

Early Music

REVIEW

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I used to think of early music performance as a branch of musicology. Both studied the past; the performer had a greater opportunity to bring the past to life, but had to work with much less precise and fallible information, so his output was far more personal an interpretation. This easy comparison is now difficult to sustain. Historians are no longer assumed to be able to tell you the truth (now an irrelevant term), so their recreations are as flimsy a representation of the past as those of performers; while performers on early instruments also seem unconcerned about using them in a historically-informed way. There are, for instance, groups that exist without a repertoire so virtually everything they play is either on the wrong instruments or gives emphasis to what at the time would have seemed an unlikely choice.

Sir John Eliot Gardiner has recently complained that musicological research has been hijacked by those concerned with Bach's performance practice, especially the one-to-a-part choir argument (see *Early Music Today* vol. 8/4). He objects, not by disputing the evidence, but by calling the issue irrelevant. [He is evidently unconcerned that, had he abandoned his choir, he could have drastically reduced the cost of his Pilgrimage and, with a distinctive and cheaper product to offer, might have kept Archiv interested in the complete set.] As with modern stagings of opera, I believe that the mental adjustments between the past and the present should be made by the listener, not imposed by the performer: I want to hear my Bach cantatas in a manner that the composer would, as far as we know, have envisaged. I'm happy to accept that he may not always have had such good singers as he would have liked, but not that he was writing music that couldn't have been performed to his satisfaction.

In an article in *Classical Music* (12-08-00), Philip Pickett quotes a Japanese interviewer who wondered whether early music had lost its way: 'Why are things so uniform and standardised and bland, where are the detectives?' Thirty years ago, we were interested in finding new ways of doing things: now we are probably better technically, but it is difficult with the pressures of success to question the conventions of early music performance. I hope we in *EMR* are detectives at heart. CB

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

ALFONSO DECIMATED

Martin G. Cunningham *Alfonso X El Sabio: Cantigas de Loor*. University College Dublin Press, 2000. viii + 280pp, £27.50. ISBN 1 900621 31 2

I wasn't sure whether to set out the heading with Martin Cunningham or Alfonso X as author, but I think the implication of the typography is as above; cataloguers may decide otherwise. The author/editor has extracted the songs of praise to the Virgin, every tenth song in the MSS (the other nine are devoted to miracles of the Virgin). The cantigas crop up quite frequently on recordings now, but there is no convenient English study of them, so one reason to welcome this book is for its up-to-date presentation of current opinions, since most of the substantial introduction relates to the cantigas as a whole, not just a tenth of them.

There is a valuable introductory chapter describing sources, form, melodic characteristic, Arabic influence (less than one would guess from most CDs) and performance. Then comes a section on notation, which is presented in Spanish as well as English, on the sensible assumption that this more original material should be presented in the language of most scholarship on the cantigas. A careful study of the notation leads to the conclusion that it is explicitly rhythmic and the rules on which the transcriptions are based are justified. The arguments certainly pass the elementary test that notes with and without stems can move in either direction (i. e. it is not standard chant notation). I'm not in a position to make any detailed comment, but wonder why the complex notation invented for polyphony should have been called upon for monophonic pieces. We return to English only for a chapter on language and pronunciation, and the introduction ends with a bibliography. The edition itself starts at p. 77. Each song is set out in line lengths that show its form, with all stanzas underlaid. Notation is in crotchets and quavers, with the original neums shown above the stave. The poems are then set out as verse, accompanied by a literal English translation, designed so that the singer can deduce what each word means. The bilingual notes discuss form and meaning, as well as giving a critical commentary. The price is very reasonable for a substantial A4 volume; although paperback, it is printed in sections, not in loose sheets, so the pages won't fall out. Any singer of medieval monophony will need to buy this, as will anyone interested in medieval song.

FIDDLELING EARLY MUSIC

The Early Music Fiddler Selected and arranged by Edward Huws Jones. Boosey & Hawkes, 2000. viii + 58pp + part.

This comes in an educational series of various other sorts of fiddling. The idea is a good one, but I have some doubts about its execution. The book comes as score and part. The score gives the violin melody, a second 'easy violin' part and a two-stave piano accompaniment, along with chord names for guitar. At the end there is an alternative violin accompaniment, which can be used by a teacher to accompany a pupil. The violin part includes the violin melody parts with chord names and sensibly also has the introduction as well, so that it is not confined to the teacher's score. I don't understand why the five pieces of the first section (*Medieval songs and dances*) need an accompaniment other than an optional drone. *L'homme armé*, on the other hand, should either be monophonic or have a polyphonic setting; the slightly-varied drone of the piano part doesn't work. Most of the rest seem more suitable for guitar than piano, the guitar's function being in some pieces to play a melodic line (chords are hardly appropriate in a Dufay chanson) or play the chord sequences in pieces like *La gamba*. I suspect that it would be possible to get a much more plausible representation of the pieces if the piano were used just as a substitute rather than scored so fussily. Can't keyboard players read the chord symbols that guitarists use? The violin parts have far too many slurs: they are neither authentic nor helpful for beginners. I would have preferred an edition which presented the music more as the original with suggestions as to how it might be performed in various ways; but I suppose teachers now expect to be told what to do.

TUSCAN TRECENTO

Eleonora M. Beck *Singing in the Garden. Music and Culture in the Tuscan Trecento* edited by Tilman Seebass. (*Bibliotheca Musicologica Universität Innsbruck*, 3). Lucca: LIM Editrice, 1998. 179pp, £150,000. ISBN 88 7096 050 1

The daunting task of deciphering pre-Renaissance music aside, the author, a music historian, discusses the social, philosophical, and aesthetic milieux at the time of Boccaccio, the Lorenzettis and Aquinas – one in which Italian secular music thrived. She moves from frescoes to codices to illuminated manuscripts to point out philosophical and theological ideas about the influence and purpose of music. As poetry and the visual arts became more precise, detailed and realistic, music-making too was described with increasing accuracy. We see it depicted as a pastime for upper class women (singing in the garden) and as proof of 'good government' (the bourgeoisie dancing in the piazza). Where it first merely symbolized ideas, like justice and harmony, it began to come into its own, as an independent, expressive art, developing ever more precise forms of notation, just as was the

trend in other arts. It is impossible to condense Eleonora Beck's conclusions, because the real pleasure of reading this book is finding so many references to music, interesting in themselves, which fit the cultural contexts referred to. The book whets the reader's appetite to hear the types of music portrayed by contemporary artists, and to be able to imagine them better when reading accounts of musical happenings; and, I must add, to read more books of this kind.

Barbara Gogolick Sachs

BLACKBURN & CARTER

Bonnie J. Blackburn *Composition, Printing and Performance: Studies in Renaissance Music* Ashgate Variorum, 2000. x + 338pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 86078 831 8

Tim Carter *Music, Patronage and Printing in Late Renaissance Florence*. Ashgate Variorum, 2000. xii + 282pp, £52.50. ISBN 0 86078 817 2

I first encountered Bonnie Blackburn's work as editor of the monumental collection of Lowinsky's essays. Subsequently, she moved from Chicago to Oxford, and has continued, I believe, to exercise a critical presence behind the scenes as well as produce distinguished research of her own, most particularly *A Correspondence of Renaissance Musicians* (which sadly never reached me for review). This collection of articles mostly concerns the years around 1500, in particular the composer/theorist Tinctoris and the pioneering publisher Petrucci. Particularly interesting is her discovery of the musical mind behind Petrucci's output, Petrus Castellanus. Much of the first half of the book is concerned with details of mensural notation. I suppose the performer can take some comfort from the increasing reluctance to assume that all relationships are hard-and-fast: it is more difficult than it used to be for a critic to damn a record or edition because a mensural sign is misinterpreted. The article that I suspect will interest our readers most is the final one, an edition and translation of a letter by Luigi Zenobi, a virtuoso cornettist who worked in Vienna, Ferrara and Naples between 1569 and 1602. Writing perhaps towards the end of his life, he gives advice to an unknown 'Serenissimo mio Signore, Signore et Padron Sinolarissimo' on the employment of musicians with valuable information on performance at the time. He expects a bass singer to have a range of 22 notes 'of the same timbre throughout' (without falsetto?) But the most important voice is the soprano (with a 'natural or boylike' voice), who must be able to sing in three styles, 'one in church, in another one in the chamber, and in a third one in the open air.' Singers should, among other more predictable virtues, be able to improvise a remedy when there is a mistake in their part. For instruments, quiet playing is most commended. The director (composers are not necessarily good directors) needs to have a good ear so that he can anticipate mistakes in a singer and correct him before he goes wrong. Continuo players are told to play plainly while accompanying a soloist and only come to the fore during his rests. There is a lot of waffle as well, but the document repays study. Trombone players (I quote this particularly for Alan Lumsden) 'are judged by their correct



The Guidonian hand

intonation, by their soft tone, and by their imitation of the human voice in the bass range.'

This essay moves us into the period of Tim Carter's volume, which focusses on Florence around 1600. It begins with several papers on Peri and leads to further essays on the politics of Florentine musical life: music for court events in 1600 and 1608 and studies of Caccini and Corsi. It would have been useful to have had more than a single reference on whether they and his published thesis on Peri need updating, especially since Kirkendale's publications: other volumes of the series have been more helpful. More recently, he has been concerned with the music publishing industry; in Florence, it was much smaller than that of Venice, which has received most scholarly attention, but quite a lot of information survives in the archives. It is interesting, for instance, that publications could remain in circulation for several decades. The book closes with a sample of the uses that can be made of archival studies with publication of three letters in the Florentine archives relating to musical activity in Pistoia. His Monteverdian and Mozartian work is not included: a second volume containing them would be valuable.

MARINI AFFETTI

Biagio Marini *Affetti musicali a 1, 2 e 3 voci* (Venezia, 1617). Andrea Bornstein, editor. Ut Orpheus Edizioni (RCF 15A), 1998. vii + 62pp score, £170,000; (RCF 15B) parts, £160,000. ISBN 88 81109 359 6; ISMN M 2153 0359 1

This is the most recent item in the welcome series of 16th- and 17th-century instrumental music, *Ricercare Capriccio Fantasia*, edited by A. Bornstein. Musicians will be grateful for having a 'clean' (unrealized) modern transcription of this important music, the original of which is unbarred (except for the continuo) and contains many mistakes. My criticisms are minor and general, and meant as suggestions for improving this series. The rather typically unidiomatic English translation of the Preface does not contain serious mistakes, but could certainly be better. Unfortunately it does not include either Marini's dedication or the poems dedicated to him.

The explanations provided in the Critical Apparatus are somewhat deficient in things a conscientious performer needs to know. Where exactly was the proportional signature **3** silently changed to **3/2** – leaving us unable to consider whether the editor is suggesting a proportion or just giving a modern time signature? Bornstein lists implied accidentals (the translation says 'implicit') in the Critical Apparatus, and places a few purely editorial ones between parentheses in the music, but we are not always told about other differences between the parts and the continuo version, even in the case of ties, dotted rhythms and accidentals. Interpreting the Critical Apparatus itself is also bewildering, and I offer this help: English readers can ignore the mysterious phrase 'indicating... the progressive Roman numeral of the accidental concerned' which doesn't apply to the English version. I would appreciate more details on all discrepancies between the original parts, and some explanation (please) for the many citations not followed by any comment whatsoever. How were all of these places problematic? Do we require a facsimile as well? Surely slightly less succinct notes would have dispelled these doubts.

Barbara Gogolick Sachs

SPES issues a facsimile, and we will review a complete recording next month. That issue will also contain reviews of Monteverdi Madrigals Book III (as mentioned in the PRB advert below) and of Book VIII from Ut Orpheus Edizione.

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NEW RELEASES: SUMMER 2000

EARLY MUSIC

- Claudio Monteverdi, *The Third Book of Madrigals* (apt for voices, viols and recorders) (vco34). **Score only**, \$24; **Five parts only** (specify viol or recorder clefs), \$26; **Seven parts only** (viol and recorder clefs), \$36; **Score + five parts**, together, \$45; **Score + seven parts**, together, \$55.
- Martin Peerson, *Fantasias & Almains a6* (vco39), seven sets for six viols (ttTTBB), with organ accompaniment. **Score**, \$16; **Parts (with organ)**, \$36; **Score and parts**, \$50.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

- Peter Seibert, *Suite on Early Carol Tunes* (cco36), for recorder quartet (SATB). **Score and parts**, \$10; **extra sets of parts**, each, \$4.
- Wolfram Wagner, *Fantasy and Canon* (cio12), for solo bass viol. **Score**, \$5.

COMING SOON...

- Orlando Gibbons, *The First Set of Madrigals & Motetts* (for five voices and/or viols) (vco40). Fall 2000, *price t/b/a*.
- Francesco Guerini, *Six Sonatas for Violoncello and Basso Continuo* (cloo6). Fall 2000, *price t/b/a*.

Please request a complimentary catalogue of PRB editions.

CATANIAN MOTETS

Antonio Ferraro *Concerti Concertati ad una, due, tre e quattro voci... Liber primus... 1617* A cura di Rosalba Musumeci (*Musiche Rinascimentali Siciliane XX*). Florence: Olschki, 1999. svii + 116pp. £178,000. ISBN 88 222 4837 6

Another excellent edition of Sicilian church music. Ferraro was organist at the Carmelite monastery at Catania, on the East coast of Sicily. The editor evidently has some sympathy with the Carmelite order, since the edition is dedicated to four carmelite worthies and the preface is dated on the order's patronal festival. The texts of the motets seem at a glance to be fairly normal. The editor identifies most of them from the Carmelite breviary but doesn't specify when they also exist in the standard Roman liturgy. The edition opens with a *Regina caeli* for soprano, but the rest of the 33 motets are for various mixtures of two, three and four solo voices; the most obvious choral combination (SATB) is avoided. All are with continuo. The music is agreeable – certainly worth singing, though without that ultimate flair that would appeal to a non-sympathetic audience. But performance might show it to be stronger; perhaps Tactus could record it. Provided the organist can read from the bass, this is an easy edition to use, compactly set out (except that in triple time, with its much longer note values, the proportional spacing between notes should have been reduced – a fault common in many editions, including our own ones at first). All pieces use standard clefs, so transposition is not an issue. *O beate Gandolphe* (AAB) may be useful fodder for Tolkien fan-clubs, but the two pieces for three tenors are not likely to attract football crowds.

STORACE'S PASSACAGLI

Bernardo Storace *Four Passacaglias for Harpsichord or Organ... (1664)* Edited by Don Simons. PCH Publishing, 2000. 38pp, \$13.50

I have enjoyed playing these, even if I'm not entirely sure that Storace's 100 variations on a two-bar bass are as capable as Frescobaldi's tour de force to sustain a listener – though they certainly attracted attention when I played them as background noise at the Beauchamp Summer School: several people brought their glasses of local cider over to listen, embarrassing me by hearing my sight-reading. The other three sets are shorter. The edition modernises the notation as minimally as possible, keeping white notes where used in triple sections and preserving the beaming. It makes musical sense to assume that the beaming gives some indication of phrasing. Apart from musical merits, this is useful as a half-way stage towards playing from facsimile (SPES has issued the whole publication from which these pieces come). The price is attractive as well as the music, and the editing and appearance are preferable to the CEKM edition (though that contains the whole book).

From PCH Publishing, Redondo Beach, CA 90278, USA, e-mail donaldsimons@hotmail.com

HENRY LAWES

Ian Spink *Henry Lawes, Cavalier Songwriter* Oxford UP, 2000. xix + 172pp, £40.00. ISBN 0 19 815665 0

William Lawes has found greater favour over the last few decades than his older brother Henry, thanks chiefly to the enthusiasm of viol players. Henry's greatest gift was for song. Milton's encomiastic sonnet at least kept his name alive across the centuries, but Henry did not set the poets that were fashionable in literary circles for most of the 20th century (Donne and the metaphysicals). Herrick, whom he favoured, was out of fashion, though Carew stayed on the fringes of respectability. Henry's music is so responsive to (one might, if one were disparaging, say parasitical upon) the words that it only has meaning if the listener thinks them worthy of musical heightening. We are, perhaps, a little less faction-ridden in our approach to 17th-century verse now, and there are a few singers who can speak the songs in a way that doesn't swamp the texts with irrelevant musical values. So this study is well timed and a valuable rehabilitation of a figure whose musical personality is still rather shadowy. Ian Spink concentrates chiefly on the songs, postulating a plausible chronology which gives the book some shape. There is also a chapter on songs for masques and plays (with which Henry was involved in the 1630s) and on his sacred music. The part-writing of the pieces from Add. 31434 is found wanting; but solecisms are not uncommon even in Monteverdi's psalms, and I wonder whether we apply inappropriate standards.

I think the importance of figures in monodic publication is exaggerated (p. 8). Cavalieri in particular and others around 1600 figured fairly carefully, but in most cases the figures are superfluous in two-stave scores. The embellishments of *Amarillis by a spring* on pp. 29-30 are interesting, but the transcription isn't 100% accurate. The Oxford MS has all the notes the same size, so the use of grace notes is misleading (and the editorial slurs superfluous). The possibly-meaningful beaming of the first bar is normalised, while the lute chord should be aligned with the opening rest. Bar 1 of the other version is wrong too: the semibreve should be a minim. In bar 9, the autograph has a comma after 'To bury her'. Capitalisation follows neither the MSS nor the first-letter-of-a-line principle. In these days of accessible facsimiles, proof-reading of music examples must be meticulous. The inclusion of references to the 1669 reprint of the Playford songbooks in the list of songs would facilitate rapid reference to the Gregg reprint. I'm not sure if I could, on the strength of this book, pick out the Henry Lawes items from a volume of anonymous songs of the period, but I certainly have a better idea of what to find in his music.

We will review next month A-R Edition's Songs with Theorbo (ca. 1650-1663) edited by Gordon J. Callon (A-R Editions MBE 105), which contains editions of two MSS which include songs by Henry Lawes: Oxford Bodleian Library, Broxbourne 84.9 and London, Lambeth Palace Library, 1041.

DE VISÉE TRANSCRIBED

Robert de Visée *Les deux livres de guitare, Paris 1682 et 1686: La guitare en France à l'époque baroque: transcription de la tablature et interprétation* Hélène Charnassé, Rafael Abdia, Gérard Rebours. Paris: Editions Transatlantiques, 1999. 237pp. ISBN 2 903933 51 0 [in UK from UMP]

The arguments about how to transcribe lute music used to be heated and impassioned, but seem to have died down – chiefly, I suspect, because tablature has been accepted as the appropriate way of writing for the lute and that scholars who don't play the instrument can either learn the notation or use their ears and listen to the incredible quantity of lute music that is now available on CD. One of the objects of this volume is to devise a way of transcribing guitar music that represents how it would have sounded at the time, especially with regard to the octave level of the fourth course. I wonder whether the black blobs included to show the octave effect in the transcription are really worth the effort. The edition prints tablature below the transcription; players will use the tablature, while others will be happy to accept an editorial decision on how fourth-course notes fit the texture. This edition is unlikely to be used directly by modern guitarists, since the page-layout isn't designed for continuous playing with rather a lot of mid-section page-turns. (If readers think that I sometimes make too much fuss about sensible page turns, it is worth remembering that Bach had pages of his French Suite re-engraved to make the turns work.) The issue is discussed in the introduction, but mostly in an either-or situation (if the player doesn't just play both strings, he plays one or the other); but I would have thought more relevant is the acoustic phenomenon that, as with an organ playing on an 8' and 4' stop, one is not consciously aware of hearing two octaves, and the player can choose to give one octave more weight than the either.

That apart, the volume is most welcome. It contains a substantial introduction (81 pages) on more general matters concerning the French baroque. The musical section, with transcription on two staves in treble and bass clef (not the guitarists' single stave in octave-treble clef) is neat and clear. Some players will welcome the interpretative guidance of the transcription, while for us non-players we can see the music with far greater precision than in the simpler transcriptions that were printed in de Visée's own editions.

BACH: A SHORT LIFE

Davitt Moroney *Bach: an extraordinary life*. The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2000. vi 122pp, £6.95 pb ISBN 1 86096 190 8

We have, of course, anticipated new books on Bach for his anniversary year, but we have no right to expect two such good biographies as those by Christoph Wolff and Davitt Moroney. I fully concur with Stephen Daw's praise of the former (see *EMR* 61 p. 5). This is very different. 122 smallish pages instead of 599, and written much more simply. It isn't

explicitly aimed at the typical Associated Board customers of children studying exams, but is perhaps a foretaste of a more general book-publishing policy which will include a guide to performing baroque music. So the description of Bach's personality as an 'irresistible cocktail' and the section on his wine and beer consumption may not be as inappropriate as I first thought, even though my parents might not have thought it suitable when I did my first AB exam (probably aged 7). There haven't been many discoveries about Bach's life. But we now have a much better understanding of the older generation of Bachs and a far greater sympathy for their music and that of other composers who influenced the young J. S., even if we still treat the mature Bach in isolation. The controversy over Bach's chorus, for instance, could be illuminated by the practice elsewhere in central Germany. Such matters are beyond this little book. Without going into details about the music, it manages to convey that the music is central to the biographee's life. It is highly readable, though in the last chapter it doesn't eschew cleverness to make a point about the learned musician. Readers less learned than our subscribers may wonder who Pachelbel was (p. 5): the various current attempts at complete organ works on CD don't seem to have had much impact on the general listener. There are occasional differences in surmise between Wolff and Moroney (over the identity of the departing brother, for instance: Wolff plausibly takes *frater* less literally). The use of the term 'special school' (p. 8) shows a lack of awareness of current English terminology which the AB copy-editor should have picked up. It seems inappropriate here to refer to an article that suggests that Handel might have been homosexual (p. 21) which Handel scholarship has not, as far as I know, generally accepted. Another reference to the source of that article, a volume called *Queering the pitch*, quotes a provocative but sound remark by Philip Brett on the danger of taking Bach's chorale harmonisations as models for students (p. 24). This is an ideal introduction to Bach, both for Associated Board examinees and for general music-lovers.

BACH CELLO SUITES

J. S. Bach *6 Suites a Violoncello Solo senza Basso*, BWV 1007-1012 Edited by Bettina Schwemer & Douglas Woodfull-Harris. Bärenreiter (BA 5216), 2000. Portfolio with 7 items, £25.00. [German-text editions is BA 5215.]

This is a magnificent assembly of the essential documents for any serious student of these basic works for any cellist, whether baroque or modern. For a remarkably low price, the player gets the following:

- a. an Urtext edition with important variants shown clearly (if slightly oddly: see below).
- b. a facsimile of Source A, Anna Magdalena Bach's copy, dated c.1727-31.
- c. a facsimile of Source B, the copy by J. P. Kellner perhaps antedating Anna Magdalena's copy.
- d. a facsimile of Source C, a later 18th-century copy perhaps belonging to J. C. Westphal.
- e. a facsimile of Source D, a late 18th-century copy sold by

Traeg in Vienna in 1799.

f. a facsimile of the first printed edition, published by Janet et Cotellet in Paris c. 1824.

g. a text volume, with editorial commentary on the sources and performance practice.

