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'It's a lovely feeling, when you see a certain date in history... and suddenly you can also visualise the paintings and the costumes of that time, and hear the music in your head and read the literature. The earlier in life you start being able to make these connections the better off you are.' I found this in a *Times* obituary (compensation for knocking the paper last month), a quotation from Irene Thomas, who died on 27 March at the age of 80. I mention her here, not because she sang in the chorus in *The Fairy Queen* at Covent Garden in the late 1940s, but because she was a representative of a world that we have virtually lost: one in which knowledge and understanding were not related to qualifications. She had no degree, but was known to Radio 4 listeners for nearly 30 years on Round Britain Quiz, that most egg-head of panel games, in which each answer required vast knowledge and intelligence.

While not at such a playful level, musicology is also concerned with seeing the connections: the book on the French court air reviewed on p. 2 is a good example. Some CDs try to link music and the wider world, though the connections tend to be forced: I often find it very difficult to relate programmes of 'Music at the Court of Peter the Podgy' with what I know of other aspects of that court. Cultures, like individuals, often survive by compartmentalising their modes of thought and behaviour. That ability is probably essential for survival, even though most of us are not in the extreme position of a monarch who could begin his day in genuine devotion at mass then approve the execution of a few prisoners without any serious attempt to establish their guilt. We can choose to recreate what seem to us to be the enduringly valuable parts of such societies, and although we want to know as much as we can about the relevant elements, how far do we need a warts-and-all view? We should not, of course, make assumptions about a society as a whole based on a selective sampling of its music, art and literature. But is there anything wrong in the cultural tourism way of visiting the past to take what we want from it? I feel uneasy at such a simplistic view; on the other hand, do I need to remember that life for most of their contemporaries was nasty, brutish and short when listening to Machaut or Dufay? If you have a pearl, need you think of the oyster? *CB*

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

COURTLY SONG

Jeanice Brooks *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France* Chicago UP, 2000 [2001]. xvi + 560pp, £50.00. ISBN 0 226 07587 7

This is a series of discussions based round Adrian Le Roy's *Airs de cour miz sur le luth* (1571). The main interest is not so much the music itself (which, indeed, is far less worthwhile than the chansons by Lassus discussed below) but in the courtly culture from which it comes. As such, I hope that it will be read widely by those interested in the history and culture of France in the period. Musicians more concerned with the music itself may find it frustrating: there is plenty of it quoted (mostly complete pieces), but only the chapter 'dialogues with Italy' has much purely musical comment. Particularly interesting here is the relationship between the simpler court song and Italian villanelle, as well as the influence of pastoral Italian poetry along with that of the classics on Baïf.

Those put off by the fashionable musicologese will miss such valuable traditional scholarly fare as the account of the court's musical establishment, which is supplemented by an extensive table (120pp) of individuals employed at court. Jargon is at its worst, as one might expect, in the chapter 'Women's voices'. For example, the author writes on p. 203: 'The abundant evidence of court women singing in a variety of contexts does not mean they sang as women; that is, they did not necessarily perform pieces in feminine voices. Although female singers were embodied as women they doubtless often sang pieces from a male subject position, as the vast majority of extant song texts from the period feature masculine voices.' I think I know what she means. But, apart from irreverent thoughts of operatic love duets with the woman singing from underneath the man, the word 'voice', now a technical term in such writing, needs to be used much more carefully, if at all, in a musical context. There are several points that are confused. Is there a relationship between the notated compass of the voice part and the singer or was octave transposition normal? Did anyone care whether the *persona* (a much less ambiguous word, used a couple of sentences later) of the song matched the sex of the singer? It would be an interesting exercise to translate the paragraph running from the bottom of 208 and through most of 209 into renaissance French or Latin just to see how far removed it is from the thoughts of the period it is describing. (I'm not subscribing to the idea that a period can only be understood in its own terms, but I am suspicious of too great a dependence on recent ideas.) The chapter was particularly dense in metaphorical jargon, such as 'forge a space' (p. 225).

This does, however, give rich insight into what is a very foreign culture. I have some concern, however, that too great a credence is placed (now as well as in the 16th century) on the propaganda of the literary mafia. As the author says, society was in something of a crisis, in that the function of kings, princes and nobles was changing as fighting became a professional activity and traditional military prowess turned into a game. So what distinguished nobility was up for grabs. Poets and musicians naturally thought it in their interest to fill the vacuum, but I would have welcomed more evidence from outside their circle that they were as successful as they thought. Despite that, this is a stimulating and informative book, which is probably easier reading for those younger than me.

LASSUS AND THE PROTESTANTS

Richard Freedman *The Chansons of Orlando di Lasso: Music, Piety, and Print in Sixteenth-Century France.* Rochester UP, 2000. xxiv + 259pp, £45.00 ($75.00). ISBN 1 58-46 075 5

This is a strange book, which seems to sit between two viable subjects without quite justifying itself. One is the significance of the French chansons of Lassus and his fame in France. The other is the way the French protestants contrafacted (excuse the word) secular texts for devout purposes. Freedman has interesting to things to say on both subjects, but doesn't really convince that discussion on the overlap between the subjects it is as important as he seems to find it. He is, however, worth reading for the Lassus aspect of his subject. He covers the status of the composer

Siegfried forges Nothing

and has useful studies of the two main collections of repertoire (the *Mellange* of 1570 and *Les Meslanges* of 1576, both self-conscious attempts to present the important oeuvre of the composer in an authoritative edition, the latter, indeed, claiming some input from Lassus ('reveyz par luy'). The discussions of the modal ordering and its significance is useful, though one does wonder how customers thought about it. Did they compare editions in a shop and buy the one with the most satisfying modal arrangement? The contrafacta discussed were mostly made because the protestants were deeply moved by Lassus's music but found the words as deeply objectionable. The replacements to the amorous and lewd texts were often skilfully made, and Freedman's comparison of the way the musical settings work with both original and new texts is the core of his book. I'm not sure whether some of the more general remarks are profound or merely stating the obvious in fashionable abstraction. But if I was interested in Huguenot domestic entertainment, the restriction to Lassus would be annoying, whereas how others used his music is quite a long way down the desiderata of Lassus studies.

