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I was interested by a recent account in the *Sunday Times* colour supplement of a journey up California Route 1, which goes spectacularly along the Pacific coast from LA to San Francisco, one of the world's great drives. I must confess that I did not think of pop culture of the 1960s when we traversed it, but that brilliant and infuriating TV and food reviewer A. A. Gill was making a nostalgic trip, and at Santa Barbara was moved to tears by an encounter with Roger McGuinn (from The Best of Byrds [no: I haven't omitted an apostrophe and Consort Songs]) singing a song of the period. The article chimed with the first draft of this editorial, in which I wondered if other listeners also find that performances of music they have loved from their youth are overshadowed by images of those distant performances – not by clear recollections that can be checked by replaying a disc, but rather by impressions of the effect of the music, which overpower any possibility of remembering what the performance itself was actually like and which provide an unassailable comparison for subsequent hearings.

Apart from our church choir, my first experience of small-choir singing was in a school madrigal group started by the assistant music master (I haven't seen him since 1961, but if anyone knows Alan Morgan, thank him for me.) The piece that has stuck in my mind is Dowland's *Sleep you no more, sad fountains*. The way the melody floats over the polyphony of the closing section and the inconclusive fading into sleep at the end moved me deeply. There are recordings of it on two discs which I have reviewed below (p. 27 & 32), and it begins John Potter's ECM Dowland fantasy (left aside till next month); but none of these match my imagined version.

A decade later, I used to play over and over again an off-air tape I made of Handel's *Saul* as conducted by Charles Mackerras. I still have the tapes; but I won't play them again. My concept of how to sing and play Handel's oratorios has changed enormously since than, as no doubt has Sir Charles's.* In 1999, I listened very differently from the way I did in 1969, and differently from the way anyone listened in 1739. Gill's experience was undermined by the singer inviting the audience to his web-site: the spell was broken. I hope that my nostalgia will be broken more positively: by performances so superlative that they impose a new nostalgia to last into my old age. *CB*

* I didn't hear his recent broadcast of *Saul* but I look forward to his *Alcina*, from our edition, at the London Coliseum next month.

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

MOTETS

Hearing the Motet: Essays on the Motet of the Middle Ages and Renaissance edited by Dolores Pesce. Oxford University Press, 1997 [pb 1998]. xii + 380pp, £14.99 ISBN 0 19 512905 9

We missed this on its first publication, so I am glad to have caught it on its paperback issue. It derives from a 1994 conference under the same misleading title. A few contributions concentrate on how a motet could have been heard, most notably the single contribution that is not new: Kerman's classic 1963 article on Byrd's *Emendemus in melius*. Most concentrate, I suppose appropriately, on the words (*motet* is, of course, a diminutive of *mot*). But hearing the words of motets clearly enough to be able to follow the complete text is an unlikely eventuality in most acoustics: perhaps the conference could have conducted some experiments. Unless you have seen the words, whether as a singer or by study, or know them from another context (e.g. the liturgy) the words are usually heard as a series of key words, not grammatical or logical wholes. If I knew anyone who could listen to a series of motets and detect the origin of the composers by the use from which their *cantus firmi* were taken, I would assume that he was a freak (and would probably have been one in the 14th century) and that he was concentrating on a trivial aspect of the music (like someone who tells you the make of the helicopter when you are watching an exciting rescue). I'm not saying that such study is pedantic, merely that it is unlikely to have much to do with hearing.

There is an irony in the emphasis on the words, which is pointed by the touching introduction to Joshua Rifkin's contribution (which *is* about how the attentive listener might hear a Willaert motet). Modern scholars try to give the impression that they work in their ivory towers, interacting with each other only in the ways indicated by their footnotes (here regrettably not at the foot of the page: is this a sign of what we are to expect from the emigration of Oxford music books? This is from OUP New York, while the UK-originated book by Zon reviewed below has them in their proper place.) Yet these same impersonal scholars spend enormous efforts trying to disentangle biographical information from the music and texts. Perhaps students should be doing doctorates on the biographies and interrelationships of scholars so that the data are available when musicology becomes so incestuous that the study of its practitioners is significant. Do scholars really believe that their arguments are as impersonal and logical as they pretend? (*EMR* deliberately tries to be a little more personal: a reviewer's taste, whatever its genetic determination, must be influenced by teachers, colleagues, friends and experience.)

Back to the book. Like the texts of the motets themselves, few of these papers would have been adequately communicated if just heard. They need studying, just as they are mainly concerned in the study, not the hearing of the motet. They are worth the reader making the effort. A common theme is the establishment of a context for the texts, which can pinpoint their meaning. Some people have been sceptical of the imputation of recusant implications to Byrd's motet texts, but Craig Monson shows how more of them than have previously been realised must have had an emotional resonance to English catholics by their use of the the reported last words of martyrs, and he links Byrd specifically to the Jesuits. David Crook squashes a vast amount of information into a tiny space on how Lassus's harmonic language works. Jennifer Bloxham undermines her argument that Obrecht's *Factor orbis* is a sermon by beginning with a false analogy. I don't find any significant similarity between the facsimile of the music and a page of the *Glossa ordinaria*: the latter uses different sizes, while Obrecht's music does not, and some argument is needed to show that the particular position of the cantus firmus on this page is significant. Other composers considered are Palestrina, Josquin, Busnois and Dufay. Two papers relate to *Fauvel* and two to the 13th century. A fine collection of scholarly essays: I'd welcome a further collection on performing the motet – or, for that matter, hearing it.

ITALIAN MADRIGALS ENGLISHED

Thomas Watson *Italian Madrigals Englished (1590)* transcribed and edited by Albert Chatterley (*Musica britannica lxxiv)*. Stainer & Bell, 1999. xliii + 127pp, £72.50. ISBN 0 85249 850 0

The title is familiar enough, but somehow *Musica transalpina* is mentioned more often and has had the benefit of being available in facsimile for thirty years. That collection is, of course, important, but Watson's anthology of 28 madrigals is perhaps more interesting. The concentration on Marenzio, (23 pieces), is a sign that he was aware of the most significant madrigalist of the time. Byrd contributed two settings of *This sweet and merry month of May*, and there is one piece each by Conversi (*Sola soletta,* later to become one of Morley's *Consort Lessons*), Nanino and Striggio. The crucial phrase on the title page is 'not to the sense of the originall dittie, but after the affectation of the Noate'. Instead of feeling obliged to produce a literal translation, Watson concentrates on writing words that suit the sound and feeling of the music. Some texts relate little to the original: 'Now twinkling stars do smile and dance and play them' (note the odd pronoun, a familiar quirk of English madrigal verse) is not as sexy as 'Sonar le labra e vi restaro i segni'.

But Watson is not always as free as his title implies. *Zefiro torna* is close enough to the first half of Petrarch's sonnet; he gets the stress wrong at the end of the first line ('out their bowers' for 'rimena'), but otherwise it works very well.

The edition is a fine piece of work from both editor and printer. The introduction succinctly outlines the importance of the publication and quotes what is known of Watson's life. The source is described fully and the Latin dedicatory poems are reproduced in facsimile and translated. The score is very clear to read, compact enough for most except the six-voice pieces to fit on three or four pages; performers, though, may find the print a bit small and insubstantial. English and the original Italian (not printed by Watson) are underlaid, with the minor rhythmic differences required in the music neatly shown. The English orthography is modernised for the underlaid version, but the original version is printed at the end of each madrigal, with a prose translation of the Italian alongside; it would have been nice had the Italian been set out to match the lines of the English where they correspond. There is a brief but adequate critical commentary. My one grouse is the MB house-style of modern time signatures: 𝔠 of the English print (changed from 𝔠 in the Italian sources) appears as 2/2 or 4/4 according to the editor's feel for the music – hardly a scholarly practice. Furthermore, it should not be necessary to turn to the commentary to find out what e.g. the two consecutive bars of 6/4 and 3/2 represent in No. 14. (Since the publisher is prepared to supply photocopies of individual items, performers may have to deal with the music without the commentary which prints the original sign). In fact, both signatures represent 3. Some of the MB volumes I have had for many years are now falling apart, so I certainly do not begrudge the extra few pounds that the binding costs, though the lettering on the spine now goes in the opposite direction.

VERY EASY LUTE PIECES

58 Very Easy Pieces for Renaissance Lute chosen from English, French and Italian sources by John H. Robinson and Christopher Goodwin, edited by Jeanne Fisher and Christopher Goodwin with fingerings supplied by Lynda Sayce. The Lute Society, 1999. vii + 35pp, £6.00 (members £4.00) ISBN 0 905655 22 2

Easy pieces tend to be short, so this isn't a long book, with items ranging from a single line to a page and a half. All are in tablature only: if guitarists want to use it they will have to retune and learn tablature – which is no bad thing. The editors have arranged the pieces in terms of the difficulty of left-hand technique, progressing gently into B flat chord shapes and avoiding barrés. I suppose this is the equivalent to the anthologies that the Associated Board produce of easy flute music. The player, as well as improving his technique, will also come through his studies with a feel for renaissance harmony and style. The book is dedicated to the memory of Monica Bishop and concludes with *A Toy for Monica Bishop* by Christopher Goodwin, a nice gesture.

DTO BIBER

Heinrich Ignaz Franz Biber *Instrumentalwerke handschriftlicher Überlieferung* veröffentlicht von Jiri Sehnal (*Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich,* 151). Graz: Akademische Druck, 1997. (about £55)

I bought a copy of this some months ago and have been intended to mention it, but it keeps on getting squashed out by items actually sent for review. Most of the contents have been available for some time in separate editions, but it is nice to have authoritative scores available. Title pieces include *Die pauern Kirchfart, S.Polycarp, Pro Tabula* and *Battalia.* There are also a sonata a6 for trumpet and strings, *balletti* a6 for two trumpets and strings, the sonata a7 for six trumpets and timps, *balletti* for strings a6, and a *Ciacona* of uncertain authorship for violin and bc. There are no parts, so performers will still need to use the old editions (I must finish our *Battalia*), but this will be useful for checking suspicious features in them, and it is nice to have a collected volume.

BAROQUE WIND

Paul Carroll *Baroque Woodwind Instruments: A guide to their history, repertoire and basic technique.* Ashgate, 1999. x + 181pp, £37.50. ISBN 1 85928 326 8

A consequence of our demand for perfection is that musicians have become specialised in a way that they were not when early music was modern, when composers were expected to play keyboard and strings, and wind players mastered a variety of instruments. Now there may be rare exceptions, but it is still quite common for orchestral managers to waste money on specialist recorder players for Handel operas and flutes for classical programmes, when both instruments would have originally been played by oboists. I have always admired Paul Carroll for keeping his options open, and he is the ideal person to write a book aimed at potential players of all baroque woodwind instruments: recorder, flute, oboe and bassoon. Each chapter has the same outline, though there is more information about buying instruments in the first chapter (on the bassoon). First comes a history of the instrument, then repertoire, then instructions on playing. There are facsimile fingering charts as well as the author's own. The substance seems sound (though I don't have the author's wide experience of the instruments). The sections on repertoire, which I am more able to evaluate, are sensible, apart from perhaps too much emphasis on the solo music. If I took up a bassoon, it would be to play continuo parts rather than Vivaldi concertos. Specific editions are not quoted, but the introductory chapter discusses editions and facsimiles in general terms and an appendix briefly describes how to prepare a performing edition from original sources. We are past the pioneering stage, and there is no point now in embarking on a new instrument without benefit of teachers; but that does not undermine the usefulness of this book for the teenager or the mature student looking for an instrument to take up, and it is very clearly written.

COLLECTED TALBOT

Michael Talbot *Venetian Music in the Age of Vivaldi.* Ashgate *Variorum*, 1999. xiv + 364 pp, £55.00

Normally with this series of reprinted articles I tot up how large a proportion of them are sitting on my shelves in their original form. Here the figure is astonishing low, not because I have avoided scholarly work on Vivaldi, but because the author has made a point of including writings originally published in places other than the most ubiquitous journals. So there is just one each from JAMS, M&L, PRMA and Acta, but six from a variety of conference proceedings and half a dozen from other sources. The volume begins with two general items, on the musical academies and on tenors and basses at the *Ospedali* (the former, he suggests, definitely sung at the written pitch by women, but with some octave flexibility for the female basses). There are nine contributions on Vivaldi, two on Albinoni, one on a cantata by Benedetto Marcello and two on Vinacesi, on whom Talbot wrote a model, if little-appreciated, book. He is aware of the relationship between his work and the non-musicological musical world. 'At the risk of sounding obvious and sententious', he writes in his introduction, 'I... also feel quite strongly that research into, and writing about, music have achieved their highest aim if they increase the enjoyment and fulfilment that come from playing and listening to it.' Regrettably, this seems not always to be obvious to his colleagues.

BECKFORD

William Beckford [*Complete works*] edited by Maxwell Steer. Beckford Edition, 1998. 5 vols, £170 (comb bound), £195 (perfect bound), £240 (bound in buckram).
Available from 15 Duck St, Tisbury, Wilts SP3 6LJ tel +44 1747 870070, fax ... 871451, e-mail mms@enterprise.net

Beckford (1760-1842) is a familiar enough name thanks to his significance in the gothic revival as author of *Vathek* and creator of Fonthill. His music, however, is less well known – no entry in *New Grove*, though I suppose that there is just time to squeeze him into *Newer Grove*, due in a year's time. Maxwell Steer supplies a fine introduction, which is included in each volume if you buy them separately. The classical style is probably the easiest, until the post-modern, for a little-trained enthusiast to master its technicalities. Although Mozart's supposed visit to Fonthill in 1764-5 and the even younger Beckford's supposed lessons from him have long been debunked (*Music and Letters* 47, 1966, pp. 110-115), he took music seriously at some periods of his life, and his compositions are competent, sometimes more than that: the editor has shown that much here is worth reviving. The most substantial piece is his *Arcadian Pastoral*, written in 1782 to words by Lady Craven, which was per-formed, with a cast formed chiefly by children. The spoken text does not survive, but the substantial music – over 200 pages of score in this edition – certainly shows promise. But there is nothing else of this scale: Beckford didn't progress from it. This pastoral occupies the second and largest volume. The first is mostly devoted to an overture *Phaeton* (published in Paris in the 1780s) plus a march and a rondo for wind octet, vol. 3 has a few pieces for voices and instruments, vol. 4 songs with continuo and vol. 5 a few short keyboard pieces. Vol. 6, not yet published, will contain *Modinhas Brasilieras* (what are they?) It was certainly worth assembling the music, and it is reassuring to know that the job has been done comprehensively. I like the way that every otherwise-blank page is filled with an apposite illustration. Individual items are available separately, with the necessary perfor-mance material. I have doubts about the economics. The editor rightly wants to get some income from the time he has invested in the project, but only a very few libraries will pay the prices listed (£12, for instance, for the 16 pages of piano pieces in vol. 5), even though the system of printing two pages on a landscape A4 sheet means that your are getting more music than the volume would seem to contain. I hope for the editor's sake that I am wrong, since his work has drawn attention to another talent of a significant, if odd, contributor to our cultural history.

ENGLISH CHANT REVIVAL

Bennett Zon *The English Plainchant Revival* Oxford UP, 1999. xxi + 410 pp, £55.00. ISBN 19 816595 1

One reason for reading at least the first of the three sections into which this book is divided is to see whether the man who produced one of world's best-known tunes (sung even by those who never sing carols to 'Why are we waiting') wrote anything else worth reviving. The previously-scorned non-metropolitan Anglican and dissenting music of the period has recently been found worthy of discovery: should we now be organising courses to sing Catholic music of the 18th century? The answer is not given at all directly here (the book is non-judgmental), but the implication seems to be no. Like the Anglicans a century later, as described in the third section, catholics seeking suitable music during the 18th century, when restrictions imposed on their public services gradually lapsed, seem to have been convinced that plainsong was the sort of music that ought to be sung, and that it should be revived. But they knew too little history and were beset by too many prejudices to have much success. This is, indeed, a salutary book to read for those of us concerned with the revival of early music. Will our assumptions, a century hence, look as naive as those revealed, with extensive quotations, here? (I don't mean specifically our assumptions about chant, but our reasons for advocating historical performance practice and our ways of doing so.) It is obvious from the extensive quotations that the writers on chant in the 18th an 19th centuries were guided almost entirely by ideals and prejudices and did not think them through – a bit like opera directors who conceive a vague parallel between an aspect of the original plot and modern politics and seize on that, even if it is irrelevant to the rest of the work. For instance, before trying to 'revive' congregational chant, did they research whether the practice had ever existed outside

monastic and collegiate communities? The catholics had more excuse than the Anglicans a century later, in that the alternative traditions available to the other denominations were inappropriate for part of the Roman church. I suspect that the main motiviation for the Church of England was to find a way of achieving the congregational involvement that was normal among nonconformists without using their method, the hymn, or the Anglican church's own despised metrical psalm. In fact, the success of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* solved the problem. Zon does not speculate on this, but this reader at least could not help doing so.

The least familiar section, to me at least, is the first, which includes a detailed study of the Catholic sources, focusing particularly on Wade, the major copyist of the sources available. This is heavy going, and I wondered whether the balance was right: I wanted either less detail or a more thorough bibliographical presentation of the sources. I wondered whether it had been cut at the publisher's behest, as Jonathan Wainright's study of 17th-century MSS linked with Hatton would have been had his book not eventually found its way to Ashgate. It would have been nice to have had a few facsimiles: libraries should preserve the wrapper with its reproduction of a page of a Wade MS.

This is useful for linking Catholic and Anglican chant apologetics and experiments. Our regular readers will wonder about Zon's literary style. Thankfully I can report that the book is free of the traits to which I drew attention in *EMR* 46 p. 13 and 49 pp. 25-6. It isn't exactly a lively read, but there is no way that a book on this subject could be written thus: it would be as out-of-place as a Mozart mass in a Pugin church (cf. p. 246). I found only one literary oddity: 'Samuel Wesley, whose brother Charles was the nephew of John Wesley...' (p. 182). Wasn't Samuel also the nephew of John Wesley, or is the family history more complicated than the normal genealogical table can show?

MARTINES MISERERE

Marianna Martines *Miserere* edited by Jean Macrae Turner. Edinburgh Music Imprint, 1998. ix + 32pp. ISMN M 9002-23 0 7

We have included reviews of editions of several church pieces by Marianna Martines over the last few years. This one comes from the University of Edinburgh music faculty; in these days when academics can do their own typesetting, I hope more universities will encourage the circulation of editions by their staff and students thus. This setting of the famous text is for SATB and figured bass, labelled continuo in the modern score but originally more specifically *organo*: why generalise it and unnecessarily hint the need to add a cello and/or double bass. The editorial information is thorough, with one exception. We are used to settings of the *Miserere* without a doxology: this has one. A note on the liturgical reason for the two types of setting would have been useful. The Authorised Version is not usually close enough to the Vulgate to act as a translation; in fact, the prayer book is usually closer in the Psalms, and also tends to be more familiar to singers. In verse 7, for instance, BCP is preferable on both counts. There are certainly settings of the text that come more to grips with the emotional text, but this is worth singing and provides a useful choral piece from a period where works without orchestra are difficult to find.

VIOL SOCIETY

John Catch *The Viola da Gamba Society: A Brief History 1948-1998* The Author (Wreyland, Broombarn Lane, Great Missenden, HP16 9JD). 28pp.

This is not an official history. John has been a member for most of the Society's existence, but has not been involved in its running. I joined about thirty years ago, and was on the committee for a decade or so. John's report generally squares with my recollections, apart from his omission of the deliberate shaking off of some of the older generation in the 1970s: either he was being tactful or it really was a velvet revolution. When I joined (probably in 1968), meetings still consisted of the massed playing of viol consorts by all who turned up: an orchestra of perhaps 20 or 30. It is possible that something might have been learnt had they been properly directed. But Natalie Dolmetsch tried to lead while playing, consequently with her back to most of the participants, when clear, firm and didactic direction would have been the only justification for the exercise. Her voice was too quiet to impart any audible wisdom to the assembled crowd. But we still have orchestras and choirs performing other sorts of early baroque music one-to-a-part!

John is right to note that the society has been dominated by the amateur consort player. Its positive side is the thorough musicological work on the cataloguing of the repertoire, mostly conducted by Gordon Dodd and presented so clearly in his thematic index. (I like, incidentally, the aside that when Gordon took his first naval command, he not only took his viol with him, but played jazz over the intercom on a self-built clavichord.) The negative is an acceptance of low standards and a lack of ambition to improve. (This is changing, I suspect, chiefly from the teaching of Aison Crum, who is the most popular coach for viol courses.) The society has always had a proper regard for scholarship. Its editions have been impeccable in their concern for accuracy with minimal modernisation. It has insisted on publishing its journal, despite opposition from those who consider that its main function is to attend more immediately to the needs of players. Indeed, one reason why many players do not join is reluctance to pay a subscription which is mostly absorbed in printing a journal they don't read. This is a short-sighted attitude: anyone involved in early music is dependent on musicological and organological research, as the changes in practice over the last fifty years make clear. John rides a few of his hobby-horses: why not? He deserves the licence as a reward for writing an account that is entertaining and nostalgic for members and officers of the Society but also of more general interest for touching, if lightly, on the musical preoccupations of the period.

VESPERS AGAIN

Clifford Bartlett

Claudio Monteverdi *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (Vespers) *1610: Critical Appendix. Bassus Generalis, Critical Notes* edited by Jeffrey Kurtzman Oxford UP, 1999. 65pp, £30.00 approx. ISBN 0 19 337586 7 [Available from OUP Hire Dept.]

Monteverdi *Vespers* Apollo's Fire, Jeannette Sorrell 90' 45" Eclectra ECCD-2038 (2 CDs)

This is the second of the three parts of Jeffrey Kurtzman's new edition. 43 pages are devoted to an edition of the 1610 continuo part. Most other editions (mine included) omit the upper staves which are included in some sections of the original *Bassus Generalis*; the selected parts provided to assist the 17th-century organist or director are redundant and just waste space in a modern full score, especially if the edition includes a keyboard realisation as well. (They are, however, in Malipiero's collected works score.) With the recent acceptance that we should take more seriously the advice that organists should double the parts, not try to avoid doing so, the specific inclusion of Monteverdi's *partitura* becomes of greater importance. In fact, I included it in the Sonata, and took great delight in doubling the violin duet recently: Apollo's fiery organist might have held the violins together had he done so there.

Another reason for interest in the *partitura* (to use the contemporary term) is its barring. The partbooks, as one expects, are unbarred. But barlines are included in the *Bassus generalis*, even when it has only one stave. Kurtzman's edition follows mine and disagrees with all others (including the 1610 BG part) by having two minims in a bar, not four. I hope his justification adds arguments to mine. King's Music has produced an alternative version (an edition by Paul McCreesh) with the whole score following the BG barring. I expected one reason for the separate editing of the BG part would be to show this; but it does not, and the information is not given precisely (though the commentary mentions it in general terms).

