

# Early Music REVIEW

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It is encouraging to hear from Bärenreiter of the success of Jonathan Del Mar's new edition of the Beethoven symphonies (see review on p. 5). I suppose that one could argue that the attempt to perform early (or not-so-early) music in period style should include use of the performance materials that were available at the time: for Beethoven, the inaccurate published parts, for Handel the incomplete Walsh editions. But mostly our concern is not so much sociological as with the intention of the composer. Beethoven was, as many accounts testify, exasperated by the inaccuracies in editions of his music; he was not, however, one of nature's proof-readers (nor, as some readers delight in pointing out, am I). The basis of any attempt to recreate the music must depend on knowledge of what he wrote, and of areas where there is uncertainty about that.

It is also necessary to be aware of uncertainties of the meaning a a composer's notation. Graham Pont has recently presented further evidence of his belief that Handel's inconsistent rhythmic notation is intentional, and summarises a statistical survey in *The Handel Institute Newsletter* vol. 11/1, Spring 2000. I have often struggled to find some musical logic in Handel's apparently illogical alternation or simultaneous use of e.g.  $\overline{J}$  and  $\overline{J}$  and failed, and have concluded that the problem is our expectation of a spurious precision. Pont is distorting the argument by suggesting that Handel's notation is inaccurate: he may equally well not have been concerned with the precision Pont expects. Is Couperin's failure to notate *inégalité* inaccurate? A particularly interesting statistic is the 4% of cases where the voice is notated more precisely than the instruments (it is usually the other way round): detailed study of these would be interesting. The fact that copyists preserve Handel's notation is not surprising: they were paid to copy, not interpret. We know (or does Pont disagree?) that *appoggiature* were sung at recitative cadences, but copyists don't change the notation to include them. If Handel was inconsistent, it may have implied a flexibility that would be lost if the notation were too tidied. Similarly, previous editions of Beethoven have tried too hard to tidy up parallel passages. The editor may have ideas what really is parallel, but the performer needs to make up his own mind. Interestingly, I find that performers are often more interested in variety than editors are.

CB

## BOOKS &amp; MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

## SONGS 1415-1480

David Fallows *A Catalogue of Polyphonic Songs, 1415-1480* Oxford University Press, 1999. xi + 777pp, £100.00. ISBN 0 19 816291 X

I may have made snide comments about what musicologists should be doing of late, but this is a magnificent example of one of their most valuable activities: assembling all the information about a repertoire and cataloguing it. To be really useful, the repertoire has to be an identifiable one, which in this case it is. Although the catalogue groups its material by language – English, French, German/Flemish/Czech, Italian, Latin, Spanish/other Iberian and textless – the sources are mixed and the styles inter-relate. When I first encountered the songs of Dufay, Binchois and their contemporaries, I tried to assemble indexes of the main sources and modern editions and cross-reference them just to get some sort of picture of what came from where. Now this (and very much more) is accomplished in this thorough catalogue, at the cost of something like 5p per song.

The catalogue begins with a list of sources: a considerable amount of information about each expressed succinctly, and there is comment on the extent to which their contents are included in the catalogue. The dates chosen are in broad terms sensible, but the catalogue uses stylistic as well as chronological criteria for inclusion). The abbreviations go back to previous, pre-RISM/Census Catalogue style, and are, to me at least, much easier to use (e.g. EscB for E-E MS IV.a.24 or EscSL IV.a.24). The catalogue itself is arranged alphabetically by title within the language groups; the user needs to be aware that not all spellings agree, and sometimes even the language of an incipit isn't obvious: *Panny, pany baby*, for instance (p. 478 – should entries have been numbered?) Then come textless items, with musical incipits of all parts. (Rightly, Fallows argues that incipits are not necessary to catalogue the texted pieces.) The poetic form is noted, as well as any divergence from the usual musical layout. The entries list all sources and allusions, together with references to modern discussions of attribution or factual matters. There are often editorial comments, which may refer to other modern writings, but there is no general bibliography for each item nor systematic reference to modern editions, which is the catalogue's only disappointing feature. The list of composers is sketchy for the major figures, not even listing the titles indexed (such information is available elsewhere) but useful for the minor figures. The list of poets is briefer, but probably more useful to musicians who know less about literary scholarship. There is a substantial bibliography, immensely valuable in itself and whetting the appetite for the critical study out of which it grew.

## EURIDICE

Giulio Caccini *L'Euridice, composta in musica in stile rappresentativo, Firenze 1600* Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 2000. (Archivum Musicum: Musica Drammatica, 5). £14,000. ISBN 88 7242 782 7

There is a facsimile of this pioneering and emulative work available from Forni for roughly the same price. But the advantage of this 400th-anniversary production is the inclusion of Rinuccini's libretto. The printing is very clear, so provided that singers can manage the clefs and distinguish f from s, there is no reason not to perform direct from it.

## HASSLER MOTETS

Hans Leo Hassler *Five Motets for four Voices...* Edited by Anton Reinthaler. Breitkopf & Härtel (ChB 5168), DM 4.20.

Hassler deserves to be sung more often. His *Lustgarten* intradas were among the first German instrumental music of his time that made a mark on me, and he wrote some fine German songs; but I've met very few motets. So this cheap and mostly jolly collection is extremely welcome. The texts are *Cantate Domino, Laetantur coeli, Gratias agimus tibi, Laudate Dominum* and *Jubilate Deo*; even the more-subdued *Gratias* ends with a triple 'per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.' It is odd, however, that the first three pieces are male-voice ones (ATTB clefs), so have quite a restricted compass transposed up for SATB. But they are well worth singing and good value at under £1.50.

## MASTER SCHÜTZ

Basil Smallman Schütz (*The Master Musicians*). Oxford UP, 2000. xvii + 218pp, £25.00. ISBN 0 19 816674 5

I don't know if I've missed anything, but apart from the *New Grove* article (updated in *North European Baroque Masters*) by Joshua Rifkin and Colin Timms, the only general book on him I have is Moser's massive biography as translated by Carl Pfatteicher (Concordia, 1959), far more useful than the cut-down version published by Faber. So this new study in a familiar series is most welcome. Basil Smallman succeeds in balancing biographical narrative with just enough background information to set it in a context that may well be unfamiliar to most readers. His comments on the music sometimes suffer a bit from an unwillingness to get too technical, but at least what he has to say (on modality, for instance) is readable. There are the appendices customary for the series, including a calendar relating Schütz's life to contemporary events and short biographies of people

mentioned. The catalogue of works is short, with the contents of collections only listed in a single alphabetical sequence. In the main index, however, pieces are indexed by publication (and numerically within them), so it can take some time to find the reference you are looking for. Surely there could have been a better relationship between the two lists?

One point that worried me several times is the editor's apparent unfamiliarity with the implications of high clefs. In his introduction, he comments on transposition into implausible keys to make the music fit modern singers (he might have added that sometimes, as in Bärenreiter's earlier editions, they do not then fit the specified instruments), but doesn't point out there or later that the notation itself can imply transposition. On p. 18, although differences in clef configuration in the Italian madrigals and the need for transposition are mentioned in the same paragraph, they are not formally linked. We are told that Schütz quotes G. Gabrieli's *Lieto godea* (pp. 41-2), but not the fact that he transposes it from high notated pitch to low sounding pitch. Chiavette transposition is explicit in the *Musikalisches Exequien*, in which the continuo part is printed a fourth below the voices, with Schütz apologising for using a fourth rather than the correct fifth since it would be too low. Smallman quotes this (pp. 82-3) but doesn't link it with other pieces that don't have a transposed continuo part. (Incidentally, Schütz's assumption that transposition would normally have been a fifth and that organists who could manage a fifth would find a fourth difficult should be borne in mind by modern performers/editors.)

A few other comments:

- p. 45. The suggestion for an invisible accompaniment to the Evangelist in the *Resurrection History* presumably goes back to Gagliano's *La Dafne*.
- p. 71-2. Surmises about the liturgical function of incomplete texts (SWV 270 & 317) could have been linked to the liturgy more specifically.
- p. 75. The balance of three cornetti but six cornettini that Schütz was ordered to buy in Venice in 1629 is interesting: should we be using the higher instrument rather more?
- p. 102. The matter of Hofkontz's desire for promotion has now been treated by Mary E. Fransden in the latest *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 125/1, pp. 1-40.
- p. 126-7. I'm not sure that Schütz's remarks on the use of instruments in *Geistliche Chor-Music* are fully understood; the phrase 'proper to the pulpit' presumably relates to the location and type of performers and perhaps is a distinction between the choir that sings old-style polyphonic music (which doesn't need accompaniment) and the solo singers who perform concerted music with instruments.

This is a welcome publication and a useful companion to the wealth of fine Schütz CDs that have been appearing lately.

#### MATTEIS

Nicola Matteis *Aires for the Violin: the Fourth Part...* Edited by Don Simons. PCH Publishing (PCH-2), 1999. \$50.00

Although Matteis is somewhat erratic as a composer, some pieces have achieved considerable popularity and his music certainly deserves better and more convenient publication than the facsimile issued by Gregg Press in the 1960s. Don Simons has produced an excellent edition. The score (91 spiral-bound pages) is practically laid-out with sensible page-turns, and there are three instrumental parts. There is no keyboard realisation, but the harmony isn't very complex (certainly not compared with Purcell's first set from the same period). The original figuring isn't too helpful, so has here been replaced. Matteis marks in the index which pieces are easy (so 'may be played with the Flute [recorder] as well as the Violin' and which are 'harder to practice upon the Violin with double Stops and divisions'. I didn't check before sending the recent recording (see p. 19) for review whether its recorder confined itself to the easy pieces. The edition does not reconstruct the *Concerto di Trombe*; there have been various attempts, which provoked a certain amount of controversy a few years ago. Peter Holman is puzzled in his review why the Palladian Ensemble think Matteis is Scottish; I presume it is on the strength of the *Ground after the Scotch Humour*, forgetting that the Scotch Tune was a genre popular in London among composers like Purcell who had no connections north of the border. (Was it in the Palladian's programme when they won the Early Music Centre competition?) This has nothing to do with the edition, which is extremely useful, whether you want to play the easy pieces on recorder or the hard ones on violin.

Don Simons, P. O. Box 1841, Redondo Beach, CA 90278, USA,  
donaldsimons@hotmail.com [www.geocities.com/pchpublish](http://www.geocities.com/pchpublish)

#### BREITKOPF BACH

Johann Sebastian Bach *Kantate Nr. 198... Trauer-Ode... BWV 198* herausgegeben von Hans Gräß. Breitkopf & Härtel (4698), 2000. 73pp, DM56.00.

Breitkopf has done a marvellous job over refurbishing virtually all their Bach cantata performance material. The few items of which they only have copies in their hire library go back to the material produced a century ago, equipped with editorial phrasings and dynamics, but anything you buy will (at least in my experience) be OK, except perhaps the organ parts – our customers generally don't want them, so I haven't seen very many; but recently I have ordered a few for works with organ obbligato parts and been disappointed at the layout, which is no better for page turns than the scores. No doubt supplying parts for the Gardiner Cantata Pilgrimage will mean that the remaining gaps are plugged.

Much of Cantata 198 has probably been heard recently more in reconstructions of the lost Mark Passion than in its original state, music sharing the media preference for the newly-discovered and unknown compared with the equally interesting or valuable things that are already known or accessible: perhaps we might call it the Prodigal Son syndrome. Let's hope that the ready availability of decent parts (at least, they should be available by the time this

issue appears) and players of lutes and viols will encourage more performances of this Bach work in its genuine form rather than split up among hypothetical additions.

The only source is Bach's autograph. The editor surmises that some of the problems it presents might have been clarified in the parts, which sadly don't survive. Two problems are present in the very first page. One is whether pairs of semiquaver rest+semiquaver note should conform to the prevailing pattern of dotted semiquaver+demisemiquaver. The other is the extent to which slurs over a few of the pairs should be extended throughout. The Bärenreiter score leaves Bach's notation unchanged and without comment (unless you have the separate critical commentary to hand); the Breitkopf score footnotes the first rest+note pair and adds dotted slurs virtually throughout. The other score I have at hand, incorporated into Simon Heighes's *Mark Passion*, amends the notation of rest+note pairs (with a general footnote) but generally leaves the slurring unaugmented. I must confess that, even without considering the details, I find the appearance of the Breitkopf score rather fussy with all its dotted slurs (the English custom of slashes through normal slurs is neater). It also makes it much more difficult for players to come to their own conclusions. I can well imagine, for instance, that they may not want to slur the leaps of a ninth and an octave in bar 2. Bar 17 gives us a nice example of simultaneous dotted instruments and undotted voices, a topic that I won't discuss yet again (see pp. 1 & 6). Heighes solves the problem by tacitly undotting the instruments! The editor suggests that the score shows Bach becoming 'increasingly aware of the kind of dotting he wanted as the work progressed'. It's probably best to leave the notation, but read it as 12/8 except for places that deliberately break the pattern, like bar 6 beat 1, but with the option of tightening or slackening the rhythmic tension as required (irrespective of notation).

There is explicit testimony that the performance used both organ and harpsichord, with Bach playing the latter. There was also an organ prelude and postlude, a practice modern performances might imitate, since there is a suitable example in B minor. There were also apparently recorders involved as well as the specified *traversi*; but there is no sign of them in the score and nowhere where they seem to be needed, at least in accordance with Bach's usual manner of scoring.

This separate edition is welcome. It will be fine for choirs and orchestras who want material that can be used without too much bother, but specialised groups (like the Purcell Quartet, who have a set of parts on order) may not want to be so spoon-fed.

Johann Sebastian Bach *Brandenburgische Konzerte...* *Concerto III...* *Kadenz von Emil Platen* Breitkopf & Härtel (OB 4065) 2000. DM 12.00.

This is an attempt to fill the notorious gap between the two movements of the third Brandenburg concerto. Platen writes a dozen bars of regular quaver movements involving all the

instruments, broken by two separate bars of semiquavers for the first cello. It would probably work very well, but it is too complicated to have been improvised, and if Bach had wanted something like this, it would have been much simpler to have written it into the score. We will probably hear it quite often, since it looks as if it will be included in the standard Breitkopf score and parts of the whole work.

The new edition of the concerto for two violins in D minor looks (from the advert) rather more interesting (PB/OB 5356), but I haven't seen a copy.

#### MUSIC FROM ABRUZZO

This is the second batch we have received of editions of local composers published by the Camerata Anxanum in collaboration with the Assessorato alla Promozione Culturale of the region of Abruzzo. I seem to have a bit slow in writing about them, since the covering letter from the regional cultural service is dated Dec. 27th. No details of prices were given; scores are accompanied with parts. Although born in Chieta, Mascitti seems not to have spent much of his life there, and was more closely connected with Naples, where he studied, and Paris, where he lived from 1704 until he died a few years short of his century in 1760. Op. 9 of 1738 (the last of his nine *opera* published there) is a set of a dozen sonatas for violin and figured bass, edited in two volumes. They are mostly in the slow-fast-slow-fast pattern and don't give the impression of being the work of someone who had lived in Paris for over 30 years; perhaps they date from somewhat earlier. The four-page introduction is in vol. 2, not vol. 1.

Fedele Fenarole is an even more obscure figure than Mascitti. Also a long liver (1730-1818), he too studied at Naples, but stayed there for the rest of his life, and became renowned as a teacher and composer of church music, of which Camerata Anxanum have issued five examples. The most substantial is a *Stabat Mater* for the Pergolesian ensemble of SA, strings and organ, for which it would be an interesting coupling. The MS is dated 1812, but that might be of copying, not composition. It may be obvious to Italians why he should have composed two separate settings of the *Domine Deus* text from the Gloria of the Mass, but it isn't to me. There is one in F for soprano, two horns, strings and continuo and one in B flat for alto and strings, both with organ. I don't mind the horns being transposed to sounding pitch in the score, but it is not very helpful for the players for the parts to be notated thus as well. An *Ave Maria* in E minor is scored for SATB, strings and organ. The viola part is in only one of the two sources mentioned; not enough information is given about them for one to surmise that, since it doubles the bass and could have been concocted by anyone, it may be a superfluous addition. It seems a more worth-while piece than an SATB & organ *Miserere* in G minor, which is mostly homophonic and a little too easy-going. It is nice to see such pride in local composer: we could do with a bit of it here!

Camerata Anxanum: fax +39 0872 716350.

## BÄRENREITER BEETHOVEN SYMPHONIES

A bit modern for us, perhaps, but a feature of the period orchestral performances of Beethoven has been a concern to use more authentic texts. The new editions by Jonathan Del Mar, initiated by The Hanover Band, now offer a new basis for the study and performance of these works which, more than any other, established a performance tradition that the new approach is questioning and undermining. The impetus for this review was the arrival of study scores of Nos 1 (TP 901; £4.50), 3 (TP 903; £7.00), 8 (TP 908; £5.50) and 9 (TP 909; £9.00). I mentioned to Bärenreiter that I could write more sensibly if I had seen the critical commentaries, which were generously also supplied; these are all available except for No. 7; prices range from £15.50 to £24.00. The full series of scores and commentaries will be available soon. Large-size scores and orchestral parts are also available.

Apart from specific points of dispute, a major difference from previous editions is the extent to which the editor adds detailed markings to achieve consistency. When marking up a set of parts in pencil in preparation for a rehearsal, a conductor may be quite free in his addition of dynamics, slurs and staccato marks. But an editor has to be far more cautious. Del Mar must, of course, make some such additions, but they are all carefully documented in his commentary. He is also helpful in listing places where the shape of crescendo/diminuendo marks varies.

The scores are self-sufficient for many purposes (and are cheaper than e.g. the older Eulenburg ones), though I found the detailed account of sources in the commentaries fascinating and was extremely glad to have them as well. Each symphony is treated as similarly as possible: it is a bit disconcerting to read the same passages in each volume. The system of notation of sources is also identical. This seems at first to be logical, with A for autograph, B for fair copy score, E for first edition in score, P for early parts. But P is confusing. For a start, German readers will expect it to stand for *Partitur* (score), and there is also potential confusion with Pe (Peters Edition), whose later scores, though of only peripheral interest, are mentioned, and Ph (Philharmonia miniature score); it isn't clear why they have more authority than the equally non-authoritative Heugel or Ricordi. (I must confess that it is the neat, two-volume miniatures from Ricordi that I have used till recently; I don't like the feel of the thick paper generally used for the Philharmonia series). It is, however, useful that readings of the Breitkopf editions are noted; conductors can see from the commentary where the new edition differs from the text with which they are familiar. (There are various differences in the Breitkopf scores over the last 140 years; I found it very difficult to work out where my Kalmus reprint of No. 9 fitted in the chronology listed in Del Mar's commentary).

