Early Music REVIEW

Number 66 December 2000

ISSN 1355-3437 Price £2.00

Published on the first of each month except Jan. and Aug. by King's Music, Redcroft, Banks End, Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 2AA
tel +44 (0)1480 52076 fax +44 (0)1480 450821
e-mail cbkings@attglobal.net
http://www.kings-music.co.uk/
UK: £15.00 Europe: £20.00
Rest of World: £30.00 (air), £20.00 (surface)
Cheques payable to King's Music

The Christmas issue again: at least that means a month to come without an issue of *EMR* to prepare. Not that I don't enjoy it, but one issue seems scarcely out of the way before the next looms. Readers will receive another calendar thanks to our ingenious cartoonist. Last year some of you wanted extra copies. These are available at £2.00 (£2.50 for overseas post): money with order, please – and if you have received a subscription reminder, please pay that at the same time. We hoped to have the calendars ready for the recent early music exhibitions at London and Paris, but neither David Hill nor we managed to be prepared.

Although the London exhibition is bigger, we sell more in Paris. It isn't for lack of competition: we were squashed between Fuzeau and Forni, with Breitkopf, Schott and Bärenreiter behind us and the Maison de la Musique Ancienne opposite. But early music is still quite a newcomer in France, and there is more enthusiasm; for the English it's old hat.

There are fewer seasonal records than usual this year (unless we are deemed too serious to be sent such fare). This is surprising, since the decline in the record industry hasn't diminished the number of discs from the smaller companies. I fear that the BIS disc of Emma Kirkby and London Baroque in two Scarlatti pastoral cantatas won't be circulated as widely as Emma's 50th-birthday anthologies, but that is my favourite this month.

There has been a vast amount of Bach this year, though it is regrettable that virtually all the cantata recordings are choral; the recent Naxos disc of Advent (not Christmas, as the cover states) cantatas is a notable exception. Early Music conductors used to seek out new ideas: conservativism has come with wealth and middle age. Even if the one-to-a-part idea turns out to be wrong, why not try it? Will Bach's cantatas fall into oblivion again? Not everywhere. In Paris, Jan Nuchelmans is getting his students to put on a series of liturgical performances next year. It would also be nice to hear rather more church music by his contemporaries: like Handel, we tend to hear and study Bach in isolation, whereas comparison might help us to understand what is distinctive about his music. *CB*

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

OUR AWIN SCOTTIS USE

Isobel Woods Preece *Our awin Scottis use: Music in the Scottish Church up to 1603. (Studies in the Music of Scotland).* The Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, 2000. xi + 267pp, £35.00. ISBN 0 8256169 4 5

My first reaction on reading this was naturally one of sadness. I was unsure how far Isobel's work had advanced, and it became clear that the author's untimely death has robbed us of the definitive book on the subject. However, what we have instead is an extremely important drawing together of her dissertation on Robert Carver and the Carver Choirbook with several other significant papers on other aspects of pre-Reformation Scottish church music. These date from 1984 to 1991, and while they would undoubtedly have formed the skeleton of Isobel's projected book, she could have been expected to have had further thoughts on many aspects of the subject.

Having said that, in compiling the present collection, Sally Harper has done an excellent job in selecting the most important of Isobel's writings, as well as bringing in complementary material by other authors. For example, to bring Isobel's research on Carver's biography up to date, she provides a masterly resumé of the recent debate (particularly in *EMR* 46, 48 & 49) in which Isobel would undoubtedly have played an active part.

In her forward to *Our awin Scottis use* Margaret Bent talks of Isobel Wood Preece's 'lovely dry wit' and 'meticulously correct and clear formulations', and it is indeed these qualities which inform all of her writings. In researching my own book on Robert Carver, I lived with Isobel's prose style for several years, and I was frequently grateful for the thoroughness of her research and the lightness of her expression.

If her critical method suffered any shortcomings, they were the result of her unbounded enthusiasm for the subject. Just occasionally she allows a hare (or perhaps a red herring) to run where a more ruthless scholar would have stopped it in its tracks. A case in point is her identification of complex dissonant polyphony in the larger works of Carver as *cant organe*, when they seem more like the result of the strict application in many parts of *countering*, the technique which precedes *cant organe* in Douglas's poem. *Cant organe* surely is no more nor less than a convenient anglicised version of *cantus organum*, allowing Douglas's line to scan properly. However, typically of Isobel, while the conclusion may in this case be suspect, the investigation throws up such a wealth of fascinating material that the process is justified. Similarly, while her insistence on spelling Carver's surname as *Carvor* presupposed an orthographical logic alien to the 16th-century mind, evidenced by the subsequent discovery of Kervours and Curwours, her decision resulted from a profound respect for the subject of her researches.

Much of what Isobel has written over the years remains the definitive commentary on the subject. Her exhaustive study of the physical structure of the Carver Choirbook has produced a sequence for the works which has not been seriously challenged, while her work on the Scottish Chapel Royal added significantly to the work of 19th-century scholars.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the book is the way in which Isobel's writings have been arranged so that they provide an almost unbroken account of the important developments in early Scottish church music and its liturgical and social context. While Sally Harper must take chief credit for this, Warwick Edwards and Gordon Munro's contributions are also substantial. Warwick's account of the St Andrew's Music Book attempts to complete Isobel's identification of the native Scottish content of this important manuscript. Her plan was to rule out all items which could be demonstrated to have another provenance, and the present chapter goes a long way to identifying and cataloguing the manuscript's contents. Gordon Munro's contribution is to take on the demanding task of integrating Isobel's notes into a comprehensive account of the music of the Scottish Reformed church. This compact and highly readable chapter is a credit to Gordon's sharp scholarly mind and his deep knowledge of the subject.

To conclude with one or two comments on the layout of the book, something odd seems to have happened to the index. For example, my own flatteringly large entry turns out to refer under my name to every Ross in the text, ranging from Thomas Ross and Anthony Ross to Reginald, Bishop of Ross and the Diocese of Ross itself! The book is comprehensively illustrated in black and white, appropriately opening with a photograph of the author but also featuring several of the important manuscripts discussed in the text. There are also copious musical examples which admirably illuminate the various lines of argument.

If we have indeed been denied the definitive book on the subject, we have been given a very fine substitute. In his review (*Early Music News* Oct 1993) of my book on Carver, Clifford Bartlett identified Isobel's Carver thesis as an 'outstanding British thesis that needs publication' [sadly, it never appeared in the Garland series I was alluding to *CB*], and in the present text we have this and so much more.

D. James Ross

I should add, for those not familiar with the background, that Isobel died in 1997 at the age of 41. The book begins with a memoir by Margaret Bent, who supervised her doctoral dissertations on the Carvor Choirbook at Princeton. Isobel always seemed a rather formidable lady to me, but I enjoyed the brief conversations I had with her between Baker Street and King's Cross on our way home after meetings of the PMMS Council. This is an impressive book, though from this side of the border I wondered whether there was really enough material to write a coherent history of Scottish church music. I sense that the liturgical situation was quite casual, with churches and monasteries apparently happy to use any foreign liturgical book they could get hold of; adding a few local feasts doesn't really establish a local use. I too was puzzled by the avoidance of the obvious meaning of *cant organe*. For the non-specialist, there are two reasons for having the book: the chapters on Carver/Carvor (though there is sadly no thorough study of the music as such, and I would have welcomed a list of the drawings in the MS with references to published reproductions) and Warwick Edwards's substantial chapter on the St Andrew's 'Notre-Dame' MS (invariably abbreviated as W_1). Having recently played in a concert at Dore Abbey, I was particularly intrigued by its opening quote (p. 225) which describes 'chant performed in three or four voices' at Dore and Tintern in 1217 (i. e. within 20 years of four-part *Viderunt* and *Sederunt* being sung in Paris).

CISTERCIAN ANTIPHONAL

Un antiphonaire cistercien pour le sanctoral XII^e siècle: Paris Bibliothèque nationale de France nouvelles acquisitions latines 1412 Introduction, table, index Claire Maître (*Manuscrits notés* II) Paris: Éditions du CTHS, 1999. xi + [404] + 75pp, 150 francs. ISBN 2 7355 0428 X

I saw this on the Maison de la Musique Ancienne stall at the Paris early music exhibition and couldn't believe the price. But it was printed on the back of the book, and it really is under £15 for a substantial reproduction of the Sanctoral half of an antiphonal of around 1175 from the Cistercian monastery of Sancta Maria de Morimondo in the diocese of Milan. The thorough index lists each chant in order of the MS (useful for those who can't read the script quickly) but has the usual index by function of chant. The reproduction seems extremely clear, but with just one snag: the stave lines, which are just visible on the single colour plate, are minimally visible elsewhere. But the notation is so precise that the missing lines are hardly an inconvenience. Apart from any more scholarly use, it's useful to have a few early sources around to check whether a chant in later books is genuinely medieval or not. NB The volume is quite heavy, so the cost of posting it from France is likely to increase the price by at least 50%.

BANCHIERI – STROZZI – TELEMANN

It was nice to receive a new batch of items from Cornetto. A CD of Pierre de la Rue will be reviewed in the next issue. The catalogue is expanding nicely, and even has a section of facsimiles devoted to eating and drinking.

The various editions of Banchieri's instruction book for organists *L'organo suonarino* have long been available in facsimile; this volume takes the music from the editions of 1605, 1611 & 1638 and prints it sensibly and compactly (with no page-turns) in modern notation. The 1611 pieces are longer and less obviously didactic than the earlier ones. I can't at present get at my facsimile, but I would have thought that some of the high-tessitura pieces were high-clef ones expecting transposition (that being a topic that Banchieri deals with, as far as I can remember). In fact, it is frustrating that the edition does not state what purpose each example serves. Does the *Sonata settima concerto enharmonico* relate to information as to how to get a tuning that works in B minor? Four Sonatas from the 1638 edition are for violin and trombone with organ continuo. This is a good edition to play from, but you still need to consult the facsimile.

Contemporary keyboard arrangements of four Overtures, a Suite and a Sonata by Telemann (TWV 32:11-13, 16, 17 & TWV 33:37) are fun to play, though probably more in the privacy of the home than as concert pieces: I think after several movements the listener might feel that the texture was a bit thin. Some movements work very well. I liked, for instance, the A minor Gavotte (p. 12), though a little filling in of the chords in bars 24 & 26 is necessary to clarify the harmony (CORN-10-1-0214). Johann Georg Lang (1724-98) is better known for his orchestral than his keyboard work. His *Fuga prima a tre per l'organo* was published in Nuremberg in 1764, apparently as a separate piece, which seems rather odd, particularly since it isn't a particularly outstanding composition, with an oddly repetitive theme. I presume that the (Pedal) markings when the left hand is in octaves are editorial suggestions, which I would ignore. All three organ editions are edited by Raimund Schächer.

Cornetto's catalogue shows planned facsimiles of Barbara Strozzi's publications, a most welcome scheme, since some that have been issued by other publishers are not longer available. What I have been sent, however, is an edition of a soprano motet to S. Anna *Mater Anna* from the *Sacri musicali affette* of 1655. This is a plain transcription, with no realisation, with even less editorial intervention than in the King's Music editions of such repertoire, in that the barring is left irregular, no figuring is added and *vbera* isn't changed to *ubera*: I would have thought that, with a facsimile available, a separate edition could be just a little more user-friendly. But it's a good piece (CRN-10-1-0213).

FRENCH THEATRE

John S. Powell *Music and Theatre in France 1600-1680* Oxford UP, 2000. xvi + 582pp, £80.00. ISBN 0 19 816599 4

This is a thorough study of the presence of music in French (chiefly Parisian) plays in the 80 years leading up to the establishment of what we would now (without worrying

about the precise terms of the time) call opera. It is exhaustive in its scope, and draws together a vast quantity of scattered information. The inaccessibility of much of the music dealt with is allowed for by the inclusion of a considerable number of complete songs, and nearly a hundred pages are devoted to text excerpts from the plays. Curiously, the reader is assumed to be able to understand them in French, whereas in the texts many documents are quoted just in English. It would be nice to know what original word lies behind the viols that are mentioned several times in the early pages, sometimes in contexts where one might expect violins (the index, in fact, only lists violins); but whatever the word, does it distinguish viol from violin in the first decade or two of the century? I was intrigued by the reference to a character in a play of 1669 conducting an overture: does that mean banging a stick or something more subtle? There is considerable information about the performance forces; the most lavish is an *intermède* of 1634 which included 16 lutes performing 'a miraculous echo concert'. The climax of the book is not Lully, as one might expect, but Molière's *Comédie-Ballets*, the hundred pages on which begin with a year-by-year list of his dramatic repertoire, with those involving music or dance clearly distinguished from the rest. This section is not entirely new. I think if I was editor of a musicological journal, I'd feel a bit fed up if I found that something I had printed was soon outmoded by a revised version in a monograph: double publication seems a bit of a luxury. As a reader, too, I'd rather have comments on what was wrong with the earlier printing than have to read it all again to find out. But it's normal practice, so I'm not criticising author or publisher here. I'm not in a position to evaluate this substantial study from a profound knowledge of the subject, but it seems to be one of those books that one will refer to for a whole variety of unpredictable reasons, and I'm sure that many scholars will be grateful to the author for reading through a vast number of obscure and tedious plays on their behalf!

MORE HANDEL CANTATAS

Handel *Cantates a voix seule et basse continue: Manuscrits autographes. Vol. II: Manuscrit R. M. 20.d.12, c.1706-c.1727.* Présentation par Philippe Lescat. Fuzeau (5799), 2000. xxv + 101pp, 240 francs.

Hard on the heels of the first volume of this excellent series (see *EMR* 62 p. 6) comes this reproduction of another autograph MS containing 16 solo cantatas. The introduction explains some points that may worry the user, though I haven't been able to work out what the note on p. xi to p. 27 is about. The table of contents on p. xxv lists the cantatas with dates and references to other versions (which are discussed more fully earlier in the introduction), though it would have been nice to have had some information on how the MS could combine music dating over a period of 20 years. *É partirai mia vita?* HWV 111b dated 'after 1710' starts mid-page after the end of *Lungi dal mio bel nume* HWV 127c of 1724-7, which needs some explanation. Like vol. 1, this is an essential purchase for all Handelians.

GUERINI op. 9

Francesco Guerini *Six Sonatas for Violoncello and Keyboard, Opp. 9* edited by Sarah Freiberg; figured bass realisation by Byron Schenkman. PRB Productions (CL006), 2000. 49pp + 2 parts, $27.00

I'm afraid that I know even less about Guerini than about French theatre music – not that there is much to know about him. He came from Naples, lived in The Hague in the 1740s and 1750s and was in London in the 1760s. His op. 9 (the edition uses the formally correct but pedantic *opp.* to represent the plural *opera* on the original title page) was published in London around 1765. I suspect that our readers would be happy with a facsimile; but the tone of the introduction and the presence of some editorial bowing sings imply circulation among a different sort of player. It is interesting (in connection with the letter on p. 13 of this issue) that so distinguished a harpsichordist as Byron Schenkman gives a mostly three-part realisation. The music looks less predictable and regular than is often the case with minor composers of this period and the accompanying part is sufficiently imitative for a second cello to be welcome.

EASTER CELEBRATION

An Easter Celebration: Passiontide Music from Georgian England... edited by Peter Holman and Sally Drage Faber Music, 2000. 31pp, £3.95.

This is more or less the edition of the CD *Vital Spark of Heav'nly Flame* (Hyperion CDA67020) mentioned rather than reviewed in *EMR* 40 since space had run out, so interested readers will have a fair idea of whether they fancy singing the music included here. Like all Faber's *Choral Programme Series*, this is very good value with lots of music in a little space – though nothing here is unduly squashed. The once-famous piece that gave the CD its title comes first; that is for three parts SSB or TTB, though the upper two parts can be sung in octaves. The rest is for four parts and organ, with the possible inclusion of other instruments. The only well-known item is Handel's *Rejoice the Lord is King!* in the version as first published by Samuel Wesley, who did not countenance the misaccentuation at the beginning of verse two. I found the commentary unclear: 'Tenor originally an octave lower' really means 'Tenor originally notated in the treble clef', i.e. not in octave-treble as in the edition. The note about verse repeats omitted relates to bars 8 and 22 (not 13 & 27), where the original (Handel's autograph as well as Wesley's edition) has double bars with dots on both sides. Most of the pieces are for Easter, though there is one called *Crucifixion*, a haunting triple-time piece by Richard Taylor, and *The Dying Christian* is personal rather than seasonal. So apart from those two, this is a joyful as well as an entertaining anthology.

Items passed over until our next issue include a batch of scores from Breitkopf, two Josquin editions by Nigel Davison from Antico and a thematic catalogue of Adlgasser.

LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Fans of Josquin des Prez (or Josquin Lebloitte, dit des Prez, as we should apparently call him) had a good October, with three concerts by The Tallis Scholars at the Wigmore Hall, each based around a Josquin Mass and works by Clemens non Papa and Gombert, including some of his last Magnificats. They opened (5 October) with Josquin's *Missa Pange lingua*, possibly his last Mass and certainly the best known. Without the usual tenor cantus firmus as a framework, the voices are given freer reign, not only to pick up and develop fragments of the melody, but also to intertwine with each other. The cantus firmus is more apparent in the Missa *L'Homme armé sexti toni* (performed on 18th October), as is the structural device of starting each movement with the emphatic interval of a fourth. After a rather meditative Sanctus, with its busy rather than triumphant Hosanna, the highlight of this mass is the concluding 6-voice Agnus Dei, with its double canons in the top four voices above tenor and bass singing the same notation as each other, but in opposite directions. Whatever the mathematical complexities of such things, it produces music that is truly timeless – some of it could have been written last week. Peter Phillips took a broad approach to the dynamics of both concerts, nicely pointing up the spatial focus of the double-voice sections. The singers were mixed in style and abilities in both concerts. Most impressive was Caroline Trevor's alto voice (particularly in the low-ranging *L'Homme armé*) and the tenor and bass singers, but there were a range of problems elsewhere, particularly in the first concert. The two sopranos had trouble retaining a decent intonation and adopted the all too common habit of letting rip as they clamber or, in this case, often slithered up to their top notes. A more than usually hooty male alto, who gave the note at the start of each piece (unnecessarily when a tenor is intoning at much lower pitch), also had some uncomfortable moments. This was most noticeable in a duet with the 2nd soprano in the Sanctus of the *Missa Pange lingua* although, once they had both settled down, their tuning was so precise, and their tone so closely matched, that sub-tone harmonics became clearly audible. But overall, the consort singing was all too frequently ragged, with some unsteady starts and curious tuning, producing, for example, audible beats in open-fifth cadences. I wonder if some of the awkward opening of pieces was down to Peter Phillips jagged conducting style – his downward arm movement resembles a squiggly crotchet rest and it must be tricky to work out just when the wobbling has finished and the beat is marked. The singing on the 18th October concert was better than in the first, perhaps helped by the presence of no fewer than four tenors alongside the otherwise paired voices.

I suppose it is inevitable in this star-struck world that a singer can command more applause for walking onto the stage without mishap than a leading orchestra can receive for having just given a superb performance of the opening overture. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, appearing at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 6 October, gave a well-planned programme of Handel, each half including arias from *Saul* and *Solomon* respectively, introduced by their overtures. Each half closed with a substantial orchestral work, the Organ Concerto Op7/7 and the Concerto Grosso Op 6/8. Alison Bury did not seem entirely happy with her role as conductor, but her direction from the leader's desk passed by without mishap. Paul Nicholson, promoted from continuo harpsichord to organ soloist, gave an excitable reading of the organ concerto, working on the 'if you've got it, flaunt it' principle of ornamentation and improvisational twiddles. He certainly has got it, by the bucket full, but it is questionable whether Handel's music (or, occasionally, the beat) benefited from the flaunting thereof. But his frisky antics certainly raised a few smiles from his orchestral colleagues and probably impressed many in the audience. The singer, by the way, was one Andreas Scholl, whose stage presence is gaining in confidence and fluidity, as well it might, given the outstanding tone and musical insight he brings to his performances.

Although he was one of the pioneers of the madrigal, Philippe Verdelot, has been largely overshadowed by later composers. Early madrigals are not as adventurous as the works that appeared later in the century, but they are certainly well worth getting to know. They are much simpler in structure and have a greater focus on the overall mood of the text rather than individual words, although they cover similarly torrid emotions. Catherine King and Charles Daniels have just released a CD of his complete *Intavolatura de li madrigali* with Jacob Heringman (lute). To launch the CD, they were joined by Brian Shelly and Robert Macdonald as occasional singers for a performance at the Wigmore Hall on 8 October. The *Intavolatura* is Willaert's 1536 lute-song intabulation of Verdelot's 1533 *Primo libro de madrigali*. Although a few of the original four-voice madrigals were included, most of the pieces featured the solo voices of King or Daniels with the lute taking the other three lines from the 1533 publication. And what beautiful voices they were. Catherine King, in particular, was in spectacular form, with her superbly expressive tone lending just the right degree of passion and emotional depth to the texts. Charles Daniels always impresses, as does Jacob Heringman, whose subtle lute playing never detracts from the vocalists. An excellent concert.