So this version falls between two stools. It reproduces one aspect of the original part, but (as well as the expected modernisation of clefs) it modernises barring, but does not add what would make it useful for a modern performer: bass figures. Organists and lutenists are now much better at reading unfigured basses than they were ten years ago, when I produced my figured part – and Monteverdi's unfigured basses are easier to read than most, since his harmonic thought is so clear. But I doubt whether any player can use Kurtzman's BG as it stands. In the larger-scale movements, indication of the chords is necessary, however good one's harmonic expectation. *Tecum principium in die virtutis* is A minor, *Dominus a dextris* is A major (in our editions, anyway), even though both are in identical contexts: the difference is not predictable from the bass part. I can understand the desire to produce a continuo part that represents the original BG, or to offer one that is useful for the player: this is neither. It is, however, neatly set out, and I can imagine the conscientious lutenist – keyboard players normally prefer the full score – figuring a copy in the way that is most meaningful to him and taking it from performance to performance. But it only has *Lauda* & the Magnificats at high pitch, and I would guess that those who play from bass are more likely to be involved in transposed performances.

A positive feature of the volume is a more thorough critical commentary than that given in the full score –19 pages rather than seven – or in any other edition. Some comments are otiose: need we be told that the E chord in bar 74 of *Dixit Dominus* is major because the same passage is explicitly so nine bars later, or that there are parallel octaves in bar 112? In bar 241, I don't see how in this style the first C could not be sharp: although Kurtzman marks it as editorial, his note casts doubt on it, even though the 1615 printer sensibly moved the superfluous sharp from the following B. But I won't bore the reader with a detailed progress through the commentary: it is better that it is too thorough than skimpy, especially since the important points are singled out in the main volume. At least it saves lugging the facsimiles around to rehearsal (and incidentally, who has borrowed my two copies?)

I've been involved in a couple of performances recently: the one directed by Peter Holman which I mentioned in passing last month and a weekend course with Philip Thorby. (I'll abbreviate these names and Jeannette Sorrell to initials.) Between the two I have listened to this new recording, presumably from our edition (at least, I'm credited with the translations and the conductor's picture shows a score which looks like our B4 format). This uses a choir of 19, from whom the soloists are drawn, except for John Buffett, a treble who is impressive in the Sonata. The PH performance used about half a dozen less.[1] In principle, that was fine, but it did cause a strain on the poor first tenor: Patrick McCarthy made a marvellous, full-blooded Italian sound at the first rehearsal (the best I've heard him), but by the time the performance came, his voice was tired. No such problems on the disc. But there is the occasional over-singing. *Clamabant* may literally mean *were shouting*, but the Seraphim took the text as a performing instruction and the tenors in the *Gloria* of the Magnificat (with their top Gs) yelled as they used to 30 years ago, reminding me of the poem 'Shouting aloud to heaven'.

[1] Michael Procter recently gave a really minimal performance, with only eight singers, using sackbuts on the cantus firmus parts of *Nisi Dominus*.

I reacted strongly against the playing of the cantus firmus in *Dixit Dominus* by a sackbut. The Vespers is explicitly written *sopra canti firmi*. Furthermore, the publication is dedicated to the Pope. While for Bach and Mozart a century or so later, alluding to the chant by instruments was fine, surely in this context it is the chant above all that must present the words? I also found the sudden presence of a sackbut doubling the continuo at the end of *Laetatus sum* vulgar, like the rapid diminuendo in two psalms ending with tutti Amens – going much further than the proper unaccenting of the second syllable demands, and using the same effect twice is counterproductive anyway.

I don't understand JS's attitude to the liturgy. She seems to assume that you can pick and choose antiphons like a non-conformist minister choosing hymns. As I point out in my Liturgical Guide to the Vespers, Monteverdi seems to positively avoid matching the modes for the major Marian feasts. Instead of reverting to the Denis Stevens mix and match solution, we need to wonder why they don't match. I think the solution is that the concerted music was not heard in relationship to the liturgical music at the Vespers service at all, so the presence of chant (other than that incorporated in the polyphony) in a modern performance is an irrelevance. If anyone can come up with a better solution that fits the liturgical acts, I'd jump to accept it. [The exception, of course, is the opening intonation: I'm glad to see that Kurtzman gives the chant on A – an alternative that I suggested in my edition and which was adopted in the PH performance; but since the tenor melody in the choral response is on one note, I assume that the ferial monotone should be used, not the more festal version that Kurtzman prints.] There is no justification for JS to preface the hymn by the chant: we hear the tune often enough anyway.

One practical point that I always make to those who ask for advice is: don't book a pair of recorders. If you do, you will be tempted to use them outside the *Quia respexit*. JS is quite virtuous, but they crop up in the ritornelli in *Dixit* (surely intended for the 3 cornetti and 3 trombones) and the hymn. They are better left as a surprise at the place where they are specifically scored, and most groups of voices and instruments who perform the work can muster a couple of recorder players from their midst. (What the *fifara/pifara* is, is another matter; PH used transverse flutes, the *flauti* are obviously recorders.)

The heavy ornamentation (e. g. Ian Honeyman's in *Nigra sum*) worried me a bit. It is good that we have singers who can treat the notation so freely, but they detract from the effect of the embellishments that are quite lavishly notated elsewhere in the score, and Monteverdi so often manages to integrate his embellishment with substance. A more fundamental worry was the variety in tempo. The best way to stop the psalms and motets from becoming a series of incidents is to keep the tempi related. There may be different ways of relating the mensurations – PH and PT didn't always agree; but both had a better concept of the work by observing it.

JS put *Lauda Jerusalem* down a tone. I'm getting worried about the key sequence of the down-a-fourth transposition: I don't believe the untransposed pitch in terms of singers of 1610, but as an empirical solution down-a-tone works fine. But the way she hops a fourth between movements of the Magnificat (perversely pioneered by Nigel Rogers) can have no justification in the notation. There is a lot to be said in favour of this performance – though I'd like to tie the theorbo player up in his own strings for adding superfluous passing bass notes between phrases – so it is a pity it is spoilt by deliberating making choices that those immersed in the period would discourage.

I am sometimes asked to recommend a recording I usually say Andrew Parrott's, but must confess that it is a long time since I listened to it. I probably know the Vespers better than any other piece of music. But it exists in my head from many performances from 1959 onwards (I first heard it in a broadcast from York Minster conducted by Walter Goehr), from editing it (a process I have done at least three times), and from playing the organ in concert performances and workshop weekends. I've listened to most of the recordings, but sadly find that they cannot compete with these other experiences of the music (cf this month's editorial), so perhaps I'm not the person to review them. I've tried to mention objective features: I question some aspects of the scholarship and the taste that lies behind it; but there is still plenty to enjoy in the Eclectra (no, not a misprint) recording.

AFTER FITZWILLIAM

Ian Harwood

The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book: transcriptions for a mixed consort
charivari agréable 70' 17"
Signum **SIGCD009**
Music by or based on Bull, Byrd, Farnaby, Gibbons, Inglott, Morley, Peerson, Philips, Sweelinck

'What a good idea', I thought when I saw the title of this disc. 'They'll be comparing the keyboard settings from this famous book with versions from the various contemporary mixed consort sources.' Not a bit of it! They have taken pieces from Tregian's huge anthology and made their own arrangements, not for the English consort or 'Morley six' as implied by the title, but for quite a motley collection of instruments, with a voice thrown in occasionally for good measure. The *Instrumentarium* (tucked away, ominously perhaps, on page 13) includes treble and tenor viols 'after B. Norman' (nearly a century too late?); no fewer than three six-string bass viols after John Rose and Francis Meares (more in period); a renaissance flute (fine); a violin 'after Stradivari' (what can I say?); two seven-course lutes, a cittern and a chitarrone, all based on originals from 1580-1608 (just right); a harpsichord 'after J. Ruckers, 1638' (right again); and a chamber organ made in 1996 after no-one in particular (which sounds fine). Is this sort of hotch-potch good enough when people quibble about the propriety of one particular kind of renaissance violin for a certain piece of music? Make no mistake, though, all these musicians are fine players; it is not the 'how' but the 'why and wherefore' that worries me.

When I first became hooked on 'old music', as we called it in the early post-war years, 'arrangements' were all the rage. Recorders were unknown in any of the schools I had attended, but I bought a wooden one (no plastic yet!), which played a lot better in tune after I found the fingering chart scrunched up in the end of the box. Soon I acquired a selection of pieces from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book arranged for descant and piano, and even as a raw beginner I had a lot of fun with it. It wasn't long before I learned that these were popular ballad tunes, sung and played on just about any instrument available in their time. Later an Alec Hodsdon virginals joined the household and my wife's playing made me appreciate the subtleties of the Fitzwilliam keyboard settings, not to be obscured even with leather plectra. As soon as I myself began to play the lute, I encountered the same melodies again, realised how differently they were worked out, and how every instrument imposed its own personality on the music. Meanwhile, 'early music' became respectable and 'arrangement' became a dirty word in the relentless quest for 'authenticity'. Now it seems that charivari agréable are attempting to reinstate the acceptability of 'transcriptions', as they prefer to call them.

All the tunes in that little recorder book were very carefully chosen to suit the instruments, and I only wish I could say the same about all of the music on this CD. Some of it works really well, some is sort-of-all-right, but most of it had me asking 'Why?' Why go to all the trouble of arranging (yes, arranging!) certain pieces that are what Lynda Sayce rightly calls 'virtuoso showpieces for keyboard' for quite another medium? There is only one straight keyboard performance: Martin Peerson's *The Fall of the Leafe*, played on a chamber organ, but at such breakneck speed that the leaf is snatched off in a howling gale rather than allowed to flutter gently to the ground. All the other tracks are modern arrangements, mostly in period style, varying in degree from quite literal transcription (Bull's complex four-part *Ut re mi fa sol la*) for bowed strings, through the simple (and, to my ear, unnecessary and irritating) doubling by a tenor viol of a repeated ballad tune each time it comes in a keyboard setting (Inglott's *The Leaves bee Greene)*, lute and viol solos and duets, to various larger instrumental combinations, sometimes with voice, rather distant and sounding strangely old-fashioned, the way lute-songs were done twenty or more years ago. Caccini's famous declamatory song *Amarilli mia bella* was written for voice and continuo, to which Peter Philips paid keyboard homage. Here it is sung, in rather questionable Italian pronunciation and for reasons unexplained, without any ornamentation, accompanied by tenor viol, lute, harpsichord and two bass viols. Bull's *The King's Hunt* is an idiomatic keyboard piece, but this royal mount is made to sound like an elderly Shire horse which 'halts right down before, and is stark lame behind' (as Gibbons's *Cries of London* has it), so unmercifully is the tempo pulled about by the band of strings, flute, lute and harpsichord. If this is period style, I'd rather not have anything to do with it! The last piece, Byrd's *Gipseis Round*, is played as a jolly free-for-all with some merry twanglings from the cittern. For me, the highlight of the arrangements is the solo lute version of Gibbons's *The Lord of Salisbury his Pavan*, transposed down a tone and brought to fit the instrument like a made-to-measure glove. It makes a highly-satisfactory lute solo, but it remains no more than a modern arrangement. Are we entitled to say 'if Gibbons had been a lutenist this is how he would have done it'?

This whole project is just the kind of thing that a competent group might decide to do for its own edification. It would also make an excellent topic for a summer school or seminar on 'English instrumentation c.1600'; my problem is that I just can't decide whether the D.I.Y. results ought to be marketed when there is still so much of the real thing waiting for a hearing. I am sure that all concerned with the making of these arrangements must have learned a great deal from the exercise, and will in future be better equipped

than before to supply missing instrumental parts for music that survives only in a fragmentary state. Yet there seems to me to be a fundamental difference between reconstructing existing but incomplete music (which is something I do a fair amount of myself with, for example, Rosseter's *Lessons for Consort*) and producing a commercial CD of what is, after all, simply high-class pastiche. We pour scorn these days on Bach-Busoni, on numerous spurious Pergolesi attributions and on the more recent baroque adagio industry; but where is the difference, apart from (one hopes and believes) a greater knowledge of the techniques involved. There is certainly a difference in quality, but not in kind. We are still in the realm of 'this is what Bach would have written if...', or so it seems to me.

Lynda Sayce's notes are informative about the music itself, if rather less so about what has been done to it. I only noticed two factual errors, both to do with *O mistress mine*: there is, as far as I know, no firm evidence that the music is by Thomas Morley, and there is a wrong word in the second stanza as printed and sung, where the Shakespeare's line in Twelfth Night reads 'In delay there lies no plenty', not 'there is no plenty'. Kah-Ming Ng adds a short post-script, mainly to give the latest thinking about Francis Tregian the younger and the compilation of the manuscript, but with the slightly curious ending: 'Through this recording, we hope to hint at the enormous range and variety of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book and at the forward-looking open-mindedness of Tregian's selection process. To this end, we have resorted to the charivari agréable tradition of adapting and arranging, responding to resonances of consort provenance in some pieces and innovating within the bounds of historical performance practice in others.' I'm not sure I quite understand all of this, but do I detect a slight flavour of special pleading ? And would not the wide scope of the manuscript be better conveyed, not just hinted at, by a complete, or even a representative, recording of the music as written, played on an appropriate assortment of keyboard instruments?

REFLECTIONS ON JOHN DOWLAND

Peter Holman

It is now more than quarter of a century since Diana Poulton published her monumental study *John Dowland* (London, 1972; 2/1982). Understandably perhaps, there was a lull in Dowland studies in the 1970s and 80s, though John Ward's 'A Dowland Miscellany', the whole issue of the *Journal of the Lute Society of America*, x (1977), served as a valuable appendix to, and extended critique of, Poulton's work. In the 1990s, however, there are signs of renewed interest in Dowland and his music. John Ward's Music for Elizabethan Lutes (Oxford, 1992) provides useful contexts for Dowland's lute music. Robert Toft's book *Tune thy Musicke to thy Hart: the Art of Eloquent Singing in England 1597-1622* (Toronto, 1993) investigates how an understanding of Classical rhetoric can help us to perform the lute songs. There have been notable more-or-less complete recordings of Dowland's lute music by Paul O'Dette and Jakob Lindberg, and there are now at least six complete recordings of *Lachrimae* available. The edition of Thomas Watson: *Italian Madrigals Englished* (1590), Musica Britannica, lxxiv (London, 1999) [see review on p. 2 of this issue] has an excellent introduction by Albert Chatterley discussing the literary context for the enthusiasm of English composers – including Dowland – for Italian madrigals, and for Marenzio in particular. A new edition of John Dowland: *Ayres for Four Voices*, Musica Britannica, vi (London, 1953; 2/1963; 3/1970) is being prepared by David Greer; it will include the lute tablature for the first time. Ian Harwood's forthcoming book for Ashgate on the mixed or 'broken' consort will give us the context for understanding the Dowland pieces in that fascinating repertory.

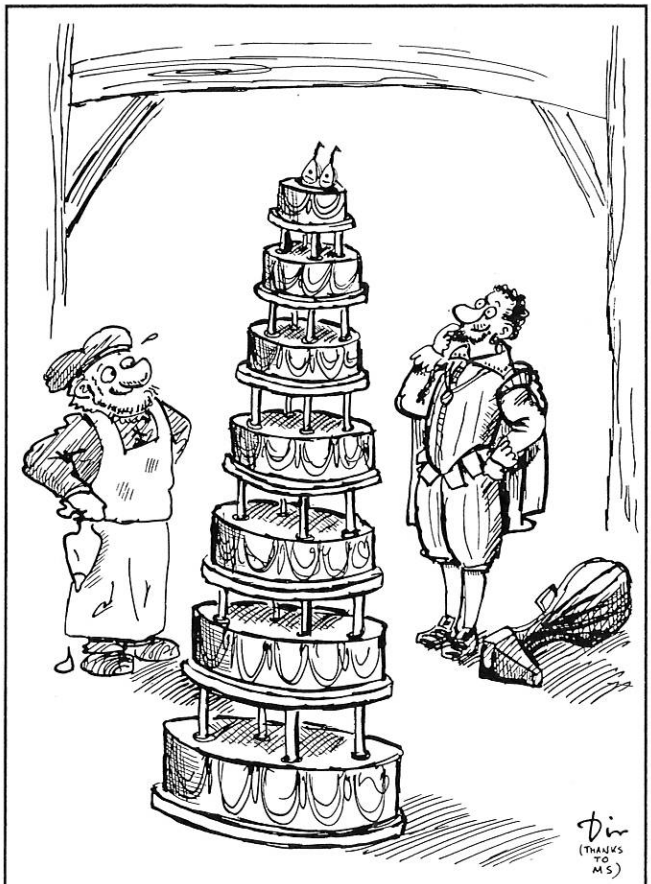
My interest in Dowland was initially a by-product of my work on the violin in Tudor and Stuart England, published as *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: the Violin at the English Court 1540-1690* (Oxford, 1993; 2/1995). I have since been able to work out the ideas about *Lachrimae* I had then more fully in a book for the Cambridge University Press Music Handbook series; it will be published next month, and is the focus for a joint meeting of the Lute Society and the Viola da Gamba Society on 20 November and a public concert given jointly by the Rose Consort and the Parley of Instruments' Renaissance Violin Consort – details below. In the last year I have also had to write the article on Dowland for the forthcoming revision of *The New Grove*, a task that Bob Spencer was unable to carry out before his untimely death. So this article is an opportunity to take stock, and to touch on some of the outstanding problems in Dowland studies.

The main focus of Diana Poulton's book was Dowland's life and the sources of his music. She devoted so much time and energy to searching out references to the composer in literary and archival sources that it is not surprising that not much has turned up since. However, we now know that Dowland was in London on 9 May 1604, the day he wrote out a piece for a foreign visitor, Hans von Bodeck of Elbing (now Elblag in Poland) – which means that he must have been there rather than in Denmark when *Lachrimae* was published that April (K. Sparr, 'Some Unobserved Information about John Dowland, Thomas Campion and Philip Rosseter', *The Lute*, xxvii (1987), 35-7). Dowland was patronised by William Cavendish, Earl of Devonshire, in

1612, who employed his son Robert over the next few years (L. Hulse, Hardwick MS 29: a New Source for Jacobean Lutenists', *The Lute*, xxvi (1986), 62-72), and took part in a 'consęrte' for the Middle Temple on Candlemas Day 1613 with William Corkine and the otherwise unknown Richard Goosey, perhaps as the member of a lute trio (P. Frank, 'A New Dowland Document', *The Musical Times*, cxxiv (1983), 15-16).

There are also several points at issue in the interpretation of the accepted facts of Dowland's life. One is the question of his religion. There is no doubt that he converted to Catholicism in France in the early 1580s, but David Pinto ('Dowland's Tears: Aspects of Lachrimae', *The Lute*, xxxvii (1997), 44-75) has recently argued that his allegiance to the old faith remained constant at least until 1604, and that he dedicated *Lachrimae* to Anne of Denmark as a fellow Catholic sympathiser who could offer him protection. But he must have subscribed to the Thirty-Nine articles when he received his B. Mus. degree at Christ Church, Oxford on 8 July 1588, and he clearly repudiated Catholicism in a long autobiographical letter to Robert Cecil, written from Nuremberg on 10 November 1595.

Another problem is the period between February 1606, when Dowland left his post at the Danish court, and 10 April 1609, the day he signed the preface of his translation of *Andreas Ornithoparcus his Micrologus* at his house in Fetter Lane. Poulton assumed that he spent those three years in London, but there is no evidence of this, and he wrote in the preface to the Micrologus that he had 'now returned home to remaine', which sounds as if he had arrived only recently. Perhaps he spent the time at another continental court, where the archives have been destroyed or have yet to be investigated.



Pudding Lane, 1604: Dowland is inspired

Between them, Poulton and Ward investigated the sources of Dowland's music pretty thoroughly, though a few new pieces have turned up in the last few decades as libraries that were behind the Iron Curtain have become accessible. The most important new source is the Königsberg lute manuscript, containing a number of Dowland pieces; it is available in a facsimile edited by Arthur Ness and John Ward (Columbus, Ohio, 1989). Another notable discovery was Johann Daniel Mylius's lute anthology *Thesaurus gratiarum* (Frankfurt, 1622), one of the unique Berlin prints that came to light at Cracow in the 1980s. It contains a number of Dowland pieces, including a fine but rather corrupt G minor pavan not known elsewhere. Paul O'Dette recorded a reconstruction of it, and the preparatory work for his complete Dowland recording also revealed some shortcomings in the Collected Lute Music of John Dowland, edited by Diana Poulton and Basil Lam (London 1974; 2/1978; 3/1981). Poulton and Lam included some pieces that are highly dubious and omitted others that are clearly genuine, including a fine setting of Monsieurs Alman that survives anonymously in English sources but is attributed to Dowland in a Genoa manuscript, and the Landgrave of Hesse's famous pavan dedicated to Dowland,which has superb divisions in his late style, and is probably his own arrangement of a consort piece by his patron. O'Dette has also shown that Poulton and Lam did not always choose the right source of popular pieces. For instance, he makes out a good case for a fine early A minor setting of 'Lachrimae' instead of the familiar G minor one printed in the *Collected Lute Music*. Clearly, a new edition of Dowland's lute music will eventually be necessary.

Rather more urgent is the need to replace the supposedly *Complete Consort Music*, edited by Edgar Hunt (London, 1985). This unfortunate edition does not print the tablature of the *Lachrimae* pieces, has no proper critical commentary, is disturbingly inaccurate in places, and makes no attempt to take account of variants between the six surviving copies of the 1604 print, or the readings of the various manuscript sources. It is also far from complete. It omits the fine five-part setting of Piper's Pavan at Kassel, two incomplete five-part settings of the Solus cum sola pavan, the four- and five-part setting of Lachrimae in Scottish sources and the Wigthorpe Maanuscript, as well as fragmentary settings of Lady Rich's Galliard and Mrs Winter's Jump. Furthermore, although it includes some of the consort arrangements of Dowland published in German anthologies, it omits others, such as Valentin Haussman's five-part setting of Mrs Nichols Almain, the two four-part settings of Mrs Winter's Jump in Praetorius's *Terpsichore*, and the four-part settings of Piper's Pavan, Piper's Galliard and the Earl of Essex Galliard in Konrad Hagius's *Newe künstliche musicalische Intraden* (Nuremberg, 1617). Only the Cantus part of this

last collection is now missing, so it is possible to reconstruct them with confidence. Finally, despite its title, the edition does not include the sixteen Dowland pieces found in the sources of mixed consort music.