Sources A-D were issued in a single, small-format volume of facsimile as a supplement to NBA VI/2, but it is far more convenient to be able to open all the sources at the same time and spread them round the room, and they are now larger and clearer. Although do-it-yourself source criticism has its pitfalls, there is one particular category of essential information in the sources that cannot be conveyed easily by a modern printed edition: the slurs. Individual MSS are ambiguous and casual, and they often differ fundamentally from each other. No single edition can present all the information visually, while any adequate critical commentary would be indigestible. The serious cellist needs to read the editorial remarks – particularly on the comparison of Anna Magdalena's MS of the violin solos with the autograph – but must then make up his own mind. In fact, he cannot rely on the editor, since no slurs are included in the edition: perhaps this is an abrogation of responsibility, but it avoids giving the impression that there is a single correct answer.

I should have written previously about Anner Bylsma's *Bach, the Fencing Master* (ISBN 90 9011 794 6). I had a marvellous evening with him at his home in Amsterdam last year, but was very diffident about writing about the book. (Fortunately, I bought it rather than requested a review copy, so had no obligation to write anything.) It is crammed with brilliant interpretive ideas, but is based on too naive an idea of the accuracy of Source A and the belief that Bach was himself responsible for its bowings. There is much to learn from it, and now that it is easy to counterbalance that emphasis, it can be much more firmly recommended.

Returning to the Bärenreiter set, I have just one problem with the modern edition. Alternative readings are printed, not one above the other, but consecutively. These are admittedly in smaller print, but it must be confusing to players, who will probably feel the need to cross out the ones they don't favour, thus making them less easy to read if they want to change their mind. The edition is quite spacious, so they could easily have been printed above the stave. Otherwise, I have nothing but praise for the set's concept and execution. *I have a few copies available at £20.00 + post.* CB

BACH TOCCATAS & OVERTURE

J. S. Bach *Französische Ouverture BWV 831/831a* Edited...by Ulrich Leisinger. Fingering and Notes on Interpretation by Michael Behringer. Wiener Urtext Edition, 2000. viii + 56pp, £5.95

J. S. Bach *Toccaten BWV 910-916* Edited... by Christian Eisert. Fingering and Notes on Interpretation by Robert Hill. Wiener Urtext, 2000. xiv + 146pp, £12.95

'Fingering by...' will be enough to put off most of our readers, so is perhaps the best place to start. Behringer quotes C. P. E. Bach's account of the emancipation of the thumb as

described by his father, then adds an equivocal paragraph, whose relationship to the pianistic fingerings he adds isn't entirely clear. Hill, however, offers three double-column pages on the subject of historical harpsichord fingering, with no suggestion that the pianist should adopt any other method. The fingerings he offers are always stimulating; they should, of course, be questioned by the user, but not until he has understood what they are trying to do. Having absorbed the suggestions here, he can then try some of the alternative versions of the music, which are unfingered. It would have been interesting to have seen fingerings by Hill for the French Overture to see how the B minor and the C minor versions differ. Behringer changes his ideas according to the key a lot, and only puts the thumb on a black note when there is no alternative; but I suspect that Hill may have been more concerned with the phrasing created by fingering (which is, of course, the same whatever the key) so more consistent between the versions.

Editing the Toccatas is a difficult job, since there are no authoritative sources. The music dates from early in Bach's career – currently they are placed rather earlier than used to be thought. One reason is our greater knowledge of the dates and provenance of the sources, but even those from Bach's family are not necessarily exact copies of the autographs (none of which survive), and one wonders whether Bach ever played them exactly the same anyway. So the editor can only choose a good source for each Toccata, correct errors from other sources and print substantially differing versions separately: a critical apparatus would be unusable if it were detailed enough to give all variants in the other sources. The editor seems, as far as I can tell, to have done his job well, backing his decisions with 19 pages of source information and commentary.

The Overture is easier to deal with. There is no way that the versions in B minor and C minor can be amalgamated (even if the notation of one may guide the performance of the other). The printing of both versions in the same volume makes comparison more difficult than if one version were slipped inside the other separately bound. The C minor version survives in a fair copy by Anna Magdalena Bach and an independent copy by Preller that can be used to correct her slips. He also added ornaments and fingerings to the opening, and the edition prints his version of bars 1-32. The B minor version survives in the first printing and a corrected reprint, which incorporates most but not all of the corrections made in a copy of the first edition annotated by Bach. I don't think there was any need apart from the desire for completeness within the series for this edition of the French Overture, but the Toccata volume can be recommended highly.

BACH & HANDEL FROM BREITKOPF

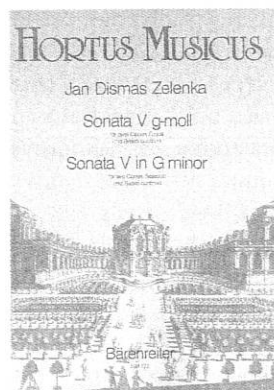
There is a limit to the amount of fresh editorial data that can be extracted from the sources of Bach's Concerto in D minor for two violins, BWV 1043. The new Breitkopf editor, Klaus Hofmann, doesn't have any new information

not available to NBA, so choice of edition for performers depends as much as anything else on the convenience of the parts, which I do not have to hand. Comparing the Breitkopf version (score: PB 5356, DM28.00; two violins and keyboard reduction: EB 8695, DM21.00; parts DM8.00 each) with NBA VII:3 reveals little of significance. In the first movement, *Br* joins pairs of minims in bars 50 and 52 with dotted (editorial) ties while *Ba* prints them as semibreves; in bars 71 & 72, *Br* puts the staccato marks in brackets while *Ba* does not show them as being editorial. In bars 75 & 76, the editions differ over the notes to which the slurs belong. The continuo parts in the first beat of 86 differ. There is a more significant difference in the slurs at the opening of the second movement. *Br* slurs the first three beats of the solo parts in bars 2 & 3, whereas *Ba* slurs only the first two notes. In the third movement, *Br* is freer in the addition of editorial slurs. Most of these points are not mentioned in *Br*'s critical commentary, though one assumes that the editor differs from *Ba* with good reason. The most obvious difference between the two is that *Ba* retains Bach's flatless key signature whereas *Br* has one flat, with the justification that in his keyboard transcription Bach himself used the modern notation. The *Br* score is more cramped in appearance, but gets the music on 24 instead of 31 pages, and some will prefer the more compact appearance (and not merely those thinking of the cost of illegal photocopies!) The *Br* parts are also more compact than

JAN DISMAS ZELENKA

The Six Trio Sonatas for 2 Oboes, Bassoon and Basso continuo

Written in 1721-2 this set of Trio Sonatas is certainly among the most striking and unusual, displaying exhilarating virtuosity. This new critical edition makes use of recent discoveries, analysing all sources to create a performing version that meets modern scholarly standards. Each Sonata contains a preface and critical commentary, and is published as full score and separate parts.



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the *Ba* ones, as far as I can remember the latter. *Br* pedantically has no movement numbers (like the new *Ba* Beethoven edition); but isn't it illogical to number bars for each movement without numbering the movements?

The difficulty of judging an edition by the parts is shown in Breitkopf's Cantata 198, which I reviewed in the last issue. I have now seen them. The editor or publisher has shared my concern that all the editorial slurs might look too fussy, but has dealt with the problem in a simplistic way by having no distinction between original and editorial ones. This is a feature of the early stages of performance material accompanying musicological editions that I hoped was past. (As I have mentioned previously, Bärenreiter are correcting their Wenzingerised parts of the Brandenburgs, but there are still cantata sets that need replacing, and I imagine that their Handel op. 4 is still unusable.) This is another example of the need for reviewers need to see parts as well as scores.

The Ton Koopman edition of Handel's organ concertos has reached No. 15, HWV 304, in D minor. The sources are the autograph and Arnold. The concerto draws on the recorder sonata from Book I of Telemann's *Musique de Table*. Handel only wrote out two movements, separated by the instruction *Organo adagio ad libitum e poi una Fuga allegro ad libitum*. Koopman's score (PB 5252, DM22.00) does not expand this. The organ part (OB 5252, DM18.00) substitutes versions of the *Dead March* from *Saul* (being in D, Koopman is technically right to say that it is from *Solomon*) and the fugue that is better known from op. 3/3. This seems unsatisfactory to me: the movements are too familiar from their other context to fit here. The organ part also contains editorial expansions of the *ad lib* cues elsewhere. This concerto is unlikely to be played except in concerts demonstrating his borrowing or in complete recordings of the concertos, but it is good to have a usable edition.

BEETHOVEN & MENDELSSOHN

Since writing in the last issue about the Jonathan Del Mar/Bärenreiter edition of the Beethoven Symphonies, the final volume has now appeared: Symphony No. 7 (BA 9007: £29.50 full score, £19.50 critical commentary). I haven't had a chance to look at it in any detail, but I had a quick glance at a copy passing through on the way to a customer and cannot resist congratulating all concerned: to quote words set in a work published in Vienna in the year of Beethoven's first symphony, 'Achieved is the glorious work'. My previous review was based on the miniature scores; if I have one minor criticism of the full score, it is that it needs more generous margins: apart from the optical illusion that tiny margins make the print look smaller, conductors need lots of room for their annotations. Otherwise, alpha plus! The commentary is meticulously detailed, yet it is comparatively easy to distinguish the important from the trivial. As someone with a fair collection of facsimiles, I was pleased to read in the editor's concluding remarks that a major inspiration for his work was his fascination with his father's copy of the facsimile of Symphony No. 9; I hope that the potentially-

wider availability of such material through the net and on CD-ROM or whatever the next system might be will continue to inspire future scholars, even though I cannot imagine they will have the same effect as a beautiful volume in one's grasp.

Breitkopf & Härtel have followed their full score and parts of Mendelssohn's *Paulus* with a new vocal score (EB 8706; DM33.00 – good value at just over £10.00). Once popular with choral societies (though always overshadowed by *Elijah*), *St Paul* is now a rarity. It was written for large forces (choir of 356, orchestra of 172), so is much more suited to modern choral societies than Bach or Handel, and deserves revival. Whether English-speaking choirs will use a German-text edition is another matter. Unlike *Elijah*, written for Birmingham so with an authentic English text, the desire for original language (which is widespread even in quarters where other aspects of authenticity are disregarded) may make some organisations prefer this to the Novello English edition, and it has the bonus of being based on a more accurate musical text.

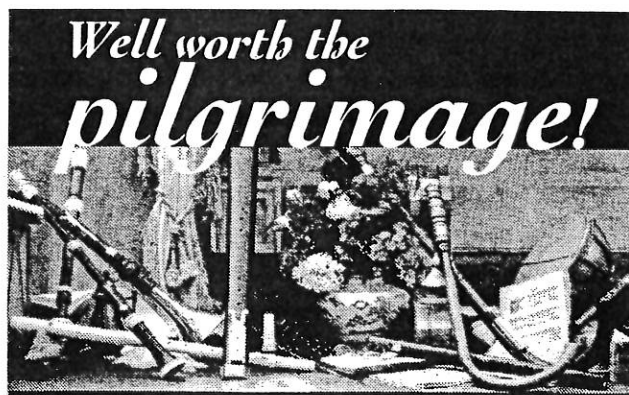
BUYING AND SELLING

Albi Rosenthal *Obiter Scripta: Essays, Lectures, Articles, Interviews and Reviews on Music, and other subjects* Edited for publication by Jacqueline Gray. Oxford: Ofo Press, 2000. viii + 472pp, £35.00. ISBN 0 9506989 3 8

Albi Rosenthal is well-known to librarians and collectors with money to spend as an antiquarian music dealer. He has had a long career, deriving from a love of the objects in which he trades. I'm sure that if I had the rarities that passed through his hands (particularly items he picked up as bargains, like the songs of Martim Codax for five pounds), I'd want to keep them for myself. He has always looked such a nice man, and this comes over strongly in the writings collected here. I have only met him in passing, except at a 1995 Monteverdi conference; the paper he delivered there shows that he wasn't aware that performers no longer needed editions interpreted by 'research into performance practices and conventions in Monteverdi's time', they just want properly-edited scores. He has inevitably needed to acquire knowledge in a wide field, so the range of topics is extensive. I was particularly intrigued by his chapter on the discovery of the MS La Clayette, of which he also wrote the first detailed description. It seems to me a weakness of musicology that the interesting story of its discovery is included in the introduction, not the two articles reprinted in the body of the book. As I've written before, why do scholars hide the sort of personal details they spend their time trying to recover from the past? In view of Tim Carter's discussions of the price of music in 16th-century Florence (see p. 3 above), the historical value of the book is diminished by the discretion with which the author avoids revealing most of the prices of the objects in which he trades. I think the editors have done him a disservice by not editing with a more heavy hand. Reading the same stories several times gives the impression that he is a

repetitive bore, which I'm sure is unfair. A strand that runs through the book is his interest in the traditions and history of antiquarian music selling; if Albi wants an occupation for his retirement (he is only 85), he is obviously the ideal candidate to write a more formal study on that subject.

We have received for more books and music than is usual over the summer, so more have been carried over to the next issue than is normal – partly due to lack of space, partly because the extension to our house/place of work has been more disruptive in its closing stages so they have not all been read. We are particularly pleased to have received the Locatelli Opera Omnia: we are grateful to Barbara Gogolick Sachs for mentioning our request to the project's general editor, Albert Dunning, and to him for having them sent. They all include substantial introductory material as well as the scores. I mention the two new Monteverdi editions briefly on p. 4: they too must await a more detailed study than I have yet been able to give them. New books include the complete librettos of Purcell's operas and a study of Purcell's MSS by Robert Shay and Robert Thompson. We will also include a review of Eric Chafe's *Analyzing Bach Cantatas*. Finally, I keep on meaning to devote space to *Lute News*, the Lute Society's Newsletter, which under Christopher Goodwin has become an amazing cornucopia of articles, reviews, information, music and wit. Perhaps their correspondent Mrs Trellis of North Wales would like to turn her attention to the watermarks of *EMR*.





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VIRTUE TRIUMPHANT AGAIN

Joachim Martini & Anthony Hicks

My apologies for not linking the article on p. 10. of our July issue with the details of the discs reviewed, which were on p. 23. CB

LETTER FROM JOACHIM MARTINI

Yesterday I had the opportunity to read the review written by Mr Anthony Hicks concerning the concert-take of *Il Trionfo del Tempo e della Virtù*, apparently published by Naxos during the last weeks.

His partially bitter remarks induce me to send you an extract of my letter answering a letter of Anthony Hicks, in which he referred to a score I had sent him some weeks before. This score contained the version – as I suppose – of the revival of *Il Trionfo* given in March 1739. I entitled my score *Il Trionfo del Tempo e della Verità*, London, 1737 & 1739'. He complained of the fact that the CD-take of our performance of *Il Trionfo* had spoiled his intention of recording his 1737 version and he called my version a 'personal compilation'. In my letter I tried to explain my points of view, and I am very sorry to say that he did not give me an answer.

Now as before I am convinced that there are no hints about the 1739 version of *Il Trionfo*, except for the press item of 3 March 1739: 'At the King's Theatre... this Day... will be reviv'd an Oratorio, call'd *Il Trionfo del Tempo & della Verità*, with several Concerto's on the Organ and other Instruments' [*Händel-Handbuch* 4, p. 306, quoting from Chrysander]. In my opinion, nowadays we are only able to guess, to maintain or to claim a conviction without being really sure about the reality of that 1739 performance.

I think that it should be decisive for an honest judgment of somebody's work to include the different social situations and artistic intentions. I am no scholar, but a conductor who wishes to give the public an idea about the incredible wealth of Handel's music. Maybe I passed across a certain musicological boundary, but I am not so very sure about it!

As to the Naxos documents, I am helpless, since I have had no opportunity to read them. As to the choir, I would like to underline that, in contrast to the Barockorchester Frankfurt and the soloists, all singers are amateurs and not paid choir-singers. It is my personal decision to maintain this choral culture, which dates back to Handel's time and which is in danger of being destroyed by the substitution of professional and semiprofessional singers.

I think that it is very important to reflect upon the traditional ways of performing Handel's oratorios. To help make the plot understood by an audience from whom the language and literary images are rather distant, I decided to

characterise the cast and their ways of thinking and feeling by giving them their own specific continuo players. So we used the carillon as a continuo instrument, even if there are no hints about Handel's way of using it.

Handel's attitude to the use of his music is characterised by a particular generosity, which is testified by many contemporary letters reporting his concerts. It is because of this, I think, that if he could have had the opportunity to listen to our performance of *Il Trionfo*, he might perhaps have been a little bit amused, but surely not so annoyed as Anthony Hicks has been.

Extract from Joachim Martini's letter to Anthony Hicks.

We had planned this project during my preparations for *Saul* in 1996. When I had the pleasure in 1997 to meet Mr Winton Dean after our performance of *Athalia* in Halle, I told him about our *Trionfo* project, and when I learnt in a letter from him (15-1-1998) about the project of the London Handel Society, I wrote immediately to Denys Darlow to inform him about this coincidence, but got no reply.

As to my version, your judgment ('a personal compilation') is right in many respects. I never intended to perform what might be called an Urtext version, but one which gave all the wonderful aspects of the dramatic theme and which tried to reflect the special concert-atmosphere of Handel's time (e.g. the improvisation around the Saraband). In my booklet, I explained my intentions in *Tu giurasti, Ricco pino, Viver e non amar*, etc to the audience.

As I know that there is no autograph or copy of the 1737/1739 versions. The 1737 cast is not known [and the only information we have on the 1739 performance is quoted in the previous column]. I found *O Tempo* with the kind help of Dr Michael Pacholke (Halle), Mr Winton Dean and Mr Roland Schmidt (Carl von Ossietzky-Universität, Hamburg).

If there is any more information about *Il Trionfo*... I would be very eager to know about it.

REPLY FROM ANTHONY HICKS

The London Handel Festival performed the three main versions of Handel's *Trionfo* oratorios in consecutive years – a good way, I would have thought, of 'exploring' Handel's various treatments of the allegory – with the 1737 version falling in 1998. By coincidence Joachim Martini's *Trionfo* project occurred around the same time, and preparations for the two performances proceeded independently. Mr Martini was kind enough to attend the London perfor-

mance (under Paul Nicholson) on 30 April. We met briefly and cordially during the interval, and he said he would send me a programme of his performance. He did (on 15 November) and only then did I learn that he had not performed the oratorio in any version conceived by Handel, but in an eclectic version of his own devising, for which the phrase 'personal compilation' is, I submit, entirely appropriate. I sent him a complimentary copy of my score (on 20 November) and by return he sent me a copy of his score and the private issue of the CD set. (The letter which he mentions, dated 26 November, does not refer to a score sent 'some weeks before'; it accompanied his score.) The appearance of the CD set, and the expectation that it would be issued commercially by Naxos, did indeed end tentative discussions with a record company concerning a studio recording of the 1737 *Trionfo* with the Handel Festival forces. However, it was by no means clear that all the supportive funding required for the recording could have been found, and therefore I do not blame Mr Martini for preventing it happening.

I have to leave Mr Martini's general views on performance to the consideration of readers, but his claims concerning what is or is not known about the 1737 *Trionfo* and its 1739 revival need refuting. Of course there is no complete autograph of either version, because when Handel made use of music written earlier for other works he would write out only newly-composed music and leave the production of a complete score to a copyist. For revivals he would mark up this copy, the so-called 'conducting score', and leave copyists to write out transpositions or insert copies of new music as necessary. All the newly composed material for the 1737 *Trionfo* is extant in autograph except for the sinfonias that begin the three parts, and we also have Handel's archive score of the 1707 setting, with his autograph annotations concerning the music to be used in 1737. The 1737 conducting score, the first score of the complete work ever made, is fully preserved in Hamburg, with annotations relating to both 1737 and 1739. There is a printed libretto for 1737. The notion that there is any significant doubt about the content of the 1737 score is therefore false. There may be the odd doubt about the changes made for the 1739 revival where the markings for transposition or redistribution of arias among the characters are unclear in the conducting score, but most of the markings are comprehensible, and the only significant formal change – the insertion of a chorus adapted from *Deborah* – is quite clear. For the other interesting change made in 1739 – the addition of a part for carillons – we have Handel's autograph of the carillon part, to be read (as we know from Handel's other uses of the instrument) as for a transposing instrument in G. Thus to say that 'there are no hints about Handel's way of using it' is again false. As I pointed out, Mr Martini includes the carillon version of the Sonatina (albeit in the wrong key), along with its 1737 version for solo violin and continuo, but ignores the carillon part for the aria that follows, despite the fact that both are written on the same sheet. Far from reconstructing the 1739 version of the oratorio, Martini ignores all features of that version except for the extra chorus (which he fails to

link to the preceding aria as Handel clearly instructs) and the carillon Sonatina (which he misreads). The answer to Mr Martini's question as to what else 'he could have done better' seemed to me too obvious to need stating. Given his remarkable ability to assemble a good set of performers, and to have CDs made of his performances, he should have used that golden opportunity to allow his audience to hear Handel's 1737 *Trionfo* as the composer conceived it, perhaps with the extra chorus and carillon part of 1739 correctly incorporated; and he should have provided a clear and accurate description of what he was doing.

Mr Martini's claim that his insertions of music from other versions of the work and from elsewhere are explained (as distinct from merely announced) in his notes can also be refuted, but I do not wish to prolong this response beyond everyone's patience, but rather to wish Mr Martini well for his further projects. I understand he has performed the pasticcio oratorio *Nabal*, compiled from Handel's music by the younger John Christopher Smith, and I hope that (if it accurately represents Smith's work and if Mr Martini has given his explicit permission) Naxos will have the enterprise and courage to issue a commercial recording.

Joachim Martini kindly sent me some samples of the programmes of his concert performances of Il Trionfo and some other oratorios, commendably detailed and in the case of Il Trionfo including the Italian libretto in facsimile; any changes from it are immediately obvious by the substitution of modern type. The Naxos documentation is less precise, and it is regrettable (and apparently not the conductor's fault) that the booklet is less specific than it should have been about what is actually on the discs.

It seems extraordinary to me that a conductor should want to revive a little-known work in a way that does not represent any of the known original versions. If it were a well-known oratorio, there may be some excuse for adapting it to present the conductor's personal vision; but it is cheating the audience to do so with something that is completely unfamiliar. The world of Handel scholarship is, within my experience, only too willing to proffer information to performers (Anthony Hicks in particular is always very generous with his knowledge), so it should not have been too difficult to find someone familiar with Handel's normal practice when revising his works, as well as detailed information on the sources of the 1737/9 versions and their interpretation.

I'm puzzled at the idea of amateur choirs going back to Handel's time. His chorus singers were professionals, probably from the Chapel Royal, Westminster Abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. The growth of amateur choruses may well stem from the popularity of his music in the later 18th century. The influence of provincial performances of Messiah and other oratorios led to the massive 1784 Handel Festival in London with 750 performers (roughly half vocal, half instrumental.) But most of the provincial performances, such as the Three Choirs Festival, were based on cathedral lay clerks. Thanks to the problems he encountered with Dean Jonathan Swift, there is clear documentation for Handel's expectation to draw his choir from cathedral singers there. Was the German tradition different?