At last I can review an English National Opera production without moaning about the chorus and orchestra. The fact that Monteverdi's *Coronation of Poppea* doesn't need either

chorus or orchestra makes this easier, of course, but the main innovation in this new production was the drafting in of Harry Christophers as conductor and 12 distinguished early music instrumentalists. My reference for *Poppea* is the CD made after the 1988 Opera London performances with Richard Hickox as conductor. The ENO used the same edition (CB's), but added two recorders to the forces and used these, and the usual two violins, during some of the vocal pieces (not indicated in the sources). Christophers made effective use of the wide range of continuo tone colour available, although the logic behind some of the instrumentation was not always clear. The choice between harpsichords, organ or regal and keyboard continuo seemed to be more to the particular text than to a specific character, although there was the usual bias, albeit slight, toward organ for nice Gods and regal for the more unpleasant Gods. *Poppea* is a curious tale: it is not always clear whose side we should be on. Superficially a love story with a happy ending, the principal characters (Nero and his pushy second wife, Poppea) are by no means deserving of our sympathy. The audience's vote on the evening I was there went to Seneca, brilliantly sung by the meaty bass, Eric Owens. Michael Chance got some laughs as Ottone when he swapped his leathers for a pantomime dame outfit, but his voice was also suffering some transgender swings, never staying in the same register for very long. [This is perhaps caused by the inconsistency of tessitura in the version of the opera that survives. *CB*] Busenello's libretto (one of the few opera libretti that can be read comfortably as text) includes some delightfully human moments – like the duet between Ottone (Poppea's unfortunate first husband) and Drusilla (his admirer) where she repeatedly asks if he loves her, to which he keeps replying that he needs her. The production made much of the burlesque elements of the text, not least in Michael Chance's chase around the bizarre scaffolding and plank runway erected around the front of the Circle (part of the design for the whole Italian season). The production seemed to make several attempts to add fun to what might have been seen as a rather unapproachable opera to the usual ENO audience, not least the translation ('il filosofo astuto' came out as 'philosophical tosspot'). David Walker sang Nerone, his countertenor voice taking on a male soprano tone and the soprano habit of screeching the higher notes and indulging in unbridled vibrato. Despite recovering from a cold, he still managed to delight some members of the audience with the first full-frontal male nudity that I can recall on the ENO stage. Both he and Alice Coote, as the devious Poppea, had trouble articulating Monteverdi's vocal fireworks. The standard of singing from the rest of the cast was mixed. Some of the cameo roles came out best, like the trio of Seneca's three friends (the Marks Le Brocq, Wilde and Beesley). Carolyn Sampson made an effective ENO debut as Love, her first solo bravely sung from a precarious heap of scaffolding high about the proscenium arch, but Joanne Lunn's brief debut as Fortune was a less happy affair, with timing and intonation problems. If the increased authenticity of this performance is a sign of things to come at the ENO, then things are looking up – and I am sure their normal chorus enjoyed a few evenings off as much as the audience did.

[We were told that Nerone was singing with a sore throat the night I attended, though rumour has it that he was better that night than when the performance was not preceded by an apology. The duet with Lucano was transposed down a tone, and I have doubts whether it is worth pushing falsettists above their comfortable range. A female soprano is fine if the production is sexually more discreet than this – though I was puzzled why Nerone had to reveal all right at the start: it reminded me of a scene in Ken Russell's television programme called something like A-Z of English Music (a video of which which our daughter delights in watching) of a stripper gradually getting dressed. Instrumentally, the highlight was the opening sinfonia, played slowly with extraordinarily moving ornamentation by Cat Mackintosh and Catherine Weiss. But I could have shot the recorder players, or rather the conductor for bringing in so uncharacteristic a sound: he phoned me up a few days after I saw the production, so I hope I told him so with sufficient good humour! On the night I attended, Drusilla was taken by Mhairi Lawson; the stylistic contrast between her and the rest of the cast (apart from the disappointing Michael Chance) showed the problems in mixing opera and early-music singers. *CB*]

Andreas Erismann showed just how expressive the clavichord can be in his recital for the British Clavichord Society (Art Workers' Guild, 14 October). Playing German music from around 1770, he producing a beautifully singing tone and a wide dynamic range from a copy of a Hubert/Tannenberg instrument, using *Bebung* to colour the notes without noticeably changing their pitch and increasing resonance by use of legato touch. His slow movements were spacious, even occasionally approaching self-indulgence, with liberal use of rubato and a fading of the tone to the almost inaudible. Dramatic early and late sonatas by C. P. E. Bach were contrasted with the more classical and straightforward mood of J. A. Stepán's charming Sonatas in A and g. The mannerist style of Bach's 1746 Sonata in G (Wq 65/17), with its whimsical outer movement and broad adagio, showed just how far his music had moved from that of his Dad. It would have been helpful to have either had a spoken introduction to the programme or some notes about the pieces, and a page turner would have avoided some distracting noise during movements – particularly critical in a clavichord recital.

The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment opened their Pioneering Orchestras series (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 19 October) with a look at Haydn in London (1791-1794). This is the sort of programme that the OAE excel at, and this was no exception. They were on particularly fine form in Symphony 93. The wonderfully growly opening, with its orchestral crashes contrasting with almost chamber-like dark string textures, leads to an Allegro whose two subjects each start in relaxed mood but end with a sting in the tail, taking on a more serious colour that is bought to the fore

later in the movement. The chamber music mood reappears in the almost pastoral-like opening, for string quartet, of the slow movement, although it doesn't last. The Finale runs through a range of emotions, including a classic Haydn joke aimed at the cellist, before its exciting ending. And this was just the start of the concert. Ignaz Pleyel was a pupil of Haydn lured to London in a spoiling operation by a rival to Salomon's concerts, although the relationship between master and pupil seems to have been unaffected by this plot and Salomon himself included a Cello Concerto by Pleyel in his concert on 2 March 1792. Their own David Watkin took the solo role in Pleyel's Cello Concerto in D. However experienced orchestral players are at playing their solo moments with the overall texture of the orchestra, the jump to concerto soloist is a large one. It was the occasional lapses of intonation in the higher positions that gave the game away a bit, although the playing was otherwise fine and the cadenza in the first movement excellent, if improvised by the soloist (or well played, if written out). Lynne Dawson showed the range and flexibility of her soprano voice in mad songs by Purcell (played with stylish accuracy for a 1790's concert with fortepiano and cello continuo), Haydn (the *Scena di Berenice*) and 'Per pietà' from *Così fan Tttte*. I find Lynne Dawson's natural vibrato just a bit too insistent for my taste, although I appreciated her emotional intensity in these pieces. Frans Brüggen's direction was undemonstrative but effective. He chose an interesting orchestral layout with the cellos and double basses on either side of the violins, and the violas in the centre, just behind the front desks of the violins.

The Clerk's Group found themselves confined in a warehouse under some railway arches in South London on 23 October, courtesy of the Southwark Festival. Mass settings from the Ivrea Codex and virelais and motets by Machaut were sung alongside readings from Froissart's Chronicles on the black death, the 100 years war and the schism in the Catholic Church that resulted in rival Popes in Rome and Avignon. A reminder that the most exquisite music can be created in the most miserable of environments! Although there were one or two uncomfortable moments, the five singers excelled both individually and in their various groupings. I couldn't quite work out some of the pronunciation – although clearly French, there seemed to be a varying approach to final consonants, some of which were sounded, some not, in the same contexts. But I am no expert of this aspect of informed performance, so will not pass judgement. One thing that did distract, though, was Edward Wickham's habit of consistently addressing a heavenly audience hovering several feet above the heads of the real one. Much as I applaud musicians willing to speak to audiences, particularly those as articulate as Mr Wickham, eye contact is surely essential.

Opera Restor'd's latest offering, *Love's Labyrinth*, was given an airing at St Mary's Putney, as part of the Wandsworth Arts Festival (7 November). Using a miscellaneous collection of songs by Purcell and others in his circle, interspersed with instrumental pieces for bass viol and harpsichord/theorbo continuo, Peter Holman and Jack Edwards have concocted an impressive tableau which, although lacking the consistency of a single composer or through-composed text, contained a convincing momentum. Choosing from available pieces gave the occasional hiccup in the story, most noticeably the plea, 'will you marry me' well into the second half when the couple had already married during the interval. The accent was on the post-coital aspects of love and relationship, the consummation of the two lovers taking place surprisingly early in the plot, considering the protestations of the young lady in question. My envy of the young man's speedy success had to be tempered by some concern over his wooing technique. It was clear that life was not going to be smooth. The emotionally wrought scenes that followed gave soprano Claire Booth and baritone Phillip Brown ample chance to demonstrate their obvious dramatic prowess. The jauntily articulated ground bass of Purcell's 'She loves and she confesses too' foretold the start of some laddish behaviour that produced vocal histrionics from She. The final scene, depicting old age, included one of the highlights, Pelham Humphrey's 'How severe is forgetful old age' sung by the impressive Claire Booth, who gained points for clarity of enunciation and power of voice. The instrumentalists were excellent. Stephen Devine directed from the harpsichord, Taro Takeuchi played theorbo and guitar and Suzanna Pell took the lead role on bass viol, combining exquisite musical expression with some nimble finger work, notably in the French-sounding Sonata in D by Lorenzo Bocchi (published in Edinburgh c.1725) that opened the second half. With a cast of two singer plus three instrumentalists (and some sumptuous costumes), this imaginative show will travel with ease, suiting many different venues.

The Barbican Cinema's imaginative Sunday morning Bach on Film series recently included the delightfully grainy 1967 German classic, *The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach*. Gustav Leonhardt played and Heinz Hennig directed the Concentus Musicus of Vienna and the Hanover Boys Choir in what, to many people, was their first sight of 'early' instruments. Various stories of Bach's life were presented as interludes between more or less complete performances of many of his works, filmed straight, and with only a few cameo scenes acted out by Leonhardt and his companions. It was fun trying to recognise all the venues, particularly as at least one of the organs has totally changed its appearance since the film was made.

THE LONDON BACH FESTIVAL

Celebrating Bach is nothing new for the London Bach Society, who combined this year's Bach commemoration with an anniversary of their own – their 10th annual London Bach Festival. Past festival themes have included periods from Bach's life and, more recently, composers who influenced, or were influenced by Bach. This year the theme was 'Bach the great colourist – a celebration of his life'. The structure of the Festival is slightly curious – apart from the opening and closing concerts, a performance of the viola da gamba

sonatas and a 'Bach organ recital' with more César Franck than Bach, the remaining concerts were from the Royal Academy of Music's programme of lunchtime and early evening concerts in their Bach series or education programme. But setting these concerts into a festival context, with the attendant advertising and opportunity for larger audiences, can only benefit those students and staff who perform. Similar institutional links were apparent in the final concert, where the guest director and half the vocal cast had connections with Clare College Cambridge.

For their opening concert at St James's Piccadilly (28 October), Lynne Dawson sang Handel's motet *Silete venti* and Bach's celebratory cantata *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen.* She caught the mood of both pieces well, although there were times when the volume could have been turned down. Her *sotto voce* answering 'Alleluia' in the Handel, for example, was the more effective, and more integrated into the orchestral colour, for being quieter. This might also have helped reduce the vibrato that seemed so at odds with the instrumentalists' style of performance. For performers in the audience, it was encouraging to see that even somebody of her stature and experience cannot resist a grimace when an entry isn't quite right. David Blackadder was the undoubted star of the evening for his trumpet playing. He instinctively knew how to mould his tone with that of the orchestra, his long-held notes slowly growing out of the overall sound world. Oboist Anthony Robson was guest director for the Steinitz Bach Players and offered a reconstruction of a Bach Sinfonia from a 'lost orchestral suite', omitting the vocal parts from the opening of cantata BWV194a. For this piece he directed from amongst his two oboe colleagues at the back of the band, and we learnt that one of the jobs of a director is to reassure the audience that a piece has finished. A nice touch from the ebullient Robson was a big thumbs-up to Lynne Dawson as she successfully negotiated a particularly powerful passage. He paced the music well – in Handel's Concerto Grosso Op 6/10, the central Air was expansive and dreamy, exactly what was needed for its pivotal position after the joyfully bubbly Ouverture and the concluding Allegros. The orchestra was most impressive – with no concessions given to the fact it does not normally meet between the annual festivals. I don't know how much rehearsal time they had been allowed, but their playing was impeccably cohesive. A welcome guest at the Festival was the Bach scholar Christoph Wolff, who led a Bach Colloquium at the Royal Academy the following day, honouring the father by revealing more of the work of his son, C. P. E. Bach and the recent re-emergence of a massive collection of music by the Bach family from the Singakademie Library, now found to have survived in the Ukraine. The performances during this afternoon were presumably intended to enliven debate about the wide range of possible modern-day Bach performance practice rather than to show how authentic the Academy's students were, although the lush grand piano performance of canons from the Goldberg variations (curious in such a scholarly setting) was remedied later by some very fine flute playing.

Performances by Royal Academy of Music staff included a recital of Bach, Mendelssohn and Liszt organ works by David Titterington and a performance by Laurence Dreyfus and the Norwegian harpsichordist, Ketil Haugsand, of the three Sonatas for viola da gamba and obbligato harpsichord (at St Andrew's Holborn Circus on 31 October). Dreyfus's eloquent and lyrical gamba playing was enhanced by neat ornamentation and gently effective application of vibrato on the fret, although there were times in the final Suite when things got rather frenetic. Ketil Haugsand clearly understood that in these, of all Bach pieces, the harpsichord playing has to be instrumental in its use of rhetorical inflexion. The treble line, which forms a melodic duet with the gamba, was delightfully projected. The Marais encore freed him from the written score for some magnificent improvised continuo playing. Two inspiring musicians on top form. Earlier the same evening Martin Baker's organ recital included two Bach pieces alongside César Franck's massive but incongruous *Grande pièce symphonique* and an impressive improvisation on a theme submitted by Dr Peter Hurford that Bach might have recognised (the theme, that is, but perhaps not the improvisation). As with too many organ recitals, this one featured the unfortunate habit of just starting, from somewhere behind the audience, with the opening bars covered by the embarrassed ending of conversations and shuffling into seats. If the audience had a nervous start, so did the player, never quite getting into the rhythmic swing of the glorious Prelude and Fugue in C minor and producing some unconvincing trills in the Fugue. The *Pastorale* reinforced an earlier reluctance to let go of passing cadences, leading to an unsteadiness of metrical pulse. Baker is a very accomplished performer, but is clearly far more at home amongst the romantic giants and contemporary improvisation than with Bach. He seems to have found himself in the wrong festival, as does the organ, which is closer to the sound world of post-Mendelssohnian England than Bach's Thuringia or Saxony.

The concluding concert was at St John's, Smith Square (10 November), or rather, at Zimmermann's Kaffeehaus on Leipzig's Catherinenstrasse, to eavesdrop on a meeting of the Collegium Musicum one Friday evening in winter sometime around 1730. Of course Bach's jovial Coffee Cantata was on the menu, as was *The Contest between Phoebus and Pan* and the Harpsichord Concerto in E minor (BWV 1053). The Steinitz Bach Players had undergone quite a few changes in personnel since their opening concert, including a change of leader, but still managed to sound fresh – a tribute to the rich pool of early instrumental players that are available for such occasions. Paul Nicholson directed the concerto from the keyboard, drawing out the richly melodious quality of the Siciliano, both as lyrical soloist over continuo bass strings and from the upper strings while he provided background tinkles in the tuttis. The surrounding Allegro movements were thrilling. Although Bach doesn't give the soloist as much room for improvisation as Handel (see the review of Nicholson's Handel organ concerto above), on this occasion the flourishes were entirely appropriate and musical. A nice touch was

his closing of the harpsichord lid at the end so that the players hiding behind could acknowledge the applause. Clare College's Tim Brown guest-directed the two secular cantatas, both of which gave the singers a chance to flex their dramatic muscles. In the Coffee Cantata this involved some deft juggling of coffee cups and scores, and it was a shame that more of the score had not been memorised. Herr Schlendrian (Jonathan Brown) made a valiant effort to depict the ploddingly pedantic character that Bach portrays in his music, although he was hindered by the natural lyricism in his voice. These character parts are difficult to portray. It is easier for a well known singer to ham it up in performance, but a younger singer has to balance portrayal of their own natural singing style and personality with that seemingly demanded by the score. In a semi-staged performance other issues of credibility also surface – in this case father and daughter did not appear to be far apart in age and Ruth Holton's Lieschen didn't quite match the programme note's image a of lively, mischievous, wilful but affectionate daughter. Nor did her big aria 'Heute noch' come over as 'beguiling'. Indeed, she seemed to take on some of the characteristics of her father. Some of the higher passages were a bit uncomfortable, and a slight quavering to her voice, not enough to be a true vibrato, added to the sense of unsteadiness. Rufus Müller was most effective as the narrator, nicely interrupting the welcoming applause with his opening 'Be quiet, chatter not'. All the singers managed an impeccably English pronunciation of the word Coffee in an otherwise German production. Poor Jonathan Brown was similarly miscast in *The Contest between Phoebus and Pan*, with a role not dissimilar to that of Schlendrian. Here he was called upon to play Pan, the loser in the vocal contest. The bombastic style of his aria was reinforced by Bach's four-square accompaniment, with its awkwardly slithering harmonies in the second part. Nobody sets out to sing such roles as a career, so it was a shame that Brown did not have a chance to demonstrate his natural voice and personality. That honour went to Thomas Guthrie as Phoebus. Guthrie's delightfully lyrical bass voice was ideal for the bucolic charm of his winning aria, in the Arcadian setting provided by Bach's accompaniment as it echoes round the leafy glade. He also scored points for having memorised his score and singing to the audience. Rufus Müller had another chance to excel as Tmolus and Vernon Kirk was also impressive as the unfortunate Midas, whose blusteringly incompetent defence of Pan (whose singing, he insisted, was 'light and unaffected') led to his ridicule and a gift of some ass's ears, an event nicely fore-told by the braying violin motif in Midas's aria. Some fine flute playing by Rachel Becket and Christine Garrett (neither of whom were credited in the programme) completed an enjoyable concert. Although many will have forgotten Bach in his 316th/251st year, it is comforting to know that the London Bach Festival will keep carrying the flag.

We wish all our readers a concordant Christmas and a euphonious New Year

BACH IN MELBOURNE

Graham Abbott

The Melbourne Festival is an annual event, one of the big arts orgies held in the mainland Australian capitals annually (or in the case of Adelaide, in even-numbered years). It spans all manner of art forms from all over the world and is usually a pretty exciting event, enabling us to see and hear things at home we'd normally only experience on recordings and videos. There isn't usually much in the way of early music in the Festival, but this year's (which ran from 19 October to 4 November) was an exception. The Festival's music component was almost entirely devoted to (some would say 'hijacked by') the sacred music of J. S. Bach, under the techno-sounding title of 'Bach 2000'. The aim was to bring to Australia something completely unprecedented: 17 concerts in 17 days devoted to the cantatas and major sacred works of Bach, to mark the 250th anniversary of his death, performed by some of the best early music performers in the world. When the plan was announced the scoffers scoffed, and even during the event the critics criticised. But from those who understood what Melbourne was being given – and this includes the audiences who seemingly couldn't get enough Bach – the response was rapturous and ecstatic.

With the exception of the Windsbacher Knabenchor, all the ensembles had their own period instrument orchestras with them. It was an amazing feast for a city that doesn't even have a permanent period instrument orchestra. There was a little sharing of players (notably trumpets) among the groups, and in cases of illness, a singer often jumped from one group to another as well. I am pretty certain that this would have been the first time in Melbourne that an oboe da caccia part was NOT played on a cor anglais!

Most performances were held in the larger of Melbourne's churches – the Catholic and Anglican Cathedrals and the main Presbyterian church. The acoustic vagaries of these exercised a few people's minds a bit too much. In my opinion those who complained wanted it all to sound like a recording, which live performance rarely does (thank goodness!). The two Passions and the Christmas Oratorio were held in the Melbourne Concert Hall, a large modern venue seating over 2,000.

The whole event was utterly extraordinary, and for my part I can only express wonder at it all. The two performances by Cantus Cölln that I heard were brilliant. The B minor Mass was performed one to a part – vocally and instrumentally – and this fared least well in the caverns of St Patrick's Cathedral (especially from my seat in the very back row). I was expecting it to be worse than it was, and was actually surprised how clearly the arias and duets carried. What suffered most were the fast tempi of the opening and

BACH 2000

In this summary of the complete programme, * indicates performances I attended: I also managed hear rehearsals of several others.

Cantus Cölln under Konrad Junghänel

20 October*: Mass in B minor
21 October* ***Trinity***: *Der Geist hilft*, Cantatas 39 and 21, *Singet dem Herrn*
22 October ***Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring***: *Komm Jesu komm*, Cantatas 30 and 147, *Fürchte dich nicht*
23 October ***The Last Three Motets***: *Jesu meine Freude*, Cantatas 185 and 93, *Ich lasse dich nicht, Lobet den Herrn*
25 October: Mass in B minor (regional performance in Bendigo)

Australian Bach Ensemble under Anthony Chesterman

24 October ***Salvation***: Cantatas 9, 170, 199 and 196
25 October ***Actus Tragicus***: Cantatas 78, 15, 19 and 106
27 October ***Sleepers Wake***: Cantatas 70, 140, 61 and 132

Windsbacher Knabenchor with the Melbourne Symphony under Karl-Friedrich Beringer

26 October ***Reformation***: Cantatas 55, 80, 52 and 100
28 October: Christmas Oratorio, parts 1-3
29 October: Christmas Oratorio, parts 4-6

The Choir of Trinity College Melbourne with Elysium Ensemble under Michael Leighton Jones and Greg Dikmans

1 November ***The Morning Star***: Cantatas 22, 1, 54, & 182

Collegium Vocale Gent under Philippe Herreweghe

30 October* ***Funeral Ode***: Cantatas 198 and 82, Mass in g
2 November*: St Matthew Passion (combined with Bach Collegium Japan)
4 November* ***Magnificat***: Cantatas 11 and 172, Magnificat

Bach Collegium Japan under Masaaki Suzuki

31 October ***Autumn:*** Cantatas 92, 181 and 127
3 November*: St John Passion
4 November, 6 pm ***Easter***: Cantatas 66, 42 and 146

closing choruses of the Gloria and the fast choruses of the Credo. I had no argument with the tempi musically, but felt they might have been modified in that acoustic. The group's concert the following night was in the much smaller Scots Church, and I think I will never hear *Singet dem Herrn* performed so magnificently again in my life. It was a stunning tour de force of vocal (and instrumental – the voices were doubled by single instruments) performance which managed to move as well as excite.