LOBO MASS

Alonso Lobo *Missa O Rex gloriae* Edited by David Trendell. Faber Music, 2001. 31pp, £3.95.

I received advanced warning of this edition from David Fletcher, who filled me in about its background. It is dedicated to the choir and congregation of St Mary's, Bourne Street, London SW1, but the publication does not mention that it was commissioned as an original way by which a member of the choir could celebrate a 50th birthday. The edition had its premiere at St Mary's on 4 February. This is a lovely idea that others might like to imitate. Lobo is best known for his marvellous canonic double-choir *Ave Maria*, which was Mapa Mundi's great early success. The *Missa O Rex Gloriae* is based on a Palestrina motet; the four parts are in high clefs, here transposed down a tone to be fairly comfortable for modern SATB; the alto has a particularly wide range from the F below middle C to the B flat above it. The scoring expands to six parts, one canonic, for the closing Agnus Dei. The melodic material is memorable, the treatment effective, and it is not too difficult to sing, so it deserves to be performed, both in those churches that are still permitted to and by enthusiasts.

FRANCK'S MUSICAL PARADISE

Melchior Franck *Paradisus Musicus* Edited by Martin P. Setchell. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 106). A-R Editions, 2000. xxii + 290pp, $100.00. ISBN 0 89579 464 0

Franck's *Paradisus musicus* was published in 1636, three years before his death and after his life fell apart with the death of his wife and daughter and the disbandment of the court in which he had worked for thirty years. It is a truism that the Thirty Years War was a disaster for music (except perhaps for military trumpeters) throughout Germany, and what was published was mostly small-scale. Since the current Italian fashion was for small-scale concerti (the impetus there being plague rather than war), the change of style would have happened to some extent anyway. This is in one sense a substantial collection, with 66 pieces in two volumes. The most unusual feature is the source of the texts, each piece corresponding with one of the 66 chapters of Isaiah and setting a few verses from it. Only No. 53 has the complete chapter, the suffering-servant text probably being close to Franck's heart. Two voices (usually SS or TT) and continuo is the most common scoring. Only seven pieces are a4. 57-60 and 63 have two violins – at least, the editor marks them unequivocally as violins in the score, though in the introduction translates the unspecific *violen* of the title page as discant viols – while 61, 62 & 64 also have a bass string instrument, with a part so minimally independent from the continuo that it drops a very broad hint that it should not be added elsewhere. 65 & 66 are for soprano solo. There are several pages of facsimiles, but not one of the original contents list, which I guess may have listed the scoring with each title: the volume would be easier to use for choosing motets for the forces at hand if the editor had done so. The music, mostly in a fluent concertato style, looks tempting, and the change from the normal run of liturgical texts is refreshing.

I have two criticisms. One is technical and is a common failing of A-R typesetting: music in triple time is usually far too spaciously set out, the printer not realising that what is a sensible proportional spacing in duple time with a crotchet or minim beat doesn't work in triple time where longer note-values are used. No. 9, which starts in 3/1, is fine, but the change to 3/1 at bar 3 of 36 looks silly. More serious is the transposition. This publication is one of those explicit confirmations of chiavette transposition that are useful to be able to produce when someone is sceptical of the idea. When the voices are in high clefs, the continuo part is printed at the sounding pitch a fourth lower. Unbelievably, the editor prints the vocal parts as notated (i.e. a fourth higher than they should sound) and transposes the continuo part. He thinks they should be transposed back down in performance (just as well, with the top D and C in the upper parts of No. 12), but prefers to make his edition look modally correct rather than be usable. Do the organ and the chiavetté parts really have the same key signature despite being in different keys? If so (as it appears from the incipits given), we are not told how the accidentals have been adjusted in the transposition of the Bc part: it is a pity that the Bc page reproduced does not involve transposition. A shame that what is otherwise a valuable edition is let down by impracticality.

GREEN BASSES

Three more issues have appeared recently edited by Cedric Lee for his Green Man Press. All come with realised score, unrealised score, and a separate bass part (which is not very helpful in the Mazzocchi, when a melodic bass instrument isn't necessary and a chordal one needs to know what the

voice is doing). Texts and translations are printed for the the two foreign items, but the poetic texts for the Purcell are not given separately. Mazzocchi is available chiefly in expensive edition or facsimile, so the three pieces (Maz 1; £5.90) are most welcome. Checking the first piece (*Conta la Gelosia*), I found a few inconsistencies in the handling of accidentals. If you are following the modern convention of an accidental lasting throughout a bar, users seeing superfluous accidentals will assume that you are following the older convention and assume elsewhere that accidentals are not valid throughout the bar; if accidentals are repeated, for whatever reason, they must be in round brackets. I find that in this period the only rule that works is to include all accidentals except on consecutive notes. Another convention is broken in bar 7: don't print editorial accidentals above a note in a continuo part since they can be confused for figures – always use square brackets. The problems are mostly academic and there is impressive music here, though you need a two-octave range from the note above middle C.