CB

CREMONA EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL

26 May – 12 June 2000

From Monteverdi to Bach

Peter de Laurentiis

The XVII 'Claudio Monteverdi' Early Music Festival of Cremona was inaugurated by Antonio Florio and his Cappella della Pietà de'Turchini performing Purcell's *Dido & Aeneas*, with Debora Beronesi and Bjorn Waag in the title roles. I have already reviewed this for an Italian magazine, but paradoxically the same reviewer (myself) needs to write quite different things about the same concert. The reason is that what was apparent to me, and at times almost unbearable, was completely unnoticed by the Italian audience. English is a difficult language. Many Italians are able to read and write it; but speaking it comprehensibly and, especially, understanding it when spoken is the most difficult task. That is why they didn't mind the poor pronunciation and the fact that many of the singers had little understanding of the meaning of their lines. (Especially reproachable for this was the actor/singer Giuseppe De Vittorio.) The fanciful and pretentious production didn't help the singers either – nor the audience, nor Purcell's masterpiece. For instance, I can't appreciate the 'artistic' choice of having the Sailor sing 'Come away, fellow sailors' sitting motionless on the edge of the stage looking at the audience. But the orchestra was excellent and very well conducted by Florio. Roberta Invernizzi was a persuasive Belinda, and Maria Ercolano and Roberta Andalò were very impressive too.

The next morning in the small church of Sant'Omobono we had a well conceived programme consisting of the *Stabat Mater* by Alessandro Scarlatti, Vivaldi's motets *In furore* and *Cur sagittas*, and Bach's *Tilge, Höchster, meine Sünden* 'Psalm 51 nach dem Stabat Mater von G.B. Pergolesi'. The performers were soprano Ilaria Geroldi, alto Gloria Banditelli and Ensemble La Moderna Pratica, a small string ensemble conducted from the organ by Stefano Molardi. An initial embarrassment for poor string intonation ended when ripienisti joined the two violins which played in the Scarlatti. Gloria Banditelli is an intelligent and accomplished performer and once you get used to her very characteristic tone, her singing is really enjoyable. Ilaria Geroldi had some moments of brilliant flair in the most 'warlike' pieces ('In furore justissimae irae'); otherwise she could be a little too relaxed (and flat), but generally her performance was very good.

La Passione di Gesù Christo Signor Nostro by Antonio Caldara on a beautiful text by Pietro Metastasio was the next concert I attended. The music is also superb and it was well performed by La Stagione Armonica, a fairly large orchestra and choir (which had not much to sing), and a good line of soloists, among whom soprano Lia Serafini and especially

sopranista Antonio Giovannini were outstanding. They were conducted by Sergio Balestracci. It was nice to hear the part of John sung by a very young falsettist (called by coincidence Giovannini), who had an extraordinary lower register, though he seemed to enjoy his higher notes better. The lower register was a bit of a problem for the other falsettist Alessandro Carmignani, who sings both tenor and alto (sometimes on the same night). The problem is that he switches to his chest voice quite often when singing alto, and the contrast is disconcerting. While listening, I thought that the tempos were all generally on the slow side, and I longed for more contrast. But I was sitting in the sixth row and had quite a good definition. I already criticised the acoustics of San Marcellino in *EMR* three years ago, and I think this was why Balestracci had to slow everything down.

The next day, in the same church, Christophe Rousset and Les Talens Lyriques presented a beautiful programme of motets and psalms (plus *madrigali e canzoni spirituali*) from Monteverdi's *Selva morale e spirituale*. Unfortunately this time I was placed in the middle of the church and consequently had a very vague idea of what was going on. I moved forward in the second half, but still could hear very little. Fortunately it was recorded by Rai Radio 3 and parts of it were broadcast some days later – the presenter, who had attended the concert, also complained about the acoustics. I can only assume that the concert must have been superb. (I did ask Rousset what he thought of the venue, and he said that while rehearsing it was difficult to hear one another, but that with the presence of an audience there was a noted improvement.)

The following morning Marco Ruggeri gave a wonderful recital on the harpsichord. I had already enjoyed his recitals a couple of times (he is Cremona based) and always thought well of his somewhat understated and elegant virtuosity. This time he played pieces by Frescobaldi (he started with the Toccata IX where he didn't seem to get tired despite Frescobaldi's admonition 'Non senza fatica si giunge al fine' – 'Not without fatigue does one reach the end'). And also by Pasquini (including the *Partite diverse di Follia*), Alessandro Poglietti, organist of Italian origin at the court of Leopold I, and two Bach transcriptions from Benedetto Marcello and Antonio Vivaldi (BWV 981 and 976).

Koopman's contribution to the Festival consisted of two Bach nights. On the same day as the harpsichord recital, he performed (together with Tini Mathot, Patrizia Marisaldi, Carmen Leoni and a one-to-a-part Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra) Bach's concertos for two, three and four

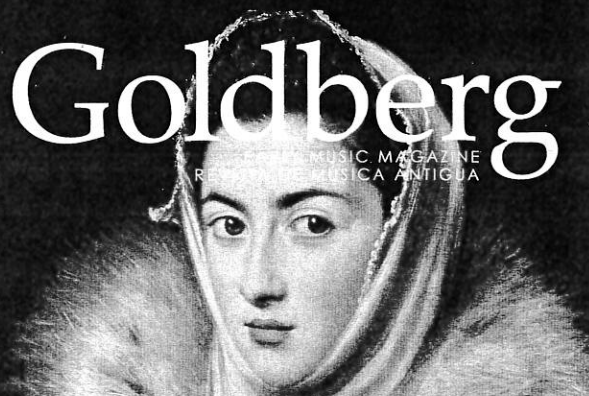
harpsichords. The venue was Cremona's Ponchielli Theatre. The harpsichords were placed side by side with the performers facing the audience, but as the stage was quite high, I had a strange view of the soloists' thighs. I wasn't very happy with this concert. It was clearly under-rehearsed. Anyway on the next night much larger forces were employed in performing Bach's St. Matthew Passion. This was quite a different matter, being by far the best concert I attended during the Festival. The performers were all exceptional. The vocally impeccable Evangelist, Max Ciolek really made something special of the text. Seldom do I feel enthusiastic about a singer's diction; I greatly admire those who have perfect pronunciation of foreign languages. I recently heard Ian Bostridge singing German Lieder, for example, but that's another matter. The other soloists (Johannette Zomer, Annette Markert, Jörg Dürmüller, Markus Marquardt) were evidently not 'early music bred' (with Tannhäuser, Don Carlo and Salomé featuring in their CVs), but they were young and sufficiently broadminded to be able to bend their different technique for the sake of *buon gusto*. Peter Kooij sang the bass arias beautifully. The orchestra, led by Margaret Faultless, was eponymously of the highest level. We were all expecting Koopman to take his capricious tempos here and there, and so he did, never really unpleasantly, except perhaps in the speediest 'Gebt mir meinem Jesum wieder' I have ever heard, where the solo violin (Orchestra II) seemed a little panicky. It is difficult to say anything about the Choir. I was sitting next to the second choir, less than two metres from one of its tenors. In fact, as I had a score with me, I had to make a great effort not to join in the Chorales, an effort which my neighbour failed to accomplish in the arias (pity he had a cold and had to sniff every two notes!). Anyway the Amsterdam Baroque Choir was big (8, 6, 8, 7), but excellent. I will never forget their singing 'Sind Blitze, sind Donner' giving the impression that the church would soon collapse – though it is true that I was sitting right under the old wooden gallery where the restless boys had been placed (Breda Sacrament Boys Choir).

To end with, I thought that the management oddities which I had noticed in previous years were left unchanged. The choice of venues: notably San Marcellino which holds a great number of people, but where you can hear decently only if you are in the front rows. Some aspects of the concert programmes: for example two pages dedicated to Purcell and his *Dido & Aeneas* and about twelve to the performers' CVs (four of which were dedicated to the producer). And finally, the way the management treated the reviewers, giving them seats where it was hardly possible to hear properly, as the RAI Radio 3 presenter said, a reviewer wrote in the local paper, and I repeat here. Anyway, I believe that things can only improve and look forward to next year when, as the organisers have promised, a Monteverdi opera will be performed.

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LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

London is a good place for early music lovers to be in June and July. You can catch the tail end of the Covent Garden Festival, the Lufthansa and Spitalfields Festivals are just about to start (usually, and irritatingly, on the same evening), there is open air opera in Holland Park and the City of London Festival tags along – plus the usual offerings at the regular venues. The opera and ballet season at Holland Park has become a regular feature of London's summer life. The audience are protected from such of the elements as are vertically applied, though the wind and temperature can still be a bit of a problem. But the setting is delightful, using the remaining bits of the forecourt of Holland Park House as a backdrop. Of particular interest to early opera buffs was the first complete performance in modern times of João de Sousa Carvalha's *L'amore industrioso*, first performed in Lisbon in 1769. It was discovered and edited for performance by the conductor, David Cherniak. An early foretaste of Mozart's da Ponte operas (with a possible, but tenuous Mozart link for musical detectives), this was a well-structured and well-paced work, with a sensible balance of recitative, arias and chorus. Although there was little of the harmonic adventurousness of the later Mozart, the music was pleasant and approachable – not always the case for 'rediscovered' works. The part-writing extended to seven voices, but they were generally all singing more or less the same text. The Apollo Chamber Orchestra did not use period instruments (apart from a harpsichord), but performed with clarity and sparkle. With seasonal colds and operatic wobbles affecting a few of the soloists, my pick of the singers was Catriona Barr for her strong voice and impressive acting abilities in the role of the maid, Bettina. The direction, with a French 1930s feel to it, was over-complicated, with several things going on at the same time – a distraction from the vocalist. Although the direction was far more straightforward, Mozart's *Così fan tutti* was less impressive, not least for the pathetic sound of the electronic harpsichord. Cem Mansur directed the Opera Holland Park Orchestra and Chorus. It was all a bit too operatic for my tastes.

I cannot give a fair review of Ensemble Organum's appearance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (22 June, and part of the Meltdown 2000 festival). I went expecting the advertised programme of vocal works from Machaut's *Le Voir Dit* and pieces from the Buxheimer Organ Book, but ending up listening to what I gather was Corsican chant. With no programme notes available, I have no idea what the music was, who composed it or anything else about it. I did work out that I was hearing a Requiem and a Mass setting, and it sounded rather late 18th century in style. It was full of distinctive ornamentation, often featuring microtonal inflections of the notes, but to what extent this

was authentic, or how it was scored, is beyond me. During the Requiem, the small group of male singers gathered around a score, but in the Mass they tended to gather round each other, more or less ignoring the score and, at times, singing to each other rather than to the audience. Much of it could have been improvised, or with the singers following one leader, as far as I could make out. The Agnus descended into complete anarchy and a totally disorganised and uncoordinated mish-mash of voices. In a few sections, the singers needed several goes before getting the notes or entries correct, and at one stage the whole show seemed to descend into a group therapy huddle, apparently to encourage one more-than-usually wayward singer who seemed to have lost the plot entirely. In my less than receptive mood, I also found the singing style quite bizarre – the tone was rough and bucolic, with little subtlety. It could all have been terribly clever stuff, with awfully famous Corsican chant specialists, famed in their own country for the vocal prowess – but it sounded frankly amateurish to my rapidly tiring ears. I do hope somebody else was at the concert who knew what they were listening to, and will write an angry letter to the Editor saying what a dreadful reviewer I am and telling you what a fantastic concert it was – and why. [If this was essentially a performance of their Corsican chant CD, there may have been more positive things to say: it stays in my mind as one of the more successful of the Ensemble's recordings. CB]

The English National Opera joined with the Mark Morris Dance Group for a short season featuring Handel's *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* [using the King's Music edition for the latter]. In both, the choir and soloists were in the boxes to the sides of the stage, giving a huge separation between the various elements of the choir. *L'Allegro* was staged with 30 short dances, which did much to help pull this rather fragmented work together. It was not easy to follow the plot, as the three characters of the title (and of Milton's and Jennen's texts) are represented as moods rather than individuals, and each of the three portrayals are shared amongst the four soloists. Morris is incredibly inventive in his choice of movements and is one of the few choreographers to visibly represent what is going on in the music – even to the extent of depicting a trill and dancing out fugal entries. Much was made of mirror images, both in structural and immediately visual terms. Using modern instruments and distinctly inauthentic direction, the music was a let down; the showpiece duet 'As steals the morn upon the night', for example, featured a curiously violent bassoon entry, rather at odds with the mood of the piece. The ENO Choir showed no stylistic appreciation of the music or the tone and vocal technique needed to portray it. What will do for Verdi will

not do for Handel. So 10/10 for the dancers and 2/10 for the musicians. The performance of *Dido* was even worse from the Chorus's point of view (it was, frankly, dreadful), although the band and direction was much better, with crisp and reasonably clear playing from most. It may have been difficult to keep the choir in time with itself across the expanse of the vast stage, but there seemed to be many singers who had trouble keeping in time with the person singing next to them. If a dancer, right at the back of the stage and far removed from the orchestra, can leap from a low wall, over the back of another dancer, and yet still land in strict time to the music, why could the Chorus not keep in time? I have moaned about the ENO Chorus before - in performance of anything before about 1800, they are a serious let down to the normally high standards of London's musical life. On these two occasions, I wished I was reviewing for a contemporary dance magazine. [The next baroque opera ENO is doing is *Poppea*; that doesn't need a chorus, so may I suggest that instead of having time off, they have some sessions working with an experienced conductor of early vocal music to extend their stylistic sensibilities? Perhaps they should give a concert at the end of the period, to give it some focus. CB]

Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music 5 June - 14 July

Under the direction of Kate Bolton and Ivor Bolton, the Lufthansa Festival has firmly established itself as the premier London early music Festival – largely because of its focussed programming policy, concentrating on a particular repertoire, and its wealth of imported musicians. With festivals of Italian and French music in 1998 and 1999, it was inevitable that this year, of all years, would be dedicated to Bach and German music, although there was the occasional diversion to France, Italy or England, and a few contemporary works. One of the most fascinating features was the inclusion of several works in little known variants – including the D major Suite without trumpets, the B minor Overture for flute and strings played in A minor with violin and strings, and an early version of the *Pièce d'orgue*. The opening night at St John's, Smith Square, was in grand style, with Ivor Bolton's direction of the B minor Mass, with his own St James's Baroque Players and Singers. From the explosive opening of the Kyrie, the tension was wound up and retained throughout. Bolton portrays a natural affinity with this music, and he produced an emotionally powerful and musically intense performance which managed to avoid exaggerated gestures or overstatement. Speeds of individual movements, and the flow of the major sections, were perfect, as was the unified sound that he coaxed out of the 24-strong chorus and the four soloists (Maria Cristina Kiehr, Lawrence Zazzo, James Gilchrist and Roderick Williams – the 2nd soprano role being taken by the countertenor). Williams was a particularly effective bass with an impressive consistency of tone over his range, although his pronunciation of 's' (as in *solus*, *sanctus*, *sanctum*) included rather too much 'z' sound. Apart from some ragged playing and intonation from the

violin, the obligato soloists were on top form, with Rachel Brown's lilting solo flute in the Benedictus (mercifully free from the mannerisms of a performance earlier this year) perfectly matching James Gilchrist's flowing lines.

A more than usually introvert early evening lute recital by Robert Barto (7 June) was followed by the impressive Freiburg Baroque Orchestra with Emma Kirkby. Although billed as 'democratic and self-governing', their stage presence suggested a very strong leader in their violinist, Gottfried von der Goltz. But whatever the internal politics were, they produced a focussed and tight sound, with superb control of articulation and mood throughout. Von der Goltz's empathy with Kirkby's singing of the aria 'Tief gebückt und voller Reue' was outstanding. My biggest concern was the over-emphatic playing of one of the continuo cellists – notably in the chorale 'Ich, dein betrübtes Kind' and the aria 'Schlummert ein'. Over at St James Piccadilly, the appearance of Joshua Rifkin with a single soprano was not the ultimately minimalist stage of his theories on Bach's vocal forces, but she was all that was needed for Bach's curious cantata *No sa che sia dolore*, whose busy writing seemed to owe more to Vivaldi's Venice than Bach's Saxon homeland. Julianne Baird's voice contained far too much vibrato for my taste, adding an unpleasant edge to her voice – she also lacked security of pitch and tone and, with her eyes firmly fixed on her score, she did little to communicate with her audience. In fact, I was singularly unmoved by the whole concert. The translation of the B minor flute Overture to an A minor violin Overture was hampered by mannered articulation and a rhetoric that edged the pulse off course rather too often. Unless the inference was that Bach's keyboard temperament was more or less equal, the transfer from B to A minor should have produced a cleaner tuning, although this was not apparent from the unrecorded, and uninteresting, temperament produced for this concert – the occasional moments of darkness were more to do with lapses of intonation than temperament. A performance, later in the Festival, of the original version of the version was similarly lacking in key colour, the A#s passing by without even saying hello.

The Bach Marathon (10 June) crammed four concerts into two over an afternoon and evening. Nicholas Kraemer directed the St James's Baroque Players and Singers in two cantatas and the Magnificat. There were particularly effective contributions from soprano Maria Cristina Keihr and tenor Rufus Müller, but I do wonder whether Christopher Robson's astonishing Mad King countertenor voice is really the thing for Bach. Cellist Richard Campbell, bassoonist Zoe Shevlin and organ continuo-ist Robert Howarth were on good form in the cantatas. Olivier Baumont and Davitt Moroney joined forces for the Concerto in C minor for two solo harpsichords – the positioning of one harpsichord in front, and slightly ahead of the other gave an interestingly focussed stereo image. Like a brace of low flying birds in close formation, one edged slightly ahead, then dropped back producing phase shifts between the two instruments as motifs were tossed

back and forth. Baumont's solo Suite and Concerto demonstrated a good sense of lyrical rhetoric. Davitt Moroney played a series of mostly choral-based organ works, and the original version of the *Pièce d'orgue*, but seemed far more at home on the harpsichord than the organ. He was (understandably) not at home on the St John's Smith Square organ, but could have made far more effort to project the music to the audience with clearer articulation. The final section of the *Pièce d'orgue*, for example, sounded muddled and murky, with sticky-finger touch. I was not convinced that this early version was worth the effort – the curious gap in the solo opening line rather jarred the ears of those who know the mature version, and the central section, which omitted the pedals until near the end (and was played in far from *Gayement* style), was audibly uncomfortable under the hands. The final element of the Marathon was the excellent Concerto Italiano with the youthful operatic soprano Désirée Rancatore featuring in one of Bach's most bustling cantatas: *Jauchzet Gott in alle Landen*. Her communicative voice has something of a mezzo tinge to it, although she had no trouble at the top of the range. Her vibrato was entirely forgivable – I have heard much worse from many so-called early music singers. Rinaldo Alessandrini's direction was fluid and passionate.

One of the highlights of the Festival was the viol consort, Phantasm, in a surprisingly successful programme of no fewer than 9 fugues and 8 fantasias, alongside 2 pavans and an aire (15 June). The tight integration and musical intensity of the playing of this group always impresses. Mico's Pavan and Fantasias indicated a composer working to a standard well beyond the amateur music making of the time – his closely wrought works deserve repeated listening; his fondness for stretto was noticeable, but never became tiresome. Purcell again revealed himself as the ultimate harmonic colourist – his Fantazia 6 a4 is a miniature symphony in the range of emotions it contains. Four movements from *The Art of Fugue* concluded this excellent concert.

Although the Lufthansa Festival opened with the glories of the B minor Mass, the closing concert was an anticlimax. Without a group name, the four soloists – Wilbert Hazelzet (flute), Paulo Pandolfo (viola da gamba), Mitzi Meyerson (harpsichord) and Micaela Comberti (violin, standing in for Elizabeth Wallfisch) – gave the appearance of having come together just for this concert. Hazelzet's beautifully structured sense of musical line and articulation in the arrangement of Bach's Organ Trio Sonata in E flat was an object lesson to organists who struggle to play such pieces with two hands and two big toes. But the other players failed to impress. Pandolfo's virtuosity was admirable, but there were several concerns in the detail – for example, the figuration in the Praeludium from the transposed E flat major cello suite was lost in the afterglow of the emphatic bass notes and, more generally, the sheer speed and lightness of touch produced a sound with a tenuous hold on the fundamental tone, leaving the upper harmonics winging their way to the detriment of the melodic line. The expressionism of the Saraband got close to self indulgence. Meyerson's harpsi-

chord playing seemed to focus more on attention seeking than an expression of musicality – there was little grace or give in the flow of the music, and the exaggerated mannerisms of the articulation and touch and lack of empathy with the other players was all too obvious. Her habit of waving around whichever hand happened to be free at the time was as unnecessary as it was irritating. A disappointing end to a magnificent and enlightening Festival. I wonder what flight of fancy they are plotting for next year?

The Spitalfields Festival

5-23 June

Under the artistic direction of composer Judith Weir and the management of Judith Serota, the Spitalfields Festival's breadth of repertoire and wide year-round educational focus has made it the most fascinating of London's festivals, although its combination of early music with other periods means that it can lose out on *EMR* reviews when concerts clash with the more specialist Lufthansa Festival. One such clash was the expanded Purcell Quartet's opening concert of Bach cantatas – but they thoughtfully repeated it the following day. Last year's opening concert dwelt on death, although not as appropriately as this year's opening piece, the gloriously mournful *Actus Tragicus*, cantata BWV 106 (probably written for the funeral of one of Bach's uncles while he was at Mülhausen) with its timeless opening Sonatina in the style of Bach's mentor, Buxtehude. Soloists Suzie Le Blanc, Susan Bickley, Charles Daniels and Stephen Varcoe were most effective, and it was good to hear Richard Boothby playing the three different bass instruments needed for the three cantatas – the viola da gamba, cello and the sonorous violone. Robert Wooley's choice of an early version of Bach's Prelude and Fugue in E minor to play on the chamber organ was a curious one – it is clearly a *pleno* piece in the North German style and sounded rather lost on the diminutive sounds of the box organ. Anybody knowing the final version would have found the missing pedal notes disconcerting, and I am not convinced that it went down well with non-specialist listeners either.

Sarband were one of the hits of last years festival with their Fallen Women programme. They returned with Fallen Women 2, and hinted at the existence of the Fallen Women 3, no doubt hoping for a lengthy series of bookings. Only one of the singers was in last years line up – the magnificently melted-chocolate voice of Fadia El-Haga excelled in songs from the Arab-Byzantine tradition. I must admit that the Swedish Women's Oral Tradition was a new experience for me: soprano Miriam Andersen was clearly well immersed in the songs of her homeland, the very high pitch and complex ornamental melismas that linked notes being in stark contrast to the eastern repertoire. The two singers combined, not altogether comfortably, in music from Hildegard and the *Codex de las Huelgas*. The main irritation in the concert, apart from a nearby car alarm, was the incessant and irritating percussion from director Vladimir Ivanoff. This added an unwarranted sense of pulse to some pieces that should remain timeless, and locked the singers

too strongly into regular beats-in-the-bar in other pieces where the pulse existed, but could have been more flexible. Apart from one piece, the fundamental pitch of the percussion was at odds with the melodic line – even the piece where the pitch seemed to work suffered a slither up a tone half way through. My companion, who knows about such things, loved the flattened 2nd in the concluding Arab-Byzantine Kyrie eleyson/Inna Moussa – it seemed to be an inflexion of the underlying mode, rather than an indication of the mode itself, but it was nice anyway.

