got him up up - on her backe, And
 bu - ried him be - fore the prime, with a downe, She bu - ried him be - fore the prime, She was
 God send ev - ery gen - tle - man, with a downe, God send ev - ery gen - tle - man Such
 10
 kist his wounds that were so red, with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.
 car - ried him to ear - then lake, with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.
 dead her selfe ere even - song time with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.
 haukes, such hounds, and such a Le - man with a downe der - rie, der - rie, der - rie, downe, downe.

RECORD REVIEWS

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Gregorian Chant Schola Cantorum Sancti Bavonis Gandae, Luc Van Meerssche
René Gailly CD87 051
Liturgia defunctorum, Missa de Angelis, chants from All Saints, Advent, Christmas, Easter & Whitsun.

Recorded in 1988, this is issued as a souvenir of the choir, with notes on it rather than the music. I don't want to under-praise it by saying that it makes very pleasant listening and covers an interesting range of chants, so is a good introduction to Gregorian chant. It really is very good of its type, and will be enjoyed by aficionados, as well as those who just like chant as background around the house. But with so many chant records around now, this needs a clearer focus in a crowded market and a more distinctive character in the singing. Apart from an occasional, somewhat artificial, accent at the beginning of a chant, there is a lack of body and guts. Chant singers need to listen to the enormous variety of vocal as well as instrumental sounds with which other performers of medieval music are experimenting (e.g. on the records reviewed below), not necessarily to imitate them, but to open their minds to the possibility that styles based on 19th-century research and taste are a curious basis for singing music from a millennium ago (though the *Missa de Angelis* is rather more recent). CB

MEDIEVAL

The Cloister and the Sparrow Hawk: Songs of the Monk of Montaudon Tim Rayborn, Shira Kammen, Alison Sabedoria 59' 58"
ASV *Gaudemus* CD GAU 175

This is a text-first disc, in that virtually no music by the idiosyncratic monk survives, so that the match of words and music is provided by the singer. Tim Rayborn has a voice that is refreshingly different from the cultivated style of most singers, yet without the affectation of the pseudo-coarse or the folksy. Its manner is entirely convincing and he creates a genuine medieval personality. The instrumental involvement seems to belong with the songs, not imposed from outside. It may be entertaining to listen to without the booklet, but the texts and translations need to be followed to enjoy this to the full. CB

Libre Vermell Ensemble *Anonymous*
Analekta *fleur de lys* FL 2 3055 (66' 36")

This must be one of the oldest groups recording medieval music, founded in Québec in 1978, and among the largest, with 15 performers. This programme was devised ten years ago and recorded in 1993. I'm in two minds about the singers: they lack the tonal precision of the best ensembles, but

have a vigour that holds me rather more strongly than the more famous Anonymous group. The programme is put together perhaps too cleverly, but it produces a nice variety of sounds, with some imaginative use of instruments, which have rather more excuse in the context of the *Libre Vermell* than in some other places, though isn't it a bit early for a sackbut? Texts are printed only in the original languages. CB

Troubadours & Minnesänger 'En chantan m'avent a membrar' Ensemble *Lucidarium*, dir Avery Gosfield & Francis Biggi 70' 05"
L'empreinte digitale ED13079

This is the most convincing of this month's batch of medieval recordings, approaching the music of the troubadours and trouvères from the viewpoint of the Minnesänger. As with the Monk of Montaudon disc, voice and instruments seem to belong together, irrespective of theories of how instruments were used, and the players successfully create a repertoire from vocal material. The two singers, Annemieke Cantor and Paul Gerhardt Adam, present their texts eloquently, though in the printing they are rather squashed: it can't be long before texts and translations will be included on the disc itself so that we can read them on screen at whatever size we prefer. CB

Grupo Cinco Siglos
Unos tan dulces sones... CDF 204 43' 46"
Cantigas de Alfonso X, dances, etc
Dansse Real: Pas Piezas instrumentales del Chansonnier du Roi (h. 1300) CDF 270 52' 55"
Músicas de la España Mudéjar: artes instrumentales en la Baja Edad Media CDF 357 51' 24"

The group performs their arrangements of early dances and songs brilliantly and with a distinctive sound of their own. But... There are far too many performances around of the small number of medieval dances that survive. With a few exceptions, if you didn't know the tunes, what you would notice here would be primarily the rhythms and the sounds: the melodies are of minor interest. Shouldn't groups like this abandon the scantily-surviving and inadequately-notated melodies and just play their own material? Who, apart from the odd kill-joy reviewer would notice or care? Any single record is fun to play and a concert from the group would be entertaining (though better with a singer who can match their sound). But one disc is enough, and it doesn't really matter which. CB

16th CENTURY

Byrd Consort Songs & Music for viols Gérard Lesne A, Wieland Kuijken, Ensemble Orlando Gibbons 64' 51"
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 5 4564 2 8
Blame I confess, Browning a5, Fair Britain Isle, Fantasia a5, [5] In nomines a5, O Lord within thy tabernacle, Prelude and Ground a5, *Quis me*

statim, Rejoice unto the Lord, With lilies white, Wretched Albinus, Ye sacred Muses

The music on this recording will be of interest to many more than just viol players for whom it is cherished repertoire, thanks to the presence of one of the great players of today leading the consort, and the way English consort music is performed by a European consort with an approach quite distinct from that adopted by the leading English ensembles. The playing is impassioned and intense, but without sacrificing those special qualities of the viol: its clarity and beauty of resonance. More legato than, for example, Fretwork, they are also less intellectual. For example, in *Browning* they seem to offer less variety of articulation, yet the sense of impulse leading to climax is very powerful. There is none of that ugly, forced sound one might expect from this description; rather, a freedom of tone, as vibrations are released rather than driven. Most of the disc is devoted to consort songs, mixing the famous (*Ye sacred muses* and *Blame I confess*) with rarities like *Quis me statim*, a setting of a lyric from a Seneca play. The singer, a falsettist, has a seamlessly beautiful sound, a very lovely *pianissimo* which he uses to telling effect, and, if occasionally a trifle overbearing in his *fortes*, the sound is never shrill or edgy. His English diction is, as the French would say, *amiable* (that is, not *parfait*). His consonants are not voiced where they should be (final *s* and *d*), and his open *e* is too open. But it is not offensive, particularly in the context of his very beautiful and often very moving singing. Highly recommended. Robert Oliver

Fayrfax Missa O bone Jhesu The Cardinal's Musick, Andrew Carwood, David Skinner ASV CD GAU 184 76' 16"
Also *Benedicite! What dremyd I?*; *I love, loved, and loved wolde I be; Most clere of colour; Magnificat O Bone Jhesu; Salve Regina,*

Just as novelists find it easier to write about unhappy than happy families (the opening sentence of Anna Karenin may not be true in real life, but accords with fiction), so it is easier to provide an entertaining review of a faulty performance: the number of adjectives one can use about a superlative recording is limited. Like Gothic Voices (whose new disc we review next month), The Cardinal's Music so rarely puts a foot wrong that all one needs to say is: go and buy it. The three secular pieces sound rather ecclesiastical, but they are complex compositions and must have been written for singers who were masters of the church style. The booklet might have explained why the Mass & Magnificat (two works with fascinating inter-relationships) have been transposed up so much – they sound a bit shrill to me; it would have been a better use of space than another silly outdoor group photograph, with the tree behind the conductor drawing attention to his lopsided stance. CB

All Goodly Sports: the Complete Music of Henry VIII Sirinu 65' 58"
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0621

I suppose it had to come: an obvious title to the marketing man, but less so for those concerned with musical substance. There are 34 items, i. e. an average length of under two minutes per piece, with seven tracks running for less than a minute. I'm sure that this will be a great success commercially, since it will be a godsend to anyone who needs a bit of early-Tudor background music; it will be nice to have a change from *Pastime*, the green holly and *Tandernaken*. Individually the performances are excellent, but it's a pity that the Henry VIII music is taken out of context. I doubt if I will ever listen to more than a few tracks at a time. CB

Palestrina Missa 'Ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la' and other sacred works Le chœur du Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal, dir. Christopher Jackson 57' 50"

Analekta *fleur de lys* FL 2 3120

Also includes *Ecce nunc benedicte* a12. *Omnis pulchritudo Domini* a8 & *Victoria Alma Redempioris Mater* a8. *Ave Maria gratia plena* a5. *Salve Regina* a8

I have enjoyed this CD very much indeed. Although new to me, this is an impressive, well-blended group with a real feeling for this music. In the Victoria *Salve Regina*, in particular, they stand up very well to all previous recordings and, for their particular mix of devotional simplicity and sheer beauty of sound, their's may well be the best yet. Palestrina's six-voice hexachord mass is one of his finest; written in the immediate aftermath of Trent, it brilliantly combines older techniques with the new text-declamation needed for the longer movements. His use of the hexachord in both contexts is inspired and the *Agnus Dei* is one of his most beautiful, given full rein in this recording. It's good to have the triple-choir *Ecce nunc* on disc though this is the least successful performance here. I don't understand their ascription of the eight-voice *Omnis pulchritudo* to Victoria: it's one of the few pieces to survive in a Palestrina autograph (fairly recently re-discovered and so not in either of the two collected editions). I've not come across an attribution to Victoria and it certainly sounds a lot more like Palestrina; a good piece, certainly, and nice to have it recorded.