The Australian Bach Ensemble was put together especially for the Festival and comprised some of Australia's best early music performers. I didn't hear their concerts, or those by the local Melbourne ensembles, as I know their work and had to ration my pennies.

By all reports the Windsbacher Knabenchor made huge fans of their audiences. They received excellent press and the rehearsals I heard were stunning. The Melbourne Symphony (pared down to chamber orchestra size and playing, of course, on modern instruments) seemed to relish the opportunity to play in Baroque style and Karl-Friedrich Beringer knew the right way to get the best from them.

My dreams, though, were fulfilled in being able to hear both Philippe Herreweghe and Masaaki Suzuki direct their excellent ensembles. My only criticism of Herreweghe's approach was that the orchestral sound was often too heavy for the voices, especially the soloists. He used four or five first violins, as opposed to Suzuki's three, and this was an obvious point of comparison. The combining of both groups (under Herreweghe's direction) to perform the St Matthew Passion was apparently a first for both ensembles, and the performance was simply and utterly perfect (except for an audience that seemed to cough at the end of every aria). Hearing the Japanese ensemble on their own the next night in the same hall to perform the St John was another privilege. The performance was impeccable and deeply moving.

Herreweghe's conducting style is idiosyncratic to say the least, but his results are beautiful. Collegium Vocale Gent gave a dynamic and moving performance of the Funeral Ode (BWV 198) as their first offering for the Festival. One would go a long way to hear sixteen voices sound like that – and it even made me not care that Bach didn't have female sopranos and altos, or countertenors! It was just beautiful.

Most astounding among all my memories of both Passions was the work of Gerd Türk, who sang the evangelist on both nights. His performances were virtually from memory, with every word beautifully considered and dramatically presented, and every note perfectly placed.

Over the Festival we heard Bach one to a part, four to a part, and larger. We heard single part period instrument ensembles, period instrument chamber orchestras and modern instruments. It was an excellent overview not only of Bach but of Bach performance practice as well, something most people here seem to have missed.

These few observations do little to capture the magic of every performance, and the rare opportunity we in Melbourne had to get so much of an overview of Bach's work. Some wished for more, such as a parallel series featuring other parts of his oeuvre – the orchestral works, the organ works, the chamber works – but the Festival did run a series of discussion fora on Bach, which enabled people to discuss Bach, his sacred music, and the performances being presented, in a public context.

And the good news is that Philippe Herreweghe will return for the 2001 Festival – this time conducting Berlioz!

LETTERS

Dear Clifford

The principle of decorum – speaking/playing in an appropriate style – should over-ride all other details in measuring where 'over-the-top' is. OTT is in a different place for Bach than for Pandolfi. If Pandolfi were played like Bach, it wouldn't be appropriate. These sonatas were composed by the performer, and the dots which appear on the printed page are a pale sketch of what might happen in a convincing stylish performance. Any performance of this type of music is bound to contain an extra large injection of the performer's imagination since, if only what was on the page was represented in sound, it would be a very poor show. Good taste does not always coincide with appropriate taste, and Pandolfi performed in what is regarded as good taste would be inappropriate!

Cicero *De Oratore* II ii 5: 'Speaking well has no delimited territory within whose borders it is enclosed and confined. All things whatsoever must be dealt with by him who professes to have this power, or he must abandon the name of eloquence.' *Judy Tarling*

I'm not sure that the distinction between decorum and good taste suggested here is entirely in accordance with the normal use of the words, though the idea is clear. The problem with Cicero is that if one thinks of Cato's definition of a good orator, Vir bonus dicendi peritus *(a good man skilled at speaking), Cicero doesn't fit the bill. He may not have been quite so bad as depicted by Colleen McCullough (mentioned as an excuse to correct the misspelling of her name last month), but even in my school days I wasn't impressed by his character, and his contemporary Julius Caesar's direct style is a much better model: how complex would Cicero have made the famous opening sentence* Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres *(All Gaul is divided into three parts)?* CB

Dear Clifford

Andrew Manze's article 'Pandolfi and the Critics' and the letter from Eric Cowell of Brewhouse Records in *EMR* 65 raise a number of interesting points on which as a reviewer with considerable prior experience of the classical record business I hope you'll be kind enough to allow me to comment.

At the start of his article Andrew Manze asks what reviewers of early music recordings are actually reviewing. Is it, he writes, 'musicianship or scholarship? performance or performance practice?' The short answer is that we should be covering all those topics, to which I would add that in the instance of an obscure composer or work it should also be a part of our service to the reader to fill in the historical background. That's an awful lot of information to impart and it raises one of the fundamental problems that frequently faces a reviewer: how do I say what needs to be said about this recording within my limit of, say, 250 words? And, no, Clifford, that's not a specific dig at *EMR*'s reviews, because it's a widespread problem that applies to all but a few publications. The reviews in quality national newspapers are a case in point, often (by definition) superficial pieces that run to little more than Manze's 'couple of sentences'. Why? It is not the case with book reviews, where the most arcane of titles not infrequently attracts more column inches than the total devoted to record reviews. I fear that until the reviewing of specialist early music discs is elevated to the status of being a far more serious occupation (imagine an equivalent of the London Review of Books!), the caveats justifiably raised by Andrew Manze will remain largely unredressed.

Eric Cowell's letter regarding the current problems of the classical record industry also requires comment. When our specialist retail business was sold ten years ago in order that I might assume an infinitely more precarious existence as a freelance writer, one of my prime motivations was the certain knowledge that sales of classical records would start to fall. It didn't need a clairvoyant to work the position out. By the early 90s serious collectors who had been avidly replacing their vinyl records with CDs had virtually achieved their aim. They stepped back, looked with satisfaction at heaving shelves, and very reasonably decided to take a breather. Henceforth if they continued to buy at all, they would buy only what particularly interested them. Astonishingly, the major companies (by that time almost exclusively run by people who had little or no understanding of the industry) were taken by surprise. The howls of anguish that followed in the wake of predictably falling sales were succeeded by such desperate measures as the dreaded compilation album and the even worse cross-over. Instead of taking a long, hard look at themselves, the majors virtually abdicated their pole position as providers of 'serious' recordings. Today it is the independent companies who have inherited the earth, providing companies such Eric Cowell's with a golden opportunity to fill the gap. But here, too, there are problems. Too many small independent companies are between them producing (a) too much product and (b), more seriously, product that does not meet a sufficiently high standard. That, I would argue from experience, is a particular problem for early music. One of the most astute men in the business (yes, it was Ted Perry) has made the point that it is easy for anyone to make a recording; the problems start with marketing it. Equally wise words on the subject came out of the interview with Reinhard Goebel mentioned by Andrew Manze: 'the early music scene should work a little bit slower... I would diagnose fewer records... more thinking.' That is surely excellent advice which would be to the eventual benefit of the Andrew Manzes of this world. Fewer records and more thought on the part of performers, record companies and record reviewers would be of immense value to early music in general.

Brian Robins

Dear Clifford,

I feel I must react to Ann Bond's letter in *EMR* 65 concerning written-out continuo parts. Of course what a good continuo player does 'defies notation' – I would suggest that this is true of any good instrumentalist or singer. I cannot, however, go along with her statement that one only 'plays in four-part harmony sometimes', and that the surviving examples of 'realised' continuo are mere compositional exercises. Of course figured bass was central to composition in the 18th century. Heinichen's monu-ental near-1000 page tome deals to a large part with just this, as the title implies (*Der Generalbass in der Komposition*). But even he discusses how to divide five and six part chords between the hands – i.e. they were to be played! Telemann in his *Singe-, Spiel-, und Generalbass-Uebungen* makes it quite clear from the first pages that his concern is the playing of the notes, not the theory of composition. Gerber's realisation under the guidance of J. S. Bach of a Sonata by Albinoni (Peters 9044, if you can still get it) might be considered a theoretical exercise were it not for the fact that the additions and corrections by J. S. himself have less to do with the correct realisation of the figures than a musician's improvement of a practical accompaniment. The above German/Italianate examples assume, or specify outright, a basic four part texture, which can increase to five or six parts, and, rarely, as in the case of parallel six chords, can decrease to three. French continuo practice was stylistically different, but here, as well, four parts is clearly the norm for practical accompaniment – a reduction to three parts is not even suggested for chains of six chords. The six chord on the second degree of the scale, so often lamentably realised in modern editions with a bare tritone, invariably incorporated the 4th as well, the so-called 'Petite Sixte', of necessity a four part chord. St Lambert and Dandrieu both specify accompaniment, not composition, in the titles of their respective works, and their instructions are practical, dealing with e. g. the position of the right hand on the keyboard. Both are again entirely four part, and Dandrieu even specifies in tablature the suggested practical realisation. I think we ignore all this at our peril, and the sound of a good continuo player accompanying stylistically in four or more parts bears little relation to the apologetic picking away at a few notes in the right hand that one sometimes hears!

What to write down in modern editions is certainly a problem, but I suggest that a simple correct realisation of a four-part texture at least gives an unskilled amateur an idea of correct part leading, and they can leave out what they technically can't play. That a computer programme won't consider three parts on one stave is hardly an argument, and that performance practice should in any way be dictated by what a computer programme can or cannot do I find most distasteful. Incidentally my version of Sibelius certainly accepts three contrapuntal parts on one stave.

Paul Simmonds

What worries me about the treatises on continuo playing is that they say so little about such practical matters as varying the density of chords for reasons of dynamics or because there isn't room between the bass and the solo part. So what seems to be good sense musically (in the case of the first) and has support from the theorists (in the case of the second) clash with the rule of four parts. It makes sense that pupils were taught to play in four parts, dealing with composition and continuo playing simultaneously. But were the rules followed if there was good reason otherwise, and good did such a reason have to be? CB

Dear Sir/Madam,

Clifford Bartlett's review of the recently published volume 9 of *The Byrd Edition* (*Annual Byrd Supplement 6*, p. 11 in *EMR* 61) opens with a misleading statement that implies that the editorial policy involves the reduction of note values in some of the volumes. I have been an advocate for original note values since the Musica Britannica *Consort Songs* volume of 1969. *The Byrd Edition* was the first major collection of pre-17th-century music to be committed to the policy of original note values from the start and set the pace for subsequent editions in this regard. The only inconsistency arose when Stainer & Bell reissued Byrd's instrumental music (volume 17 of *The Collected Works*) under the new series title with no consultation.

It was difficult in the Wulstan-dominated days of the early 1970s also to secure original pitch, though I have made my position clear on that on a number of occasions, most recently in 'Pitch and Transposition in the Paston Manuscripts' in *Sundry Sorts of Music Books: Essays on the British Library Collection Presented to O. W. Neighbour on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Chris Banks, Arthur Searle and Malcolm Turner (London: The British Library, 1993). It would have been more helpful of Mr Bartlett to say that transposition occurs in only five volumes – the four containing the Anglican church music (for which the transpositions are justified and justifiable) and, to my regret, volume 1, *Cantiones Sacrae* (1575) – in order to avoid the false impression (as on the question of note values) that a substantial portion of *The Byrd Edition* reflects policies which in fact it doesn't espouse.

A team consisting of myself, David Mateer and Jeremy Smith are now working on the two remaining volumes with the aid of a grant from the USA National Endowment for the Humanities. (I myself – not Thurston Dart as Bartlett again erroneously reports – had revised these on the old Fellowes plates while a student of Dart's in the 1960s.) Naturally the conclusion of so great an enterprise is an occasion to wish some things could have been done differently – USA letter size (8.5" x 11") or Continental A4 paper size would have been another improvement over British octavo. But while bibliographical sophistication will no doubt increase (as Jeremy Smith's contributions to our knowledge of English music-printing of the period show), music editions are entering another phase. It is to be hoped that Stainer & Bell, like software companies and some book publishers, will eventually be able to create electronic editions of their major series from which excerpts can be quickly and cheaply downloaded from the Internet and formated to suit indi-

vidual needs. There is no reason in this postmodern as well as computerised age to think of texts in quite the same way. We have them, most of them, already. When digitised, they can be morphed at will. They therefore become capable of reflecting the instability of their origins rather than the perfect single state of the modernist dream. This is possibly the realistic answer to the questions I was raising some years ago in an essay about the ideology of editing in Nicholas Kenyon's collection *Authenticity and Early Music* (Oxford UP, 1988, pp. 83-114). It certainly means that no one will ever have to 'start revising the earlier volumes again' as Bartlett supposes, at least not in the way he imagines.
Yours sincerely,

Philip Brett

I have greeted each volume of The Byrd Edition with enthusiasm. To have begun a review with a history of the transformation of The Collected Works of William Byrd *to* The Byrd Edition *would have bored the reader straight away, especially since the story is likely to be familiar to readers of an* Annual Byrd Supplement. *The General Preface to the volume under discussion makes no particular point about the change of title: indeed,* The Byrd Edition *is only mentioned once, three lines from the bottom of the page. I was not criticising any individual for the differences in policy: regular readers of* Early Music Review *and, before that began,* Early Music News, *will know that I am thoroughly in agreement with its current editorial practice. The volumes that depart from it that were in my mind were the 1575* Cantiones Sacrae *and the instrumental music, which I happen to have used far more than those devoted to the English church music: it is, indeed, a pity that they are both, for reasons Philip explains, untypical. As for who revised the old Fellowes volumes, if the title page reads 'revised under the direction of Thurston Dart', it is adequate for a passing remark to take that at face value without investigating which of his various research assistants was responsible. It is nonsense to claim that* The Byrd Edition *was the first major collection of pre-17th-century music to be committed to a policy of original note values from the start: I mentioned one in my first paragraph,* Tudor Church Music. *So I assume you mean the first UK edition since the wave of modernising postwar editors.*

Your comment on the ability of editions in the future to 'be capable of reflecting the instability of their origins rather than the perfect single state of the modernist dream' is a significant one. As a publisher, I use the computer to prepare music but not yet to distribute it. There is not necessarily a fixed version. Our edition of that controversial work, Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers, *which you conducted in 1990 just before it was computerised, is now sold in whatever version a conductor may require. My chief misgiving with electronic distribution of our output is that we strive to produce editions that are easy to perform from and we don't want them to circulate in the format of loose sheets of paper. With orchestral managements and department secretaires who can't photocopy four A4 pages in the right order onto an A3 sheet or don't realise that an odd-numbered page is always on the right, I think there is still a demand for user-friendly music on paper. The computer can deal with matters like transposition and note values (our programme can even double or halve note values automatically, as well as transpose and adjust the key signature to avoid the solecism of sharp minor keys being printed with an extra sharp). But as with the on-line* New New Grove, *from which I am sure users will run of frequently-consulted pages, there is a great danger of the new technology merely flooding us with more (but less organised) paper.* CB

Dear Clifford,

It seems to me that you have not clearly understood the identity of the bass viola da gamba, violone and contrabasso da gamba in 17th-century Italy.

All Italian sources that I know seem to agree on the following:

1. The viola da gamba tuned from D upwards (which modern players often call a bass viol) was always referred to as a tenor-alto instrument.

2. The bass viola da gamba, also referred to as violone, was tuned from GG or AA upwards, Obviously this instrument played mainly, but not exclusively, in the 8' register. If the bass viola da gamba was the instrument tuned on GG, the contrabasso da gamba was obviously something even lower to Monteverdi, who calls for 'duoi bassi da gamba, & un contrabasso de viola' in *Orfeo*.

3. The contrabasso da gamba is described by Banchieri as being tuned from DD an octave below the alto/tenor (not from GG as you claim). With this tuning, it must have played generally in the 16' register. The 'duoi bassi da gamba, & un contrabasso de viola' in *Orfeo* would then be two G-violoni, presumably doubling the two bass trombones at 8' pitch, and a DD instrument doubling the continuo at the lower octave, which would still be possible when transposing the coro di spiriti down a fourth.

So can you please stop smacking performers or editors on the head for performing, or advocating performance of, contrabasso parts (as distinct from violone parts) at 16' pitch.

Incidentally, Agazzari says that the violone should dwell as much as possible on the lower strings, which would seem to mean playing an octave lower than written. Was he being inauthentic?

The second smack on the head you regularly give is to anyone doubling the organ continuo with a bowed instrument in 17th-century-Italian music. Again I feel that you have only half-understood the problem. Surely what you should be criticising is the use of completely inadequate organs, which sound more like a recorder consort in a shoe box than an Italian organ. Even smaller Italian organs have strong basses, so which director is the more authentic: the one who doesn't double the organ or the one who realises that the bass register of his organ is completely useless and therefore uses a bowed bass instrument? According to *Lex Bartlett*, it is the first, but according to my ears it is the second. When using my Italian organ for recordings and

concerts within a reasonable travelling distance, we do not (and do not need to) double with a bass melody instrument; but when confronted with the sort of organ we usually meet on tour, the doubling with a melody instrument produces musical results closer to my undoubled Italian organ.

Your statement in the KM edition of the 1610 Vespers: 'the continual use of a melodic instrument in the *bassus generalis* line should be avoided', although satisfying the letter of the law, leads in 90% of performances to worse musical results – at least from an aural point of view. What you should be doing is campaigning for the use of real organs which have some virtue other than that of fitting in the back of an estate car.

Yours sincerely,

Roland Wilson

I'm no expert on organology, but have in my mind (I wouldn't like to quote from what origin) the idea that the technology of providing 16' strings was difficult and that such as there may have been would have been slow to sound, especially at the DD level, and none too subtle. I'm aware of the clash of this with written sources, so would welcome further information. What is the current opinion of the thinner, treated strings, for instance?

Looking at scores raises doubts that the contrabasso de viola should sound at 16'. The accompaniment to Orfeo's Sol tu nobile Dio, *for example, is scored for 'tre Viole da braccio, & un contrabasso de Viola'. It is in four parts (C1, C1, C3 & F4 clefs); if the contrabasso di viola really sounded at 16', there would be an enormous gap between it and the C3 part. It is, I suppose, possible that an 8' pitch viola was assumed to play as well, but that is not a necessary assumption. The following Sinfonia a5 (C3, C3, C4, C4, F4) is for 'Viole da braccio, un Org[ano] di leg[no] & un contrabasso di Viola da gamba'. Again we do not know if the contrabasso was the only instrument on the bottom part; but to my (obviously subjective) ears, the close writing of the five instruments is spoilt either with only the organ at 8' and the contrabasso an octave below or with a bass viola da braccio also playing the bottom line at 8' pitch. Hopping to Venice, Gabrieli clearly loved low sounds; but his bottom note (BB♭) is clearly intended to be sounded at pitch. This is obviously a topic that requires further discussion.*

I am thoroughly in agreement about the need for organs with proper basses. But I'm not sure that adding a melodic instrument to a bass part that isn't melodic is any help. As a listener, I find that a string bass instrument jars in most soloistic sections of the 1610 Vespers. I don't know whether the theorbo was a normal part of the Mantuan ecclesiastical establishment; but the work was clearly intended for the court forces, who would use their customary instruments, including the fashionable novelty designed for accompanying voices, the chitarrone. This is much better for beefing up a feeble organ bass without the sustaining problems of a bass violin/violone, and appears in later ensemble editions as an alternative for the melodic bass part. I must confess that I'm much happier playing with a chitarrone than with a string bass, since in the latter case every note-length needs to be a collaboration with its player, which gets in the way of concentrating on the singer. CB

Dear Clifford,

I was intrigued by the performance practice implications of your review of the Byrd masses (*EMR* 65, p.15) – 'I would have thought that those celebrating a clandestine mass behind closed doors would sing more discretely'. Each one in a separate room, presumably?

Keep up the good work. *Simon Hill*

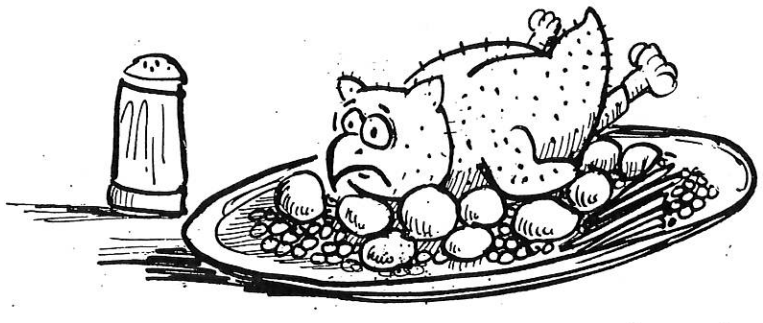
Matthew Cooke

While shepherds watched

The music printed on pp. 16-17 is taken from *Twelve Tunes (in four parts) composed for the use of the Church at North Mims... by Matthew Cooke* [c.1790].