The miniature scores have short introductions by Barry Cooper as well as the editor's brief comments. But serious students and performers of the works will need to buy the

commentary volumes, which are set out very clearly and which are prefaced by a variety of facsimiles. (No. 5 also includes on p. 2 the note to the printer telling him how many of them there are.) Most of the difference are in detail: the most audible potential variant – whether there should be a further repetition of Scherzo and Trio in No. 5 – is (after four pages of careful discussion) decided in the negative. I suspect that most listeners couldn't tell if a particular performance was given from this or the previously-standard editions. But any conductor who has studied the variants and comments here is likely to approach the works more freshly, even if many will take Del Mar's labours on trust.

Norman Del Mar was well-known for his concern with the textual accuracy of the editions he conducted (possibly even to the detriment of his career: some orchestras were unsympathetic). We got on well in the 1970s, when I was probably the only person involved in the orchestral library world who shared his interest; he once flattered my by introducing me as the world's best music librarian (though that was in an attempt to get me a job). Jonathan (whom I don't know personally) has delved far more deeply than his father into the minutiae, has spent an enormous amount of time studying the sources (as the facsimiles show, this cannot really be done adequately from photocopies), and has produced editions which should become standard for many years.

## BEETHOVEN COMPANION

*The Cambridge Companion to Beethoven* edited by Glenn Stanley. Cambridge UP, 2000. xiii + 373pp. hb ISBN 0 52158074 9, £xx.xx; pb ISBN 0 521 58934 7 £xx.xx

I am somewhat embarrassed by this, since I read it as soon as it arrived and thought a lot about it, but didn't get round to writing my thoughts down on paper and only realised that I hadn't done so the day before sending this off to the printer. So its a sketchier report than it deserves. Its main strength is the way that it manages to cover Beethoven's output from such varied perspectives, even though an immediate response might be that any individual item of interest may seem a bit one-sided. Mark Kaplan on the chamber music with piano, for instance, concentrates on sound rather than form, a refreshing change from most other chapters unless information on form happens to be what you want. The older terminology of sonata form appears quite rarely, though it is assumed that the reader is aware of it. The chapter that exercised my brain the most was Nicholas Marston "The sense of an ending": goal-directedness in Beethoven's music. I'm not sure why the first five words are in quotes; the running title omits them. 'Goal' puzzled me (and does so even more writing at a time of football fever). Although OED gives 'the terminal point' as a main meaning, in normal parlance the word is surely used as in football to mean a series of achievements that take place during the course of an event, not the conclusion of the event. So the analogy in a sonata-form work might be the successful passing from a remote key in the development to the tonic of the recapitulation. The end, which is

what Marston seems to think the word means, is the 'result', a consequence of a series of goals (or the lack of them), not the goal itself. That apart, a feature of music as compared with, say, a novel is that the latter often tie up all the threads with a degree of calm so that by the time you put the book down, you are ready to leave it; musical works, however, tends to work up to a big climax to extract the maximum of applause – works that don't are to some extent the more effective because they contradict that expectation. Marston ends with Beethoven's end: *Plaudite, amici, comoedia finita est.* Generally, Beethoven's music sets up complexities which are, by the end, resolved – i.e., in one definition of the term, are comedies, so his deathbed recollection of Plautus is apt.

I haven't given the book the treatment it is worth, and the last few sentences don't even come to grips with the chapter that provoked them. It's not quite the Beethoven-lover's *vade mecum* of the Thames & Hudson *Beethoven Compendium*, but it is worth stretching the mind to read it.

David Charlton French *Opera 1730-1830: Meaning and Media*. (Variorum Collected Studies Series). Ashgate, 2000. xii + 374pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 86078 782 6

Ashgate show good taste, in that all the English musical scholars chosen to collect their papers together for their anthologies read *EMR*. This differs from others in the series in that some papers have been revised. It also differs in that much of the contents is new to me. I cannot pretend to claim that I am particularly knowledgeable on the subject: only the chapter on *Fidelio* impinges directly on repertoire that was standard when such a concept was plausible, and one could look at it as covering a dead period between Rameau and Berlioz. The chapter on Envoicing the Orchestra is worth reading both for the general issues it discusses as well as for its more specific consideration of French ideas (ones less easily ranged than one might expect from the polemics of the time, and I welcomed throughout the rest of the book the continual reminder that opera in Paris was more interesting than we lazily assume.

#### FUZEAU FACSIMILES

I only had time and space to mention one of Fuzeau's latest batch last month. I can now return to them, dealing with them in chronological order. The latest item, César Franck's *Prélude, Aria et final pour piano* (5706; FFR110,00) is too modern for us, but those interested will find a slightly spidery but very legible MS. We quote French prices; the export price is a little less, since it is without VAT, but the difference is likely to be swallowed up by postal cost and dealers' mark-up. So for a rough equivalent, divide the franc price by 10 for pounds.

Pierre Attaingnant (éd) *Tablature pour le jeu d'orgues...* Paris, 1531. Présentation par Marcel Degrutère. Fuzeau (5690), 2000. li + 79pp

This takes us back well before the period we expect from Fuzeau: to the very first French keyboard prints, one of a batch of seven titles published by Attaingnant within a few months in 1531. Presumably sales were disappointing, since he did not repeat the experiment. It contains two *alternatim* organ masses, *Fons bonitatis* and *Cunctipotens*. The preface includes a facsimile of relevant pages of a 1511 *Graduale Pataviense* – why not from a Parisian source. The introduction explains the notation and point out errors in Rokseth's elegant edition of 1925. I'll still continue to use that, though: there are just too many clefs to negotiate in comfort in the facsimile, and the print is quite small – perhaps a reason for the publication's original lack of success. (It will, in fact, be difficult to place the edition an facsimile side by side on a shelf). But even if not used for playing, it is good that so significant a document is available.

Georg Friedrich Haendel *Cantates à voix seule et basse continue: Manuscrits autographes*. Vol. 1 – Manuscrit R. M. 20.d.11. c. 1706-c.1709. Présentation par Philippe Lescat. Fuzeau (5751), 200. xxxvii + 178pp, FFR350,00

This is the first of an important series. There have been remarkably few facsimiles of Handel autographs: the only substantial volumes are *Messiah* (twice) and *Jephtha*. They are, of course, all available on film, but working with them is hard work, so congratulations to this first volume (of six). I like the idea of producing a facsimile in connection with a course, in this case one by Paul Esswood at Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges this month. After a calendar of Handel in Italy, the 'Comments on the Score' begin with the remark: 'George Frideric Handel's handwriting poses no particular reading problem.' (The trilingual text carefully spells Handel's name differently in each.) If you are thinking of performing direct from the facsimile, don't believe it. True, it's pretty good compared with Beethoven, but you have to be very familiar with it (both music and words) to be able to read it in performance; I've probably studied more Handel MSS than most, and I would certainly rather perform from a modern edition. The 23 cantatas etc. here are for solo voice and continuo; the only edition is Chrysander's, so this is useful at the very least for checking the text of HG 50 & 51. The very first page that caught my eye, in *Aure soavi e liete* (facsimile p. 51, HG 50 p. 13) produced examples of whether to dot inconsistent paired semiquavers (cf my editorial). In bar 7 of the first aria, the even pair of notes for the voice on beat 2 not only clashes with the dotted bass, but also with the rhythm of the same word the beat before. The facsimile is no help: Chrysander represents the MS correctly.

But the end of bar 13 is more problematic. *Ma pietà* at the end of the bar is a new idea, and is introduced by the continuo with a dotted rhythm. As a new phrase and anticipation of the voice, this will be played prominently, and it would be very odd if the voice entered differently. As Chrysander notates it, the A natural needs to be forceful to contradict the continuo's A flat. However, neither the natural nor the sharp that begins his next bar are visible in the facsimile. The A should strictly be natural, since the flat



earlier in the bar (in fact, two flats in the MS: Chrysander uses the modern convention and omits the second) is no longer valid. Chrysander's sharp at the beginning of the next bar makes the A natural certain, but without that sharp, a singer may well retain the flat, influenced by the harpsichordist who, without further prompting, would play F minor throughout the second half of 13 and a  $\frac{4}{4}/\frac{2}{2}$  at the beginning of 14. Even if we decide that Chrysander's text is right, we would not have been aware of the problem without the facsimile. The commentary to the facsimile clarifies Handel's corrections but doesn't extend to comment on places like this.

I wrote 'visible in the facsimile' with intent. Like other Fuzeau facsimiles, this has been cleaned up; the publisher is quite open about it and even supplies a before-and-after version of the chanson *Sans y penser* (though with no explanation of the music in the margin of f. 62r). The problem with this sanitising is that the user is never quite certain that some-thing that matters hasn't been concealed, and whatever the merits of restoring a print to its ideal condition, a MS is unique and all aspects of its history should be preserved.

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier *Cinq sonates, un concerto Opus 26 (violoncelle, viole ou basson). Six sonates, un trio Opus 50 (violoncelle, viole ou basson)*. Présentation par Stéphan Perreau. Fuzeau (5767), 2000. vii + 24 + 24pp. FFR 136,00

Joseph Bodin de Boismortier *Cinq sonates en trio Opus 28. Cinq sonates en trio suivies d'un concerto Opus 37.* (Présentation par les élèves du Ce. F. E. de M. de Rueil-Malmaison. Fuzeau (5800), 2000. 7 parts. FFR 205,00

Boismortier, while not reaching the heights, is always competent, always effective, never dull. We have been amazed how well the group of facsimiles of his bass music has sold, so are not surprised that Fuzeau has turned their attention toward him. Fuzeau's facsimiles are smarter and cleaner than ours, and also retain the original size (ours are squashed to A4). On the other hand, we offer op. 26 and op. 50 separately, each for £6.00, while the Fuzeau volume with both costs getting on for £14.00 – fine if you want both sets, but expensive if you want only one (especially as you will need two or three copies to play from). Each set contains

five sonatas for solo bass instrument and continuo. Op. 26 also has a concerto for cello solo with two violins and bass (modern score and parts are available from King's Music for £10.00), while op. 50 concludes with a trio for violin, independent cello and continuo. The op. 28/37

package has two sets of three parts plus an introductory booklet in the same format; these come in a slip-in folder. Op. 28 has six sonatas for two oboes (or flutes or violins) and a continuo part labelled *organo*, and ends with two concertos, one for musette (headed *Zampogna* in the part), one for recorder. Opus 37 has five sonatas for one treble instrument (flute, violin or oboe), one bassoon and *organo*, and a concerto for flute, violin, oboe, bassoon and continuo. There is no competition for op. 28, but if you only want op. 37, our facsimile is £10.00 as opposed to over £20.00. Notation is clear and presents few difficulties, so these two sets provide attractive short sonatas and concertos at reasonable prices.

Pierre Dandrieu *Noëls...* (ca. 1729) Jean-François Dandrieu *Noëls...* (1759). Fuzeau (5641), 2000. 2 vols, FFR 390,00.

These two Christmas collections are grouped together, not just because they are by uncle and nephew, but because the contents overlap considerably. Pierre's book was first published around 1706: that is lost, and it is a reprint that is here reproduced, a substantial volume of 113 pages. The 1759 collection, despite bearing the name of a different author, contains a lot of the same material, but also differences, both of substance and detail. The introduction lists the different types of differences and gives a concordance table between the two editions. The modern player (both titlepages mention harpsichord as well as organ, though the pedal is sometimes required) will prefer the later volume, with its use of standard treble and bass clef; the earlier volume prefers F3 for the left hand. There is lots of useful fodder for Christmas services and concerts here.

Alto. *Par-dessus de viole: Méthodes et Traités – Dictionnaires* Fuzeau (5794), 2000. 135pp, FFR 180,00.

The title puzzled me at first: it has no punctuation after the first word and I wondered whatever an *alto pardessus de viole* might be. In fact, this is chiefly a collection of material about the viola, in the same series as the clarinet volume mentioned last month. The pardessus section has little beyond Corrette's *Méthode* of 1748, which is more comprehensive than his remarks on the viola included in the earlier part of the book. The most comprehensive viola treatise is that of Cupis (c.1800). Woldemar's *Méthode* of around the same date has some tricky-looking variations in which the viola is accompanied by a violin. There is less here than in the volumes for other instruments: not surprising, of course, since viola-players presumably all started as violinists.

## CONFERENCES AT AMERICA'S SHRINE TO MUSIC MUSEUM

David Schulenberg

America's Shrine to Music Museum in Vermillion, South Dakota, was the site of two international conferences on consecutive weekends this spring: the eighth annual meeting of the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music (SSCM), held April 27-30, 2000, and an international interdisciplinary symposium organised by the museum on 'The Pre-Classical Piano: Expressive Claviers and Their Repertoire in the Eighteenth Century', May 5-8, 2000. The museum is one of the world's leading organological collections, with more than seven thousand instruments representing every major world music culture. It has particular strengths in European winds, strings, and keyboard instruments of the 17th-19th centuries, making it an appropriate venue for both conferences. Situated close to the geographic centre of the U.S. on the campus of the University of South Dakota, the museum is one of the chief cultural resources of the vast corn-growing region of the Northern Plains, whose settlement by music-loving northern Europeans during the later 19th and 20th centuries is part of the museum's heritage (the museum's history and collections are fully explained on its excellent website at <http://www.usd.edu/smm/>). In the interests of full disclosure, I must mention that in addition to being a research associate of the museum I am married to one of its curators, with whom I collaborated in concerts during both conferences.

The SSCM is one of the newer musicological organizations, distinguished by a strong interest in musical performance and by the lively character of its annual meetings. This conference naturally placed particular emphasis on instruments and performance practice, but talks ranged from old-fashioned archival research to sex (still a highly fashionable topic in American academic circles). In what follows I report especially on items of particular interest to *EMR* subscribers.

Given the museum's strengths, it was natural that keyboard instruments and their music should furnish subjects for several talks. John Koster, the museum's conservator, spoke about seventeenth-century French instruments, arguing that until the 1680s the latter followed native traditions rather than Ruckers and other Flemish influences. Ed Kottick reviewed differences between other national harpsichord types, emphasizing the German interest in distinctive *timbres* for the various stops, and Candace Bailey argued for the influence of the French unmeasured prelude – most likely through Froberger – on a number of unusual preludes by Locke and other English composers. Robert Green, noting a striking thematic parallel between Holborne's Lute Pavan No. 8 (the Countess of Pembrook's Funeral) and Dufaut's *Tombeau de Mr. Blancrocher*, suggested a historical connection between the English memorial pavan and the French commemorative tombeau.

Among other instrumental papers was Stewart Carter's study of the *Motetae* published in 1613 by the Habsburg capellmeister Christoph Straus. These include unprecedentedly complete and precise specifications of instruments, such as the *fagotti grande, commune* and *piccolo* all used together in one work, *Gabriel angelus*. Curator Mary Oleskiewicz spoke on the problems of reconstructing the 17th-century transverse flute and its music, proposing new explanations for special features of the few surviving instruments as well as some provisional solutions to problems of pitch and instrumentation in the extant repertory. David Dolata surveyed the evidence for the use of split fretting by lute players in order to make enharmonic distinctions like those available on keyboards with split keys. Stuart Cheney reported on a Washington manuscript (recently published in facsimile) that fills a lacuna in our knowledge of 17th-century hunting horn signals.

Among the more strictly musico-historical offerings, Jessie Ann Owens's systematic survey of cleffing in English vocal polyphony c.1575-1650 demonstrated its failure to follow Continental patterns relating to mode and seemed to bear out her scepticism that cleffing in this repertory has anything to do with transposition, as some have proposed. Mary E. Frandsen argued convincingly that the restrained, introspective character of Lutheran church music between Schütz and J. S. Bach reflected the influence of the 'New Piety', a literary and theological movement that produced many of the poetic texts set during the late seventeenth century. Frandsen illustrated her talk with excerpts from a recent Ricercar Consort recording of Buxtehude's *An filius non est Dei*; I wish we could have heard as well her example, given in text only, from M. G. Peranda's *Quis dabit capiti meo aquas?*, sung at the Dresden court in 1665 and perhaps not performed since.

Finally, sex – or, at least, gender. Colleen Baade gave a fascinating account of the careers of musical nuns in Spanish convents, showing that many sang and played organ, harp, or *bajón* (a type of dulcian) in lieu of paying a dowry upon entrance. The convents clearly counted their *dólares* carefully; one nun was required to pay back her waiver upon her retirement from musical activities, despite more than thirty years of service. Amanda Eubanks Winkler tried to show that spirits in Restoration drama, including some of Purcell's musical scenes, are 'gendered' by both their words and their music, despite Dryden's declaration that spirits lack sex.

Two evening concerts took place in the museum's small but acoustically exceptional Arne B. Larson Concert Hall (named for the collection's founder). Bella Donna, an

ensemble of recorder, violin, and continuo based in the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, performed a programme of rarely heard music under the title 'Folias festivas'. About a third of the selections were arrangements by the group's harpsichordist, Barbara Weiss, of Iberian and Italian keyboard music, among which were Cabanilles's catchy if atypical *Jacara* and the *Folias* variations of Bernardo Storace (the latter's *Spagnoletta* variations were played in their original keyboard setting). One might also count as arrangements the *Folies d'espagne* of Marais, which Clea Galhano played on recorder, or two *recercadas* of Ortiz, rendered by Rebecca Humphrey on baroque cello. Lively interplay between cello and violin (Margaret Humphrey) characterized Tarquinio Merula's sonata *La Pusterla*, which opens with an unusually persistent 'repercussive' subject consisting of numerous quick repetitions of a single note.