Noel O'Regan

Live in Oxford The Tallis Scholars, Peter Phillips 70' 40"

Gimell 454 998-2

Byrd *Tribue Domine*; Josquin *Gaudie Virgo*; Josquin or la Rue *Abaslon fili mi*. Mundy *Adolescentulus sum ego*. Vox *Patris caelestis*. Obrecht *Salve Regina* a6: Taverner *Gaudie plurimum*

I have not always been fully enthusiastic about the Tallis Scholars, partly because of Peter Phillips's liking for high pitch levels (I'm sure our readers know the arguments on both sides now), partly because I find his conducting style so distractingly jerky. No doubt his input at rehearsal makes up for that, since amazingly the performances sound if anything too smooth. But he has the skill to select good singers and good music, and

has done a marvellous evangelical job for Renaissance sacred vocal music around the world. This recording of a live concert on 17 December 1996 at Merton College Chapel, Oxford, the location of many early Tallis Scholars' recordings before they moved to the more peaceful surroundings of Salle Church, is issued to celebrate 25 years of the Tallis Scholars (or at least, 25 years since Peter conducted his first concert). It's a fine programme, beautifully sung, provided that you accept the principles on which the group operates, and a worthy reminder of a quarter-century's devotion to renaissance religious masterpieces, with a marvellous climax in Mundy's *Vox Patris caelestis*. CB

Mortuus est Philippus Rex: Music for the life and death of the Spanish King Westminster Cathedral Choir, James O'Donnell 65' 54" Hyperion CDA67046

Cotes *Mortuus est Philippus rex*; de Escobedo *Missa Philippus rex Hispaniae*; Las *Infantas Quasi stella matutina*; Lobo *Libera me Domine*, *Versa est in luctum*; Vivanco *Versa est in luctum*;

The main focus of attention in this interesting recording of music associated with Philip II of Spain is the first recording of the recently-resuscitated Mass by Bartolomé de Escobedo, a friend of Morales and probably a teacher of Victoria. The work has traditionally been associated with Philip's coronation, although Bruno Turner's excellent note points out that that there is absolutely no evidence for these claims. The Mass does have the sort of portentous and occasionally bombastic tone that would suit a coronation mass, and at points is curiously reminiscent of Tallis's Mass *Puer natus est*, also perhaps connected with Philip. The performance is generally very effective, although the boys occasionally sound a little too unfocussed for my taste. In the opening *Mortuus est Phillipus Rex*, where the simple rhythms are intended to draw attention to the subtly moving harmonies, this is again in evidence. Elsewhere, however, the whole choir is in excellent form. Two further plaudits: for the visually-stunning booklet cover and for Anthony Fiumara's reconstruction of the Mass - the scholarly *sprezzatura* of his description of the process conceals the enormous artistry clearly demonstrated in the edition itself. D. James Ross

Piae cantiones: Latin Song in Mediaeval Finland Retrover Ensemble, Markus Tapio dir Naxos 8.554180 £ 62' 06"

I've placed this under 16th century, since the date of the famous Finnish publication from which most of the disc is taken was 1582. But its repertoire was widespread in Central Europe during the preceding centuries. One of the big difficulties we had when working on the *New Oxford Book of Carols* was the lack, as far as we could discover, of recent scholarly work on this area of Latin song: it is too modern for the medievalists. As the director says in his note, we have no idea how this music was performed. He generally aims for a 15th-century manner rather than one contemporary with the publication, which makes the isolated example of fairly up-to-date,

four-part writing come as rather a shock. Highly recommended. Buy it (it's cheap anyway), and also get hold of the facsimile of the 1582 edition and use your imagination in performing some of the tunes on the assumption that they are not just waiting for SATB harmonisation. CB

17th CENTURY

Lorenzo Allegri Le suites medicee: Il Primo libro delle Musiche (1618) Gran Consort Li Stromenti, cond Gian Luca Lastraoli Dynamic CDS 218 ££ 66' 14"

Despite owning three modern editions (in descending order of completeness, Garland, LPM, Nagel) of Allegri's 1618 volume, I have so far not heard or played any of it. So this disc is welcome for drawing attention to the merits of his dance music; the eight *balli* from Florentine court entertainments between 1608 and 1615 are definitely worth playing. But I'm less sure about these performances. The attempt to vary the scoring becomes boringly predictable, and anyway I would imagine that textural variety would have come from the use of discrete full consorts in different pieces rather than just starting with a few instruments and adding more on repeats, or the even fussier orchestrations used here. Each dance is played several times, but the :||: in the middle of these binary dances is often ignored, or else only the second half is repeated. Allegri says that you can play the music with fewer instruments, but presumably he envisaged situations where the full complement is not available, since his five-part writing is in fact well contrived. As in other recent Italian recordings of the period, the signature C is often assumed to imply four crotchet beats, which makes some dances feel very slow, but perhaps it's right. It's a pity that the opening *Sinfonia* and madrigal are not also included, since they tie the music specifically to its Medici origin. CB

Cabanilles Batalles, Tientos & Passacalles 1660-1700 Hespèrion XX, Jordi Savall 61' 41" Alta Vox AV 9801

This is even more a modern orchestration than the Allegri reviewed above, since it is based on keyboard music (the four-stave facsimile used as booklet design does not imply that the music was intended for ensemble). The preface justifies playing 16th-century organ music on other instruments, but Cabanilles (1644-1712) was writing in a period when instrumental music was far more idiomatic. I find myself uncomfortable with the rescored for ensembles which have a genuine repertoire, since there is often a clash between ensemble and style. In practice, the disc is immensely entertaining, even though pieces turned into violin fantasies seem to my Anglo-Saxon taste to be over-stated. There is surely something to be learnt from what makes sense on an organ, and no organist could treat the contrapuntal lines so freely. The jollier pieces are performed with tremendous panache. If you don't like organs, this makes some fine music extremely palatable. The writer

of the booklet notes seems not to realise that the *Batalla Imperial* is not by Cabanilles but by Kerll, though it is correct on the contents list

Since this is the first of the new Savall series we have reviewed (see also Marin's *Tonos humanos* and *Les voix humaines*), it is worth stating that instead of the fragile and unmendable jewel-box the discs instead have a double-flap container of card with the notes slid into one side of it. I would guess that more than 10% of the jewel-case boxes we receive arrive damaged. But these card cases, despite looking less substantial, can be patched if they get damaged and seem to me to be preferable – and lighter to post. CB

Carissimi Abraham et Isaac, Ezechia, Missa septimi toni, Tolle sponsa, Jephte, three motets Chamber Choir and Orchestra of the Gulbenkian Foundation, Michel Corboz 104' 11" (2 CDs) rec 1972 Erato 3984-24231-2 ££

This may appear to be good value, but an orchestra is irrelevant to Carissimi's music even in the handful of places when he writes a pair of violin parts; here it is added indiscriminately. A pity, because there is some fine solo singing, especially from one of the tenors (John Elwes, probably – they are not individually identified). But this is only of interest for those tracking the history of performance practice, and was outmoded even when it was issued in 1972. CB

Carissimi Jonas, Dives malus, Beatus vir Soli, Coro della Radio Svizzera, Lugano, Sonatori della Gioiosa Marca, Diego Fasolis Arts 47513-2 £ 65' 54"

This is much better than the previous disc. There is a real sense of style and drama, making Carissimi seem a far better composer than Corboz was able to do. There is a slight problem in that I'm a little suspicious whether much, if any, of this sort of music was written for choir – Roman directors of music seemed to be a little like Praetorius and, if they had more than one-to-a-part for one choir, would split the extras off and place them in another gallery. With 12 soloists, one wonders why there is a choir at all. But it sings superbly, so I'm not grumbling too much, and it is certainly worth buying at the price. CB

Cavalieri Rappresentazione di Anima e di Corpo Soloists, Capella Musicale di San Petronio di Bologna, Sergio Vartolo 100' 43" (2 CDs in box) Naxos 8.554096-97

Regular readers will remember my suspicion of Vartolo's recordings of music of this period for their mixture of the very good and the distinctly odd. There is nothing here as strange as the *Orfeo* recording. Comparison with the Californian recording with Judith Nelson and Paul Hillier (Koch International 3-7363-2 H1) is very much a matter of penny plain, tuppence coloured. The Koch version stresses the simplicity of the original production, though the Naxos note-writer discounts the specific financial evidence.

Much of Vartolo's instrumental elaboration is within the stylistic convention of the time, even if perhaps more Florentine than Roman. But he goes too far when adding trombones and drums to recitative – he is like one of those infuriating people who borrow one of your books and returns it with his favourite passages underlined or even highlighted – and he undermines the specific suggestion made in the preface for chitarrone, Spanish guitar and a cimbalotto (?little cymbal), played by the singers, to characterise Pleasure: such sounds are not shocking after what has come before. Vartolo benefits from native Italian singers, an important matter when so much of the work is monodic, though in other respects they are not superior. Although the Naxos set is a bargain, the Koch version is on a single disc so isn't that much more expensive. It omits ten minutes of spoken dialogue at the beginning: it is useful to have it translated in the Naxos booklet, but I wouldn't want to play it very often. The two recordings offer the extreme ranges of performance styles: predictably, I prefer the more restrained Californians. CB

W. Lawes Suites pour une et trois lyra-violes Jonathan Dunford, Sylvia Abramowicz, Sylvie Moquet 63' 04" Adès AD 206502

This is an interesting disc, particularly for viol players who approach this very challenging and very much underestimated repertoire, and it is mostly well played. There are individual dance pieces for solo viol, arranged in suites according to tuning, and it is intriguing to hear the different sonorities. Greater variety of approach would help the listener: there is a wider range of moods than is apparent here. I enjoy the vigour that Jonathan Dunford brings to the solo pieces, but would prefer a greater variety of articulation, dynamics and tone generally. With the two sets for three lyra viols the mood changes. The trios are wonderful music, overwhelming in their intensity and unexpectedness, and well played, although not as well as in Fretwork's performance on their disc of Lawes consort music. The wisdom of limiting the choice to the music of one composer is questionable, but one is left amazed at the invention and sheer beauty that Lawes finds in this apparently limited genre. Robert Oliver

The Fretwork disc is Virgin Classics 759021-2, currently unavailable, though you may find a copy lurking in a little-used shop.