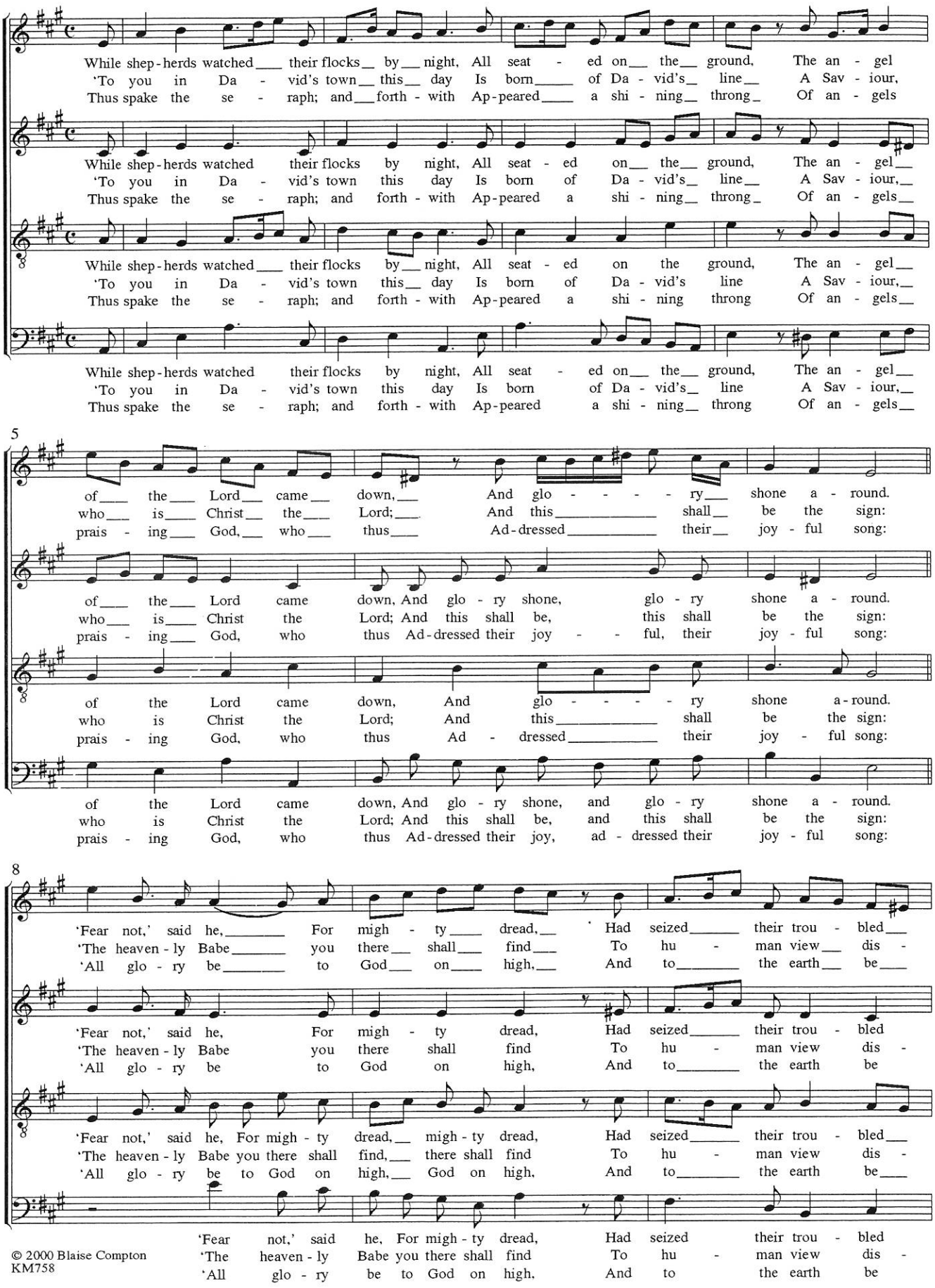
Cooke (1761? - 1829) was a pupil of Nares and worked as a copyist, an organist and a teacher. His most important appointment was as organist of St George's, Bloomsbury. His *Twelve Psalm Tunes*, with unfigured bass and occasional instrumental parts, were obviously composed for an organless choir. A more substantial publication followed some five years later: *Select portions of the psalms of David*. Other surviving music includes songs and dances, *A sett of six lessons for the harpsichord or piano forte* and an arrangement of the overture of *The Magic Flute* for piano duet. North Mimms is in Hertfordshire (now less well-known than South Mimms, which has given its name to a motorway service station where the M25 crosses the M1); it has a medieval church and a large Elizabethan house.

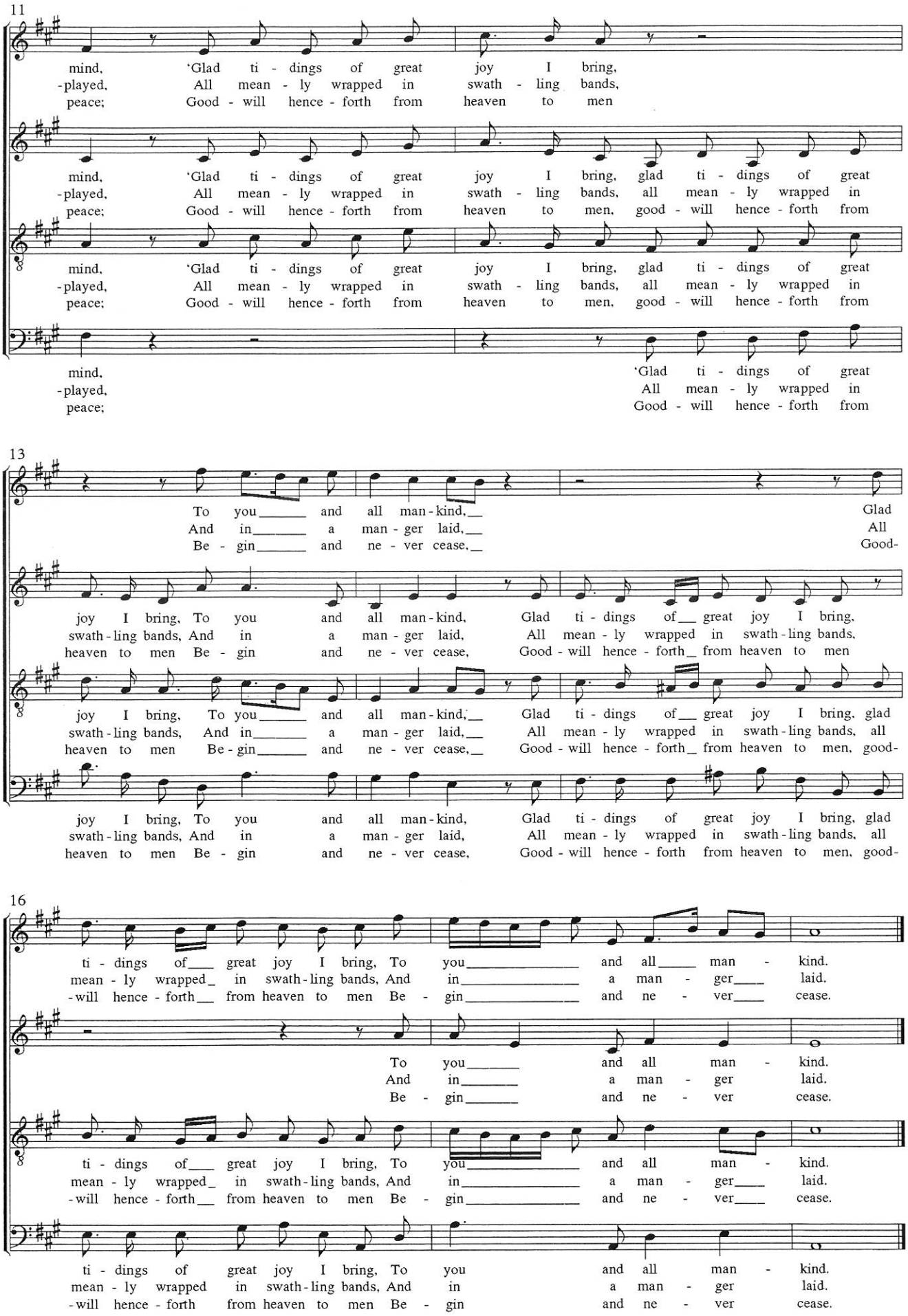
We are grateful to Blaise Compton for his edition.



Sweet Suffolk owl
(serving suggestion)

Matthew Cooke – While shepherds watched




11
mind, 'Glad ti - dings of great joy I bring,
-played, All mean - ly wrapped in swath - ling bands,
peace; Good - will hence - forth from heaven to men
mind, 'Glad ti - dings of great joy I bring, glad ti - dings of great
-played, All mean - ly wrapped in swath - ling bands, all mean - ly wrapped in
peace; Good - will hence - forth from heaven to men, good - will hence - forth from
mind, 'Glad ti - dings of great
-played, All mean - ly wrapped in
peace; Good - will hence - forth from
13
To you and all man - kind, Glad
And in a man - ger laid, All
Be - gin and ne - ver cease, Good-
joy I bring, To you and all man - kind, Glad ti - dings of great joy I bring,
swath - ling bands, And in a man - ger laid, All mean - ly wrapped in swath - ling bands,
heaven to men Be - gin and ne - ver cease, Good - will hence - forth from heaven to men
joy I bring, To you and all man - kind, Glad ti - dings of great joy I bring, glad
swath - ling bands, And in a man - ger laid, All mean - ly wrapped in swath - ling bands, all
heaven to men Be - gin and ne - ver cease, Good - will hence - forth from heaven to men, good-
joy I bring, To you and all man - kind, Glad ti - dings of great joy I bring, glad
swath - ling bands, And in a man - ger laid, All mean - ly wrapped in swath - ling bands, all
heaven to men Be - gin and ne - ver cease, Good - will hence - forth from heaven to men, good-
16
ti - dings of great joy I bring, To you and all man - kind.
mean - ly wrapped in swath - ling bands, And in a man - ger laid.
-will hence - forth from heaven to men Be - gin and ne - ver cease.
To you and all man - kind.
And in a man - ger laid.
Be - gin and ne - ver cease.
ti - dings of great joy I bring, To you and all man - kind.
mean - ly wrapped in swath - ling bands, And in a man - ger laid.
-will hence - forth from heaven to men Be - gin and ne - ver cease.
ti - dings of great joy I bring, To you and all man - kind.
mean - ly wrapped in swath - ling bands, And in a man - ger laid.
-will hence - forth from heaven to men Be - gin and ne - ver cease.

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

Music for Candlemas: Gregorian Chant & Early 13th-century Polyphony from the Ecole Notre-Dame Trigon (Margot Kalse, Jos Somsen, Penny Turner) 51' 25"
Passacaille **932**

I'm not quite sure why I find these three women feel more convincing than the more famous, slightly larger female ensemble: perhaps Trigon is a little less anonymous, and they make the chant feel as if it is going somewhere. The organa are freer in tempo than one often hears, with some expressive slithering that will either entice or infuriate. The programme comprises the antiphons from the Candlemas procession and the propers of the mass, sung to chant interspersed with Notre-Dame organa and ending with *Ave maris stella* (the only hymn on the disc: the *hymns* of the English booklet note are a faulty translation of *chant*). This is not a full liturgical reconstruction, but the listener gets the sense of a context of the part-music (though it wouldn't have been sung by women at Notre-Dame). *CB*

MEDIEVAL

Cantigas de Santa Maria Ensemble Alla Francesa 64' 24"
Opus 111 **OPS 30-308**

Not quite as Martin Cunningham suggests that the music should be performed (see *EMR* 63, p. 2). but fascinating and impressive nonetheless. Brilliantly sung, with considerable imagination in vocal and instrumental sound and style, though far less African than most such interpretations, this is immensely enjoyable and I would hate to be the killjoy to wonder whether it is all untenable! *CB*

Die tenschen Mordor: Meister Rumelant, minnesinger at the Danehof court, 1287 Alba (Agnethe Christensen *voice*, Miriam Andersén *voice & harp*, Poul Hoxbro *perc*) 53' 23"
Classico **CLASSCD 335**

I generally find that there is a correlation between the quantity of percussion and my suspicion of the validity of recordings of medieval music. With percussion providing a third of the performance forces, my suspicions were roused. As with the disc reviewed above, I have intellectual doubts, but the performances are in themselves utterly convincing and extremely enjoyable. I was very impressed by the singing. There is no vast repertoire of Danish medieval song, but among the songs of the German Rumelant are three which relate to the period between the murder of Eric V on 22 November 1286 and the conviction of those responsible on 25 May 1287. (The booklet contains extensive historical information.) These are supplemented by other more general songs, making a unusual disc that is recommended to all interested in medieval song. *CB*

15th CENTURY

A Marriage of England and Burgundy The Binchois Consort, Andrew Kirkman 74' 48"
Hyperion **CDA67129**
Busnois *Regina coeli I & II*; **Frye** *Missa Summe trinitate*; **anon [Busnois]** *O pulcherrima, Incomprehensibilia firme*; **anon [Frye]** *Missa Sine nomine*

No academic worries here: of course, we don't know how Frye and Busnois expected their music to be performed, but the six singers and conductor of The Binchois Consort represent it to the best of current knowledge (and in thirty years time will probably sing it completely differently!) The booklet justifies the attributions to Frye and the possible relationships among the pieces; useful though the information is, the music doesn't need props, so just buy it and enjoy it. *CB*

16th CENTURY

Byrd *Music for the Virginals* Aapo Häkkinen
Alba **ABCD 148** 70' 50"
MB 8, 12, 13, 42, 46, 54, 60, 70, 110, 114-7

Anyone who thinks that Byrd sounds best played in some kind of severe, metronomic style should have a good listen to this CD. Aapo Häkkinen really teases out the continental flavours in a nicely balanced programme of work both familiar (*Lachrymae Pavan*) and unfamiliar (Fantasia MB13), and isn't afraid to let things get quite heated when the music can take it. The harpsichord is interesting too – an original low pitch, brass-strung 1575 Trasuntino in the Accardi collection. Disappointingly, perhaps, Häkkinen has chosen to use a non-original high pitch keyboard instead of the original (which plays at a fourth lower than 'normal'). Whilst we are denied the rich, dark low pitch sonorities, we get some fantastically grandiose sections (most notably in *Walsingham*) at 16' pitch – great fun and quite unforgettable. The *Lachrymae Pavan* is performed without any damping, giving a lovely harp-like effect, although it's not clear whether this is something the harpsichord is usually capable of, or something rigged up specially for the recording. Other notable works are the *Goodnight Ground* and the MB46 Fantasia. Häkkinen's sparkling virtuosity here creates a real sense of excitement, and yet the performances remain communicative, intellectually satisfying and extremely easy to get along with. A listener cannot ask for more.
Robin Bigwood

Morales *Missa Si bona suscepimus* The Tallis Scholars, Peter Phillips 56' 01"
Gimell **CDGIM 033**
+ Crecquillon *Andreas Christi famulus*, Verdelot *Si bona suscepimus*.

It has taken me a long to find out what all the fuss was about with The Tallis Scholars. Their live performances, while technically excellent, usually leave me cold, and although their recordings set high standards, I rarely feel that they are much more than literal reproductions of the notes. This recording is different: the richly-layered textures of Morales's arching phrases lead them to some quite passionate singing, hugely satisfying to listen to. The strong, rhythmical singing has enough flexibility for some really tender moments – *et incarnatus est* and *Agnus Dei*, for example – while maintaining a secure framework which can also accommodate the choppy Osannas, which are full of child-like life and fun. Some sections are sung by solo voices, the rest has two to a part. To the singers' credit, this does not detract from their accuracy, but only adds richness to the well-balanced sound.

The music is marvellous: Morales transforms Verdelot's transparent, restrained motet into true Spanish opulence, with ravishing peals of imitation throughout the voice parts, beautiful use of the two soprano and tenor lines, and occasional naughty passing notes. The reason for the inclusion of Thomas Crecquillon's motet *Andreas Christi famulus* is, allegedly, to 'put the particular qualities of Morales's style in relief', though the motet was until recently attributed to Morales himself; but I suspect it also advertises a future Tallis Scholars recording!* *Selene Mills*

* Or was the misattribution only discovered after the recording? This is the first issue of the newly emancipated Gimell, now independent after a period under the ownership of Universal. *CB*

Il Ballarino: Italian Dances c1600 The Broadside Band, Jeremy Barlow 58' 25"
Hyperion *Helios* **CDH55059** ££ rec 1986

I enjoyed this when it first appeared, but it seems a little rigid and joyless now: even that great improviser George Weigand is a bit straight-laced. But it is a good collection of popular renaissance tunes and will be useful to dancers, since Jeremy Barlow is well aware of the physical movements for which the music is the guide. *CB*

Carlos: Mille Regretz: La Cancion del Emperador La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Hesperion XXI 76' 26"
Alia Vox **AV 9814**
Music by Arbeau, Cabezon, Encina, Flecha I, Isaac, Jannequin, Josquin, Morales, Narvaéz, Parabosco, Willaert

This anthology takes a little while to develop a shape: the opening tracks strive a little too hard for contrast and variety. But the later sections, which include the Sanctus and Agnus of the Morales Mass on Josquin(?)'s chanson (the booklet does not

admit that the attribution is controversial) and the chanson itself are impressively and movingly sung (though I prefer the version by Jennie Cassidy etc: cf *EMR* 63 p. 22). However, I suspect that those who would buy a disc chiefly for them will already own a good performance of the Mass and innumerable versions of the chanson, so it is the attraction of the first 60 minutes that need weighing in the balance, and I wasn't entirely enthralled or convinced: apart from any more profound criticism, there's rather a lot of percussion. *CB*

Celebrating Shakespeare: music to Shakespeare's plays. Miriam Meltzer *S*, Benny Hendel *narrator*, Phoenix: The Israel Consort of Viols, Myrna Herzog *dir* 50' 41"

I had an e-mail recently which seemed to be a circular justifying the Israeli side in the current troubles. Something in it annoyed me, so I sent a sentence or two in reply, to which the response was that it was sent by mistake for a request to subscribe to *EMR*. Along with a subscription came this CD of a live concert in Jerusalem in Spring 1999. I suspect that it worked better as a concert than as a CD: it needs more editing to make the alteration between speech (mostly rather short chunks from the bard) work, and the music isn't always acoustically satisfactory. But it gives a good idea of what was clearly a very successful concert. (The final applause and thanks are a bit excessive: don't hang on in case there's an encore – there isn't). Miriam Meltzer sings well, apart from an exaggerated avoidance of emphasising the final note of a phrase: this is often a sensible practice, but not with verse texts like *Fortune my foe* with strong masculine rhymes. The arrangements (even a consort-song 'In darkness let me dwell') work well. Despite the use of treble viol for music that suits the fiddle, this is a well-researched and impressive debut for the ensemble, and provides a convenient anthology of music linked to the plays. *CB*

Unnumbered disc available from Phoenix, HaYovel St, Ra'anana 43400 Israel
http://www.fortunecity.com/tinpan/baxendale/711

Lie down, poor heart: English Lutesongs & Folk Ballads Daniel Taylor *cT*, Sylvain Bergeron *lute* 69' 20"
Dorian **DOR 90287**

The programme is divided about equally into folksongs, lute songs, and lute solos. The latter come mostly from the Margaret Board Lute Book, with the addition of a set of variations by Carolan (melody only, arranged by the player with tricksy elaborateness). The folksong interpretations are egregiously arty, with unmetrical caesuras and a tendency to contrived, superficial emoting. A performing style determined to vary the expression between stanzas should start with an inherently expressive voice type, which Taylor's falsetto alto certainly isn't. 'She wept, she cried, she damn' near died' is charmingly funny from Pears and Britten; here it's damn' near embarrassing. The arranger (Bergeron?) tends to take the most artful option (e.g. with Brahmsian bass lines) when he should have chosen the simplest. The notes on 'Black is the colour' refer to 'an unresolved ending in the minor subdominant', but the first three stanzas end on a tonic; when the last verse does go where it should, the subdominant is undercut with a spineless second inversion. The lute songs are better, though Taylor won't admit – as Deller obviously did – that the falsetto alto by its nature compels a relatively neutral interpretation in this repertoire. But at least Taylor is far less mannered here than in some of the folksongs; his excellent technique is particularly effective in 'I saw my lady weep' (whose second and third stanzas fit the vocal line very poorly: were they ever meant to be sung at all?). The CD should be approached with due caution, but it has much to offer the singer's many admirers. *Eric Van Tassel*

Fagotto, Basson, Dulcian, Curtal... Une énigme de la fin de la Renaissance Syntagma Amici, Jérémie Papasergio 59' 26"
Ricercar **233392**
Music by Banchieri, G. Bassano, Bertoli, Böddecker, Du Caurroy, Glamonte, Guami, Mainerio, Moderne, Ortiz, Parabosco, Praetorius, Salaverde, Selle, Susato, Verdelot

Using a flexible ensemble whose name puns on Praetorius's *Syntagma Musicum*, the Ricercar label is illustrating renaissance instruments in this series of recordings. Jérémie Papasergio, the dulcian virtuoso who features in recordings by, for example, La Fenice, is joined by three *amici* to display the range of repertoire which the dulcian might typically have played in the 16th and 17th centuries. The repertoire and history of the instrument, and its several names (for sometimes the names may not always refer to the instrument we would assume today) are discussed in generous sleeve notes. This is a serious attempt to document the instrument – so far as is possible in 50 pages of notes and an hour of music. The consort sound is strong and rich and employs well differentiated styles for the dance and vocal music. Italian, German and Spanish repertoire is represented – the last by Selma y Salaverde – in the expected divisions pieces. In this vein but much less expected is an extraordinary *Sonata sopra La Monica* by Boddecker. Papasergio's considerable virtuosity does not become an end in itself, displaying changes in weight and styles of articulation which keep the music always alive. The ensemble piece by Selle made me hope one day to hear the group perform Schütz's *In lectulo per noctes*. Larger scale pieces (an eight part canzona by Guami and Bassano's seven part *Hodie Christus natus est*) are achieved by dint of supplying one choir on a keyboard. The Bassano uses a regal, which works peculiarly well, perhaps because each choir gives as good as it gets in terms of tone colour, and possible byre-like connotations. This is an excellent disc. The repertoire span means it is an interesting listen for those with a general interest – not only those who wish to be dazzled by unbelievable technique! *Stephen Cassidy*

17th CENTURY

Biber ***Missa Salisburgensis*** Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra & Choir, Ton Koopman 51' 39"
Erato **3984-25506-2**
+ Sonata a7 & Sonata Sti Polycarpi a9

We've been a bit slow getting this. It has the advantage over the McCreesh version in that it was recorded in the place for which the work was written – Salzburg Cathedral. That may have some bearing on the tempi, which are here much more sprightly, encouraged by the Salzburg architecture and acoustic which was intended to provide a setting for polychoral performance, whereas large English churches demand a more stately movement and have less manageable echos. (In the cathedral and large parish church used for the Peter Holman performances that I and several of our writers were involved in last summer, adequate spacial separation was impossible, though tempi were nearer Koopman's than McCreesh's.) Koopman's tempi work very well, except that the triple-time sections of the Agnus are rather quick. He is let down by his 16 soloists, who are not up to scratch when audible as single voices. So not an ideal performance, but certainly worth listening to. And the more I hear and play the piece, the better it seems. *CB*

Relocating my CDs in our enlarged house in some sensible order is one of the tasks I haven't yet managed to achieve, so I may be mixing recollection of the Gabrielis' live performance at St Paul's with the recording at Romsey Abbey.