The three cantatas from Legrenzi's op. 12 of 1676 (Leg 1; £5.90) don't require notes below the stave, and except for the third item are less florid. Unless you are a real virtuoso with bottom Ds, you should try them before embarking on the Mazzocchi. They are less impressive but more tuneful.

The common feature of the set of three songs from *Orpheus Britannicus* (Pur 7) is the presence of oboes. Two of the songs are also for bass, but the first, Ismeron's 'Seek not to know', is for soprano (originally a boy, Jemmy Bowen); it can be sung by a lowish tenor (the top note is F), though I think that the editor's suggestion of a baritone would not sound comfortable. One is suspicious when one sees *Orpheus Britannicus* used as the main source for Purcell editions. It is posthumous and not necessarily the most reliable source. In Ismeron's song, we find a sharp before the second note of bar 45 that is not in the other sources. Also, the bass figures were probably added by the publisher: the MS sources have extremely few of them. But I'm being pedantic: the editions here are perfectly usable. The other two duets are 'Hence with your trifling Deity' from *Timon of Athens* and 'Wond'rous machine' from the 1692 St Cecilia's Day Song.

NERI RECOMPOSED

Massimiliano Neri *Sonate Da sonarsi con varij stromenti A trè fino a dodeci Opera Seconda. [Edited and completed by Martin Lubenow and Roland Wilson].* Musiche Varie (Verlag Martin Lubenow) [c.2000]. 146pp.

Musiche Varie publishes the 15 works included here individually as score and parts; this is a useful reference volume containing all the scores. The snag with Neri's 1651 print is that only three of the original seven partbooks survive. Fortunately, one of these is the continuo book, which ensures that the harmony is there throughout, together with polyphonic entries, and there are rubrics noting instrumental entries and alternation between choirs. The contents list states the instruments required for each piece. So there is a framework for reconstruction. Also, three complete pieces survive in MS transcriptions by the mid-19th-century scholar Carl von Winterfeld, so there are examples of Neri's style for pieces a4, a8 and a12. The user has to beware the slight inconsistencies in distinguishing which parts are editorial. Sometimes you can detect original parts by the presence of an original clef, but not all pieces show any original clefs, and when they do, some can be deductions from the higher clefs that occur in the continuo part (which always follow the clef of the part it is doubling). The instrumental information from the 1651 *Tavola* is not always included in the score. But these are quibbles. The music on the page always looks plausible and players should not let fears of the non-authenticity of the notes interfere with sampling the intriguing scoring of 2 cornetti + bassoon, 3 trombones, 2 violins + theorbo and *3 viole* of the four-choir Sonata 15.

BIBER

Heinrich Ignaz Franz von Biber *Missa Christi resurgentis* Edited by James Clements. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 107). A-R Editions, 2000. xvi + 93pp, $45.00. ISBN 0 89579 473 X

Appropriately, I'm writing this on Easter Sunday morning. The editor (who reviewed the Bury St Edmunds performance of the *Missa Salisburgensis* in *EMR* 62) follows Eric Chafe's suggestion that it was written specifically for Easter 1674; that is possible, but seems to be pushing the evidence a bit hard. It is a large-scale work in 21 parts: 2 clarini, 2 cornetti, 3 trombones, 5 strings, 9 voices and organ, presumably intended to be spread in the four galleries and both sides of the Salzburg Cathedral choir. Unlike the *Missa Salisburgensis,* it is explicitly ascribed to Biber, and it is possible (though by no means certain) that some of the parts are in his hand. These survive in Kromeriz, not in Salzburg (which is perhaps as well, since one Biber source there, the Requiem in F minor, has been lost for at least the last ten years) and may be a minimal set sent on the assumption that, if it were performed, additional parts would have been copied as required. The editor points out that they contain mistakes with potential for disaster if performed from (though it is difficult for us to get into the frame of mind of rehearsing without a pencil) and that there is only one *solo* mark (which might, however, be because there were only nine singers). There is only one continuo part, marked *Violone* but figured. This would make sense for performance in a church with a single organ/musicians gallery (the sort Bach had at Leipzig), but would waste the facilities in Salzburg – and surely a work this size would exploit them in full.

Returning to the singers, James Clements (with whom I'd be hesitant about disagreeing) assumes that the Mass was intended for two vocal choirs. Strangely, though, his score is set out in the order SSAATTBBB. There are enough places where SATB I and SATB II are antiphonal to suggest that the voices should be separated (which makes it hard work for the conductor to disentangle which way to look). I wonder whether the third bass should be placed with one

of the instrumental groups rather than reinforce the bass of Choir I in tutti sections (using tutti to mean sections where all parts are singing, not necessarily additional voices). In fact, unless comparison with other masses is conclusive, the surviving material would seem to be adequate for performance. Whether that was the original conception is another matter.

Anyway, it is excellent to have this fine piece in a careful, edition with a full introduction. Despite its size, it isn't dominated by the slow harmonies of the Salzburg Mass. I would have thought it ideal for an Early Music Forum course, though there is no mention of performance material being available.