Gaspard Le Roux Pièces de Clavecin Mitzi Meyerson, Lisa Crawford 72' 04" Harmonia Mundi HMC 901660

Le Roux was effectively the first French composer to explore, albeit somewhat indirectly, the opportunities offered by the duet for two harpsichords. The *Pièces de Clavessin* of 1705 were published in two versions – a fully worked out solo harpsichord part, for 'stand-alone' performance, together with a slightly altered, single-line bass and melody version at the foot of each page. This was designed to be played either by, say, gamba and flute in addition to the harpsichord, or,

with a degree of 'realisation', by a second harpsichord. Meyerson and Crawford utilise this latter option, and their realisation is very effective, adding many layers of complexity, and some creative counter-melodies, over and above the solo version. Perhaps there could have been more variation of texture at times, and occasionally I felt the music's dramatic elements were overstated (by too frequent bass double-octaves amongst other things). But fundamentally this is a good CD, and well worth investigating. The harpsichords, incidentally, are the 1769 Taskin and 1764 Goermans/Taskin from the Russell Collection. Robin Bigwood

Lully Acis & Galatea Jean-Paul Fouchécourt *Acis*, Véronique Gens *Galatée*, etc, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski 106' 36" (2 CDs in box) Deutsche Grammophon Archiv 453 497-2

This *Pastorale heroïque* was Lully's last completed opera and consists of a prologue and three acts. I enjoyed very much the singing of Jean-Paul Fouchécourt and Véronique Gens in the title roles, as well as that of Laurent Naouri as the Cyclops (although his horribly out-of-tune panpipes were incredibly irritating!) and the ever-impressive Howard Crook. The voices in the prologue and the final *passacaille* (a giant of a piece, lasting over 13 minutes) were rather too large for my taste. I found it quite strange that the action is put on hold for a ballet interlude (a bit like the adverts during a television soap opera), yet at the same time was slightly frustrated that it was not a video CD that I was reviewing – they surely cannot be too distant a prospect (although this production would be quite expensive!). Much as I enjoyed the music, just now and then I longed for a scrunchy bit of Charpentier-style harmony. Still, another very fine achievement by Minkowski and his innovative team. BC

Marais Pièces de viole du second livre (1701) Markku Luolajan-Mikkola *gamba*, Varpu Haavisto *gamba*, Eero Palviainen *lute*, Elina Mustonen *hpscd* 72' 46" BIS-CD-909

The Finnish virtuoso makes his majestic way through the French repertoire with a generous helping from Marais' most important book, which contains some of his best music. The 32 variations on *Folies d'Espagne*, published as a French answer to Corelli, are a kind of manifesto for the instrument and its style. It makes considerable demands on technique but perhaps more on the player's capacity to find variety of expression. This is a well-thought-out performance from both soloist and accompanists, with a fine sense of gathering momentum. If it lacks a certain impulsiveness it certainly has moments of great beauty. The suite in E major is given a full choice of dance movements, including the *Pavan* 'in the style of the old masters of the lute' in which Marais pays homage to the progenitors of his style and techniques, and finishes with a marvellous *Chaconne*. The famous *Tombeau pour Monsieur de Ste Colombe*, Marais' tribute to his teacher, is

given on its own. Without its suite it still is a very moving piece, beautifully, if literally, played – not poetic, but powerful rhetoric nevertheless. The suite in D minor contains one of Marais' most remarkable pieces, *Cloches ou carillon*, here given an exhilarating performance. It suits this player perfectly and his formidable technique powers through the obstacles. Then follows a very lovely *Ballet en Rondeau*, its main theme a simple harmonic progression repeated with divisions between contrasting sections: it is one of Marais' less virtuosic yet most appealing pieces, beautifully played here. The final piece, a *Prélude* in A is made up of short episodes in duple time, repeated and developing rather like a chaconne. It finishes the disc with suitable bravura. *Robert Oliver*

Marin Tonos humanos Montserrat Figueras, Rolf Lisievand guitar, Arianno Savall double harp, Pedro Esteven perc, Addela Gonzalez-Campa castanets 67' 03"

Alia Vox AV 9802

June Yakeley reviewed the edition of Marin's songs used here in our last issue. Not that these performances bear a close relationship to any edition (or, for that matter, to Fitzwilliam Mus MS 772, which comprises just melody and guitar tablature). The accompaniment is expanded to include double harp, drums and castanets, and occasionally a second voice. Readers who are enthusiasts for the Harp Consort's Ribayaz will love this for its simple chord patterns treated with Hispanic verve and imagination. But the voice is what really matters. I first heard Montserrat Figueras on a couple of Philips recordings some 15 years ago and was amazed by the skill and subtlety of her voice and interpretation. I have since found her mannerisms annoying, but here I am utterly enthusiastic. I have some doubts about the backing – are the Spanish clichés always relevant? But it's an entrancing disc, enjoyable if you don't sit down with the words, but even better if you do. *CB*

Monteverdi Combattimento, Ballo delle Ingrate (Ottavo Libro dei Madrigali, vol. II) Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini 58' 24" Opus 111 OPS 30-196

I looked forward to hearing this with great anticipation, and to some extent the performances fulfilled my hopes. Recitative singing of wonderful flexibility, string playing impulsive, exciting, spontaneous, singing free but with great style and with well-produced voices. The disappointments are relatively minor. The narrative role in *Il combattimento* is taken, as it was in the William Christie recording I reviewed last month, by a baritone, but to my ears it should have the lighter sound of a tenor. Good though Roberto Abbondanza is – a lovely easy top, for example, with no sense of strain – he doesn't have that final emotional punch that Nicolas Rivenq was able to bring to the role. However, his freedom and his verbal approach teach all who would sing this part a great lesson on what it really means to sing in Italian. Elisa Franzetti, who sings the part of Clorinda, is magical. No vibrato in

her sound, her brief recitatives at the end are meltingly beautiful and it is worth having the recording just for those. The *Ballo delle Ingrate* also has a weakness, perhaps more serious. In the role of Plutone, Daniele Carnovic has just the right range, an easy top, plus plenty of resonance right down to the low C he opts for whenever there is an opportunity. But his sound lacks the presence of the great god of the underworld, and his singing is too sunny, too much of this world, to menace anyone. However, he sings with great freedom, and the rest of the cast, particularly Elisa Franzetti again, who sings the lament of the *ingrate*, are marvellous. Well worth having for the two masterpieces in an individual performance of passion, commitment and style. *Robert Oliver*

Poglietti 'Il Rossignolo': Oeuvres pour clavecin Jörg-Andreas Bötticher hpsc'd 73' 08" Harmonia Mundi HMC 905242

This is a much more approachable and, ultimately, satisfying recording of *Il Rossignolo* than the one by Joyce Lindorff I reviewed previously (EMR 35, p.14). Where Lindorff's playing is generally rather clipped and often stylistically idiosyncratic, Bötticher's is neat, lyrical and imaginative. He manages to draw much more contrast between the variations of the *Aria Allemagna ... sopra l'età della maestà vostra*, and imbues many with a far sturdier sense of character. Bötticher's playing is very good to listen to – masses of detail, and widely varied articulation – but I couldn't help thinking that it was not shown off to best effect on a copy of a Gianfranco Facchini (8'/8'/4'!) which sounded bass-light and, frankly, a bit puny. *Il Rossignolo* is a great piece of music, worth the time and effort of familiarisation, and this is probably the best recording of it to date. *Robin Bigwood*

Provenzale Vespro all'oratorio dei Girolamini (Tesori di Napoli 5) Soloists, Coro Mysterium Vocis, Cappella de' Turchini, Antonio Florio Opus 111 OPS 30-210 74' 48"

This series goes from strength to strength: from the opening sinfonia to the end of the disc, I was struck by the high quality of the music and the mastery of the performances. Apart from four psalms and a Magnificat by Provenzale, there are two motets by him, a hymn and a motet by Caresana and one motet each by Giamberti and Tricarico, and nine tracks of appropriate plainsong. They form a delightful hour's listening, characterised by sharply-focussed singing and extremely stylish playing, from both the strings and the continuo section. With Florio's help, Provenzale is fast becoming a composer to reckon with. *BC*

Rigatti A 1640 Venetian Mass Vancouver Cantata Singers, James Fankhauser 78' 51" Analekta Fleur de lys FL 2 3097 Rigatti Mass a8 (1640) with music by Castello, Gesualdo, Monteverdi, Neri, Picchi & Viadana