Sonnerie's Musical Offering (16 June) portrayed Bach with a twinkle in his eye, with Gary Cooper's free and rhetorical harpsichord playing of the Ricercar a 3 (probably as close as Bach got to notating an improvisation), relishing the exploratory nature of the piece and savouring each moment before moving off onto another idea. The more scholarly movements, worked out by Bach away from the royal gaze, were performed with a similar freshness and vivacity. Gary was joined by Wilbert Hazelzet, Monica Huggett and Emilia Benjamin for the concluding Sonata. Emilia had wheeled her dad (the actor Christopher Benjamin) in to announce the poetic titles of the various canons – a nice touch. I was envious of the admiring glances from daughter to father – my own children would sooner die than share the same stage as me!

Every now and then there is a concert that goes beyond mere critical review. Gary Cooper's triumphant performance of the Goldberg Variations (19 June) was one such – it was one of the finest I have heard. Like his playing of the Ricercar a 3 a few days before, the opening *Aria* was languid and rhetorical, with an improvisatory feel of exploration. But from the forcefully played first variation onwards, he threw caution to the winds. Living dangerously can be a disaster, but in this instance it worked, as we were propelled through an emotional rollercoaster. Variation 11 was like mice skittling over the keyboard, the twiddles in Variation 14 like pirouetting spiders, Variation 19 like a summer downpour – the snapped ending like a clap of summer lightning. The lengthy and chromatic Variation 25 was a spellbinding emotional climax, in contrast to the vivacious and humorous Variation 23. A fantastic performance. I would like to think that Bach played like this.

City of London Festival 20 June - 13 July

The City of London Festival certainly knows how to do it in style. With some of London's finest buildings and locations on tap, it matches the St Paul's Covent Garden Festival in providing musical, architectural and historical feast. It opened with two concerts in St Paul's Cathedral (20 July) – an early evening combat between the choirs of St Paul's and the Maitrise Notre-Dame de Paris, and later Bach's Magnificat and the premier of John Tavener's latest blockbuster. The French were put in to bat first, with their colourful mix of children and adults. They made good use of the vast space of St Paul's and from the vibrant and

rather forced tone of the 2 male altos who opening the batting onwards, produced a distinctive tonal colour. The sequence *Audi tellus, audi magni maris limbus* was presented as a music drama, with choruses and soloists processing around the distant chancel area and dome stage. Perotin's *E semine rosa* featured the girl-dominated children's choir. Fans of Preisner's music will know the hypnotic sound of the high pitched French female voice – a sound that resonated with the vast spaces of St Paul's. After some more recent pieces, including Messiaen's *O sacrum convivium* (with the most meticulous tuning up I have ever heard in a choir), the home team of St Paul's had a go, starting with a processional organ hymn by John Redford. The steady walking bass that measures out the time of Maurice Green's actuarial anthem, *Lord, let me know mine end and the number of my days*, showed the ability of this very English choir to produce perfect diction, pitch and timing. The two choirs combined for Louis Vierne rather jingoistic Mass for choir and two organs. In the later concert, Bach's Magnificat sounded dreadful in the cavernous acoustic of St Paul's. Although the New College Choir are clearly used to a much smaller space, it was the direction of Paul Goodwin that should have controlled the situation. Even from my seat just a few rows from the stage, the sound was a complete hotch-potch – I dread to think what those in the nether regions of the packed cathedral made of it all. The players in The Academy of Ancient Music seemed good enough, and Julia Gooding and James Gilchrist were the most effective soloists, but there has to be better ways of projecting Baroque music in this most Baroque of architectural spaces. Of course, John Tavener knew just how to do it, but that is a story for a different review.

Trevor Pinnock's endearingly shy introductions to all six of the Brandenburg Concertos covered some complicated stage re-ordering in London's Guildhall (6 July). Despite the applause given to the stage manager, it was the ever-resourceful English Concert, with their glittering array of soloists, that won the day. There is something of the romantic gypsy in Rachel Podger's violin playing, particularly in the occasionally violent attacks on the opening transient of notes and her use of that naughty vibrato. But it made the perfect foil for Katharina Spreckelsen's characteristically sensitive and musically phrased oboe playing (and some uncharacteristically well-behaved horns) in Concerto 1. The stage position for Concerto 3 was an obvious one, but is not used that often in performance – the three groups of triple violins, violas and cellos were spread across the stage facing the audience. This gave a very clear focus on the interplay between each of the three groups of instruments and each individual player, with motifs playfully passed down the line. Trevor Pinnock's direction and harpsichord playing, notably in the staggering 5th Concerto, was expressive and persuasive, holding the attention of a generally non-specialist audience for a long evening.

The annual incarceration in the Tower of London with the Choir of the Chapel Royal at St Peter ad Vincula featured Schütz's Italianate *Deutsches Magnificat*, Bach's *Jesu meine*

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Freude and Cantata 50, Buxtehude's *Missa brevis* and Mendelssohn. This was a much better performance than last year, although the volume could have done with turning down a bit in this relatively small church – the best cadences were certainly the rare quiet ones. Their sound was far more coherent, although the soloist ambitions of some of the singers still sounded through at times. Their carefully controlled phrasing was in the Anglican tradition of punctiliously observed punctuation, particularly in sentence carry-overs at the end of lines. This can become pedantic when over done, or when it causes a jar in the flow of the music, but was kept within the realms of decency on this occasion. Diction was always clear, although my well-educated companion spotted a few Latin pronunciation errors. A technically assured and nicely articulated performance of Bach's *Komm, Heiliger Geist* by Colm Carey showed off the church's new organ.

My ancient records of Nikolaus Harnoncourt's B minor Mass is a reminder of the roots of early music performance practice as we have come to know it. Translating that to the year 2000 and St Paul's Cathedral (and the closing concert of the City of London Festival – 13 July) was a fascinating experience. With his *Concentus Musicus Wien* and the Arnold Schoenberg Choir, the master gave an object lesson in Bach interpretation, and in the comparative taming of the huge acoustic. Harnoncourt's speeds were broad, and he gave meticulous attention to every detail of articulation, phrasing and relative volume between the musicians – he even closely directed all the soloists. A nicely buzzy bassoon helped by giving much needed definition to the bass line and the pulse. The choir was light in tone, avoiding the *con belto* style of some choirs – the choir and soloists were treated as extensions of the instrumental line, giving a coherence that is missing from many performances. There were some delightful individual movements and some superb instrumental solos (all by unnamed players). A glorious end to this enterprising festival.

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Giacomo Carissimi

Surrexit pastor bonus

Three sopranos and organ

Edited by Brian Clark

SOURCE: S-Uu vok.mus.hs. st. 12:4, four parts in Gustav Düben's hand, titlepage dated 1665

Editorial changes: Bar 40 Organ has 5+ rather than 6b;
Bar 48 Organ has 3 4

*Surrexit pastor bonus, qui animam suam posuit pro ovibus suis
et pro grege suo mori dignatus est.*

The good shepherd is risen again, who gave his life for his
sheep, and was worthy to die for his sheep. [After John 10:11]

Brian Clark, Dundee, 28th May 2000

Small-size copy on page 19; full-size copies available as a
set of 4 copies (3 singers & organ) for £3.00.

[illegible]

14

a - ni-nam su - am po - su-it pro o - vi-bus su - is,

qui a - ni-nam su - am po - su-it pro o - vi-bus su -

a - ni-nam su - am po - su-it pro o - vi-bus su -

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su-o, gre-ge et su-o mo-ri di-gna-tus

su-o, gre-ge et su-o mo-ri di-gna-tus

et pro gre-su o-mo-ni-di-gna-tus

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mo - ri di - gna - tus es, mo - ri di - gna - tus es, di - gna - tus es, di - gna - tus es, di - gna - tus es.

SUMMER SCHOOLS

Patience Balslev & Jeff Gill

Engelsholm 2000

The finale of the season for Danish early music enthusiasts is the annual renaissance music course held at Engelsholm Castle in central Jutland. This year we were joined, not only by equally enthusiastic Swedes, Norwegians and Germans, but also an American and an Australian, making a total of 54 participants. The team of ten tutors had one new member, Edward Wickham, who very quickly adjusted to the early mornings, the enthusiasm, the relaxed atmosphere and the varied levels of proficiency.

The course began after dinner on Saturday 24 June, when all the participants gathered in the great barn. We started by singing a two-part canon *Fange nun an, zu segnen das Haus deines Knechtes* (Let it please thee to bless...); in accordance to the *custos* at the end of the piece, it rose a tone higher each time it was repeated – an excellent way to get the voices warmed up. This was followed by instructions for dancing a simple pavan; with four recorders accompanying, everybody danced a couple of circuits round the room. The evening closed with Regnart's *Tollite jugum meum* a5 (Take my yoke upon you) accompanied by two cornetts and three sackbuts. These were a foretaste of things to come.

Each day started at 9.00 with morning choir. Edward patiently led us through a series of exercises in order to improve our breathing habits when singing, and also introduced us to some fine choral pieces, including a double canon for 8 voices *Honi soit qui mal y pense* by Morel, a mid-16th-century musician who probably worked for the Duke of Arundel. The mixed ensemble ran from 10.00 till 12.00. The first group in which I participated comprised two singers, two players (recorder and sackbut) with four more who could both sing and play (recorder, sackbut and two renaissance viols). The piece chosen for us was a motet in three sections by Isaac in honour of John the Baptist. We all sat round a single copy of the music with all four parts visible; one singer was kept busy making the seven page turns. Other groups worked on Marenzio's *Che fa oggi il mio soli* a5, which showed the influence of the virtuosic female singing style in the Italian madrigal of the 1580s; Stolzer's *Ich klag* and *Patientiam* with viols, curtal, lute, recorders and voice; a Lassus madrigal and a motet *Aude dulcis*, in which the soprano had to be a match for three accompanying sackbuts; a double choir piece by Morago *Jesu nostra Redemptio* (Portugal, c.1630), one choir being taken by cornett, three curtals and four singers, the other by four voices and viols.

After lunch, up to five hours of lessons took place daily for each tutor. Each participant had been offered the chance of being tutored in two subjects. In our free time we could

practice, relax, play in untutored groups, etc. Some of the results of the tutored groups were to be heard by the rest of the participants later in the week.

The first part of each evening usually began *tutti*, working on Regnart with Olivier Hirsch. We then split into three groups – dance, dance band or small choir. On the fourth evening Ole Kongsted gave a lecture about the music he had discovered over the years (including the Kronberg Motets); he reckons that there is an abundance of music still to be found. On another evening we were invited to view a delightful dance by 12 nymphs with garlands of flowers around their heads.

On the last evening we all had the opportunity to listen and perform items learnt during the week. The programme had been cut back to 22 items, all of which were quite different in style, texture and performance. The first half ended with Regnart's *Lamentabatur Jacob* a5 performed by all and the concert finished with the morning choir singing Tallis's well-known and much-loved *O nata lux*.

Engelsholm is very special. Not only is it well organised, offers sumptuous food, and happens to be set in beautiful surroundings, but 95% of the music is sung/played from facsimile. Using the notation of the period can be challenging, but it can be fun too, and the musician develops listening skills which are not required when modern notation is used. For newcomers, this can be difficult; but with the help of clue sheets and lunch-hour notation classes, they soon get the hang of it. All this year's newcomers vowed they would be back: just 51 playing weeks to go!

Patience Balslev

An invitation in English to Engelsholm 2001 can be obtained by contacting me: e-mail rice@post.tele.dk or tel +45 4465 5969

Beauchamp House

In this year's early music week at Beauchamp House, near Gloucester, Philip Thorby and Alan Lumsden, with Clifford Bartlett at the organ, looked at the large-scale sacred pieces published by Michael Praetorius in *Polyhymnia Caduceatrix & Panegyrica* of 1619.

The course could have been called 'Martin Luther meets Monteverdi'. In these works Praetorius applied to the Protestant chorale the early Baroque techniques – multiple choirs of voices and instruments, virtuoso solo writing, simple melodies transformed by florid decoration, dramatic changes of pace and mood – which had been demonstrated in the 1610 Vespers. Not that Praetorius was Monteverdi.

"In your dreams, Michael", as Philip put it. Nevertheless this is music of remarkable power. It builds on the chorale repertory, the stock of strophic melodies with, mostly, supplicant texts which must have been burnt into the brain of anyone brought up within the Lutheran liturgy. The familiar tunes and words – *Vater unser in Himmelreich, Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein, Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme* and so on – serve as the rocks on which lengthy pieces are built. Philip pointed out how the composer takes advantage of the listener's ingrained knowledge of the standard settings to play subtle games, making small changes in the lengths of notes and rests so as to alter the phrasing even when the chorale is presented plain. Decorated versions of the chorale may preserve the rhythm while dividing long notes, or the melody may be used straight while the rhythm is pulled about. Sometimes most of the voices and instruments give a calm rendering of the chorale while one or two voices urgently interject short phrases. The combined effect is to etch the underlying melody and its words even deeper into the mind. No doubt that was the idea.

It is a measure of the quality of the music, and of Praetorius's practical skill, that these large, difficult pieces worked even when performed by amateurs. Admittedly, the general standard of musicianship on the course was respectable, and there were some fine individual singers and instrumentalists, but even so this was unfamiliar music studied under time pressure. Our shortcomings offered plenty of targets for the rapier thrusts of the Wit of Beccles, as Philip was dubbed at one point: for instance when he called for a crescendo, and then asked for the phrase to be repeated not only crescendo but getting louder. But the results were impressive. One moment which lingers in the memory was a point in the middle of *Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort* when a different chorale – the equivalent of 'Grant peace in our time, O Lord' – was sung and played antiphonally by a solo soprano and larger forces, including a low trombone choir. 'Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich', sung quietly by the voice alone, hung in the air before the massive response 'Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten'. Enough to make the hair stand up on the back of even an unbeliever's neck.

Which most of those present probably were – unbelievers, that is. Some of those taking part undoubtedly meant the words they sang, even if they would not have been in agreement with Luther, or Praetorius, on all points of doctrine. Other participants would have had to say that they no longer believed in the God invoked by the chorales. Some perhaps grew up without any religious instruction or experience. Does it matter when music written in an age of faith is sung and played by people who do not share in the beliefs underlying the texts? A similar question arises to some extent for anyone who takes a serious interest in Renaissance art: but at least you can look at a Nativity or an Annunciation without addressing the Virgin. You cannot sing words convincingly (or, arguably, play vocal music on instruments) while ignoring what the words mean.

Not everyone will see a real issue here, and those who do

must no doubt handle it on the basis of their personal views and values. I would guess, though, that some musicians who were brought up as Christians but are no longer believers are glad if their early experience helps them respond to the music but uneasy because it feels like cheating. There is an uncomfortable irony in putting to a God one no longer believes in the request 'gib dass nicht bet allein der Mund, hilf dass es geh von Herzensgrund' (grant that it is not just the mouth that prays, help it to come from the bottom of the heart). It would be interesting to know whether those who have never been Christians suffer similar anxieties or feel that they are missing any of the content of the music. For that matter, how do believers feel about others singing their words?

Jeff Gill

This report was written for the Thames Valley Early Music Forum Newsletter; we are grateful to Jeff for letting us reprint it.

With the younger half of our population mostly lacking even a residual awareness of Christian culture, one wonders whether future singers will be unconcerned about the problem and happily sing the texts like opera singers, who don't have to believe that they are in love with the person they are addressing, or will avoid religious repertoire because the texts don't impinge on their thought-patterns and experience.

I thought I knew the music of Praetorius better than most, but like everyone else at the course, I was amazed by the quality of the best pieces. With Praetorius in particular, there is often a relationship between the quality of the chorale and the quality of the music, and Vater unser is certainly a powerful tune; but the imagination with which he creates a 20-minute piece that is so thematically economical yet sustains interest right through nine verses is amazing. The other highlight for me was Veni Sancte Spiritus/Komm heilige Geist, a much smaller piece (with the same scoring as the better-known Christmas Puer natus: Ein Kind geboren), in which a three-part choir (SSB soli) repeats the Latin antiphon while the remaining performers (four-part choirs of singers and instruments) alternate with Luther's German hymn, the two strands merging at the end. There was no general discussion of the issue Jeff raises, but several singers were offended by the anti-Papist and anti-Turkish text of Erhalt, uns, Herr bei deinem Wort, assuming from the text in modern German hymnbooks that Praetorius's version was a corruption. But it is the modern books that have bowdlerised und steur des Bapsts und Türken Mord. It may be unsuitable for church use now, but that's how Luther felt in 1541.

I also called in a couple of times to the Cambridge Summer Schools. On my first visit, I was enticed to a harpsichord within a minute of arrival to accompany some Charpentier: Philip Thorby, then walked in to tutor the group, and must have been appalled that, after a week enduring my continuo-ing in Beachamp, he couldn't escape me on the first day at his next course. The richly-tutored week was thoroughly enjoyed by all those I spoke to. It was nice to see again some of the musicians I had met in Israel in January. Another student was Cedric Lee, whose publications are advertised on p. 28; I will write about them in the next issue of EMR. (There is rather a lot to write about in the next issue!) CB

RECORD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Cantico della terra: the sacred and popular in 13th century Italy Quartetto vocale Giovanna Marini, Micrologus 60' 45"
Opus 111 OPS 30-277

Certainly earthy, especially the singing of the Marini quartet, a group that recreates folk music that may have an ancient pedigree. They make Micrologus (not the most mellifluous of groups) sound quite civilised. The repertoire is from the Cortona laudario MS and from various MSS, mostly from Cividale, in the binatim style (two parts start a fifth apart and move in contrary motion). It is rough and ready, but is often impressive. I would have welcomed more information in the booklet on the modern material (the medieval items are available in facsimile) and I'm puzzled why the music is said to come from Southern Italy. A fascinating disc, but the quartet sound is not for the faint-hearted. CB

15th CENTURY

Dufay O gemma lux: the complete isorhythmic motets Huelgas Ensemble, Paul Van Nevel Harmonia Mundi HMC 901700 68' 44"

I can't remember a disc about which I have found it so difficult to decide whether I like it. First time through, the opening vocal duet (of *Vasilissa ergo gaude*) sounded stunning, but I was then disappointed when the magic was broken by the wind on the tenor and contratenor parts. But in the next motet (*O Sancte Sebastiane*) I wasn't worried by it. Come track three, I was wondering whether the trombone could play so low at this period. I have reacted differently at different times, but on balance think that any doubts on the performance are outweighed by the opportunity to have these 13 marvellous pieces on a single disc. Paul Van Nevel advises us to listen to each piece individually – advice relevant to many early-music anthology discs; but in fact I enjoyed playing this through. Despite his advocacy of a steady tempo, the performances are often quite romantic in feel – perhaps too much, but at least there is no need to fear that isorhythm means mere cerebrality. In the 1970s, there was a controller of BBC Radio 3 who placed an absolutely ban on the word 'isorhythm'; if he had heard this, perhaps he would have delighted in the term. Despite my vacillation, buy it. CB

Josquin Missa Pange Lingua & motets A sei voci, Maîtrises des Pays de Loire, Bernard Fabre-Garrus 69' 30"
Astrée naïve E 8639

Mass, chant, *Christus mortuus est*, *O Domine Jesu Christe*, *Qui velatus facie fuisti*

This recording looks like a liturgical reconstruction complete with chant and even appel bell, but simply presents the

movements of Josquin's mass setting interspersed with motets and chant. The programme note offers no explanation as to the choice of the chant and is also unforthcoming as to who sings what. It seems to me that the male and female voices of the Maîtrises sing the chant, while the ladies also take the top line of the mass and motets with the male voices of A Sei Voci on the lower parts. There is an inappropriate feminine quality to the ladies' voices which occasionally unsettles the ensemble balance, while some of the chant sounds nervous; nevertheless there is some beautifully expressive singing. I have occasionally found A Sei Voci's intonation to be troubling in the past, but they have made great advances on this front. The obvious touchstone recording of the mass is the 1986 collaboration between the Ensemble Clément Janequin and the Ensemble Organum on Harmonia Mundi (HMC 901239) and while the present recording treats the music more expansively, the earlier recording, a genuine liturgical reconstruction, is more authoritative, a tour de force of gritty and confident singing. D. James Ross

Master of Musicians: Songs and instrumental music by Josquin des Pres, his pupils and contemporaries Musica Antiqua of London with Jennie Cassidy, Belinda Sykes, John Potter & Robert Evans SATB, Philip Thorby dir Signum SIGCD025 68' 21"

Josquin des Prez Sixteenth-century lute settings Jacob Heringman lute 67' 08"
Discipline Global Mobile DHM0006

A disc and a half of instrumental Josquin may seem nearly as absurd as a CD of vocal Corelli. Extremely little of Josquin's music is plausibly instrumental. But a glance at Howard Mayer Brown's *Instrumental Music Printed before 1600* shows that it was the basis for a vast array of transcriptions and adaptations. The Musica Antiqua disc places Josquin in this context. For me, the highlights are the plain vocal settings (e.g. *Mille regretz* – I was relieved to hear from David Fallows that the attribution is still tenable) or solo voice with viols (the Virgil setting *Dulces exuviae*, beautifully sung by Jennie Cassidy). The viol playing is most expressive, whereas the voices adopt a plainer style, which paradoxically results in a perfect match between them. It took me a while to get into the disc; eventually the scurrying counterpoint of the opening Isaac convinced me, but I'm still not happy about *Comment peult* with the tune in the bass. Those who can't take early music without crumhorns will find them slightly uncouth in *Bergerette savoyssienne* but kempt in *Bergeret sans roche*, the only place where the programme meets the jolly dance type of renaissance anthology. John Bryan's booklet notes are excellent. (I haven't deliberately singled out the names of

contributors to *EMR* for praise!) I've played this disc more than any other in this month's batch; marvellous music, sung and played with just the right style and musicianship: I recommend it strongly (though it is not to everyone's taste: my wife can't stand it – partly from a congenital dislike of the viol; she was also puzzled by the heavy breathing on track 15.)