Perhaps the most intriguing problem in Dowland studies is the meaning of the Latin titles of the seven 'passionate pavans' in Lachrimae. Scholars have traditionally shied away from this difficult area, though Anthony Rooley suggested in a footnote to his article 'New Light on Dowland's Songs of Darkness', *Early Music*, xi (1983), 6-21 that they 'can be seen as a Hermetic cycle describing the fall and rise of the journeying soul', though he did not elaborate further in print, and his attempt to connect Dowland's music to occult Neoplatonist philosophy has been criticised by Robin Headlam Wells ('John Dowland and Elizabethan Melancholy', *Early Music*, xiii (1985), 514-28, revised as 'Dowland, Ficino and Elizabethan Melancholy' in his book *Elizabethan Mythologies: Studies in Poetry, Drama and Music* (Cambridge, 1994), 189-207), among others. David Pinto proposed an orthodox religious interpretation in his article 'Dowland's Tears', suggesting that the tears are those of the penitent soul on a spiritual journey from original sin (Lachrimae Antiquae) to redemption (Lachrimae Verae). My own interpretation, which draws on unpublished writings by Lionel Pike, is complementary rather contradictory in many respects, but explores the states of melancholy described by Robert Burton and other Elizabethan and Jacobean writers. I suspect however, that there is no single 'right' interpretation, and that the seven pavans will continue to attract alternative explanations for years to come, just as Elgar's 'Enigma' does.

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The publication of Peter Holman's book *Dowland: Lachrimae (1604)* by Cambridge University Press is being marked by a joint meeting of the Lute and Viola da Gamba Societies on Saturday, 20 November at the Art Workers Guild, Queen Square, London WC1, and by a public concert at 5.30 in the church of St George the Martyr, a few doors away in Queen Square. The concert is entitled *Showers of Harmonie: John Dowland's Lachrimae (1604) and the Music it Inspired*, and features The Rose Consort of Viols with The Parley of Instruments Renaissance Violin Consort and Elizabeth Kenny (lute). It will be an unique opportunity to compare the effect of Dowland's matchless music played on sets of Renaissance violins and viols. Tickets £10, £8 (Lute and Viola da Gamba Society members), £6 (concessions) from the VdGS, 3 Warren Rise, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey GU16 5SH (cheques with SAE, please), or at the door.

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Peter's book will be reviewed in EMR next month, along with the CD of songs by Dowland sung by John Potter with the intriguing accompaniemnt of lute, saxophone/bass clarinet, baroque violin and double bass.

LONDON, AUST & WINCHESTER CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

For a group with the enviable publicity machine and CD sales of Anonymous 4, the low turn out at the Wigmore Hall (12 September) must have been disappointing. Their programme, 'The Second Circle' (the place in Dante's descent into hell which 'stings the soul into wailing'), interspersed love songs by the renowned 14th-century Florentine organist and composer, Francesco Landini, with spoken extracts from Dante's *Inferno* read by each of the four women singers in turn. It has to be said that the audience's response was warm, and there was a healthy queue at the CD stall at the end of the concert, but I am afraid that the concert left me flat. I will try and pinpoint some of the issues. There were some purely practical ones like the distracting sound of clinking glasses and pouring water during many of the spoken sections. And only one of the singers made any attempt to engage the audience by looking at us – most of the stage eye contact was between two members of the group and heads were usually buried in scores. Their stage presence was generally rather stern and intense, with few smiles – and their spoken interludes reminded me of High School elocution classes (a male voice would have added contrast and gender sensibility to the texts). Musical issues include a more or less absolute consistency of tone and vocal colouring, articulation, pulse and volume both between the four voices and between each of the pieces. Their tone is rather piercing, and in one case decidedly pinched, with a distinctive nasal quality to it. This tone quality, combined with some issues of tuning, made it difficult for them to settle themselves into the sort of vocal purity that might have been expected. The distinctive Landini open-fifth cadences, for example, never achieved the still quietness expected from Pythagorian tuning, but retained the edgy restlessness so characteristic of impure intervals. I don't have a problem with all-women vocal groups singing music that would normally have been sung by men, but the compression of the vocal range and the lack of variety of vocal timbres might be something more easily avoided by male singers. Landini's music was, of course, exquisite, but for such a famous performer of the portative organ (and to address some of the issues mentioned), a portative would have been a welcome addition to many of the pieces, not least those with one or more untexted lines.

The revival of David Freeman's 1981 production of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (English National Opera, London Coliseum, 17 September) saw the promotion of Anthony Rolfe Johnson from title role in the first production to conductor. As a performance of early music, this was far more successful than English National Opera's recent *Semele*, largely because of the higher quality of the chorus (which included all the soloists from the start). There were still issues about the early music credentials of some members of the orchestra (which featured some curious string intonation), although the solo instrumentalists were more or less of the faith and the continuo group was used most effectively. *Orfeo* was presented as a play within a play, with the solo parts evolving from the chorus of villagers that take the stage from the start. This works better if you don't recognize the singers – before the idea had sunk in, I found myself wondering what Apollo (eventually sung with characteristic agility by Mark Padmore) was doing among the merrymakers in the opening scene. In fact it showed that Padmore, one of the very welcome new imports into the ENO, is no mean bit-part actor. The stage setting involved several large rocks (referring to Orfeo's ability to subdue nature with his lute) and a stage set that moved from washing-day sheets to a carpet emporium and back again. There were some brilliantly staged set pieces, for example the shuffling gait of Orfeo and his followers as they start the journey out of the underworld, and the horrific gestures of death of the lost souls who hadn't managed to scrape together the coin for the ferryman to take them across to the underworld. Hope's brief appearance before she had to be abandoned was delightfully sung by Emer McGilloway before Orfeo gets one over Charon, not by changing his mind through the power of his music or the emotional logic of his plea to follow Eurydice into the underworld, but by sending him to sleep, a curiosity of Monteverdi's text that led me to wonder why the lost souls, who played such a strong part in this scene, didn't follow him across. Despite missing the eloquence of the Italian text (only the plaintive cry of 'Ahi!' survived from the original language), and with slight concerns about the orchestra, this was an enjoyable evening from a company that is beginning to take its early music repertoire more seriously.

On the very day that the news broke of the discovery of the remains Agrippina's villa during car park excavations near the Vatican, the Early Opera Company presented Handel's opera on the antics of the same lady – the mother of Nero and wife of Claudius. Much of the opera is pure farce, with Poppea's bedroom scene at the beginning of Act III featuring a number of men hidden way in cupboards. To varying degrees, the production (St John's, Smith Square, 18 September) accented this feature, with Mhairi Lawson portraying the adolescent and bolshy Nero in the manner of a Harry Enfield character and Geraldine McGreevy (Poppea) ripping the heads off flowers and kicking the remains round the stage as her love for Ottone takes a turn for the worse. This was a more or less staged production, with a trouble-some bed/settee as the main prop. Although the occasional use of word-sheets by some of the singers rather let the side down, I certainly prefer a staging with aides-mémoire to a

concert performance with scores. The players were positioned behind the singers, which led to a few timing mishaps – occasionally it seemed that the director was waiting to hear the singer before giving his beat for the players, which made their entries very late. But generally this was a musically assured performance, with Katharina Spreckelsen, as ever, on top form as the all-important oboist – she is a credit to the many bands she plays with. Christian Curnyn directed the players with vigour from the start, and was not afraid to give the distinctive silences at the end of the Overture their full reign. All the young singers were very good, with the honeyed tones of Sally Bruce-Payne just getting my vote for the most focused singing as Ottone. An inspiring evening by some very talented young musicians.

An expanded Sonnerie gave another of their exciting Wigmore Hall concerts on 23 September, with a programme of Bach, Vivaldi, Telemann and Rameau. Sonnerie's playing is not for the weak-hearted – they are not afraid to take risks in order to bring out the dramatic context of each piece. Whether or not the risks work, their concerts are always invigorating. For example, Monica Huggett's use of hairpin dynamics on a note was absolutely delightful at the beginning of Bach's first violin sonata when her first entry grew imperceptibly out of the continuo – but further on in the piece, the lack of attack on the opening of a note meant that the beginning of notes were occasionally not fully audible. Although she was not always technically at her best, Huggett on a bad day is still a gripping experience. It is good to hear Telemann taken out of the parlour – his Concerto for Flute, Oboe d'amore and Viola d'amore was given the rustic treatment, with sunrise opening and hoe down, and his Concerto for Flute, Recorder, Strings and Continuo contrasted the Handelian song-without-words Largo with a rumbustiously bucolic final Presto. Great fun.

Passacaglia gave another of their always excellent performances in a lunchtime concert at St John's, Smith Square on 30 September. Their programme included Italian pieces from 1584 to 1642 – the 'Age of Opulence'. One feature of this concert which worked very well was the use of the resident Mander chamber organ as continuo. It was good to have a continuo organ where pipes could be seen and sound could be heard, and musically the sustained tones blended perfectly with the two recorders and viol. As an organ player myself I am undoubtedly biased, but it was a relief not to have the often percussive sound of a harpsichord rattling along through a concert. In democratic fashion, each player had their solo spot, with Robin Bigwood bringing out some of the free fluidity needed in Frescobaldi 1637 *Toccata Prima* and supporting Reiko Ichise's sinuous performance of Dalla Casa's divisions on 'Ancor che col partire'. The two recorder players, Annabel Knight and Louise Bradbury each played solo divisions by Bassano. Although the tune was instantly recognisable in its incarnation as a French Noel, I had not heard Turini's jolly set of variations on 'E tanto tempo hormai' (1621) before, or his concluding Sonata 'Il Corisino' with its insistent build up of metrical pulse. A lovely way to spend a lunchtime.

South Bank Early Music Weekend - From Distant Lands

One of the first musical signs of Autumn is the annual South Bank early music weekend directed by Philip Pickett. This years theme 'From Distant Lands' (3/5 September) encompassed a fairly loose conglomerate of travelling and travelled composers, from Beowulf to Mozart. The weekend opened with tremendous gusto in Latin American mood with the welcome return of Camerata de Caracas with their vivacious director, Isabel Palacios. Although occasionally lacking in musical finesse, the sheer entertainment value held the packed Queen Elizabeth Hall enthralled, the group living up to their billing as 'ever-popular, brilliant and crazy'. Their programme looked at the varying influences on South American music in the 16th and 17th centuries, with an emphasis on the way that the homeland music (and racial tensions) of the imported slave population had gradually meshed with that of the indigenous Indians and the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors. After the concert, the delightfully cosmopolitan audience packed the Queen Elizabeth Hall foyers for Salsa Rica, with members of Camerata in more up-beat mood for a Venezualan party. One hopefully little-noticed feature was the bizarre sight of a distinguished artistic director trying to teach a hack reviewer how to Salsa – not a pretty sight! An inspiring way to open the festival.

Following a rather rambling and far from dispassionate talk on Spanish colonialism, the main Saturday concert was the combined Philip Pickett home teams of the New London Consort and their South Bank neighbours, the Musician of the Globe. Shewes and Nightly Rebels removed the apparently inconsequential music from the sidelines of Jacobean Court masques and placed it in the more sympathetic context of concert performance. And fine music it was, by composers such as Campion, Lupo, Giles, Johnson, Ferrabosco, Coprario and several members of the Anon family. This was a highly professional and carefully crafted concert, with some fine singing by Simon Grant, Joanne Lunn and Andrew King, although King's voice displayed a rather unsettling quivering (not quite reaching full vibrato), particularly in Ferrabosco's 'Gentle knights', one of many pieces to have the accompaniment of two lutes and a theorbo. With only 12 instrumentalists (including both virginals and harpsichord), I did wonder whether a conductor was either necessary or appropriate. When Picket plays in a concert, he usually directs from his playing position to the side of centre; but with no playing participation this time he conducted from centre stage more or less throughout. There are an increasing number of groups performing without a conductor (sometimes with a Christopher Page style director sitting to one side of the performers), and it does help cement the bond with the audience and possibly between the players, who have to keep themselves on line without the middleman. This was particularly evident in 'Fain would I wed', where the band kept up a fairly unyielding pulse throughout, although soprano Joanne Lunn clearly preferred a more rhetorical delivery and greater fluidity at phrase endings and in the second verse. This is a topic for general discussion rather than criticism of an excellent concert.

Saturday had hinged around frequent appearances of the fairly new and encouragingly youthful and talented recorder consort, The Royal Wind Music, made up of multinational past and present pupils of Paul Leenhouts and Walter van Hauwe at Amsterdam's Sweelinck Conservatory. With two foyer performances and a late night concert of 16th- and 17th-century consort music from England and Germany (A Noble Noyse of Musick), they earned their keep. The 12/13 recorder players managed to keep the tuning very well in line, and there were sufficient changes of timbre to retain interest. The much-heralded sub-contrabass, a monstrous (if that could ever be the right word for a recorder) 10' long instrument, only made a brief appearance in two Holborne Galliards – a curious choice of piece to use the big beasty, given the more doleful nature of some of the other pieces. The opening of Mallorie's *Miserere* was exquisite, as it slowly emerged from a pulsating unison note. Lutenist Israel Golani showed superb sensitivity of touch and articulation in his four solo pieces.

It says something for developments in the early music world that a concert can be criticised for using a piano from a period only 40 years later than the music played. This was the case with Andreas Staier's Mozart concert, played on a fortepiano after Brodmann, 1823. This produced a heavy bass, lack of clarity of detail and brightness of tone far removed from the instruments that Mozart would have known, such was the speed of piano development in those few years. Although he played magnificently, Staier was clearly ill at ease with the offered piano – I cannot believe it was his choice, and hope that questions have been asked within the South Bank management as to how such an unsuitable instrument came to be offered to such a distinguished performer. The pieces were all written between 1775 and 1785, although the tonal and emotional range varied widely. Staier's played started with a meticulous opening Adagio (to K394) but soon developed a lyrical edge to its precision (in the Adagio of the next piece, K282). His portrayal of the bloated monk pouring scorn, through a plodding bass theme, on the stupid man in the street ('Unser dummer Pöbel meint' variations, K455) was magnificent, and it was good to hear the linked Fantasia and Sonata in C minor (K475/457) played together.

Hespérion XX returned to a full house although, as with last year, there seem to have been some problems with the programme and timing of the concert. This time, they started late, cancelled the interval and ran for 2 hours non-stop, nudging the start time of the following concert. Featuring the sinuous and sensuous voice of Montserrat Figueras, the music was intended to cover Moorish-Andalusian, Jewish and Christian song from the Spain of Alfonso X el Sabio (1221-1284). In this context, the inclusion of four well-known 14th-century Italian dances was curious, particularly given the length of the programme. As with all performances of medieval music, the key question is how to deal with pieces that only survive in melodic form. However carefully scripted this performance might have been, it had the feel of being completely improvised, with lengthy introductions often appearing like a collective jam session with 2 or 3 instruments gradually building up a melodic interplay while others continued to tune. Instrumental accompaniments were generally multitudes of canons or strettos piling on each other at seemingly random intervals. The musical mood ranged from the hypnotic and etherial, through belly dance, curry house music to a slithery sarod that would have done the steel guitars of ZZ Top proud (in 'Axerico de quinze años', a lengthy solo by Kenneth Zuckermann).

The tricky bit about Benjamin Bagby's late night presentation of the Anglo-Saxon epic poem, *Beowulf*, was whether to attempt to follow the translation of the text or keep your eyes glued on the mesmeric antics of the bard. Offering just one hour of the seven-hour-long text, Bagby interspersed speech with song and variations in between, with a six-string lyre to accompany, support and generally allow breathing space and point landmarks in the words. It was an extraordinary occasion which, if you were not in the mood, could have driven you crazy. It is difficult to know whether to review it as music (none survives, of course), poetry or high drama. His opening yelp of *Hwæt*! was of Sergeant-Majorish proportions. After this terrifying start, Bagby slid almost unnoticeably from speech through multi-pitched speech to true melody and also used the lyre effectively to give a structure and contrast to the whole. Musically the limits of the six-string lyre began to be felt towards the end, although not before an amazing impression of breaking waves and some other gruesome plucks to portray the monster seizing a warrior, ripping him apart, swilling blood from his veins, tearing off his gobbets and finally eating him up. The evening concluded with the monster having his arm ripped off by Beowulf and eventually dying in a murky swirl of hot dark ooze. All good family fun.

Aust Festival of Mediaeval Music

The parish church in the tiny village of Aust, tucked under the wing of the Severn Bridge, is fast becoming a pilgrimage centre on the early music map. The most recent Festival of Mediaeval Music (24/26 September) featured evening concerts by Misericordia, Daughters of Elvin and Sinfonye; daytime workshops on chant (Peter Wilton), hurdy-gurdy (Stephen Tyler), bagpipes (Anne Marie Summers), fiddle (Stevie Wishart), percussion (Dhevdhas Nair) and voice (Vivien Ellis); and a variety of informal entertainments in between. There was a delightful atmosphere of combined folk club and village fete about the place. The workshops I attended veered towards the therapeutic rather than musically technical, but seemed to be enjoyed by the customers.

The Daughters of Elvin concert combined music and dance in an entertaining romp around the well-known surviving music of mediaeval Europe. Singer Jeremy Avis joined the core group of Katy Marchant (pipe and tabor, bagpipes and recorders), Dhevdhas Nair (percussion) and Clio Wondrausch

(dance). Musical arrangements were simple and effective, and there was an endearing atmosphere of innocent naivety apparent in a number of pieces, aided by Avis's boyishly husky high tenor voice and a hesitant stage presence. Although there were moments of technical uncertainty (endings of pieces were rather haphazard affairs and the musicians occasionally seemed not quite sure who was going to do what and when), this was a thoroughly entertaining evening in a beautiful church complete with resident angel musicians. Although stage lighting could have been better (the brightest lights were behind the performers) it was good to have a concert in a church where staging had been provided – an essential item in most churches, but rarely seen. Numbers attending the festival, both locally and from afar, were healthy with a good number of regulars.

Winchester Early Music Festival

Winchester is the sort of place that I would have expected to have had an early music festival for years, but in fact the weekend of 24/26 September was only the second. Teething problems led to one concert being cancelled through lack of ticket sales and another to be disrupted by a clash with the Cathedral's regular Sunday afternoon bell-ringing dinga-long. But a very healthy crowd filled Henry III's majestic 13th-century Great Hall for the Sunday evening concert by Gothic Voices. This was one of the finest concerts I have heard them give, with Catherine King being in particularly fine solo voice and blending perfectly with the three male singers. Their tuning, intonation and tone control were perfect, and they knew just how to project their voices into the large acoustic. Apart from two Hildegard pieces, their programme contrasted music from England and France between the 11th (a two-part organum from the Winchester school) and 14th centuries and showed the development of the conductus and the textural anarchy of the motet. Particular highlights were the intense 4-voice conductus *Mundus vergens in defectum* and the jubilant and exhilarating *Vetus abit lettera*. Leigh Nixon introduced each group of pieces in a style that informed without patronising.

The Sunday afternoon battle with the bells fielded Concerto San Giacomo (violin, cornet and theorbo) in a concert showing the birth of the sonata (Pilgrims' Hall). The highlight was the theorbo playing of Taro Takeuchi, who made very effective use of the wide range of timbres produced from the whole of the soundboard, and showed musical sensitivity as soloist as continuo player. Although their director, Michael Lawlor (cornet) was not on good form, Sharon Lindo (Renaissance violin) also played well, particularly in a Pandolfi Sonata with an intense chromatic descending bass chaconne before the final flourish.

Other festival events were a sung Compline and a Cathedral choral evensong and a day-long choral workshop for young musicians. The one real oddity was that, although the festival was commemorating the 1100th anniversary of the death of the King of Wessex, Alfred the Great, there seemed to be no music from that period.

SONNERIE in GLASGOW

Brian Clark

For some years now, the Georgian Concert Society has attracted many of the leading early music groups to Edinburgh and Robert King has made fairly regular trips north of the border. Domestic talent, in the shape of Concerto Caledonia and cappella nova has started to build its own following. Now the 'scene' has a newcomer – Sonnerie, directed by Monica Huggett.

There was a slight programming miscalculation in that the first concert of their planned season coincided with a Glasgow holiday, so the Stevenson Hall in the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama was not as full as it might have been: not even as full as I remember it being when Katherine McGillivray did a mega-viola gig as part of the International Viola Congress. A lot of the interest in the audience focused on local talent – not only were Katherine and her sister Alison playing (they're from Giffnock), so was Pamela Thorby (who hails from Perthshire).

The programme was quite varied: a violin sonata and a concerto by J. S. Bach, two concertos by Telemann, a violin concerto by Vivaldi and, to end, an orchestrated version of Rameau's 3rd *pièce de clavecin en concert*. Gary Cooper's entertaining note called them some of Sonnerie's personal favourites and, as they played, it was clear that they derived genuine pleasure from performing them – there were numerous smiles bouncing around the group, a cheeky little flourish on the keyboard here, a delayed triplet decoration from the flute there. It was just such fun.

The Bach concerto was the F major version of what we know as the fourth Brandenburg. Despite some beautifully restrained string tone (and what a particularly effective bassetto player Katherine McGillivray is on viola), the recorders still could not always cut through the texture. I must actually say that I found Pamela Thorby's overblowing somewhat distracting, and her filigree ornamentation somehow did not fit in with what the others were doing. Similarly in the Telemann flute and recorder concerto (whose last movement was a terrific rustic romp), there was a clash between Wilbert Hazelzet's suave flute tone (and his barely moving fingers!) and her rippling melismas and slightly coarse sound.

The other Telemann concerto was that gem, the E major viola d'amore, oboe d'amore and flute concerto. This didn't pass without incident – the viola d'amore refused to stay in tune – but it was a wonderful advert for Telemann the melodist. Catherine Latham is too diffident an oboist (and even more so as a recorder player) – she should play out and enjoy herself more!

Catherine Martin joined the ensemble for that piece and also led the band in Vivaldi's *Il grosso mogul* concerto. That, however, was very much Monica Huggett's moment. I've known the piece for years, heard various performances and even scraped my way through the cadenzas myself (having typeset them), but I have never heard violin playing like this (either on the baroque or the modern instrument). It was the only time in my life when I would genuinely have heard a pin drop – there was such an incredible sense of awe in the hall as she progressed up and down the fingerboard, the rich harmonics of her sweet-toned fiddle resounding around the vast space. It was amazing.

The other stars of the show were the continuo section. Alison McGillivray seems rarely to look at the music: she's busy watching someone or other like a hawk, be it the soloist or Sarah Groser, the violone player, or Gary Cooper. His greatest ability, for me, is not the technical gifts of the keyboard player (of which he has an unfair share), but his oh-so-fertile imagination as continuo player. I smiled several times as he turned what I thought was a familiar passage into something quite new, and, where I was not convinced by Pamela Thorby's decorations of Bach, I found his somehow more idiomatic. Bach's B minor violin sonata BWV 1014 was just wonderful, his keyboard playing only slightly outshone by Monica Huggett's astonishing final notes.