This disc is an attempt at the reconstruction of mass for the Purification of the Virgin using the Ordinary in eight parts from Rigatti's 1640 *Messa e salmi*, as well as two

solo motets (the solo singer is not identified precisely), liturgically appropriate motets by Gesualdo, Monteverdi and Viadana, instrumental music by Neri (a sonata which has itself been reconstructed), Picchi and Castello and some plainsong. The overall effect is very pleasing, though the choral sound can be a little stodgy without the added instrumental brilliance. Rigatti's music is very much more than competent imitation Monteverdi (the way he builds the *Glorificamus te*, for example, is quite original) and this recording will help to bring him to wider notice. *BC*

Salut! Italian Instrumental and Vocal Music from the 17th Century Sally Melhuish rec, Tim Blomfield vlc, Luke Green hpsc'd with Jane Edwards S, Lucinda Moon vln, Marshall McGuire hp 63' 12" Walsingham WAL8024 2

Music by Cima, Frescobaldi, Leonarda, Marini, Monteverdi, S. Rossi & B. Strozzi,

This Australian disc was made with support from the country's branch of the Mars chocolate empire*. Whatever the historical accuracy of an ensemble of solo recorder and violin for this repertoire, the proof of the pudding is, as they say, in the eating and these are extremely impressive performances. The descant recorder is a difficult creature to balance faithfully, but most of the technical problems seem to have been surmounted. Even in very high passages, there are few shrill notes and hardly any discomfort for the listener. The singing is exemplary – a beautifully clear voice with a flowing legato and nimble passagework as required and a controlled vibrato when the music seems to require it – very similar, in fact, to the recorder playing. The varying continuo is well considered and performed. All in all, a most enjoyable disc. *BC*

*Mars seems to be big in Australia; a newspaper survey I saw there included the average number of Mars bars eaten per year along with the frequency with which Australian families eat out, take holiday trips, and have sex. *CB*

International Baroque – 17th Century Les Enemis Confus 67' 29" René Gailly CD87 046 (rec. 1990)

Music by Castello, Helmreker, a Kempis, Kist, Locke, Merula, Schmelzer, Schop, Selma y Salaverde, Turini, Van Wickel & anon

Most of the pieces on this CD are played by two descant or two treble recorders with archlute or theorbo and a Rücker harpsichord. The exceptions are three dances by Schop, the first (a Paduana) being played by the wonderful combination of bass and great bass recorders with theorbo. The programme contains an exceptionally wide variety of little-heard music, and it is very well played. Most of it is explicitly for violins, but that matters little when the players are as convincing as they are here. The recorders both have lovely soft tonguing, which means the lines can be pointed without disturbing their natural flow. The absence of a melodic bass instrument was hardly noticed – the theorbo is more than capable of fulfilling

that role. Recommended for novelty of repertoire and stylish performances. BC

La Prima Stravaganza: Sonatas of 17th Century Italy Capella Corelli 74' Move MD 3208

Castello II/1 & 2; Cima per vln; Corelli op. 5/1, 12; Fontana nos 1, 3, 4; Frescobaldi *Cento partite*; Marini *con due corde*; Montalbano *Sinf.* 4; Uccellini op. 5/8

Like the disc of French music on this label reviewed below, this complementary disc features an established Australian ensemble which really knows how it wants to play its chosen repertoire and has devised a programme that displays its riches. Corelli's op. 5/1 with the 1710 ornaments gives the recital a flying start, from which it never looks back. Similar flamboyance characterises the concluding *Follia*. John O'Donnell finds a convincing path through Frescobaldi's marathon *Cento partite*, to which the chosen temperament contributes some piquant moments, and two sonatas are given to the recorder which, though perhaps on the fringe of the 'authentic' performance options in this music, provides a welcome change of sonority. There are a few moments of questionable intonation, but these should not deter the would-be purchaser. If you are looking for a 17th-century sonata collection, this is it.

David Hansell

Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Lute Book Paul O'Dette lute 76' 38" rec 1992 Harmonia Mundi Suite HMT 7907068

This is a welcome reissue, preserving all of the original tracks and notes, but minus some of the booklet illustrations. Lord Herbert was a diplomat, philosopher, poet and soldier; he left us both his autobiography and his lute book, which is one of the finest late English sources, containing many unica. The repertory includes much French music (Herbert was ambassador to France from 1610 to 1624), works by Jacob Polonois, Cato, Lorenzini, and of course English music of the 1620s and 1630s. There are also pieces composed by Herbert, of which he was very proud – perhaps unjustly so. This rarely-heard repertoire mixes some of the earliest chaconnes and sarabands with some of the latest examples of the renaissance fantasia and pavan. The performances are superb; both lutes used are richly sonorous, and O'Dette negotiates the formidable technical difficulties with ease. Highlights include the astonishing fantasias of Cuthbert Hely [cf. p. 5], and Daniel Bachelor's virtuosic variations on *La jeune fillette*. A must for those who missed it first time round.

Lynda Sayce

Two upon a Ground Charivari agréable (Susanne Heinrich vlns, Kah-Ming Ng kbd, Lynda Sayce lutes) with Susanna Pell vlns Signum Records SIGCD007 78' 28" Music by Finger, E. Gaultier, Hume, Jenkins, W. Lawes, Purcell, C. Simpson & Tomkins

With two of *EMR*'s reviewers featured on this disc it is pleasing to be able to recommend it wholeheartedly. For a start, it is excellent value, with nearly 80 minutes of music. This music is well-known to and

beloved of viol players, but will be of great interest to others: bass viol duets with organ, harpsichord, theorbo and guitar in various combinations by those great figures of English 17th-century music, Jenkins, Simpson, Lawes. For viol players no more need be said – just buy it. It is all beautifully played, and I was particularly struck with the lovely fresh clean sound of the two bass viols. I would guess they play with non-metal-wound gut bass strings. The balance between bass and treble registers is just right, and both instruments, though quite distinct, share this quality. There's more: solos for virginals by Tomkins, brilliantly played, a Gaultier *Tombeau*, beautiful on an original English Theorbo, a couple of Tobias Hume solos, some Purcell even, and some Finger. In fact, if anything, there is too much. It is as though they are really making two recordings, and couldn't quite make up their mind how to split them. But one needn't listen to it all at once. Robert Oliver

LATE BAROQUE

Albinoni Cantatas Barbara Schlick S, Roderick Shaw hpscd, Nicolas Selo vlc Etcetera KTC 1181 53' 14"

Four cantatas from op. 4 *Amor, sorte, destino!* *Del chiaro rio, Lontananza crudel, Ove rivolgo il pide, Parti mi lasci, Poiché al vago seren*

Perhaps it was the emotional outpourings that make up the recitatives that were the problem here. Whatever the cause, I found myself struggling to last even a whole cantata before having to skip on to the next track. Barbara Schlick's voice is bright but not always absolutely true to pitch. The cellist shapes his lines quite well, with a sensitive ear to when he's accompanying and when he's the main interest. The keyboardist, however, rarely does more than double the cello (with some noticeable tuning differences – try the opening of track 12, for example!) and fill in a few chords. I have to say that this is not Albinoni's best music but, even so, this disc (recorded in 1993 and issued in 1994) is slightly disappointing.

BC

Bach Complete Organ Works as published by the Composer Jonathan Dimmock on European instruments concurrent with the compositions 1691-45"

Arkay Records AR6161 3 discs in box *Clavierübung III, Schübler Chorales & Canonic Variations*

One way to get the 'complete' organ works of Bach onto 3 CDs is to record only those that he published in his lifetime – the *Clavierübung III*, Schübler Chorales and Canonic Variations on *Von Himmel hoch*. And even that needs fillers, in this case the addition of the sung chorales before each of the *Clavierübung* preludes and the inclusion of the variant autograph reading of *Von Himmel hoch*. Three organs are used, the well-known 1761 French-inspired Johann Andreas Silbermann organ in Arlesheim Cathedral (used for the early Lionel Rogg recordings), the 1736 Schnitger-inspired instrument at St Wilhadi, Stade, and the less-known 1737 Christoph Treutmann in Klosterkirche Grauhof in Germany. Recently restored, this is apparently the only Baroque organ of similar size to survive the 2nd World War with its pipes intact. Although the idea of including the chorales sung in unison is a good one, they are the weakest link in this recording – the miscellaneous collection of differing vocal styles and strengths smacks too much of the worst sort of church choir, with the expected intonation and pitch problems. The playing is a bit heavy-handed for my taste, and lacks the fluidity of the finest performers. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Available from the player via the internet at: jdimmock@earthlink.net

Bach Complete Organ Works Vol 4. Jacques van Oortmerssen (1743 Hinsz organ, Bovenkerk, Kampen, The Netherlands). Vanguard Classics 99104
BWV 533, 562, 565, 572, 583, 694, 734, 740, 770

If you haven't already discovered the joys of Jacques van Oortmerssen's complete Bach series, Vol 4 would be the ideal introduction to it. Starting with the ubiquitous Toccata and Fuga in D minor, which he plays with masterly assurance, this CD contains a beautifully balanced and musically sensible collection of pieces representative of Bach's many organ works. It is easy to run out of superlatives with van Oortmerssen – he is one of the finest players around, with a musical insight and sensitivity of interpretation that most organists would (or should) die for. The magnificent Hinsz organ in the huge acoustic of Kampen's Bovenkerk allows a vast array of tonal colour, and the high quality of the recording gives a focussed but acoustically mellow sound. Indeed one of the welcome changes in organ recordings of recent years has been a huge improvement in the way the acoustics are dealt with – we have moved far from the

microphone-up-a-pipe days. Organists should listen to the final track – the 3-part *Pièce d'Orgue* played on a single pleno throughout without any of the oft-heard registrational silliness. And if anybody needs one track to convince you of the power of this playing, listen to track 8: Bach's homage to De Grigny, the Fantasia in C minor (562) played with a majestic control that produces an unleashing of almost unbearable emotional intensity and spiritual power. This is Bach as God intended. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach Partitas Robert Woolley *hpscd* 159' 21" Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0618(2) (2 CDs in box)