Flautist Mary Oleskiewicz and I had opened the conference with a programme built around the museum's Italian harpsichord of c.1662-82 by Giacomo Ridolfi (which has been featured on a number of recent recordings). I offered toccatas by Michelangelo Rossi, Froberger, and Georg Muffat; passacaglias by Luigi Rossi, Cabanilles, and Johann Philipp Krieger – the latter of particular interest to me because it uses the same ground later employed by Telemann in the final movement of his 'Paris' quartets – and a suite by Bernardo Pasquini. For the latter I switched to the museum's octave virginal of 1695 by the Neapolitan maker Onofrio Guaracino; despite its octave pitch I find this a remarkably resonant instrument, and it has prompted me to recognise such *spinettine* as serious works of art – by no means mere toys! With the latter I also accompanied Frescobaldi's canzona *La Bonvisia* and Van Eyck's setting of Caccini's *Amarilli*, both played on a flute by Barbara Stanley after Lissieu. For an anonymous arrangement of Corelli's violin sonata op. 5, no. 3, we turned to a more modern flute by Jean-François Beaudin after Quantz, and to the museum's sumptuous 1785 Parisian harpsichord by Jacques Germain. As I explained in my own paper for the conference, the French origin, ornamentation, and bass figuring of this version (published at Paris, c. 1738) suggested our use of *notes inégales* and other stylistic features which made the music sound like Leclair (or is the latter rather a gallicized Corelli?)

The Piano Conference centered on the activities of the small international coterie of scholars, builders, and museum professionals who work on 18th-century keyboard instruments. One lesson of the conference for me was that keyboard players and music historians might pay more attention to the numerous types of 'expressive claviers', as John Koster calls them, that emerged after 1700. Such innovations as the *Pantalon* (a sort of giant hammered dulcimer), the *Tangentenflügel*, and what one speaker described as 'clavichords with gadgets' – not to mention the Venetian swells and special stops fitted to late English and German harpsichords – are often disparaged by writers celebrating the eventual triumph of the fortepiano. And indeed the conference was timed to mark the 300th anniversary of Cristofori's invention of the latter. But by

specifically excluding the more familiar Viennese Classical piano, the conference not only focused attention on the earlier pianos of Cristofori, Gottfried Silbermann, and their immediate followers but showed that other types of expressive claviers were equally suited to much of the century's keyboard music, playing an important role in musical culture from the late Baroque to the early Romantic period.

There were four evening recitals; what might have been a surfeit of keyboard music was enlivened by the use of a veritable catalogue of instrument types. Susanne Skyrme of the University of South Dakota opened the meeting with a recital of Iberian music, including sonatas by Seixas and Soler, on the museum's 1767 piano by Manuel Antunes of Lisbon – possibly the oldest surviving instrument with an extant Cristofori-style action (this too is available on several recordings). The following night, Mary Oleskiewicz and I played portions of Bach's *Musical Offering* together with sonatas by Quantz and C. P. E. Bach, using David Sutherland's copy of one of the pianos Silbermann built for Frederick the Great. Jacques Ogg played a recital on two late harpsichords from the museum's collection: Haydn's E-major sonata (Hob. XVI:13) and Scarlatti's 'Cat's' Fugue (among others) seemed at home on a silvery 1780 Portuguese harpsichord by José Calisto, whereas Forqueray's C-minor suite naturally suited the 1785 Germain. The Hungarian C. P. E. Bach specialist Miklós Spányi closed the proceedings with a program of sonatas by C. P. E. Bach and Haydn, alternating between the museum's 1804 clavichord by Kraemer und Söhne and a *Tangentenflügel* of 1784 by Späth and Schmahl. The latter possesses several distinctive registrations which Spányi employed to great effect, notably in Haydn's lengthy Capriccio in G (Hob. XVII:1) on the folksong *Acht Sauschneider müssen seyn*.

Unfortunately I had to miss an afternoon recital by Richard Troeger of music by Fischer, Pachelbel and several Bachs, played on three museum instruments including a recently acquired spinet by Johann Heinrich Silbermann (Gottfried's nephew). I also could attend only a selection of the papers. Several delineated a cultural context for the new keyboard instruments. Herbert Heyde set the 'mellow and friendly' instruments within an 'Arcadian neo-Classical reform' of around 1700, which included a turn toward a 'lighter and friendlier' style of architectural decoration. Peggy Baird gave an entertaining slide show on early pianos in paintings at the Yale Center for British Art, demonstrating the instrument's centrality to upper-class life of the later 18th century even in far-off British India. Eleanor Selfridge-Field's opening talk placed Cristofori's invention amongst contemporaneous technological and intellectual innovations, especially the founding of the Venetian Arcadian Academy in 1697 by Zeno (the librettist) and Maffei, who published an account of Cristofori's instrument in 1711. The earliest music published specifically for the latter, the *Sonate* of Ludovico Giustini, appeared only in 1732; these were subjects of papers by Daniel F. Freeman and John A. Rice, the first pointing to the inclusion of French genres among

the works' many movement types, the latter to the presence of fashionable melodic and harmonic devices from current Neapolitan opera. This left me wondering for what sorts of music the first pianos were intended – perhaps primarily for accompaniment rather than for solo playing?

'Combination instruments' incorporating elements of the clavichord, harpsichord and *Pantalon* were the subjects of several papers, including a comprehensive survey by Michael Latcham. As Ed Kottick observed, the colouristic devices of these instruments may be superfluous in the music of Couperin and J. S. Bach, but they are eminently suited to the music of Alberti and other composers whose works, now regarded as peripheral, were central for the authors of the *Encyclopédie*. In a paper on Saxon instruments, Eva Badura-Skoda repeated some of her arguments for the early use of piano-like instruments by J. S. Bach, among others, and showed clips from her engaging video demonstrating speculative reconstructions of the pantalon (with and without keyboard). But Konstantin Restle and Richard Maunder both sounded warnings about relying on sketchy historical documents, Restle questioning Forkel's report of

King Frederick's 15 Silbermann pianos (only two survive), Maunder showing that a 1752 advert in a London paper for a *piano e forte concerto* might in fact have referred to one for violin. Maunder found that the earliest English piano concertos were probably those of James Hook, performed at London in 1768, or the Oxford professor Philip Hayes, published 1769; J. C. Bach's Op. 7 set followed in 1770.

Several papers focused on technical subjects of primarily organological interest. But one such paper, by the English maker Kenneth Mobbs, was illustrated by what was for me a highlight of the conference: an impressive performance of the sonata that Muzio Clementi reportedly played in his competition with Mozart in 1781. Mobbs divided the work between John Watson's copy of a 1776 square piano by Johannes Zumpe and the museum's 1798 Kirckman harpsichord (equipped with machine stop and swell). Mobbs started each of the sonata's three movements on one instrument, moving to the other at the recapitulation, thereby providing not only great amusement to the audience but demonstration that both instruments are eminently suitable to this high-Classical, perhaps even proto-Romantic, work.

## THE TRIUMPH OF VIRTUE?

Anthony Hicks

This is the third recording of a Handel oratorio derived from a live performance under Joachim Carlos Martini and involving the chorus and orchestra he himself founded. In each case the recordings have been issued privately by the Junge Kantorei and subsequently re-issued by Naxos. It was possible to treat the earlier issues indulgently – they were *Athalia* (EMR 45, p. 19) and *Saul* (EMR 47, p. 25) – because the performances were passable and they offered cheap alternatives to better recordings at full price. The fact that *Athalia* was unaccountably boosted by the addition of an aria from *Deborah* and that *Saul* displayed an odd choice of variants did not matter very much. Indeed, one of the *Saul* numbers had not previously been recorded, and so added interest. Such tinkering did however indicate a touch of quirkiness in Martini's approach, and the product of his latest project is eccentric to the point of being seriously misleading. It purports to be the première recording of Handel's only Italian choral oratorio, *Il trionfo del Tempo e della Verità*, a radical revision of the Roman oratorio *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* of 1707, composed in London in 1737 and revised in 1739. In a sense it is, since the music of the 1737 oratorio, here amounting to about 2h 11m, is virtually all present, but it is embedded in a highly personal compilation of 3 hours length. The additional 49m is made up of extracts from the 1707 version, variants of the 1739 revision and other more loosely associated material. The result is a sequence of

music that at times specifically overrides Handel's considered rejection of elements of the 1707 version, and makes it impossible to appreciate the special qualities of the 1737 revision – wittier and more light-hearted than 1707. The booklet notes are muddled, sometimes factually in error, and do not provide a coherent explanation for Martini's treatment of the score.

It must immediately be said, however, that the set preserves a remarkable evening of music-making. I suspect the real reason for Martini's compilation is a genuine fascination with all three versions of the oratorio – including the English version of 1757, *The Triumph of Time and Truth* – and a consequent desire to perform as much of their music as is possible in a continuous sequence. Besides being a fine musician, Martini obviously has the organisational and fund-raising skills to run his choir, fix his orchestra and arrange for professional recording, so why should he forego the opportunity to record some lovely music on the pedantic grounds that it does not strictly belong with the rest? In many ways the highlight of the performance occurs in Part 3. In 1737 Handel omitted his original sarabande setting of the aria 'Lascia la spina' (probably because it had become too well known as 'Lascia ch'io pianga' in *Rinaldo*) and replaced it with a short, sprightly setting. Martini duly performs the latter, but follows it with elaborated harpsichord arrangements of the sarabande in *Almira* from which

the 1707 setting of the aria derives, and then the 1707 aria itself, hauntingly sung by Elisabeth Scholl. The interpolations become a sort of rapt meditation on the sarabande theme some 11 minutes in length. Here Martini's direction is indulgent, though generally it is stylish and sensitive. Scholl and McFadden make contributions of absolute commitment throughout, and the two countertenors, though capable of occasional sourness, are more than competent. The chorus, alas, sound as murky as ever, and does not seem comfortable with Italian, but its role in this piece is comparatively small.

The tracks devoted to the sarabandes can of course be skipped, and the same applies to some of Martini's other interpolations from the 1707 score and to the two tracks entitled *Interludium* before Part 2, consisting of the Sonata for organ and orchestra from 1707 and the chorus 'Viver e non amar' from the 1732 Italian and English *Acis and Galatea*. (The text of the latter has no relevance to the *Trionfo* libretto but the piece gets in because it appears in the 1757 *Triumph* as 'Pleasure submits to pain'.) Anyone who wants to extract the pure 1737 version from Martini's compilation soon runs into difficulty, however, because some interpolations cannot easily be isolated and the Naxos documentation does not assist such an exercise. Partly this is Martini's fault, since the Naxos booklet is derived from his German original, but at least in the German version the texts of items not in the 1737 score are printed in italics, whereas the libretto as printed by Naxos makes no such distinction. Naxos also provide a track-by-track synopsis, but again it does not indicate the extraneous numbers. Confusion starts with the first track, where Martini plays first the opening sonata of 1707 (with the trumpets parts added for *La resurrezione* in 1708) and runs without a break into the new Sinfonia of 1737, which loses its individuality as a result. Part 1 then proceeds as 1737, except for the insertion of the duet 'Il voler' from 1707 and a weird twist in Bellezza's first aria ('Fido specchio') where the *da capo* begins with the ritornello of 1707 (introducing a thematic element Handel had eliminated in 1737) and the 1737 text then returns. In Part 2 Bellezza's aria 'Venga il Tempo' is first sung in its original 1707 version, with closing ritornello. Then follows, separately, the chorus 'O Tempo, padre di dolor', an addition of 1739 with music taken without change from the *Deborah* chorus 'O Baal, monarch of the skies'; it should replace the final ritornello of the aria. Next Martini plays an orchestral ritornello with a cello cadenza, which is what replaced the 1707 ritornello in 1737 but is meaningless as an isolated fragment. Part 3 also starts enigmatically, with the opening Sinfonia played twice, first with oboes doubling violins, then with flutes substituted. (In the German notes Martini calls the piece 'a light-footed *gagliarda*', evoking *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, giving a vague clue to his thoughts, but this phrase does not appear in the English text and there is no further elucidation.)

Perhaps the most serious muddle, involving actual misrepresentation, occurs in connection with Piacere's aria 'Un leggiadro giovinetto'. The 1707 setting has an organ

obbligato and is introduced by the organ-and-orchestra Sonata and the tiny recitative 'Taci! qual suono ascolto!' for Bellezza. In 1737 Handel recomposed the whole sequence, replacing the Sonata with a short Sonatina in A major for violin and continuo, and the aria by a new setting in the same key, with solo violin. In 1739 the Sonatina was rescored for solo carillon, and the violin solo in the aria replaced by a carillon part. Martini begins his sequence with the violin Sonatina and then continues with the carillon version in its written key, ignoring the fact that for Handel the carillon is always a transposing instrument. Thus the carillon Sonatina sounds in D instead of A and fails to link properly with Bellezza's recitative. In regard to the aria, Martini claims that 'with the help of the suggestions of Bernd Baselt on the carillon in the second *Händel-Handbuch* [we] have completed the music assigned to it'. The reference to Baselt is to the inaccurate entry for HWV 46b (apparently the source of several of Martini's quirks) but Baselt cannot be blamed for the false claim of 'completion'. What Martini actually performs is the 1737 version of the aria, but he also has the carillon doubling the solo violin in places as well as playing a continuo role unrelated to the part that Handel wrote.

This then is a frustrating issue: for £15 it gives you three hours of Handel's music pretty well performed and much of it never before recorded. One can hardly declare it unwelcome. The down side is that the musical sequence recorded is not what it purports to be and comes without adequate documentation or indeed any clear justification for its content. It will inhibit for many years any attempt to record the 1737 *Trionfo* in a more accurate form. My annoyance is no doubt intensified because I happen to know the piece quite well, having edited the 1737 score for its first modern revival under Paul Nicholson in April 1998, as part of the London Handel Festival. Since my concern was to produce a text as close as possible to what Handel performed in 1737 – anything else in my view would have been an offence to both performers and audience – I find it hard to enter the mindset of someone who takes a wholly different view of the editorial task. Despite the 'historical awareness' brought to bear on early music over the last thirty or so years, the misrepresentation of major baroque works in performance still seems to be an on-going phenomenon – as witness the bizarre patchwork of various versions currently being presented by Opera North as 'Handel's' *Radamisto*. (I have just heard the relay on Radio 3.) A serious analysis of why this happens – it is seldom a matter of finance – would be interesting.

Anthony Hicks published the full score of his edition of Handel's *Il trionfo del tempo e della Verità* last year in a limited edition of 40 copies. It contains the complete 1737 score, a libretto with translation, an editorial commentary and an appendix of variants including the carillon versions of the Sonatina and the aria 'Un leggiadro giovinetto'. A few copies are still available at £25 + post: enquiries to King's Music.

CB

## THE BACH FESTA DA MUSICA, Lisbon, April 29th & 30th, 2000

Martin Renshaw

This was great fun as well as being hard work. Right from the start, as we ploughed and veered through the 6 p.m. traffic jams from the airport and were delivered to our hotels (where our passports were demanded so that our details could be given to the police on fiches) and then walked on paths of small stone setts, the Tagus estuary on our left, passing the baroque and mannerist splendours of the bleached-white monastery of St Geronimo on our right towards the pink granite ziggurat called the Belém Cultural Centre, it was obvious that we were about to have some new experiences, as the travel writers say. 'We' were the director and chief stage manager of the Cité de Congrès at Nantes, where the Folles Journées take place every year, René Martin, the 'onlie begetter' of the FJ idea, his secretary, and me, charged with organising tunings for about 40 concerts in two days in a building I had never seen and with three Portuguese colleagues-to-be I'd not yet met. All 30,000 tickets had been sold for the 72 concerts on offer and all 18,000 copies printed in Portuguese of Davitt Moroney's biography of Bach had been sold. We found that the staff at the Centre were thoroughly efficient, well-briefed and extremely welcoming – and not a little nervous about what the next few days would bring.

They showed me round the centre, which is much larger than its Nantes equivalent and with many more rooms, on five levels and in three linked sections. That night (Wednesday) we and Miguel Antunes, the Centre's director, met in the old town (a hair-raising taxi-drive away, with a driver who could not at first find our rendezvous) for a meal which ended about midnight with five of us staggering through the streets, narrowly avoiding the trams which follow lines of sinuosity, inclination and declination that would make Alton Towers jealous, and then taking a jumpy British-built little tramcar (c1901) back along the river front to the Belém quarter.

The next morning we had to get down to the work of sorting out the instruments and meeting our collaborators. Laurent Soumagnac and his son-in-law (Laurent junior) had brought three harpsichords from Marc Ducornet's stock in Paris, plus one of his own making, and three organs. Philippe Humeau came with two harpsichords of his own, and the Gulbenkian Foundation lent a very good Dowd (1983) and an amazingly awful Sperrhake (c1965, but even this dog had its day, as you will see), and a local person lent a Klinkhamer. Two very well-made twin organs were available (as was their maker, Pedro Guimaraes, who also tuned them) and João Vas and Rui Paiva brought their own organ and harpsichord and an organ tuner for their concerts. We were, as it turned out, extremely lucky also to have the help of Paulo Pimentel, who runs a music shop

in Lisbon and is an expert harpsichord tuner. He fully entered into the hard-working folly of the whole enterprise, and if he has a family they didn't see much of him for four days! Christopher, our mover-in-chief arrived later that day, so by the end of the first day they were tuned and placed where they needed to be for the first rehearsals that afternoon and the next morning (Friday). After a meal in one of the three excellent restaurants in the Centre we retired early to the hotel – at least, that was the theory, but I still had to do two hours of detailed planning to make sure that rehearsing musicians were supplied with the instruments they wanted. This planning showed that we lacked a viable harpsichord, and arrangements were made to find one in the city; it (a twenty-year-old American-made Ruckers copy) arrived just in time on Saturday afternoon to plug a gap. I was spared more late-night planning by the welcome arrival the next day in our main tuning room of a large white-board on which I could mark up the snakes-and-ladders-style schedule in blue (concerts) and red (rehearsals).