Jacob Heringman plays a couple of lute solos on the Musica Antiqua CD, but has also released a whole Josquin programme of his own. I found the close recording disturbing: there is a lot more sound of fingers moving on frets and strings here than on the Musica Antiqua disc, and I find it distracting. I think you need to be a lute fanatic to want to take too many tracks at a time: the advice in the Dufay booklet really is appropriate here. This too has a good booklet, with notes by the player and by David Fallows (expressing the positive value of the recent narrowing of the composer's authentic oeuvre). As someone who used to love playing vocal scores on the piano (*The Dream of Gerontius* works marvellously thus), I have no qualms about the playing of transcriptions, and especially in getting to know the music in the way it was circulated at the time and in the decades after Josquin's death. Jacob Heringman manages to give shape to the more substantial pieces, and the fact that I sometimes felt I was listening out of duty rather than pleasure reflects on my trying to listen too long at a time. It is good that these transcriptions are taken seriously in their own right, but listen selectively. CB

La Rue Mass of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin; Easter Mass Ars Antiqua de Paris, Michel Sanvoisin 74' 41"

Naxos 8.554656 £

Missa de septem doloribus BVM a5, *Missa pascale a5*, *Pater de caelis a6*

While we ought to applaud the release of two important and hitherto unrecorded masses by Pierre de la Rue, the present performances will do little to enhance the composer's reputation. The French singers sound uncomfortable throughout, the tuning falls consistently short of adequate, and there is little attempt to interpret the music. This is a pity, as the group seem to be specialising in de la Rue's music in live performances; but on the evidence of the present recording they have a lot of work to do on ensemble, intonation and musicality before they could be said to be making a valuable contribution. For the dedicated early CD collector this recording fills a gap, but quite honestly it would be better to get a few friends round and sight-read the scores. While Naxos have released some superb early music at budget price, this is the second major lapse I have encountered in their quality control system (cf *Psaumes de la Réforme* 8.553025). D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

G. Gabrieli *Music for Brass*, vol. 2 London Symphony Orchestra Brass, Eric Crees 52' 04" Naxos 8.553873 £

Canzon I Toni a8, Sonata 8 toni a12 (1597); Canzon 1-3 (1608); Canzon 2, 3, 5, 6, 12, 16, 18, 19 (1615); Canzon a12 (Kassel 4° 147.d))

This is an excellent modern brass recording of the generally larger-scale instrumental pieces from the 1597, 1608, 1615 and Kassel collections. Re-acclimatising to the glitter of modern instruments*, one hears performances which display great understanding of the drama and pace of the pieces. Each is characterised intelligently according to the mood of the mode, and there is an excellent sense of their architecture. As well as trumpets and trombones, flugel horns are used for some of the lower and more sonorous melodies, for example in the extremely lyrical opening to Sonata Octavi Toni a 12. The build up of tension and use of tone colours through this is nothing short of gripping. The recording acoustic is spacious, with good positioning of echoes, as suits regal signal instruments – as opposed to the more intimate acoustic we are normally treated to in early brass recordings. This makes the tasteful little *rallentando* at the end of the echoing end of Sonata XVIII seems odd – a romantic gesture, rather than something from the purely physical world of the echoing grotto, Basilica, or even modern tape loop. There is little pace change within phrases which adds to the feel of mass, grandure, and a smoothly operating mechanism, perhaps at the expense of harking back to any distant chanson roots to the genre. These two approaches tend to be mutually exclusive, and in this recording the particular choice is made convincing. A very good listen.

Stephen Cassidy

* This was written after a week of Praetorius with cornetts and sackbuts continually to the fore. CB

Le Jeune *Airs et Psalmes mesurés* Claudine Nasermet S, Paolo Cherici lute 68' 06" Symphonia SY 99174

Le Jeune's airs were published as vocal ensemble pieces during his lifetime and in the posthumous collected edition of 1608. This disc is performed on the assumption that it was only the conventions of publication that prevented their presentation as solos with lute; if Le Jeune's music had been regularly performed thus, though, it is odd that the anthologies from 1608 feature Guédron rather than Le Jeune. This disc shows that the songs work very well thus. Le Jeune is still underperformed, and the songs here are well worth hearing in this form. The performances are fine, except that the singer has a tight vibrato that I find distracts a bit. A viol is added in the last track, the particularly chromatic *Qu'es devenu ce bel oeil*. Generally the later rhymed versions of the *vers mesurés* texts are sung, but here and in a few other pieces the original unrhymed versions are retained.

CB

Palestrina *Missa Hodie Christus, Missa Ut re mi fa sol la; Magnificat a8, Motets* Società Cameristica di Lugano, Edwin Loehrer 73' 01" Nuova Era 1241 (rec 1958/9)

+ *Assumpta est Maria, Tui sunt coeli, Vergine Santa*

These pieces were recorded for Swiss-Italian radio in 1958/9 and are now issued as a tribute to Edwin Loehrer's pioneering work at that time with his Lugano-based choir. As a historical document it is certainly interesting, though to modern-historical ears (if that's not a contradiction!) the level of vibrato in the sopranos and tenors is unacceptable. The sound is rather like that of the contemporary Sistine Choir, with prominent operatic tenors, great climactic endings (even in Kyries), sudden crescendos, rubatos and other special choral effects. Strangely, there are no intonations for Gloria and Credo. The madrigale spirituale *Vergine santa* is performed by two unison sopranos with a string quartet, the latter, in contrast to the singers, playing with very little vibrato. Pioneering repertoire for the 1950s, certainly, but virtually all is now available in alternative recordings.

Noel O'Regan

Palestrina *Missa Papae Marcelli; [9 motets from] Canticum Canticorum* Wiener Motettenchor, Bernhard Klebel 49' 24" (rec 1982) Christophorus CHE 0106-2 £

This reissue of a 1981 recording now also sounds very dated. These are very much choral performances, though with rather tentative and feeble sopranos on top and equally feeble tenors taking the alto parts. In the mass every syllable is hammered home in a most unmusical way, as if taking the Council of Trent's recommendations too literally. There are a lot of lozenge dynamics around, which break up the line. These faults are less obvious in the motets and here there is a much better sense of line and better ensemble work. Recording quality is not particularly good, though, and there are several much better versions of this music available.

Noel O'Regan

Diferencias: *a Journey through Al-Aldalus and Hispania* Ensemble Diferencias, Conrad Steinmann 59' 19"

Divox GDX-79809

Music from Codex Las Huelgas & Cancionero de Palacio; Cabezon *Diferencias*; Morales *Ecce virgo concipiet, Sancta et immaculata*

The ensemble is essentially a recorder group; the playing is excellent and the embellishments are, as one would expect from the title of the disc and the group, effective. Some pieces are treated within the European tradition, but the Moorish influence is prominent. There is a sudden stylistic jolt with track 9, when we move from the *Codex Las Huelgas* of c.1290 to Cabezon a quarter-millennium later; the programme then slips back through Morales to the Palace Songbook from the end of the 15th century. The disc is attractive, but when heard in too long stretches I want to quote Schoenberg's "O word, word, word that I lack" (even if I wouldn't understand them). The booklet interview with the

group's leader is fascinating, though the possibility that starting with an ensemble and looking for music rather than vice versa might be cart-before-horse isn't raised. (Is the use of a recorder quartet any more historically informed than using a string quartet?) I like the idea of a picture showing the different locations in which the musicians are placed. This is primarily a recording for recorder buffs to enjoy; others probably won't stay the course.

CB

Tota Vita: *Music for Charles V* by Canis & Payen Egidius Quartet 69' 30"

Etcetera KTC 1239

+ Crecquillon *Carole magnus erat*

Cornelius Canis succeeded Nicolas Gombert at Charles V's chapel in Brussels and Madrid and Nicolas Payen in turn succeeded Canis as master of the Capilla Flamenca. The disc opens with a series of motets by the two and by Thomas Crecquillon. The sacred music is well sung by the solo voices of the Egidius Quartet, although occasionally in this repertoire I yearned for a fuller choral sound. But the varied selection of chansons which constitute the rest of the recording are utterly convincing, and sung with great flair and vigour. The brief moments of unhappy intonation are fleeting and the general impression is of great confidence and strong ensemble. This is a disc which presents a little-known and important repertoire and does it with considerable skill and musicality.

D. James Ross

17th CENTURY

Banchieri *Vezzo di perle musicali... op. 23* Matelda Viola, Paola Ronchetti SS, Giovanni Caruso theorbo, Gino Nappo hpscd, org 59' 50" Tactus TC 560201

This delightful disc contains the 11 duets for equal voices from *Vezzo di perle musicali* of 1610 (there are 10 duets *a dui parti inuguali* awaiting a future disc), together with six pieces from various editions of *L'Organo Suonarino* and ten solos and duets from *Nuovi pensieri ecclesiastici* III (1613). The familiarity of the first date adds some piquancy to any comparison of Banchieri with his great contemporary. We are definitely in the same world as a more famous duet of 1610, *Puchra es*. Banchieri doesn't quite have Monteverdi's imaginative power, and the chromaticism in *Anima mea* feels superimposed for effect; but all of these pieces are effective in isolation. If you wonder why the harpsichord interludes in the penultimate piece, *In voluntate*, seem familiar, think of the final dance of the 1589 *intermedi*; it is headed (though not in the booklet) in *Sinfonia all' Aria del Gran Duca Musicale*. Both singers project the music clearly and sound pleasing, and they are stylishly accompanied (with no superfluous cello). I can recommend this disc strongly, though with the proviso that concentrated listening from beginning to end might not show it at its best; it would have been better if the organ pieces had been spread rather than placed in one less-interesting lump in the middle.

CB

Caldara *Missa dolorosa, Stabat mater* Coro della Radio Svizzera Italiana, Aura Musicale Budapest, René Clemencic 63' 09"
Naxos 8.554715 £
+ *Sinfonias in e* (Gioseffo, 1726) & *g* (Sant'Elena, 1731)

This is not the first CD devoted to the music by Caldara by Naxos, and it is also one of the nicest I've heard. Oratorio *sinfonie* act as introductions to a *Stabat mater* and the *Missa Dolorosa*. I do not know either piece, but I would have thought that the two trombone parts which sometimes appear in the choruses and have some obbligato passages would have been part of a ripieno group with cornett doubling the soprano and bassoon (which has a sudden solo in the mass) doubling the bass voice. That aside, these are marvellous performances, especially of the vocal music. The solo and choral singing is faultless, the instrumental accompaniments work very well indeed. I'm happy to record here that I've listened to this CD many times more than any other this month! BC

Giuseppe Cavallo *Il giudizio universale* (1681) Roberta Invernizzi, Roberta Andalò, Giuseppe De Vittorio, Rosario Totaro, Stefano Di Fraia, Giuseppe Naviglio SSTTB, La Cappella de'Turchini, Antonio Florio dir 55' 25"
Opus 111 (*Tesori di Napoli* 10) ops 30-262

This is another excellent recording from Opus 111. The characters in this Neapolitan oratorio of 1681 include two angels and two sinners with Christ in the first half and two saved souls, two damned souls, Christ and St Michael in the second. The orchestra consists of strings and continuo with recorders (about which I'm a little dubious, but I haven't seen the source, and I don't know what the surviving materials tell us about scorings in that part of the world at the time – they just somehow seem too cheery!) The singing is wonderful – full-bodied but accurate and impeccably phrased to carry the text. I did find the 'characterisation' of some parts a little wearing, but I can understand why the performers chose that approach. Great stuff. BC

Ferrari *Il Sansone* (1680) Roberta Invernizzi, Elena Cecchi Fedi, Roberto Balconi, Gian Paolo Fagotto, Furio Zanasi, Carlo Lepore SSATBarB, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45412 2 2 70' 14"
Also includes 5 songs from *Musiche varie III* (1642) & *Pur ti miro* (the final duet from *Il pastor regio*)

Most of us will have heard of Benedetto Ferrari as the author of the words (and perhaps music) of the duet that ends *Poppea*. It appears here as the closing piece of Ferrari's *Il pastor regio*, with Ferrari's slightly-different text; Ferrari's score doesn't survive, so it is sung to the *Poppea* music, and benefits enormously from the absence of the weight of tradition and context which normally produces such slow performances. Ferrari, born 1603/4, was a man of considerable talents; a librettist and composer, he wrote the words, played theorbo and was impressario for the first Venetian commercial opera in 1637. In later life, he spent two periods at the Modena court, where

oratorio was popular. He had a long life. His *Samson* dates from the year before his death; it is a fine, dramatic work, showing the composer keeping up with stylistic developments, and was well worth reviving and recording, especially in such a performance. Alan Curtis can do no wrong these days. CB

Kittel *Arien und Kantaten op. 1* Johanna Stojkovic, Bernarda Fink, Gerd Türk, Jeremy Ovenden, Martin Snell SSTTB, dir René Jacobs 72' 08
Harmonia Mundi HMC 905247

When you set out to make a case for something being unjustly neglected, your final product really has to be thoroughly outstanding. I don't deny for one moment that Kittel's works have not remained undiscovered for too long, but I find it quite remarkable that, along side some of the finest instrumental playing I've ever heard in this repertoire (Kindermann's publications are the main sources of the *sinfonie* and *ritornelle* which quite rightly are interspersed into Kittel's extended settings of Opitz's poetry), René Jacobs has chosen two female voices that neither articulate the coloratura in a way that the tenors Jeremy Ovenden and Gerd Türk can, or even restrain their vibrato within the context of the home key (such as all three men seem to be able to do!) I was extremely disappointed by Bernarda Fink's contribution – she has been absolutely stunning in the last few Gardiner recordings I've heard. Johanna Stojkovic is a new name to me, but I hope she reins in the vibrato before I hear her again! Anyone interested in 17th-century German music should have this, as should early fiddlers – Pablo Valetti and Amandine Beyer are brilliant; the continuo gamba player – it's difficult from the booklet to know who plays what on the bass line – is also very good. BC

W. Lawes *Consorts in Four and Five Parts* Phantasm 66' 50"
Channel Classics CCS 15698
5 sets a5; *For the Violls* a4 (nos 108-113)

Lawes' viol consorts are an acquired taste. As a young student playing these works with The English Consort of Viols I found them disturbing, the writing not so skilled or thought-through as that of his contemporary John Jenkins, somewhat wayward in design and harmonically crude at times, doing all the things I had been taught not to do in my harmony lessons. Over the years I have come to appreciate what masterful, but none the less still disturbing, works these are. Perhaps the nearest equivalent in chamber music terms is the late Beethoven quartets. For those addicted to Lawes' consort music (and for those who are not), this is not to be missed.

Ian Graham-Jones

Monteverdi *Lamento d'Arianna; Scherzi Musicali* (1632) Rosita Frisani, Manuela Custer S mS, Ensemble Arte-Musica, Francesco Cera Tactus TC 561307 52' 52"

This begins with Arianna's lament and ends

with Ottavia's 'Disprezzata regina' from *Poppea*; in between come the eight pieces of *Scherzi Musicali* II and four other songs. A nice anthology, if you like the voices. The laments are sung by Manuela Custer, a fruity mezzo with a contralto-ish sound. She has presence and panache, and makes the most of the impassioned text (it sounds so over-the-top that it must be right); but she has one of those voices that I turned to early music to escape. The soprano is better, but she makes too much of a trifle like *Maledetto*, taking it too seriously and sounding as if she is in a different world from her accompanist. The backing is rather fussy, with too many changes of instrument and too much cello. I was amazed that after 56 statements of the *Ciaccona* in G in *Zefiro torna*, the E major chord could be made to mean so little, the voice not letting the continuo place the harmonic change. Disappointing! 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)

Two recordings of performances which have played an important part in my life. Apart from the Vespers, which I knew quite well by the time I went to the first performance of the notorious cut-down Denis Stevens version in 1961, I did not make much of Monteverdi and was unaffected by the current Wenzinger *Orfeo*. But I taped the Leppard/Glyndebourne version of *Poppea* off air and played it incessantly, from that moving on to love the rest of Monteverdi's music and, eventually, to edit much of it. Which is where the Hickox performance comes in. In 1985 I had edited and advised on *Alcina* for him for a series of performances at Christ Church, Spitalfields (subsequently recorded) and was asked back to advise on *Poppea*. The result was a fascinating staging (though why it had to be set visually in the 1660s I don't understand) taking advantage of the non-theatrical layout of the church. I was present at many of the rehearsals, and suspect that in finding the tempi on the recording almost invariably as I like them, I am congratulating myself as much as Richard Hickox, since that was one area in particular in which I had considerable influence. He also followed my recommendation that he should not conduct but play one of the harpsichords. Consequently the movement is far more self-generated than has been normal in recorded performances. The main roles were cast

before I was involved, and there was no way this could vocally be the sort of performance I would have liked, so in some respects the differences from the Leppard edition are less than is desirable. I was intrigued to find that Arleen Auger based her characterisation of Poppea on a sentence I scrawled on a post-it note when I sent her score telling her that she would have to watch her volume since she was mostly accompanied just by lute: she sang in a seductive piano most of the time, turning a negative comment into something very positive. The ideal recording is still to come, but this is the best so far.

The Glyndebourne one, heavily cut and with a conductor not really at home in anything before Mozart, is very difficult to listen to now. At times, it works, despite the indulgent rhythmic flexibility and orchestration: there is certainly a feeling for the text which comes over very clearly, and it is nice to hear that magnificent singer Richard Lewis as Nerone (I'm less worried than some by the octave transposition). But I can only imagine myself re-hearing it if I were looking for examples for a lecture on the changing performance styles of the work. The five-voice *Lamento d'Arianna* which concludes the madrigal group is also dated, but I found it fascinating. CB

The King's Music edition of *Poppea* has another outing, with English text, for 11 performances by the English National Opera in September and October: for details, see diary.

G. Muffat *Organ Works* vol. 1. *Apparatus musico-organisticus* (1690) Part I (*Toccatas* 1-8) Martin Haselböck (organ of Klosterneuburg Abbey) 54' 31" Naxos 8.553917 £

Muffat's music can be difficult to place, and many organists do not make the attempt. Of Scottish extraction, born in Savoy, via Alsace to Paris and Lully, thence to Vienna, Prague, Salzburg (with leave of absence to study with Pasquini in Italy) and finally Passau, Muffat was a true pan-European musician. He claimed to be German, but professed to combine the French style with the German and Italian to 'give a foretaste of the desired harmony among the people, for beloved peace'. Haselböck is one of the few players I have heard who has managed to portray the mixed cultural heritage of Muffat's music, eschewing the more usual Italian interpretation of his substantial *Toccatas*. The choice of organ is inspired, and relatively neutral in culture – the stunning Austrian early-baroque organ in Klosterneuburg Abbey. Its meantone temperament lends harmonic sweetness to the sound, but add delight to the more tart excursions away from the mode. Player, organ, composer – all superb. At a fiver, there is no excuse not to buy it. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Brotherly Love: The Music of Daniel Purcell Evelyn Tubb, Sprezzatura 73' 22" Etcetera KTC 1232

Henry Purcell's early death is one of the great what-ifs. Had he lived, he would have

dominated English music of the early 18th century (by the age of 67 he'd have officiated at three more coronations). Instead, his death left unresolved a question – viz. the reconciliation of English and Italian styles – to which Handel's italianism gave an essentially one-sided answer. As a result we've been nearly deaf to other options that were explored during the two decades after 1695, and Henry's younger brother is an important victim of this neglect. While this diverse programme shows him trying to italianise his musical vocabulary in a variety of ways, he is always a deft writer of music for English words. Even the most explicitly italianate pieces here (two cantatas from a set published in 1713), being in the audience's own language, display a histrionic immediacy that was partly lost when secular music in England decided to affect a foreign language. And the solo songs in smaller forms – continuo songs, including a vivid mad song, and 'symphony songs' with interludes for an instrumental ensemble – are also pointedly dramatic and expressive, in an idiom that ranges fluidly from declamatory arioso to lyrical melody. These idiomatic and vivacious performances, in Evelyn Tubb's own inimitable style, imply convincingly that in every genre Daniel Purcell remained a theatrical composer; and she leaves me in no doubt that this repertoire demands to be better known. Eric Van Tassel

Schmelzer *Intrada di Polcinelli*: Johann Heinrich Schmelzer in Kromeriz John Holloway vln, Jaap ter Lindin gamba, Barbara Maria Willi kbd, Nigel North lute, gtr 62' 51" Cantata Musicaphon M 56832
Döbel vln sonata in D; Muffat vln sonata in D; Kertzing Gamba sonatina in d; Schmelzer Balletto das Narrenspittall 1667 & 3 attrib. vln sonatas Bb, e, g

No surprises for guessing that I would enjoy this disc! Not only does it feature four of my favourite players, but it's music by one of my top composers, played in one of the rooms in the castle at Kromeriz, where Schmelzer (or even Biber!) might have played it. The two longest pieces, though, are not by Schmelzer – one of them isn't even for violin! But that makes no difference, because here are a quartet of musicians who make it all sound so easy. I have a bit of a problem with the *Narrenspittall* music – a ballet which survives at Kromeriz for four-part strings (as the original would have been – indeed, the composer almost certainly would have sent it as such after the Viennese production), but the performers chose to record the short-score version from Vienna, which strikes me as rather perverse and rather a missed opportunity. Still, rather this way than not at all! I prefer Annegret Siedel's Muffat (on ram 59602) to the version here, but there's no beating the Schmelzer! BC

Johann Schop and his contemporaries: the Hanseatic violin school in the 17th century Annegret Siedel vln, Barbara Maria Willi kbd, Hubert Hoffmann 62' 07" Cantata-Musicaphon M 56830 Music by Baltzar, Bleyer, Brade, Scheidemann,

Schop, Sidon

This is a wonderful CD – I have sat and listened to it (or rather allowed myself to be transported far beyond the confines of my new living room) several times in the last few weeks. If I once likened Elizabeth Wallfisch to Locatelli, I have to say that Annegret Siedel might well be Thomas Baltzar incarnate – his music must simply flow in her veins! Not that her Schop, Brade, Bleyer, or Sidon are any less compelling. Accompanied by harpsichord, organ and theorbo (or solo, since some of the pieces are unaccompanied), her violin was like the Pied Piper's flute – wherever it led, my ears followed without any straining or effort on my or her part. I'd never heard of Schop so this is a most welcome addition to my CD collection and I cannot recommend the disc highly enough to anyone interested in the 17th century. BC

We were sent the Schmelzer and Schop discs by their harpsichordist, Barbara Maria Willi, who is involved with a forthcoming performance of Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Brno using the KM edition.

Schütz *Musikalisches Exequien*; Johannes-Passion Westfälische Kantorei, Wilhelm Ehmann 71' 48 (rec 1960 & 1961) Cantata-Musicaphon C 57602

Even before hearing a note, I was intrigued by the inclusion of a theorbo (played by Hermann Dick) on the list of instruments – rare beasts indeed in 1960. The booklet goes to great lengths to show how the layout of voices and instruments follows Schütz's instructions for the *Exequien*. Yet the sound is very different from the sort of performance of which I would consider ideal now, and makes very strongly the point that a significant component of what we think to be an appropriate style might be fashion rather than knowledge. In fact, the performance grew on me, and it feels far less remote than Loehrer's Palestrina masses of a year or two earlier reviewed above: it could be more dramatic and a bit faster, but perhaps the decorum here is appropriate. CB

Strozzi *Arie, lamenti e cantate* Susanne Rydén S, Musica Fiorita 72' 16" Harmonia Mundi HMC 905249

This disc arrived at my door shortly after I had completed reviewing it for a US readership. But I'm more than happy to have the opportunity to endorse its merits in the pages of *EMR* also. Indeed, this is the best disc of Barbara Strozzi's remarkable cantatas and arias yet to have come my way, achieving a greater degree of the essential combination of intimacy and strong projection than either the sometimes-overwrought Mona Spägle (cpo) or Emanuela Galli (Stradivarius). Both earlier discs concentrate on just two of Strozzi's publications (op. 2 of 1651 and op. 7, 1659), but the Swedish soprano Susanne Rydén has chosen to range more widely, giving her programme a good balance between Strozzi's highly emotive outpourings and the lighter, humorous songs. Rydén is particularly good with the latter, teasing

out the words of a song like 'Amor, non dormir' with a sly insinuation that few will resist. But she's excellent throughout, surprisingly finding more in the words than does the native Italian Galli. The continuo support is very positive and more appropriate in size than Galli, who is supported by a group large enough for the opera house. A highly distinguished disc.