The last piece was great fun – everyone joined in the Rameau, which featured a long rondeau with some beautiful tenor recorder playing from Pamela Thorby, and finished with two rollicking *Tambourins*, where she played a suitably cheeky descant, bringing the whole thing to a bright and cheerful conclusion.

As with my review of Concerto Caledonia, I feel I need to give my fellow Scots a bit of a pep talk – if we fail to support this brave venture in numbers, it cannot possibly survive financially. The next scheduled event is March 19th 2000, and will include sonatas by Biber and Vivaldi. Mark it in your diary now!

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King's Music got involved with a project of Sonnerie's just after this concert. They were providing the accompaniment for a South Bank Show programme on countertenors with James Bowman and Michael Chance. We supplied various Purcell items, among other things producing a score of the Evening Hymn (*Now that the sun has veiled his light*) without the usual page turn for the accompanist. It is available in three pitches (G, F & D) in the same copy, sold as a pair (for singer and accompanist) for £2.50.

The programme will also feature Andreas Scholl, both of whose recent aria CDs have used our editions. We do not know what he is singing on the Show, which is due to be broadcast in December.

BLOW IN COVENTRY

Robert Johnson

Asides in square brackets are by CB.

The MEMF/EMEMF Workshop *John Blow – 350th Anniversary course on* Saturday 9 October 1999 at St. James's Church, Styvechale, Coventry tried out a piece that might be suitable for a group of musicians looking for something more exciting than *Auld lang syne* for a millennium party, Blow's new year *Song* [not *Ode*: that word seems to have been used to refer to poems] for 1700. David Hill, Winchester Cathedral Organist since 1987, is no stranger to MEMF workshops, his last visit being in 1997, shortly after Princess Diana's death, when he took us through Victoria's sublime Requiem. On this occasion we tackled three works by John Blow, Purcell's [formal or informal] teacher and also his predecessor and successor as organist of Westminster Abbey. David is well acquainted with Blow's large output, having directed the recording of two CDs of the anthems.

Appear in all thy Pomp, the New Year's Song for 1700, came to us hot off the press, the photocopy of the autograph having reached King's Music only three weeks earlier from the Royal College of Music, whose library holds the autograph score. This put great pressure on the editors, Brian Clark and Clifford Bartlett of King's Music, but very few errors were spotted [the most embarrassing being my mis-spelling my name on the cover].

Beresford King-Smith, who organised the event and looked after the singers when David had a separate session with the strings, speculated that it could be in honour of Marlborough, but thought it not very likely: some other military hero perhaps? In any case we can be pretty certain that it hadn't been performed for 300 years, so this was the modern première. The words are by Nahum Tate, librettist of *Dido & Aeneas*, and one obvious similarity was the phrase 'appear, appear'. The score is laid out as in the autograph, so there was a need to get used to chorus parts interspersed with the instrumental parts.

There are five sections to the work. The Prelude apostrophises 'Great Janus, Father of the year' in a jolly F major chorus which recalls Purcell's style. There is some re-use of the text of this number in later choruses. Section 2 is a tenor solo which warns, 'Thy new-born Infant kindly treat'. For want of a soloist this section had to be shortened, the chorus singing the continuation 'Proclame aloud'. [The spelling of the MS was preserved in the underlay.] In number 3, the alto soloist calls on the 'chearfull powers' to assemble for the awakening of Spring, [the music is printed on pp. 18-19], then the chorus looks forward to a 'joyfull year of Plenty, Peace and Fame'. In the fourth section, the alto soloist marks the conclusion of a century that 'such amazing scenes has view'd', with 'Europe brought to outmost need under Cruell bondage lying', after which the bass soloist tells of how our Champion, like Perseus, came to the relief of the 'disponding Dame'. (As the Tory party conference had just ended, this and other suggestive coincidences caused outbreaks of mirth in the ranks of the chorus!) [It also shows how easily a situation that the author could not possibly have envisaged may appear appropriate – a warning against excess zeal in reading political allegory into early texts.]

The finale reprises the opening number. Erroneously [I only spotted an error in cutting and pasting on the file after the copies had been produced], the score repeated the seven-bar introduction from the Prelude but we included it anyway. The chorus later breaks into 6/8 rhythm to express the hope that 'this Iron age conclude with Peace and Mirth renew'd', returning to common time for a brief but grandiose peroration, apparently in order to flatter the anonymous dedicatee as 'the gratest hero of the Gratest race'.

Also included were the verse anthem *I beheld, and lo, a great multitude* and the well-known *Salvator mundi*. With words taken from the Book of Revelation, the former, a fine declamatory anthem, is notated in 3/4 time but with occasional bars of 3/2 time to catch out the basses. There are expressive solos for counter-tenor, tenor and bass who, together with a second bass, echo one another and alternate with the triumphal chorus. Not surprisingly it is a favourite of the Winchester choirboys, according to David. *Salvator mundi* shows Italian influence, achieving its pleading effect by such devices as dissonant entries and suspensions. The sudden modulation from D to B major after a pause is particularly striking, at least in English music of the period, and there is a final poignant return from D major to D minor. We performed the piece with a delightful four-rank chamber organ.

David Hill managed the task of rehearsing soloists, chorus and band with his usual assurance and good humour. He was on tremendous form and his clear tenor speaking voice was always audible – an immense advantage. As he finally leaped into his bright red convertible and roared off back to Winchester, we were left to reflect on an intensely enjoyable and instructive day.

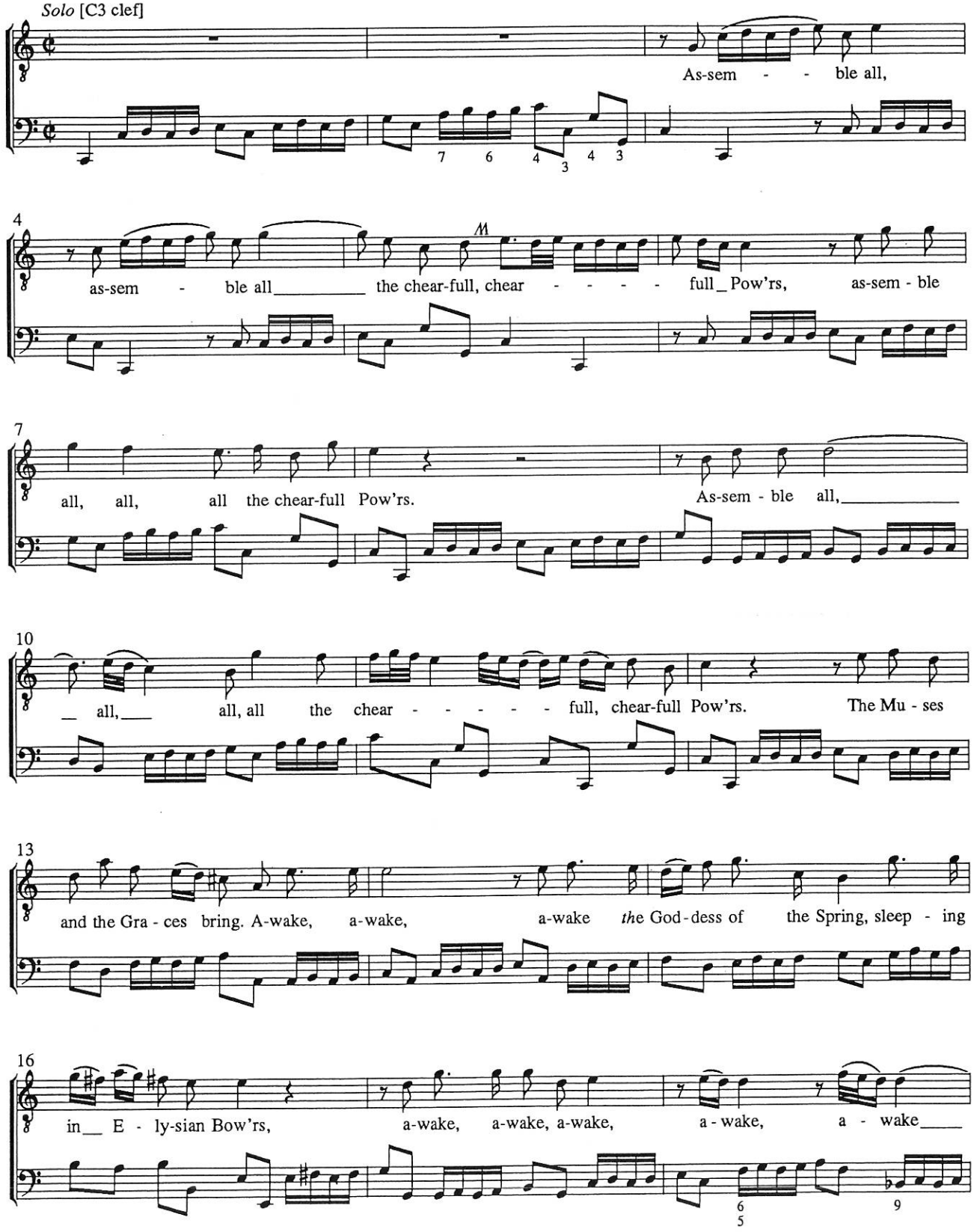
John Blow *Appear in all thy pomp* (New Year's Song 1700) is published by King's Music: score £5.00, strings £2.50 each. The solo on pp. 18-19 of this issue is notated in the alto clef in the MS but may be sung by a high tenor; here we have printed it for tenor, in the complete score it is at the alto octave.

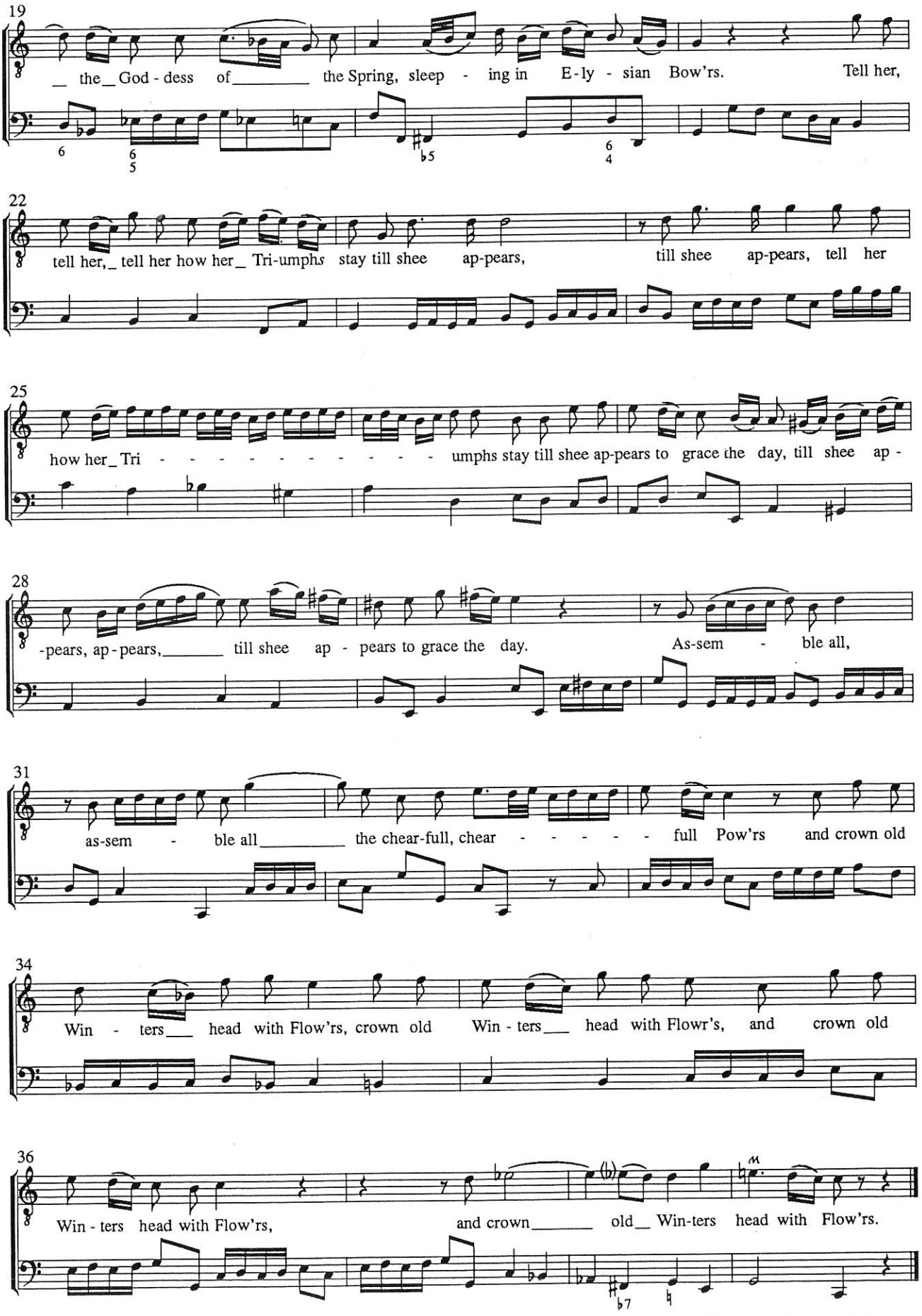
John Blow – Appear in all thy Pomp

New Year's Song 1700

Words by Nahum Tate

No. 3. Assemble all *Alto solo*





leads into a ritornello for strings and chorus.

The Katzman Trasuntino harpsichord or Old Wine in Old Bottles

Robin Bigwood

Back in June I was invited by New London Consort director Philip Pickett to see and play a new copy of the RCM's 1531 Trasuntino by Joel Katzman, an American maker based in Amsterdam. The story behind the Katzman Trasuntino is an interesting one. Around 1997 Pickett was looking for an Italian virginals to use on the New London Consort's Praetorius recording and, finding few instruments that would fit the bill, began to examine the V & A's 'Queen Elizabeth's Virginals' with a view to commissioning a copy. Far from providing an easy solution, research into the virginals (and particularly the changes made to it over its lifetime as a playing instrument) raised, according to Pickett, many more questions than it answered. It seemed probable, for a number of reasons, not least the keyboard's extended treble compass, that a low overall pitch could well have been part of the original specification. Around the same time Pickett was approached after a London concert by Nicholas Mitchell, a singer, wind player and musicologist whose article 'Choral and Instrumental Pitch in Church Music, 1570-1620' had appeared in the March 1995 *Galpin Society Journal*. Mitchell wanted to borrow a recorder pitched at A=466Hz to help him with some research, but it soon became clear that he himself had much to offer Pickett.

To fully understand the importance of Mitchell's work a detailed study of his GSJ article would be advisable, but, in a nutshell, the notion of Renaissance and early Baroque pitch standards being at best a highly localised phenomenon is stood on its head. Mitchell's evidence is wide-ranging and seemingly watertight, based on fresh organological reassessment and a Europe-wide examination of performance practice. Not only does it seem that there was, indeed, agreement on pitch from court to court, and, surprisingly, country to country, but that such standards that existed were part of a wider, interdependent system of pitches, separated, in a practical sense, only by common, easy transpositions. For keyboard instruments, and particularly harpsichords, it seems that a low pitch of A=348Hz should be regarded as reference pitch.

The implications of this are numerous, and telling. First, it makes sense of instruments such as 'Queen Elizabeth's Virginals' whose original Italian keyboards contain notes at the treble end well outside the scope of all but a few pieces in the Renaissance repertoire. Second, it adequately explains, perhaps for the first time, the offset of the keyboards on a transposing double. With the upper keyboard giving A=348Hz reference pitch, the lower keyboard gives A=520Hz when played up an octave. Transposing up a fourth on each keyboard gives the other two pitch standards, A=466Hz and A=392Hz, identified by Mitchell and associated with specific musical genres and functions. By the same token, the 5-voet (A=392Hz) and 6-voet (A=348Hz) Ruckers instruments, which have always sat uncomfortably in a simplistic view of Renaissance pitch, suddenly find a role. Perhaps most importantly, however, from a musical perspective, is the low keyboard pitch's effect of rendering the majority of top lines in the music into a natural vocal range. Indeed, the close correspondence between instrumental compass with that of the human voice is an underlying theme in Mitchell's work.

If Mitchell's theories appear esoteric, then surely they can only properly be assessed when put into practice. This is where the charismatic Joel Katzman comes into the picture. Pickett and his wife, harpsichordist Sharona Joshua, had been drawn to Katzman's instruments first on the basis of sound and sheer quality, and perhaps, too, because of Katzman's willingness to address the question of real authenticity versus the self-supporting orthodoxy of 20th-century harpsichord making practice. It seems entirely apt, then, that it should be he Katzman who was chosen to construct a low pitch harpsichord in line with Mitchell's findings. Pickett wanted a copy of an instrument which could be regarded first as a classic of the Renaissance, and also one which represented the mainstream building tradition of its time, and not an 'oddball' instrument.

The RCM's 1531 Trasuntino was, then, chosen for a number of reasons. The instrument showed some clear evidence of its original specification, it was from a mainstream Venetian builder, and, as Pickett himself puts it, it is a 'Rolls Royce' amongst harpsichords. The fact that plans of it were available was an obvious advantage. A year or so down the line and the Katzman Trasuntino was taking shape. One of its most interesting features, which has caused some controversy (notably amongst those who have neither heard nor played the instrument) is its low-tension stringing in iron. This goes against the normal practice, advocated by O'Brien and many others, of taking strings close to their breaking points. On the Trasuntino the strings are three or four semitones off this point, and this contributes a good deal to the instrument's unique sound. Katzman had had experience of low-tension iron scaling before, principally with some 17th-century French instruments, and it was on his advice that an earlier, experimental Ruckers copy by Titus Crijnen had been lowered to A=392Hz, to great effect. It is interesting to note here that John Barnes had proposed the whole concept of a lower Renaissance reference pitch, on the basis of his organological observations, perhaps thirty years ago, but his ideas were never taken up.

Katzman finished the Trasuntino in early summer this year and delivered it to Pickett in June. I went to see it at the end

of a week during which many of the UK's harpsichordists had played it, and I was able to discuss the various aspects of the instrument with both Pickett and Katzman. Visually the harpsichord is simple but elegant, with a cypress case and slab-sawn cypress soundboard. Attention to detail is obvious but there is a refreshing honesty and a kind of ruggedness about it which is very reminiscent of the original. The compass is CC/EE-f³, with an interchangeable GG/BB-c³ keyboard for A=466Hz work. Quilling is in seagull, and the instrument is strung with Ormiston wire, originally produced for Hugh Goff, and apparently quite different from 'industry standard' Rose wire. There are two registers - an 8 foot and a 4 foot.

Whilst it is always difficult to give an impression of sound in print, and although attempts to do so can often make for spectacularly dull reading, the qualities of the Katzman Trasuntino are so special, and sufficiently removed from any comparable modern copy, that they definitely deserve some mention. It certainly sounds nothing like any other Italian instrument I've encountered. Familiar repertoire takes on a rich, dark, sonorous tone, quite different from the coarse, 'poppy' treble that has come to define the small Italian harpsichord sound. In fact the traditional Flemish/ Italian divide is simply not an issue: the Katzman Trasuntino has a more generic, universal sound, far better suited to treble-based solo repertoire, which takes on a more lyrical, vocal quality. For continuo work the sound is better integrated into, and less prominent within a consort – indeed this is an instrument that sounds superb doubling instrumental parts. The low string tension gives the impression of improved sustain in the treble, but also makes the instrument feel, and sound, very flexible and fluid. Voiced in quill the touch is exacting but tremendously responsive – ornamentation feels somehow more natural in many cases, and the ever-present sonority invites the player to experiment with a plethora of overholding and colour effects, of which Katzman himself is a great advocate.

The comparison of the Trasuntino's sound with that of the lute is valid and informative. It is one of the first harpsichords that I've played which really allows exploration of lute style in the manner suggested by so many contemporary sources. This, apparently, falls very much into line with Katzman's own views on harpsichord usage and playing style. Katzman aggressively defends his own approach to building, suggesting that other makers 'play' at authenticity, producing instruments that fail to live up to objective historical standards and comparisons with originals. He rejects utterly the claim that time plays much of a role in developing a harpsichord's sound, citing makers who use the excuse of an instrument's newness to defend intrinsically poor sound quality. Instead he advocates proper research into stringing practice and materials, soundboard support and bracing, woods and grain orientation, and quill voicing techniques, all in attempt to establish a sound, objective basis for building. If Katzman's arguments are persuasive, his instrument is even more so, and I was left in no doubt of this after hearing at close quarters a whole range of dance movements, ricercars and toccatas played by Sharona Joshua.

As yet there has been no response from researchers such as O'Brien whose work is called into question by Mitchell. And whilst some critics have quoted Praetorius or referred to Renaissance wind pitch in objection to Mitchell's work these arguments have been shown to be spurious, or at best inconclusive, especially since the evidence which backs up Mitchell's theories continues to accumulate.

There are two opportunities to hear the Katzman Trasuntino in London in the near future. Sharona Joshua is giving a recital of Frescobaldi, Picchi, de Macque and Cavazzoni at the Italian Cultural Institute in Belgrave Square at 7pm on 2nd November. The harpsichord will also be the focus of attention on Joel Katzman's stand at the forthcoming International Early Music Exhibition at the RCM, 29th-31st October. Mitchell, and in its own way the Katzman Trasuntino, may ultimately force everyone involved with Renaissance music, whether as directors, players, singers, makers or writers, to redefine their perspectives. As Philip Pickett himself writes, 'After years of research the production of this unique instrument marks one of the most important developments in the modern harpsichord revival since makers started copying surviving instruments.' Having read the research, and heard the result of it, I can confirm this is no overstatement.

Tickets for Sharona Joshua's recital at the ICI are free, but places should be reserved by contacting the Institute:
Tel 0171 235 1461, Fax. 0171 235 4618,
e-mail ici@italcultur.org.uk)

DER STEIN DER WEISEN

Peter Branscombe

***Der Stein der Weisen, oder: Die Zauberinsel: Heroic-comic Opera in 2 acts* by Emanuel Schikaneder, music by J. B. Henneberg, B. Schack, F. X. Gerl, E. Schikaneder and W. A. Mozart** Boston Baroque, Martin Pearlman 124' 20" + discussion disc 24' 25"
Telarc **DSD CD-80508** (3 CDs for the price of 2)

Here is a recording of major importance to anyone with an interest in Viennese opera and singspiel in the late 18th century. The excitement generated in 1997 by the announcement that the American scholar David J. Buch had discovered hitherto unknown theatre music by Mozart was not confined to the specialist musical press – leading newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic carried front page headlines. We must be patient until the full score is published, but here is a very rewarding recording of the music and dialogue of *The Philosophers' Stone, or: The Magic Island* emanating from the performances given at the New England Conservatory during the AMS Conference in autumn 1998.