HANDEL'S REJECTED THOUGHTS

David Ross Hurley *Handel's Muse Patterns of Creation in his Oratorios and Musical Dramas, 1743-1751* Oxford UP, 2001. xvii + 288pp, £45.00. ISBN 0 19 816396 7

Anyone who has looked at Handel's autographs will be aware that there are a large number of rejected movements and cancelled passages within complete ones. I've probably edited more Handel than most people, and have generally ignored them, partly because my purpose has always been to produce something that Handel performed, but also because I have always been a little suspicious of trying to revive what the composer has rejected. There are cases when this may seem justified: Bruckner's symphonies, for instance. But I was refused permission to edit the original scoring of Vaughan Williams's *Wasps* music: it has been done since by someone else, though not, I think, yet performed – and now that we've had the uncut *Sea Symphony*, I hope we have a chance to hear the *Tallis Fantasy* in its first state. These examples are all of music that was performed: what Hurley discusses is different – sketches and fragments – and raises a different question: do we really learn very much from studying them? Beethoven sketches have been a topic for investigation since the 1860s. They are useful for establishing such basic information as when the composer was thinking about what and confirming relationships between different works. But one has to be suspicious in relating prehistory to an understanding of any work in itself. I also wonder whether studying the visible remains of a composer's thinking process is of any value as a model for future composers. Do teachers suggest that budding composers work through the sketchbooks and try to create new music by the same system? Or is the object just curiosity?

What is interesting (and creditable) about Hurley's book is his suspicion of facile general theories. He does come up with one, though: that Handel worked with small units. The obvious comparison with 16th-century practice as described by Jessie Ann Owens or in the chapter in *The Josquin Companion* by John Milson which I commended last month (p. 3) are not made. He also stresses that Handel was aware of long-term balancing of scenes, not just writing discrete arias. He takes as a starting point Gerald Abraham's suggestion that Handel worked by improvisation and demolishes it comprehensively. The detailed descriptions of the changes Handel made are fascinating in showing how the music is put together, though it is never easy to be sure that Hurley's guess why any particular example was rejected is the only possible one. The arguments and demonstrations would have been easier to follow had a more imaginative approach to publication been chosen. It would have been easier to understood and assess the arguments if the music had been printed in a separate, larger-paged volume with the various versions of the complete movements shown in parallel for ease of comparison. In old-fashioned terms, that would have been impossibly expensive; but presumably all musical scholars now can use decent computer type-setting programmes, with the result tweaked up to normal Oxford UP standard. This provides an impressive insight into Handel's working methods. My guess is that Handel's thought processes were simultaneously instinctive and complex, and we only see problems when they didn't quite work. So we shouldn't extrapolate too much from Hurley's examples. But I suppose the idea that Handel actually thought about what he was doing will increase his stature in some quarters!

TELEMANN

Those who turned to the Telemann work-list when checking the reliability and usefulness of *Grove 7* will have spotted that the small number of editions of individual pieces that it deigns to mention include those published in the *Severinus Urtext Telemann Edition*, edited by Ian Payne. A couple of pieces passed through my hands recently, giving an excuse to draw attention to them. The Concerto in A for four violins, strings & Bc TWV 54:A1 (Severinus No. 30; £24.80 score & parts) is not quite complete in the source; but since all that is missing appears to be the last eight bars of the final ritornello, adding that from its previous appearance is no great editorial task. The solo parts are not exceptionally taxing, so this could be useful in educational contexts, allowing four players to claim the status of soloist. The editor offers little help on dotting equal notes according to parallel notation, which doesn't really get in the way, though professional players seem to prefer to sort these sort of things out in action and are less concerned with consistency. No. 45 (£17.25) is another Concerto in A, TWV 52:A1 for two oboes d'amore, two violins and Bc. In the surviving MS at Rostock, the bass is given as *basson* in the title, *basso* on the part itself. The editor assumes that the title is wrong, but it seems more likely that the general is used for the specific rather than a wrong specific for the general: or if whoever wrote *basson* did it because he assumed that two oboes should have a bassoon, that may in itself be significant. Since there are only five parts, I agree with the editor that the likely scoring is five instruments and keyboard. There are editorial problems (Payne wonders whether to blame a youthful composer rather than the copyist), but the unusual scoring is likely to secure some performances. There is no editorial guidance on the quaver rhythm of the opening movement: perhaps it might be *inégale* throughout. The series is nicely-

produced, each volume having a one-page introduction and a critical commentary: I hope it progresses speedily.

HEBDEN CONCERTOS

John Hebden *Six Concertos in seven parts... Opera II*[a]. With an introduction by Peter Holman. J. P. H. Publications, 2001. Facsimile. £25.95

The latest of the Jacks, Pipes & Hammers facsimile series is set in the standard seven part books of mid-18th-century English concerto grosso publications, with two solo violins, two ripieno violins, viola (called 'tenor violin' on the title page, 'viola alto' in the part), cello (figured) and organ (also figured). One can guess how the lower parts may have been distributed, but do we know? A couple of performing groups who subscribed took two sets. Hebden was a bassoonist and cellist 'of the second class' according to Burney, who thought he was 'totally ignorant of composition'. (JPH should quote that on their publicity: I'm sure a similarly devastating Burney quote in an earlier edition of our catalogue helped to sell our Kelway.) They look interesting, though I haven't seen a score or played them. Reference books give 1745 as the publication date, which presumably comes from contemporary newspaper adverts. The parts come comb-bound in a folder with a title page pasted on it: if you are likely to use them, write the part-name on the cover of each part straight away.

HASSE

Richard Reinert *Die Vorfahren von Johann Adolf Hasse (1699-1783)*. Studio-Verlag (Beim Strohhause 16, 20997 Hamburg). 2000.