Brian Robins

Españoleta Chatham Baroque 64' 17"
Dorian DOR-90284

Why does Spanish music have to sound so unmistakably Spanish. It's fun for a while, but then the guitar rhythms and repetitive basses (and I'm more partial to grounds than most) pall. The programme here is mostly 17th century, with Ortiz sounding staidly out of place. Most of the items are credited to various of the performers as arrangers (so are presumably not group improvisations); but the stoniest (and least-overtly Spanish) pieces are trio sonatas 7 & 9 from Francisco José de Castro's *Trattenimenti Armonici* of 1695. Falconieri's *Folias* are also less of a caricature than the arrangements. (Can someone tell me if the haunting tune of Cererols' *Serafin* that is the basis for the striking pastiche variations on the last track has been traced before his setting?) This is nicely played, but I suspect I will enjoy it more as background music than heard in concentration at my desk. CB

Highland King: The Scottish Lute, Vol. II. Ronn McFarlane 59' 43"
Dorian DOR 90257

Since Jakob Lindberg's pioneering recording on BIS, the Scottish lute manuscripts have fascinated lutenists and listeners alike. The repertoire is varied and attractive, ranging from the simple early-17th-century tunes in the Rowallan and Wemyss manuscripts, to the more developed, often virtuosic, variation sets of the 1680s and 1690s in the Balcarres manuscript. McFarlane captures both the stark poignancy and the foot-stamping folksiness which mark the extremes of the repertoire. This material often looks uninspiring on paper, but McFarlane brings it vividly to life, with improvised variations, a striking range of articulation, and fluid, imaginative ornamentation. The whole is played and recorded at quite a low level, suiting the intimate nature of the music, and preserving the subtlety of the instrument, which is invariably lost in the concert hall. The result is a beguilingly intimate delight, which deserves a wide audience.

Lynda Sayce

BACH

Bach issues have piled up over the last couple of months. We review a fair number here, but some have been held over until next month. We have been selective in which issues from the Hänssler Bach Edition we have included, concentrating on discs using early instruments and omitting the church music (in which Rilling uses a modern band) and keyboard music played on the piano. This is our general policy for other Bach releases as well, though some exceptions have been made.

Bach Cantatas for Ascension Day (11, 37, 43, 128) Nancy Argenta, Michael Chance, Robin Blaze, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Christopher Genz, Stephen Varcoe, Reinhard Hagen SAATTBB, Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 78' 30"
Archiv 463 583-2

I don't believe I'm the only person in the world who thought this series of CDs was tied in with The Bach Pilgrimage. It's not until you reach page 6 of the booklet that you discover that only one of the four cantatas was recorded as recently as 1999, BWV 11, 37 and 43 dating from sessions at Tooting in 1993. Be that as it may, Gardiner's Bach is always to be reckoned with and with Anthony Rolfe Johnson in excellent form in the earlier pieces, this is a thoroughly enjoyable disc. The opening chorus of BWV 11 starts with a typically bouncy ritornello, but the first chorus entry had me convinced I was listening to Stanford! The horn parts in the first movement of BWV 128 seem to have given the players a bit of trouble, but there were no such problems with the excellent trumpet obbligato in the seventh movement of BWV 43. I found the two German men rather heavy going, and I preferred Robin Blaze to Michael Chance as alto soloist. The playing (as we expect from The English Baroque Soloists) is very good, particularly the unnamed violin soloist on Track 18, and the oboists. If you're buying this series instead of opting for one of the complete sets, you won't be disappointed by four fine performances.

BC

Bach Arias Magdalena Kozená, Musica Florea, Marek Stryncl 54' 28" rec 1996
Archiv 457 367-2

I don't get up to London very often, but I believe Magdalena Kozená sang Bach there this summer, which may explain why this CD, recorded in 1996 and P-dated 1997, has now been sent to *EMR* and *Gramophone* for review. The singer is never less than capable and often very good indeed. I'm glad to hear that in some arias, at least, the tempos are not as frantically rushed as is fashionable. But this is rather old-fashioned Bach, in that it suggests a slightly puritanical mind-set: Baroque music, especially if sacred, and in particular if Protestant, mustn't be too expressive or emotional. One consequence is a vocal legato that's always somewhat instrumental. And whilst Kozená always knows what the words mean and phrases them intelligently, her declamation doesn't do much to distinguish between different affects. Five of these ten arias have integral recitatives: had they been included, they might have helped set a different expressive tone for each piece. Two things make this CD important listening, though, especially for performers. One is that Kozená sings both soprano and alto arias (as usually assigned); her success may encourage more use of adult women across the Anglican gulf that separates boy trebles and falsetto altos. The other is that the programme, mixing the thoroughly well-known and the rela-

tively unfamiliar, may inspire conductors to look at the less well-thumbed pages of the cantata corpus.

Eric Van Tassel

Bach Trio Sonatas BWV 525-530, arr. Richard Boothby The Purcell Quartet 72' 40"
Chandos Chaconne CHAN 0654

The last ten years have seen a flurry of instrumental transcriptions of Bach's so-called organ trio-sonatas. This has done a great service in making this remarkable music accessible for those to whom the organ world is a closed book, and it also restores the pieces to their generic background as instrumental sonatas (at least some of them must have been instrumental works that Bach transcribed for organ or pedal clavichord).

The various options explored recently have involved:

- two like instruments and continuo
- two unlike instruments (recorder and violin being particularly popular)
- melody instrument and harpsichord obbligato.

The Purcell quartet's version (arranged by Richard Boothby) shows several imaginative ways of how a quartet can play a trio. The default option is two violins balanced by harpsichord and viola da gamba continuo. But there are several points where the gamba becomes a melody instrument (sometimes for passages within movements) and even places where it takes an upper line (thus showing how the music still works with the upper part taken down an octave). In the sixth sonata the harpsichord takes more of an obbligato role, emerging from the texture in the first movement rather as it does in the fifth Brandenburg concerto. Thus there is much in this new version of the sonatas, with the variable textures, that links them to the concerto genre as much as to the trio sonata – an interesting re-interpretation of some wonderful music. The performances are fine, if a little careful for my tastes – but there are plenty of careful people around who will undoubtedly benefit from this congenial disc.

John Butt

Bach Leipzig Chorales BWV 651-667 Bine Katrine Bryndorf (Wagner-Organ, Trondheim Cathedral) 84' 16" (2 CDs in box)
Hänssler 92.097

I have given favourable reviews to this young Danish organist before, and will continue to do so if the standard on this CD is maintained. Bach's Leipzig Chorales (formerly known as The Eighteen, although there are only 17 of them, 15 of which survive in Bach manuscript) are amongst his most moving organ works. They were clearly close to his heart in the last decade of his life, as he radically revised the earlier Weimar preludes to produce a collection that encompasses his artistic and religious life. Bine Katrine Bryndorf gives thoughtful performances, and is clearly at ease with the all-important concepts of hierarchy of the pulse and the control of articulation. My only advice to her, if asked, would be to allow a bit more breadth into the

overall architecture of a piece; the virtuoso opening *Fantasia super Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herr Gott* is taken at a spanking pace, but comes over as rather frenetic without the occasional moment of structural repose.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Transcriptions: Concerti & Trios Pieter van Dijk (organ at St Laurenskerk, Alkmaar)
Hänssler 92.095 71' 03"
BWV 585-7, 592-6

The Alkmaar organ is one of the finest in the world, and Pieter van Dijk is a lucky man to have charge of it, and with playing as fine as on this CD, he deserves the post. Schnitger transferred the tonal focus of the organ from the Dutch Golden Age to the North German high baroque when he re-ordered the instrument in 1725, and curiously tuned it to equal temperament. Although the instrument is some way removed from the central German organ that Bach would have known when he transposed these Italianate works for organ, it is a reminder that it was through Holland that many of them came to be known to Bach. It has some distinctive features, including the rich combinations of the 8' Praestant stops with the Quintadena on the Rugpositief, Viool di Gamba (a reed) on the Groot Manuaal and Hautbois on the Bovenwerk. The principal chorus is based on 16' pitch, with mixtures to match – something that has caught at least one world class organist out. The recording is close enough to hear the important distinction between the solo Rugpositief manual and the other supporting manuals – and also to allow us to admire van Dijk's exquisite touch, articulation and musical use of instrumental rhetoric. Pieter van Dijk's performance of the Gross Mogul concerto is one of finest I have heard.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach Six Partitas BWV 825-830 Trevor Pinnock *hpscd* 149' 04" (2 CDs in box)
Hänssler 92.115

A harpsichord by David Way (aka the late American Zuckerman agent)? A penchant for the buff stop? A tripletized version of the Gigue from Partita VI? Surely a reissue from the 1970s? But no, this is a brand new recording of the Partitas by Trevor Pinnock who, to be sure, made his reputation during the 1970s but is now clearly back on the map as a solo harpsichordist. And yes, if some aspects don't quite accord with most recent tastes, it's quite clear that Pinnock has not stood still as a musician and can make a recording that is extremely valuable by anyone's standards. The playing is very fluent and energetic, absolutely brilliant in fast passages (e.g. the energetic *Corrente* from Partita VI), beautifully lyrical in the slow movements (the *Saraband* from Partita I, with its ornamented repeats is one of the finest I've heard). The playing in between is never less than excellent (although in some of the medium-speed movements there could be more variety from one bar to the next). In all, though, this recording

reflects the achievement of an artist with many years' cumulative experience and fingers that are still at the peak of fitness.

John Butt

Bach Harpsichord Music by the Young J. S. Bach II. Robert Hill 146' 00" (2 CDs in box)
Hänssler (*Bach Edition* 103) CD 92.103
BWV 821-2, 905/1, 912a, 923, 946, 949-951, 951a, 955, 959, 963, 990, 993

This is a varied and interesting collection of works which exist in a number of manuscript sources and whose authenticity, in some cases, is a little doubtful. That said, there are some very good works here, and although I found a few in the Henle *Fantasien, Präludien und Fugen und Suiten, Sonaten, Capriccios, Variationen* volumes, virtually all were unfamiliar.

Year 2000 seems to be a year when anything goes (and frequently does) in relation to J S Bach, but Robert Hill has, with this disc, come up with something really special. For me, this is one of the best and most exciting Bach recordings on the market. The playing is superb: committed, imaginative and eloquent – not exactly delicate nor overtly sensitive but communicative and logical, suffused with a real feeling of richness and grandeur. Indeed, some pieces, the fugues in particular, take on the stature of a good organ performance. The ample acoustic definitely enhances this, and Hill's generous ornamentation and detailed articulation come across perfectly intact.

Highlights include the sunny Sonata in D BWV963, the last movement of the Suite in B flat BWV821 with its swift timbral contrasts and rip-roaring trills, and every single note of the *Sarabande con Partite* in C BWV990, a piece which in its boundless enthusiasm and unrelenting optimism is about as life-affirming as Bach gets. The early version of the well-known toccata in D is excellent too – quite jokily done here, and with some unexpected twists and turns. This, then, is one of those rare Bach recordings in which the performer, instead of going down on bended knee, keeps his head held high and matches compositional creativity with interpretational insight, producing something which is at once authentic in spirit but highly original in character, vital and relevant. A disc to be cherished.

Robin Bigwood

Bach Sonatas and Partitas BWV 1001-1006 Hopkinson Smith *baroque lute* 137' 00" (2 CDs)
Astrée E8678.

These lute transcriptions of the sonatas and partitas for unaccompanied violin invite comparison with the set by Nigel North on Linn. Both sets are excellent, but will appeal to very different sections of the Bach-appreciating public. The most obvious difference is in the sound; North plays closer to the bridge (historically more kosher) and produces a brighter, crisper tone as a result. Smith plays (anachronistically) much closer to the rose, producing a much warmer, more romantic sound, but pays the price with occasional rubber-

band-like twangs in the bass. Both artists have made their own extremely successful transcriptions, both opting for the same transpositions of BWV 1002 from B minor to A minor, and BWV 1006 from E major to F major. The myriad differences of detail are too many and mostly too minor to list here, but generally to my ear North's Bach has a more magisterial feel, more drama, a greater variety of tone and dynamic, and more poise; his total timings are a shade quicker than Smith's yet feel less hurried. Smith's version is generally more tranquil listening; it can feel a trifle pedestrian at times, but has some notable moments of stunning virtuosity, particularly in sections of the D minor Ciaccona. Also the subtle, reflective interpretations amply repay repeated listenings. Real lute and Bach enthusiasts will want both versions. If you only want to buy one, choose North if you want to be fired up by extrovert, passionate Bach, and Smith if you want calm, intellectual tranquillity.

Lynda Sayce

Bach Complete Flute Sonatas vol. 2 Musica Alta Ripa, Karl Kaiser *fl* 65' 51"
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 309 0932-2
BWV 1013, 1030, 1033, 1035, 1039

This disc follows up Musica Alta Ripa's earlier Bach disc, reviewed in the February issue of *EMR*. An imaginative and varied use of continuo instruments once again gives the disc a distinct character of its own; the use of a fortepiano for the continuo-based E major Sonata BWV1035, for example, is justified by virtue of the sonata's links with the Prussian Court in Potsdam where Bach was known to have played such an instrument for the King. Both the flute Sonata in C BWV 1033 and the Sonata for two flutes in G BWV 1039 are treated to a large continuo section of organ, cello and theorbo, which would perhaps in live performance raise serious issues of balance. However these are overcome by the wonders of recording technology, which allow the flutes to be heard easily, if at the expense of clarity for the individual continuo instruments. The overall sound, though, is warm, sonorous and well-blended. Musically, there are some outstanding performances; particularly good is the B minor sonata BWV 1030 (played in the usual combination of flute with obbligato harpsichord), which displays technical assurance, musical unanimity and intellectual awareness in equal measure. A recording well worth investigating.

Marie Ritter

Bach Solo Concertos vol. 5 Musica Alta Ripa
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 309 0685-2
BWV 1042, 1050a, 1058, 1060 60' 36"

This disc is the final issue from Musica Alta Ripa (the name comes from the Roman name for Hannover) in this series. The pieces are the harpsichord versions of what I know better as the A minor violin concerto and the D minor double, as well as the E major played on violin and the earlier version of Brandenburg 5, with the shorter cadenza and the 'bungy jumping'



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violin entry at the Da Capo in the last movement. As with the other issues, four different harpsichordists play, which lends a nice variety, within the constant sound of one-player-per-part. There is no 16' bass in the Brandenburg variant, but the harpsichord has a 16' stop. It made fascinating listening in conjunction with Suzuki's BIS recording and I would not like to choose one over the other. The Germans are, if anything, slightly more emotionally engaged with the music. BC

Bach *Concertos* Ryo Terakado *vln*, Natsumi Wakamatsu *vlv*, Marcel Ponsele *ob*, Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki *hpacd/dir*
BIS BIS-CD-961 59' 20"
BWV 1041-3, ob & vln after BWV 1060

The first thing that struck me about this CD was the choice of tempi – the outer movements are brisk and sprightly, the middle ones expansive without ever feeling slow. The second thing that caught my ear were various aspect of Terakado's technique – a lovely bowing arm, allowing him to phrase beautifully, a slight tendency to slide from one position to the next (a little too audibly sometimes!), and no qualms about ornamenting the line: it's the first recording I've heard where the G sharp minor cadence at the end of the 'B' section of the E major concerto's first movement (which was a slight variant from the normal version anyway) is extended. His partners are very good indeed – Ponsele is something of a deity among Bach oboists and this recording will only enhance his reputation, and Wakamatsu is a very fine violinist indeed. As one would expect, Suzuki lavishes abundant care on the 'orchestral' contribution – the D minor concerto has only two ripieno violins, while the other three have a couple of players on each violin part. Although I have to confess that I found the sliding a slight distraction, this will be my recording of choice for these four pieces. BC

Bach *Harpsichord Concertos* BWV 1052-1054
Robert Levin *hpacd*, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart,
Helmuth Rilling 54' 55"
Hänssler 92.127
Bach *Harpsichord Concertos* BWV 1055-1058
Robert Levin *hpacd*, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart,
Helmuth Rilling 50' 53"
Hänssler 92.128

Perhaps you never thought you'd read the name Helmuth Rilling in *Early Music Review*? But the interesting name here, of course, is Robert Levin, coupled not with the fortepiano but with the harpsichord. It is also interesting to see what he will do in music that is already so extraordinarily dense that it is difficult for him to improvise much more, as is his wont (he still manages to fit in a small cadenza or two). In the event, the orchestra clearly shows the benefit of exposure to period performances and sounds passably stylish, often excellent. And if you still can't stand that sort of sound, the orchestra is kept relatively well in the background and we hear the harpsichord very fully.

Levin sounds as excellent as one could

hope – fine virtuosity throughout (although some of the fast passages, originally for violin in the arrangement of Brandenburg IV, sound more careful than I'd have expected). He manages to spin long lines in the slow movements (showing how he fully understands the aspects of harpsichord technique and expression that would be rather counter-intuitive to most pianists) and every concerto comes off as a real 'performance'. Hearing Levin – so closely associated with Mozart's piano concertos – playing the Bach concertos really does remind one of how new and enterprising the concept of the keyboard concerto was for Bach. It introduced a form of virtuosity (coupled with a complete coverage of the musical texture in the solo part) that went well beyond the mere transcription of melody lines for harpsichord. The tempi are often more stately than one would expect from 'period' performances (but perhaps you get to hear more of the notes), the sound and acoustic are sumptuous and, most importantly, the music sounds fantastic.

John Butt

Bach *Ten Years Channel Classics*
Channel Classics CCS SEL 1398

Such samplers are always entertaining listening: not too much of anything to get bored or irritated, yet a chance to experience a variety of performers. Even tracks which confirm your prejudice that that you would never want to buy the complete disc may be worth hearing once (e.g. *The Art of Fugue* on modern brass – is there a version on cornets and sackbuts?) But other tracks are more enticing, so I expect that if you hear this, you will be off to the shop for more. I recommend the innocent ear approach: listening for the first time without looking at the list of contents and performers. CB

Bach *Transcriptions* BBC Philharmonic,
Leonard Slatkin 73' 03"
Chandos CHAN 9835
BWV 537 (Elgar), 545 (Honegger), 552 (Schoenberg),
577 (Holst), 582 (Respighi), 622 (Reger), 645
(Bantock), 680 (Vaughan Williams/Foster), 1004
Chaconne (Raff)

I wouldn't normally ask for review copies of orchestral arrangements, but this looked as if it might be entertaining, apart from yet another Respighi *Passacaglia*. (Why has it become so popular?) In fact, I was surprised how unexciting and unilluminating most of it was. Listening blind, the one piece that seemed to have anything to say about the music turned out to be the Schoenberg (not normally a composer I'm particularly fond of). Sad that the Webern *Ricercar* is missing; it has an originality and imagination that most of these orchestration exercises lack (as, indeed, have the Stokowski versions, readily available elsewhere): odd though the Webern may be, at least it has a point to make. But I may be sour: I have just read the review in *Gramophone*, which is enthusiastic. I suppose judgment of the arrangements depends on the reviewer's expectations; the performances are excellent. CB

LATE BAROQUE

Boismortier *Chamber Music* Manfred Harras, Marianne Lüthi recs, Richard Gwilt vln, Arno Jochem, Brian Franklin gambas, Sally Fortino hpscd 60' 27"

MusicaPhon BM 56 812

op. 9/1, 10/2, 34/3, 37/3, 38/4, 52/4, 59/1, *Concerto Zampogna*

This 1989 recording offers a varied anthology of chamber music for various combination of recorders, viols, violin and harpsichord by a composer who is enjoying quite a revival at present, on disc if not in concert. One work has been transposed to suit treble recorder from a flute original; elsewhere voice flutes are used in the original *traverso* keys, and very good they sound. This is attractive music, with more than a few harmonic/melodic surprises and, in the larger ensembles, skilful counterpoint (try track 5, a quartet for recorder, pardessus, violin & bc). The *Ballet de Village* op. 52/4 inevitably sounds tame compared with the big-band version from Le Concert Spirituel that I reviewed recently, but there is no denying the life in the playing. My own favourite tracks are the Sonata for two bass viols and the characterful solo-harpsichord suite, if only because of the sonorities; but there are plenty of other good things. Usefully, a list of editions is given, but if they're all still in print, I'll be amazed! David Hansell

This is a fresh promotion of a release reviewed by BC in *EMR* 24, p. 19. He liked it too.

Fasch *Suite in g; Missa brevis; Violin Concerto in D* Linden Baroque Orchestra, Choir & Soloists, Catherine Martin vln Walter Reiter cond 64' 46

Medidian CDE 84373

I have to own up to the fact that I prepared the editions and wrote some of the booklet notes for this CD, but I had absolutely no direct input in the recording, which is the first to feature a complete performance of any church music by the elder Fasch on period instruments. The orchestral suite (for 3 oboes, bassoon & strings) is one of the orchestra's favourites, since Ant Bevis introduced it to them some years ago. It has since been recorded by The English Concert and, although this doesn't perhaps have the finesse of that set, it is certainly a fine account, as is Catherine Martin's stunning performance of the violin concerto. The piece is slightly problematic in its use of three trumpets and drums which, like the trombones in many a symphony orchestra, can sometimes drown the strings, but with such fine playing it was rarely a distraction. The central movement is beautifully done, as are the violin/oboe duets in the outer allegros. If the orchestra go on to record more Fasch, I'd suggest these two soloists look at his D minor concerto. The Mass is, for me, the highlight. I heard a recording of a concert performance the group gave a couple of years ago; since then Walter Reiter has clearly revised his opinion of the speeds,

most of which are slightly slower. The opening Kyrie is very much slower, and it works brilliantly with the breathing space this allows. The soloists are very good and there is some fine instrumental playing. The highlight of the piece, for me, is the Crucifixus, set for solo quartet with obbligato oboe over tremolando strings, done to perfection here. BC

I hope this CD will also encourage performances of the Mass. EEMF had a day course on it, for which it was very suitable, since there was plenty for the chorus to do (begging the obvious question about Fasch's chorus) with very little solo music; and it is a very good piece. CB

Mancini *Concerti da Camera* Musica Pacifica, dir Judith Linsenberg rec & Elizabeth Blumenstock vln 71' 21"

Dorian DOR-93209

Nos 6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 20 from Naples MS + Durante *Concerto 2 in g & D. Scarlatti Sinfonia 1 in a*

I first came across Mancini's recorder 'sonatas' with violins on an old Reinhard Goebel record, and then in 1983, when a Swedish recorder player came to play some Edinburgh Festival Fringe concerts with me, she wanted to play some, so it's nice to have a CD with one of them and more – especially when the performances are of such a remarkably high calibre. I've enthused about Musica Pacifica before, and I need only say that this continues where the last one left off. The balance between strings and recorder is not always easy, but they've got it just right. The disc also has two pieces for strings (both of which sound more modern than the Mancini), a concerto by Durante and a sinfonia by Domenico Scarlatti. If you want to hear a recorder played well without flashy displays of self-indulgence, this will be perfect! BC

The Mancini concerti come from the same Naples MS as the A. Scarlatti *Concerti da camera* recorded by Musica Pacifica on DOR-93192 (see *EMR* 58, March 2000); each concerto is being published separately by Ut Orpheus. The D. Scarlatti is from the Paris MS of his *Sinfonias*, of which KM has a facsimile @ £10.00.