Friday was difficult because of the number of rooms in which the rehearsals took place (and trying to remember how to get to them – but Laurent junior soon became adept in the place's geography and at finding short-cuts), but Saturday was hell because rehearsals started early and then also went on at the same time as the concerts, although the concerts at least started at the more civilised hour of 2 o'clock in the afternoon each day, unlike the 9 a.m. starts at Nantes. Laurent senior was marvellous over getting first-aid repairs rapidly done to broken strings, quills, etc, and with a seemingly endless supply of stories he kept us amused when tensions started to build up, especially when (as happened twice to a serious extent) concerts overran and instruments required elsewhere were still being used by musicians giving encores, an indulgence which had been strictly forbidden. This was one area where the staff at the centre – some 300 were on duty over the two days – could have no influence. Otherwise they were clearly very well trained and had firm orders; by mistake I went up a floor too high in a lift and found myself barred from access at that level, my white 'Afinador' (tuner) label not being the right colour. It was also amusing to see, during the last large-scale concert, that a young door-keeper, presumably not knowing who he was, did not let René Martin out through the main doors to get to another concert. Perhaps she was right not to trust anyone; after all the President of Portugal himself was there (for a second concert) – a positive attitude which some French critics did not fail to contrast with the total lack of any official delegate from Nantes.

The Portuguese critics were ecstatic over the Festa, for reasons that lay buried a little below surface appearances.

It seems that the Centre was highly controversial when first built – a large building in a sensitive area near St Geronimo and the Salazar-period monument to Portuguese marine explorers as well as the historical Torre (Tower) which before the 1740s earthquake was in middle of the Tagus – and was widely regarded as a place only for cultural snobs. The Festa changed all that, the papers headlining the relaxed air of the proceedings, the families that came, and look – no ties or suits! Ticket prices, at the equivalent of £1.50 for the smaller-scale concerts and £3 for those in the large (1700-seater) hall, had indeed been kept as low as possible (everyone's fees – both musicians and tuners – being reduced also; but no concert was recorded or broadcast, the French and Portuguese television crews and a special documentary maker being confined to the corridors and cafes). So what was described as Portugal's largest-ever cultural event was made very widely available. The headline of main report in the Nantes paper said it all: 'Bach makes 30,000 more victims in Lisbon'!

One of the few good things about being in charge is that you can to some extent pick what you want to do, and ask others to do the rest, so I took advantage of this unusual (for me) situation to tune for the soloists I did not encounter at Nantes. It was very rewarding to tune for or with the likes of Olivier Baumont and Davitt Moroney (and for their two-harpsichord concert), for Blandine Verlet and Beatrice Martin – not least because not one of these failed to say 'thank you', a politeness alas not usually found among more mediocre players.

I won't describe the concerts, first because many were the same or similar to those at Nantes and second because (as usual) I didn't have time to hear much of any of them. But I make an exception of the aforesaid last concert, a St John Passion given by the Gulbenkian Foundation Orchestra and Choir, conducted by Michel Corboz. In keeping, perhaps, with the ambivalent look at Bach typified by the Italian Concerto on a (single) piano on one side and the concerts given by Le Concert des Nations on the other, this was Bach as it used to be, but at its best – a 1960s version with modern instruments (practically a full symphony orchestra but of course without brass or percussion), a large choir and visually and vocally weighty soloists, Christus and Pilatus ceding nothing to our late lamented Gordon Clinton or Owen Brannigan on the redoubtlessness scale. John Mark Ainsley evangelised fluently and without apparent strain at 442 Hz and sang 'Ach, mein Sinn' but was spared 'Erwäge', the only cut. Using tempi that never ceased to fascinate me either by their fleetness or by their devotional near-suspension of speed, Corboz steered an intense and finely-moulded, note-perfect reading home without an interval in well under the two hours our 'baroque' version took at Nantes, and deservedly took the house by storm. Which I suppose goes to show that musical insight is always more valuable than surface appearance, and that 'authentic' performance practice guarantees nothing in itself, a fact I am sure all other *EMR* readers have long before realised.

Sunday finished with a largely impromptu party for all participants in the restaurant that overlooked the Tagus. Here I decided was the ideal moment to bring on the (literally) heavy guns – more particularly, the Sperrhake – so the six of us took it along to the dance. I'm afraid to confess that I was filmed trying to play it (without my reading glasses, being too vain) dressed only in a Breton tee-shirt and bathing trunks – it was warm, I tell you – but Davitt Moroney and 'Madame Zhu' (Zhu Xiao Mei) joined in to compete with each other in chasing fragments of the Goldbergs and Art of Fugue, and then Anne Queffelec turned out to have a good voice for some of her native Breton songs... So the ice was broken and serious dancing and drinking (until the barrels ran dry) went on until well after 4 a.m. We loaded the harpsichords and organs and then continued to make a spectacle of ourselves in between walks along the terrace to bid emotional au revoirs to the Tagus, the distant lights of the old city and our new friends. After just 40 minutes back at the hotel, it was time to go to the airport and eventually home to what seemed in all senses a duller Nantes.

What should one learn from the experience? Now that the Folle Journée idea will go to Bilbao next year and is eventually destined for Japan and other countries, I suppose our role will be to prime the pump and then let the local experts get on with the job. It has been a steep learning curve for me, and left me not only dissatisfied with the ordinary run of single 'prestige' concerts but, at a more practical level, often also with the instruments themselves, as I hinted in my report of the Nantes event in the May *EMR*. The 'locals' will have some learning to do as well; for instance, one of the organ-builders did not seem to realise that his instrument, which included upperwork of metal pipes cut to tuned lengths, had to be capable of being tuned to a certain pitch (in this case, 415 Hz) at *any* temperature (22°) – an attitude so unexpectedly rigid that I did not check the organ the first time it was used until it was too late, with the result that Accentus (whether they realised or not) sang their two concerts at quite different pitches! The moral must be that absolutely nothing can be left to chance – and that the ideal continuo organ has probably yet to be designed and made. Greater efforts will also have to be made to integrate as many as possible of the local makers and tuners. Such people should not be left to feel that others are being parachuted onto their patch to exclude their potential contributions to the Folle Journée idea, and any time devoted to bringing them fully into the team would surely have results even beyond the festivals themselves.

Finally, what will one remember most? A white Opel van in the courtyard of the Belém centre decorated all over with one of the Goldberg variations? The crowds of young people and families who came to the free concerts in one of the open spaces and – a nice touch – in one of the cafes? The sight of René Martin still dancing at 4 a.m.? No – the brief companionship of the intelligent and warm-hearted mostly young people who run the Centre and who will surely score an even greater success with Russian music next year.

Johann Wilhelm Hertel (1727-89) *Larghetto* from Sonata 1 in C minor

2. Larghetto

Source: B-Bc Ms. 6066, Sei Sonate per Cembalo da Clio; Guid. Hertel

## LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

My expectations are always high for concerts by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. However, their performance of Bach's wedding cantatas (BWV195 & 197) and the third Suite, conducted by Frans Bruggen (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 10 May), was disappointing. Bruggen's direction was frankly so uninspired and the OAE did not even manage to switch to automatic pilot (as they can do so well) to lift this moribund affair. The Orchestral Suite opened with a methodical overture and matter-of-fact fugue that was well short of achieving the lightness that we have come to expect in present day performance. The ubiquitous Air was languid, but with too much of a veer toward the laboured. Fortunately the later movements livened things up a bit. With all due respect, Bach's wedding cantata *Dem Gerechten muß das Licht* is a curious affair. Normally used as a vehicle for arguing Bach's familiarity with the emerging gallant style, Bruggen's direction of the single aria *Rühmet Gottes Güt und Treu* left it devoid of the dance-like character it deserves, despite Neal Davis's fine bass voice. Some awkward timing upset the final chorale (the final version of the cantata was performed, omitting all but the chorale from the second part, which would have been sung after the wedding ceremony). The cantata *Gott ist unsre Zuversicht* was not much better, despite its impressive scale and large orchestral forces. The opening alto aria, which the programme note suggested should have been tenderly expressive, emerged as ponderous and plodding. The tables were turned in the final soprano aria where the accompaniment was light but the singing was over heavy. Throughout, the recitatives lacked fluidity. That said, there was, as ever, some fine playing from the OAE, particularly bassoonist Andrew Watts.

One of the opportunities that the Bach anniversary year is throwing up is the chance to hear complete sets of works, programming that would probably be avoided in a normal year. The Swiss harpsichord player, Ursula Dütschler, gave us the seven Toccatas (Wigmore Hall, 11 May). The rhetorical opening of the D minor Toccata showed great promise, but many of the later opportunities for displaying the improvisatory style of these pieces were missed. Fugues were generally rather emphatic – the strong rhythmic pulse was fine, but a bit more subtlety in the articulation would not have been amiss. Greater use of ornaments would have been stylistically appropriate, and would also have allowed more of her personality to shine through. Although I have not heard Ursular Dütschler before, she has a sound track record and is clearly an accomplished player. But, either through nerves or stylistic choice, on this occasion she sounded rather too stern and unyielding to woo my ear. When the playing is inspired, I can readily forgive the occasional slip, but her waning concentration did become

noticeable towards the end of a concert that would exhaust any player.

The British Clavichord Society hosted a concert by Sally Fortino in the delightful haven of the Art Workers' Guild (20 May) with a programme of music from the time of Goethe. The link with Goethe was rather tenuous, although all but one of the pieces were written between 1782-93, which gave a nicely focused glimpse of the keyboard world of central Germany of the period. Ernst Wilhelm Wolf emerged as the writer with the closest affinity with the instrument, although he was not at all friendly with Goethe. Sonatas from his 1786 and 1793 collections showed the increasingly romantic musical view of the world, particularly the delightful *Poco adagio* from Sonata 2 in B minor (1794). At the other end of the spectrum, Johann Georg Witthauer showed his roots as a pupil of C. P. E. Bach. Although Sally Fortino portrayed a good sense of light and shade, I had a number of problems with her playing and presentation. There were several times when the timing became wayward. Ornaments were never quite effortless, and often nudged the underlying pulse off course. Page turns also took their toll, and there was not enough time given for the terribly well behaved audience to settle themselves at the start of pieces or between movements – particularly important in a clavichord recital.

## COVENT GARDEN FESTIVAL

The often manic London festival season opened with the Covent Garden Festival, which continued its magical formula of inventive concert planning in superb locations, with innovative and imaginative presentations. The opening event gave the chance for a sneak preview of what will surely become one of London's finest open spaces – the courtyard of the 18th-century Somerset House, for long the rather depressing abode of the Inland Revenue and Divorce Registry. An all-day event brought together musicians, children and artists of all ages for a recreation of Haydn's *Creation* (a popular work for such occasions) in the context of creation myths from around the world. Great fun!

Just to the west of Cliveden House, high above the Thames in Berkshire, a few humps and bumps in the ground are all that remains of the open air theatre where Thomas Arne's *Alfred* was first performed in 1740 to commemorate the third birthday of Princess Augusta, granddaughter of George II. The performance was not a successful one and, ever since, *Alfred* has been causing problems, not least to directors. It is a difficult piece to stage, with its unrelated arias and little sense of plot or development of characters or momentum. Although it is not an unpleasant work, it

needs something to lift it in performance. Unfortunately, the Early Opera Company performance at the Royal Opera's Lindbury Theatre (17 May) failed to provide that lift, despite some good singers and players and well-placed conducting by Christian Curnyn. The stage direction was the main culprit. The action seemed to consist mainly of 'singer walks on, sings, walks off'. There were variations on this theme - 'singer walks on, falls over, sings, gets up, walks off'; 'singer walks on, stands around for a while, sings, walks off'; and the novel 'singer does not walk on, but sings from wings'. This approach was far too static, allowing few moments of interaction between the characters; the first movement, for example, ends with a Spirit appearing to Alfred with a vision for the future of the country - but Alfred had long since fled for his interval drink. The character of Alfred, as presented in this production, was not believable, although it did add credence to his apparent lack of culinary ability. In the first half, he was an awkward, insecure and, initially, drunken man in an anorak. In the second half (in which he should have turned into a hero), he appeared as a man in a C&A suit, displaying the sort of pompous male ineptitude that, for some reason, seems to encourage women to attempt to do men's ties up. Arne's music is not inspiring - even Eltruda's echo aria sounded far too predictable. Daniel Taylor did his best as the hapless Alfred, and was one of the better singers, as was Sally Bruce-Payne as his son Edward, the one character that did seem to portray some depth. At least the concluding chorus ('Rule Britannia') gave us something to look forward to. If I had been a three year old princess who had been made to sit through this on my birthday, I would have been very, very cross.

I didn't think I would be able to get to The Sixteen's 'Choral Pilgrimage' concert on 19 May in The Temple Church, so reviewed them last month in Oxford. But I did go, and a group as good as The Sixteen deserves two reviews anyway. The organisational problems of getting a capacity crowd through the single narrow entrance door to the church produced a very late start, but the reward was another staggering performance from these inspired singers. The programme was similar to Oxford, with the addition of *Spem in alium*, sung from the circumference of the circular nave - how we envied the small number of people sitting in the centre of that space, though until then they had suffered a view of the rear of the singers standing in the arch between the circular nave and large chancel. The men moved to the east end for John Sheppard's *In manus tuas*, with its wonderfully scrunchy alto entry - but this bought me within earshot of Harry Christophers' disconcerting sniffs (seemingly unrelated to any rhythmic considerations like up-beats); he also has a habit of vocalising while conducting, which can be distracting. But his musical direction and understanding of the architectural structure of music is outstanding. Three pieces by Tallis, in addition to *Spem in alium*, were the highlight for me, if only for their heavenly cadences - the final cadence of *O nata lux* seems all but impossible to resolve, and the cadences on the two alleluias of *Loquebantur variis linguis* (with one voice adding a distinctive twist) are the musical equivalent of a

motorway pile-up where everybody walks away smiling.

Other groups may come and go, but The Sixteen have clearly become a Covent Garden Festival fixture, particularly with their annual Handel spectacles in the sombre surroundings of the Grand Temple of the Freemasons' Hall. This year it was the turn of that old favourite, *Israel in Egypt* (31 May). There can few better Handel oratorios than this one for a group like The Sixteen, with its preponderance of choruses and wealth of solo singers to call upon. As the identification of soloists with pieces were not given in the programme, it would be unfair of me to pick out the ones I recognized or deduced by trial and error - but all were excellent. The Symphony of Harmony and Invention were also on particularly good form. The performance was based on the two sections composed by Handel in 1738 - 'Exodus' and 'Moses's Song' - but with the addition of the orchestral introduction from the Funeral Anthem as the opening 'movement', rather than the original adaptation of the 1737 anthem for the funeral of Queen Caroline into a Lamentation. The Covent Garden Festival has an innovative approach to musical presentation and venue, and often uses theatrical lighting to aid interpretation. For this concert, a static eye projected onto a large screen above the choir broke into a full length sequence of deconstructed images in support of the text. Apart from the obvious references to the plagues, much of the film was of 1930/40s Germany - a series of stark but dated images. I wouldn't want to dampen the enthusiasm of the Festival in their endeavours to add a layer of presentation to the music, and would rather they tried it, and failed, than didn't make the effort. But I wouldn't be sorry not to see the film again, a feeling shared by many in the audience, judging by overheard comments.



Errata, the Muse of Printers' Errors

## BIBER IN BURY ST EDMUNDS

James Clements

It was the magnificent 53-part *Missa salisburgensis* (Salzburg Mass) which formed the centrepiece of a concert given under the direction of Peter Holman in St Edmundsbury Cathedral on the evening of Saturday 3 June. This work, described by Reinhard Goebel as a baroque 'monster', was performed with no less than seventy-three musicians drawn from Psalmody, Gradualia, the Colchester Bach Choir, the Ravenscroft Cornett and Sackbut Consort, and the Essex Baroque Orchestra. Formerly attributed to Orazio Benevoli (1605-1672), the piece is now thought to have been written by Heinrich Biber (1644-1704) for the 1682 celebrations in Salzburg marking the 1100th anniversary of the founding of the archdiocese.

The sheer size of this work poses numerous problems for performers, particularly regarding balance. Holman, however, managed to overcome these problems and tame the 'monster', producing a performance which was both stylish and refined. The problem of balance was solved by having all the musicians positioned together, with one of the two antiphonal groups (each consisting of four separate 'choirs') on either side of the performing area. This is not historically correct, in that a performance in Salzburg Cathedral in the late-17th century would most likely have had the performers positioned in the choir, and on the organ galleries on each of the four pillars in the crossing. (A 1682 engraving by Melchior Küsel, used in the promotional material for this concert, shows such a performance taking place in Salzburg Cathedral.) Given that St Edmundsbury Cathedral does not have such galleries, and is smaller than Salzburg Cathedral, this was an acceptable compromise, even if some of the antiphonal affects were lost.

On the whole all soloists were clearly audible: no mean feat given the size of the ensemble. Holman favoured a more chamber-music style intimacy, rather than the canons and fireworks style used in the recent recording of the work by Musica Antiqua Köln and the Gabrieli Consort & Players. A good example is the way in which the tutti interjections on 'Pax' following a series of duets for reduced ensemble at the start of the Gloria were coaxed and caressed rather than bellowed at full volume as is often the case. That is not to say that there were no fireworks, however. The timpani and brass section were (apart from a few slips in the latter) most impressive, particularly in Kyrie II and the 'qui tollis' of the Gloria. Holman's tempi were on the brisk side, which worked well in sections such as the 'Amen' at the end of the Gloria. Less convincing were the 'miserere mei' sections in the Agnus, which I would have preferred slightly slower to allow reflection on the text-music relationship highlighted by the shimmering chromatic writing at this point. The tempi did, however, create a good sense of

large-scale cohesion, and Holman succeeded in giving each movement a strong sense of direction, and not sounding like a series of unrelated sections strung together.