Cavalli ***Giasone*** Michael Chance *Giasone*, Gloria Banditelli *Medea*, Catherine Dubosc *Isifile*, etc, Concerto Vocale, René Jacobs *dir* 233' 56" (3 CDs in box) rec 1988
Harmonia Mundi **HMX 2901282.84** ££

This is a welcome return to the catalogue. The orchestra is modest (single strings with pairs of recorders, trumpets and cornetti), the continuo line-up is star-studded (Erin Headley, Konrad Junghänel, Andrew Lawrence-King, with Yvon Repérant and Martha Cook on keyboards and Peter Pieters on guitar), and the solo singers the pick of the 1988 crop. The opera itself is 'restored' by the cutting of scenes, re-writing of recitatives, re-ordering a couple of scenes, cutting a minor character, re-allocating arias, the addition of instrumental ritornelli and interludes (and padding out the original with two viola parts), the inclusion of an aria from another Cavalli opera, and at least one new composition by René Jacobs himself. (An early version of the libretto gives the text, but no trace is found in any of the 12 surviving manuscripts – the booklet notes even pose the telling question: Was the aria ever composed?) The final result is, then, what René Jacobs has decided to give us, and very satisfying it is. The instrumental music (some of it appropriate in musical terms perhaps, but totally anachronistic – part of Schmelzer's *Fecht-Schule* is used for a battle scene, for example) is well played and nicely phrased. The singing is gener-

ally very good, with the whooping and screeching that I've come to associate with Jacobs' recording (I can't think of any kinder way to describe some of the singers he chooses) cut to the minimum (and with the comic characters, there is some leeway, I suppose). If you ignore the bold editorial intrusions (or, indeed, if you accept their inevitability given the sketchiness of the surviving materials and the needs of modern theatre audiences), you'll enjoy some wonderful music which will probably never again be recorded. *BC*

L. Couperin *Œuvres pour orgue* Jan Willem Jansen (1714 Bizard organ of l'Abbaye de Saint-Michel en Thiérarche) 56' 53" (rec 1993)
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 61775 2** 9 ££
Clérambault *Livre d'orgue; Chants du Salut* Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cur, Jean Boyer *org solo*, Emmanuel Mandrin *continuo org & dir.* 65' 47" (rec 1993)
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 61888 2** 7 ££
Suite I tone with Magnificat, Suite II tone with Benedictus; motet *Exultet in Domino*

These two CDs are re-releases of Radio France recordings in the *Musique à Versailles* series. Both use the superb 1714 Saint-Michel en Thiérache organ. In 1715, five years after the publication of his *Premier Livre d'Orgue*, Clérambault succeeded Nivers as organist music master at Saint-Cyr, a school for the daughters of impoverished noblemen. In the succeeding years, he published various collections of music written for the young ladies of the school, including the service *Pour un Salut du Saint Sacrement* using the four-motet structure laid down by Nivers. But the key interest in this recording is the incorporation of Clérambault's two Suites for organ in the context of alternatim chanted Magnificat and Benedictus. The edition does not specify which liturgical context the suites were intended for, giving freedom for just this sort of interpretation. The Benedictus uses the second Suite complete, but the Magnificat slightly changes the order of the pieces in the first Suite to match the mood of the words. This loses the expected link between the opening Grand Plein Jeu and the following Fugue, which now appears at the end, after what would normally be the closing Dialogue sur les Grands Jeux. That aside, the playing and singing is first rate (both with seductively French accents) and is an excellent introduction to the sound world of the French classical organ and the musical context in which it flourished.

The Louis Couperin CD can now be seen as a stepping stone in one of the more disgraceful stories in recent English musicology. Although the 1653 MS was discovered in the late 1950s, it wasn't until some years after this 1994 recording that the complete contents were made public. Davitt Moroney's excellent triple CD of the complete works was released in 1996, but this is a useful mid-price introduction to Couperin's style, using about a third of the pieces that are now in the public domain. This music provided the much need missing link between Titelouze and Nivers, spanning the period from 1650 to 1659, and pushing the start of the French baroque style back by several years. Compare with Moroney, and check your wallet.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

We never did get the promised review copy of the L'Oiseau-Lyre printed edition of Louis Couperin's organ works whose publicity leaflet we circulated in 1996.

Dowland *Lute music* Ronn McFarlane
Dorian **DOR 90148** 66' 50"

Re-releases are often welcome, and this one is good news for those who missed it first time around. This is a splendid recording which gives an excellent overview of Dowland's lute music. There are many challengers of course; both Lindberg and O'Dette have done marvellous complete Dowland recordings, from which single disc samplers are available, and North has also released a Dowland disc. However this still has much to recommend it. All the most famous pieces are here, and McFalane's approach is lively and engaging, but he is also able to plumb the emotional depths in pieces such as *Lachrymae* and the wonderfully melancholic *Semper Dowland Semper Dolens*. He explores the whole gamut of articulation and ornamentation, as well as drawing a wide range of dynamics and superlative tone from his lute. Highly recommended. *Lynda Sayce*

Dufault & Gallot *Pièces pour luth* Pascal Monteilhet 72' 41" (rec 1993)
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 61776 2** 8 ££

This compilation unites two of the leading lights of the 17th-century French lute school, Gallot being approximately a generation younger than Dufault. Both are extremely fine and idiomatic composers for the 11-course D minor lute, though their music, with its elaborate ornamentation and pronounced stile brisé, has a reputation for being obtuse and difficult. However, Monteilhet is more than equal to the challenge, and in his capable hands the music emerges with great clarity, in all its rich and sombre intensity. Dufault's subtle phrasings and Gallot's extraordinary harmonic twists make for compulsive listening; this is intricate and introverted music which demands careful attention. Don't be surprised if you find yourself hitting the repeat button; Gallot's magnificent *chaconnes* and *passecailles* are infectious. *Lynda Sayce*

Frescobaldi *Messa sopra l'aria di Fiorenza* Ensemble San Felice, Federico Bardazzi
Bongiovanni **GB 5603-2** 45' 39"
+ Beatus vir, Decantabat populus Israel, Ego sum panis, La Maddalena & organ solos; **Gagliano** *Elizabeth Zacharie, Gabriel angelus*
Frescobaldi *Messa sopra l'aria di Fiorenza* **Cavalli** *Vesperi (1675)* Siri Thornhill, Rainer Seifert, Henning Kaiser, Marcus Niedermeyr *SATB*, Orpheus Chor München, Gerd Guglhör *cond* 60' 34"
Arte Nova **74321 75500 2** £

The Bongiovanni disc would have received a slight welcome for its content had I written about it on arrival, though the singing of the mass itself is so unappealing that the brevity of the disc is an asset. But seeing the Arte Nova disc advertised, I delayed review until it came. It provides a far better performance of the mass, though there is still room for a superlative performance of the pair of double-choir masses attributed to Frescobaldi. The Cavalli is confusingly presented both on the disc and in the notes. The 1675 publication contains two specific sets of vesper psalms and magnificats sandwiching a more heterogenous group of vesper psalms: this disc includes eight psalms, no magnficat and two hymns from elsewhere. The performance style is rather fussy in its use of choir, soli and instruments: both conductor and note-writer have missed the point that this is not concertato music and is very diferent from the 1656 Mass and Psalms. The music does, however, come over rather well, so is worth hearing despite criticisms. Fortunately, the better disc is by far the cheaper. *CB*

Froberger *ou l'intranquillité* Blandine Verlet *hpscd* 66' 15"
Astrée Naïve **E8805**
Canzon II, Capriccio VI, Fantasia I, Suite I (Allemande), Suite II (Allemande, Sarabande) XIV, XIX, Toccata XVI

I can't say I admire all of Blandine Verlet's recordings, but one or two are very special. Certainly she seems to have a real feeling for Froberger, and there are some brilliantly intense and expressive performances on offer here. I am absolutely puzzled, though, by some of the tunings – it's probably 1/4 or 1/5 comma meantone throughout, but often the 'wrong' accidental seems to have been deliberately chosen, such that some sections are *hideously* out of tune. And I don't mean the occasional note or cadence, but long stretches which, to me, don't seem to have any particularly expressive role. It's no exaggeration to say I felt a little bit off colour after one or two of these passages. Another astonishing feature is a continuously squawking bird (I presume) that has found its way onto tracks 7 (Toccata XVI) and 8 (Fantasia I), which together last for nearly 14 minutes. Unfortunately, we are not talking lark, or even nightingale – either might have been quite a pleasant addition – and whatever it is is very intrusive and quite annoying. In fact I almost began to wonder if it was the bird that inspired the disc's title. Its presence does seem to indicate though that these tracks were recorded in one take, which is an impressive feat, if not really much of a consolation. The Colmar Ruckers, by the way, sounds fantastic. If you can put up with these strange features then this is a beautiful disc. But don't say you haven't been warned. *Robin Bigwood*

Fux *Il Fonte della Salute* Kimiko Koise, Linda Perillo, Ann Monoyios, Henning Voss, Johannes Chum, Wolfgang Bankl *SSScTTB*, Wiener Akademie, Martin Haselböck
CPO **999 690-2** 133' 40" (2 CDs)

This is another welcome addition to the catalogue. Fux's extended works are much neglected – in fact, make that just Fux is much neglected. This 'componimento sacro'

is a *sepolcro* oratorio, most probably intended for private performance before the Hapsburg Royal family and other dignitaries. It calls for six singers (three allegorical and three real characters), and a typical Fux orchestra, with chalumeau, gamba and trombone featuring in obbligato roles, as do a pair of bassoons. I have to say I found the recitative tedious, and some of the singing (particular from the sopranos) was slightly screechy. The arias are nicely done (I'm happy to atone for my criticism some time ago of José Vazquez – his gamba obbligato is very beautiful indeed!) I don't seriously think this is destined to be a best seller, but anyone interested in the Viennese High Baroque should certainly have it. *BC*

Gesualdo *Il quarto libro* La Venexiana
Glossa **GCD 920906** 67' 34"

My prejudice against excessive speed, in almost any repertoire, has helped make me a fan of La Venexiana, who tend to take their madrigals at a distinctly leisurely pace, with generous caesuras between clauses. This favouring of detail over sheer momentum is especially effective with Marenzio, who says so much in a few notes that you need time to take it all in, and works pretty well even in the less tightly argued madrigals of Monteverdi or d'India. But Gesualdo is a special case: his harmonic box of tricks (arresting but basically rather limited) is nearly all he has to offer, and hardly compensates for his difficulty in organising coherent ideas on a large scale and his lack of rhythmic or declamatory variety. So he needs more metrical steadiness than LV seem willing to impose, and in a slow piece like 'Io tacerò' they risk losing what was anyway a rather tenuous plot. (LV's prevailing timbre is on the dark side, which doesn't help relieve the monotony.) This CD imports from Book 5 'Mercè grido piangendo' as a kind of *omaggio* to LV's own recording of d'India's Book 3, which sets the same text. D'India's setting is breathlessly taut, and when LV took it a mite slow they let in some welcome air and light. But Gesualdo's version comes off better in the Consort of Musicke's 1983 recording of his complete Book 5, thanks to the Consort's lighter vocal colours and their skittish, light-footed pace from 'o del mio cor'. As a progress report on LV's rapid development, this CD (their fifth Glossa release in three years) is almost all good news. The soprano Rossana Bertini is losing the strident edge to her voice, and her colleague Emanuela Galli makes a nice contrast when she takes over the top line. In addition to 'Mercè grido', the CD includes two pieces from Book 2, imaginatively adapted for solo soprano with two lutes, one essentially homophonic and the other highly ornamented. This treatment reveals Gesualdo's occasionally inept part-writing, but the agreeably lucid texture makes these more successful than most similar arrangements of classic madrigals.

Eric Van Tassel

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

Hume *A Soldiers Resolution: The Firste Part of Ayres* Miriam Morris *bass viol*, Christopher Field *cT* 61' 56"
Move **MD 3232**

It's nice to have a recording which shows faith in this most original of composers, so often derided by people who have little experience of his music. His first publication in 1605 has most prominently on its title page the heading *The First Part of Ayres*, but Hume's real title, on every page of the book thereafter, is the much more delightful *Captain Humes Musicall Humors* and I can never understand why people don't use that one. The selection includes three of the very lovely songs. I'm not keen on countertenors in this repertoire. Christopher Field doesn't cause me to change my mind, with mostly legato singing and unclear words; but he has a clean sound, sings bang in tune, and, apart from the top F, without strain. Miriam Morris plays a copy by Ian Watchorn of a French 7-string viol, and it has a superb sound. She plays thoughtfully, with a lot of freedom. The tone is unfailingly rich, the articulation constantly smooth, somewhat cellistic, with the motion towards often emphasised more than the point of arrival. Only occasionally does one get a feeling for the beat from which she is always departing. Even the title piece is played with languishing rubato, despite its military subject. Hume's pieces can have a folksy melodiousness, for example *My Mistresse hath a pretty thing*, and she doesn't take the opportunities they offer to vary the tone or articulation. Despite the felicitousness of her playing, tone, and phrasing, the music has greater variety of character than she displays here. *Robert Oliver*

Muffat *Organ Works, vol. 2: Apparatus musico-organisticus (1690) Part II* Martin Haselböck (organ of Zwettl Collegiate Church) 58' 47"
Naxos **8.553990** £

Volume 1 was enthusiastically reviewed in *EMR* June 2000, and this also gets the thumbs up. Completing the series of 12 Toccatas with the four pieces in the transposed modes of the notional keys of e, D, c and Bb, the CD also includes the supplementary pieces added to the 1721 second edition of Muffat's 1690 *Apparatus musico-organisticus* – the *Ciacona*, the huge *Passacaglia* (lasting 15' 02" and all on a ***mf*** registration) and the curious *Nova Cyclopeias Harmonica* with its reference *ad Malleorum Ictus Allusio* in the second part indicating a link to the story of Pythagoras developing his harmonic system after hearing the blows of a hammer on an anvil. The organ is an interesting one, dating from 1731. The meantone temperament makes itself felt in a number of B major cadences.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Paisible *Six Setts of Aires (1720)* Musica Barocca (Johanna Valencia & Maria Martinez *recs*, Daniel Valencia *gamba*, Mauricio Buraglia *theorbo*, Juan Estévez *kbd*) 68' 57"
Naxos **8.555045** £

Naxos's early music recordings tend to be variable in quality, but this one is a winner. Jacques or James Paisible, an oboist, recorder and bass violin player who came to London from France in 1673, is arguably the most consistently accomplished of the many immigrant composers working in England around 1700, though his music was neglected until recently. So far as I know, this is the first CD devoted entirely to him; it consists of a complete recording of the *Six Setts of Aires* (i.e. suites) op. 2 for two recorders and continuo. The collection was published in December 1720 in the last year of Paisible's life, though the title-page states that it was 'Never before publish'd' as if it had been composed much earlier, and the music sounds as if it was written around 1700. It combines in a most attractive way the French type of extended trio suite popularised in the 1690s by Michel de La Barre and Marin Marais with elements of the English style. There are some Purcellian turns of phrase and passages of affective harmony, and the movements include a hornpipe, some marches and even a *Scotch Aire*. In general, the quality is consistently high: there is hardly a dull moment. Fortunately, the quality of the performances is also high. Four of the five members of Musica Barocca (two recorders, bass viol, theorbo and harpsichord/organ) come from Colombia, though they all studied in Europe and the USA, and the recording was made in Forde Abbey in Dorset. In general, the intonation and ensemble of the group is excellent, though the keyboard player is sometimes a little heavy-handed and unrhythmic. The tempi are mostly sensibly chosen, and there is a refreshing directness and honesty about the playing. If some movements are characterised a little less vividly than one might wish, there is none of the wearisome affectation and overemphatic playing that has become fashionable recently in music of this period. At less than a fiver this CD is a real bargain. I hope it stimulates interest in the rest of Paisible's recorder music. How about recordings of the solo sonatas and the six sonatas op. 1 for two unaccompanied recorders? *Peter Holman*

Purcell *Odes for Queen Mary* Julia Gooding, James Bowman, Christopher Robson, Howard Crook, David Wilson-Johnson, Michael George *ScTcTTBB*, Choir & Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Gustav Leonhardt 64' 55"
Virgin *Classics* 7243 **5 61844 2** 8 ££ (rec 1991)
Come ye sons of art, Love's Goddess sure, Now does the glorious day appear

Gustav Leonhardt's 1992 recording of three odes for Queen Mary's birthday is rather sober. His precise, detaché articulation lacks the rhetorical and rhythmic flair that became fashionable in the glut of Purcell recordings around the 1995 tercentenary. Moreover, his continuo group comprises harpsichord and cello throughout, with no plucked instruments to give variety. But these performances are nonetheless made worthwhile by the outstanding team of soloists assembled by Leonhardt. The highlight is in *Come ye sons of Art*, where James Bowman and Christopher Robson are paired in a 'Sound the Trumpet' of enthralling brilliance. *Stephen Rose*

Christmas Music Emma Kirkby, London Baroque 66' 49"
BIS-CD-1135
Bach BWV 61/5, 147a/5, 1068/2; Böddecker *Natus est Jesus*; Corelli op. 6/8 *fatto ler la notte di natale*; Pachelbel *Canon & Gigue*; A. Scarlatti *Non sò qual più m'ingombra, O di Betlemme*

We have received remarkably few Christmas discs this year; but even if there had been more, this would certainly have been a strong recommendation as the choice for presents or post-prandial relaxation. Apart from a variety of 12/8 pastoral movements, the only explicitly seasonal sound is the carol in Böddecker's *Natus est Jesus*, but there are two Christmas Cantatas by Alessandro Scarlatti two Advent arias by Bach – I can't think of a seasonal reason for the a4 version of the Air on the G String, but it's a nice contrast to the wallowing style of popular versions. The Corelli is played with single strings, adding just the ripieno viola to the concertini: a way it must often have been played at home or in small churches, and in a performance as good as this it works perfectly. Finally, having been uncharacteristically critical of the last Emma Kirkby disc I heard, I have nothing but praise for her here: to mention just one point, her singing of the Scarlatti recitatives is a model for all. *CB*

Score and parts of O di Betlemme *have been available for some years from King's Music;* Non sò qual, *in an edition by Rosalind Halton, will be ready for Christmas 2001.*

Counter-Tenor Duets and Song: Purcell and his contemporaries Ryland Angel, Mark Chambers *cT cT*, Laurence Cummings *hpscd/org* etc.
Deux-Elles **DXL 911** 61' 00"
Music by Blow, Humfrey (*Hymne*) & Purcell

The notes point out that 'countertenor' at this time could be either a falsettist or a high tenor, and suggest combining the two types in Purcell's 'Sound the trumpet' (while not mentioning that the tenor type must be the better choice in other pieces such as 'Here the deities approve'). But these two singers, who happen to sound remarkably alike, are both falsettists. Both have to drop into chest voice occasionally, with indifferent success in Blow's 'Quam dilego legem tuam' (one singer, probably Angel, manages a better tenor timbre in Purcell's 'No, resistance is but vain'). Many aspects of the programme are predictable, starting with the familiar tendency to go too fast ('No, resistance'; 'If music be the food of love'; 'Now that the sun'). The continuo group is nicely varied in colour, drawing upon harpsichord or organ, archlute or guitar, and bass viol. But the harpsichord realizations are too busily intrusive (and the instrument has too much sizzle and not enough plummy resonance for the period); moreover, it's lazy-minded to use the organ whenever the subject matter is devout (though none of the devotional pieces here is liturgical). As for the singing, falsettists like Taylor, Daniels and Scholl nowadays set a standard of tonal clarity and agility too high for either of these chaps to equal. Of the two, Chambers is a bit nimbler on semiquaver runs ('I see she flies me'); his vowels are less distorted than Angel's, and he usually avoids the italianate rolled r which is not only affected and unmusical (as in Angel's 'Music for a while', which also takes the abominable C♭) but almost certainly anachronistic. So I wouldn't mind hearing Chambers again, though I'd trade him any time for a good high tenor like Covey-Crump or Del Pozo. What this release needed was some more imaginative repertoire choices. Why clutter the discography with yet another CD mainly of Purcell (he has four of the seven duets and seven of the nine solos)? Despite the so-so standard of performance, I'd have given this a warm welcome if, after just a couple of Purcell lollipops to pull in the punters, the CD had focused on Blow and Daniel Purcell, whilst also dipping into the more falsetto-friendly generation of Croft and Eccles. *Eric Van Tassel*