Perhaps my opinion is biased – I studied with Robert Woolley for four years – but I think this is a superb recording. I harbour a secret fear of having to sit, in a sort of daze, through long-winded, uninspired renderings of Bach Partitas and English Suites – but thankfully, on this occasion my fears couldn't have been further from being realised. These are creative and uplifting performances that reveal the intricacy and detail of the music without sacrificing a sense of sheer enjoyment. There's a strong feeling that Woolley has found the 'groove' – especially in, say, the D major Gigue, which is breathtaking – whilst retaining, and exhibiting, a deep understanding of the Partitas' stylistic and intellectual subtleties. This is a recording for the connoisseur, and, like Robert Woolley's recording of the Purcell Suites, a cornerstone of any self-respecting harpsichord CD collection. *Robin Bigwood*

Bach 57 Sacred Songs from Georg Christian Schemelli's Musicalisches Gesang Buch (Leipzig, 1736) Barbara Schlick S, Klaus Mertens Bar, Bob van Asperen *hpscd*, org, Wouter Möller vlc 153' 20" cpo 999 407-2 (2 CDs in box)

Bach's precise involvement with the *Gesangbuch* which Schemelli produced has been far from certain; it may have been only in a distant consultative capacity. However, the work has vital significance to serious students of protestant hymnody, since it included 954 chorale melodies with texts (one of the largest collections of all), many also with a figured bass line. This selection is performed with considerable distinction by four artists of securely-established authority, and the venture is to be welcomed. But outside the somewhat restricted world of Lutheran scholarship, a solo rendition of examples from even one of the best hymnbooks may, I fear, command little appeal. I note with delight that both soloists declaim the words in a rather detached way, which I suspect to have been usual with chorales in any medium around 1736. I am very pleased to have been supplied with excellent original texts and good English translations. *Stephen Daw*

Boismortier & Dornel Concertos and Sonatas Tripla Concordia 64' 04" Dynamic CDS 198 ££

The ensemble Tripla Concordia seems to

have an impressive review record to date, so I was a little disappointed by some aspects of this disc. The programmed works represent a good mixture of pieces by Boismortier and Dornel for various combinations of recorder, flute, oboe, violin and bassoon, promoting some lesser-known works by both composers. The performance quality is rather variable: the pieces for larger forces tend to lack cohesion and drive, and even the trio sonatas sound a little ragged at times. This may in part be due to the recording balance, which strongly favours the upper parts and leaves the bass instruments sounding weak and uncommanding. There are good things on this CD; I enjoyed the Boismortier Sonata for recorder and obbligato cello, which had more flair. But on the whole I found it all a little too safe. *Marie Ritter*

J C F Fischer Musicalischer Parnassus, Musicalisches Blumen-Büscklein Siegbert Rampe 54' 04" Virgin veritas 7243 5 45307 2 2 FWV 13, 14, 74, 78, 81

Fischer is most widely known for his *Ariadne Musica* of 1702. This collection of preludes and fugues for organ in 20 different keys is an obvious predecessor of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, both in concept and in thematic material, but it suffers – quite catastrophically – from comparison with Bach's pieces. Fischer's other keyboard collections stand far better on their own: they are not historically pathbreaking but they represent some of the best German keyboard music of the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Siegbert Rampe presents us with two partitas from Fischer's first published keyboard collection (1696/8) and three from the *Parnassus* collection of c.1736, written when the composer was nearly 80 years old. The later pieces are somewhat lighter and more linear in style but the composer's qualities of thoroughness and lyricism are consistent throughout. Rampe's performance is excellent – pliable, cantabile and effortlessly virtuosic: The booklet also testifies to his achievements as a scholar (which include his new Froberger edition) benefitting from much recent academic interest in the composer. If Rampe is sometimes a naive historian (some useful and interesting comments from Mattheson are presented undigested and the *Parnassus* collection hardly represents 'the beginning of a new style of music'), this is more than compensated by the vigour of the playing and the wonderful instruments from the Beurmann collection. *John Butt*

Handel Opera arias David Daniels ct, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Roger Norrington Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45326 2 7 Arias from *Giulio Cesare*, *Rinaldo*, *Rodelinda*, *Saul*, *Tamerlano*

Daniels made a great impression as the soldier Didymus in Peter Sellars' production of *Theodora* for Glyndebourne, combining a burly frame and good stage presence with an evenly-produced countertenor voice of great beauty and power. This recital of arias from Handel's Italian operas, chosen by

Daniels himself, confirms his musicality and assured technique, but does not quite do him justice, since the voice is only part of the package and (here, at least) does not emerge with strong personality. (Norrington's somewhat disengaged accompaniments may have been unhelpful; in any case he should have reined in the strumming guitarist in the fast arias – see my review of Handel concertos below.) The *Giulio Cesare* extracts consist of three arias from the title role and two from the mezzo-soprano part of *Sesto* (which Daniels sang in the recent, pretty dire production by the Royal Opera); one of the latter, *Cara speme*, has continuo accompaniment only and allows Daniels to show his command of high register when he can float the line, but the notes above e" in arias with full strings are not entirely comfortable. The selection, though a good blend of the expressive and brilliant, could usefully have been less obvious (*Ombra mai fu*, *Va tacito*, *Dove sei*, *Scherza infida* and *Cara sposa* are all there). Not a full view of Daniels' talents, but a valuable glimpse nevertheless. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel Athalia Elisabeth Scholl, Barbara Schlick, Friederike Holzhausen, Annette Reinhold, Markus Brutscher, Stephan MacLeod SSSATB, Junge Kantorei, Barockorchester Frankfurt, Joachim Carlos Martini 128' 45" Naxos 8.554364-65 (2 discs) £

This is assembled from a number of live performances (so there are noises off, and one or two blips), and was originally issued privately. (Martini has also recorded *Saul* in the same way; perhaps it too will appear on Naxos.) Price apart, it is not a serious alternative to Hogwood's 1986 version (with Joan Sutherland over the top in the title role but one hardly minds) which we ought to have had by now. It is, however, a decent account of the work, the sort of thing you would be pleased to catch at one of the German Handel Festivals. (An extra aria from *Deborah* is added to the part of Joas by way of a bonus.) Scholl is a spirited Athalia and Schlick is excellent in the lyrical (if sometimes over-extended) music of Josabeth. The part of Joad, one of the few Handel actually wrote for countertenor (it does not go above c") is assigned to a heavy contralto of the kind not often heard today. Reinhold is magnificent in her way – I should love to hear her in a Russian opera – but out of place here, and her accent is particularly marked. The English is variable throughout: Joas promises to reign 'like righteous Dayweet'. The Junge Kantorei – basically an amateur church choir, it seems – are enthusiastic and well-trained, but are disadvantaged by cloudy sound and a balance that favours the orchestra. Martini's direction, though occasionally lacking urgency, is intelligent and stylish. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel Concerti Grossi op. 6, vol. 3 Collegium Musicum 90, Simon Standage Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0622 56' 17" Op. 6/10-12 & Concerto in Alexander's Feast

This is the last volume of Collegium Musicum 90's recordings of Handel's Opus 6 concertos and the only one I have heard.

Well-drilled, gutsy and austere were the adjectives that first came into my mind – not inappropriate for no. 10 in D minor, but I was worried by a dynamic range stuck between fortissimo and mezzo-forte, with close miking of the concertino further reducing contrast between solo and tutti. Use of organ and theorbo as well as harpsichord overloads the continuo, and there are regrettable rattlings from a strummed guitar, that inauthentic cuckoo recently sneaked into baroque bands by pushy lutenists. The concerto's last movement, unexpectedly in the major and surely intended to lighten the seriousness of what has gone before, comes out prim and unsmiling. No. 11 in A major gets similarly treated and suffers the more, being one of the sunniest concertos in the set. Yet no. 12 in B minor is very satisfying, the sound better balanced in what seems to me a more natural acoustic; the central E major minuet and its variation are beautifully shaped. The more clinical sound returns for the *Alexander's Feast* concerto and works well with the thinnish musical material until the final gavotte, robbed of its charm by staccato delivery of the melody. (No distinction is made between Handel's written-out Scotch snaps and his small note appoggiaturas; the latter are surely meant to have full value.) I am not rushing out to buy the earlier volumes, but a reissue of the whole set in one box will clearly be worth examining.

Anthony Hicks

Handel (?) Johannesspassion Jan Van Elsacker T: Evangelist, Lieven Termont B: Jesus, Patrick Van Boethem A: Pilatus, Angès Mellon, Goedele Heidbüchel, Stefan Geyer SSB, Vocal Ensemble Ex Tempore, Baroque Orchestra Le Mercure, Florian Heyerick dir 66' 05" René Gailly: Vox Temporis VTP CD92 036

The anonymous St John Passion on Postel's text of 1704 is unlikely to be Handel's, but it is a fine and interesting piece in its own right; if the attribution helps to keep it in the repertory, no harm is done. It does not sound to me like a young man's composition: the expressive settings of Christ's words, the lively *turba* choruses and a few numbers over Corellian walking basses suggest the 18th century, while the stiffer counterpoint of formal ensemble numbers hints at a composer already mature in the 17th. One of the features is an absence of chorales, so it is a shade perverse of Heyerick to insert four such numbers from Handel's Brockes Passion, but he places them aptly and directs an affectionate, intimate performance.