B. Marcello *Estro poetico-armonico Psalms no. 3, 10, 40, 44 & 47* Cantus Cölln (Johanna Koslowsky, Elisabeth Popien, Wilfried Jochens, Stephan Schreckenberger SATB), Konrad Junghänel dir 60' 45"

Harmonia Mundi HMG 901696

Having not been too complimentary about Marcello's *Arianna* a few months ago, I'm pleased to report that this recording consists of five beautiful psalm settings (one for two voices, three for three and one for four) with cello, keyboard and lute continuo. They are settings of new Italian translations of the Psalms by Giustiniani, which paid some regard to the Hebrew text as well as to the vulgate, and the composer also draws on Jewish chant. Perhaps this helps to make the music a little more passionate than most psalm settings, which the four singers who make up this particular Cantus Cölln take full advantage of. It's particularly nice to add the name of another outstanding female alto to the growing list of period singers – Elisabeth

Popien, who combines beautifully both in duets with the soprano and in trios with the men. After *Arianna*, I doubted I'd be able to endure a whole CD or Marcella at one go, but in the event I've played the CD from beginning to end several times without waning. Another success for Konrad Junghänel. BC

Mondonville *De profundis; Venite exultemus* Gillian Fischer, Charles Daniels, Stephen Varcoe STB, London Baroque, Choir of New College Oxford, Edward Higginbottom 61' 35" (rec 1987)

Hyperion Helios, CDH55038 ££

+ *Benefac Domine, In decachordo psalterio, Regna Terrae*

This reissue of what was ground-breaking in 1988, especially for an English cathedral-type choir, is now less startling. All these works are now available in alternative versions, the *grands motets* from Christie or Coin and the *Pièces de Clavecin avec voix...* have been recorded complete on Meridian. Nonetheless, this is a welcome release which should be seized upon by any to whom this noble idiom is still a closed book. Mondonville's music is extremely demanding technically as well as musically, and there are places where even these distinguished forces sound under pressure. But on the whole these are considered, accomplished readings complemented by a booklet that within a mere 12 pages finds space for all the standard contents.

David Hansell

Telemann *String concertos* Musica Antiqua Köln, Reinhard Goebel 65' 06"

Archiv 463 074-2

Concerto Polonois in G (TWV 43:G7) & Bb (B3), *Divertimento in A & Bb, Viola Concerto in G, Concerto a6 in G (52:G2), Concerto for 2 vln in G (52:G3)*

This is the best CD I've heard from Reinhard Goebel for a long time! I don't know if he has a thing about Telemann, but the seven pieces are, typically, reassessed, nowhere more demonstrably than in the third movement of the concerto for solo viola, which bubbles along about twice as quickly as most performances I've ever heard – and works! The ridiculous enharmonic shift flows past almost unnoticed without what has become the traditional place for a pseudo-Bachian cadenza. My favourite piece is, in fact, the *concerto a sei* with two solo violins, which is beautiful. The *divertimenti* are interesting in their form – a fast movement followed by a sequence of scherzi in different styles, typical of Telemann's interest in diversity within pieces, and also tying in very well with the Polish theme of the first two pieces. Excellent. BC

American Baroque plays Telemann 69' 53"

Dorian DOR-93205

Essercizii Musici: Trio in d & g, Sonata in Bb *Tafelmusik* Sonatas in b, trio in e, Quartet in G

In the current financial climate, I'm surprised that a CD company has added this title to its catalogue. There are already several Telemann's 'best chamber music'

discs and I'm afraid the playing on this one, though very good, is not the best available. There are some pieces on it not included elsewhere in the compilation market (like the *Tafelmusik* quartet), but that would not be enough to convince me to buy it. BC

Telemann in Paris Ensemble Le petit bruit (Jobst Harders fl, Stephanie Engels vln, Sven Holger Philippsen vlc, Carsten Lorenz hpscd) Cantata Musicaphon M56834 67' 53" *Nouveaux quatuors 1 & 6; Suite 5 (c.1733); Sonata in A (Essercizii)*

This recording features two of Telemann's famous 'Paris' quartets, along with the fifth Suite in A minor from *Six Concerts et six Suites* (performed as a trio here without continuo) and the trio sonata in A major for flute, harpsichord and continuo from *Essercizii Musici*, this latter a rarely recorded and attractive work. Although there are some nice moments on this disc, and indeed these are amongst the most beautiful chamber works Telemann ever wrote, under close scrutiny this is perhaps not a recording which stands out. The recorded sound is, though faithful to the acoustic in which it was played, distant and slightly unfocused, and perhaps accounts for a general lacking of subtlety and overall character. This is not to say that the individual artists do not deliver competent and musical performances, just that for me, the definitive recording of the Paris Quartets at least, remains the Tokyo Baroque Trio on Denon. Marie Ritter

Telemann Der Tod Jesu (1755) Dorothee Mields, Britta Schwarz, Jan Kobow, Klaus Mertens SATB, Magdeburger Kammerchor, Telemann Kammerorchester Michaelstein, Ludger Rémy 76' 12" cpo 999 720-2

Ludger Rémy and cpo continue to produce very high quality performances and recordings of some of the German baroque's very best pieces. Working with the Magdeburger Kammerchor and the Telemann-Kammerorchester at Michaelstein, Rémy's account of the 74-year-old Telemann's passion oratorio is an enlightening experience. Mention *Der Tod Jesu* and anyone with an interest in this field will almost certainly say Carl Heinrich Graun, but it is stunning how modern the Telemann, which was premiered one week before Graun's setting, sounds. The opening movement, with its concerted horn parts, captures a mood which is preserved throughout over an hour of late baroque/gallant recitative/aria pairs, with occasional chorales and relatively few choruses, mostly in simple four-part homophony. The solo singers are, without exception, first rate. Another outstanding achievement. BC

Telemann Moral Cantatas, Chamber Music and Songs Knut Schoch T, Manfred Harras rec, Johannes Gebauer vln, Arno Jochem gamba, Sally Fortino hpscd 62' 32" Cantata Musicaphon M 56826

This is quite a strange disc. The reasoning

behind it is quite simple: combine the Moral Cantatas with some music for recorder (because you happen to have a very good recorder player to hand) and add a trio sonata to fill up the remaining space. The trouble, for me (even as a fan of Telemann!), is that this is not his best music and, more than most, probably rests on interaction with an audience to work. Knut Schoch's is a new voice to me and, despite my German friend's high praise for him as a Bach Evangelist last year, I found his voice a little flat, both in terms of tone and of tuning. I also found the continuo (surprisingly for players like these) a bit on the uninspired side. The recorder playing is good, but I just cannot believe that Telemann would have approved of the descendant recorder (even though he was the ultimate in giving music to all instruments!). The trio sonata at the opening is by far the highlight of the disc – violinist, Johannes Gebauer should have been given FAR more to do! BC

The Best of Telemann 71' 07" Naxos 8.556689 £

This is not a CD our readers are likely to buy – the 'greatest hits' angle is ridiculous, considering that there is no vocal music at all! Not an area I would expect Naxos to explore, even though they are to be commended on broadening recorded repertoire elsewhere (see the Caldara reviewed above). The CD does, in fact, contain a lot of my favourite Telemann – Nils-Erik Spark's gorgeous Trumpet Concerto and the D major *Conclusio* of *Tafelmusik II* from the Orchestra of the Golden Age make the best impression. It did not bother me that some performances were on period instruments and others were not. Such is the quality of the playing. I would welcomed some of the four-violin concertos, and the flute, oboe d'amore and viola d'amore concerto as being better than some of the orchestral suites, but this CD should certainly attract new listeners to Telemann, especially if it's included in another review magazine's 'What Next?' feature. BC

Vivaldi *Concertos for oboe, strings and B. C. II* Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht ob 53' 06" Passacaille 923 RV 451, 454, 457, 460, 461, 463

This was reviewed by BC in EMR 50 p. 21 as Vanguard Classics *Passacaille* 99723. BC found it 'probably the best CD of non-stop oboe concertos I've heard'.

Vivaldi *Gloria RV589, Magnificat RV 611* Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini Opus 111 OPS 1951 £ 59' 49" + 62' 45"

This is a reissue packaged with a tempting second disc sampling Opus 111's output for 2000 and a catalogue celebrating the label's 10 years. This certainly demonstrates Yolanta Skura's flair for selecting a wide variety of successful projects and performers. The catalogue also announces a long-term project of recording all the

Vivaldi music in Turin. The location of the MSS seems to be an odd criterion for selection: the project will cover most of Vivaldi's music, so why not finish the job? A lot is made of the merits of Italian performers: I suspect that at present they feel they have a point to make and are deliberately exaggerating the difference from staid northern practice and that long before this project finishes twenty years hence conductors like Alessandrini will have calmed down a bit. This disc is certainly dramatic, but I'm inclined to agree with Ian Graham-Jones, our reviewer when it was first issued (*EMR* May 1998, p. 23) that the tempi are too extreme, though there is certainly some exciting music-making and it demands to be heard at least once. CB

The eighteenth-century English organ – a celebration John Wellingham (1785 Richard Seede organ in Lulworth Castle Chapel) Plenum Records PLE 2001 72' 24" *Arne Introduction & Fugue in C, Sonata 6; Bennett Voluntary 10; Boyce Voluntary 3; Corelli/Miller op. 4/1; Croft Trumpet Overture; Greene Voluntary in F; Handel op. 4/5; Overture to Ottone; Prellur Voluntary in D; Stanley op. 5/3, op. 6/3*

The organ in Lulworth Castle Chapel is one of the most important 18th-century instruments in England. Built by the Bristol organ builder Richard Seede in 1785, possibly for a chapel or room in the castle itself, it was moved in 1786 to the new chapel a short distance away from the Castle – the first free-standing Catholic church to be built since the Reformation. It was restored in 1989 by William Drake with the active involvement of BIOS (the British Institute of Organ Studies). Although only a single manual instrument, the inclusion of three stops in a Swell box and a compass extended down to GG give it a greater degree of versatility. This CD seems to view the organ as a chamber instrument rather than the church organ that it must have been for most of its life – although the recording gives the organ an acoustic bloom that would not be present when the building was full of people, most registrations are restrained variations of the 8' and 4' stops, and the full chorus is not heard at all. The playing is similarly restrained and thoughtful, with little of the projection that a recital would generally demand. In a recital, an inspiring player could probably get away with the frequent little note inaccuracies that bedevil this CD – with repeated listening, these could become very irritating. All players know that fingers can often take on a mind of their own, getting up to things that neither the brain nor the music wanted – we are all prone to this; but a CD producer should insist on sufficient retakes to ensure that notes are clean and accurate after editing. It is a shame that this potentially important CD has been let down by poor production. Andrew Benson-Wilson

From John Brennan, Positif Press, 130 Southfield Rd, Oxford OX4 1PA tel 01865 243220, fax 243272

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

Harpsichord in Hanoverian England David Leigh 53' 58" (rec 1986)
Musicaphon BM 506 801
J. C. Bach *Sonata in c op. 17/2*; J. S. Bach *English Suite 3*, *Handel Suite 5 in E*; *Paradies Sonata 6 in A*

The harpsichord was restored by David Leigh in 1986 and judging by this recording, he has done a superb job. The instrument has a beautiful singing sound, with an excellent balance between treble and bass. It makes a most refreshing change after the usual French and German copies to be heard nowadays. That said, I have some reservations about the playing and the production. Leigh plays the Handel and the Paradies nicely, with some well-judged decoration in the repeats, but the use of the machine pedal in the J. C. Bach sonata (surely intended for the Backers grand piano) sounds a bit fussy and contrived, especially after hearing Kenneth Mobbs's memorable Clementi performance at Vermillion recently (reported by David Schulenberg in the July *EMR*). In the more challenging J. S. Bach (what have his so-called 'English' Suites to do with Hanoverian England?) the rhythm occasionally seems a little uncontrolled. The programme note repeats the hoary old chestnut about J. C. Bach's first public use of the piano as a solo instrument on 2 June 1768, already shown to be wrong by Virginia Pleasants in her 1985 *Early Music* article 'The early piano in Britain'. Do not be misled by the listing of 15 tracks on the back page: there are in fact only four, one for each of the works played.

Richard Maunday

Keyboard Classics Martin Souter (1720 Cristofori piano) 65' 10"
Classical Communications CCL CD005
Scarlatti *K 360, 371-3, 376-9, 384*; Seixas *Sonatas in A, a & d*; Soler *Sonatas 28, 37, 47*

This record is a fraud, as might be suspected from the lurid prose on the cover ('The remarkable sound of the world's oldest piano can be heard on this recording... The full, rich, antique tones of the Cristofori pianoforte ring out in sonatas that convey a wide range of emotions and styles'). What the notes omit to say is that the 1720 Cristofori has suffered several disastrous 'restorations', notably in 1875 and 1938, as a result of which it has lost its original soundboard, wrestplank, strings and hammers. It was last restrung in 1970, probably in the wrong material since it has now to be tuned a major third below *a* = 440 Hz. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the tone is feeble and uneven (as also, evidently, is the action). If you want to know what a genuine Cristofori-style piano sounds like, I strongly recommend Edward Parmentier's recording (Wildboar WLBR 9401) of similar repertoire on the Antunes (Lisbon 1767), preserved in well-nigh original condition at the Shrine to Music Museum, Vermillion. The instrument has an astonishing variety of tone, and is much more sensitively and imaginatively played. (I bought my copy at the Vermillion conference in May; Wildboar's address is 2430 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

94704; www.musicaloffering.com.)

Richard Maunday

It can also be ordered from Lindum Records. We send *EMR* to 'Mr Wildboar' (Joseph Spencer) regularly, but haven't had any review copies of his own output lately. CB

CLASSICAL

Bach (JS/CPE) Sonaten Hannsjörg Schellenberger *ob*, Margit-Anna Süss *harp*, Klaus Stoll *violone* 63' 51"
Campanella C 130221
BWV 1020, 1031, 1033; Wq 132, 139, 135

Whether or not you like this CD will rest entirely on your acceptance or otherwise of the idea that you can play baroque music on whatever instruments happen to be available. One thing is beyond dispute – the playing is thoroughly excellent: the oboist has a beautiful sense of line, stunning breath control (not that you can ever hear when he breathes at all), the harpist can play polyphony and continuo with ease, and the double bass does not growl along somewhere slightly out of synch as many a bassist does. The booklet notes are pretty hard going, but the packaging is very elegant and the oboist is to be congratulated on what is altogether a very nice CD.

BC

C. P. E. Bach *The Solo Keyboard Music 5. Leichte Sonaten* 1 Miklós Spányi *clavichord*
BIS-CD-964 73' 10"
H116, 119, 162, 180, 181

What a joy to heap nothing but unqualified praise on a new keyboard recording! I used to think C. P. E. Bach was a rather dull composer, enlivened only by some rather contrived eccentricities, but Spányi has made me revise my opinion completely. He is totally in tune with this quirky and witty music, with an astonishing ability to read between the lines and bring it to life. His sense of timing is impeccable; he is a master of the expressive silence and the throw-away ending; his exquisitely shaped line in slow movements is as vocal as that of the best singers; and his delivery of quite elaborate ornamentation (some of it his own) invariably sounds absolutely natural. The instrument, a Hubert copy by the excellent Thomas Steiner, is a delight to listen to for its own sake. I don't think I have ever heard a better clavichord, with such a beautiful sustained tone right to the top of the compass, and a wide range of dynamics down to an almost inaudible pianissimo. It will obviously do everything Spányi requires of it.

This recording should be required listening for all who play period keyboard instruments. Above all, it demonstrates that a highly expressive style of performance needs absolutely nothing in the way of sustaining and other knee-levers, fancy registrations and the like.

Richard Maunday

C. P. E. Bach *Lieder 'zum singen buy dem Clavier'; Charakterstücke; Solo a Viola da Gamba e Basso in C* Ursula Fiedler S, Lorenzo

Ghielmi *fl*, Vittorio Ghielmi *gamba* 62' 55"
Ars Musici AM 1233-2

Having welcomed a recital of CPE's songs in the July number, I am delighted to have another opportunity to commend this aspect of his oeuvre: a selection of 12 lieder dating from between 1758 and 1781 (including two of the Sturm settings recorded by Klaus Mertens and Ludger Rémy), here interspersed in the programme with eight (inadequately identified) keyboard solos, and concluding with a three-movement sonata for viola da gamba and bass, played with warmth and style by the brothers Ghielmi (the gamba is a Michel Colichon of 1688, the fortepiano a modern copy of a Gottfried Silbermann of 1749). Ursula Fiedler sings the songs with considerable panache but occasionally shrill and unattractive tone; in the keyboard solos Lorenzo Ghielmi is both sensitive and brilliant. The programme selection is well contrasted, and the whole recital is to be welcomed; it is neatly and quite intimately recorded, and the presentation for the Anglo-Saxon listener lacks only an English translation of the sung texts.

Peter Branscombe

I normally list H numbers for C. P. E. Bach anthologies, but amazingly Helm's catalogue has no title index and there are 19 titles to check. I gather that some scholars still find *Wotquenne* more convenient anyway.

CB

Boccherini Cello sonatas Lucia Swarts. Stephen Stubbs, Richte van der Meer 55' 30"
Vanguard Classics 99210 ££
Sonatas G.5, 6, 10, 13

Boccherini was a gifted cellist and his sonatas exploit the different registers of the cello in an interesting fashion, notably with an admirable contrast between high notes in the solo part and the deep register notes of the cello playing the bass line. The allegro of the fourth sonata is just one of the movements with considerable rhythmic interest and there are some enjoyable melodies, even if Boccherini is inclined to be long-winded. The scoring on this disc is certainly unusual in that there is no harpsichord playing a harmonised version of the bass part, but its place is taken by a baroque guitar or baroque theorbo. On balance I prefer the tonal contrast of a harpsichord, but these performances are stylish and highly enjoyable.

Margaret Cranmer

Anna Bon di Venezia *Sei Sonate per il cembalo* Paule van Parys *hpscd* 66' 42"
Pavane ADW 7338

To quote the decidedly minimalist programme notes of this CD, 'Anna Bon di Venezia was born in Venice in 1740. At the age of 16, she was appointed as Court musician to Frederick, Vice-count of Brandeburg [sic] and his wife, Wilhelmine von Bayreuth'. The sonatas here are from the 1757 *opera seconda* and are comparable to early C. P. E. Bach, with functional but often fairly active and rugged bass parts. The undoubted charm this music has, though, is all but destroyed by an

astonishingly metronomic and inflexible performance, not aided by the rather average recording which picks up the thud of every keystroke. I'm all for uncomplicated playing, but Paule van Parys's approach to this graceful music is mechanical to say the least, and you have to listen hard to hear any interpretational response to the music whatsoever. Check out Anna Bon by all means, but avoid this recording at all costs! Robin Bigwood

Armand-Louis Couperin *Pièces de Clavecin*
Brigitte Haudebourg *hpsc* 74' 08"
Arcobaleno AAOC 94352

Armand-Louis was the last significant Couperin. His career revolved around the many organist's posts he held (eight at once, apparently), and perhaps because of his frantic activity as a performer, few of his compositions were prepared for publication in his lifetime. This disc presents some that were, the *Livre... pour clavecin* of 1751, a mixture of dances and character pieces, including portraits of both the dedicatee, Princess Victoire, and A-L's wife, *La Blanchet*. Stylistically, the music inhabits the world not only of Rameau and Couperin *le Grand* but also that of Scarlatti, particularly in the bold use of the instrument's entire compass and the great variety of texture. Brigitte Haudebourg is a persuasive advocate of this repertoire, displaying both panache and tenderness when required. She also deploys the full resources of the large harpsichord in a way that strict fundamentalists may feel rather over-ices the cake, though changes of registration are always related to musical structure. The *Gavottes* (tracks 24-5) and *Menuets* (26-7) will illustrate this for any pre-purchase samplers. However, in the overall scheme of things this is a small point. I enjoyed this recital very much, not least because of the consistent interest of the music itself.

David Hansell

Dussek 5 *Piano Trios* Trio 1790 (Susanne von Bauszner *vn*, Philipp Bosbach *vlc*, Harald Hoeren *fp*) 63' 05"
cpo 999 583-2
op. 20/3, op. 24/3, op. 31/1-3 (on Scotch & German Airs)

Trio 1790 use a different violinist on this disc from their recordings of Haydn and Kozeluch piano trios, but the quality of the ensemble playing remains impressive. As one would expect from a composer who was also a concert pianist, the piano part dominates this brilliant, cheerful music, which in some movements is also based on popular tunes of the time. Harald Hoeren uses two different reproduction Viennese fortepianos built by Derek Adlam, and the clarity of the recording enables one to enjoy his subtle use of colour on these fine instruments. Highly recommended.

Margaret Cranmer

Gambarini *Complete Works for harpsichord*
Anthony Noble 65' 31"
Herald HAVPCD 244

Elizabeth Gambarini, London born but of Italian parentage, was the first woman to publish keyboard music in England. Her two keyboard collections, *Six Sets of Lessons for the Harpsichord* and *Lessons for the Harpsichord*, both date from 1748 and are presented on this fascinating disc along with some well-researched booklet notes by the performer. The music owes little to Handel and much to Greene, Arne and other exponents of the galant style in England. Much of it has a simple, two-part texture but it's nicely put together and displays a natural and quite sophisticated sense of melody. Sonata III in F from *Six Sets...* is a good example: the *Allegro moderato* has a fine sense of harmonic development towards the end whilst the following *Adagio* is surprisingly intense. The final minuet and variations are also good, although the energy of the third variation is disappointingly short-lived. In *Lessons for the Harpsichord* the song 'Love go and calm thy Sighs' and its variations are most enjoyable, with somewhat fuller harmony and some really creative figuration. Anthony Noble's performance on a Kirckman copy by Christopher Barlow is suitably polite and well mannered, with an easy-going musicality that suits the music well. The recording quality is OK but rather quiet, with the result that the instrument initially sounds a bit weedy.