The average opera-lover perforce knows little of the music of the Viennese suburban theatres apart from *The Magic Flute*. Around 1790 there was considerable rivalry between Schikaneder's Freihaustheater auf der Wieden and Marinelli's Theater in der Leopoldstadt. In the latter, Wenzel Müller and Ferdinand Kauer provided ambitious musical scores to farces involving Kasperl, a stock comic figure derived from the old Hanswurst tradition. Schikaneder, a more recent arrival on the Viennese scene, answered with a series of singspiels involving the figure of Anton, a rather stupid gardener. In Johann Baptist Henneberg, Schikaneder had a very good music director and composer, and several of the singer-actors in his company were also talented composers, and – often, surely, because time was short before the next premiere – it was handy to be able to farm out the composition among his musicians. As this new recording makes clear, composition by committee could be surprisingly successful.

Hitherto we have had to make do with the scant information about *The Philosophers' Stone* that emerged from the researches of Otto Erich Deutsch, Egon Komorzynski and one or two other scholars. It was known that the score was a joint venture, as were so many of the works put on by Schikaneder in the Freihaustheater from 1789 onwards; Deutsch's still unsurpassed 1937 listing of first performances at the theatre gives the composers as 'B. Schack and others'. In 1996 Professor Buch, working in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Hamburg on manuscripts returned in 1991 from their post-war internment in Russia, discovered that the score of *Der Stein der Weisen* contained attributions number by number to no fewer than five composers, in the order listed above. For obvious reasons it was the name of Mozart that caused the most excitement; but a feature that any listener to this recording will soon note is that the standard is remarkably high throughout, and that there is little or no lack of unity within the work as a whole. This is in part, of course, due to the fact that it is a singspiel, with dialogue (here sensibly abbreviated) between the numbers. But Schikaneder's controlling hand as director as well as librettist (and, briefly, as composer – his earlier known compositions date from some years before) deserves credit for creating a piece that delightfully combines a simple story-line with dramatic happenings and amusing situations. It is worth mentioning that he valued the work highly enough to choose a scene from it (of Lubano standing outside his hut, in which his wife is temporarily imprisoned) for the frontispiece to his theatre almanac for the year 1791 – probably the sole surviving visual representation of the Freihaustheater. This little engraving would have made a welcome additional illustration for the insert booklet.

One of the many notable features of the score is its adventurousness. It is easy to think of a singspiel as containing mainly short songs and a few simple ensembles, and that in this respect *Die Zauberflöte* breaks new ground. Of course Mozart's opera is on an incomparably higher musical level, but structurally it isn't so far in advance of *Der Stein der Weisen*, which has overtures to each of the acts, both leading into choruses with solos, three further numbers of this kind, two duets, imposing accompagnati, a march, ten well-contrasted, mainly short arias, and two extensive, multi-sectioned finales lasting around twenty-four and nineteen minutes respectively. There are a capella passages, exacting wind obbligati, dance and hunting rhythms; some of the tunes are catchy, others touching, reminding one now of *Die Entführung* or *Don Giovanni*, now of works that one can't quite place (it's also easy to hear pre-echoes of *Die Zauberflöte*, and not just in the passages marked as by WAM). Some of the music unattributed in the Hamburg score is good enough to be by him – not Mozart in top form: he was too generous, and too much the practical man of the theatre, to want to outshine his collaborators here. The point is, one often finds oneself wondering as one listens to this music, is there really the expected clear-cut dividing-line between the contributions of the journeymen and the supreme master? I think the answer is 'no'. I am particularly impressed by the numbers that bear the name of Henneberg – easily the most heavily employed of the five collaborators, and on the available evidence someone whose music deserves to be much better known. But of course it is Mozart who commands our attention, and his longstanding friendly relations with Schikaneder, and more recently with Benedikt Schack, as is evinced not least by an entry in F. J. Lipowsky's *Baierisches*

Musik-Lexikon (1811) and by Constanze Mozart's letter to Schack of 16 February 1826, are reason enough for Mozart's involvement with the troupe a year and more before *The Magic Flute*. We need look no further than Mozart's correspondence for evidence of his sense of fun that could bubble over in a moment, as when he reports to Constanze in the letter of 8/9 October 1791 the trick he played on Schikaneder with Papageno's glockenspiel during a performance. His collaboration on *The Philosophers' Stone*, whether it is due to Schikaneder direct, or to his liking for helping Schack with his compositions, is entirely in character.

As with *The Magic Flute*, Wranitzky's *Oberon* and Wenzel Müller's *Kaspar der Fagottist*, the libretto is derived from the writings of C. M. Wieland; his collection of oriental fairy-tales entitled *Dschinnistan* is the principal source for many Singspiels. The libretto of *Der Stein der Weisen* (hitherto thought to be lost, but also discovered in Hamburg by the indefatigable Buch) hasn't the economy and symmetry of *The Magic Flute*'s book – for which, as Schikaneder later stated, he had the benefit of Mozart's committed collaboration – but it serves its purpose very well, with striking stage sets, dramatic situations, and colourful characters.

This recorded performance is in no respect less than good and in several respects could hardly be better. Martin Pearlman directs Boston Baroque with commitment and enthusiasm; phrasing could at times be more flexible: the occasional sticky patch in the score, and some of the repetitions, could perhaps have been more sensitively handled. The period-instrument orchestra is lively and of a standard that Schikaneder's Freihaus ensemble would have envied, with good balance between the strings and winds, the latter often faced with exacting solos. A German language-coach is named in the credits; she clearly had her work cut out with some of the singers. One of the few disappointments, indeed, is that Kevin Deas as Lubano (the proto-Papageno) fails to convey the wit and ease of utterance of the Volkstheater, well though he actually sings. In that respect he is comfortably outshone by Jane Giering-De Haan as Lubanara, his flighty wife whose indiscretion with the god of the underworld leads to her temporary imprisonment and sentence to miaow like a cat (in the duet long known to have Mozart's hand upon it). The vocal writing is often extremely demanding. Kurt Streit sings very well most of the beneficent god Astromonte's music, but he is considerably strained by the coloratura in his big solo in the Act I finale. His brother deity, Alan Ewing as the evil Eutifronte, has problems with the lowest notes in the taxing accompagnato that Franz Xaver Gerl, the creator of the role, wrote for himself. Indeed, one of the fascinations of the whole enterprise is to hear music that was in some cases written by these talented second-string composers for themselves to sing.

The heroine and hero are well taken by Judith Lovat (Nadine, the role created by Anna Gottlieb, the first Pamina) and Paul Austin Kelly (Nadir); their trials are mild by comparison with those in *Die Zauberflöte*, their music often quite as challenging as what Mozart wrote a year later. The comic couple are kept busiest of the cast, with three solos for Lubano (Schikaneder, as in the Flute, believed in giving himself the lion's part), one for Lubanara, and two duets, apart from their often important share in the larger ensembles. As expert a singer as Sharon Baker takes the minor role of the spirit messenger. Sadik, ruler of the Arcadian land in which the action unfolds, father to Nadine and adoptive father to Nadir, is impressively taken by Chris Pedro Trakas.

The rather cramped cardboard slipcase and jewel-box also contains a third CD with a spoken introduction to the work, illustrated with well-chosen parallel scenes from *Die Zauberflöte*. More important, the booklet contains illuminating introductory essays by David Buch and Martin Pearlman, a detailed synopsis, and the libretto, in German and (often inaccurate) English translation. A word of warning: have a magnifying glass handy, as the type is very small. I urge readers to buy this set, which has the additional advantage of being very well recorded. But buy it soon, as unusual recordings of this kind have a nasty habit of disappearing rapidly from the catalogues, and this is an issue that no Mozartian or Viennese addict can afford to miss. Perhaps we can even dare to look forward to recordings from the same source of other music from these delightful Viennese confections, also unearthed by Buch, and discussed in his publications, *Der wohlthätige Derwisch, oder: Die Schellenkappe*, for example.

Anyone wanting fuller information about these discoveries can be confidently referred to David J Buch's article, 'Mozart and the Theater auf der Wieden: New attributions and perspectives', published in Cambridge Opera Journal, ix/3 (November 1997), pp. 195-232. The score of the cat duet is appended to another article by Buch in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 124 (1999), pp. 53-85.

It seems very odd to me that this discovery of a work of such immense importance to anyone concerned with the music of Mozart should have happened in 1996 yet the music is only circulated now, not in score, but as a recording. Why hasn't modern technology been used to make the MS available? With all the attendant publicity, it would have been an ideal opportunity for combining a first recording with publication of a facsimile on disc – indeed, the very disc here that contains just 23 minutes of discussion and could easily have included a complete reproduction. We are now getting CDs of standard repertoire with sound plus the score: surely this would be far more useful for music for which the score is inaccessible. CB

RUGGIERO FREED

Michelene Wandor

Francesca Caccini: *LA LIBERAZIONE DI RUGGIERO DALL'ISOLA D'ALCINA* (The Rescue of Ruggiero)

9 October 1999, United Reformed Church, Muswell Hill, London N10

To the United Reformed Church in the far reaches of northern London last night, to view what is believed to be the first outing in this country for an Entertainment in the New Style, known variously as the *Seconda Prattica*, or the *Stile Rappresentativo*. All I can say is that it appears to mean a story, with figures and events from the depths of mythology retold by one of our earliest soap-opera afficionados, Ariosto, and then selected cantos VI, VII and VIII, relayed to recount the fable of one young Ruggiero, already in love with Bradamante, but at the start of last evening, in thrall to the seductive sorceress Alcina, securely ensconced on her Island. And the whole composed to Musick by Francesca Caccini, without a single syllable ever spoken. I believe in future times this genre will come to be called opera; here, however, it was an Opera in the sense of the operative Work, and given with great enthusiasm by a young company who are embarking on a series of musical presentations, called 'Unsung Heroines' and called from the Distaff side of our musical heritage.

Francesca Caccini is already well known to us as an instrumentalist (lute, harp, keyboards) singer and poet, and one of the daughters of the deservedly famed Giulio Caccini, whose influence is heard in myriad melismata throughout the Land of Song. First performed in 1625 at a villa somewhere near Florence, the Facsimile of this work incorporates a drawing of Neptune rising from the Waves in a Chariot, and I was not a little Curious to see how the Waters would fare in the United Reform, but I was reassured. Robed in black, with coloured Ribbands of various hues, the Singers and Musicians inhabited nave and broad stage with Magical purpose: Neptune, Ruggiero, Alcina, Melissa (both sorceresses), and various Trees, Monsters, Ladies and Others, with a hardy band of virtually concealed Musicians, who fortunately did not have to play under water.

In the original Musick, some instruments are assigned – three Recorders for the pastoral Ritornelli, and Tromboni joining with other continuo instruments and Strings for part of Ruggiero's Singing. Conducting from Keyboard, Leah Stuttard, also combined and alternated harpsichord with organ, and cello and chordal viola da gamba for other dramatic occasions, and gave Ruggiero more than one bass sackbutt to Deepen his bass line.

The Singing, I must say, was almost uniformly excellent, especially Lisa Carlioth, whose potent Alcina, now Seductive, now aching with pain, as Melissa lures her Ruggiero away, quite made me Forget that she was originally an evil Sorceress. Perhaps Caccini had a Secret sympathy with a woman whom Seduction led to love; perhaps she envied Alcina's talent for Turning Men into Trees.

The Opera itself is structurally gauche (to my contemporary Mind); it dribbles away after Alcina has unsuccessfully pleaded for Ruggiero to Remain, and the Postlude is a series of Sycophantic Tributes to Caccini's female Patronnes. Here, in the absence of the composer's original Balli, three by fellow-scribes were heard: Cavallieri, da Gagliano and Tedesco, but even this did not entirely compensate for the inadequate Resolution. Perhaps Caccini was merely echoing Ariosto, and ending where his episode ends, with a Cliff-Hanger.

The Ending revealed also one of the Limitations of probably too-short rehearsal time and of the nature of a Concert Performance. For too long in the Second Half, the singers merely Stood or Sat, when both Score and Audience Interest begged them to dance. Perhaps all the Choreographers were on a Cruise; they should be Tempted to return before the Piece is attempted again. The Band similarly need to be less Shy, and could festoon the Performance Space, so that we can see them more clearly, and greater familiarity with the music could bring out more of its Rhythmic variety and pacing.

Dramatically, it is composed of extended dialogue sections, choruses and some longer Set Pieces (a floating Sirena, Larnx and Feet, from Clare Norburn, and a Commanding messenger from director Lindsay Richardson), with Ritornelli extended for the performance. The singers ornamented most happily, with more than a Nod to the guidance of Father Giulio, but some used an identical cadential Swoop-Up-and-Down-Again figure rather too Oft. An Ornament must take you by Surprise each time, and you should not be left Singing-Along to it too much.

I Sense that everyone is wondering whether we have a true competitor to Monteverdi, to name but Three. All I can say is that the Court of the United Reform Church held many luminaries last Night, including Anthony Rooley, Emma Kirkby, Stanley Sadie, and their applause was enthusiastic. I am sure we shall see more Performances of *Ruggiero* before long. Meanwhile, Gentlemen, take care to avoid Sorceresses, and Ladies, keep away from Trees. They may be Magicked Men.

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

Canti Gregoriani: Adorate Deum... in Sanctis Eius Schola Gregoriana 'Scriptoria', Nicola Bellinzano *dir* 65' 22"
Tactus **TC 100002**

Like the Carmelite Priory choir reviewed below, this is a highly proficient group of singers, performing technically and musically at the highest level. The repertoire, arranged theologically rather than liturgically, is less popular; the style is slightly older-fashioned, still influenced, though not dominated, by the fluid (some might say slithery) rhythms of the school of Solesmes. The sound has a good body to it (no, I'm not writing this in a wine bar) and, without any exaggeration, makes the chant feel tougher than it often does. *CB*

Franciscan Road The Friars of St Saviour's Monastery, Jerusalem, Armando Pierucci *dir*
Divine Art **2-7003** 57' 49"

It is tempting, if an exaggeration, to say that the most striking feature is the cover: four Franciscans on a pedestrian crossing, whose no-entry sign would betray that it wasn't Abbey Road (which is two-way) even if it didn't have a Hebrew inscription. The appeal of a programme of simple chant outlining the life of Christ sung by friars of the monastery of St Saviour in Jerusalem is more likely to be spiritual than musical. The singing is, in fact, moving and sincere, and the chant is selected to match the friars' abilities. They are a little embarrassing in the other, non-chant items with organ, which is to their credit, since the music itself is embarrassing. This is the first of several discs that Stephen Sutton, the man behind Divine Art, has sent us this month. I would guess that his heart is in the right place as well as his commercial acumen, since there is no doubt a market of tourists and the faithful for his product. But a little more rigorous self-criticism is necessary if his output is to survive the gaze of the wider, less devout musical world. The booklet has substantial notes in English and Italian, but the texts are in Latin only. *CB*

Gregorian Chant The Choir of the Carmelite Priory, John McCarthy 51' 34" (rec 1961)
Decca (*Penguin Classics*) **460 641-2** ££

This forms a nice contrast with *Franciscan Road*. There the image is of a working, praying community; this gives the alternative, a highly skilled, professional group of singers – a select, specialised *schola*. (I'm guessing: the notes give no indication about the performers.) This isn't a disc to try if you want something overtly holy and mystical: the music is sung clearly, sometimes boldly. I like it. All that's wrong is the booklet, which has no texts or translations, just one very general page on the music headed 'Musicology' and two meandering pages by Richard Maby, whose claim to fame is writing about Gilbert White, nightingales and *Flora Britannica* – as helpful as any introduction I could write to a disc of bird-song. *CB*

Missa in Gallicantu & Carols: Christmas Music from Medieval England The Burgundian Cadence (Rupert Damerell, Simon Biazeck, Matthew Woodhouse, Damian O'Keefe)
Zenobia **ZEN401** 57' 12"

The propers of the Sarum First Mass for Christmas Day (which the brief booklet note reckons to have taken place at dawn despite Shakespeare's testimony to the unreliable timing of cocks on Christmas night; more seriously, see Jason Smart's letter in *EMR* 37, p. 21), interspersed with carols: a good idea. The most distinctive feature is the controversial use of drones below the chant. The pronunciation of the carols sounds more modern than usual: perhaps Alison Wray's advice is that they date from after the vowel shift. I'm puzzled at Landini cadences not being sharpened – it seems to defeat their point (or is that a Burgundian cadence?) I won't complain: this is an attractive disc, well-sung by a young ATTB group. But I'll tire of the drones before I tire of the carols. *CB*

According to the letter sent with the review copy, texts etc are available from www.burgundian.co.uk, but this is not mentioned on the packaging or booklet.

MEDIEVAL

La Dame à la licorne: 'A mon seul desir' La Compagnie Médiévale 69' 44"
Collection Romane **CR103**

I first listened to this blind (at least, in the dark without reading the booklet: judging by the documentation of many CDs, though not this one, the public must be expected to do this often). I made very little sense of the sequence of music. It was performed skilfully, but there was a distinctly modern ethos behind it, despite the old instruments and vocal style. Turning to the booklet, I found that this is the music of an allegorical dramatic show based on the six tapestries *Lady with the Unicorn* at the Musée National du Moyen Age in Paris. If the production is revived, the disc deserves to sell well as a souvenir; but listening again with the booklet did not bring the event sufficiently to life, despite the individual excellences. A video would have made more sense. *CB*

Grantjoie: A Minstrel's Journey Strada (Pierre Langevin, Pierre Tanguay, Guy Ross) with Liette Remon 57' 20"
Analekta **AN 2 8811**

This comes from the folk end of the medieval revival. Various whoops from the four players and singers in the first track set the scene. Like the preceding disc, this evocation of the 13th-century minstrels' life and work is based on a dramatic performance, but seems to exist rather better out of context, though the incidental noises become wearing: I'd like a device that can filter the atmospheric sounds so that I can hear them first time through, then cut for rehearing. I'm sure the group is fun heard live, preferably with a flagon of some alcoholic beverage to enhance the experience. It is, however, good to hear a different side to medieval culture from the suave, courtly sound of Gothic Voices. *CB*

Joy Pastance 60' 21"
Move **MCD 129**
Music by A. Cronin, Donato da Firenze, Dowland, Dunstable, Henry VIII, Hildegard, Landini, Machaut & anon

One has to remove the shrink-wrap to discover whether the title is Pastance and the group Joy or vice-versa. The shorter word suggested to me a disc by the Sally Army, happy-clappers or gospel singers. In fact, it comprises mostly medieval music, on the the whole stylishly performed, though some editorial middle-parts sound odd sung at the wrong octave. Singers rarely win: either we criticise them for being too wobbly or else, as here, the intonation can be suspect, which is not surprising when the sound is so raw and exposed (those words are intended as compliments.) The Oxbridge voice is not the only one for early music (effective though it is with groups like Gothic Voices). I'm not sure if I'm convinced by the *joy* theme, but this is an attractive anthology. With its folksy style it will probably be enjoyed most by those approaching early music from that world. *CB*

One of the two 'trad' items is Black is the colour of my true love's hair, *which I think is a pseudo-folk song composed by John Jacob Niles; the arrangement here is ingenious, but can't remove memories of Joan Baez and of Berio's setting for voice and viola. Move discs are available outside Australia from Lindum Records.*

Master of the Rolls: Music by English composers of the fourteenth century Gothic Voices, Christopher Page *dir* 59' 05"
Hyperion **CDA67098**

The composers are anonymous Englishmen of the 14th century whose music would have been recorded on rolls like the one shown on the cover. There are three styles. The first, shown most memorably in the first piece *Ab ora summa nuncius*, is homophonic and mellifluous, the second is polytextual and vigorous, the third is monodic – mostly the simpler sort of chant. Gothic Voices has changed singers over the years, but the ability to characterise style by sound is unchanged. *O quanta delectatio horum simul canencium! O mira modulacio sonorum musicalium! O dulcis altercacio acutorum et gravium mediorumque vicio discordie carencium!* If you don't under-

stand these compliments, you'll have to buy the disc to read the translation of the final piece. *CB*

Vocal Music of the 14th Century Mora Vocis
Mandala **MAN 4946** 53' 30
Music by de Vitry, Machaut & anon

The immediate shock is hearing what sounds like a choir singing the *Agnus* of the Barcelona Mass. There are, in fact, only seven singers, all ladies, but that is at least twice the number needed for most of the music, taken from Fauvel, de Vitry, Machaut, and the Apt, Barcelona and Cyprus MSS. However, once one gets used to the sound it is pleasing and lets the music sound clearly. The music is nicely characterised: no anonymous performances here, though the tuning doesn't match Gothic Voices. I find the continual high sounds a bit wearing, but perhaps that is the unregenerate prefeminist streak in me. *CB*

15th CENTURY

Vox Organalis: Gothic Keyboard Music Joseph Payne *org* 62' 46"
Koch Discover **DICD 920593** ££

This is a fascinating collection of 36 pieces from the Buxheimer Orgelbuch and other lesser-known German organ manuscripts of the 15th century, although the sparse CD notes do not identify the source of any of the pieces. It is unlikely that many *EMR* readers will be familiar with this repertoire, but it is well worth discovering for yourself. Although the pieces are short, with a number of motifs that turn up all too often, there is much to delight the ear, with some beautiful melodic lines treated to the simplest of contrapuntal accompaniments. Two organs are used – a modern instrument with an amazing array of bells and special effects, including a bass drum, and the remarkable early 15th-century organ at Kreward, in the remote northeast corner of Holland. Although there are many examples of toy stops and other gadgets attached to organs in the 15th to 17th century, their use is not well documented. But the organ of the 15th century was full of dramatic possibilities, complete with monsters with revolving eyes and other such fripperies to frighten the ungodly. There is also some evidence that early organs could have been tuned to the same pitch as the church bells (there is a CD of Harald Vogel playing the late medieval organ at Rysum, not far from Kreward over the German border, together with the church bells) and there is much earlier iconographical evidence of the combination of organ and bells. This CD gives you a chance to hear what it might have sounded like. The Kreward organ, although lacking such gadgets, is an astonishing survival of a late medieval organ. It has a very powerful voice, speaking from its screen gallery into the tiny church with a distinctive vocal timbre. This is well worth a listen, although the scholarship of programme notes should not be relied upon. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

16th CENTURY

Byrd *The Complete Keyboard Music* Davitt Moroney 497' 29" (7 discs for the price of 5)
Hyperion **CDA66551/7**

If you have any interest at all in Byrd, keyboard music, English culture, or, indeed, music of any sort, buy this set. First, for the music itself. One of the most significant publications in my life was the cheap Dover paperback of the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. Despite some quibbles, the original 1899 edition was amazingly good for its date, and its cheap reissue in 1963 introduced me (and surely many others) for the first time to unbowdlerised versions of the music. I have probably used it more than any other keyboard publication that I own, despite its gradual replacement by composer volumes from *Musica Britannica*, especially the two devoted to Byrd. It was Byrd that I played most, chiefly the variations, which is why the subsequent Dover *My Ladye Nevell's Book* had less impact on me. My initial excitement was at the piano; only later did I acquire a harpsichord. Apart from my own playing, there is one performance – a much-played tape of a broadcast by John Beckett – that coloured my feeling for the music. I was afraid that this new recording might not live up to its image – I can't have heard it for 20 years. But fortunately Davitt Moroney achieves performances that are in the style I like: the sort that seems as if the performer is adding nothing – but *summa ars est celare artem*.