The Golden Age of the French Lute Stephen Stubbs 55' 18"
Vanguard Classics **99197** ££
Corelli *Courante italienne*, Jacques Gallot 'le vieux', Denis and Ennemond Gaultier, Jan Antonin Losy, Esaias Reusner, de Visée

This short but intriguing recital approaches the 17th-century French lute repertory in the same way as did its original performers; following the cue of the surviving sources, Stubbs has compiled suites of pieces grouped by key, but not necessarily by composer. This has the pleasing effect of giving due emphasis to the many cross-references and tributes within this repertory, such as Ennemond Gaultier's *Tombeau* for Mezangeau, and de Visée's *Tombeau* for Vieux Gallot. The inclusion of a whole suite by Jan Antonin Losy is also welcome. The performances are more extrovert than is the norm with this repertory; for my personal taste the more introspective pieces are rather too fast and vigorous, and some of the ornamentation has a snatched, almost violent quality. The intense reflective subtlety, which Monteilhet captured so well, is somewhat lacking, but the dance movements gain from this approach; the gigues and chaconnes are particularly engaging, and Stubbs captures the melodic appeal of the music better than most. This is an excellent easy introduction to this repertory for those who have found more introspective approaches hard listening. *Lynda Sayce*

BACH

Bach *Cantatas 36, 61 & 62* Nancy Argenta, Petra Lang, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Olaf Bär *SATB* Monteverdi Choir, English Bach Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 61' 09"
Archiv **463 588-2**

The opening of Bach's church year comes rather late in the Gardiner Pilgrimage, so beginning with an Ouverture has less point than it might. This 1992 recording is more cohesive in terms of performers than other discs in the series; they are all named (though again the cover picture is misleading: no boys take part) and come together to make an excellent sound. The performances of the solos are enjoyable, but the choruses (irrespective of arguments about whether an extra 23 singers are desirable) sound a bit too forceful: the strange half-verse of *Wie schon leuchtet* that ends Cantata 61 bursts in with no apparent relationship to what we've heard before, and the unison violins have to play with exaggerated articulation to be heard: the Naxos recording (see below) manages this far better. There is plenty of fine music-making here, and these cantatas (among my favourites) are an excellent starting-place for anyone constructing his own Bach Pilgrimage. *CB*

Bach *Christmas Cantatas* (36, 61, 132) Teri Dunn, Matthew White, John Tessier, Steven Pitkanen, Thomas Guerz *SATBB*, Aradian Ensemble, Kevin Mallon 62' 17"
Naxos **8.554825** £

This arrived just as I was on the final stage of preparing this issue of *EMR*. It deserves serious attention, partly because it addresses the performance-practice issues that Gardiner despises, partly because the music-making is so pleasing. Cantatas 36 (here the earlier version: the JEG disc has the later one) & 132 are sung by soloists, who in 61 are supported by a ripieno group of eight singers. I'm puzzled why single strings are used: two copies of both violin parts survive in the performance material of Cantatas 36 and 61 (there is no surviving material for 132). That matters less, though, than the chance to hear the music with appropriate vocal forces. Irrespective of the musicology, this sounds attractive; the general feeling is much more comfortable than Gardiner's. When his tempi feel wrong, it is because they are too fast; with Mallon, they tend to be a bit slow – especially in the instrumental suite he has concocted from BWV 699 & 659, where speeds which would have sounded fine on an organ don't work with an ensemble. A comparison of 'Öffne dich' (from Cantata 61) has JEG (with Nancy Argenta) at 3' 47" and Mallon (Teri Dunn) at 4' 29"; in this case, Mallon, is too slow, making it hard for his singer, while JEG sounds fine – though Emma Kirkby shows (at 3' 21") on the London Baroque Christmas disc reviewed a couple of columns back that it could be even a touch faster. Mallon is a few seconds faster then JEG in the choral *Ouverture*, but sounds slower. JEG has better performers, but I'd rather spend a fiver on Mallon than thrice that on Gardiner. The Naxos title is wrong: these are Advent cantatas – but I suppose most people don't know the difference now. *CB*

Bach *Cantatas 140, 147* Ruth Holton, Michael Chance, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Stephen Varcoe, *SATB* Monteverdi Choir, English Bach Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 52' 51"
Archiv **463 587-2**

This CD is not, strictly speaking, part of the Pilgrimage, having been made as long ago as March 1990 (in Dorset), and issued

in 1992. Compared with some of this year's recorded performances that I have heard, it strikes me as more relaxed, more joyously musical and unhurried. All four soloists are very fine, with particular care being taken with the recitatives; the choral work is exemplary, and the orchestral playing of a standard that Bach must have yearned for. BWV 140 and 147 make a lovely pairing, and one could not hope for finer readings. *Peter Branscombe*

Bach *Magnificat, Cantata 21* Greta de Reyghere, René Jacobs, Christoph Prégardien, Peter Lika *SATB*, Nederlands Kamerkoor, La Petite Bande, Sigiswald Kuijken 72'40"(rec 1988)
Virgin *Classics* 7243 5 **6 61833 2** 2 ££

Sigiswald Kuijken's 1988 recording is less concerned than current Bach performances with perfecting technical matters such as intonation (witness the wobbly oboe tuning in the Sinfonia of BWV 21). Yet this is because Kuijken treats Bach's music not as a beautiful toy but as an affective response to a text. These are colourful performances, occasionally with provocative interpretative decisions such as the rhythmic inequality in 'Quia respexit'. The solo arias are excellent, in particular Christoph Prégardien's 'Bäche von gesalznen Zähren' and 'Deposuit potentes'. *Stephen Rose*

Bach *Congatulatory and Homage Cantatas BWV 30a, 36c, 36b, 134a, 173a* Soloists, Gächinger Kantorei, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmuth Rilling 121' 14" (2 CDs in box)
Hänssler CD92.139 ££
Bach *Selected Vocal Works Magnificat* BWV 243a, BWV 232II, 34a, 69a, 120a, 197a Soloists, Gächinger Kantorei, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmuth Rilling 76' 19
Hänssler CD92.140 ££ (2 CDs in box)

We have avoided Hänssler's cantata discs since they are reissues of old, modern-instrument recordings in a style which our reviewers would probably not favour. But Helmuth Rilling has been learning from his period-instrument rivals and the playing on these sets of new performances are impressive and acceptable to all except pedantic authenticists. The booklet notes seem at first to be a bit dry, but they make an important point: our attitude to Bach's cantatas is distorted by the BWV numbering, which was taken over direct from the Bach-Gesellschaft. Apart from having no inherent logic, it is misleading because when there are a group of related cantatas, it invariably gives the main number to a church version, whether it was the original setting or a contrafactum. So the secular version is often assumed to be the adaptation and of less importance. Gardiner, for instance, is performing and has recorded BWV 36, but not 36c. Some of the texts are hard to take seriously, but they are no worse than celebrating a king's return from the races at Newmarket! These discs redress the balance, and also include the original version of the Magnificat. The singing is a more variable than the playing, but these sets cover neglected areas of the repertoire and all Bach enthusiasts should buy them. *CB*

Bach *Cantatas & Arias* Ian Bostridge, Europa Galante, Fabio Biondi 67' 55"
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 45420 2 2**
BWV 55 & 82a complete + 4/1,7/3-4, 18/1 43/2-3, 139/2, 198/8, 212/1, 249/7

My review of this disc will undoubtedly fly in the face of popular critical opinion. I should start by saying that my opinion of Biondi's recordings generally start out life most negatively but gradually dissolve into rapture when I see where he's coming from or where he's going. I'll compound my subsequent sin by saying that I think Ian Bostridge is an excellent singer and that I think his voice is very well suited to Bach indeed – there's something of Paul Agnew about his tone and something of Rolfe Johnson's agility. Yet I've found myself continually frustrated by this particular recording. Jarring phrasing (in the Sinfonia to BWV 18, for example), slightly untidy string playing (perhaps forgivable in the heat of a Vivaldi concerto, but far less so in such an austere setting – though maybe I'm missing the point, and hold Bach's church music in too much reverence?) and just things that didn't really work. For me, at least. I have no problem with people having a different take on pieces from me – indeed, without such alternative viewpoints, life would be very dull. I suppose I expected rather better from a line-up of this calibre. *BC*

Perspectives Johann Sebastian Bach Wilbert Hazelzet *fl*, Jacques Ogg *hpscd* 57' 24"
Glossa **GCD 920805**
Transcriptions as trio sonatas by Hazelzet of BWV 525-8, 583 & 587

This is a disc of organ trio sonatas transcribed for flute and harpsichord, but unless you're a BWV expert you wouldn't know this until you'd waded through some rather challenging booklet notes which deal, at length, with metaphysical concepts of seeing and vision in Bach's music (hence the disc's title). Hazelzet and Ogg are an established and experienced duo with a very similar interpretational approach, which, I've always felt, is something of an acquired taste. Hazelzet certainly produces some remarkable sounds, and at times the flexibility achieved in the space of just one note is quite astonishing. It's what he does with a phrase that is sometimes harder to understand. Everything is so highly and consciously shaped that, at times, the music takes on a strange artificial quality that obscures rather than elucidates. And with less immediate expressive ability at his disposal, Ogg has to resort to some quite highly distorted rhythms and exaggerated articulation to match Hazelzet. Playing aside, there's some great music here, some of it familiar from Bach's own transcriptions for larger instrumental forces. In general, slow movements come over pretty well, but elsewhere, perhaps because of the performers' incessant concentration on shaping short motivic units, you'd be forgiven for thinking you were listening to C. P. E. Bach. In that respect, I suppose, Hazelzet and Ogg do indeed offer quite an interesting 'perspective' on these sonatas. But whilst the transcriptions themselves have validity, I feel that the performances on offer here are not particularly faithful to Bach's original conception – throughout I longed for a more restrained and unself-conscious approach with quite a different set of ideals. If you're a Hazelzet fan, though, I'm sure you'll love it. *Marie Ritter*

Bach *Trio Sonatas* The Rare Fruits Council, Manfredo Kraemer 66' 58"
Astrée Naïve **E8804**
BWV 527, 530, 1029, 1030, 1037

The Rare Fruits Council introduce their CD of string trio sonatas by Bach (largely transcribed from organ works and sonatas with obbligato harpsichord) with a collage of remarks about Bach (largely abstracted from Christoph Wolff's recent biography), beginning with those that seem to stress the constant party-atmosphere in the Bach household and the composer's obvious addiction to beer, wine and spirits (but what else could he have drunk, before the era of uncontaminated public water?) It is clearly this side of Bach that they try to communicate in their playing: conviviality and high spirits (to the point of hysteria, on occasions) and a wonderful enthusiasm and energy that is somewhat reminiscent of Musica Antiqua Köln during their heyday in the 1980s. But refinement and technical perfection are sometimes a little distant. It's the sort of playing that would be stunning in live performance; but hopefully they will put a little more time and thought into their next recording. *John Butt*

Bach *Organ Works* Simon Preston 14 CDs
Deutsche Grammophon **469 420-2**
rec 1987-99 ££
Bach *Complete Organ Works* Werner Jacob
EMI **CZS 5 7378 2** 16 CDs £

Two 'complete' Bach organ works make for interesting comparisons, not least in value for money. The Jacob collection, recorded between 1970 and 1985 on some of Europe's finest historic instruments, gives you 16 CDs for around £40. Preston's 14 CDs, mostly on modern instruments, will set you back at least twice as much. Although the recording technique is a bit dated, not least in the fading out of the acoustic between tracks, there is much to praise in the Jacob recordings. The playing is clean and unostentatious, with little of the froth and bubble that Preston delights in. There are some remnants of the 1970s neo-baroque noticeable, both in the playing and the rather shrill mixtures of some of the organs (many of which have gone through further restorations since these recordings), but there is little that will annoy on repeated listening. The order of the pieces makes for balanced CD programmes, generally mixing chorale works with free pieces. The inclusion of 'Arnstadt' chorales found in the Neumeister Collection, and discovered in the mid-1980s also make for better completeness than the Preston collection.

The Preston set uses modern instruments by the likes of Klais, Metzler and Marcussen, including a number that Simon Preston

has been involved with. Although most were built with more than a nod towards the Bach, or more accurately, the earlier North German organ, they veer towards the eclectic in tonal make up and lack most of the historic influences (for example, in temperament and winding) that readers of *EMR* would expect. When Preston behaves himself his playing is very fine, and the fact that he has waited until his 50s before studying the complete works of Bach has helped in terms of musical maturity. But his still-youthful exuberance bubbles over in excesses of spiky and unyielding touch, over-detached articulation and quirky registrations. Whilst this might appeal to some English organ buffs in live concerts (like the frankly bizarre performance of the Toccata and Fugue in D minor that opened his recent Royal Festival Hall recital), such antics are unlikely to bear the scrutiny of repeated CD listening by a more enlightened audience. From a reference point of view, the collection is usefully grouped more or less in BWV order, and there is a helpful index to all the works. It is worth irritating your friendly record dealer by listening to as much of both sets as you can manage – but I would not be too surprised if you end up deciding the historic instrument set wins out. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *One of a kind* William Porter (1998 Fritts organ, Pacific Lutheran University, Washington). 71' 05"
Loft recordings **LRCD 1025**
BWV 533, 548, 565, 582, 653b, 709, 721, 727, 736

This large new three-manual organ is based on the North-German instruments of the late 17th century, but with an anomalous French-inspired Swell division in the Oberwerk position. We are used to such eclecticism in the UK, but the difference is that, on evidence of this CD, the builder has respected the German influence more than most UK makers would have done, not least in having a switchable wind stabilizer (not used for this recording) and a Kellner temperament that adds noticeable key colour in a few pieces. William Porter's programme is well balanced, with alternating chorale movements and free works, including the ubiquitous Toccata in D minor and the Passacaglia. The playing is mature and thoughtful, with a gentle application of rhetoric to enliven the structure of the music, making for a CD that will withstand repeated listening. The so-called 'little' E minor Prelude and Fugue is sensibly given a pleno registration, reinforcing its credentials as North German, although the change in pulse, and loss of tactus between the Prelude and the Fugue is not to my own taste. Registrations are effective. The Swell division is only used once, for its tempting Bourdon and Nazard registration. The large E minor prelude is played on the single 8' Principal, revealing the meditative quality that is often missed by performers – a mood that could have been carried over to the Fugue if the full organ registration had been avoided or, at least, reduced. *An Wasserflüssen Babylon* features the gently undulating sound of the two 8' flutes on the Great (Rohrflöte and Spielflöte) drawn together (a sound that Bach might have been familiar with from central German organs of his homeland) with the combined Dulcian and 8' Praestant as solo, in the Dutch tradition. Well worth hassling your supplier for – they are available in the UK from the new label Quilisma. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Attributions* Christopher Herrick (organ of St Michael, Kaisten, Switzerland) 76' 45"
Hyperion **CDA67263**
BWV 553-560, 581, 771 + 15 chorale preludes

This is the last of Herrick's complete Bach series – a total of 16 CDs, all on modern Metzler organs and arranged by type. I have been rather tough on Mr Herrick in reviews of a number of his earlier Bach CDs, but this one is really rather good. A collection of Bach attributions, including the famous Eight Little Preludes and Fugues, are imaginatively programmed and played with little of the individualisms that have incurred my wrath in previous reviews. As far as I am concerned, the more music that is attributed to Bach the better, because it at least means that it gets recorded. Nobody would buy a CD of miscellaneous works by anonymous central German composers (or even by Krebs and other Bach pupils), but some of this music is quite delightful – try the beguiling *Schmücke dich, o liebe Seele* (track 2). If you haven't tried any of Mr Herrick's series, start with this one. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Fantasias and Fugues* Masaaki Suzuki *hpscd* 77' 19"
BIS-CD-1037
BWV 903-4, 906, 917-8, 921-2, 944, 950-1, 992-3

As Yo Tomita remarks in his informative sleeve-note, the genre 'Fantasia' covered two, almost contradictory styles at the end of the 17th century: one the one hand, a skilful, contrapuntal texture in a relatively conservative idiom and, on the other, a much freer, improvisatory style. Masaaki Suzuki has already recorded Bach's Inventions and Sinfonias (the latter being originally entitled 'Fantasia' by Bach), thus representing the more cerebral genre; this disk presents the remaining Fantasias, Capriccios and Praeludia, those in the free, virtuoso idiom.

The collection is framed by the three most famous pieces: the *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue* and the *Capriccio sopra la lontananza del suo fratello dilettissimo* at beginning and end, and the mature Fantasia in C minor towards the middle. Suzuki's expressive and subtle style of interpretation (so familiar in his vocal recordings) is most readily evident in the lamenting movements of the capriccio. Much of the disc shows off his remarkable virtuosic facility. If this sort of playing is sometimes rather relentless and lacking the detail we find in his more expressive playing (such as in the opening chromatic work) there are some wonderful moments, such as the ostinato movement from the Prelude in C Minor, BWV 921, or the multiple characters in the A-minor Fantasia, BWV 922. In all, the Suzuki communicates a conviction that this is the way the music should go, and this in itself renders this a very worthwhile collection. *John Butt*

Bach *Music for Harpsichord* David Cates Wildboar **WLBR 9902** 73' 15"
BWV 696, 729, 802-5, 831, 903, 914, 916

This disc offers the best recording of the French Overture BWV831 I've heard to date. It just sounds 'right' – grand in scale and yet quite moving on a personal level. Cates's style is deceptively simple in that he pretty much lets the music perform itself. There's no exaggerated articulation, no pulling about of tempos, and no gimmicks. What there is is real clarity, a fine sense of melodic line, and a kind of innocence about it all that is a joy to hear and, quite frankly, a breath of fresh air compared to many recordings. Along with the French Overture we also get some interesting chorale settings, four intriguing, highly chromatic Duets BWV802-5, and the Toccatas in E minor and G major. Cates really finds the groove in these last two works and, particularly in the G major toccata, offers some thoughtful and original interpretational points. The last piece on the disc, the D minor Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, is masterfully controlled, and Cates's path through the harmonic minefield of the Fantasy is safe and true. Readers of the email-based discussion forum 'HPSCHD-L' may be interested to learn that the harpsichord, after the V&A Vaudry is by Owen Daly. It sounds absolutely superb at A=392Hz in Werck-meister III, and is recorded in a big, lively acoustic that gives the listener a real impression of being at a recital. Few harpsichordists are as unfussy, honest and revealing as Cates – this is a disc to savour. *Robin Bigwood*

Bach *Arrangements for Lute, BWV 995, 1000, 1006a* Oliver Holzenburg 55' 10"
Hänssler **92.118** ££

This is part of the Bachakademie recording of all Bach's works, on 172 CDs. The 'arrangements' of the title are not Holzenburg's but by Bach or his contemporaries of works which also survive in another form, BWV 995 for solo cello, BWV 1000 and 1006a for solo violin. In view of the archival nature of the recording (or perhaps because of it), it is rather sad to report that these are rather neutral performances, which will offend no-one, but are equally unlikely to inspire. They are sparsely ornamented, and the tempi all tend towards a moderate *tempo ordinario*, the slow movements being rather fast and the fast rather cautiously slow. A somewhat jerky rubato doesn't help matters. Holzenburg's tone is beautiful, his playing is very clean, and the disc has been extremely well recorded. But there are several more beguiling performances of these works available. *Lynda Sayce*

£ = bargain price ££ = mid-price
All other discs are full price, as far as we know.
If you have difficulty finding any of the discs reviewed here, contact Lindum Records, who either stock or can acquire them

Bach *Cello Suites Nos. 1-6* Pablo Casals 148' 47" (2 CDs) rec 1938-9
Naxos **8.110915-16** £
Also includes 1927-30 recordings of arrangements from BWV 478, 564, 811, 1003, 1068

Like most people my age or older, I first heard this music from Casals' recordings, and his conception of the music still mostly feels right – or at least, alternative approaches are still judged implicitly by the Casals manner. In fact, his playing clashes less with current historically aware styles than that of the famous performers of the violin Solos. It is marvellous that these historic documents are available so easily and cheaply (and with a background hiss that was only noticeable on one of the three players I used); but listen to the music, not the history. *CB*

Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord Vol. 1 (BWV 1014-17) Lucy van Dael, Bob van Asperen 61' 09"
Naxos **8.554614** £
Bach *Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord Vol. 2* (BWV 1018-19 + 1019 alternative movements) Lucy van Dael, Bob van Asperen 49' 14"
Naxos **8.554783** £
Bach *The Complete Sonatas for Violin and Obbligato Harpsichord* Rachel Podger, Trevor Pinnock 139' 23" 2 CDs
Channel Classics **CCS 14798**
BWV 1014-1019, 1019a, 1021, 1023

I already have two wonderful recordings of Bach's sonatas for violin and continuo, so these new sets were up against it: Monica Huggett with Ton Koopman and Maya Homberger with Malcolm Proud weren't about to give up their place in my collection lightly. The Naxos set obviously has a huge financial advantage. At this price, van Dael and van Asperen's fine accounts are a real bargain. The second of their discs gives all the 'missing' movements from the various versions of BWV 1019 (the back cover mistakenly says BWV 1016). Podger and Pinnock also throw in the two 'continuo' sonatas BWV 1021 and 1023, as well as a repeat of the opening movement of BWV 1019a and a second variant.