Anthony Hicks

Kuhnau Sacred Music (Bach's Contemporaries) Deborah York, Marianne Hellgren, Lisa Beckley, Susan Hamilton SSSS, James Bowman, Robin Blaze AA, Charles Daniels, James Gilchrist TT, Peter Harvey, Colin Campbell BB, The King's Consort, Robert King 74' 45" Hyperion CDA67059

I have already enthused about the quality of Kuhnau's church music in the booklet notes to this recording; here we have vivid textual imagery, dramatic gestures and a winning,

lyrical style. As one might expect for a cantor of the Thomasschule in Leipzig, Kuhnau is an expert contrapuntist, but he is one who uses compositional devices for immediate aural effect. These pieces have much in common with Bach's Mühlhausen cantatas (almost exactly contemporary with much of Kuhnau's church music) and often approach them in quality. This recording of six cantatas and motets introduces much music that has not been previously recorded (only the motet *Tristis est anima mea* has been readily available in print) and provides an excellent introduction to this repertory. Robert King and his forces produce direct and elegant performances that are well shaped both dynamically and rhythmically. If they steer away from the extremely vivid and sometimes aggressive style that often characterizes German revivals of the pre-Bach repertory, they provide a fresh and spontaneous approach that seems to bring out almost a Purcellian element in Kuhnau (the compositional ink seems, as it were, still wet). The singing is occasionally just a touch cautious (e.g. the ornamented reprise in the opening number) but there are many wonderful moments: e.g. countertenor Robin Blaze's arias in *Ihr himmel jubilirt* and soprano Deborah York's performance of the solo cantata *Weicht ihr Sorgen aus dem Hertzen*.

John Butt

Giuseppe Sammartini Concertos pour orgue Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester org & dir. 77' 55" Accord 206472 Concertos op. 9/1-4, Trio sonata op. 3/12

The complexity of some of Handel's solo oboe writing can be blamed on Giuseppe Sammartini, the leading oboist of his day and a member of Handel's and Bononcini's bands. Born in Milan in 1695, he moved to England around 1728 where he eventually became Master of Music to Augusta, Princess of Wales. He died in 1750. His skills as a composer only became recognised after his death, and his music stayed in circulation for many years. His four Concertos for Harpsichord or Organ, *Opera Nono*, were published by Walsh c1754. All but the 2nd of them use the organ as solo instrument (the naming of the harpsichord first in the published edition was a common marketing gambit of the time). These are delightful pieces, played with panache in a generous acoustic by the four strings, harpsichord and organ. Stylistically on the cusp between post-Corellian Handel and the gallant and rococo styles, looking forward to the early stages of the classical style.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Scarlatti 18 Sonatas for harpsichord Luc Beauséjour 74' 25" Analekta fleurs de lys FL 2 3041 K 1, 23, 87, 141, 159, 162, 201, 203, 296, 429, 444, 481, 487, 531, 544-5, 554-5

The very thought of a Scarlatti CD by a 'new' young harpsichordist was enough to fill me with dread – too fast, too flashy, too insensitive, I imagined – but I couldn't have been more wrong. This is no show-off recording, but a mature, considered disc by

a player who evidently has a superb technique and an easy, unfussy musicality. Beauséjour's playing style is straightforward and rather understated, but never machine-like – he allows the music to speak, to the point where it is the Scarlatti one marvels at, not the playing. Interestingly, the selection of 18 sonatas spans K.1 to K.555 at roughly regular intervals, but with only two pairs, and no ordering in terms of key. It can certainly be listened to in one sitting, with good variation of tempo and style between successive sonatas.

Robin Bigwood

Telemann Musique de Table (Tafelmusik) Part I, Vol. 1 Orchestra of the Golden Age Naxos 8.553724 £ 69' 50 Overture in e, Quartet in G, Concerto in A

This first volume was recorded in 1995. When I first listened to it in my car (on a quality player!) I felt the acoustic was just a little dry. Having transferred to the comfort of my study, that seems less of a problem, though there is still a certain lack of resonance. The playing is slightly uneven: there are moments of brilliance juxtaposed with some sketchy tuning. Robert Glenton, the director, is too modest about the solo cello's role in the A major concerto, which is, perhaps, the most successful work of the three on this CD. Volumes 2 and 3 are awaited with interest.

BC

Telemann 12 Fantasias for flute without bass Claire Guimond 56' 40" Analekta fleurs de lys FL 2 3084

There are so many good recordings of the Telemann Fantasias on both recorder and flute that any new issue has to really offer something special. Claire Guimond has a straightforward and musical approach which allows the music to speak for itself, clearly and without hindrance. As the notes perceptively comment, Telemann's self-imposed challenge was to make a single instrument sound like two: an obvious concept but an important one which Guimond faithfully bears out. Technically and musically she is a fine and gifted player, with solid, well-formed ideas and a strong sound. If you don't own a recording (or two) already, this is an excellent introduction to these remarkable pieces. If you do, you won't be disappointed if you buy this as well.

Marie Ritter

Telemann Sonatas Peter Bree ob, Marianne Stucki fl, Hans Dusoswa vla, Christian Lambour hpscd, Dries Munnik vlc 41' 58" Etcetera KTC 1083 rec 1980 Sonatas in Bb fl, hc, b fl, vla, bc, c ob, vla, bc, Suite in g ob, bc from *Getreue Music-Meister*,

This 'vintage' 1980 recording is a new arrival in the UK, originally released on CD in 1990. It features modern instrumentalists and gives scant programme information, but despite initial misgivings I was pleasantly surprised by what seemed a genuine attempt to create an overall 'baroque' sound ideal. Whilst 'authenticity' per se is evidently not a priority here, machine-gun vibrato is thankfully off the agenda and all the players display an admirable sensitivity to the demands and subtleties of this music. The

oboist, Peter Bree, in particular, sounds quite strikingly baroque and his performance of the Suite in G minor from *Der Getreue Music-Meister* is musical, soft-hued and modest. If nothing else, this is an example other modern players may well wish to follow. *Marie Ritter*

Vivaldi *Per Archi: concertos for strings*
Angèle Dubeau & La Pietà 64' 30"
Analecta *fleurs de lys* FL 2 3128
RV 138, 146, 156, 151, 159, 271, op. 1/12, op. 3/11

La Pietà is, appropriately enough, an all-female string orchestra, playing modern instruments with bags of energy and enthusiasm. Their programme ranges from the *La Folia* trio sonata (played, rather darkly, without harpsichord) to the concertos for four violins op. 3 no. 1, with a solo concerto on a revamped 1733 Stradivarius. What is lacking (upper note trills – in some cases any trills – at cadences, ornamented repeats, etc.) is balanced by meticulous tuning and ensemble. Although I cannot say the disc will feature in my regular listening collection, there is no denying that, of its sort, this disc is a remarkable achievement. *BC*

Vivaldi *Famous Concerti for 2 trumpets, oboe, violins, cello, mandolins* Various ensembles Naxos 8.554040 £ 77' 54"
RV 122, 151, 356 (op. 3/6), 413, 447, 461, 522, 532, 537

This is an anthology culled from previous Naxos discs (and not a series of concerti all including the instrument listed, which the cover title may seem to imply). It gives the non-specialist listener a good range of concertos to sample and the playing is fine, though it seems to me a pity that Naxos has gone to modern instruments for its Vivaldi. Players like Crispian Steele-Perkins and conductors like Nicholas Kraemer, who are among the performers here, do, of course, have a good idea how of the appropriate style goes. But overall what struck me was the lack of characterisation that modern strings give compared with period ensembles; it is much easier to treat this just as background music than, say, the disc of Vivaldi from the AAM and Andrew Manze. It is a pity that the notes say nothing about any of the pieces on the disc. *CB*

The Bedroom of the King: intimate music from the court of Versailles and the salons of Paris Elysium Ensemble 68' 04"
Move MD 3184
Couperin *Les goûts-réunis VII & VIII*. Hotteterre Suite in e (1709) & No. 2 a 2 dessus (1717)

Although they've been around since 1985, the Elysium Ensemble are new to me. Their playing soon made me regret this: ensemble and tuning are excellent (some impressive cadential unisons from violin and flute), phrases are nicely shaped, the approach to *inégalité* intelligent and above all varied, and the programme is neatly constructed. This creates a *rondeau* by using smaller-scale works as the *couples* between selections from Couperin's *Concert dans le goût théâtral*. If you wish to hear these movements in their published order, the booklet contains programming instructions among its com-

prehensive remarks on the music's intended context, composer and character (only in English, though). Two technical aspects of the production disappointed me slightly. The (welcome) works without continuo are rather closely recorded and some endings are rather abruptly edited into digital silence when a second or two of genuine space would have been welcome. Nevertheless, this is strongly recommended. *David Hansell*

La Folia Susanne Ehrhardt rec, Jacqueline Ogeil org, hpscd 56' 43"
Move MD 3211
Corelli op. 5/6 & 12, Scarlatti K31 & 87, Vitali op. 4/12, Vivaldi op. 3/8 & op. 13/6 (Chédeville)

This is a well thought-out 'show' programme featuring virtuosic Italian music for recorder and harpsichord. Although much of this repertoire is already familiar to recorder players, the 'La Folia' variations by Virali are an interesting addition; Vitali was undoubtedly familiar with Corelli's work but these are surprisingly fresh and original. A Vivaldi concerto (No 8 from *L'Estro Armonico*) appears here, in an 'anonymous and undated transcription edited by Winfried Michel'.* The opening bars of this piece are clearly the inspiration for Scarlatti's Sonata K31, also included on this recording and performed with great aplomb by Jacqueline Ogeil. Overall my only concern is with the lack of variety in tone and mood, in both the harpsichord and the recorder playing. Both Ehrhardt and Ogeil are very passionate and intense musicians and technically there is little to fault, but even in the slow movements the listener is barely soothed. The close miking does nothing to alleviate this; but if plain virtuosity is what you're after, you will find it here. *Marie Ritter*

*In view of Winfried Michel's record of creative editing, we may wonder whether the source is as mythical as that of the recent 'Haydn' piano sonatas which he discovered.