Everyone interested in German baroque music will be grateful to Richard Reinert for his research on the Hasse family. Reinert, like Hasse, is a native of Bergedorf near Hamburg and has drawn on detailed local knowledge to give an exhaustive description back to the 12th century of this family, many of whom were musicians. While there is probably little new to learn about Johann Adolf Hasse himself (we get just a sketch in this book of his career in Dresden, Vienna, and Venice), we get fascinating detail on earlier family members, such as the organist Petrus Hasse (1575?-1640) who studied with Sweelinck and became a predecessor of Buxtehude at Lübeck. There is also much detail on the Hamburg priest Nicolaus Hardekopf; other family members were teachers, shoemakers and sailors, and some were Burgermeister, suggesting a dominant position in society around Hamburg lasting several centuries. *Keith Briggs*

Mention of Bergedorf reminded me of Friedrich Chrysander, the indefatigable editor of Handel, whose editions are still indispensible even though he died a century ago. To quote Anthony Hicks from Grove 6 & 7, *in 1866 'Chrysander... took over the entire production of his complete [Handel] edition, setting up a small printing shop in the garden of his Bergedorf home. The sale of produce from his market garden provided some finance.' Might HHA scores be a bit cheaper if Bärenreiter tried a similar cross-fertilisation?*

CYCLIC SCHUBERT

Charles Fisk *Returning Cycles: Contexts for the Interpretation of Schubert's Impromptus and Last Sonnets* California UP, 2001. xi + 308pp, £29.95. ISBN 0 520 22564 3

Schubert is a bit modern for us, but I warmed to this after reading at opening: 'The questions addressed in this study... originated as a performer's questions'. Fisk answers them in a thoroughly musicological way, but I think that the reader can feel him worrying away at the music from inside, not imposing theories from without. The book is quite hard work, and I must confess that I haven't followed every thread right through. The argument is that the piano music of the title links both musically and emotionally with the *Wanderer* fantasy and *Winterreise*. The case is convincingly made. But what I will remember the book for is nothing to do with its content but its packing. It came in a box somewhat larger than necessary filled with biodegradable bobbles. These had started their degradation rather too soon and the book was smothered with powder – between the pages, inside the jacket, down the spine. Luckily, it fell off quite easily. I hope research will come up with something better.

LUTE NEWS 57

Chris Goodwin gave me the latest issue at a NEMA meeting a few days ago and I read it on the delayed train home. What an excellent publication. The reports of events are extremely throrough in the extreme (to the extent some may be tempted not to attend meetings because they will be so fully reported), the main topic being 'What makes a good lute'. Apart from the obvious – a good maker and a good player – one answer is age: instruments do seem to improve with age, even if it is decades that are at issue, not centuries as with violins. The page on recent tuning machines is of interest not just to lutenists. Relevant items in other publications are digested, news is retailed, and there are book, music and CD reviews. Supplementary pages include lists of events, instruments for sale and makers. And finally there are 28 pages of music (or at least, 2 pages of introduction and 26 of tablature): the collected lute music of Valentin Strobel the Elder (1575/80-1640). Seven of the eight pieces are in Fuhrmann's *Testudo Gallo-Germanico* (1615), but versions from other sources and an additional piece are included. This really is a model to other specialist societies – though without an enthusiast like Chris it wouldn't work.

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The reduction of note values is familiar enough in editions of early music, but despite Thurston Dart's suggestion than some passages of Beethoven might be doubled, that hasn't been a normal editorial technique. So I was interested to see an advert from Edition Peters for an edition for solo violin and piano of Pachelbel's Canon and Gigue with note values doubled. (Why anyone should want to derange the piece to get rid of its most characteristic feature – three instruments playing in canon – defeats me, yet there are arrangements that ignore it completely. Is there really a shortage of music for violin and keyboard?) Are children really happier with dotted semibreves in the bass than dotted minims?

MUSIC in LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Vocal vibrato is an issue that exercises many *EMR* readers so I will get this month's gripe out of the way now. I have recently heard a number of performances by young opera singers from the conservatories, and have been surprised how little attempt there seems to have been to encourage singers to control the sort of vibrato that is more appropriate for 19th and 20th century opera sung in vast auditoria. Those more at home in the opera house rather than on the early music concert platform may not find this to be a problem, but I do. Vibrato of itself is not the issue – indeed, a totally flat voice would soon become tedious. But the subtle shading of a held note, or the gentle inflexion colouring the tone, is far removed from the sometimes violent alterations of pitch and/or volume that affect so many of our singers. There are many factors involving the relative speed of vibration and the depth of the tonal or volume change, but these are probably best dealt with in a separate forum. I have written before of my amazement that internationally respected early music conductors who would not tolerate a vibrant violinist, for example, seem happy to work with the huge vibratos of international opera singers. Unless this is to remain the pattern in early music, it is surely to the conservatories that we should look for a new generation of early music singers (if there is to be such a creature) capable of projecting a beautiful tone without wreaking havoc on the pitch of a note. Or are the financial complexities of a singer's life dependant on billings at the larger opera houses and early music technique is just not economically viable. Discuss!