A number of other small-scale works were included in the programme inserted between the movements of the mass, which (as Holman says) reflects conventional practice. The first was a piece for string ensemble with antiphonal effects entitled *Offertur ad duos choros* by the Moravian Pavel Josef Vejvanovský (c1639-1693), a friend and colleague of Biber, which was performed with a crisp and clear articulation. This was followed by the *Surrexit pastor bonus* by Samuel Capricornus (1628-1665) that was printed in *EMR* in May, performed by Jennie Cassidy (mezzo), Stephen Cassidy (cornetto) and Clifford Bartlett (organ). After the Benedictus, a setting of the text *In sole posuisti* received a polished performance by Claire Tomlin (soprano), with Judy Tarling playing a rather virtuosic violin part and Peter Holman on organ. In spite of the fact that this work is listed in the most recent catalogue of the Kromeríz music collection prepared by the Czech musicologists Jirí Sehnal and Jitenka Pesková (*Caroli de Liechtenstein-Castelcorno episcopi Olomucensis operum artis musicae collectio Cremsirii reservata, 'Artis musicae antiquioris catalogorum series' 5/1-2, Prague, 1998*) as anonymous, we are told in Holman's programme notes that the work is by the Moravian-born Gottfried Finger (c1660-1730). There was hardly room in the brief programme note to justify the ascription, but given that the Kromeríz MS is dated 1670, the attribution to Finger raises one or two questions. Immediately after this came a Sonata by Finger performed by Geoffrey Harniess (trumpet), Tassilo Erhardt (violin), Louise Holman (cello), and Peter Holman (organ). Most impressive here was Erhardt's violin playing, which was both impeccably polished and most sensitive to the affective devices in the music. The concert concluded with the 53-part motet *Plaudite tympana* which is included in the same massive manuscript score of the *Missa salisburgensis*. The performance was bright, lively and rhythmical, and proved to be a fitting finale to a concert which seemed to have been greatly enjoyed by all present, and was a real treat for Biber enthusiasts.

*The arrangement of the forces at the performance at Hadleigh the following day gave greater spacial separation for all except the two vocal choirs and certainly felt better from my central position at one of the organs. Peter Holman tells me that Finger's birth date is conjectural and that he could well have composed *In sole posuisti*, edited from a MS thought to be his hand, in 1670.*

*As a result of this performance, King's Music now has a set of scores and parts available for hire. So ambitious ensembles, why not try it? I can vouch for its musical interest.*

CB

## RECORD REVIEWS

## MEDIEVAL

Frauenlob (Heinrich von Meissen) *The Celestial Woman* Sequentia, Barbara Thornton & Benjamin Bagby dir 62' 55 (rec 1990) DHM 05472 77309 2

Over-enthusiastic reviews of posthumous discs are likely to make the reader suspect the operation of *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*. In this case, the fact that a ten-year-old recording whose issue had previously been rejected has now been resuscitated makes one think of barrels and scraping. But the reasons for non-issue were technical, and the problems seem to have been cracked. The most impressive feature of the singing is the flow. The unrhythmic notation is given a shape which seems to come from the music's intrinsic nature and each section has more shape than in most performances of such repertoire. My two points of criticism are that the pitch seems to be about a tone too high, so the women sound a bit forced, and that I enjoyed the disc more when it was playing in the next room and the distance cut out the harp background which, though effective in small doses, eventually became a distraction. The resuscitation was definitely worthwhile. CB

## 15th CENTURY

Ockeghem *Missa L'homme armé*, *Missa Sine nomine* a3 The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham ASV Gaudeamus CD GAU 204 + Morton *Il sera pour vous/L'homme armé*, Basiron *Salve Regina* ('Ockeghem' setting II)

Admittedly I am in no position to judge; but from where I stand, craning my neck and peering up into the clouds at the dizzy heights of Ockeghem's mind and heart, Edward Wickham seems to comprehend both. Rare praise. He also knows how to communicate what he sees of these peaks with supreme clarity. Yet precisely because I am looking into the clouds, I want my guide to provide firm co-ordinates for the whole of Ockeghem's sound-world – acoustic, vocal scoring, pronunciation – and I am not convinced that the Clerks' Group offer all of these. Is it likely that Ockeghem conceived the *L'homme armé* mass, for instance, to be sung in such an intimate acoustic, with its cantus line sung by a soprano and a falsettist, and without the twang of French or Flemish Latin? Perhaps Ockeghem's performance practice is simply too misty for those questions to be answered. More significantly, perhaps those who understand the peaks of Ockeghem's genius simply don't need this information, and for them the Clerks' Group must be a revelation. Simon Ravens

£ = bargain price ££ = mid-price

Other discs are full price, as far as we know

## 16th CENTURY

G. Gabrieli *Sonate e Canzoni "per concertar con l'organo"* Concerto Palatino, Bruce Dickey, Charles Toet; Jan Willem Jansen & Liuwe Tammina (organs at San Petronio, Bologna) Harmonia Mundi HMC 901688 75' 59"

This recording takes advantage of the recent restoration of the two renaissance organs in the basilica of San Petronio Bologna. Built in the late 15th and 16th centuries respectively, they parallel the original (but now lost) organs of St Mark's Venice, and so give us a direct idea of the sound resources which its great organist Gabrieli had at his disposal. The organs are heard alone in ricercars and versions of canzoni – a very open and soft-edged sound, matching the contemporary descriptions of the St Mark's instruments, and remarkably similar in tone to the 1519 organ of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, recorded by Kimberly Marshall. For the most part, they are joined by the enlarged forces of Concerto Palatino, which indulge us with 7, 8, 10 and 12 part *sonate e canzoni*. It is interesting to hear these familiar pieces, played impeccably, cushioned on the sound of these magnificent organs, and in the truly massive acoustic of San Petronio. They are lent a more ecclesiastical air – giving feeling of context which liturgical reconstructions aim to give in another way. The performances are taut (perhaps augmented by the high pitch) and emphasise the formal structures of the pieces. On a technical note, I wish the recording engineers had allowed us to hear that magnificent acoustic for a little longer before winding the levels down for the next track – it is a truly rare sound! There are one or two uncomfortable edits early on, which is a pity. As can be expected from the Concerto Palatino stable, this is definitely one for the collection – it makes a great contribution to re-integrating the authentic organ sound in Gabrieli performances. Stephen Cassidy

Giovanni Gabrieli *In festo sanctissimae trinitas* Chœur de Chambre de Namur, La Fenice, Jean Tubery dir 63' 37" Ricercar 207512

Jean Tubery has used pieces linked to the feast of the Trinity as the theme for this disc. It allows him to weave in some of the greats; *Dulcis Jesu* a20, *Jubilate Deo* a10, *Omnes gentes* a16, as well as a variety of less-frequently heard pieces. One of these is the *Canzon settima*, which starts and pretty much continues in 3-time, and as a result sits slightly uneasily in Gabrieli's repertoire. However, the Trinity allegory and the dance-like performance ease its passage. This connects with the performance style of the disc as a whole: much more connection with the drama and flexibility of the music than is normally displayed.

The continuo includes two large lutes as well as two Italian organs, which propel the music forwards. The instrumental mix is also heterogeneous – including dulcian and viols, as well as the brass and voices. The result is performances which emphasise the humanity of the music, rather than its architecture, which is the more usual approach. How grateful I am that we have no way of knowing which is 'right'! Certainly the *Dulcis Jesu* – the pleas of a people emerging from the ever-threatening plague – suits the intimacy of the voices naturally balanced with the instruments. They emerge from within the instrumental sound in a very moving way. In large-scale vocal pieces, many performances now follow Praetorius's recommendation of giving the highest and lowest parts to instruments. In this recording singers cover all parts – sometimes doubled by instruments. This gives quite a distinctive sound colour. This approach is taken in the Trinity mass opening, in a decorated version by Bassano. Here, the vocal parts are sung while the instruments decorate round them. The result is very glittery. Anyone looking for yet another facet of the great Gabrieli should listen to this disc.

Stephen Cassidy

Vecchi *L'humore musicale; La Caccia d'Amore* The Consort of Musicke, Anthony Rooley 66' 39" (rec 1989) ASV CD GAU 202

The copyright line on Anthony Rooley's notes is dated 2000, and the ASV copyright line is the same, though the recording was actually made in 1989. But the Consort of Musicke was, perhaps, at the height of its powers, and the recording has not dated. It definitely has an English feel to it, and I can imagine how differently the music would sound with performers like Alessandrini's *Concerto Italiano* – the barking dogs and all the other quirky sounds are a bit school play-ish. I'm not 100% taken by Vecchi's music, either, I have to say, which is rather important when you're listening to it as music. In fact, it took me several attempts to get through the whole CD, which is most unlike me. I'm sure that aficionados of the Consort will relish and cherish this disc, for the singing is (of its type) truly the best. It just did not set me alight, I'm sorry to say. BC

Oh Flanders Free: Music of the Flemish Renaissance Capilla Flamenca 54' 57" Naxos 8.554516 £ (rec 1996) Music by Basiron, Busnois, Fabri, Magister Guglielmo, Henry VIII, Isaac, Josquin, La Rue, Ockeghem, Rampollini, Susato, Verdelot & anon

Capilla Flamenca is a happy combination of male voices, recorders and bass viols – proficient musicians, performing an unusual but fascinating mixture of Flemish music from the 15th and 16th centuries. I found this recording pleasing in many

ways, in spite of a generally low-key approach to the music, which the CD purports to celebrate. The recording begins, for no particular reason, with a plainchant Requiem, followed by more wistful music: even the Christmas text *Alleluya, verbum caro factum est* set by Busnoys, and other pieces which might have been candidates for some contrasting cheerfulness, such as Josquin's *El grillo*, sound rather sad. However, there are moments of lighter mood: Rampollini's *Bacco, Bacco e u o e* not only gets the performers off the ground at last, but also reveals the answer to what had been a mystery to me: those vowels are really sung as separate syllables rather than being some sort of secret code (like the notorious *ij!*) The performances are tidy, well-phrased, in tune, and sometimes really moving. One 'Amen' in the tiny anonymous *Laus Deo* makes the whole piece glow. No one can surpass John Potter singing Isaac (for that you need *The Triumphs of Maximilian* by Musica Antiqua of London, whose Josquin disc is imminent), but tenor Jan Caal, aided by the instruments, gives a beautiful and atmospheric rendition of *Innsbruck* which can happily bear repeated listening. Someone has translated the macaronic *Sergonta Bergonta* from 'a mixture of Italian, Spanish, French and coined words', but the singers seem to be above its earthly pleasures; 'Cla gnao gnao' certainly doesn't get them as excited as the people they describe in the song. You'll have to guess!

Selene Mills

*Viva Napoli: canzoni villanesche* Doulce Mémoire, Denis Raisin-Dadre 62' 38" Astrée Naïve E 8648  
Music by Azzaiolo, Bendusi, Caroso, Festa, Lassus, Nasco, Negri, Nola, Valente, Willaert, Zanetti

This is an extremely enjoyable disc, full of entertaining pieces that emanated from Naples and permeated the music of the rest of Italy and elsewhere. The opening *Chi passa* seems a bit subdued, but don't expect the loud, four-square style of such northern repertoire as Susato dances; this is to some extent popular music heard through the ears of sophisticated composers such as Willaert and Lassus, and is marvellously performed with just a touch of civility. The disc ends surprisingly with what at a concert would be an encore. CB

## 17th CENTURY

de Grigny *Premier livre d'orgue* (1699) Marie-Claire Alain (1790 Cliquot organ at Poitiers Cathedral), Compagnie Musicale Catalane, Josep Cabré dir 62' 00" Erato 3984-23443-2

The glittering career of the redoubtable Marie-Claire Alain shows no sign of diminishing as she returns to her own French repertoire for a magnificent performance of de Grigny's powerful set of hymn versets. Avoiding the improvisatory twists and turns of some of her younger colleagues, she plays it as it is, with grandeur, vigour and musical insight. The French classical organ was designed for series of formulaic

registrations which are beautifully demonstrated on the late-flowering organ at Poitiers – the first two verses of each of the five hymns are, quite correctly, played on the same two registrations. It is also one of the few surviving organs capable of producing the *Grands Jeu de Tierce* registration heard in the bass of track 3. Five women sing the chanted verses (using Nivers' *Antiphonarium Romanum* of 1701) – a sound world far removed from the grandeur either of Poitiers or of de Grigny's own cathedral at Reims. Andrew Benson-Wilson

*Knüpfer Sacred Music* The King's Consort, Robert King 79' 38" Hyperion CDA67160

Hardly a familiar name, yet this disc should put Knüpfer on the metaphorical map of 17th-century Germany as a landmark in his own right, not just as one of Bach's predecessors as Cantor at Leipzig. The music is fascinating. There are eight church pieces, one (*Super flumina Babilonis*) in Latin, the rest German. When I first played the disc, it was Ach Herr, strafe mich nicht that stood out, magnificently scored for two recorders and two trumpets with five-part strings and voices. There is an amazing section in C minor for bass with the trumpets (in B<sup>b</sup>) to the sombre text 'In death there is no remembrance of thee' and the closing *plötzlich* is memorable. The rest are hardly inferior. Performances are excellent. Highly recommended. CB

*Lully Grands Motets Vol. 2* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 64' 44" Naxos 8.554398 £

This 1994 recording seems only now to have achieved a release through yet another potentially major Naxos series. It starts with a real bang with a vigorous setting of 'Why do the heathen rage', relaxes with a setting of the penitential poem 'O faithful tears' and concludes with settings of the *Dies irae* and *De profundis*, both composed for the funeral of Louis XIV's wife, Marie-Thérèse. I sometimes find Lully a little bland if I listen to his music after that of Charpentier, but that was not the case here, even though he chooses quite a restrained path through these richly emotional texts. As ever with performances emanating from Versailles, there is much evidence of loving care from all involved with good integration of orchestra, solo and chorus, exemplified by the opening of *De profundis*. I do feel that the sound is a little constricted in the tutti sections and that a more atmospheric acoustic might have been used, but there are still both revelations and abundant pleasure to be found here. The booklet includes a helpful essay (Eng/Ger/Fre), Latin texts and parallel English translation. David Hansell

*Lully Grand Motets, Vol. 3.* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 57' 35" (rec 1994) Naxos 8.554399 £  
*Benedictus, Exaudiat te Dominus, Laudate pueri Dominum, O dulcissime Domine*

Not before time, this 1994 recording achieves a wide release. Naxos's faith deserves to be rewarded with healthy sales, not least because this disc is even more enjoyable than its predecessors, partly because of the repertoire, partly because of the performances, which really do go with a swing. The programme offers a welcome opportunity to explore the contrast between the grandiose gestures which characterise the large works and the more intimate, in some ways more sophisticated world of the *petit motet*. The singers of these are perhaps a little over ardent at times, but do display commitment to, understanding of and enthusiasm for their task. Similar virtues are apparent in the three *grands motets*, all of which epitomise Lully's art and show him at his best. As in previous issues in this series, the integration of solo, choral and orchestral forces is a particular strength, with a continuo section based on three uninhibited theorbos providing the glue. Great stuff, warmly recommended.

David Hansell

*Matho Arion* Stéphanie D'Oustrac, Monique Scholte, Eric Vignau, Pierre Thirion-Vallet, Ronald Aijtink SSTBarBar, Il Teatro Musicale, Frédérique Chauvet cond 66' 20" Arcobaleno AAOC-94202

This is a world première recording of a *tragédie en musique* by the leading composer of baroque Brittany. Matho (born in 1663) was famed in France as a singer, and his music has a definite tunefulness. While the instrumental playing is very fine, there is something peculiar about either the recording or about the acoustic it is trying to re-create. It's as if the microphones are set up in the middle of the band and the singers can't quite hear, because they fairly consistently fail to hit the middle of the note, and here it is a definite case of pitch distortion within the building rather than vibrato or any lack of technique on the part of the singers. (Anyone who has performed in a church will sympathise with the problem. Indeed, I regularly have to close my ears while symphony orchestras 'tune up'. The cellos and basses are regularly well below the violins – I really pity the oboists who are held responsible!) Back to Arion... This is a nice piece, and well worth reviving. Hand on heart, though, I have to say the unstable pitch is a problem. BC

Matteis held by the ears Palladian Ensemble Linn CKD 126 73' 24"

Nicola Matteis's four books of airs for the violin have been available in facsimile since the 1960s, but it is only recently that groups such as the Arcadian Academy and Chatham Baroque have begun to perform and record selections from them. This new recording left me exhilarated, bemused and exasperated by turns. *Exhilarated*, because the four members of the Palladian Ensemble make a wonderful sound and play with real virtuosity and passion; their tuning and ensemble are virtually faultless, and they have a knack of characterising the

music strongly without sounding affected. Bemused, because they seem to have the strange idea that Matteis's music is somehow Scottish. They include a number of their own arrangements of 17th- and 18th-century Scots tunes, and while playing Matteis they often slide into a folk band idiom, all trills, skirls and slides – Baroque meets the soundtrack of *Local Hero*. Leaving aside the question of whether this Celtic twilight style is appropriate for Scots tunes of the period, let alone Matteis, by concentrating on the folk-like aspects of his music they produce a rather one-sided portrait of a composer who was actually remarkable diverse in style; there are French, German, English and even Spanish influences in his music as well as his native Neapolitan idiom. *Exasperated* because, as always with this group, the music has to fit the combination of recorder, violin, bass viol and assorted pluckers. For once guitar continuo is absolutely appropriate (Matteis was a guitarist as well as a violinist and wrote a book on guitar continuo playing), though it is disappointing that all the trio versions of the airs are played with recorder and violin on the upper parts. Matteis intended two violins and continuo, and in my opinion it sounds best that way. 17th-century music for two trebles and continuo is normally intended for two instruments of the same type on the upper parts; composers only began to exploit the use of contrasted upper instruments in the 1720s and 30s when it became fashionable to write trio sonatas in the style of solo concertos, and they wanted to give a suggestion of the contrast between soloist and orchestra.