While I would not have hesitated to buy the Dutch pairing, I'm afraid the new Channel Classics recording came along and stole its thunder with a vengeance. This, like Podger's unaccompanied Bach on the same label, is magical stuff. The rich tone of the violin, the slightly background harpsichord, the subtle manipulation of rhythm, the wonderful gamba playing (why is Jonathan Manson given so secondary a credit?) and just the absolute conviction and, dare I say it, enjoyment of getting under Bach's skin. I've listened to nothing else since this arrived! *BC*

Bach *Reconstructed Violin Concertos* Isabelle Faust, Musiel Cantoretti, Christoph Poppen *vlns*, Bach-Collegium Stuttgart, Helmut Rilling
Hänssler **CD92.138** ££ 51' 06"
BWV 1045, 1052R, 1056R, 1064R.

Having not been *very* kind about Hänssler's Bach last month, I am more than happy to sing the praises of this disc. Speeds are nicely judged, the solo and tutti sounds blend nicely, and Isabelle Faust is a particularly fine Bach exponent. There's a bit of confusion in the sleevenotes with the G minor concerto being described as for three solo violins and continuo, and the D major for one, whereas it is really the other way round. The Sinfonia BWV 1045 (with which I was totally unfamiliar) sounded for all the world like a Fasch violin concerto movement. At just over 50 minutes, the disc is a little short. The booklet notes, on the other hand, are more than a little too long. *BC*

Bach *Brandenburg Concertos I (1, 2, 3 & 6)* Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Helmut Müller-Brühl 55' 12"
Naxos **8.554607** £
(Complete Orchestral Works 6)

This is another fine installment of the Naxos Complete Orchestral Works series. Helmut Müller-Brühl directs the members of his Cologne Chamber Orchestra in bright and crisp accounts of four of the Brandenburgs, with the soloists all clearly listed at the rear of the booklet. The liner notes are by no less a Bach specialist than Peter Wollny. The link in Brandenburg 3 is improvised by the harpsichordist, Robert Hill. I thoroughly enjoyed listening to this disc, even though Brandenburg 2 featured a flute instead of a recorder (one of the modernisations I find particularly difficult to tolerate), and I'd happily recommend it to anyone who is not too fussy about the use or otherwise of original instruments. *BC*

Bach *Die Kunst der Fuge* Hans Fagius *organ*
BIS-CD-1034 79' 49"

It is unclear whether or how The Art of Fugue should be performed – but the organ, as the quintessential polyphonic instrument, would seem ideal. Fagius plays intelligently and neatly, and his impressive pedal technique easily accommodates the fast-moving bass lines in movements such as Contrapunctus 4. But overall, the recording has the unfortunate effect of underlining the fact that the Art of Fugue isn't idiomatic organ music. Unlike Bach's organ fugues, it lacks dramatic pedal entries, contrasts between full textures and manual-only episodes, or rhetorical gestures thrown into the church building. In Contrapunctus 11, Fagius's performance simply sounds crowded, with the harmonic rhythm too fast for the acoustic, and no time for the interrupted cadence near the end to sound dramatic. To project the contrapuntal texture, Fagius relies on placing notes by slight delays – a crude technique compared to the rhythmic inequalities and shadings available to harpsichordists or string players (as in Musica Antiqua Köln's superb 1984 recording). Many of these problems are exacerbated by Fagius's use of an instrument in the style of Schnitger – a big Baltic organ meant for highly-rhetorical exploitations of the church acoustic. This is not to dismiss Fagius's achievement, for this is the finest performance of the Art of Fugue I've heard by an organist. But Fagius should have asked if the understated and intimate fugal rhetoric of this collection really suits the organ. *Stephen Rose*

Perhaps he was pressurised into it, like the string quartet in Vikram Seth's An Equal Music, *whose viola player is reduced to consulting the early music world to get an instrument that will play her part.* CB

LATE BAROQUE

Albinoni *12 Concerti a cinque, Op. 5* Collegium Musicum 90, Simon Standage
Chandos *Chaconne* **CHAN 0663** 76' 18"

This is a lovely recording. Albinoni's Op. 5 set is not exactly full of music that grabs your attention and defies you to ignore it. It's possibly ideal dinner party music because, in addition to your guests enjoying the effortless melodiousness of it all, they'll actually ask what it is. I'm currently working in Dundee's Central Library and one of the perks I have is the ability to play music all day, and (without exception) every member of staff who has come into my office during the past week has asked what I'm listening to. Granted none of them has ever heard of Albinoni, but they all enjoyed the music (and the performances) so much that they made an effort to find out. Simon Standage and the rest of the CM90 strings and continuo are in fine form. This would be an ideal non-Christmassy Christmas present. *BC*

Boyce *David's Lamentation over Saul and Jonathan* Patrick Burrows, William Purefoy, Andrew Watts, Richard Edgar-Wilson, Michael George *Tr A cT T B*, Choir of New College Oxford, Hanover Band, Graham Lea-Cox 79' 58"
ASV *Gaudeamus* **CD GAU 208**
David's Lamentation Dublin 1744 version + extracts from London 1736 version; *Ode on St Cecilia's Day 'The charms of harmony display'*

Graham Lea-Cox and the Hanover Band (obviously helped by some generous sponsorship) continue their most valuable project of making several of Boyce's major works available on disc for the first time. (For the earlier issues of *The Secular Masque* and the longer Cecilian Ode *See fam'd Apollo* see *EMR* 41, p. 17, and 60, p. 17.) *David's Lamentation* is a particularly fine piece, showing the 24-year-old Boyce's confident command of the elegiac manner. Lockman's poem covers the Amalakite's assassination of Saul as well as David's lament and so anticipates the subject matter of the final scenes of Handel's *Saul*, composed over two years later. Handel was careful not to borrow from Boyce, but there are interesting comparisons to be made. For the recording Lea-Cox adopts the revisions made by Boyce for a Dublin performance of 1744, adding the original 1736 versions of some numbers in an appendix. He directs an excellent performance, with a well-matched and responsive team of singers; the two countertenors are outstanding. The shorter of Boyce's Cecilian odes, *The charms of harmony display*, is a slighter and perhaps much earlier

work, but is a good choice as a filler. (Its overture is published in the collection edited by Gerald Finzi for *Musica Britannica* 13.) A 'fourth and last disc' in the series is promised, to include Boyce's *Pindaric Ode*, but I hope that Lea-Cox will also turn his attention to Boyce's master Maurice Greene; recordings of his *Ode for Music* (usually, but wrongly, called his St Cecilia Ode) and *Song of Deborah and Barak* are long overdue. *Anthony Hicks*

Campra *Les Festes Vénetiennes*; Destouches *Les Eléments, Le Carnaval & la Folie* Ensemble Baroque de Limoges, J. M. Hasler *dir*
Lyrinx **LYR 069** 62' 21"

This 1986 recording comes packaged with Lyrinx's interesting catalogue and a booklet that is close to being a triumph of design over usefulness. Fortunately, the performances can speak eloquently for themselves. I quite like the warm analogue sound, though in truth the ecclesiastical acoustic is not really appropriate for this collection of theatrical overtures, airs, dances and chaconnes. As co-creators of the *opéra-ballet*, Campra and Destouches are well-paired musically, even though heir careers were strongly contrasted, the former's conventional rise through the musical ranks being complemented by Destouches' journey (at the age of 15) with a Jesuit party to Siam, which was followed by a spell as a musketeer. These three suites are played at sensible tempi which allow both a relaxed swing to the *inégalité* and a rhythmic snap to the flourishes in the overtures. The music features elegant melodic writing, some exotic harmony and colourful use of recorders, oboe and bassoon, which contrast effectively with the basic string band. All in all, this is a useful re-release of music from the relatively shadowy period between Lully and Rameau that is here shown to have its own merits. *David Hansell*

Handel *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* Christine Brandes, Lynne Dawson, David Daniels Ian Bostridge, Alastair Miles *SSATB*, Bach Choir, Ensemble Orchestral de Paris, John Nelson 118' 14" (2 CDs in box)
Virgin Classics 7243 **5 45417 2** 8

Not a period-instrument performance, and therefore on Virgin Classics instead of Virgin Veritas. Period instruments do not necessarily mean period forces: they may be used in the wrong numbers, or even be the wrong instruments. As Handel usually suffers from undersized orchestral forces, especially in the strings, the more robust tone of modern instruments, if used with historical awareness (as here), is not to be dismissed. That said, it is the contributions of the distinguished soloists which are the most striking feature of this performance. There is a nice contrast between Brandes' steely soprano and Dawson's warmer tone: the latter blends very finely with Bostridge's impeccably phrased tenor in that delectable duet 'As steals the morn upon the night'. Brandes also finds a good partner in Clara Novakova's flute in 'Sweet bird', both embellishing with judicious fantasy; but she is unfortunately defeated by the 'warbling' trills of 'But oh! sad virgin'. None of the music was originally composed for alto voice, but for revivals Handel recomposed one number ('Sometimes let gorgeous tragedy') and transposed several others for the low voice of Susannah Cibber, and these versions are sung here by Daniels. Despite his sensitivity, I would have preferred a female contralto in this context. The transpositions themselves, though interesting to hear, lack the freshness of the originals. 'Hide me from day's garish eye' a fourth down loses the ethereal effect of a soprano voice initially supported only by upper strings, as well as the distinction of being the only Handel movement in the key of A flat. The transposed version of the brilliant soprano aria 'Orpheus' self' is also used; Alastair Miles does his best, but cannot make it work. The choir obviously has one of those trainers who insists on well-articulated consonants, so that 'p's and 't's sometimes pop out rather alarmingly, but generally it sounds very well. Nelson moves the music along amiably, perhaps balancing the Allegro and Penseroso elements more equally than does Robert King on his fine but Penseroso-leaning Hyperion recording (see *EMR* 55, p. 30). But King's greater intensity and use of original voice pitches throughout gives his version the edge.
Anthony Hicks

Handel *Theodora* Susan Gritton *Theodora*, Susan Bickley *Irene*, Robin Blaze *Didymus*, Paul Agnew *Septimius*, Neal Davies *Valens*, Angus Smith *Messenger*, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Paul McCreesh 183' 53"
Archiv **469 061-2** (3 CDs in box)

As CB mentioned in *EMR* 65 (introducing the extract from the new King's Music edition of the oratorio's most famous aria) *Theodora* acquired a burst of unaccustomed acclaim with Peter Sellar's 1996 stage production at Glyndebourne. (CB's reaction to the TV relay is understandable, but despite many annoying features the production was a serious attempt to engage with the issues raised by the work; there is a commercial video.) Partly because of that, and partly because of Nicholas McGegan's respectable Harmonia Mundi recording of 1991, Paul McCreesh's new account is less of a revelation than his recent *Solomon*, but it is a carefully considered, vivid and moving interpretation, easily surpassing its predecessors in quality of orchestral and choral sound. The soloists are also excellent. Both Susan Gritton in the title role and Susan Bickley as her fellow Christian Irene consistently find the right degree of tragic expression in their many slow arias, brightened when appropriate with hopeful radiance. Countertenor Robin Blaze seems at first too light in tone for the young soldier Didymus, but his fearless accuracy at any pitch soon impresses, and he brings strength as well as tenderness to the role. The sympathetic nature of Septimius is eloquently realised by Paul Agnew, but I would have liked more swagger from Neal Davies as the blustering Roman governor Valens; he seems too attached to the written rhythms of the recitatives. Here he might have been helped by more vigorous prompting from the rather reticent continuo players, though as usual McCreesh must be complimented for his use of correct instrumentation in that department. Tempos are invariably convincing, except possibly for the final chorus of Act 1 ('Go, gen'rous, pious youth'), where McGegan's greater urgency makes better dramatic sense than McCreesh's oddly reflective approach. Like McGegan, McCreesh presents a full text, with extra generosity over the variant versions of the prison scene in Act 2. The booklet provides a commendably erudite essay credited to Ruth Smith and McCreesh on the literary sources of the libretto and its relationship to the sentimental drama of the period, but a few more words on the music would have been welcome. Handel's use of themes from the duets of G. M. Clari – more extensive than is indicated by Winton Dean – is not mentioned, but their influence on the score is surely as important as the influence of Richardson's *Clarissa* on the libretto. A clear recommendation of this performance must bear no qualification, however; the special qualities of Handel's most extraordinary oratorio are made manifest as never before. *Anthony Hicks*

Keiser *Croesus* Dorothea Röschmann *Elmira*, Werner Güra *Atis*, Roman Trekel *Croesus*, Klaus Häger *Orsanes*, etc, Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, René Jacobs 188' 02" (3 CDs in box)
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901714.6** ££

I've already outlined René Jacobs' approach to baroque opera (which, of course, will already be familiar to our readers) in my review of Cavalli's *Giasone* above. Here, he is making a case for the re-assessment of Keiser's operatic output, not just in view of its undeniable influence on the young Handel (there were times when I could almost hear the latter's brain ticking over with excitement at some new ideas), but for its own sake. This is, to all intents and purposes, a Venetian opera (complete with comic secondary characters) with a rich orchestral accompaniment. There are, however, unusual features, such as the sequence of four duets and a quartet towards the end of the first act. The arias are slightly short-winded, but full of good ideas: Act III opens with a very Handelian aria for Orsanes (one of the bad guys) which barely lasts a minute and a half – the younger composer would have at least doubled this. On the whole, the singing is very good. I had my usual problems with Dorothea Röschmann – she's cast as the Princess Elmira, an unfortunately highly-strung young lady, centre of various men's attention... When she gets upset, the dramatic effect seems to take precedence over voice control, I'm afraid. This may just be my low 'opera tolerance threshold' kicking in, and other listeners may find it more convincing, but I have the feeling someone like Veronique Gens or Sophie Daneman could do the job and not swoon and swoop about. Werner Güra does a

wonderful job as Atis, son of Croesus. I don't think anyone interested in the German baroque or early opera can really afford to miss this, no matter which side of the René Jacobs fence they sit on – it's an excellent piece with some terrific performances, and we are unlikely to hear an alternative recording for many years. *BC*

D. Scarlatti *Stabat mater* [etc] Die Deutschen Bach-Vocalisten, Gerhard Weinberger
Christophorus **CHE 0109-2** £ (rec 1987)
Allegri *Miserere;* **Ingegneri** *Tenebrae factae sunt a4;* **Monteverdi** *O bone Jesu a2, Sancta Maria* a2; **D. Scarlatti** *Stabat mater a10*

The major work here is the ten-voice *Stabat mater*, here sung by a mixture of choir and soloists (though without being able to quote specific sources, I'd be inclined to prefer soloists throughout). The performance is good of its type, but the programme isn't quite strong enough to make this a desirable buy, especially since most listeners will already have rival versions of the Allegri (which here isn't the normal Ivor Atkins version with the top C). *CB*

From Lisbon to Madrid with Scarlatti
Penelope Cave *hpscd* 66' 23"
Pace **PACE0700CD**
Sonatas by Albero, Carvallo, Ferrer, Jacinto, D. Scarlatti, Soler

I always think there are a lot of Scarlatti discs on the market, perhaps even a few too many, and the typical string of 20 or more sonatas doesn't always make for the most enjoyable sustained listening experience, even if you're a fan of the style. Penelope Cave has been a bit canny here though, interspersing sonatas by Seixas, Jacinto, Albero, Ferrer, Carvallo and Soler to keep things interesting. You probably need to have the CD case nearby to make the most of it, but this approach certainly helps make the disc stand out from the crowd. And actually the playing is such that interest is maintained anyway. Penelope Cave is an energetic player and her performances sound good on a lively Antunes copy by her husband Michael Heale. There is some wonderful, crystal-clear playing in the high treble register, and throughout the disc guitar-style writing comes across as gloriously strident and rhythmic. Maybe sometimes there could have been some more inventive articulation, especially in repetitious sections, and occasionally I yearned for some really florid ornamentation, but that's just my preference. There's nothing bad here, just fine, outgoing, interesting playing which could hold its own with anything else now available. Most enjoyable. *Robin Bigwood*

D. Scarlatti *Sonate* Maria Vittoria Guidi *hpscd* 43' 49"
Rivo Alto **CRR 9804**
K.134-5, 144, 146, 208-9, 424-5, 435-6, 490, 492

These days you have to try quite hard to make a bad recording – at least technically speaking. It's quite impressive, then, that this Italian offering sounds as awful as it does. Supposedly this is a remastered 1986 recording, but it might as well have been 1956 – the sound is harsh and constantly fluctuates in pitch, as if it was being played on a worn-out tape recorder. The harpsichord itself isn't up to much either – some notes don't speak properly and the tone is uneven to say the least. And finally, to make matters worse, Maria Vittoria Guidi's performance is plodding and full of wrong notes. Believe me, I try to be as positive as possible about all performances I hear, whether live or recorded, but this one simply does not stand any comparison with virtually anything else on the market: it has nothing going for it. *Robin Bigwood*

Telemann *Concerts & Suites 1734* Camerata Köln 159' 12" (3 CDs in box)
cpo **999 690-2** ££

Michael Schneider and Company have pulled off another wonderful coup in their on-going project to record (it seems) everything that Telemann ever published in its entirety. This three-disc set contains some lovely movements and some wonderful playing. There's little in the way of out and out virtuosity, but there are a great many subtle (and some not so subtle) nuances: a couple of squeaky voice flute moments irked slightly, for example. The interesting variety of continuo line-ups helped to stimulate the ear. Some pieces call for obbligato harpsichord, which is sometimes accompanied by cello and lute, at others by organ, and twice by cello only. The melody instruments (flute, voice-flute and violin) are excellently handled, with fine intonation and exemplary phrasing. A real treat for Telemann fans everywhere. *BC*

The Baroque Harpsichord (Instrument: Jacob Stirnemann, Lyon, 1777). Lars Ulrik Mortensen, Anne Gallet, Christiane Jaccottet 73' 00"
Claves **CD 50-9908**
C. P. E. Bach Sonatas Wq 51/2, 4, 5; **Couperin** Prélude in b (*L'Art...*), Ordre 27; **Rameau** Suite in e

Here's an interesting concept – a recording of three harpsichordists performing a range of repertoire on the same harpsichord (not at the same time, you understand.) The instrument in question is a 1777 double by Jacob Stirnemann from the Geneva Museum of Art and History collection. Looking very much like a standard 18th-century French instrument, it actually has dogleg coupling. It's a good-sounding instrument with quite a distinguished, sweet treble and an overall quality that puts its somewhere on the lighter and clearer side of Ruckers-derived instruments. Only one other harpsichord by Stirnemann is known.

Lars Ulrik Mortensen's offering of three C. P. E. Bach sonatas is sophisticated and enjoyable, but left me wondering how the works would have fared on a Silbermann piano. Actually, all of his keyboard music leaves me wondering this, so that's no reflection on Mortensen. The Couperin, played by Anne Gallet, I found difficult to get along with. Some rhythm and lots of articulation is messy, and the sense of line is undulating to say the least. The highlight of the disc is undoubtedly Christiane Jaccottet's Rameau Suite in E (1724). The instrument sounds best in her hands, and a combination of rich ornamentation with an irresistible sense of dance and movement makes for a superb effect overall. *Les Rigaudons* is particularly enjoyable, as is the *Musette en rondeau*. Sadly, this was the last recording she made before her death in October 1999. *Robin Bigwood*

CLASSICAL

Dittersdorf & Vanhal *Double Bass Concertos* Chi-Chi Nwanoku *db*, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Paul Goodwin 70' 27"
Hyperion **CDA67179**
Vanhal in D; Dittersdorf 1 & 2 in D (Krebs 171-2)

Double bass concertos, it has to be admitted, are never going to be best-sellers, so all credit to Hyperion for releasing this enterprising disc, featuring three of the rarely-heard but most famous pieces of their type. Chi Chi Nwanoku should be a familiar name to most early music fans, as she features on a huge number of recordings, but this is the first time I've ever heard her play concertante pieces. The tone is a surprisingly delicate one, and the growly lower notes are perhaps the most obvious reason why these pieces are not that popular! There's even room on the disc for an alternative slow movement to Dittersdorf's second concerto. Although there are some pleasant tunes about, I reckon this is chiefly a novelty disc for fans of the double bass. *BC*

Haydn *The 'Sturm und Drang' Symphonies* The English Concert, Trevor Pinnock 6 CDs
Archiv **463 731-2** rec 1988-89
Symphonies 26, 35, 38-9, 41-52, 58-9, 65

No surprise that these thrilling performances – affectionate and witty too – appear now for the third time: this must be the outstanding set of middle-period Haydn symphonies, and handsomely they appear in an olive-green box (the only fault is that each CD is enclosed in a card envelope that demands fingering of the disc's surface). But this is to trivialise a major achievement: 41 in C, 47 in G, 51 in B flat are marvels, quite the equals of the best-known ones – there isn't a dull page here, and the recordings and notes are worthy of Pinnock's performances with his excellent players. *Peter Branscombe*

Haydn *London Symphonies Vol. 2 (94, 101 & 102)* Collegium Musicum 90, Richard Hickox
Chandos *Chaconne* **CHAN 0662** 75' 16"

This is the second installment of CM90's London Symphonies series, and it's as welcome as its predecessor. The woodwind playing is an especial treat, though pride of place for outstanding playing must go to the whole band for the surprise: the introduction is *so* quiet and the fortissimo *so* subito that I was quite taken aback. The variations are well done, too, and there's a lovely passage for high woodwind over upper strings. In a month when I have not really had time to sit down for more than a

few minutes, I've thoroughly enjoyed listening to this repeatedly. Buy it! *BC*

Haydn and his English Friends Psalmody, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman *dir*
Hyperion **CDA67150** 69' 19"
Haydn *6 English Psalms* + music by Burney, Dahmen, Foster, Shield, Stafford Smith, Webbe Sr