Most of his recent recording has been of later music, but his PhD was on Tallis and he is entirely at home in this period. The instruments are varied, though not in any kaleidoscopic way, neatly shaping the well-designed programme. Each disc can be heard as a satisfying entity, though I would probably replay the third disc least, recorded on a North-Geman style organ by Ahrend in Toulouse: I found it a bit overpowering. The other instruments are a Goff clavichord, a Goetz & Gwynn four-stop organ, harpsichords after A. Ruckers (1644) and J, Couchet (1679) and a muselar virginals after J. Couchet (1650) – none based on instruments of Byrd's time: that might worry others more than it worries me. Byrd's music is not, on the whole, full of notes; but every note counts, and every note is here given its due attention.

The set comes in a cardboard box with each disc slipped in its own cover (no plastic) and a 200-page booklet (diminutive in page and type size, not in length) in English and French, an essential companion to the music and a valuable piece of work in its own right: libraries need to buy and keep it. I don't want to make a balance sheet of praise and blame: there is, indeed, very little of the latter. With the complete vocal music on its way from ASV, Byrd-lovers have never had it so good – though there have evidently been some vicissitudes in finding an outlet for this project. I hope Ted Perry's confidence is repaid. *CB*

Lindum Records are selling the set for £60.00

Fuenllana *Libro de música para vihuela intitulado Orphénica lyra* Nuria Rial, Carlos Mena *SA*, José Miguel Moreno *vihuela & dir* of *instr. ensemble* 60' 53"
Glossa **GCD 920204**
Includes versions of music by Flecha, Fontana, Morales, Ortiz/Arcadelt, Narvaez, Sermisy, Vazquez

I enjoyed this. But second time round I had a few doubts; the lingering that was originally delightful became over-languid and I wanted greater impetus. I started asking myself a few questions: why drag out the brief *Tant que vivray* to 5' 20" but only perform sections from Flecha's ensaladas? I assumed initially that Fuenllana had only printed excerpts; but no, they are complete in the Jacobs edition. And having read Ian Harwood (see p. 8), I wondered whether the same arguments were relevant here as well. Since the emphasis is on Fuenllana's sources, the focus of Ivan Moody's note seems off the mark. But third time through, I enjoyed it again. *CB*

Pierre de la Rue *Lamentationes Jeremiae*; Isaac *Oratio Jeremiae Prophetae* Sudwestdeutscher Kammerchor Tubingen, Rolf Maier-Karius *dir* 40' 49"
Cornetto **COR10006**

While the singing of this music from Rhau's *Selectae harmoniae quatuor vocum de passione Domini*, 1538, is generally expressive and well-blended, the tuning occasionally falls short of the ideal, and some entries and articulations are a little fluffy. I can't help feeling in the Lamentations that if the conductor had taken some of the movements a little slower and eschewed the mannered, surging style which seems to be pervading continental choral performances of music of this period these days, things might have sounded a lot more comfortable. As it is, while nothing too painful occurs, there are too many sour moments and blurred phrases to make this performance wholly satisfactory. This is a pity as the music is of a high quality, but should also be relatively accessible to a non-specialist chamber ensemble such as the SKT. At 40' 49" the disc is not over-generously filled, and the programme note, in German only, is of general rather than of scholarly interest. However, this issue provides a telling insight into the wholehearted support such projects receive on the Continent. In tandem with the disc, Cornetto has published the music in facsimile and performance editions, and the Heilbronn City Archive, which houses the original edition, has helped to finance the disc. I suspect that this is a set of circumstances that many British ensembles could only dream of! *D. James Ross*

Maschera *Libro primo de canzoni da sonare a quattro voci (1584)* Il Viaggio Musicale 60' 41"
Kicco Classic **KC00695CD** (rec 1995)

Maschera's four-part Canzonas achieved an enormous popularity, with half a dozen reprints; but although entertaining to play, they are hardly the best music of the 1580s. No original instrumentation is specified.

This complete recording of the 21 pieces begins on the organ (on a 1544 instrument at Piacenza) in deference to his description as *organista nel duomo di Brescia* on the title page. There are four other scorings used: strings, flutes, a mixed ensemble of recorder, violin, gamba and dulcian, and solo lute: a distinct improvement on the usual undisciplined mix-and-match.The playing is good, apart from an occasional tendency to find more in the music than is really there. I hope the booklet notes read better in Italian than English, though there are some interesting comments on performance. *CB*

This is one of several discs recorded over the last few years and reviewed this month that are now imported by One For You (available from Lindum Records).

The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book: transcriptions for a mixed consort charivari agréable 70' 17"
Signum **SIGCD009** *See p. 8*

Stabat Mater: Late Medieval Motets of Penitence and Passion Cantores, David Allinson
ASV *Quicksilva* **CD QS 6234** ££
Cornysh Jr *Woefully araide*, Gombert *Lugebat David Absalon*, Josquin *Stabat mater*, Mouton *Ave Maria gemma virginum*, Pashe *Sancta Maria mater Dei*, Sheppard *Media vita*

This ambitious collection of motets includes some very demanding music in terms of choral technique, but also in terms of sheer stamina. Just occasionally the strain shows, such as in some of the later pages of Sheppard's *Media vita*, but on the whole these are competent and expressive performances with episodes of impressive energy and focus. The upper voices are generally more pleasing in tone and technically proficient than the lower, a fact cruelly exemplified in the solo quartet who perform William Cornysh Junior's *Woefully araide*, where the tenor singing is indeed woeful. This is a lowpoint which a more ruthless editor would have dropped from an already generous programme. ASV's bargain-price Quicksilva label serves a valuable purpose in bringing new groups to wider attention, and we should look forward with interest to future visits by Cantores to the recording studio. *D. James Ross*

I did not realise when I sent this out that we had already reviewed its previous issue under its own label in EMR 49, p. 20. So check and compare the reviews.

17th CENTURY

Buxtehude ***Trio Sonatas*** **[op. 1]** The Boston Museum Trio (Daniel Stepner *vln*, Laura Jeppesen *gamba*, John Gibbons *hpscd*) 56' 17"
Centaur **CRC 2391** (rec 1995)

Buxtehude's reputation these days tends to derive from his organ works and church music, but the pieces published in his own lifetime were mostly trio sonatas for violin, gamba (which often plays a decorated version of the bass line) and continuo. The seven sonatas of Op.1 show his enviable powers of invention, ranging from strict imitation through imaginative variations to quirky fantasy. So it is frustrating that these performances by the Boston Museum Trio tend to be workmanlike rather than inspired. Stepner's somewhat heavy-handed violin playing and the often relentless continuo mask the more lyrical qualities of the gamba and deprive the music of its quick-silver changes of mood, though the recorded sound has a clarity that gives contrapuntal details plenty of bite. It is the improvisatory basis of Buxtehude's style that makes his music leap off the page, and the Boston Trio tend to be too literal. A comparison with the recordings by Holloway/ter Linden/Mortensen or Trio Sonnerie shows just how impassioned or flamboyantly zany these pieces can be.
John Bryan

Readers will have realised from last month's editorial that Robert Oliver, our regular viol reviewer, is back in New Zealand, though he hopes to be in Britain for several months each year (starting next January). So we welcome John Bryan to review at least some of the viol repertoire.
Players may like to know that the Dutch facsimiles of Buxtehude's op. 1 & 2 (memorable for needing to be dismembered because the parts were bound together) are out of print, but Fuzeau have produced op. 1 for about £16.00, with op. 2 & the MS pieces to follow.

G. Corrette ***Messe du 8e ton*** René Saorgin (organ of Monaco Cathedral) 57' 21"
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 905245**
+ G. Jullien: extracts from *Premier Livre d'orgue*

The pinnacle of achievement of the French organ Baroque (for some reason, usually known as the French Classical) period came either side of the 1690s with the Organ Masses of François Couperin (1690) and Nicholas de Grigny (1699). Broadly speaking, composers before these two masters were mere forerunners, and organ composition got steadily sillier after the untimely death of de Grigny. The little known composers, Jullien and Corrette, neatly span this period. The French organ of the time was a vast pallet of tone colours, and detailed instructions survive for how to combine and contrast the various combinations. The modern organ used does not really do justice to the vibrant and rich tones found on surviving historic instruments, being altogether too refined a sound. The CD sleeve notes are pathetic – although at least a specification is included. The playing is stylish and confident, as it should be for an expert like Saorgin, but there are better demonstrations of the French organ, and its music, to be had. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Dowland ***Awake Sweet Love*** Julianne Baird *S*, David Taylor *lute*, The Robert DeCormier Singers 68' 23"
Arabesque Recordings **Z6622** rec 1991

An interesting recording. It is nice to hear the four-part versions of Dowland's songs, so often written off as ungainly arrangements. But two-to-a-part is an odd choice, neither solo voices (ideal) nor a blended choir. There is a stylistic clash between the fairly straightforward performances of the choral items and the dramatic (or perhaps wayward if you don't like it) singing of Julianne Baird. It is certainly fresh in comparison with the distanced declamation we usually hear in this repertoire, but I think the effect would be stronger if it worked within the tempo rather than pulled it around – but I always think that! *CB*

Du Mont ***Motets pour la Chapelle de Louis XIV*** Howard Crook, Hervé Lamy, Peter Harvey *ATB*, Les Pages et Chantres de la Chapelle, Ensemble Musica Æterna, Olivier Schneebeli *dir* (rec 1994)
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 61675 2** 0 ££

There was a snippet from this disc on last month's *A musical tour of Versailles* which had me craving more, so it's a double delight to be asked to review this re-release (in the sense that a different company launched it in 1994), as the orchestra is Slovakia's Musica Aeterna. They make a wonderful contribution to a generally marvellous recording. The booklet is the weak part, there being several spelling mistakes (including the leader of the group's surname), and, unless my ears are very deceptive, the transverse flutes are not mentioned. The text of the notes is also slightly shady, in making diverse claims about Du Mont's music, which I think reveal a lack of understanding of what's actually involved in grand motet performance. Be that as it may, the performances are very good. The only piece I'd heard on CD before was the Magnificat (from an old Herreweghe recording). The two instrumental pieces are very fine, as are the other three large motets (one lasting over a quarter of an hour). *O panis angelorum* sounded curiously high, suggesting that it had been printed in chiavette (not an unknown practice in France), and it jarred slightly, especially as the superstar continuo payers have made such an incisive contribution to the proceedings and are rather weak here. Since Herreweghe's Harmonia Mundi record, I've been longing to hear more big Du Mont (whom I've always called Dumont, as does New Grove); there's a large quantity of small-scale pieces, too, but no-one seems to have recorded them particularly well. There are still more grands motets – any takers? *BC*

Gibbons ***Music for Harpsichord & Virginals***
James Johnstone 67' 40"
ASV *Gaudeamus* **CD GAU 191**
MB20 nos 4-6, 8, 9, 11, 14-19, 24-27, 31, 32, 36, 42, 43 [NB number on booklet not always correct. Track 4=18, 17=22, 19=17]

Any new recordings of virginalist music is welcome, and such a fine one as this especially so. Johnstone's approach is balanced and straightforward yet perceptive. Important lines are pointed out without interrupting the overall flow, and expressive harmonies are clearly enjoyed without ever becoming indulgent. Johnstone uses a copy of a 1611 Johannes Ruckers muselar together with a 1970s Kroesbergen copy of an Italian original of 1694 by Stephanini. The latter instrument is fairly strident and has perhaps slightly too big a sound, but it is nothing that causes too much concern. A fine CD. *Robin Bigwood*

Le Camus *Airs de cour* Véronique Gens, Jean-Paul Fouchécourt *ST*, Pascal Monteilhet *theorbo* 59' 30" (rec 1994)
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 61674 2** 1 ££
+ Estienne Lemoine *Pièces de théorbe* in G

Most of these songs are taken from the 1678 publication, the last of such songs in France. These late airs display a far greater freedom both of form and declamation than those from earlier in the century, fully exploited by both singers. They receive sensitive support from the theorbist, who also contributes an enjoyable solo suite by the obscure Estienne Lemoine. Though this recital does capture much of the style's essential nobility, my first recommendation for a single disc of this repertoire would be the King/Heringman release from earlier this year. Full song texts are given but, regrettably, there are no translations. *David Hansell*

Monteverdi *Vespers* Apollo's Fire, Jeannette Sorrell 90' 45" (2 CDs)
Eclectra **ECCD-2038** *see p. 6*

Pandolfi Mealli *Complete Violin Sonatas* Andrew Manze *vln*, Richard Egarr *hpscd*
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907241** 80' 00"

I first encountered Pandolfi (or Mealli) when asked to review a two-disc boxed set (five minutes longer than this single disc) by Martha Moore and Joris Loeff for *Early Music* (Aug. 1993, p. 497). I was puzzled by the music, and though impressed in some respects, placed him as 'a composer of only erratic genius'. Omitting the 'only', this makes him tailor-made for Andrew Manze, whose first recording followed soon after (seven sonatas on Channel Classics CCS 5894, which I reviewed in *EM* Aug. 1994, p. 521). My problem there was a concern that he and Richard Egarr at times went over the top: not in itself objectionable, but worrying when something that is too idiosyncratic is fixed on a disc. (All performances, of course, have to be individual: it is a matter of degree.) Early music performance has in general got much freer even in the last five years, and anyway Pandolfi is a composer whose style (*stilus fantasticus* is a term that, in various spellings, is much more familiar now) demands such imaginative intervention. So such matters worry me far less. Players must love such music which leaves so much of the rhetoric to them. The performances are stunning, and should inspire all baroque violinists (though please don't copy too closely!) As we have come to expect, Manze excels not just in playing but in writing booklet notes. *CB*

G. B. Tibaldi *Trio Sonatas from opp. 1 & 2* Parnassi musici 69' 46"
cpo **999 633-2**

Parnassi musici champion the unknown trio sonata repertoire, and here they have produced a lovely disc of highlights of the two known publications of someone who played in Corelli's orchestra in Rome on a fairly regular basis, and who clearly fell under the master's influence. That is not to say that these are slavish imitations of Corelli's output, although movements such as the flourish of G major arpeggios at the opening of Op. 2 No. 5 may suggest otherwise. The fiddlers have alternated as first and second on previous discs, but Margaret McDuffie takes the lead here throughout. The recording is beautifully balanced, with a bright sound without too much reverberation. Don't worry about never having heard of the composer – this is excellent stuff! *BC*

If you wish to check the last phrase by the cold light of a score, Margaret McDuffie is sending us the score she has made of six of the trios, which we can copy at a reasonable fee.

Weckmann *Sämtliche Klavierwerke* Siebe Henstra *hpscd, clavichord* 73' 31"
Ricercar **206682**

A 'complete' Weckmann is a rather controversial matter, with many of the toccatas, in particular, being only doubtfully attributed. Certainly there are stylistic inconsistencies and distinct variations in quality, but this is nonetheless a wonderfully revealing and most enjoyable CD. Siebe Henstra uses three instruments – copies of 1638 Ruckers and 17th-century Italian harpsichords and a copy of a North German school clavichord from the same period. All sound excellent, enhanced by a fruity meantone temperament, and the clavichord playing is top notch, amongst the best I've heard. Henstra, a disciple of Leonhardt and Koopman, guides the listener through Weckmann's (or whoever's) motivically charged and gesture-laden text with delight freedom, making sense of the music's disparate elements and handling one or two awkward corners with authority. Interesting repertoire, stylish playing – what more could you want? *Robin Bigwood*

Weelkes *Madrigals & Anthems* The Consort of Musicke, Anthony Rooley 61' 47"
ASV *Gaudeamus* **CD GAU 195**

This was recorded in 1994, but only released this year. It presents some of Weelkes's best works, but the performances are not quite perfect. *Hosanna to the Son of David* and *Gloria in excelsis Deo* are taken at contemplative speeds and sound mournful rather than exultant; the 'strong thund'rings' (every bass singer's favourite bit in *Allelulia, I heard a voice*) are fluffed by Simon Grant. Now and again there are signs of tiredness or laziness: the soprano swoop on 'a stony heart' (*Cease now delight)* is inexcusable in a group of this calibre: the same line is sung cleanly elsewhere. The diction is superb, and heightened by dramatic delivery, with petulant sobs, emphatic consonants, huge crescendos, sudden tempo changes. Occasionally the effects are overdone: who but Rooley would ask for a sounded *r* in 'mourn' without going the whole way to 'authentic' pronunciation? The emphasis is on drama – leaping from one mood to another, as Weelkes does in his compositional style – rather than the beauty of phrasing, and the delivery of phrase-endings is sometimes peremptory. The tuning and control are excellent at the Gesualdo-like chromaticisms such as 'crave thy God to tune thy heart'. Ensemble is one of the Consort's strong points, and their performance of *Thule* demonstrates it at its best, with perfect unanimity in their presentation of extraordinary news bulletins from around the world. *Selene Mills*

Musica Venetia In Stil Moderno 67' 55"
de haske **DHR 197.038**
Music by Castello, Chilese, Frescobaldi, Giovanni Gabrieli, Marini, Picchi, Riccio

I reviewed this group's previous CD on the Cantus label, and I have to say that the very strong impression they made with that recital disc of early music for violins and trombones from Poland is reinforced by this Italian selection. There are pieces for various combinations, ranging from from one of each to the full ensemble, such as the opening Gabrieli and final Marini canzonas. The individual players are very classy indeed, but I find the group at its best when all six players are involved. This is music I love played exactly as I like to hear it; I can't recommend In Stil Moderno enough. *BC*

The Noble Bass Viol Mark Caudle, The Parley of Instruments (Susanna Pell, Susanne Heinrich *bass viols*, Elizabeth Kenny *lutes*, Peter Holman *org*) 77' 59"
Hyperion **CDA76088**
Music by Bocchi, Conti, Corelli, Draghi, Finger, Gorton, Handel, Hely, Purcell

If you thought the viol died out in England after Purcell's youthful fantazias and the spotlight was then firmly on the French solo repertory, then think again. This well-researched CD shows that the bass viol at least was still prized for its versatility and virtuosity in London and Oxford in the years around 1700, and that a wealth of styles from operatic airs to full-blown Italianate sonatas was written or arranged to suit its plangent tones. The disc is as well planned as we would expect from Peter Holman, providing a more or less chronological survey from Purcell to Handel, but incorporating plenty of variety of texture by interspersing solo and duo items between the full ensemble pieces. Mark Caudle is very much the star of the show: released from his more usual position of bass violin he seems to relish the freedom of the solo viol lines and plays with splendid panache and invention. His slightly grainy sound contrasts well with Susanna Pell's more retiring tone in the duos and he is ably abetted by the varied continuo team. The music is not all of the very highest class, but if Gorton's duo lessons seem lightweight and the undulating parallel thirds of Finger's *Pastorale* out-stay their welcome, the meaty sonatas by Corelli and Handel more than compensate. Particularly successful are the Parley's own arrangement of a Handel trio sonata (putting the violin parts down an octave does not create a clogged sound at all) and the setting of Draghi's *Italian Ground* with its delicately shaped variations. Thoroughly recommended. *John Bryan*

Rosa mistica: Musiche nei monasteri femminili lombardi del '600 Cappella Artemisia, Candace Smith *dir* 76' 34"
Tactus **TC 60003**
Music by Assandra, Badalla, Cozzolani, Leonarda, Meda, Perucona, Rusca, Sessa

This is a refreshingly unusual recording, and not at all what I had expected from 17th-century Lombard convents. Six of the eight composers represented were nuns in enclosed orders, the exceptions being Perucona and Leonarda, who were not bound by vows of *clausura* and may have been allowed to supervise the publications of their works. Leonarda became the most prolific female composer of the century, in spite of her Bishop, later Innocent XI, who zealously opposed music in convents. In contrast, Sessa and Rusca in Milan were actively encouraged by Archbishop Borromeo, who actually donated musical instruments, which were banned in other monasteries. Some of these pieces were composed for high voices, to be sung within the convent, but many of them include tenor and bass voices, which in this recording have been transposed up the octave, with a bass instrument playing the lines at written pitch. Sometimes the tenor or alto line is left as the bass, but I was rarely disturbed by odd inversions or textures. The music itself is full of delights, often reminiscent of Monteverdi, Grandi or Strozzi. *Selene Mills*

Un soir à la cour: Lute Songs & Lute Music Kai Wessell *cT*, Ulrich Wedemeier *chit, lute* 65' 29"
Dabringhaus und Grimm **MDG 339 0879-2**
Music by Bataille, Boesset, Caccini, Castaldi, Dowland, Frescobaldi, Hammerschmidt, Kapsberger, Krieger, de Moy, Schein & anon

As I've said before in these pages, the recent bull market in male altos has allowed us to hear a great deal of unfamiliar music. Wessel and Wedermeier have gathered a pleasing handful of 17th-century songs and instrumental solos; they visit several countries without lingering anywhere. Many of the songs are strophic and might have given us a chance to tolerate repetition, as our ancestors did, for the sake of savouring an agreeable melody and a diverting lyric (I was once enchanted to hear Russell Oberlin on Radio 3 referring to 'the pleasures of monotony', though I'm afraid he must actually have said 'monophony'). But Wessel tends to treat everything – high art and faux low – as if it were courtly and refined; so he graces his second and third stanzas with a slightly misplaced (and not quite sure-footed) virtuosity. Unlike the current crop of 'heroic' altos (Scholl, Daniels *et al.*), Wessel sounds like a young Deller – cool, floating, other-worldly – though he lacks the last degree of sweetness that this approach needs to compensate for the earthy naturalness it has given up. Nearly one-third of the CD is given over to Wedemeier's solos, and on the chitarrone in particular he's worth hearing; but he too favours delicacy over passion. Alto enthusiasts and devotees of the lute family should consider adding this to their collections; others may find themselves echoing Roy Fuller on the subject of restraint: 'They use the snaffle and the curb all right/But where's the bloody horse?' *Eric Van Tassel*