Incidentally, there is a strange omission in the listing of the pieces: in addition to the advertised *Roger of Coverley*, Track 25 also includes the D minor divisions by Christopher Simpson, the preceding piece in *The Division Violin*. *Peter Holman*

*NB This may not be where you expect it in a shop, since it is marketed on the strength of the Palladian Ensemble and the name of Matteis is not visible.* CB

Monteverdi *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (arr. Leppard), Magda László Poppea, Richard Lewis Nerone, Frances Bible Ottavia, Carlo Cava Seneca, Royal Philharmonic Orch, John Pritchard; Madrigals April Cantelo, Eileen Poulter, Helen Watts, Gerald English, Robert Tear, Christopher Keyte SSATTB, Raymond Leppard 142' 10' 2 CDs (rec 1963 & 1967)

EMI Double Forte 7243 5 73842 2 3 £

Monteverdi *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* Arleen Auger Poppea, Della Jones Nerone, Linda Hirst Ottavia, James Bowman Ottone, Gregory Reinhart Seneca, Sarah Lennard Drusilla, Adrian Thompson Arnalta, Catherine Denley Nutrice, City of London Baroque Sinfonia, Richard Hickox dir 194' 40" 3 CDs in box Virgin Veritas 7243 5 61783 2 8 (rec 1988)

*My review turned out to be rather long, so will appear as a separate, somewhat reminiscing article in the next issue. I don't think that there has yet been a fully-recommendable recording of Poppea, but I would argue that the Hickox is the best, despite (and because) of my involvement in it.* CB

Purcell *Hear my prayer: Music for Westminster Abbey* Jean Nibbs, Geoffrey Mitchell, Peter Hall, David Thomas SATB, Margaret Phillips org, Cantores in Ecclesia, Michael Howard 73' 04" (rec 1995)

BBC Classical Collection BBCM 50192 £

I'm not convinced that all the music here is for the Abbey rather than the Chapel Royal: the booklet gives absolutely no information. If this is from a broadcast, there must have been an announcer's script, and printing that (or even including it on the disc) would have been of documentary interest. I am puzzled too that it is dated 1995. The line-up is far more plausible for the 1970s and the performances are very much in accordance with the tastes of the time. They now sound a bit slow and old-fashioned, though as always with Michael Howard, are musical and impassioned. Fortunately, neither Abbey nor Chapel let in Catholic influences, so there is none of the wallowing over Mary that infects his performances of renaissance music. The disc is a real bargain, mixing well-known pieces like *Hear my prayer*, *Remember not*, and the Funeral Sentences with lesser-known pieces, including some organ solos and the *Benedicite*. CB

Rosenmüller *Deutsche Geistliche Konzerte* Johann Rosenmüller Ensemble, Arno Paduch Christophorus CHR 77227 72' 07  
*Ach Herr, strafe mich nicht, Daren ist erschienen, Ensetze dich Natur, O Jesu süß, Ich weiß daß mein Erlöser lebt, Siehe an die Werke Gottes, Vater ich habe gesündiget, Was stehet ihr hic; Sonata a2 (vln bsn 1682)*

The pieces on this CD range from a sonata for violin, bassoon and continuo to *Siehe an die Werke Gottes* with full ripieno – a total of 15 parts. The recording opens and closes with pieces from the first of Rosenmüller's two printed collections of such music (the *Kern-Sprüche* of 1648), with three pieces each from the Grimma and Erfurt collections (now in Dresden and Berlin respectively) in between, mostly lasting about six minutes, but one piece of over 19 minutes, *Entsetze dich Natur*, a setting of an anonymous 14-verse poem about God's arrival on Earth in the shape of the baby Jesus. On the whole, I was more impressed by the playing than the singing. None of the players' names and few of the singers' were familiar to me: I heard one of the tenors, Michael Schaffrath, sing at last year's Fasch Festival, when he was still a student, and I have to say that his contribution is very fine. I think what I miss most is a brightness of tone, which may, of course, be more to do with the recording, or perhaps the church's acoustic. There is much excellent music, such as *O Jesu süß*, a delightful motet in the increasingly florid strophic style of Rigatti for tenor and a pair of violins. The Uppsala source of *Ach Herr, strafe mich nicht* gives the solo instrument interjections to organ rather than the violin (as here) and I suspect that is more likely. Still, a very welcome addition to the catalogue. Will they now move on to Rosenmüller's Latin music? BC

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

A. Scarlatti 7 Concerti con Flauto Camerata Köln 53' 04"  
 cpo 999 619-2  
 Sonatas 7, 9, 12, 21-24

These are the Scarlatti items from the anthology entitled *Concerti di flauto, violini, violetta e bassi* (MS 38. 3. 13 at the conservatory of S. Pietro a Majella in Naples). The CD calls them *Concerti* on the front, *Sonate* (*Concerti*) on the back and *Sonate* in the booklet, which seems to reflect the inconsistent terminology of the MS. I'm puzzled by the booklet's reference to 32 sonatas: other references (including the list in one of the volumes of what will be a complete publication of it by Ut Orpheus Edizioni) give 24. It is also curious that the booklet keeps on mentioning the flute and flautists like Quantz, implying that the writer is thinking of the traverso, whereas the music is for recorder, eloquently and rhetorically played by Michael Schneider on a Denner-copy alto by Adrian Brown. This is a fine recording; my only complaint is that it might have been nice to have mixed Scarlatti's contribution with some of the other sonatas in MS: there is room on the disc for a sample or two of the 12 by Mancini, for instance. CB

Schütz *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* SWV 282-337 Weser-Renaissance Bremen, Manfred Cordes cpo 999 675-2 195' 34" 3 CDs for price of 2

The *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* have often been unjustly maligned, with even Schütz stating that their thin textures were forced on him by the depredations of the war. There is no satisfactory modern edition\* and many performances seem to find the concertos intractable – perhaps because they lack the instrumental colours and Monteverdian style of the *Symphoniae sacrae*, perhaps because their solo-voice writing does not suit the choral bias of mainstream German Schütz performance. But Weser-Renaissance's recording shows the true qualities of the collection. Cordes' ensemble now includes some of the best German singers of 17th-century music, and they bring the concertos alive with their grasp of the text and their powerful yet never overstated shaping of vocal lines. Although there is the familiar problem of three hours of music never intended to be heard continuously, the recording in fact shows the stylistic distinctions with which Schütz treats different types of text: the ornamented, often impassioned settings of texts by church fathers (e.g. a wonderfully persuasive *O süßer, o freundlicher*); the plainer, Viadana-like style for New Testament material (e.g. *Joseph du Sohn*); the mix of ornamentation and refrain in the strophic chorale settings (e.g. the effervescent *Allein Gott in der Höh*). In this landmark recording, it is excellent to see a German ensemble reclaiming a corner of Schütz's output which for too long in the revival of his music was overshadowed by the large-scale court compositions. Stephen Rose

\* The Spitta edition has been reprinted by Dover: excellent value at £11.95 (\$14.95), if you can read the clefs, and the only Schütz collection that is available cheaply. CB

## LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Complete Cantatas* vol. 9 Sibylla Rubens, Caroline Stam, Lisa Larsson, Bernhard Landauer, Christoph Prégardien, Klaus Mertens SSSATB, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 206' 05" (3 CDs in box) Erato 3984-27315-2  
Cantatas 37, 48, 66, 70, 86, 138, 153-4, 166, 173a, 194

The essentially chronological ordering of Koopman's Bach series has the merit of juxtaposing masterpieces like BWV 70 and 138 with seemingly workaday pieces like BWV 153. This instalment, with cantatas dated between September 1723 and May 1724, has relatively few soprano solos: at this stage in Bach's first Leipzig Jahrgang, was he being cautious about writing for boys he hadn't taught himself? CB asks me not to dwell on the one-per-part issue, so I'll just say that Koopman's setup – solo voices in the foreground, chorus somewhere in an unfocused middle distance – makes a nonsense of movements like BWV 66/1 or BWV 194/1; where a single voice alternates with the chorus, the effect is comically close to 'Now I'm a judge/ And a good judge too!' BWV 70/5 addresses a question raised by Brian Robins's letter in *EMR* 61. Should soprano and violin always ornament their cadences in the same way? or is Bach deliberately exploiting their differences in articulation for expressive purposes? The soloists are almost uniformly good value. Bernhard Landauer's markedly androgynous vocal quality makes a surprisingly good fit both with Prégardien and with the rather womanly Sibylla Rubens; but he does sound self-conscious compared with Prégardien's commanding dignity, or Mertens's dramatic energy. All the soloists cope well with Koopman's often excessively fast tempos (especially in BWV 153/6 and BWV 173a/6-8). I don't buy the muscular-Christian cheerfulness of BWV 70/8; a bit more gravitas wouldn't come amiss here or in the extraordinary bass recitative & aria pair BWV 70/9-10. Indeed, the whole of this powerful work is emotionally understated: for instance, the semi-quavers in the alto aria (no. 3) sound like a vocal exercise rather than a picture of agitation and flight. Erato's packaging is disappointing, with booklet notes seemingly written on auto-pilot; in the parallel texts, the English versions are obviously singing translations and don't help non-German-speakers relate the words to particular musical effects – a far from idle consideration in Bach's cantatas. If I add that the printing is often too faint, I fear I may sound like Woody Allen complaining that a popular restaurant serves terrible food – 'and such small portions, too!' Eric Van Tassel

Bach *Cantatas for the 3rd Sunday after Epiphany* Joanne Lunn, Sara Mingardo, Julian Podger, Stephen Varcoe SATB, Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 57' 18"  
Archiv 463 582-2

The aim of the Bach Cantata Pilgrimage is to perform all the cantatas on the liturgical

days for which they were composed in a variety of European venues. In a recent radio interview Sir John expressed the fear that funds may run out in the autumn. Let us hope not, for such bold projects deserve to succeed for their own sakes, let alone for Bach's or, indeed, music's. Aspects of these interpretations may strike some as bordering on the dangerously romantic, particularly in the choral movements – the very existence of which will provoke raised eyebrows, if no real surprise – but there is no denying the virtuosic musicianship that is on display here from both singers and the small-sounding EBS, with oboes much on parade (the booklet, though complete in all other ways, gives no list of players). Among the soloists, Stephen Varcoe's delivery of the words is much to be admired, alto and tenor take the prize for outstanding courage under fire (from Bach!) in the horrendously taxing duet in BWV 111, while Joanne Lunn is blessed with the best moment. I defy anyone to listen to track 4, and then not buy the disc – or track 14, or 17... David Hansell

Bach *Markus-Passion* (reconstruction by Ton Koopman) Christoph Prégardien *Evangelist*, Peter Kooy *Christus*, Sibylla Rubens, Bernhard Landauer, Paul Agnew, Klaus Mertens SATB, Boys of the Breda Sacrament Choir, Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra and Choir, Ton Koopman 118' 23" (2 CDs in box) Erato 8573-80221-2

Bach scholars generally agree that the *Markus-Passion*, for which only the text survives, was largely parodied from the *Trauer-Ode* (BWV 198). Koopman's version, however, deliberately avoids material used in other reconstructions. This is both perverse – ignoring the near-matching text for much of the *Trauer-Ode* and *Markus-Passion* – but also creative: Koopman imagined that he was a Bach pupil told to assemble a Passion from cantatas written up to 1731. Maddeningly, he does not state his sources. But for listeners who know the cantatas well, he gives insights into the often-misunderstood technique of parody. Common poetical themes between cantata and *Passion* texts emerge (so the aria 'Falsche Welt' uses the aria 'Falsche Heuchler' from Cantata 179); equally, his choices show how the affective richness of Bach's music leads to an ambivalence of textual association that allows parody. However, I would query his use of Cantata 4 for aria no. 21, because Bach never parodied his Mühlhausen works; and Koopman's insertion of a new aria (no. 40) in the second half makes me wonder how much this is a 'reconstruction'. The recitatives are by Koopman, but these generally eschew the dramatic, even indecorous harmonies that would make them sound Bachian; as the work largely comprises chorales and recitatives, listeners expecting a musical density and intensity comparable with Bach's two surviving Passions will be disappointed. The performance is typical of Koopman's Bach cantata cycle, showing a stylistic intimacy and technical competence that sometimes risks blandness by

making the music sound too easy. However, the reconstruction itself is undermined by Koopman's oblique aims, of which his failure to cite sources is symptomatic. As with his contributions to the Bach Chorus debate, Koopman's aesthetic instincts overrule scholarship; since this makes him such a compelling performer, it is a shame he is not more honest about it. Stephen Rose

Bach *Goldberg Variations* Angela Hewitt pf Hyperion CDA67305

When this first appeared on the Hyperion new-releases list I didn't bother to ask for a copy, since the policy we have adopted on modern-instrument performances is only to include them for music that is not readily available otherwise. But I was intrigued by the unanimous enthusiasm in the press, so requested a copy (apologies to Hyperion for not having listened to it in time to write last month) and can certainly see why. There is no doubt that the praise is warranted. I was more interested in assessing the balancing act of adjusting the music to the piano without taking it too far from what Bach might have expected. The opening was disappointing; the theme is so self-evidently harpsichord music that it doesn't really work on the piano. But once that was over, I just sat back and enjoyed it. Dynamics were mostly dealt with sensibly: no attempt to suppress the piano's natural rises and falls, but nothing overdone – except the variation played quietly: changing manual works well enough on a harpsichord, but here it resulted in a loss of energy. If you want the Goldbergs on a piano, this is as convincing as you'll get. CB

Bach *Bach à la française: Four Harpsichord Suites; Clavichord Pieces* Olivier Baumont hpscd, clavichord Erato 8573-80224-2  
BWV 691, 818a, 819a, 823, 832, 841-3, 846a, 847, 851, 855b

Olivier Baumont is one of those harpsichordists who manages to produce informed, intelligent and balanced performances that sacrifice nothing at all in the way of originality and wit. The pieces on this recording, little-known works and variant versions of old favourites all owing something to the French style, could so easily come across sounding dry and academic, but in Baumont's hands they really sparkle. More than that, though, this disc is like a journey of rediscovery, communicating more about the influences that surrounded the young Bach than a hundred essays or articles ever could. The suites in A minor BWV818a and Eb major BWV819a are particularly fine. Very much in the vein of the French Suites, these are mature works dating from the early 1720s when Bach was in Cöthen. BWV819a is really enjoyable, and seems to be full of echoes (and pre-echoes) of other works – some configurations in the allemande certainly bear a close resemblance to those in the allemande of the E major French suite, and the Courante, with its buoyant bass line, is uncannily like the unison canon from the

Goldberg Variations, even down to the underlying harmonic layout in the second section. The suite is also enhanced by the addition of the isolated E-flat Praeludium BWV815a. This sounds stunning on Baumont's Sidey and Bal harpsichord (after anon, Silbermann school, 1735), the sound transparent and supple, and the pulse wonderfully elastic. An older suite, in A major BWV832, is also great fun, its rather pompous, Lully-inspired *Air pour les Trompettes* contrasted with a lighter, simpler Bourrée making fine use of the harpsichord's lute stop. Surrounding these suites are a series of smaller-scale works which Baumont performs on the clavichord, a pretty lively copy by Anthony Sidey of a double-strung German instrument. The four Praeludia are early versions of those from the WTC, taken from the *Clavier-Büchlein* written for W. F. Bach in 1720. The Praeludium in C (yes, that one) is a real eye-opener, but interesting and enjoyable in its own right. The three G major Menuets BWV841-3 are a light relief – tiny, but perfectly formed. I'm not sure that the chorale setting *Wer nur der lieben Gott lasst walten* is an ideal piece to bring the CD to a close, but it is nevertheless an effective and enjoyable performance. All in all, then, a top class CD – highly recommended.

Robin Bigwood

Bach *Die Sonaten für Viola da gamba und Cembalo* (BWV 529, 1027-9) Jordi Savall, Ton Koopman 58' 40" Alia Vox AV 9812

This is music-making of the very highest order from two complete masters of their instruments, celebrating 30 years of their duo partnership. It is a real privilege to be able to eavesdrop on their musical conversation, which has all the spontaneity and respect for each other's ideas that one might expect from such experienced players. Tempi are generally relaxed, allowing scope for thoughtfully lyrical phrasing and unhurried ornamentation. These speeds always feel 'right': the underlying sense of momentum is never lost, while the duo's virtuosity is worn lightly in the more vivacious movements. Savall varies the tone colour by using two different bass viols: the more plangent Barak Norman providing a better foil to Koopman's bright harpsichord (a Zell) than the plummier tone of his much earlier Zanetti. A bonus in addition to the three gamba sonatas is a performance of the organ trio BWV 529 in which Savall plays one part on an alto viol leaving the remaining treble and bass lines to Koopman. This works extremely effectively, though one might wish for a more brilliant viol sound in the faster movements to match Koopman's always inventive and effervescent harpsichord playing.

John Bryan

Boismortier *Ballets de Village* Le Concert Spirituel, Hervé Niquet 74' 45" Naxos 8.554295 £ Ballets 1-4, op. 52; 1<sup>er</sup> sérenade op. 39

A preliminary scan of the instruments of this disc made me fear that I might be

about to endure death by droning – two musettes and two hurdy-gurdies were lurking between the recorders and the continuo – but in fact their skilful use by Boismortier, to say nothing of the bravura playing, make this 1997 recording nothing if not a charming collection of pastoral *bon-bons*, so fashionable in 18th century France. Interestingly the op. 39 *Sérénade*, despite its rustic-sounding movement titles, eschews the exotica, being for 'serious instruments' to quote the booklet. Whether this justifies organ continuo is, I would have thought, open to question, but other choices of instrumentation, where they need to be made, work well even if they are sometimes a little over-colourful. Boismortier's prolific output was criticised almost to the point of derision by his contemporaries, but it is easy to see from this collection why he enjoyed so much commercial success. Good fun, and recommended.

David Hansell

Clérambault, Montéclair, Couperin Salomé Haller S, Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester 54' 00"

Assai 207202

Clérambault *La Muse de l'Opéra*; Couperin Concert 8; Montéclair *La Morte di Lucretia*

This is a really good, if slightly short concert. The two cantatas frame a performance of Couperin's epic suite that is perhaps fussy scored but nonetheless bubbles along happily, providing a less intense though still theatrical interlude. In the vocal pieces Salomé Haller is dramatic and direct without being over-bearing and receives alert support from the ensemble, especially in the relatively delicate sections. *La Muse* is a guided tour of the character effects that abound in the French operatic repertoire, requiring kaleidoscopic changes of mood and style – storm, sleep, demons, etc. Lucretia dies violently, sadly and abruptly. The lack of texts and translations is a serious impediment to the complete enjoyment of this disc.