Haydn's Masses of the 1790s are now well known, but the six small English psalms of 1794 have been neglected: later Anglicans rejected the classical style as unsuitable for church while serious musicians have mostly scorned the metrical psalm and hymn as beneath criticism. This disc includes all six, along with other religious music from England of the time. It begins with an extraordinary setting by Haydn for voices with obbligato keyboard of words in praise of him by Henry Harington and includes an anthem version by William Gardiner of the variations of op. 76/3. As usual, Peter Holman has put together an intriguing programme, throwing new light on obscure corners of music history in an enjoyable rather than didactic manner, pleasingly performed. *CB*

Mozart *Piano Sonatas* (K342, 533/494, 545, 576) Liv Glaser *fp* 52' 38"
Simax **PSC 1149**

This disc presents perceptive and stylish interpretations of the well-known easier (but not boring) C major sonata that Mozart composed for novice pianists coupled with two of the most technically and musically challenging sonatas that he wrote. The recording is wonderfully clear and enhances these translucent, vibrant performances. Tempi provide zip when it is needed and there are moments of passion as well as breadth in the Andante of K533. Subtle decorations are added to most of the repeats – a touch of originality that blends with the music rather than trying to outdo Mozart. Highly recommended.
Margaret Cranmer

Platti *Sonatas* Elaine Funaro *hpscd, fp*
Wildboar **WLBR 9901** 77' 20"

Platti's music is full of post-Baroque pre-Classical turbulence, and this recording gives an opportunity to hear some of it on a copy of the 1726 Cristofori in Leipzig. A harpsichord 'after 18th-century German originals' is also used for three of the sonatas. The appeal of Platti's music lies very much 'in the moment' – there's little possibility of anyone going away whistling the tunes – and Elaine Funaro makes the most of the dynamic contrast offered by the piano to keep the listener engaged. Some of it's quite exciting, but I do feel more could be done, especially in the slow movements, to vary the colour. I sense there's some genuine subtlety and darkness in Platti's style that on this recording comes over either too melodramatically or not at all. Given the piano's expressive abilities, it's interesting that the sonatas performed on the harpsichord don't sound at all inflexible –in fact I'd say they sound better. I suspect Funaro is much more at home on the harpsichord, but even so I still long for some more colour – it's all a touch sterile and there's no experimentation with overholding or emphasis on interesting harmonic juxtapositions. If this all sounds negative then I've created the wrong impression – on balance this is a good recording. For the most part the playing is energetic and bold, and well shaped, but I just think there's more to be had from this difficult music than we hear on this disc. *Robin Bigwood*

G. Puccini Sr. *Musica sacra* Julia Gooding, Jonathan Peter Kenny, James Gilchrist, Adolph Seidel *SATB*, Kantorei Saarlouis, Ensemble UnaVolta, Joachim Fontaine *cond*
Arte Nova **74321 75507 2** £ 61' 26"
De profundis, Dixit Dominus (1755), Laudate pueri (1741)

'Senior' in the heading is short for great-great-grandfather: the opera composer came from a line of musicians. This Giacomo (1712-81) is certainly competent, in fact rather more than that: I'd rather listen to this than most English cathedral music of the time, and it adds to the picture of the vitality of Italian church music at a time when writers (then and now) were only interested in the opera. According to the booklet, the conductor was since a student drawn to 'historically adequate performance practice' – a refreshingly modest target that others might emulate. The performances are certainly far more than adequate and present this unknown music favourably. Worth buying, especially at bargain price, and playing more than *una volta*. *CB*

Vanhal *Symphonies Vol. 2 (d2, G11, B♭3)* City of London Sinfonia, Andrew Watkinson
Naxos **8.554614** £ 49' 51"

This is the most exciting of the 'contemporaries of Mozart'-type recordings I've heard for one simple reason – it includes the amazing D minor symphony with no fewer than five horns. The aura of sound the horn consort (an additional woodwind) make gives this piece a very distinctive colour, and The City of London Sinfonia (directed very stylishly by Andrew Watkinson) play it beautifully, with incision and suavity by turns. The other two pieces, though less outstanding, are still very nice symphonies of their time and should find a place more frequently in the repertoire of the world's chamber orchestras. A very fine CD indeed. *BC*

Pastoral Masses Soli, Brno Chamber Orch., Ars Brunensis Chorus, Hradistan (dulcimer ensemble), Roman Válek *dir* 62' 34"
Supraphon **SU 3475-2 231**
Zrunek *Missa prima in F pro festis Natalitiis* (1766); **Pavlica** *Missa brevis (1997/99)*

This may not be the correct thing to say in an early music magazine but, if I were to buy this CD at all, it would be for the modern piece. The Zrunek mass of 1766 is far from the most interesting piece in the *missa pastoralis* repertoire and, although there is some nice singing and playing, I don't think I'll be rushing back to listen to it again. The Pavlica, on the other hand, has quite a few arresting ideas, with a bouncy Kyrie setting the pace. The solo singing is very good, the choir is generally well disciplined, and the band very good (though the flutes sound slightly sharp just occasionally). *BC*

VARIOUS

La bela naissença: Christmas Carols from Provence Patrick Vaillant, Danielle Franzin, Renat Sette, Jean-Louis Ruf, Serge Pesce, Bijan Chemirani + Melonious Quartet
L'empreinte digitale **ED 13113** 50' 02"

I thought that this might be something different than what it is, but it is a current folk presentation rather than a historically-minded recreation. Indeed, the search for authenticity is described as 'vain and utterly futile'. Perhaps, but some of us like to try, and comment on this as contemporary music is beyond our scope. The Melonious mandolin quartet is worth hearing. *CB*

Wondrous Machine: Early English keyboard music on the organ of the Ospedaletto in Venice Christopher Stembridge 73' 19"
Quilisma **QUIL302**
Music by Alwood, Aston, Blitheman, Blow, Boyce, Bull, Byrd, Gibbons, Handel, Redford, Tallis, Tomkins, Walond & anon

The programme covers music from the early 16th to the 18th century. Finding the right organ to record most of this repertoire is certainly not easy, although a 1751 Venetian organ is not the most obvious choice – interestingly, it works least well in the 18th-century pieces. Although most of the sounds are pleasant enough, there is no obvious link with any of the repertoire, and the Tromboncini reed stop is so distinctively not English (of any period) as to distract. I am afraid that there is much that is distracting about the playing as well. Although earlier CDs have shown that Stembridge can be an imaginative (if unorthodox) interpreter of the early Italian repertoire, he imposes too much on this more conservative English repertoire. His frequently inelegant articulation and curious ornamentation and textural additions detract from the music. Those pieces that are played straight are the most successful, particularly Blitheman's four settings of *Eterne rerum conditor* – I liked the sound of the stops being drawn between these four pieces – and in Bull's five-verse *Salve Regina*. For those exercised by such things, five of the earlier pieces are played a fourth or fifth away from the written pitch – a helpful contribution to a highly complex debate. The early English repertoire deserves to be better known, particularly in England. A new label willing to record this repertoire needs all the encouragement it can get, so do listen and buy if you disagree with me.
Andrew Benson-Wilson

£ = bargain price ££ = mid-price
All other discs are full price, as far as we know.

The Art of Robert Bloom 7 CDs
Boston Records BR1031CD-BR1037CD

Robert Bloom (1908-94) was a leading New York oboist with a particular interest in early music (though played on the modern oboe). Two of these discs are devoted to recordings made of concerts by William H. Scheide's Bach Aria Group. They make a fascinating study of the way Bach was played by conscientious performers during the period, a world very different from today. The later recordings suggest that New York was a bit old-fashioned compared with London in the 1960s and I find the earlier recordings more revealing about how performers felt for the music in a different way from now. The oboe playing far more acceptable than the solo singers. The other discs (two for oboe and strings, three of chamber music) also contain much early music. I wonder how current performances will seem in 2050! *CB*

Sacred songs from East & West Sister Marie Keyrouz 114' 46" (2 CDs)
Virgin Classics 7243 **5 45289 2 6**
CD 1 *The Nativity in the Eastern Church traditions* Ensemble de la Paix
CD 2 *Ave Maria* Orchestre d'Auvergne, Arie van Beck *cond* (Ave Marias & other Marian pieces by Bach/Gounod, Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner, Franck, Gordigiani, Gruber, Mascagni, Niedermeyer, Schubert, Schumann & *Adeste fideles*)

Both discs are dated 1999 with no suggestion that this package is a compilation from earlier recordings. The mish-mash of arrangements on disc 2, with virtually nothing performed with the original scoring and with no awareness of the different styles the pieces require (though I can see the point of a jolly *Adeste fideles*), makes one suspicious of the Arabic-Christian music on disc 1. If it corresponds with the taste shown in disc 2, I'd like to be warned. (There is the normal problem with world-music: performers are interested in developing their style, usually under the influence of Western popular music, whereas those with a historical interest want to hear it uncontaminated.) Sister Marie has an impressive voice, and doesn't make disc 2 sound at all Arabic. I wonder whether she sounds genuinely Arab on disc 1. What happened to the Mussorgsky listed on the cover? *CB*

Andreas Scholl *The Voice*
Harmonia Mundi **HMX2901726** ££

This a mid-price anthology from various previous recordings, with some well-known arias (*Ombra ma fù, But who may abide, Erbarme dich*, the *Agnus Dei* from the Mass in B Minor). lesser-known items by Caldara, Hammerschmidt, Nauwach and Vivaldi, and a couple of English folk songs. Those of our readers who don't yet know if they like his voice or not will find this a useful way to decide. If you do, and want to buy any of the source discs, note that Harmonia are selling their six Scholl recital discs at mid-price until Christmas. *CB*

SOUNDS FROM AN EXHIBITION

The following discs were offered to me by visitors to the London Early Music Exhibition.

Viking Tones: I Dreamt a Dream Mogens Friis, Knud Ambert Jepsen, Erik Axel Wessberg 20' 40"
Skalk **CD 2**

The disc contains 12 short tracks demonstrating Viking instruments, interesting more for organological than musical reasons (though the pieces are played musically enough and worth hearing). The booklet notes are extremely informative. It is available from Mogens Friis, Samsøgade 85, 8000 Århus C, Denmark; tel & fax +45 86 12 41 72, e-mail mogens.friis@get2net.dk

1526: O Cancioneiro de Elvas Vitor Lima *A*, Joaquím Galvão *rec*, Paulo Galvão *vihuela*
Musicália **M.01.01.004** 58' 47"
Recital: Vivaldi, Ortiz, Molino, Rodil, Galvão Duo Galvão 63' 22"
Musicália **M.01.01.001**
O Livro de Guitarra do Conde de Redondo Paulo Galvão *baroque guitar* 58' 58"
Musicália **M.01.03.003** 58' 47"
Recital de Música Portuguesa para Flauta e Piano Joachim Galvão, João Luis Rosa
Musicália **M.01.02.002** 64' 14"

I assume that the two Galvãos are brothers, and they are a talented pair. The last item listed here is modern, so I won't comment on it. Of the others, I found the earliest the most interesting, though must confess that were I recording a disc of music from 1526, I wouldn't choose alto voice and recorder unless I also included a contrasting voice and instrument. Never mind, they give a good idea of the MS, including 26 of the 65 pieces. The booklet note is by Ivan Moody (in English) but the tests are only printed in the original. 27 short pieces for baroque guitar are less exciting: the playing doesn't have enough verve, and the simple grounds etc. need a few more improvised statements to hold the interest. The Duo Galvão recital is probably the most satisfactory disc, with the plucked continuo working well. The flute & recorder sound quite solid, the antithesis to the Dutch sound, and I rather liked it. While I'm not absolutely enthusiastic about these particular discs, Galvão is certainly a name to watch out for. *CB*
From Musicália, Rua Cemitério 15 8600-713 Lagos, Portugal tel +351 282 767 305

DVD

I was hoping to review the two DVDs we had received, but we didn't get round to acquiring the equipment in time. They are:

Handel *Xerxes* (1988 English National Opera production in English cond. Mackerras)
Arthaus 100 076
Salieri *Falstaff* (1996 Schwetzinger Festival cond. Östmann)
Arthaus 100 022

THE EARLY ENGLISH ORGAN PROJECT

Andrew Benson-Wilson

One of the most exciting developments in the English organ world in the past 10 years has been the emergence of the soundboards of two early-16th-century organs. The soundboard might appear to be one of the more boring bits of an organ, but it can give valuable information on the keyboard compass, number of ranks and approximate plan area of the organ. The importance of these two fragments is that there is no physical evidence of any organ in England from before about 1620. The documentary evidence is tantalizing but often obscure. Helpfully, the currently assumed dates of both fragments are from the same period as two of the better pieces of documentary evidence, the organ contracts of 1519 between Anthony Duddyngton and All Hallows, Barking by the Tower and 1526 between John Howe and Holy Trinity, Coventry.

The larger soundboard, the 'Wetheringsett fragment', is named after the Suffolk village in which it was found, masquerading as a door and hidden behind a partition in a 16th-century house. Although first discovered in 1977, it was not until the early 1990s that it was realised what it was. Dendochronological dating suggests a date between 1525/50, which probably means that the organ was not the one known to be in Wetheringsett Church in 1504. It now seems possible that it could have been part of the organ referred to in the archives of Debenham Church. The smaller Wingfield fragment has been playing hide and seek in various nooks and crannies of Wingfield Church, not far from Wetheringsett, until it was found again in 1995. There are records of an 'ancient' organ (presumed to be this one) at Wingfield from writers back to 1796. The Wingfield fragment is small, the collegiate church wealthy, so there could have been a larger organ as well: there are records of an organ being played in 1492 during the visit of a Bishop. The Wingfield organ had five stops with 40 notes and, it seems, wooden pipes – possibly an early example of a tradition of small wooden piped organs that continued into the seventeenth century. The larger Wetheringsett organ had a 46 note compass, showing similarities with the Italian organ of the period, with seven stops and predominantly metal pipes. The Early English Organ Project has been set up to oversee the reconstruction of an example of both organs, giving us one interpretation of the evidence surviving from each soundboard, starting with the smaller Wingfield fragment. On 7 October, a conference took place at Wingfield, in the church and the nearby College (the remnants of a once thriving medieval institution), combining members of the British Institute of Organ Studies, the Plainchant and Mediæval Music Society and the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History – an interesting mix. The talks covered the background to the discovery of the Wingfield fragment and the possible position within the church, the role of organs in the liturgy of the time and the proposed reconstruction of the organs. Not surprisingly, the day raised more questions than it answered, particularly in the discussion about the reconstructed organ. The suggestion that the original organ stood on the surviving screen in the first arch of the north side of the chancel was queried by many. This screen is structurally stronger than the other remaining screens in the church so could well have been designed, or reinforced, to house a small organ. But the width of top of the screen, and the space below the arch, is limited, raising questions about whether an instru-ment of the size suggested by the soundboard could have fitted. Indeed, the reconstructed Wingfield organ will not fit the space that the original organ was supposed to have fitted.

This is an exciting chance for us to add to our knowledge of the organ available to composers like Redford, Preston and the young Tallis and the host of unknown organists that contributed to the thriving musical activities of the late medieval church. One reconstruction will clearly not be enough to explore this most important insight into a lost world of organ playing.

Both fragments are currently displayed at the musical instrument collection of the Royal College of Music, although the Westheringsett fragment is unfortunately placed against a wall so that only one side is visible. They are up the stairs at the far end of the gallery.

MOVING CONCERT

There was some confusion about the date of Andrew Benson-Wilson's organ recital at the Grosvenor Chapel. In October we advertised it as 11 Nov. Andrew asked us to point out last month that it was on the 5th. Unfortunately, he got the date wrong and it was actually on the 7th. Our apologies if anyone turned up on either of the wrong dates.

AND A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE

JENNIE CASSIDY

The twelve days of Christmas (from the end of Advent on Christmas Day through to Epiphany) were pronounced a festal tide by the Council of Tours in 567. The carol celebrating this season may have its origins in a thirteenth-century manuscript in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge (B. 14.39) entitiled *Twelfth Day*. The song we know today was first printed in a children's book in 1780.

On the Twelfth day of Christmas
My true love sent to me
Twelve lords a-leaping,
Eleven ladies dancing,
Ten pipers piping,
Nine drummers drumming,
Eight maids a-milking,
Seven swans a-swimming,
Six geese a-laying,
Five gold rings,
Four colly birds,
Three French hens,
Two turtle doves,
And a partridge in a pear tree.

The 'pear tree' may come from the French for partridge: *perdrix* or *pertriolle*. 'Une pertriolle qui vole du bois au champ'. Colly or cally birds are blackbirds and the gold rings might either be from goldspinks (goldfinches) or guilderer (turkey).

The song used to form part of a game of forfeits played at Epiphany (the twelfth day) in which anyone who could not carry the song a line forward and repeat the preceding lines had to contribute something to the amusement of the assembly (eg a song or story). Versions of it appear in England, Scotland, France, America and French Canada. Here is a nineteenth century version from France:

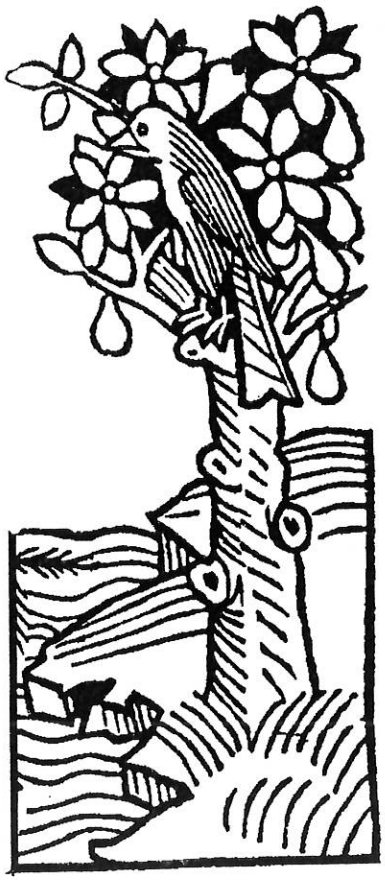
La premièr parti d' la foi d' la loi,	*The first part of the faith of the law,*
Dit'-la-moi, frère Grégoire?	*Tell me Brother Gregory?*
Douze mousquetaires	*Twelve musketeers*
Avec leurs rapières,	*With their swords,*
Onze demoiselles	*Eleven maidens*
Fort gentill's et belles	*Beautiful and aluring,*
Garni's de tétons,	*Well upholstered,*
Voilà qui est bon.	*Nice one.*
Dix futailles pleines,	*Ten full casks,*
Qui feront merveille,	*That work wonders,*
Neuf plats de chapitre,	*Nine dishes*
Pour servir de suite,	*For a chapter of canons,*
Huit plats de salade,	*Eight plates of salad,*
Pour garnir la table,	*To decorate the table,*
Sept lapins en broche,	*Seven spitted rabbits,*
Rôtis à la sauce,	*Roasted with sauce,*
Six perdrix aux choux,	*Six partridges with cabbage,*
Voilà tout.	*Here's everything.*
Cinq pieds de mouton,	*Five legs of mutton,*
Quatre pieds de porcs.	*Four pig's trotters,*
Trois aloyaux rôtis qu maluraux.	*Three joints of mouldy (?) beef,*
Deux ventres de veau,	*Two breasts of veal,*
Un bon farci sans os	*A good stuffing without bones.*

And a 19th-century Scottish version:

The king sent his lady on the first Yule day,
A popingo-aye;
Three partridges,
Three plovers,
A goose that was grey,
Three starlings,
Three goldspinks,
A bull that was brown,
Three ducks a-merry laying,
Three swans a-merry dancing,
Three stalks o' merry corn.
Wha learns my carol and carries it away?

Partridge was always a very popular food, simply roasted and served with a sauce of stewed fruit, spices, rosewater and claret. Pears were first brought to England by the Romans, and in medieval times were considered a great luxury. The pears grown were mostly wardens, which were large, hard cooking pears. By the middle ages all the grandest houses had their own apple and pear orchards which were a considerable status symbol. Glastonbury Abbey was planted with three acres of orchard and select pears were sent to the Abbot's country residence. John Gerard in 1597 enviously mentions a friend who grew an orchard with 'threescore sundry sortes of Peares and those exceeding good'.

WARDENS IN CONSERVE



I have found many recipes for pears cooked in wine (or cider) dating right back from Imperial Rome in the third century AD through to 'Delia Smith's Winter Collection'. The Roman recipe slices the pears and stews them with black pepper, cumin, honey and white wine. My version is a combination of two English recipes, one from 1430 and one from 1575. It is a light, sophisticated and festive dessert that never fails to impress, and yet it is simple and quick to prepare and can be done well in advance. You could serve partridge as a first course!

8 large, firm pears
Bottle of red wine
1/3 bottle sherry or Montilla wine
4 oz clear honey
6 oz sugar (or to taste)
2 tsp cinnamon powder
1 tsp ginger powder

Peel the pears but do not core them or take off the stalks. Put everything else into a saucepan, heat slowly and stir until the sugar dissolves. Submerge the pears in the syrup and cook gently for about 15 minutes until they are just tender but not soft. Let the pears cool in the sauce as this intensifies their colour. They can be kept in the fridge for a few days and are fantastic served with cream and a bay leaf for decoration.

I will be serving the twelve days of Christmas including 'wardens in conserve' for lunch at the annual Epiphany party in Beccles on 6 January. It is an Eastern Early Music Forum event; for the musical parts of the day Philip Thorby will be working with singers and players on Striggio's colossal 40 part motet *Ecce beatam lucem*.

The workshop is open to non-members as well as to members.

If you would like more details, please contact me:

tel: +44 (0)1473 718811
email: jennie.cassidy@btinternet.com