This is an unusual and interesting disc, well worthy of exploration. Robin Bigwood

Giornovici *Violin Concertos vol. 3: Nos 2, 6 & 10* Tania Davison, Brittany Kotheimer, Sha Ye *vn*s, Starling Chamber Orch, Kurt Sasmannshaus *dir* 78' 23" (rec 1996)
Arte Nova Classics 74321 65426 2

This is a pretty remarkable CD. Not only are the soloists glamorous, young American-based women, but the orchestra is basically a junior music school ensemble! The technical demands on the soloists in these world-premiere recordings are not excessive (though I would not like to have to play them), but there is plenty of scope for them to display their abilities and ample room for some expressive, cantilena playing from all three. Giornovichi is a name I've often encountered but whose music has, until now, remained unknown to me. He clearly had some good ideas, both in terms of melody and of new ways to use his instrument, but there is not much compositional flair – it's all a little predictable (which I think may have been another of the problems with the Pleyel disc reviewed below), if mostly pleasant. We seem to have missed volumes 1 and 2. BC

Haydn *Symphonies, vol. 22, nos 13 & 36, Sinfonia Concertante* Christina Hommel *ob*, Martin Kevenhörster *bn*, Florina Geldsetzer & Winfried Rademacher *vl*n, Oren Shevlin *vlc* Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl 56' 55"
Naxos 8.554762 £

In the '70s I used to look forward to each new Haydn release from Müller-Brühl and his excellent Cologne CO. Here they are again, now participants in the complete recording of Haydn's symphonic oeuvre, at bargain price, from Naxos. Earlier they were a period instrument ensemble; now they favour modern instruments, but play in period style – which means hefty thwacks on timpani, forward detailing from winds, and light articulation from the strings. There is the occasional cut corner and wrenched phrase, but in general these are lively, perceptive performances of works featuring solo instruments (in No. 36 the principal violinist is Florian Geldsetzer). The *Sinfonia concertante* is a class or two above the early symphonies in worth, but all three works on this rather short CD will give sustained pleasure, finely recorded as they are by German Radio. A shame the Bellotto view of Vienna is printed the wrong way round. Peter Branscombe

Haydn *Symphonies vol 10: c.1779-1781* The Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood 169' 52" 3 CDs in box
L'Oiseau-Lyre 466 941-2
Symphonies 62-3, 70-71, 73-5

It is a few years since one of the Hogwood Haydn sets came my way for review; I am immediately struck by the more relaxed, confident playing and perceptive direction of this latest issue which (with James Webster's stimulating notes and exemplary documentation), subtitled 'Serious entertainment', covers the period around 1780. There is lovely playing from soloists and full ensemble alike and if one occasionally feels that the approach is austere, there is, to cite three examples, no lack of fun in 62 or of sparkle in *La chasse*, and the gentle charm of 70's trio sets off nicely the rumbustious minuetto. The recording is fresh, quite close, never cramped, and in 71/iii the antiphonal effects are delightfully brought off. I have much enjoyed this issue, and shall often return to it.

Peter Branscombe

Haydn *String Quartets op. 76* Quatuor mosaïques 144' 53" (2 CDs)
Astrée naïve E 8665

Judged by the highest standards of modern quartet playing these are excellent performances, and my only (mild) criticism would have been that they are sometimes a little too extrovert for my taste (I hesitate to use the word 'flashy', but...). They will certainly appeal to those who think they don't like 'period' playing, for the Mosaïques couldn't possibly be accused of 'thin' tone or lack of full-blooded expression. But herein lies a difficulty. Rather like a certain school of fortepianists who play Mozart on copies of c.1800 instruments with much use of the knee-levers, the quartet seem to want to adopt as modern a style as possible on their period instruments. They are obviously using Tourte-style bows – not anachronistic for the late 1790s, to be sure, but it is unlikely that they were then held right at the frog,

with the upper arm horizontal, as the leader Erich Höbbarth is doing in the photo in the programme booklet (it is instructive to compare the 1795 silhouette of Regina Strinasacchi reproduced in Peter Walls's article 'Mozart and the violin' in the February 1992 *Early Music*: she is holding a similar bow well up the stick and her right elbow is tucked in to her waist). This is not idle pedantry, for it is only the modern bow-grip and right-arm technique that permits the aggressive attack at the heel to be heard on this recording. Similarly, you can't easily use this much vibrato, or conveniently take high positions on the G string, unless you have the sort of modern chin-rest to be seen in the photo of the viola player, Anita Mitterer (it's impossible to see whether Höbbarth also has one, but he's certainly playing 'chin on'). To be fair, the programme booklet makes no claim about period style, but only for 'a new clarity stemming from their use of period instruments'. I am left wondering, though, why an unquestionably first-rate modern quartet should bother with gut E strings and a slightly lower pitch (a' = 430 Hz, with a tendency to creep up a bit), which is all that might reveal to an 'innocent ear' that these are not standard modern instruments. There's plenty of scope yet for truly 'historically aware' performance of Haydn's and Mozart's chamber music!

Richard Maunder

Haydn *Anno 1776 Sonatas – I* Ronald Brautigam *fp* 78' 23"
BIS-CD-1093
Hob.XVI 27-29, 33, 44 (or Nos. 32, 34, 42-44)

All scholars agree that these sonatas date from 1770-75, give or take a year or two. *Pace* the programme note, there is not the slightest doubt that they were conceived for either clavichord or harpsichord, not for fortepiano. Indeed, two recent books on the subject agree that Haydn probably had a two-manual instrument in mind at least for Hob. XVI/28. One must, of course, admire those clever but misguided keyboard gymnasts who can manage the passages for interlocking hands, like some of the Goldberg Variations, on a single-manual piano; but it would be hard to believe that Haydn deliberately perpetrated such difficulties.

On this recording Brautigam uses a modern copy of a Walter fortepiano, allegedly dating from 'ca. 1795' but more probably made after 1800 (it has the Beethoven 'Waldstein' range of FF-a3, not found on datable instruments earlier than 1799). Brautigam exploits its full resources, including the knee-lever operated damper raising and 'moderator', the latter occasionally used to shade off the end of a phrase. Although staccato long notes are – usually – crisply articulated, rapid scales are often rendered in the continuous legato manner demanded by modern technique, complete with the slight 'afterglow' produced by a brief raising of the dampers at the start. I do not want to give the impression that these are bad performances, for on their own terms they are well characterized and

played with a good deal of virtuosity. I particularly enjoyed hearing second as well as first repeats in the opening movements. As for the instrument, there are, I suppose, marginal gains in using a Walter copy instead of a Steinway, though it is great pity that the opportunity was not taken to use something closer to what Haydn would himself have used in the 1770s.

Richard Maunder

Haydn *Arianna a Naxos, XII Lieder für das Klavier I* (1781) Jane Edwards S, Geoffrey Lancaster *fp* 59' 07
ABC 465 693-2

This pleasing CD emanates from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and features two imaginative Australian artists in a recital that is well recorded and well presented – good notes and full texts (some-what naively translated), and an attractive overall design. The solo cantata is reasonably familiar; the 1781 set of twelve lieder much less so than it deserves to be. Jane Edwards makes too little of the words, and I am unhappy about some of the liberties both artists take with Haydn's music. Edwards once or twice misses the tragic note appropriate to Ariadne's plight, but she sings the concert *scena* cleanly and with spirit. The fortepiano, finely played by the experienced Geoffrey Lancaster, is a modern copy of an Anton Walter of 1796. This is a welcome issue. Peter Branscombe Available from Jane Edwards, 150 Albany Rd, Stanmore NSW 2048, Australia e-mail sooty@magna.com.au fax 061 2 9564 3877 or from Lindum Records

Pleyel *Symphonies* (1778/1786) Capella Istropolitana, Uwe Grodd 74' 33"
Naxos 8.554696 £
In C (Ben128), c (Ben121), f (Ben138)

I listened to this CD several times but just could not get into it, or recall a single melody. I'm not saying it is not pleasant music, but I would only ever want to have it on as dinner party wallpaper sound, I'm afraid. No disrespect to the performers or the conductor – they make the most of the scores (two symphonies in minor keys, very much in Haydn's Sturm und Drang mould, and one in C major, each with four movements) and play very stylishly. I've just listened to it again after several days and my opinion hasn't changed. Nice, but not arresting enough. BC

Music for Gainsborough Charivari agréable Signum SIGCD026 72' 48"

Music by A. F. Abel, J. C. Bach, Giardini, Linley, R. Straube & anon

Those casually picking up this disc may well be forgiven for thinking that this is primarily a recital of 18th century songs with some Abel sonatas. Neither the front cover nor the detailed items on the back list the instruments (or voice) of the ensemble. Those that know of Charivari Agréable will rightly assume that Susanne Heinrich plays Abel's viola da gamba

sonatas rather than his violin sonatas, and those that know her playing will rightly assume how musically she plays these; they will also rightly assume that Kah-Ming Ng is playing a J.C. Bach keyboard sonata (on an original Kirckmann instrument, one discovers). But who is the singer? The items listed are songs by J.C. Bach, both Thomas Linleys, Giardini, and an aria from Mozart's *Magic Flute*. Perhaps Reicho Ichese (listed in small print on the cover) has graduated from bass instrument to soprano? Only on very close inspection by removing the seal and delving deep into the booklet will they discover that all the songs are arrangements for bass viol, delightfully played but sounding a little like Marais on an off day. Perhaps the most musically interesting pieces on the disc are the Rudolf Straube lute works, a suite and a superb Adagio from one of his sonatas, probably written well before he came to London – but that matters not, as it is well worth having on disc and is superbly played by Lynda Sayce. Avid readers of *EMR* may well remember some correspondence on the subject of arrangements (No. 56, p. 9). If listeners can accept such arrangements as part of a recital programme then this is an interesting and worthwhile record, but I do think that the cover ought to be more informative and certainly less misleading. Ian Graham-Jones

19th CENTURY

Beethoven *Christus am Ölberge* Simone Kermes, Steve Davislim, Eike Wilm Schulte STB, Chorus Music, Das Neue Orchester, Christoph Spering 49' 00"
Opus 111 OPS 30-281

Christ on the Mount of Olives is a comparative rarity on disc, and this performance with period instruments will make new friends for the work. Dating from the period of the Second Symphony and Third Piano Concerto, in company with which it was first performed, it has never really caught on. The contrast between the fairly static first part and the more dramatic second is one possible reason; another is that the music is only intermittently inspired. The performance is a very good one, with a nimble, noble Christ from Steve Davislim. The Seraph, Simone Kermes, like many a Queen of Night, is happier with her high-lying music than within the stave. As a belligerent-sounding Peter, Eike Wilm Schulte completes the solo line-up. Both chorus and period-instrument orchestra are fine, and Christoph Spering can henceforth include this interesting issue among his battle-honours. Recording and leaflet are both admirable. Peter Branscombe

Beethoven *Sonatas* Martin Souter (1820 Böhm *pf*) 55' 59"
Classical Communications CCL CD007
Sonatas op. 2/1, 14/1, 27/2; Bagatelle op. 33/6; Für Elise

This is an interesting selection of music by a performer who concentrates on expressing the power in Beethoven's sonatas. There

is some fine, crisp, non legato playing and the presto agitato from the *Moonlight* sonata also has splendid energy. However, the minuet in the F minor sonata is decidedly lumpy, and elsewhere in this work the quiet dynamic markings are not observed in the bass in the effort to maintain dramatic impetus, so the balance between the hands is altered and one notices some percussive chords rather than experiencing a build up of intensity. The Viennese fortepiano from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is a good instrument but it is somewhat closely recorded.

Margaret Cranmer

Czerny *Complete Music for horn and fortepiano* Andrew Clark, Geoffrey Govier 79' 40"
Hyperion CDH55074 ££

While I was racking my brains who among our reviewers was an expert on the horn, I put the disc on to one of the Schubert fantasies and was immediately intrigued and delighted. I can imagine serious Lieder-fanciers then and now being offended, but I found the reworkings full of character – if you listen expecting to be amused (as I was), you will find just a bit more. Perhaps Hyperion should be marketing this as an appendix to their completed Schubert Songs (I was wondering how I could squeeze in congratulations on the completion of that mammoth project). The *Drei Brillante Fantasien* op. 339 are substantial pieces, including 22 songs altogether. The opening piece is an *Introduction et Variations concertantes* which, despite a Czerny opus no. of 248, may be by the horn-player Joseph Lewy; according to the very informative booklet notes, it is one of the first pieces written for valve horn. The disc concludes with Czerny's unpublished *Andante e Polacca*. Anyone interested in the transition between natural and valved horn will find this a fascinating disc; those who are not will be impressed by the brilliance of the playing, and the music is entertaining even when it doesn't depend on Schubert's inspiration.

CB

Hummel *Quintet op. 87, Trio op. 12, Viola Sonata op. 5/3* The Music Collection (Micaela Comberti vln, Gustav Clarkson vla, Pal Banda vlc, Caroline Maguire db, Susan Alexander-Max fp 64' 48"
ASV Gaudeamus CD GAU 210

Hummel has suffered the indignity of being rated as an influence upon others rather than being valued as a composer of lyrical and stylish music, so the high calibre of musicianship in these performances make this disc particularly welcome. Mozart taught Hummel for two years and the viola sonata, composed when Hummel was only twenty years old, shows Mozart's influence in its texture and ornamentation. The reproduction Viennese fortepiano by Derek Adlam after Michael Rosenberger balances the viola beautifully. The quintet is the work of a mature composer with contrapuntal interest. An Erard piano c.1846 is used in the recordings of the quintet and trio; the latter was published c.1803 and I

would like to hear it recorded with an earlier fortepiano to see if the texture is enhanced, but don't let this put you off an excellent disc.

Margaret Cranmer

Rossini *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (wind transcription by Wenzel Sedlak Ensemble Italiano di Fiati, Paolo Pollastri dir 65' 51"
Tactus TC 791801

I normally dislike Rossini operas once the overture is finished. But without singers, I find this very enjoyable. Primarily useful as background listening, the wind scoring gives the music a new flavour, sometimes quite Mozartian. An unexpected pleasure.

CB

ASTRÉE SAVALL EDITION GLOSSA REPRISE VERITAS X2

We had intended to list and comment on these excellent mid-price reissues, but have run out of space. We will return to them next month.

ERRATA

Concert Spirituel The Jerusalem Consort
Arcobaleno AAOC-94332

We reviewed this favourably in May but misprinted the number: the correct one is given above.

Purcell *Hear my prayer...* BBCM 5019-2

Blaise Compton has pointed out that the review printed in our last issue p. 20 appeared to be extraordinarily anti-catholic. In a shuffle-round of words I'd cut any specification of the period in which the Abbey & Chapel Royal had not let in catholic influences – the reign of James II, while the reason for that being 'fortunate' was that it gave the conductor no opportunities for his habitual 'wallowing over Mary', a slowing of tempo that occurs in many of his performances when she is mentioned in the text. I doubt whether this has anything to do with Roman catholicism: Michael Howard began his career as an Anglican organist (at Ely Cathedral).

CB

DVD

We haven't yet started reviewing Digital Video Discs, since there's not yet very much relevant repertoire. The two operas listed below have modern-style singers but stylistically-aware conductors. We have received a copy of the Salieri, so we hope to review it in future; UK distribution is by Select.

Handel *Ariodante* Joan Rogers, Gwynne Howell, Christopher Robson, Lesley Garrett, Paul Nilon, Mark le Brocq, English National Opera Orchestra and Chorus, Ivor Bolton
Arthaus Musik 100 064

Salieri *Falstaff* John del Carlo, Teresa Rongholz, Richard Croft, Delores Ziegler, Jake Gardner, Carlos Feller, Darla Brooks, Radio Symphony Orchestra Stuttgart, Arnold Östmann
Arthaus Musik 100 022

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

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LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

In the course of your review of Eberlin sacred music (*EMR* 62), you ask to which Bach was Mozart referring in the letter to his sister dated April 20 1782. Clues to a possible answer lie with a letter Mozart addressed to his father ten days earlier. There he writes: 'I am collecting at the moment the fugues of Bach – not only of Sebastian, but also of Emanuel and Friedemann'. The way in which this is worded suggests that the Bach of Nannerl's letter is almost certainly J. S. Bach, to whose music Mozart was at that time much exposed as a result of his regular Sunday visits to the eccentric Bach and Handel enthusiast Baron von Swieten. Further evidence to support the nomination of J. S. B. can be found that same year in Mozart's arrangements of six Bach fugues (5 by J. S., 1 by W. F.) for string trio, to which he added preludes of his own (K404a).

Incidentally, Eric van Tassel (review of Erato's Bach Cantatas Vol. 9) has mistaken the meaning of my letter in *EMR* 61. I was not entering into a discussion about the exactness of ornamentation between singer and instrumentalist, rather was I complaining about singers who skate over or omit trills because they cannot sing them properly.

Brian Robins

Of course! I'd forgotten how soon after he settled in Vienna Mozart encountered Bach's music. There is a thorough account in the *August Music & Letters* by Yo Tomita of how a corrupt MS of the 48 came to Vienna (perhaps via van Swieten). A group of the Fugues, without Preludes and with those in difficult keys transposed, circulated there and was the basis of Mozart's string arrangements. Incidentally, elsewhere in the same issue Nicholas Jones manages to write a whole article on how Maxwell Davies's Third Symphony is based on Brunelleschi's proportions without mentioning Dufay's motet *Nuper rosarum flores* (which is on the CD reviewed on p. 22). Since the motet was written for the dedication of Brunelleschi's dome at Florence cathedral in 1436 and was believed until very recently (until after the symphony was written) to have been based on the architectural proportions of the cathedral, I find it unbelievable that Max, who was certainly aware of the isorhythmic motet repertoire, would not have known one of the most famous examples.

Dear Clifford,

James Clements repeats what every other reviewer has said about the Biber Mass, that it celebrated the 1100th anniversary of the Salzburg diocese. But no one ever qualifies it by saying 'as it had been calculated locally for many centuries'. That traditional date must have been 582.

But any familiarity with the Dark Ages will assure you that nothing existed in Noricum from the barbarian destruction of the Christian Roman settlements in about 478 until Rupert arrived to found St. Peter's abbey about 700 (he died in 718).

Jerome F. Weber

Dear Clifford

I should point out that I wrote £250 (two hundred and fifty), not £3250 as you have it!!

Christopher Stembidge

Apologies: your e-mail, when transferred to my computer, read A=3250, which I interpreted as £3250. In your correction, the two figures come out as A=33250 and A=3250. Sorry I didn't check back to to your original message.

CB

Dear Clifford,

Thank you for letting me have a copy of Graham Pont's article which you talk about in your July editorial. Pont's statistical survey is fascinating – especially the three-dimensional graph. His work overlaps with some of my own *inégales* research – indeed, I once planned doing just such a survey (thanks to Pont for saving me the trouble). Pont's 'inconsistencies' are pretty close to my 'careless notation', which was the theme of a paper I gave at the American Handel Society conference in Maryland this May.

Pont wonders why so often the theme of a Handel aria appears with dotting in the introduction but without dotting at the entry of the voice. He seems anxious to dispose of the view (held by such as Watkins Shaw, I presume) that such inconsistencies are due to errors that need correcting. He believes they're deliberate. Looking at the matter from an *inégal* viewpoint, however, I would say that when Handel varies his notation like this he still intends the band's ♩ and the singer's ♩ to sound the same. This is the essence of my theory of 'careless notation' (I refer the curious to MT, Jan 97). Then another question raises its head – if the two rhythms sound the same, why does Handel use now one, now the other? I would say that in his choice of notation Handel is influenced by expediency. He uses dotted notation for the band because they need more explicit notation to get the piece started. Written dotting helps to establish the level of inequality. The singer gets the less precise kind of *inégal* notation because singers are less technical than instrumentalists and because their rhythm has already been anticipated by the band.

A separate point is why Handel's dot-dropping should happen more at slower tempi. My answer would be that in music played *inégal*, slower tempi tend to bring written dotting with them, which would presumably bump up the numbers in Pont's 'varied' column straight away (cf. Couperin's *La Terpsicore* and 2nd prelude from *L'art de toucher*).

You write that 'Pont is distorting the argument by suggesting that Handel's notation is inaccurate' but surely Pont is claiming that it is accurate.

John Byrt

I don't think that anyone should be calling Handel's notation 'inaccurate'. It may be inconsistent, its meaning may be unclear to us, but 'inaccurate' should only be used as shorthand for 'inaccurate by modern conventions'.

CB

WEBSITES

At the Huntingdon nerve centre of King's Music, there's never a moment's peace and quiet. In the relative tranquillity in life in Dundee (where, apart from setting anything Clifford needs done pretty quickly, and captioning a mere 5000 photographs from the turn of the century by the end of May 2001, and still playing volleyball) Brian Clark finds time to transcribe and edit music by a number of out of the way composers, like Erlebach, Capricornus, Stölzel, etc. He has also found time more recently to update his website, and invites readers, who might be interested in performing some of the material (or commissioning proper, paid work – perish the thought!) to visit, or save him time and effort at a later date by letting him know they actually published items listed or similar repertoire two years ago. Seriously, some of the material is very good, but there is no commercial advantage for King's Music to publish for publishing's sake.

Visit the site at www.argonet.co.uk/users/brianc and let's see what happens!
Brian Clark

Those wishing to contact Maxwell Sobel or check on new publications after seeing his catalog (circulated with this issue of *EMR*) may like to know that he has upgraded his website, but is having some trouble with the home page. The individual pages with the composers music shows up, but it still needs work. You can try to access it on <http://home.earthlink.net/~concertoed>. We had intended to include a short motet that he publishes, *Circumdederunt me* as by Morales in this issue, but are short of space and thought it fairer to squash one of our own editions to half-size so have deferred it till next month.

I had an e-mail circular passed on to me from Teri Noel Towe, who had discovered the long-lost portrait of Bach that was known to have been owned by his pupil Johann Christian Kittel still owned by his descendants. Details and reproduction at <http://www.geocities.com/thefaceofbach/>

YOLANTA SKURA

Opus 111 was created ten years ago by Yolanta Skura. A letter circulated with their August release list announces that the label is now linking with Naïve and that she is leaving it.

After thirty very pleasurable years spent in the classical recording world, including ten years with Opus 111, I have decided to terminate my present activities and concentrate on other matters... When looking for a partner who shared our outlook and was prepared to maintain our high standards and adventurous policies, I explored every possible means guaranteeing a secure future for Opus 111, and remain convinced that the merger with Naïve will ensure continuity... Life is, of course, a continual series of changes, but I am confident that the coming season will prove to be both encouraging and prosperous, and invite you to keep regularly in touch with the discoveries that Opus 111 has to offer.

We hope that Yolanta's 'other matters' will be as stimulating to herself and to others as has her achievement with Opus 111.
CB

PETER PLATT

(1924-2000)

Emeritus Professor Peter Platt (Sydney University) died in Sydney on 3 August, 2000. Born in Sheffield in 1924 and a graduate of Oxford and the Royal College of Music in London, he was Professor of Music at the University of Otago (New Zealand) from 1957-1975, when he moved to the Chair of Music at the University of Sydney till his recent retirement. Peter Platt edited the *Musica Britannica* volume devoted to the 17th-century composer Richard Dering, whose combination of modal/tonal language fascinated him. The all-embracing nature of his interests ensured him the warmest relationships in many fields: early music (he played baroque oboe), composition, ethnomusicology.

Mediaeval music was a central part of his curriculum in both Otago and the University of Sydney. His encouragement of student and colleagues' interests in many spheres was legendary; in retirement he was particularly active, conducting e-mail discussions on many subjects of performance and aesthetics. In 1953, as a lecturer in Music at Sydney, he founded with Trevor Jones, the first Australian Early Music Society, 'with the blessing of [viol player] Professor Donald Peart'. In the later 1950s the chance to hear performances directed by Thurston Dart was an important influence. His last paper to the Musicological Society of Australia was entitled 'Only connect', borrowing the phrase of E. M. Forster to draw together a life-time's thinking about the connections that exist between apparently disparate types of musical creativity.

With his death, early music in Australia loses a great friend and ally, but above all a profoundly thoughtful voice who expanded musical and intellectual boundaries for generations of students and colleagues in Australia and New Zealand.

Prof Platt was my Professor in Otago in the early 70's – in fact, he taught me from my last year of school. A brilliant teacher who knew so much music, you just had to try to do the same. But beyond that, he was always trying to understand how it worked. We spoke as recently as the Sunday before his death, when the lung problem that caused the fatal pneumonia was telling on his stamina, but his mind was as clear and cheerful as ever, so one felt he could continue for years, writing, composing, and letting you know what he thought about your latest efforts.

Rosalind Halton

Renewals

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