David Hansell

Couperin *L'Œuvre pour Clavecin*: 3, 5, 6, 8, 17 ordres Noëlle Spieth hpscd 133' 30" 2 CDs Solstice SOCD 166/7

Some of the real classics of Couperin's output are on this attractively-presented disc, amongst them *Les Barricades Mistérieuses*, *La Favorite* and the B minor *Passacaille*. However, from the five complete ordres on offer only the diminutive 17th is not from Book 1, so the overall feel is largely skewed towards the dance rhythms and grandeur of the late seventeenth century style. On the face of it Noëlle Spieth's performances are faultless. Technically they're beyond reproach, with copious, supple ornamentation and an enviable swiftness – in these, and other ways, they are reminiscent of Blandine Verlet at her best. In particular *Les Petits Moulin à vent* is an exciting, audacious reading – quite breathtaking in fact. Spieth's ability to maintain the musical argument in the midst of lines crowded with ornaments is impressive. Some of Couperin's more relaxed pieces are equally enjoyable – *Les Langwers*

is wonderful, given an irresistible warmth and radiance. *Les Bergeries* is also good, with a notably bittersweet minor section just before the final return of the rondeau. The picture is not all rosy, though. Often the faster pieces are rushed – *La Bersan* is the worst example – and, on occasion, there are some pretty extreme and unprepared variations in tempo. Worse, though, at times I sensed a marked lack of musical depth: some of the most weighty pieces sound disappointingly anaemic and oddly inconsequential. *Les Barricades Mistérieuses* was one such casualty, the unusually fast and cool reading leaving the listener feeling rather short-changed. The B minor *La Raphaële* and *L'Unique* fared little better, neither of them remotely dark or dirty enough. The same could be said, too, for *La Ténébreuse* and *La Superbe ou la Forqueray*, although thankfully the *Passacaille* and *La Favorite* are better and sound less anxious. Ultimately Spieth's playing is largely musical, highly detailed, but fiercely individual. The performances are by no means weak, but they are not classics either. Something like *La Logivière* is a prime example – it's stylish and effective, but the lack of acknowledgement of the chromatic section in the first half seems, to me at least, absolutely criminal. The harpsichord (Chauveurge after the Edinburgh Taskin) is a cracker, and the free-ranging and ever-so-slightly pretentious sleeve notes are hugely entertaining and really quite informative.

Robin Bigwood

Eberlin *Sacred Choral Music* The Rodolphus Choir, Christopher Whitton org, Ralph Allwood 61' 41" ASV Gaudeamus CD GAU 205

*Masses in a & C, Christus factus est, Dextera Domini, Tenebrae facta sunt; organ verses in tones II & VIII*

I'm afraid that Eberlin was just a name to me. There are similarities in origin and education with Leopold Mozart, and both worked as musicians in Salzburg. The conductor does not quote in his booklet note Mozart's comment to his sister: 'If Papa has not had those works by Eberlin copied, so much the better, for in the meantime I have got hold of them, and now I see (for I had forgotten them) that they are unfortunately far too trivial to deserve a place beside Handel and Bach.' Perhaps they don't stand the comparison (which Bach does Mozart, writing in 1782, mean?) But the two *stile antico* masses (here sung with 4.3.2.5 voices) and continuo are certainly worth listening to, and I am delighted to have had a chance to make their acquaintance. I think, though, that I would have preferred a bit more of a mix of the vocal and organ pieces; just as a mass isn't intended to be sung or heard in one single sweep, so sets of versets need to alternate with chant. It is immediately obvious that the Rodolphus isn't a specialist early-music choir (one day I'll try to analyse the immediately apparent differences, but after a minute or two it didn't worry me. An enterprising release.)

CB

We also received another Rodolphus disc, By Special Arrangement (Herald HAVPCD 242), an anthology

of pieces mostly not intended to be sung. I can imagine individual items making effective encores, but as a whole the collection lacked wit, vitality and panache. *Die mit Tränen to a Bach prelude* is an interesting idea – see if your friends recognise it (it doesn't sound like any Bach choral music), and I liked the lovely folk-song movement of Tchaikovsky's first quartet as *Ave Maria*. But the only arrangement that really worked was Barber's own *Agnus Dei*, despite being two removes from its quartet original. CB

Handel *Il Trionfo del Tempo e della Verità* (*The Triumph of Time and Truth*) HWV 46b  
Claron McFadden, Elisabeth Scholl, Nicholas Hariades, Peer Abilaard SSAA, Junge Kantorei, Barockorchester Frankfurt, Joachim Carlos Martini 179' 40" (3 CDs in box)  
Naxos 8.554440-42 £ see p. 10

Marcello *Arianna* Anna Chierichetti, Gloria Banditelli, Mirko Guadagnini, Sergio Foresti, Antonio Abete SATBB, Athesis Chorus, Academia de li Musici, Filippo Maria Bressan 183' 55" 3 CDs in box  
Chandos *Chaconne* CHAN 0656(3)

A Marcello opera on CD! Can you believe it? Three CDs of an early 18th-century opera that isn't by Handel or even Vivaldi! Five soloists, chorus with up to eight soloists, flutes, oboes, trumpets and drums, solo horn. It sounds ideal. Each of the characters is given a share of arias in each of the two parts (strictly speaking, it's a serenata), the only duet is for the villains (if you like), Theseus and Phaedra, there are three choruses (presumably danced) in each part. Marcello was apparently trying to out-do the professional Habsburg court composers of the time, in this case Fux. (He'd earlier set the oratorio *Joaz* to compete with Caldara's version of the same year.) For all that, I have to say that the music is not as good as that which I know by either of these two. Here, my problem was with the performance. There just seemed to be too much effort involved in the singing – everyone has vibrato (some more than others), but there was also a slightly strained sound – perhaps caused by trying to sing down in a sort of early music-y way? The playing is generally very good, but just occasionally there was an untidy corner here, a bit of rhythmic unsteadiness there. Running to over three hours, such slight flaws are perhaps inevitable? Perhaps, too, the set was unfortunate in sharing my time with the excellent *Dardanus* reviewed below. The absolutely polish of that would challenge anyone! There are some very nice movements here (CD 2, Track 15, an aria with flutes for *Arianna*, is delightful), so please don't be put off if I sound too negative. BC

Mouret *Divertissements pour les comédies de Marivaux* La Compagnie Baroque, Michel Verschaeve 54' 48"

37 items in 54 minutes may not be a record but it certainly keeps a conscientious reviewer busy. This disc offers a wide-ranging anthology of Mouret's music for Marivaux's comedies, hoping thereby to stimulate performance of the latter complete with the former. The songs and dances are placed in a sequence that creates a sort of

plot rather than by source – an imaginative idea – though, of course, all the pieces from any one play can be programmed successively by those who wish. The vocal items are all sung 'in character', which can become rather wearing when they follow each other without the intervening dialogue, and the dances are played in some over-exotic scorings. But this is still a useful disc of obscure repertoire that may one day achieve its aim. Given this evangelical intent, the lack of texts and translations is regrettable. David Hansell

Murcia *Codex n. 4, Mexico c.1730* Ensemble Kapsberger, Rolf Lislevand 58' 38"  
Astrée Naïve E 8661

It's a long time since I've heard a recording which shovels such industrial quantities of pepper onto the early music world's tail. The packaging, with its aubergine sleeve, crimson booklet and acid green disc, will probably be sufficient warning for those who like their early music 'straight'; if not the provocatively-worded postscript to the notes certainly will; 'A mind eager to put artistic expression in categories and boxes will surely feel tempted to associate this recording with terms such as New Age, Crossover or World Music'. So let us just say that Lislevand and his colleagues have taken a broad view of Murcia's music, which has after all been recorded several times in more or less straight versions. There is some stunning baroque guitar playing here, an admirable precision of ensemble and an imaginative treatment of the instrumentarium and the music. There are also some jaw-dropping surprises, including a fretless baroque guitar – its irate maker informs me that it is actually an ordinary one which has been castrated. The interpretations owe something to Django Reinhardt, John McLaughlin, and Sky, with a bit of flamenco tossed in; if you don't know what I'm talking about you won't like this. The last track is the most startling; if the thought of Hank Marvin playing *Greensleeves* appeals to you, buy this disc. Similarly if you like your guitarists fretless, topless or legless, you will not be disappointed. Lynda Sayce

Rameau *Dardanus* [mostly 1739 version]  
John Mark Ainsley *Dardanus*, Véronique Gens *Iphise*, Laurent Naouri *Anténor*, Mireille Delunsch *Vénus*, Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski 155' 43 (2 CDs in box)  
Archiv 463 476-2

Graham Sadler's notes end with a suggestion that 18th-century writers believed that *Dardanus* 'encapsulated his musical powers.' He continues, 'I believe they were right.' And (surprise, surprise) so do I! Much of the instrumental music is familiar enough (the various suites must be among the most-recorded of Rameau's pieces) and the vocal material of a similarly high quality. It's a slightly hybrid version, but Minkowski is surely right not to deprive us of 'Lieux funestes' from the opera's second incarnation. Where big voices were a problem in the *Marcello* I reviewed above, here somehow there was a genuine emotional

need for richer expression. In general, the soloists all have some vibrato, but most use it as colouring and are perfectly able to articulate a melisma when the need arises. I was certainly never aware of tuning suffering on account of it. I won't single out any one character, as they were universally excellent. Minkowski has a reputation for steadily gathering momentum until the dancers collapse exhausted. Here, some dances fairly fly along, but none of the tempos are reckless, and the playing is first rate. I wish I'd seen a performance! BC

Vivaldi *La tempesta di mare: Concerti con titoli* Fabio Biondi, Europa Galante 63' 57"  
Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45424 2 8  
RV 234, 270, 439, 531, 552, 570, 579

This was definitely another of Biondi's CDs which was best listened to, then put away, then listened to again. So often, I find what he does initially startling, but, on subsequent listening, everything seems to fall into place. There are still a couple of reservations (the violent off-beat strumming in the last movement of *La Notte*, and the accelerando opening to what is fast becoming Vivaldi's most popular piece after *The Four Seasons*, the concerto for two cellos – surely *Allegro* means just that?). But overall this is stunning. It comes hot on the heels of a similar disc by the Sonatori della Gioiosa Marca, which also tried to get under the skin of Vivaldi's 'descriptive' music, but didn't have anything like this panache. BC

Vivaldi *Concerti per vari strumenti* Zefiro, Alfredo Bernardini dir 63' 49"  
Astrée naïve E 8679  
RV 461, 484, 535, 537-8, 545, 557

As you would expect from this group, the wind playing is wonderful! I'm surprised there are so few recordings of the concerto for two trumpets: this one, with the freedom of ornamentation afforded by one-to-a-part performance, is very enjoyable, as are all the other pieces on the disc. The horns in RV 538 are anything but refined, but that's fine! There's no mention of the recorders that play in the middle movement of RV 557 anywhere in the booklet, and, if you like your sleeve notes to be informative, don't bother opening the booklet: it's done in the style of a dialogue and really did nothing for me at all. I suppose it has something to do with a completely new packaging and a conscious effort to appeal to a wider audience. One thing that's beyond doubt – the playing is excellent! BC

Zelenka *Responsoria pro Hebdomada Sancta* Capella Montana, Ludwig Gossner 125' 34"  
2 CDs in box  
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 605 0964-2

Two recordings in a couple of months (see May p. 18) is an unfortunate duplication, considering that there is still so much unrecorded Zelenka. Both treat the work as choral (6.5.6.6), which is surprising considering the sparsity of singers at the Dresden chapel at this period. One of the booklet writers mentions this, but the

conductor's note is evasive. Whatever *The Essential Zelenka Choir* might say, the tutti sections are more successful in this performance: the soloists (from the choir) don't blend well enough and the ladies wobble. I'm also puzzled by the choice of gambas to double: surely by 1723 anyone expecting gambas would not have written just *viole*? The music is certainly worth hearing (Carus-Verlag publishes the score), but the contrast between *stile antico* and a more modern manner of expressive counterpoint is not enough to sustain interest for over two hours. So listen to sections at a time. CB

## CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *Sacred Songs after C. C. Sturm*  
Klaus Mertens, Ludger Rémy 71' 50"  
cpo 999 708-2

The 22 songs here presented are a selection of C. P. E.'s 60 settings from Christoph Christian Sturm's *Geistliche Gesänge* (1780 and 1781); they were published by Herold in Hamburg in 1780 and 1781 and are Bach's last major set apart from the Masonic songs of 1788. Klaus Mertens has a fresh, rounded voice; he must guard against intrusive h's, and that 'special' tone of piety that slow-moving, religious songs seem to encourage; in other respects he is a fine artist. Ludger Rémy, playing a pianoforte modelled on an instrument by Johann Anton Walter, is a sensitive accompanist who also relishes the opportunities that the numerous solo passages give him. The texts and English translations, clearly set out in the booklet, will help listeners to appreciate the subtlety as well as the simple goodness of the songs. The selection includes songs about the seasons and natural phenomena as well as various contemplative sacred settings. It can be warmly recommended as a valuable introduction to an aspect of CPE's œuvre that is currently ignored in the British catalogue. (An earlier recital by Mertens and Rémy is available in Germany). Peter Branscombe

Cimarosa *Complete Sonatas* Marcella Crudeli  
pf 109' 30" [2 CDs in a box]  
Arcobaleno AAOC-93672 (c) 1994

We would not normally review Cimarosa on a modern piano. That, however, would be to miss both an extremely enjoyable recital of mostly unfamiliar music, but also a demonstration of exemplary 'period' playing. The translations of the sleeve notes are not the best, but it appears that the performer uses the material for teaching purposes and has edited the music for publication, the CDs (perhaps) being her interpretation of how they work as music. Just as she has not given pedalling instructions in her edition (I think), so she tends not to use them in performance, so the actual sound she gets from her piano is extremely clear, which helps her articulate passages and phrases meticulously, something at which she is particularly good. I would not recommend listening to more than a couple of the

pieces at a time, but I will happily dip into this set when I feel like some solo piano music in the background – and sometimes give it closer attention. BC

Haydn *Symphony No 64 Tempora mutantur*  
*Symphony No 45 Abschied*. Schlierbacher  
Kammerorchester, Thomas Fey 53' 68"  
Hänssler Classic CD 98.357

Haydn's symphonies are enjoying something of a renaissance at the moment: quite apart from the ongoing Naxos set, several other chamber orchestras are exploring and recording the repertoire. Here the Schlierbacher Kammerorchester, with modern instruments except the horns and calskin timpani, under the direction of Thomas Fey, who studied with Harnoncourt, play two well-known pieces which make up the second of Hänssler's projected complete set, due to be completed in 2009, to mark the 200th anniversary of Haydn's death. With a 4-4-2-2-1 string section, Fey draws a beautiful sound, well balanced with the oboes and, as you'd expect, easily punctuated by the natural brass. An excellent CD. BC

Haydn *Symphonies 88 & 89; Sinfonia Concertante* Lucy van Dael vln, Wouter Möller vlc,  
Ku Ebbing ob, Danny Bond bsn, Orchestra of the 18th Century, Frans Brüggen 61' 52"  
Philips 462 602-2

This disc consists of recordings from three different sessions, but there is no discernible difference in the sound the orchestra makes over the hour. I think that's a good thing – especially as in some compilations the variation in sound and sound quality can be disconcerting. The Sinfonia concertante contains some of the nicest playing of all, especially that of the solo violinist, Lucy van Dael, who I've never heard play as sweetly as this. The gem of the disc is, of course, the Largo of Symphony No. 88, and it is easy to understand why Brahms was impressed! The solo oboe, solo cello combination obviously stuck in his mind. The sudden outburst of trumpets and drums must, of course, have been a total shock to the Parisians of the time. BC

Haydn *London Symphonies Vol. 1: 95, 103, 104*  
Collegium Musicum 90, Richard Hickox  
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0655 78' 14"

I have reviewed rather a lot of Haydn lately, so this might have been the straw that broke the camel's back. In fact, this is a stunning recording, which opens with the famous drum roll – it had the same, slightly shocking effect on me as it must have had on the original audience, because I was expecting Symphony No. 95, going by the front cover! From there on, the playing is excellent, and the control of dynamics very well done, and the pacing first rate. It may seem strange not to work through the 12 symphonies in order, but this is an auspicious start to the series! Very highly recommended. BC

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

Krebs *Organ Works vol. 1* Gerhard Gnann  
(Gabler Organ, Weingarten) 65' 09"  
Naxos 8.553924 £

Naxos have done it again! Their enterprising searching out of repertoire, instrument and player has produced some excellent CDs in their early organ series over the past few years, and this is one of the finest. Krebs is a fascinating composer – under the wrong fingers, he can be infuriatingly predictable, but given the right degree of interpretational insight, his post-Bachian mannerisms become a delight. I have not come across Gerhard Gnann before, but he had the amazing good fortune to have had his first organ lessons on the Weingarten organ used for this CD – one of a number of fabulous south-German organs splashed over the west walls of equally entralling Baroque Abbeys. He certainly knows how to use it, and the recording engineer has made an excellent job of capturing the complex architecture of its various sound sources. The opening pedal solo to one piece and the flamboyant opening to the concluding Praeludium in C are worth the £5 alone, but there are also some sensitive interpretations of Krebs's more subdued pieces. My only quibble is the very occasional, and understandable, tendency to speed up very slightly towards the end of some of the lengthy sequences. If you haven't yet discovered Krebs, this should convert you. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Richter *Leçons des ténèbres* Isabelle Poulenard, Pascal Bertin, Gilles Ragon, Peter Harvey SATB, Stradivaria, Daniel Cuiller dir  
Cypres CYP 1624 55' 46"

About ten years ago, I asked my friend Valérie to go along to the library in Strasbourg, near where she lives (the formidably named village of Breuschwickersheim!) to enquire after their collection of music by Franz Xaver Richter. She came back with a report of over 'four linear metres' of material, some of which had been sent to Germany where someone was cataloguing it. I think I was as daunted by the volume of music as she had been, and my interest waned slightly, particularly as part of the collection was then unavailable. The present recording has thus had a mixed effect on me. The music is marvellous and the performances excellent, but the idea that I'd given up on the composer is the cause of some regret. Essentially, each of the nine Lamentations is scored for solo voice with a pair of matching instruments (soprano and flutes, alto and tenor with violette (here violas), and the bass with bassoons or, in one case, cellos), and a further obbligato instrument part which seems to double the voice for some of the time. They are somewhat similar to the Zelenka settings, ranging between recitative, arioso, and short arias. The sonorities are what makes them special. Peter Harvey's 3rd leçon for Good Friday opens with a luscious 'Incipit' with the solo cello and two bassoons above the continuo line – it has to be heard to be believed. All of the other soloists are excellent, though Isabelle

Poulenard does not always sound completely comfortable. If the rest of Richter's music is anywhere near as good as this, watch this space!