Whether it was Opera Sonnerie (as the programme cover proclaimed) or plain Sonnerie plus the vocal group Cantus Firmus (as the programme contents would have us believe) that performed Purcell's *Fairy Queen* and *Dido and Aeneas* and Locke's *Tempest* at the Wigmore Hall (21 March) was not entirely clear. The complex incarnations of early music groups and musicians are just one of the complications of the music business. But what matter. A more serious point about the programme was the omission of the names of the instrumentalists and the identification of which role each singer was landed with. But most of the performers were recognizable as regulars in the London early music scene, and we did benefit from Monica Huggett's jovial jazz-club style introductions after the interval, along the lines of: 'from Edinburgh, the fabulous McGillivray sisters'. In the scene-stealing stakes, Thomas Guthrie will take some beating for his lurching-down-the-aisle and staggering-around-the-stage performance as the Drunken Poet – I hope he enjoyed the research into the role. He was supported by some suitably po-faced interventions from Rachel Elliot and Julia Gooding as the two Fairies. Rachel Elliot also featured in the Humfrey, Reggio and Banister songs incorporated within Matthew Locke's music for *The Tempest*. In a dress that nicely matched the colour of the harpsichord, her fluid and emotionally charged voice clearly came from somewhere deep, both in these songs and in her second half appearance as Belinda in *Dido and Aeneas*. A sturdy performance of the Overture to *Dido* made it clear that there was to be no pussyfooting around in this interpretation. Geraldine McGreevy's powerful portrayal of Dido would have sent any itinerant King scurrying off home sharpish. Thomas Guthrie's Aeneas was pensive and emotionally wrought as he struggled with the conflicts of his duties towards the Gods and his newfound love. The powerful instrumental contributions raised the dramatic stakes throughout the work, with an evil Prelude for the Witches and some eerie screeching and scraping in the Echo Dance of Fairies. Andrew Pinnock's excellent programme notes outlined recent theories on the Dido myth, including the possible graphic references of Dido's 'bending spear' and the 'bleeding tushes' and, more interestingly, Roger Savage's conjecture that the Sorceress is Dido's self-admonishing alter ego (from *A Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth* ed. Michael Burden, Faber 1998). Geraldine McGreevy sang both parts, saving a bob or two on production costs and also making rather more sense of this most complex of plots. Dido and Aeneas's consummation, if that is what it was, was accompanied by what is now becoming the almost obligatory Elizabeth Kenny solo guitar spot. One curiosity in this demi-semi-staged performance was Dido's final lament. The effect of the opening line 'Thy hand, Belinda' was rather weakened by the fact that Belinda's hand had already left the stage, along with the rest of her. Monica Huggett led the band with her usual attention to the detail of articulation, ornamentation and the direction of the pulse and her characteristically earthy and vigorous style.

It is unusual for St John's, Smith Square (like most British venues) to have an organ recital devoted entirely to early music, but their Thursday lunchtime series including one such on 22 March given by Belgian Serge Schoonbroodt. Like his country of birth, his programme had an international feel, with works by de Grigny, Chaumont, Sweelinck, Bach and the anonymous French or English scribe of the early-14th-century Robertsbridge Codex whose incomplete *Flos vernalis* opened the programme with a reed-based registration that was not to be invented for another century or so. There were one or two more registration surprises in the two French works, but the 'little-bit-of-everything' specification of the St John's organ probably contributed to that. One nice touch on the registration front was that Schoonbroodt eschewed the dazzling collection of pistons and drew all the stops by hand – something many organists avoid doing nowadays. Exploiting his background as a

singer, he provided his own very effective and fluid plainchant verses as interpolations to Nicholas de Grigny's four verses on *Ave maris stella*, although not to the all-purpose verses of Lambert Chaumont's *Suite de deuxième Ton*. Sweelinck's well known *Mein junges Leben hat ein End* demonstrated Schoonbroodt's clean articulation, although the successive addition of stops for each section ended up with an inappropriately thick tone. A fine performance of Bach's *Passacaglia & Fugue* rightly used a pleno registration throughout, the subtleties of the structure of the piece being apparent from the changing textures and the well controlled touch of the player. Bach's *Erbarm dich mein, O herre Gott* suffered from over-insistent chords, but generally Schoonbroodt's thoughtful attention to the detail of touch and control of articulation contributed to an excellent concert.

This years London Handel Festival opened with the oratorio *Athalia* in the Royal Academy of Music's Duke's Hall (22 March), given by the London Handel Orchestra and Choir conducted by Laurence Cummings. Written for a degree ceremony at Oxford University in 1733, *Athalia* was the Handel's third oratorio and the first to use new material throughout. It is an attractive work, with integrated choruses often leading straight from solo arias or including solo passages within the chorus. The chorus appears as young virgins, Israelites, Sidonian priests and Jewish priests and Levites. The libretto develops a number of the minor characters – indeed the title role is far from the most prominent. The text is based on the stories in Kings and Chronicles of the overthrow of the Baal-worshipping Queen Athalia by the Israelite forces who restore the throne of Judah to the boy-king Joas, who had survived Athalia's order that all male children of the royal house were to have been put to death by sheltering with Joad, a High Priest, and his wife Josabeth. Two ancillary roles are Mathan, a former Jewish priest but now a priest of Baal in Athalia's court and Abner, a Captain in the Jewish army. By the time the oratorio opens, Athalia has already seen the death of her son and mother. The Israelites start off in a good mood, but also quickly become grumpy as they bemoan their fate under the impious Athalia. Abner's stormy opening aria (sung with energy by Christopher Purves) evoked rolling thunder and whirlwinds with its rapid descending scales. Joad's exquisite lament 'O Lord, whom we adore' follows. Despite the anguish of the lyrics, it is set to a gentle pastorale accompaniment and gave an early chance for the excellent countertenor, Robert Blaze, to show his mettle. The jagged melodic lines of his later aria 'Gloomy tyrant, we disdain', the revivalist hymn 'Reviving Judah shall no more' and the skipping lines of his final aria 'Joys in gentle trains appearing' were all highlights. Another incongruously laid-back accompaniment supported Athalia's first appearance in 'What scenes of horror round me rise', although the orchestral mood changes towards the end of this sequence as her murdered mother's ghostly form warns her that the God of Judah is after her. In a series of images of her mother being torn apart by dogs and of her own forthcoming demise, Athalia (Helen Williams) fails to be comforted either by the Sidonian priests (in a chorus with harmonic sequences that Andrew Lloyd-Webber would be proud of) or by the touching aria 'Gentle airs, melodious strains' from Mathan, sung by Mark Wilde in a wonderful portrayal of a deviously buttoned-up second-hand car salesman. The plot moves towards its inevitable conclusion, but not without some emotionally-wrought scenes that tested the ability of the singers to delve the depths. One curiosity was the casting of Helen Groves as Joas. Although semi-staging allows some flexibility in authenticity of stage persona, Handel intended the role for a boy treble. The age of the young King is not revealed, but he was clearly pre-pubescent – something that Helen Groves clearly is not. Quite apart from a vocal quality some way removed from that of a treble, she towered over her adoptive parents. I am afraid these things matter to me – I need to believe in the characters. Laurence Cummings kept the pace going well, coaxing some attractive sounds from the band. However, one sound that was not coaxed was the weedy continuo organ, which was completely inaudible throughout. For an oratorio that was later to incorporate one of Handel's most popular organ concertos, this was unfortunate. Anyway, in the end, the right God was in his heaven again and, apart from any followers of Baal in the audience, we all went away feeling warm and cosy inside. The pre-concert warm up by four talented young players from the Royal Academy of Music's Historical Performance Department (playing music for various combinations of harpsichord, cello and two flutes) was a nice touch – all credit to the London Handel Festival for including such events for young musicians.