LATE BAROQUE

Arne *Alfred* Jennifer Smith, Christine Brandes, David Daniels, Jamie MacDougall, *SSAT*, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan 76' 10"
Deutsche Harmonia Mundi **75605-51314-2**

I edited this piece some time ago for Nicholas McGegan, so it's nice to hear it, albeit it on a different label and from a different source. My first response to the recording was: what excellent orchestral playing! The overture romps along with bright but unobtrusive horns and remarkably reticent oboes. Of the four singers, only Christine Brandes impressed me. There's something of a Last Night of the Proms approach elsewhere – there's a sticker on the front of my disc box telling me that the piece features Rule Britannia! The voices are simply too big and I'm not quite sure where the rationale behind such an approach comes from. It seems particularly strange when the orchestral playing is so crisp and clean, that no less than three of the four singers wobble their way through some pretty straightforward music. The 'finely composed' trio in Act One is a mighty disaster – chains of 'thirds', a tenor who cannot quite manage the top notes, a Prince Edward who sounds more like Princess Edwina. As for the aforementioned Last Night extract, the choir are magnificent, but the soloists are too stereotypically bumptious. There is much fine music here, and I should point out that Christine Brandes's voice is not a schoolboy sound by any stretch of the imagination; yet she somehow manages not to overdo things. A curate's egg of a performance, but lovely music. *BC*

d'Astorga *Stabat Mater* *see* **Boccherini**

Arleen Augér sings Bach Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmut Rilling 77' 20"
Hänssler **CD 98.958** (rec 1988)
Arias from cantatas 36, 49, 57, 68, 80, 84, 92, 105, 115, 127, 183, 199

We have generally avoided reviewing the reissues of Rilling's Bach cantatas, on the grounds that we normally only cover modern-instrument baroque performances if they have something very special to offer. But Arleen Augér is a singer of distinction, and one of whom I have fond memories, since I worked with her on the Hickox *Poppea* a decade ago. She isn't my ideal Bach singer (nor, for that matter, my ideal Poppea), but she produces beautiful and intelligent performances. If I find the disc disappointing, it is because she and the instruments don't seem to belong together emotionally. The choice of arias is interesting, particularly featuring solo keyboard. The booklet is coy about what has happened to Augér since the disc was originally made. *CB*

Bach ***Organ Works Vol. 3: Orgelbüchlein, Part 1 (BWV 599-631)*** Gerhard Weinberger (Joachim Wagner organ 1739-41, Nidarosdom, Norway) 68' 31"
cpo **999 652-2**

I do not know the Trondheim organ, but potentially it is an important instrument, being a survival of the type of organ that Bach was familiar with and played. I gave Gerhard Weinberger a roasting in the last *EMR* for Vols 1 and 2 of this series. This CD is rather more accceptable, but the playing still lacks life, largely because of the lack of convincing articulation.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach ***Influences of Cantata, Concerto & Chamber Music*** Bine Katrine Bryndorf (Lund -organ, Garrison Church, Copenhagen) 72' 04
Hänssler (Bach Edition 98) **CD 92.098**
BWV 540, 546, 583, 591, 645-50, 712-3, 717, 731, 734

Although the CD title is rather coy about the fact, this programme actually includes the six Schübler Chorales and two major free organ works, the Great C minor Prelude and Fugue and the Toccata and Fugue in F; this last is a superb performance, despite the logistical problems of a pedalboard only going up to d', with the Fugue quite correctly played as an *organo pleno* continuation of the Toccata's grandeur. Bine Katrine Bryndorf is a young Danish organist that I have not come across before – and judging by this performance, she is somebody to watch out for. She plays with musical and emotional maturity and whilst never allowing herself the self-indulgence of some other players in this series, imparts a well-judged musical rhetoric and personality. You will not tire of repeating listening of this CD. Her added ornaments in *Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier* (track 2) are imaginative, but she wisely decided not to add similarly to the other tracks. Although the organ is not an historical instrument, it is made in the spirit of the North German baroque organ and sounds most effective. There is a particularly sweet Cimbelstern combined with a 4' Spitzflöit on track 8 and the pleno sound is rich and magisterial (try track 19). Excellent performances from a talented young player. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach ***Sonatas for Viola da Gamba & Harpsichord BWV 1027-1029*** Hille Perl, Michael Behringer 37' 47"
Hänssler (Bach Edition 124) **CD 92.124**

The Bach gamba sonatas are one of the great peaks of the solo viol player's repertory, so each new issue joins a pantheon of versions by previous masters and mistresses of the viol. Perl and Behringer offer no radically new insights into these beautifully crafted pieces (apart from an unmarked pizzicato section from the viol during the harpsichord's cadenza-like section of the D major sonata), but they do provide some elegant and sprightly playing, spaciously recorded. Tempi tend to be on the fast side: this energetic approach enlivens the fugal movements, but does not always allow the slower movements to reach the heights of sublimity that Bach's harmony

can so often express. What does come over very clearly is the players' concern for the overall architecture of each movement, with the conversational aspect of the texture well to the fore. Balance between the parts of these sonatas is always something of a problem: here the treble of Behringer's Franco-Flemish harpsichord sings serenely, though its bass sometimes loses focus while Perl's mellow Tielke copy gets pushed to the back of the aural picture. At under 40 minutes of music this CD might seem poor value, but the quality of the music and the playing is never less than richly rewarding.

John Bryan

Bach ***Oboe Concertos*** Pauline Oostenrijk *ob*, Nieuw Sinfonietta Amsterdam, dir. Jaap ter Linden 51' 16"
Vanguard Classics **99069** ££
JSB ob d'am in A ; **CPEB** in E♭, Wq 165; **JCB** in F

Pauline Oostenrijk's stylish Bach playing has already drawn praise from me (she recorded various arias with her sister on Vanguard 99166). Here she's accompanied by a modern-instrument band, equally at home in this repertoire and the contemporary scene. Under ter Linden, they are, perhaps, the most successful group of this kind to attempt a historically aware performance. He appears to have a keen ear for balance and a clear sense of overall structure and phrasing. The J. C. Bach is perfectly paced to allow the individual voices to speak when necessary (bringing out the bassetto viola parts, for example), and yet give prominence to the oboist too. The cadenzas are well written and played. A lovely CD, but don't believe everything you read in the booklet. *BC*

Francœur ***Symphonies pour le Festin Royal du Comte d'Artois*** La Simphonie du Marias, Hugo Reyne *dir* 63' 25" (rec 1993)
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 61676 2** 9 ££
Suites in D, F & g

The steady flow of recordings originating from Versailles is threatening to become a flood but if they're all like this there will be no complaints. From the large collection of music assembled (though not all composed) by Francœur to entertain the guests at the 1773 wedding of the future Charles X, Hugo Reyne has compiled three suites of airs and dances (all operatic in origin) by the then ageing *Surintendant de la Musique du Roy*. The affection and enthusiasm that drove the project is apparent in the playing, especially the two splendid chaconnes, which have a positively Handelian swagger; in the less extrovert movements, delicacy and poise are more the order of the day. Here and there a few blips of intonation and ensemble occur but these are really insignificant in the overall context. I loved it.

David Hansell

Handel ***L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*** Susan Gritton, Lorna Anderson, Claron McFadden, Paul Agnew, Neal Davies *SSSTB*, The King's Consort, The Choir of the King's Consort, Robert King *dir* 137' 51
Hyperion **CDA67283/4** (2 CDs in box)

This is a fine recording of one of Handel's richest and most subtle scores. It has the considerable advantages of a sensible edition (by Robert King), and particularly scholarly and informative notes (by Anthony Hicks). Tempi are well judged (though tending to the slow) and instrumental playing alert and stylish (I particularly enjoyed the opening *Lentement* of the Op. 6 concerto used as overture). Soloists are generally excellent, but sometimes sacrifice Milton's (and Jennens') all-important words to beautiful tone. For example, Handel's opening movements (as in many of his stage works) introduce the 'Grand Design' of the whole piece, in this case that *L'Allegro, Penseroso* (and *Moderato*) are all facets of one and the same personality. Thus, L'Allegro opens to Penseroso's accompaniment and vice versa. Unfortunately, the tenor L'Allegro follows his lugubrious accompaniment, rather than interpreting his own words (carefully set in free declamation by Handel), and the subtlety is lost. It would also have been pleasant to have had a 'boy-lark', as in the old John Eliot Gardiner recording. There are, however, many compensations; in particular, Lorna Anderson is on superb form in a 'Sweet Bird' of heavenly length and her 'Hide Me From Day's Garish Eye' is marvellously sung, fully capturing the astonishing beauty and subtlety of Handel's setting of Milton's already-rich lines – one can praise no more highly. Do try it. *Alastair Harper*

Hasse ***La Contadina: intermezzo in musica (Naples 1728).*** **Mascitti** ***Concerto op 3/7***
Graciela Oddone, Lorenzo Regazzo *SB*, Ensemble Arcadia, Attilio Cremonesi *dir*
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 905244** 70' 28"

I'll doubtless be drawn over the coals again for criticising a recording on the grounds that there's too much boring recitative, but that was my gut reaction to this recording. The playing (like the Arne above) is very good indeed, but the singing not outstanding and the lengthy passages of secco dialogue interminably boring. Of course, the piece was meant as an interval distraction from the serious matter of the opera between whose acts it was performed, and live performance with its visual as well as musical impact would lend an instant improvement. Mascitti's five movement concerto (added for what reason other than to fill out the disc – couldn't we have had more of Hasse's overtures, since the performers opted to preface the intermezzi with one from *Astarto*?) is a delightful little piece, which will find favour among cellists, since that part is particularly ornate, and the whole very nicely played. *BC*

Leclair ***Ouvertures et Sonates en trio*** **[op. 13]**
Les Talens lyriques (Florence Malgoire, Ryo Terakado *vlns*, Kaori Uemura *bv*, Christophe Rousset *hpscd, dir*) 70' 48" (rec 1993)
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 61677 2** 8 ££
Suites in D, F & g

Leclair has been well served recently by both performers and recording companies and any recent converts whose libraries still lack a recording of Op. 13 can safely seek out this one. There are three each of overtures and sonatas, all for the trio-sonata combination of violins and continuo. Interestingly, this required the composer both to expand and contract earlier thoughts, as two of the sonatas were originally solos with continuo (and the third a trio sonata for flute and gamba) and the third overture was 'the overture to my opera, which is little known on account of its difficulty of execution'. It sounds no easier in this new version, but the players toss off the opening roulades with great panache and are just as convincing in the sustained music which follows. Generally, they adopt a forthright style well-suited to this extrovert music, with Rousset providing impetus without dominating. If you still have to explore Leclair, start here. *David Hansell*

Rameau ***Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin (1728); Pièces en Concert (1741), La Dauphine (1747)*** Frédérick Haas (Henri Hemsch hpscd 1751) 78' 13"
Caliope **CAL 9279**

Frederick Haas acquired some very favourable reviews for his previous recording of Rameau and a disc of d'Anglebert suites. Whilst I can appreciate his great technical prowess I find it harder to come to terms with his stylistic approach, especially with regard to ornamentation. From the word go Rameau's finely crafted lines are laden down with truckloads of trills and turns that, for me, stifle any underlying musicality. Although the effect is grandiose, it also sounds rather contrived, and expression becomes a surface phenomenon rather than something intrinsic. There is a mix-up with track numbering, so that one of the *Pièces en concert* is divorced from its three counterparts and left high and dry amongst the 1728 pieces. This is by no means a weak performance, though, and those who like their Rameau on the rich side could well be in their element.

Robin Bigwood

Zelenka Complete Orchestral Works 2
Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre, Jürgen Sonnentheil 58' 26"
cpo **999 629-2**
Capriccio 1 & 5, *Simphonie a 8 Concertanti*

What wonderful natural horn playing! Where there seems to be a tendency towards blustering up the harmonics, Teunis van der Zwart (and his 2nd Raphael Zafra) coax an all-too-rarely-heard delightful tone from their instruments. Zelenka seems to have relished pushing them to new limits, and few hornists attempt to scale these heights. But the challenges are comfortably met by this pair and the rest of Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre under Jürgen Sonnentheil. The tempi in the concerto seemed just a little slow (they take over two minutes longer than the Freiburger Barockorchester with von der Goltz), but the Capriccios were shrewdly judged. Pieter Affourtit does not quite have the flair of his Freiburg

opposite number, but this is rather in keeping with a slightly more relaxed approach to the music in general. *BC*

Cantatas from the Georgian Drawing Room
Concert Royal, Margarette Ashton 61' 23"
Divine Art Record Company **2.5001**
Music by Albinoni, Arne, Burgess, Carey, Eccles, Pasquali, Pepusch (rec 1994)

'It is difficult to understand why these attractive works, many written by eminent composers of the day, have been so neglected by modern performers,' say the booklet notes. One reason might be that they were intended as social diversion rather than formal recital pieces – the singing of one's niece or cousin might rightly be admired, as the family gathers around the harpsichord, but there really is not very much of the drama of contemporary opera. There is also the somewhat illogical argument that one can get away with singing nonsense in a foreign language, but somehow doing it in English is unforgivable. Against such a background, the present performances are not bad. I particularly enjoyed the obbligato playing and the cello continuo. The harpsichord seemed rather distant (or perhaps sparing in its participation – did the church acoustic result in too much jingling?) and the singing is too much like my niece's efforts – schoolgirlish in the extreme, with pinched high notes, slightly uneasy low ones, and extremely precise pro-nun-ci-a-tion. No sadly neglected masterpieces here, but several enjoyable cantatas make a pleasing mixed programme. *BC*

La musica nei teatri del '700 napolitano
Gloria Guida Borrelli *S*, Piccolo Ensemble Quintetto da Camera 71' 01"
Kikko Classic **KC00496CD**
Music by Cimarosa, Giordano, Mercadante, Paisiello, Pergolesi, A. Scarlatti, Vinci & anon transcribed for string quartet and hpscd.

Oh dear! Music from the 18th-century theatre recorded in a cavernous church with a string quartet and harpsichord, and a singer with a vibrato you could drive a bus through. The strings are rarely absolutely as one – doubling violins and octave-doubling viola and cello seem to have caught a terrible dose of pitch-approximation, most likely from the singer, who swoops around some attractive-sounding arias. Why there's an extract from a Pergolesi mass on the programme, I'm not sure, since the booklet notes are simply biographies of the performers and the texts in Italian (and its Neapolitan variant) only. *BC*

La musica strumentale nel 700' napolitano
Orchestra I Solisti Partenopei, Ivano Calazza
Kikko Classic **KC00396CD** 47' 06"
Durante *pf concerto in B♭*, **Prati** *pf concerto in E♭*, **Ragazzi** *vln concerti in a & B♭, concerto grosso in C*

The reader will have suspicions from the data above; apart from the short playing time (room for a couple more concertos, surely), *pf* really is an abbreviation for *pianoforte*, and the booklet shows the player, Antonella Cristiano, at a concert grand. So modern instruments, and even old-fashioned editions that quote the name of the continuo realiser. The sound, however, is better than one might fear, and those interested in little-known repertoire may find this worth investigating. Angelo Ragazzi (1680-1750) was a violinist who moved from Naples to Spain in 1704 and then to Vienna. Alessio Prati (1759-88) studied in Naples, but his attempts to achieve fame and fortune took him unsuccessfully to Paris, St Petersburg and Ferrara. *CB*

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach ***Wind Chamber Music*** Fiati con Tasto Köln
cpo **999 598-2**
H 506, 516-521, 549, 573, 636, *Pastorale* for ob & bsn

The thing that caught my notice about this disc was not the performances themselves (which are, without exception, excellent), but the programming. It seemed strange to open with a piece with only one member of the featured group and a guest flautist (wonderful as Karl Kaiser is!) The opening of the second piece (Alfredini's masterfully sinewy oboe phrasing) made the decision seem even stranger – it's surely a far more arresting curtain-raiser on this little-known area of C. P. E. Bach's output. In stark contrast, the playful little clarinet duets are charming and show that economy of means was no brake on Bach's imagination (although they undoubtedly owe something to his godfather's duet output). Perhaps the strangest pieces of all are six small sonatas for clarinet, bassoon and fortepiano, where the winds either double or simplify the keyboard lines, or very occasionally have little fragments to themselves. Drawing-room music as it should be played. *BC*

Boccherini ***Stabat Mater op. 61 (1800 version);*** **d'Astorga** ***Stabat Mater*** Susan Gritton, Sarah Fox, Susan Bickley, Paul Agnew, Peter Harvey *SSmSTB*, The King's Consort, The Choir of the King's Consort, Robert King *dir* 73' 20
Hyperion **CDA67108**

I first came across the d'Astorga about 35 years ago, when I rescued an old Novello vocal score from a pile of rubbish. What was this obscure baroque work that was thought worthy of a popular edition a century ago? Its popularity in England went back to the Ancient Concerts, and Handel may have taken a phrase from it ('These pleasures, Melancholy, give', on the King's Consort other release this month), though it derives from a 1708 cantata which may be earlier than the d'Astorga. I thought it looked impressive, and I am glad that I have at last managed to persuade someone to perform it. It makes a good contrast with the Boccherini, both stylistically and in its different texture (SATB soli & chorus as opposed to the later work's SSA soli with no chorus). Those who share my desire for chronological order will want to play it first, though it comes second on the disc. I followed the Boccherini with the score of the 1781 version, and was fascinated by the revisions; apart from the transformation of solo to trio, there are innumerable changes in the string writing, including some of the most imaginative parts of the work. Neither suffers from the monotony that the regular rhythm of the *Stabat mater* text sometimes produces. I enjoyed the performances of both works. *CB*

Some sources of the Boccherini (though not the one used for the edition) include a movement from a symphony as an instrumental introduction; it is here omitted, since it does not match the mood of the work.

Bon ***Sonate da Camera*** Trio Aleph (Gaspare Antonio Bartelloni *fl*, Paolo Ognissanti *vlc*, Luca Gherardi *hpscd*) 60' 40"
Kicco Classic **KC0797CD**

Both the outer cover and the inner sleeve notes of this disc would seem to suggest a recording motivated by historical research and a genuine desire to promote the work of a relatively unknown composer – to quote the programme notes, 'availing of an attentive and precise musicological research'. Sadly, however, this turns out to be one of the least sensitive and historically aware recordings I have heard in a long time. Performed on modern flute and cello with harpsichord, the performers pay little heed to basic 18th-century performing techniques, with frequent lapses of intonation. More worrying however, is the overall lack of sympathy and creativity with the music itself; there is a general feeling of heaviness which derives mainly from the bass line, stifling all the freshness and sparkle which these light, galant pieces have to offer. There are far better representations of Anna Bon available; this is one to avoid. *Marie Ritter*

Galuppi ***Complete Piano Sonatas, vol.1*** Peter Sievewright 58" 15"
Divine Art **2-5006**

I don't want to be too critical of an enterprising young company, but there are two major problems with this disc as the first in a complete series of Galuppi's 90 piano sonatas (lovers of poetry should be warned that he wrote no Toccatas – was Browning teasing?) First is the instrument. I can take Bach or Mozart on the piano: their music has a timeless quality and anyway, one knows it on instruments of the time, so one does not feel that anything is lost by occasionally hearing the more modern sound and pianists whose interpretation has something special to offer. But lesser composers are less effective when yanked out of their historical context, and like the Naxos Scarlatti on which I commented last month (and see p. 34), I think that the choice of a modern piano is a pity. The faster movements work fine, but the emotional implications of the slower ones are distorted by the more solid sound and slower tempo, even though sometimes, e.g. track 7, I was almost convinced. The playing is sensitive, and listeners not

attuned to the harpsichord or fortepiano will, I hope, be convinced that Galuppi is worth the effort. Documentation is weak: one expects a Complete Works to identify properly the works on each disc. An imaginative touch is the use of modern Venetian lace designs for the booklet. *CB*

Hagen ***Solo Works for Lute*** Robert Barto *Baroque lute* 72' 10"
Naxos **8.554200** £
Sonatas in B♭, d, E♭, F, f; Locatelli Variations

I recently reviewed Barto's first Hagen disc in these pages, which was so good that it left me wishing for more; so this is a rare treat, which not only lives up to the standard of the first but has the added advantage of being budget priced. There is no overlap between the two discs which must collectively include most, if not all, of Hagen's output in exemplary performances. This is a must for any lute enthusiast, but I hope that its bargain price will tempt those who wouldn't ordinarily buy such repertory to give it a try: they won't be disappointed. Though little known outside lute circles, Hagen is a fine composer, and one of the last to make a significant contribution to the lute repertory. Barto's technical fluency is such that it makes the music sound easy; one would never guess that this is territory where most lutenists fear to tread. The performances are dramatic, compelling, and extremely well recorded. A marvellous fiver's worth, highly recommended. *Lynda Sayce*

Heinsius ***Six Sinfonie op. 2***; **Nicolaas Lentz** ***Two Harpsichord Concerti*** Orchestra 'Van Wassenaer', Makoto Akatsu *vln/dir* 73' 20"
BIS-CD-984

Not one but two previously unheard composers (for me, at least), and what an insight they give to amateur music making in the Netherlands in the time of van Wassenaer – and how like him some of the Heinsius sounds, indeed. I have not heard this ensemble before (a Netherlands-based, international group, with three Japanese members), but very impressive they are. The six published symphonies by Heinsius are in three movements, as are the two (of three known) concertos by Lentz, which are performed with solo strings. The sleevenotes make something of the fact that the players have all studied with Sigiswald Kuijken, which lends a certain unanimity of style, and I have to confirm this: there are only eight of them, but they fill the room they play in with a bright, perfectly balanced sound. Pure joy. *BC*

Helmont ***Missa solemnis Sanctae Gudilae*** Capella & Concerto Currende, Erik Van Nevel *dir* 67' 09"
de haske **DHR 16.009**
+ **Bréhy** *Resurrexit amor meus, Scapulis suis, Jubilate Deo, Isti sunt triumphatores;* **P. A. Fiocco** *Fuge demon fuge lepra*

St Gudule was the name saint of a collegiate chapel in Brussels (now St Michael's Cathedral) where Charles-Joseph van Helmont (1715-90) was choirmaster from 1741 (after a period elsewhere when Joseph-Hector Fiocco had succeeded Bréhy in the post against all expectations). The solemn mass is, according to the booklet notes, very much in the French style, with a wide array of complex ornamentation for singers and players alike, so that no two passages are quite the same. My experience, though, is that this is very much an Italianate mass setting, and I was constantly reminded of a recording I have of Clari, Bigaglia and Francesco Mancini's church music, perhaps mostly by the four-part string sound and their frequent semiquavers against sustained notes in the choir. There are some lovely solos and duets, some with instrumental obbligatos (the cello being a not-very-typically-French one!) and the singing is generally lively and stylish, though the soprano makes rather too much of the precision of her mordents – she doesn't seem to be able to see the woods for the trees. The Bréhy grand motets are really rather nice pieces, with again some attractive solo sections. Erik Van Nevel (perhaps he'd be kind enough to let us know whether all three parts of his name are capitalized or not!) appears as baritone soloist as well as director. Unfamiliar repertoire, well worth exploring. *BC*