MR/CB

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *The Complete Keyboard Concertos*, vol. 7 Miklós Spányi tangent piano, Concerto Armonico, Péter Szüts 70' 45"
BIS-CD-857

Concertos in A (H 437), e (H 428) & Bb (H 434)

The concertos in A and Bb were adapted for keyboard solo from originals written for *traversière* and cello respectively. To compare them with transcriptions by Father Sebastian from violin concertos is not quite fair, since Emanuel's solos had really virtuosic solo parts; the keyboard version of Brandenburg 4 is more comparable. Spányi is a really good player of early keyboards, especially on the reconstruction of a tangent piano used here and in vol. 6. His accompanists from the Hungarian Concerto Armonico serve him very well, as they are developing nicely as specialists in these richly-rewarding concertos: 21 have now appeared out of a target total of 56. Perhaps this is, as far as the music is concerned, the least sparkling disc so far; but a major point about this kind of series is the consistency of performance and presentation: both remain at the high level already established.

Stephen Daw

J. C. Bach *Flute Quartets op. 19* Camerata Köln 58' 25"
cpo 999 579-2

This superb set of quartets appears to have been composed for the exclusive use of the Earl of Abingdon, the flute-playing benefactor of the famous Bach-Abel concerts held in London during the late 1770s. Three of the pieces are for a pair of flutes, viola and cello, whilst the fourth substitutes a violin for the viola. In this recording fortepiano continuo is discreetly added, although J. C. Bach's independent quartet texture clearly anticipates the early string quartets of Haydn and Mozart; the outer movements are expansive, well-developed sonata form or rondo models, full of delightful melodic ideas and bold, inventive craftsmanship. Camerata Köln's performances are crisp, frothy and energetic, capturing the spirit perfectly. Excellent all round quality. *Marie Ritter*

Dittersdorf *Sinfonias* Failoni Orchestra, Uwe Grodd 63' 13"
Naxos 8.553974 £
Sinfonia in d (d1), F (F7), g (g1)

Though it is perhaps a terrible way to start a review, my initial response to this disc is 'Not another three Dittersdorf sinfonias!' I find no fault with the music at all and the playing is equally impressive, but there is, perhaps, no harsher reminder of the difference between his output and that of Mozart. Charming, melodic and painlessly enjoyable, there is nothing to grab ones imagination, to make one think 'This has to be Dittersdorf'. All Viennese classicists will have to buy this for their collection and it would be an unusual gift for Auntie Molly's birthday. *BC*

Haydn *Nelson Mass, The Storm, Missa brevis in F* Ruth Holton, Vanessa Williamson, James Griffett, Laurence Albert SmSTB, Haydn Society Chorus, Orchestra of the Golden Age, Denis McCaldin 59' 15"
Meridian CDE 84393

These performances are of a high standard. The sounds throughout of soloists, chorus and orchestra are punchy, and they certainly convey the magnificence of the scores. However the actual sound lacks any real atmosphere, and there is little 'spiritual' impact. The Kyrie of the Nelson Mass is impressive, but here, as on many other tracks, the over-emphasis of the soprano on certain notes creates something of a warble, which becomes rather distracting. The use of semi-authentic obbligato wind instruments, rather than organ, in the Nelson Mass is interesting (the edition is a new one by the conductor). The rarely-recorded *Storm* is another reason to recommend this disc. On the whole, though, I remain indifferent to this recording. It is neither bad nor particularly good, and I got the feeling that it could have been more enjoyable if the recorded balance had been handled with greater care. *Daniel Baker*

VARIOUS

Les voix humaines: Abel, Bach, Marais, Sainte-Colombe Jordi Savall *gamba* 78' 45"
Alia Vox AV 9803
Also Caix d'Hervelois, Forqueray, Hume, de Machy, Playford, Schenck, Telemann & anon

This is an important recording. A great player, on top of his form, giving a kind of overview of baroque music for unaccompanied viola da gamba, on a new label of which he is artistic director. Truth to tell, it's a bit of a hotch-potch, tantalising in its assembly of bits of suites and sonatas. I longed to hear the whole of Bach's C minor suite (originally for cello), all of Telemann's D Major suite (not just the *Vivace*), more of St Colombe le Fils, not to mention Marais, Caix D'Hervelois, Schenck, Abel, Hume and anon, all of whom are represented here. Movements are grouped according to style, mood and key, not according to composer. He plays the later pieces on his Barak Norman, and the earlier (only four of them) on the mid-16th-century Zanetti - a nice change in sonority here. But my reservations are minor - the playing is beautiful and all viol players should certainly buy this disc immediately. There is a Bach *Sarabande & double* arranged by Savall from one of the violin sonatas and played with glorious freedom, never losing the thread of the line, and with a tone which one swallows like wine in deep draughts. Savall has arranged some pieces so that they work without accompaniment. The eponymous piece by Marais works well, but Forqueray's *La Du Vaucel* which follows it is a bit cluttered by the additions he makes. His playing gives more sense of overall shape than I remember from his recordings of 20 years ago. Roll on the next in the series. *Robert Oliver*

Let the bright Seraphim Crispian Steele-Perkins tpt & dir, Jeni Bern S, The Handel Players 68' 32" + video track
Carlton 30366 01182 £C
Handel: *Desterò dall'empia dite* (Amadigi), *Let the bright Seraphim* (Samson), *Tu del ciel* (Il Trionfo); Purcell: *Genius of England* (Z 578/7), *Hark the ech'ing air* (Z629/48), *Sound the trumpet* (Z342/6), *Trumpet tunes*; A. Scarlatti *Su le sponde del Tebro*

In the rush of getting the October issue together I left out a review that I had drafted in my head in the train on the way to a reception celebrating it and other forthcoming issues on the Carlton label but not written down. Its omission is exceedingly ungenerous to Carlton, who had put together a concert at Leighton House (with real, live music, not just tracks from the CDs) giving a foretaste of their new releases. Not all the music was as convincing as the food and wine. Church music by Malcolm Williamson sounded a bit like debris from John Rutter's waste-bin, a Moonlight Sonata was unsuitable and heavy, and an ensemble of four guitars played tedious arrangements. But piano music by 14-year-old Korngold was most impressive and Benjamin Zander's introduction to his recordings was, although entirely about the music, a marvellously convincing sales-pitch: I just wanted to go and listen to them. His comments on the end of the last

movement of Shostakovich's fifth symphony show the difficulties of getting tempo even with a work recorded often while the composer was still living. I've always assumed that it was supposed to be tongue-in-cheek: if the authorities insist on having a popular work with a positive end, here you are. But normally it is played far faster than the metronome mark. Zander plays it at the prescribed tempo to produce an over-solid effect which he believes shows the composer illustrating the compulsive, heavy applause of a state-organised crowd. Whatever the meaning, he reported that a conductor once wrote to the composer asking if the metronome mark was correct: he received an unsigned postcard in reply with the single word in the composer's hand: 'correct'.

Turning to the point of this meandering, the 'early' item in the concert was Crispian Steele-Perkins & Jeni Bern introducing pieces from their CD of music for trumpet and soprano. Crispian is a marvellous entertainer, and some of that quality comes through on the disc. He is quite right about the potential compatibility of the natural trumpet and soprano. There is a problem, though, in that few singers can control vocal vibrato enough to make the maximum effect: one wants to hear the voice matching it in purity. Jeni Bern can't quite manage that, though she makes a good shot at it. The programme is attractive, and has particular interest for another feature, Crispian's use of a late-18th century trumpet with tuning slide. This is, of course, anachronistic for the music he plays, but it is interesting to hear it in operation. Curiously, in 'Let the bright seraphim', the second notes of some semiquaver pairs seem to my imperfect ears to be more out of tune than they would play naturally. He demonstrates playing with a mute, having found contemporary evidence to justify it. But changing mid-piece can only be done on a recording. An extra feature of the disc is the inclusion of a video demonstration by Crispian which you can see on your computer - fairly short, since there wasn't much spare capacity on the disc. But irrespective of gimmicks, an enjoyable disc anyway. *CB*

Magical lute 59' 18"
Auvidis *Tempo A* 6259

This is another issue to commemorate the Cité de la Musique and the extraordinary lute collection of the Musée de la Musique in Paris. It celebrates the lute in its generic sense, including tracks featuring various types of oud and the pipa in addition to various Western lutes. The resulting mélange is fascinating: here are lutes with four courses and fourteen, fretted and unfretted, played with fingers or plectrum, featured in ensembles ranging from pipa and Chinese flute to what sounds like a rave in a souk. I confess that I was unable to place several of the ensembles in the appropriate country: some more information in the minimalist booklet would have been welcome. However, the tracks are all well played and buzz with *joie de vivre*. Thankfully, the Western lute tracks have been chosen with care, and include Hopkinson Smith playing de Visée,