Another outing for young musicians saw the Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Early Opera Project travel to St John's, Smith Square (23 March) for Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, directed by Christian Curnyn. Even with some doubling up, *Poppea* allowed 15 singers to have a go, alongside 11 instrumentalists. Although the student singers were amongst the wobbly culprits, they were certainly not the worse I have heard from young singers. Many of them demonstrated enviable tonal qualities and an encouraging ability to act. It is perhaps invidious to pick out individual singers from a student cast all of whom tried to give of their best, but I did like Sarah Redgwick as Poppea, the mezzo Alenka Ponjavi (Nerone), the rich and emotionally taut voice of Delphine Gillot (Drusilla), the firm and assured bass of João Fernandes (in the key role of Seneca), the warm tone of Rachael Lloyd (Arnalta) and the high tenor of Benjamin Hulett in a number of cameo roles. Special mention must go to William Purefoy, a last minute stand-in as Ottone, for showing the students what life is like as an experienced professional, expected to sing testing roles at a moment's notice. He managed some extremely convincing acting, despite the handicap of having to carry a score round with him and, by the by, showed just how effectively vibrato can be used in early-music singing. The student instrumentalists coped well with the difficult positioning to either side of the stage – and it was nice to have a continuo organ that was audible. Its breathy and growly lower tones blended well with the singers and the brighter chorus added drama to the more powerful settings,

although the wind supply did complain about a few low chords. Curnyn used a wide palette of continuo colour with two harpsichords, organ, two cellos and two theorbos. For me, the only oddity was a particularly intrusive bout of harpsichord, and an awkward shift of pulse, in the central section of the concluding 'Pur te miro'. But then I suppose most of us carry around in our heads our own favourite interpretations of such gorgeous pieces with which to judge other performances. To me, whatever the sordid results of this ill-conceived relationship, and however we might judge the characters of the people involved, this simple love duet between two surprisingly young people needs as gentle an interpretation as possible. The plain staging was effective, although the singers on the high rear platform had a harder job in projecting their voices and the front stage lighting left the singers' faces in shadow for most of the time.

The Classical Opera Company is carving out a well-earned niche for their annual performances of the early operas of Mozart. This year it was the turn of *Il Re Pastore,* written when Mozart was just 19 (Linbury Studio Theatre, 24 March). Frustrated by the lack of a proper theatre in Salzburg and working under a not entirely sympathetic Prince-Archbishop, Mozart was only able to write this one opera on his home ground during this period of his life, for the visit in 1775 of the Hapsburg Archduke Maximilian Franz. Even then, it had to be given a concert performance and was noted on Mozart's title page as a 'serenata' rather than an opera. But opera it certainly is and, as the director, Ian Page, pointed out in his programme note, it foreshadows the dramatic power of Mozart's last opera *La Clemenza di Tito.* It opens with the mobilization of Macedonian troops (an unfortunately topical scenario) as Alexander the Great overthrows the tyrant leader of Phoenician Sidon. Alexander searches for the only descendant of the royal family, who is living a blissfully unaware existence as a shepherd named Aminta. He is about to marry Elisa when his true position is revealed. Alexander hatches a politically expedient scheme to marry Aminta off to Tamira, the daughter of the deposed tyrant. His lack of consultation on the matter means that he remained completely unaware of the havoc this causes to the rest of the cast. The remainder of the plot alternates between the resulting relationship complications and Aminta's reluctance to desert the simple life for that of a King. The first act is an almost totally joyful exploration of the life of simple country folk, although it did seem to rain a lot – a little stream trickling away on stage must have caused a few crossed legs from those in the front few rows. Apart from Alexander's naive self-celebration after hatching the hopeless wedding plan, the second-half arias are far more tempestuous, although it does, of course, all end happily. The music was well paced, both by Mozart and Ian Page, with rather more meaningful recitative than is often the case, and a speed of delivery that avoided the machine-gun clatter of many classical recits. There are some very impressive arias that beautifully expressed the human emotions that underlie the text. The cast was well up to the task of expressing these feelings, with particularly effective contributions from Darren Abrahams (Alexander), Christopher Saunders (Agenore) and Sally Matthews as the bright-eyed and bushy-tailed Elisa, whose simple goal of marrying her shepherd lover makes her the most dominant character in the opera. The staging was curious, and at times inappropriately humorous. The awkward attempts of stage hands to push flowers up during the otherwise delightful aria 'Si spande al sole in faccia' and some very curious bird-like objects with lids on their backs were just two of the oddities. The bird shadow-puppet hand gestures of the cast at the end of the final chorus just came over as contrived. Ian Page was well served by his instrumentalists, and he quite correctly acknowledged the continuo harpsichord and cello players (Robert Howarth and Sarah MacMahon) before any other players. Howarth had adopted the stylistically appropriate approach (for classical opera) of letting the singers get on with it, with only the occasional flourish from the harpsichord. Staging, and the Meccano-set ambience of the Linbury Theatre aside, this was an enjoyable evening.