Der Stein der Weisen ***(The Philosophers' Stone)*** **by Gerl, Henneberg, Mozart, Schack & Schikaneder** Soloists, Boston Baroque, Martin Pearlman *dir* 2 discs 124; 20" + discussion disc 24' 25"
Telarc **CD-80508** (3 CDs for the price of 2)
see p. 22

MISCELLANEOUS

Een vroylic wesen: Musik aus fünf Jahrhunderten von Vaillant bis Abel Harmonie Universelle, Bernhard van Kampen *dir* 61'22"
Harmonie Universelle [no number]

This is another disc on which I exercised my innocent ear, first playing it through with no idea what box it came from and not guessing what it was for some time. The repertoire is rather more extended than one usually hears on an anthology now, but pleasing, even if the first two items antedate the renaissance viol. In view of my remarks on page 1, the reader will not be surprised that I was unconvinced by Dowland's *Weep you no more*: it seemed a bit rushed and heavy, and I prefer words with the lower parts. Bernhard van Kampen sent along with his new subscription and a letter on the violone (see p. 35). What I assume is his 8' violone (described as a *großbaß* in the neat table of instruments in the booklet) appears in the Gibbons 'great dooble base' fantasia and one of the Speer pieces mentioned in his letter. I enjoyed the variety of music, even though the performances occasionally seemed a bit heavy. *CB*

Bernhard van Kampen is the same person as the Anthony van Kampen who was a member of the BBC Symphony Orchestra in the 1970s while I had overall responsibility for orchestral music at the BBC Music Library; but we worked several miles away and did not meet. CB

Graysteil: Music from the Middle Ages and Renaissance Scotland Rob MacKillop *lutes*, William Taylor *clarsachs*, Andy Hunter *ballad singer*, Paul Rendall *tenor* 59' 40"
Dorian *Discovery* **DIS 80141**

This recording, issued in 1997, the fifth centenary of a documented performance of the ballad Graysteil at the Scottish court, is an intriguing compendium of music for wire-strung clarsach, lute and voices, which includes arrangements for lute of pieces from the late 16th-century Scottish manuscript *The Art of Music*, clarsach realisations of music from the 13th-century St Andrews Music Book, and an ear-opening performance on bray harp and lute of the three-part Mass by the 16th-century Scottish master, Robert Carver. The instrumentalists are joined by Paul Rendall for intelligent and idiomatic performances of *Et te lux oritur* and *Nobilis, humilis* and by Andy Hunter for sections from the eponymous ballad. William Taylor and Rob McKillop, both tireless champions of authentic performances on their respective instruments, open a priceless window on a corner of Scottish culture which cries out for creative scholarship. The sound world they create is at the same time an extremely convincing and a very beautiful one, alive with ringing strings. And if the 'two fithelaris' at the court of James IV gave as persuasive a performance of Graysteil 500 years ago, they certainly earned the nine shillings they were paid!
D. James Ross

Illumina The Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, Tim Brown *dir* 76' 08"
Collegium Records **COLCD 125**
Byrd *O lux beata Trinitas*; Hildegard *O coruscans lux stellarum*; Josquin *Nunc dimittis*; Palestrina *Christe qui lux, Lucis creator optimi*; Tallis *O nata lux, Te lucis ante terminum*; Whyte *Christe qui lux* + Grechaninov, W. Harris, Holst, Ligeti, Rachmaninov, Rautavaara, Rutter, Tchaikovsky, C. Wood

The recording activity of Clare College choir suffered from the bankruptcy of Gamut Records, which probably hit them harder than me: I used to write the notes for a variety of Gamut discs, including some from Clare, contemporary organ music and at least three recordings of music by Rebecca Clark. Now the choir has found a new home with John Rutter's Collegium Records (Rutter, incidentally, was Tim Brown's predecessor as Clare's Director of Music) and this disc benefits from Rutter's high production standards; the spacious Ely Lady Chapel does not dominate the music as in some other recordings made there. I was not fully enthusiastic about the choir's Sweelinck (*EMR* 47, p. 21); I am much happier hearing the choir in a more mixed repertoire. This takes us from the Candlemas chant *Lumen ad revelationem gentium* through settings of related texts, including four each of the *Nunc dimittis* and of *Hail gladdening light*. The choice of music is enterprising and the mixture works very well. *CB*

£ = bargain price ££ = mid-price
Other discs full price as far as we know.

Villancicos del Barroco Hispanoamericano Conjunto de Musica Antiqua, Sylvia Soublette Institute de Musica de Santiago 41' 57"

It is good that the church music of South America is gradually finding its way here. Hispanic Mexican music has been known for some time, and it is predictable that there were strong catholic traditions further south. This short disc introduces villancicos from the 17th & 18th centuries. They seem rather shorter than the multi-verse Spanish examples of the period: perhaps verses are omitted. The more affective pieces are given a little too much licence, but otherwise the performances are convincing. This is the first Chilean disc I have heard: I would welcome more. *CB*

Discovery are offering two four-disc sets under the title Musiques sacrées missionnaires *from K617 at £15.75 each set, mostly conducted by Gabriel Garrido. I haven't heard them, but they are surely worth buying.*

RIVO ALTO

Clementi ***Sonate per pianoforte a quattro mani*** Gino Gorini, Sergio Lorenzi *pf* 40' 38"
Rivo Alto **CRA1 89081**
Stradella Opere Strumentale III: Sonate per due violini e b. c. Mario Ferraris, Angelo Ephrikian *vln*, Enrico Miori, Antonio Pocaterra *vlc*, Bruno Ferraris *db*, Maria Isabella De Carli *kbd* 58' 35" rec 1971
Rivo Alto **CRA4 9007-3**

Vivaldi Sei *concerto op, VI* Franco Fantini, Mario Ferraris *vln*, Antonio Pocaterra *vlc*, Maria Isabella De Carli *kbs*, I Solisti di Milano, Angelo Ephrikian *dir* 51' 53"
Rivo Alto **CRA1 9006** (rec 1969)
Vivaldi Sei *concerto op, XII* Franco Fantini, *vln*, I Solisti di Milano, Angelo Ephrikian *dir*
Rivo Alto **CRA1 89291** (rec 1969) 61' 45"

The two Vivaldi discs seem to be taken from a more comprehensive series, since the brief booklet of op. 12 (containing just a passage from Burney in Italian) refers to the op. 4 note for a biography; op. 6 has a more satisfactory note, as does the Stradella. All four booklets devote their back page to an illegible facsimile of the same Vivaldi piece. It is recordings like these from which many of us first got to know the music of Vivaldi in the 1960s; they wear quite well, though the slow movements are rather heavy. The Stradella (containing all nine pieces under No. 7.3 in the thematic catalogue) is commendable for 1971; again, it is the slower movements that will put the modern listener off, and the general feel is early 18th-century rather than mid 17th. The high registers of the organ sometimes get in the way of the violin sound. The short playing time of the Clementi would only by justified by a low price, as indeed would the reissue of the old recordings on the other discs, though we have no information that they are cheap. But Clementi's music is attractive and the use of modern instruments jars less than with the Galuppi reviewed above: it is the most entertaining of the batch, to the extent that any piano duets are to be listened to rather than played. No original recording date is given. *CB*

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Congratulations to Metronome and Carole Cerasi for winning the Gramophone Award for Baroque Instrumental Music for their recording of music by Elisabeth Jacquet de la Guerre (MET CD 1026: see *EMR* 47, p. 20). There was a feature on the composer by the player in the August/ September issue of *Early Music Today*, which is incidentally interesting for the way its two pictures contrast poses thought sexy three hundred years ago and now. Metronome is a very small company, run by Tim Smithies (some readers will remember him from his days at the Early Music Centre). His success rate from his catalogue of about 30 discs is extraordinary. The next disc by Carole Cerasi will be of C. P. E. Bach.

This is also an excuse to mention the influence of Klaus Neuman at Westdeutscher Rundfunk. The WDR logo has appeared on this and hundreds of other recordings. Unlike the BBC, WDR has worked in conjunction with record companies, and the result has been beneficial to all of us. Best wishes to him on his retirement. *CB*

LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

David Schulenberg, reporting on the NEMA conference and concerts (*EMR* 53, p. 8), commented that my flute consort *Zephyrus* at the York Festival demonstrated that 'specialist performers still employ instruments and techniques far from the originals'. This rather sweeping dismissal is all the worse for being incorrect. The flutes we were playing were right for the music, and as for 'techniques' he does not mention any, so I cannot imagine what he must have meant. Such vague, general criticism is unanswerable, and he ought to have been more careful.

It seems that he missed the point that I made in my conference lecture, that so-called 'renaissance' flutes did not fundamentally change in the course of 150 years or more. Our performance of 16th-century French chansons and early 17th century *airs de cour* on the same consort of flutes precisely illustrated my point, rather than being 'contrary to the spirit of the conference to use these instruments for 100 years of music'.

We switched to baroque-type instruments for de la Barre and Hotteterre pieces, making audible the impact of the change from cylindrical to conical instruments, as I said in my programme notes. On this occasion we chose to play a carefully considered trio of distinctive instruments by early-18th-century makers, not what he inaccurately termed 'anachronistic mid-18th century baroque type flutes'. One was a Denner copy, one Hyacinth Rottenburgh, and the third a Bressan at low 'French' pitch of a=392 which blended and contrasted with each other in an interesting way and were certainly within the sound world of the music we were playing. To call these flutes 'anachronistic' is just plain wrong. Hotteterre (d.1765) published his *Brunettes* in about 1725; they were arrangements of early-17th-century airs, were no doubt played at court on his own French 3-piece flutes in the late 17th century, and clearly were popular well into the 18th century. Michel de la Barre published music between 1694 and 1734; he retired from public performance in the 1720s.

I imagine that Mr Schulenberg was expecting to hear 3-piece French flutes, although he does not say so. Of course, those instruments would have been appropriate, too, as representative of the earliest attempt to redesign the flute. It was disappointing that Mr Schulenberg was so preoccupied with the instruments that he was unable to comment more fully on our concert.

Nancy Hadden

Dear Clifford,

Ouch! Must quickly take issue with you on the recording of Scarlatti on the piano (*EMR* 54 p26). If you need to be convinced that there is a point to it, have a listen to Mikhail Pletnev's 2CD recording for Virgin. Recorded (I'm told by rumour, which I'm sure could be verified or otherwise by those present) largely in single takes, it was going to be a single CD, but they finished it in no time flat, and Pletnev just kept going. There's plenty to argue with stylistically here and there, it is 'over the top', but it's not in the worst possible taste. In fact there's lots to admire, and plenty to gape open-mouthed at in admiration.

I suppose the lesson is that to learn about any kind of music, we have to remember to keep an ear out for truly great musicians as well as great musicologists!

David McGuinness

The Naxos series isn't *recorded by Pletnev. There is a lot lost when Scarlatti is played in the piano. A great performer can make up for that, a good performer can convince in small doses. But the idea of a continuing series of performances which, thanks to Naxos's price and marketing, will become ubiquitous, recorded on inappropriate instrument seems to me to negate what we might naively call progress in the public attitude historical performance practice.*

Dear Clifford

Could I correct the misleading impression created by BCs review of Capella Nova's 'Nou lat us sing: a Scottish Christmas' in *EMR* 54, p. 28. While he states that 'the relevance for *EMR* readers is slightly dubious, given that most of the material appears in arrangements', in fact while there are several very effective modern settings of *traditional* material, of the six early pieces in the programme (13th to 17th cent.), four are in editions by the eminent Scottish musicologist Dr Kenneth Elliott and myself, and two are conventional four-part settings of 17th century tunes by Dr Elliott in the period idiom. Nothing too anathematic to *EMR* readers, I would hope!

D James Ross

Dear Mr Bartlett,

I am writing to give you our change of address to in Gummersbach/Hülsenbusch. The premises will be developed as a small arts centre for both the visual arts and music with an emphasis on early music. Here we hope to have master classes, workshops, educational projects, house concerts and exhibitions. This is set in a most wonderful location in a village not far from our beautiful baroque church in which our viol group has given many concerts. The house was the Pfarrhaus and has glorious views from the large garden, similar in character to the Yorkshire dales. So we hope to encourage people, also from England (including one-time colleagues) to come and make music and perhaps teach over a short period.

As I am writing, I thought I would take the opportunity of expressing an opinion that has been at the back of my mind for some time now concerning the meaning of *violone,* for example in Corelli's op. 5 sonatas which has the scoring *Violono e violone o cimbalo.* There have been several occasions when, whenever this instrument has been mentioned, as in your excellent and informative *Early Music Review,* it was thought to be only another terminology for the violoncello. (After all *violoncello* means *little violone* and was referred to sometimes as *violoncino.*) Or, whenever a cello has been used in these and similar sonatas, there has been little concern or counter-argument as to whether violone could, after all, mean another instrument. The subject, though previously much discussed, seems to have been virtually swept under the carpet since such articles as those by Peter Walls ('Performing Corelli's Violin Sonatas op. 5' in *Early Music,* Feb. 1996) and David Watkin ('Corelli op. 5 sonatas: Violino e violone o cimbalo?' in *Early Music,* Nov. 1996) were written.

But, as has been stated, perhaps Corelli really did mean what he said. And I believe he could well be referring to the 8' violone tuned G,-g rather than the violoncello. This has, after all, the same compass as the bass violin, which also has the top string tuned to g, but extends just a minor 3rd to G, below the bass violin's Bb. In other words, there is a difference of only one tone between the top string of the 'cello (a) and that of the 8' violone (g), and being a player of both instruments there is no doubt in my mind that the latter is not only preferable but was surely intended by Corelli. One can see why Corelli has written *violone o cimbalo* for with this instrument, played, as it were, lyra-way, it is far more suitable for producing a sustained chordal accompaniment because of its fourth-third tuning and frets. And with all respect to David Watkin whose playing I admire (and whose article, I must add, is very persuasive) the 8' violone has a far more resonant quality than one can produce on the 'cello.

In his article, Peter Walls was surely wrong to state that 'the violone is used in the 17th century Italian sense as the bass member of the *violin* family' and that 'the final section of the *Folia Variations* [by Corelli] make it reasonable... to treat *violone* here as synonym for *violoncello.*' Nowadays one has come to presume *violone* as meaning the large 16' instrument (*Contrabasso da gamba*) rather than the smaller 8' violone, which was the true bass of the viol consort. (perhaps that is the reason why the Germans call the smaller bass viol (tuned D-d') *tenor* or *tenor-bass* and the tenor viol as the *alto.)* Before and during the advent of the cello and the addition of the 7th string on the bass viol, the 8' violone seems to have been used far more often than one thinks today. In fact, its use spanned a period of 200 years, for in 1528 Agricola mentions a *Groß Geigen-Bassus* with the G,-g' tuning and Eisel in 1738 also refers to a violone with this same tuning. And although the violoncello meant (perhaps for a better word) little violone, the two instruments are not at all related, the cello being from the violin family and the violone from the viol family. (We know of course that in Renaissance times *violone* could mean any member of the viol family.)

In the article by David Watkin the section entitled *The Violone* doesn't mention *the* 8' instrument (G,-g) at all. He was right to state that 'In Corelli's Rome the term violone continued to be used to describe *an* 8' instrument well in the 18th century' (emphasis mine), but didn't continue along a path of enquiry about the 8' violone itself. To say that 'it seems more likely [that violoncello and violone is] a change of nomenclature than of the actual instrument' seems to be avoiding the issue. But even with uncertainty of the meaning as to which instrument is referred to, especially those in Renaissance times, I'm sure Corelli in 1700 would have made the distinction between *violone* and *violoncello* as Bach did a little later. And because of the above mentioned advantages of the former over the latter, I am certain the 8' violone was intended when replacing the harpsichord.

To confirm my opinion, Heinrich Schütz found the violone most suitable for trio sonatas. In the forward of his *Musicalischen Exequien* (1636) he characterized the *Violon oder Große Baßgeige* (G,-g) to be 'the most agreeable, elegant and best instrument; a particular honour to music.' As Alfred Planyavsky had discovered, that since then 'the most eminent European musicians used to employ this instrument' (written in his introduction to the two sonata movements for two bass viols and 8' violone by Daniel Speer [1636]). I have used this instrument on many occasions: in consort music, in the pieces by Speer, in Bach's Brandenburg Concertos Nos 2 and 6 (at 8' pitch of course) in the recording with Konrad Hünteler and the Camerata of the 18th Century; and using it in trio sonatas, it could have a great future! I look forward to reading other opinions about the *violone* with relevance to Corelli's op. 5 violin sonatas.

Anthony van Kampen

*Anthony (*alias *Bernhardt) van Kampen also sent a copy of a disc recorded by his ensemble: see p. 32. I suspect that the problem with the term* violone *is that usage varied enormously from place to place and that it needs to be considered carefully in its context whenever it occurs.*

Dear Mr Clark,

I was very glad to read your article in the last *EMR,* though I was puzzled that you implied that Hungary was not an Eastern European country. I would like to accept your invitation to write more about early music making in my land. Publicity, as given in your magazine, is very important our musicians so I thank you for your effort. This summary is by no means comprehensive – there are good choirs and orchestras who assemble only occasionally and certainly a lot of fine soloists – but it gives a flavour of the Hungarian early music scene.

Schola Hungarica is an important choir, established by László Dobszay and Janka Szendrey around 1970. It has

given many concerts and made over 40 recordings and has a wide repertory of rich and subtle Hungarian chant. More recently, has extended to repertoire from other European centres. It forms a focus of early music activity in Budapest: several significant figures in our musical life have sung in it. Dobszay is no doubt our most influential musician and scholar; English readers may have come across him at the Dartington Summer School.

There were two main 'early music' orchestras before the fall of the Berlin Wall, *Capella Savaria* was one of the earliest Hungarian music groups; unlike the other groups mentioned here, it is not based in Budapest by in a small city near the west border of the country where its director leader Pál Németh lives. It has performed many concerts, made many recordings of oratorios and operas and has worked with Nicholas McGegan in particular. The famous Hungarian soprano Mária Zádori sings with them.

Concerto Armonico was established in 1986, with two artistic directors, Péter Szûts, violin, and Miklós Spány, harpsichord and fortepiano. It works in Budapest. The ensemble has recorded ten CDs of C. P. E. Bach's keyboard concertos for BIS: eight have been released. Miklós Spányi is also recording his complete solo piano works with BIS and 'The Tangent Piano Collection' with Hungaroton. [The BIS discs have been favourably reviewed in *EMR*. *CB*] Their two most recent releases are J. C. Bach with Benedek Csalog, flute, and Schobert with Péter Szûts, violin.

Orfeo Baroque Ensemble was established in 1990 by György Vashegyi (he also directs the Purcell Choir). He performs French Baroque repertoire and late Baroque oratorios. Its first CD received very favourable reviews in *Fonoforum* and a Charpentier CD will be released soon.

The *Festetics String Quartet* led by István Kertész is another fine ensemble. Kertész was probably the first to play baroque violin in Hungary. They are best known for string quartets of the Classical period, especially those of Haydn, recordings of which have received several international prizes.

One of the most influential musicologists is János Malina who plays with his own ensemble *Affetti Musicali*. This group specialises in vocal chamber music of the 17th & 18th century, such as Telemann and Hasse. They have recorded 3 CDs with Hungaroton.

Cantus Corvinus is a ensemble of 12 singers, directed by Géza Klembala which specialises in manneristic polychoral repertoire. The first CD of the very young *Corvina Consort* (three men & a woman led by Zoltán Kalmanovits) with Lassus: *Lectiones sacræ novem ex libris Hiob* received a warm welcome from D. James Ross in *EMR* June 99. (The groups are not related: Corvinus was the family name of a famous Hungarian Royal house.)

When Fabrice Fitch wrote in *Gramophone* Oct 99, that 'the rise of vocal ensembles in Eastern Europe is one of the most promising developments of recent years', he must have been referring to the next two groups. The *A.N.S. Chorus* (a choir of 14, directed by János Bali) recorded a Jacob Obrecht CD and hope to record the complete works of Barbireau next year. *Voces Æquales* (a group of six men) was formed in 1993, primarily to perform sacred vocal music of the Renaissance. I cannot write impartially about it as I am one of the six, but Fabrice Fitch has praised our efforts. At present we are working on renaissance music related to Hungary, chansons by Josquin, compositions on Saint Ambrose, madrigals on texts by Dante, political motets connected with Charles V, and our Millennium Triptych (*Apocalypsis* 1998—*Genesis* 1999—*Tempora* 2000). In the last we include Renaissance pieces and specially-commissioned works by contemporary Hungarian composers. [I reviewed the first in *EMR* 48, p. 18; the second, received with this letter, will be covered in our next issue. *CB*]

With friendly greetings,

András Koncz (Voces Æquales)

web site available soon : mp3s:http://www.fono.hu/voces

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We sent some bumph to the Early Music Fair in Toronto. The following letter of thanks to people who contributed gives some idea of the event. I hope we can attend one year.

Officially this event attracted 1339 visitors, a number which represents a very good attendance, especially for a beautiful day which could easily have deterred anyone from wanting to be indoors.

There were many wonderful performances throughout the day – the gifted students of the Historical performance Studio of the Faculty of Music (University of Toronto); the exciting young ensemble I Furiosi – baroque performance students from the Royal Conservatory of Music; the multi-instrumental talents of Michael Franklin and Steve Starchev; the luscious tones of Deborah Howell's Amati violin; the lively and irreverent MadriGALS; the mellow classical clarinet of Nicolai Tarasov; trio sonatas performed by The Quantz Trio; and the magical medieval moments produced by Sine Nomine and others – all were highly appreciated! As in previous years, the elegance and grace of baroque dance demonstrations by La Belle Danse were a visual delight. Theorbo player, Eliott Chapi, also entertained many enthusiastic listeners.

Thanks are due to the Royal Ontario Museum (for the venue & general support), Claviers Baroques (for providing the keyboards), Toronto Early Music Players' Organization & the Recorder Players' Society (for supplying ensembles which filled the upper levels with sounds of the Renaissance), Early Music America (for donating a free subscription as a draw prize), BBC Music Magazine (for donating copies of their EM Special Issue), King's Music and David Jensen Harpsichords for their displays.

Frank Nakashima, Toronto