Gaultier, Gallot, Kapsberger and Bach, Paul O'Dette playing Dowland, and Eugène Ferré's lute quartet playing Vallet - but the Western lutes have a hard time competing with the vitality and virtuosity of many of the Eastern brothers. Don't be put off by the hideous 1970s-style mauve and orange cover, and don't try to hear the whole disc in one sitting unless you want to assault your pitch sense and experience a particularly surreal form of culture shock. This disc is a real eye- [or ear]-opener to those of us who are unfamiliar with living, Eastern lute traditions and should be required listening for all interested in the lute. *Lynda Sayce*

Slow, slow - slow, slow

We have not requested for review a disc called *Vivaldi Adagios*. It is a sign of the same perversion as the two hours of slow music which Classic FM foists on its listeners every evening. I don't understand why, when every composer from the period from which the repertoire is chosen sandwiched each slow movement between quick ones, modern marketing-men assume that they know better. Slow movements are easier not to listen to, so make better background music? There should be nothing in the music that should draw attention to itself. So only by mistake is the slow movement of Haydn's *Surprise* symphony likely to appear on such discs and programmes: it might make a driver hit the car in front! I suppose that, if a critic is to evaluate it in accordance with its function, he should criticise it according to the degree to which there are any features that might attract the listeners interest. *CB*

RECYCLED RECORDINGS

Although these Oxbridge recordings are not quite in the style that most of our readers would now favour, these reissues contain many performances of interest and value, which some may find nostalgic. All items comprise two discs for the price of one.

Double Deccas

458 370-2 J. S. Bach & C. P. E. Bach *Magnificats*; A. Scarlatti *Messa di Santa Cecilia*, Choirs of Kings College & St John's College, Cambridge

458 373-2 Haydn *Stabat Mater*, *Salve Regina* in g, *Theresienmesse* London Chamber Choir, Laszlo Heltay; St. John's College Choir, ASMF, George Guest

458 376-2 Haydn 5 *Masses* Choir of Christ Church Oxford, AAM, Simon Preston; St John's Cambridge, ASMF, George Guest

458 379-2 Mozart *Vespers & Litanies* K 339, 321, 195, 243 St John's College, The Wren Orchestra; Schola Cantorum Oxford, ASMF

458 386-2 Palestrina 5 *Masses* Choirs of King's and St John's, Cambridge; Carmelite Priory, London, John McCarthy

Philips Classics Duo

426 306-2 Corelli op. 5 Arthur Grumieux, Riccardo Castagnone

462 293 2 Telemann *St Mark Passion*, *Magnificats* in C & G Kurt Redel

LONDON MUSIC

continued from page 9.

It is only occasionally that a concert transcends all human thought and aims directly for the heart. One such was the lunchtime concert on 22 September at the Bishopsgate Hall by the new group, Alba, with Vivien Ellis (voice) and Giles Lewin (fiddle), both known through their Dufay Collective concerts and CDs. With music ranging from 13th century France to some snazzy Irish fiddle-jigs, the focus was on the more earthy folk music contemporary with the more aristocratic troubadour repertoire. The link between the continuing traditions of much medieval music with the folk tradition of more recent times was made clear, particularly in the astonishing version of the King Orfeo story sung in the ancient language of the Shetlands, where Orfeo eschews his more usual harp in favour of a bagpipe. Appropriately, several of the pieces were in the form of 'alba's, or dawn songs, where the secret tryst is curtailed by approaching dawn. All thoughts of the noisy air conditioning and distant car alarms were soon expelled by the most beautiful solo singing imaginable. Vivien Ellis sings from the heart and to the heart. Her voice has more than a resonance of the folk tradition and is projected with a harmonic edge capable of real emotion. She was sensitively supported by the fiddle/vielle playing of Giles Lewin. This was music at its simplest and most moving.



Is there a castrato in the house?

Early Music Review

Our prices have been unchanged since we began in June 1994. That issue contained 16 pages. Our costings were for a magazine that would vary between 12 and 16 pages. In our first year, there was only one other issue of 16 pages: six had 20 pages and two had 24. Since then we have expanded. Our last three issues have each had 28 pages, together with a concert diaries of 20, 12 & 12 pages. The June issue had 24 pages + 20 pages of diary + 12 pages of Annual Byrd Newsletter (which has no separate funding), a total of 56 pages. (We make no mention of quality.) There have also been post increases which we have absorbed.

We therefore feel that a substantial price rise is in order. So the subscription price will increase from February 1999 as follows:

UK £15 per year

Europe airmail and rest of world surface mail: £20

Rest of world airmail: £30

\$US rate: \$48 (air), \$32 (surface). French francs: 190

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FAMOUS FOR AN HOUR

I happened to switch on Radio 4 (or rather, starting the car switched it on automatically) a couple of days before this went to press and nearly switched off in disgust at a comic treatment of the repetition of words in *Messiah*. (All sorts of vocal music repeat words: the first pop song that came to mind, ||: *She loves me, yeah, yeah, yeah* :|| begins with repetition at two levels. Why single out classical music?) But then there was a change to a bit of *Carmina burana* (Orff), leading to the appearance of one of our more enthusiastic subscribers, whose able tenor voice is commended on the previous page. The noble baritone who emerged from the arena to replace a collapsed Thomas Allen at a Prom performance of the Orff in the 1970s has now gone up in the world to become a tenor. He conducts his own choir, buys music from us, and sings with Psalmody. He showed on the programme that he had a bit of a falsetto as well, though we'll only review it if he moves to an earlier opera than *Carmen*, in which the use of a male soprano is not authentic.

CB

We were flattered that someone who burgled the home of one of our Spanish customers was sufficiently interested in early music to take, among other things, a King's Music catalogue. I suppose we need to make sure we ask for money in advance if we get orders from Spain from people we don't know.

Letters

Dear Clifford,

My friend Michele Kohler [EMR 44, p.28] dislikes (as I do) obtrusive vibrato (precise observation, by the way, shows that string players always show some 'subliminal' vibrato, even when striving to avoid it). But 'lazy listening' is not to blame. Those professional string quartets are much more attentive and acute listeners than most of us. Clearly they like their vibrato, and so of course do many of their listeners. And why should they not?

There are no objective standards in such matters. Naive people sometimes assure me that 'the human ear has not changed', as if 'the ear's' aesthetic judgments were calibrated at the Creation for all time in the Celestial Standards Laboratory. It is the individual brain, referring to all its clutter of accumulated social and personal experience and attitudes and preconceived ideas, which forms an aesthetic judgment. Often enough it simply does not notice something unless it is specifically looking out for it. We spill much ink nowadays about pitch and temperament; neither is mentioned by Arnold Dolmetsch in his pioneering book on interpretation.

Michele might reply that, historically, vibrato is 'wrong'. But how do we know what degree of vibrato was acceptable in the past? We have to rely wholly on what people wrote. Even this written evidence is not entirely consistent; and the recent work of Robert Philip comparing recorded performances with contemporary statements and markings, shows that such written evidence is untrustworthy.

Christopher Hogwood was asked in 1994 '...might not current performing methods be merely our contemporary style, rather than the faithful recreations we imagine them to be?' 'Yes', he replied, 'all these things we feel instinctive about now may turn out to be period mannerisms of our own'. What Michele, or you, or I, or any of our contemporaries may happen to like is not safe evidence of historic performance practice. Let us play as we like, and be tolerant of those who have different likings.

John Catch

Last month's editorial was intended to remind us that a complete absence of vibrato is not necessarily a virtue; it is, indeed, far less a matter of controversy now than twenty years ago. Some of the other authenticities of the early days of the AAM can be seen as mannerisms of the 1970s. There is, of course, no accounting for taste; but performance practice is not just a matter of taste. There are some things we know, and other things that are less certain but are more plausible than following modern conventions. We have a right to expect performers to be curious to establish what their options are. To take an example from one of this month's CDs, even if we admit the doubtful hypothesis that Carissimi's recitative needs a string accompaniment, the likelihood of a body of strings in the 1650s sounding like that which Michel Corboz produces on his Carissimi CD is extremely remote; such a performance needs to be identified as 20th-century as clearly as Respighi's Ancient Airs and Dances. I can understand composers wanting to present music of the past in a modern style (e.g. Webern's version of Bach's six-part Ricercar, Maxwell Davies's Purcell Foxtrots or Martland's arrangement of Marais' Sonnerie de S^{ta} Genevieve du Mont – though he has the cheek to pass Re-mix off as his own piece); but what is the point of a half-hearted modernisation of old music merely by playing it in a style from a more recent past? Robert Philip and others have shown that the constant vibrato of modern string players is quite a recent innovation. If you learn a piece from an edition with a wrong note, you may still like that note even when you are told what is correct; but you shouldn't foist your wrong note on a public coming to hear that piece of music. Blatantly inappropriate vibrato is far more pervasive than the effect of a wrong note. It is, however, odd that many composers lived through the 20th-century change in style and were not worried about it!

CB

Brian Robins is researching provincial 18th-century catch clubs for a planned study on the subject. He would be grateful to any reader who might have local (or other) information on the existence and activities of the many clubs that proliferated in the latter part of the century. He can be contacted at: 7 Willingdon Way, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 0NJ, or via e-mail: BrianRob13@aol.com.

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