BC

Or perhaps watch the King's Music catalogue

**Salieri Overtures** Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava), Michael Dittrich Naxos 8.554838 57' 46" £ (rec 1991-2)

Naxos here present 12 of Salieri's opera overtures. Those chosen are mainly short, sprightly pieces in single-movement form and include the ones written for *Les Danaïdes*, *La grotta di Trofonio* and *Axur, re d'Ormus*. There is little of distinction, though also little that is downright dull. There would probably be no claimants to a prize for correct identification of which belong to a serious, which to a comic opera: the latter are busy, short-breathed pieces intended to put the audience in cheerful, receptive mood for the stage work to follow. The operas date from between 1771 and 1800 and their ordering here is haphazard. Should Naxos intend to produce a second, and even a third CD containing the rest of Salieri's overtures, curiosity and pleasure would draw many of us to buy them: the scoring, for standard (occasionally enhanced) opera orchestra of the period, is often inventive, with solo passages in several of the pieces, and nice textural contrasts. The Slovak RSO and Michael Dittrich are efficient, occasionally a little more than that, and the recordings, made as long ago as 1991 and 1992, are good.

Peter Branscombe

**Samuel Wesley Symphonies** London Mozart Players, Matthias Bamert 71' 05"

Chandos CHAN 9823

*Sinfonia obligato* in D (1781), Symphonies in D & E (1784), in A (1784+), in B♭ (1802)

Samuel Wesley (son of Charles the hymn-writer, father of Samuel Sebastian) was just about the only English composer to write convincing Classical symphonies, so it's good to have anew recording of five of them, ranging from the youthful D major *Sinfonia obligato* (1781) for violin, cello, organ and orchestra (a first recording) to the B flat (1802), a grand and mature work that takes its point of departure from Haydn's London symphonies and ends up sounding oddly like Berwald in places. This is wonderfully inventive music, always assured and touching, witty and brilliant by turns.

The performances are not such good news. Though they are livelier than those on the only other CD of Wesley symphonies, by Hilary Davan Whetton and the Milton Keynes Chamber Orchestra (Unicorn-Kanchana DKP (CD)9098 of 1991, they have the typical drawbacks of modern-instrument performances: The orchestra sounds much too heavy and large in the early symphonies: they seem to have been written for the domestic concerts given by the Wesley brothers in their London house, and were done one-to-a-part. The balance is all wrong: the wind instruments are generally too reticent and the horns are ridiculously backward in the early

pieces. The timpani playing belongs to the modern 'soft-focus' school, and there is a rather clunky harpsichord continuo throughout – particularly offensive and redundant in the 1802 symphony (why not use a piano with a modern orchestra? – at least it could be played softly in the quiet bits). On the credit side, the tempos are mostly well chosen, the playing is always technically assured, and Mathias Bamert usually shapes the music convincingly. But what this music really needs, of course, is a first-rate recording on period instruments.

Incidentally, the notes are a waste of time. The finale of the A major symphony is likened to 'Bach's seventh Brandenburg Concerto' (a meaningless and extraordinarily wide-of-the-mark comment), while things that would help the listener understand the composer's thought processes – such as the relationship between the first movement of the D major (1784) and the first movement of J. C. Bach's op. 18/4 (c1781), and the fact that the Andante of the 1802 symphony is a study in three-bar phrases – are ignored. Also, why are the names of the soloists in the *Sinfonia obligato* not given?

Peter Holman

**Musik für Flötenuhren (Music for Musical Clocks)** Peter Alexander Stadt Müller (Gabler organ, Klosterkirche Ochsenhausen) 57' 13" Christopherus CHE 0170-2 £ rec 1977 C. P. E. Bach Kleine Stücke... Beethoven Stücke... WoO 32/2,3,5; Haydn 1772, 1792 & 1793 sets; Mozart Andante K 616

This is a reissue from 1978. It's good to have so much music for mechanical clocks collected together, although it's a pity only one of Mozart's pieces is included. Stadt Müller plays with suitably machine-like precision (or is it so suitable? – the legendary recording by Handel's pupil J.C. Smith on the Colt Collection barrel-organ is remarkable for its flexibility of tempo). The organ, from Ochsenhausen (Württemberg), sounds appropriately antique; it would have been nice to be told something about it.

Richard Maunder

## 19th CENTURY

**Dupont Napoleon's Cellist** Donald Moline vcl, Daniel Paul Horn pf 68' 04" Centaur CRC 2414 Nouveau Nocturne in C, Romance (1810), Sonata in C, Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2 in G

Recorded, as it is, on modern instruments, this would not normally be covered in *EMR* [except as an excuse to plug the King's Music facsimile of his *Essai sur le doigté...*] but the music is quite interesting and the playing excellent, so I feel happy recommending it to our cello-playing fraternity. Donald Moline has Dupont's sureness of intonation and is the equal of all the technical demands placed on him. Horn, who has recorded elsewhere on fortepiano, uses little pedal (from what I can tell), which results in a bright, uncluttered sound picture. There is nothing intellectually challenging about the music, but I've enjoyed listening to it several times.

## VARIOUS

**Putnik: Russian Pilgrims** Sirine Ensemble Opus 111 Muses OPS 30-267

Your reaction to this CD will depend to a large extent on what you expect – it's neither early music nor ethno-cross-over, it's neither folk nor classical. Rather, it's a fusion of different approaches to different repertoires with a professed primary emphasis on religious intensity. There are many tracks with more 'ethnic' influences than others. Some pieces are more like folk-song arrangements in standard Western art-music style. Some seem to be more 'Russian', for want of a better word, with harmonies with lots of seconds, and 'slightly off' tuning. And there are modern settings, none more mesmeric or affecting as the final track, a gorgeous setting of the Beatitudes by Vladimir Martynov. The sleeve notes say that the group is working on his setting of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and I shall certainly get that when it appears. The present piece would be played continuously on Classic fm if they discover it!

BC

The format is of a 48-page bound book the size of a CD box, with the CD slipped inside. The number given above is on the disc, but the packaging only bears the ISBN 2-913542-07-7.

**Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern** Torsten Lauk org (Holy-Orgel Dornum, 1710, & two 20th-cent organs) 77' 14"

Organ Org 7009 2

settings by Scheidemann, Scheidt, Buxtehude (BuxWV223), Bach (BWV 739), Gade, Reimann, Karg-Elert, Reger, Kaminski & Distler

This is a CD for the organ buff, rather than the lover of early music. The idea is a good one – to look at how different composers treat a similar theme (I have used it myself in recitals), but the use of three radically different instruments and a repertoire ranging from 1604 to 1938 place it in the curiosity value category. The early pieces are played on an instrument with pipework going back to before 1630, although the recording makes the Dornum organ sound rather brittle. Those organists who were weaned on Reger and his ilk can warn the neighbours, turn up the volume, and blow their minds.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

## MORE SELF-CONGRATULATION

*EMR* is far too inexpensive. It is a joy to have in the study each month.

David Allan

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**London Musical Arts Baroque Ensemble**  
**St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, 26 May 2000**

Part of a series of summer concerts by candlelight, this programme gave us a mix of baroque pops, informal and informative presentation, and an instrumental curio. A brisk and bright *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* (Handel) was preceded by conductor John Landor explaining the period instruments, and the tuning vagaries of gut strings. While the acoustic benefitted the precision of the music, Landor's words were often swallowed up, undermining some of the educational purpose of the chat.

However, the tone he set established the generosity of the performers towards the audience, some of whom were not regular baroque concert-goers. Indeed, the choice of pieces echoed the principle bruited more widely abroad by Classic FM - self-contained, free-standing extracts, familiar and new. That the audience was in part a relatively innocent one was confirmed by the fact that it took them (us) until after the second piece, Bach's Air from Suite No 3 in D major ('Air on the G string'), to feel able to applaud - after Adrian Butterfield's violin line swooped sexily, with a delicate *inegalité*, over Christopher Poffley's lilting cello.

With Vivaldi's *Follia* trio sonata, Landor left the stage to the instruments, with Butterfield and Oliver Webber in consummate control of this late canzona-like structure, and some helter-skelter precision from the cello. The curio highlight followed: Clare Salaman coming on, holding aloft her hurdy-gurdy, on which she proceeded to give us Nicholas Chédeville's arrangement of 'Spring', from Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons'. Her excellent left-hand technique from violin expertise had no fear of the now horizontal fingering, while her right hand controlled the dynamic wheel of drone and tone. Like a shyer and sweeter mandolin, the hurdy-gurdy brought inside echoes of the more rustic and outdoor bagpipe and barrel organ. By the end, enthusiastic applause was matched by a bouquet and an eager circle of the curious round her during the interval.

For the first part of the second half we were back in the formal concert hall, with Canadian soprano Linda Perillo giving us a selection of Handel recits and da capo arias. Nothing wrong with that, but they were ordered with no clear rationale - it might have been more dramatically effective to start with the Italian arias, and move on to the English ones. Additionally, Perillo, complete with concert dress, took over Landor's podium, squeezing his conductorial role into a confined space, and completely obscuring Gail Hennessey, whose oboe and soprano recorder obbligati were so crucial to the English arias. Perillo's clear tones and great dramatic sensibilities, musically satisfying as they were, ended up rather out on a limb, compared with the string ensemble feel of the rest of the programme.

John Landor's introductory demonstration of a Bach orchestral suite deconstructed the overture, explaining the interplay of French framing with fugal interior, before playing the entire piece. Information and entertainment melded together at the end, as they had at the beginning.

On the whole, an excellent and entertaining programme, informative, unpatronising, and even pushing the aural boundaries with the respectabilised hurdy-gurdy. But I did wonder if Landor was necessary as a conductor. Had he led from the harpsichord, his role might have been more integrated; while it must be hard to rehearse musicians in such a way as to make yourself redundant, the truth was that the greatest pleasures of the evening came from the free-standing ensemble, led from within and drawing the audience into the music.

Michelene Wandor

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## LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

Eric Van Tassel quite rightly points to the musical coherence (as well as the musicological correctness) of 'small-scale' Bach (my expression, not his). In particular, recording engineers can do wonderful things to lift the scale of such performances as well as retaining their intimacy and detail. Two facts remain. These do not so much detract from the argument as invite broader sympathies. The first is that the performance of 'old' music legitimately reflects the conditions and circumstances of contemporary music-making. This is the acceptable (perhaps even desirable) process of mediation. So there is never any sin in performing Bach with a large ripieno if the process of mediation leads you to that conclusion (if there were, the greater sin would be performing Bach in a concert hall to a secular audience). Secondly, a performing ensemble may be seen to have an autonomous identity. Thus, for some of us, a choir is our 'instrument', not susceptible of significant changes in person-power (manpower in my case) without compromising the instrument. Mind you, anybody thinking of depriving King's (or even New College) from singing and recording Bach would also be on shaky historical ground: the tradition in 18th-century Europe of using ripienists to the numbers available and to the taste of the director provides a contemporary carte blanche. The crucial issue is that circumstances might argue for the enlargement of the ensemble, not that we should always be limited to the concertino.

Edward Higginbottom

*I don't think the primary issue is that choirs should not perform Bach, but that organisations and performers whose publicity claims adherence to period practice and which are comprised of individuals booked as required, so have no institutional constraints, should treat the surviving evidence more seriously. CB*

Dear Clifford

With regard to singers adding ficta when sight-reading 16th-century music: I sometimes (i.e. in a group where the one or two others on my part will know what I mean) point up or down as a moment approaches where one might add ficta. Up means sharpen, or don't flatten; down meaning flatten, or don't sharpen. Meaning seems clear in context. Responsibility for doing this can be rotated among the singers if disagreements are a problem (or for fun). Or one can go through something again, making a decision about the places which were highlighted. It seems to work and I think would give a better result than the leader deciding and others following a fraction later, as you suggest in *EMR* 61.

Emma Tristram

Dear Clifford,

I can't be the only *EMR* reader who was taught to sing as a small boy in a choir (in this case the choir of St Paul's cathedral) by the very method described – that of shadowing a stronger singer until one gained confidence and an ability to relate what one reads to those harmony, score-

reading and interval-based skills that come along later. And of course I must have 'taught', quite unconsciously, new junior boys placed next to me later on...

I suppose that in fact the difference between a choral and solo singer is that the latter does not (usually) need to be led – though we all must know the story about the soloist who, when challenged by the conductor, was sure that he or she had really done well, asserting that 'I did follow your beat...'. There's certainly nothing so annoying in a choir as having another chorister next to you who sings everything (right or deliberately wrong) that tiny fraction of a beat after you.

Martin Renshaw

Dear Clifford

While we appreciate your drawing readers' attention to the *cembalo cromatico* (*EMR* May p. 22), I must ask you to put the record straight, since your note implies that the Home Office has some good reason for not permitting my wife Ella to live in the UK. That is not the case. We are returning to Italy because WE are not happy with the UK authorities. After paying a fee of £3250 (to bring my own wife to my own country!), after Ella's hour-long interview at the British Embassy in Rome and after living here for one year and acquiring a residence in both our names, the Home Office insisted on holding Ella's passport for 2 months (that was preferential treatment thanks to the intervention of our MP and the British Consul in Florence – normal procedure can last 6 months) while they renewed her residence permit. Had she had to request her passport back in order to fulfil an engagement outside the UK during that period, a repeat of the fee, interview, etc. would have ensued before she could have set foot in this country again! The thought of this nonsense recurring in 2 years' time, with all the uncertainty, all the time wasted writing letters and telephoning, makes us feel that Italy is our home after all. There, as in other EU countries, it would be illegal to withhold a passport for more than 24 hours. When we married 3 years ago, Ella was granted Italian residence for as long as I have it; thus giving her freedom to travel between Poland and Portugal, between Amsterdam and Athens. (Had I then been sanguine enough to renounce my British citizenship in order to become an Italian, we could have come to live in the UK without any hassle – the Home Office would have accepted Ella as the European citizen she would meanwhile have become.)

Most UK residents appear to be unaware of the way in which this country treats spouses if they happen to hail from countries such as Russia. I imagine that enough of your readers follow the international music scene for these facts to be of more than passing interest.

Christopher Stembidge

*Sorry: I had no intention that my rather compressed statement should distort the facts.*

CB

Dear Clifford,

I have just been enjoying your review of Jeffrey Kurtzman's *Monteverdi Vespers, music, context, performance*. The *Vespers* (KM edition) was my first project at the University of Kansas. I was an extremely 'green', untried and untested university academic and took a huge gamble launching that particular ship in such uncharted waters. I am now about to begin my seventh year of teaching and have a secured professorship and full tenure, but those two performances using 24 undergraduate soloists, a small continuo group and two choirs of around 40 each (OK, OK, I know they were too big, but these choirs were in the timetable and no alternative was available at the time!) still rank as probably my most exciting undertaking.

Your review alludes to a slight problem with the teaching of musicology in the US and probably elsewhere too. Mountains are so often made out of mole hills, the analysis is lengthy but the relevance to practical performance somewhat submerged. I try to squeeze out the juice by showing my graduate students 'when and why liturgical texts are set in a different way from less specific motets', why Monteverdi's way of dealing with cantus firmus is so special and in particular what makes his way with words so superior. Many of my best undergraduate students fulfil all their music history requirements conscientiously, take four or five years of concentrated voice lessons, and yet are rarely encouraged to take the 'essence of the sound, shape, accent and colour' in the setting of a text and relish this in their singing.

Your approach to the performance and enjoyment of Early Music remains a constant inspiration. I urge you and your team to continue with your refreshingly personal and individual style and not to be side-tracked by the odd brickbat on the correspondence page!

Simon Carrington  
Director of Choral Activities,  
The University of Kansas

Dear Clifford,

I've just been reading your review in the June *EMR* of the new edition of Vivaldi's *L'Estro armonico*, Op.3. I would add to what you say: the *Solo* and *Tutti* markings must be 'for information only' and have nothing to do with the addition of ripienists. In the finale of Op.3 No.4, for example, *Solo* occurs only twice (both times in violin 1), and there are no *Tutti* markings at all, so there is no way any hypothetical ripienists could have known where and where not to play. Thus doubling is emphatically not an option.

As for the *violone*, every other set of parts for Venetian concertos, whether published in Venice or Amsterdam, either has a separate cello part and a figured bass for *Cembalo* or the like, or has two copies of a combined *Organo e Violoncello* (as for example in Vivaldi's *La Stravaganza*, Op.4): cello and keyboard never have to share a part. Vivaldi's Op.3 is unique in providing both a separate part for *Violoncello* and a figured bass called *Violone e Cembalo*, apparently to be shared by a harpsichord and a (second) string player. It's not clear what *Violone* is supposed to mean, anyway, for the word was still used for cello (or possibly old-style bass violin) in Albinoni's *Trattenimenti armonici*, Op.6 (Amsterdam c.1711) and even in Geminiani's Op.1 violin sonatas (London 1718). It's hard to find any unequivocal evidence for the use of a double bass in Venice at this time, so *Violone* is more likely than not to mean an 8' instrument. But in that case why provide a separate cello part as well? I suspect the mention of *Violone* is a mistake on the part of Vivaldi's publisher Roger, who could be rather cavalier in naming instruments: when reprinting Albinoni's *Concerti a cinque*, Op.5, for example, he changed the original *Cembalo* to *Organo*. A careful examination of parts and their markings shows beyond reasonable doubt that very many concertos of the baroque period (and certainly all from Venice, c.1700-1725) were intended to be played one-to-a-part. A double bass was usually expected in Rome but not always elsewhere. Full details will appear in my forthcoming article 'The Scoring of Baroque Concertos'.

Richard Maunder

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