It is not often that the performance of two Bach cantatas will completely fill a major concert hall, but that was the case at the Barbican on 30 March. It is difficult to know how to bill this concert – the names that bought the punters in were the American theatre, opera and television director Peter Sellars and the mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt Lieberson. The instrumentalists were The Orchestra of Emmanuel Music conducted by Craig Smith, a band based at a church in Boston where they give regular Bach cantata performances. They were playing modern instruments, and the plodding performing style was far from authentic, so the concert only just about warrants an appearance in *EMR.* As the billing implied, this was a staged performance that was clearly aimed at those opera lovers who resent Bach for not having the wit to write an opera. The two cantatas were *Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut* (199) and *Ich habe genug* (82), both allowing for much unearthing of drama. Peter Sellars introduced each cantata, expressing what were clearly very personal interpretations and beliefs about the cantata texts, adopting for both the totally secular imagery of a distraught woman in the throes of suicide in cantata 199 and merely dying in cantata 82. Every ounce of emotional turmoil was dragged out of poor old Bach's music. The pace was mournfully slow, the playing intensely emotional in a way that no Baroque composer would have dreamed of being appropriate and the score was pulled around mercilessly – the huge gaps in 'Schlummert ein, ihr matten Augen' being just one example. I guess the assumption is that opera audiences (or American church congregations) need this sort of overkill to make sense of music with fewer notes than Wagner or Verdi provided for the punter's money. Most of the Barbican audience loved it, if the applause was anything to go by. Of course, this sort of venture is not new – we have had Jonathan Miller's *St Matthew Passion* and last year's ENO production of the *St John Passion.* But both of these forebears built on a performance of Bach's music that Bach himself would have had a reasonable chance of recognizing. And both respected the religious, rather than secular, imagery that Bach uses. But instead of Christ in cantata 199, we had a suicidal woman trying to hang herself

or crush the breath from herself with a woefully inadequate scarf. In cantata 82, the aged Simeon is transformed into a dying woman (presumably the same one, having managed a more successful suicide attempt during the interval) in a hospital gown dragging unattached drip tubing round with her until she eventually succumbs to 'a beautiful death'. I cannot argue that many people enjoyed the spectacle, but it left me cold. For a production that made so much of a very particular interpretation of the text, it was a bizarre decision to plunge the audience into darkness throughout. Just to rub it in, the second half featured a very bright light that was moved around behind the singer in such a way that it shone into the eyes of many of the audience. Far from reading their programmes, a number of them had to use their programmes to shield their eyes, thus defeating the whole object of this very visual event. To end on more positive note, the singing of Lorraine Hunt Lieberson was immensely powerful. There were several people from the early music world in the audience, so perhaps if one of them saw the whole thing differently, they could write a counter-review.

I reviewed Ricordo's debut concert in the bowels of the Royal Acadamy of Music a couple of years ago, and was impressed. But what a difference two years make in the musical advancement of young players. Their most recent concert was on 3 April in St Giles-in-the-Fields, a delightful but little-known church nestling under the wing of the Centre Point tower block off the Charing Cross Road. My review in 1999 included a number of (what I hope were taken as) constructive points for development – and every one has been dealt with magnificently. They are now a group to be reckoned with, and a forthcoming CD should spread their enthusiastic and distinctive playing to a wider audience. The four players (Kati Debretzeni *violin*, Alison McGillivray *viola da gamba*, Matthew Wadsworth *theorbo* and Robert Howarth, *harpsichord*) are indivually well known on the early music scene. Under the rather uninspiring title 'The 17th century Virtuoso Violin – England and Germany', we were given Locke, Simpson, Purcell, de Visée, Baltzar, Buxtehude, Kapsberger, Schmelzer, Weckmann and Biber. The missing guests at this international table were, of course the Italians, whose music inspired, to varying degrees, most of the pieces presented. One of the key features of this group is the way that they relate to each musically during performance, helped no doubt by performing entirely from memory. This started life as a practical consideration as one of the players is blind, but there is far more to it than that. Like concerts I have heard where choirs sing from early notation and each singer has to be totally aware of what their companions is doing, the very act of performing with other people is transformed when you have the chance to actually look at your companions. It doesn't happen that often. Their stage position was revealing – the violinist was standing looking towards the rest of the group, rather than out to the audience. The ability of each player to bring out the colours of the various instruments is particularly noticeable. At times, Kati Debretzeni's bow was barely touching the strings, but she still produced a beautiful sound – a difficult technique to bring off well. Their nicely balanced programme included its fair share of drama, but also some exquisite gentle moments, particularly in Matthew Wadsworth's two gentle and unassuming, but thoroughly musical solos. Indeed, in a hectic programme the second solo was one of the highlights for me – an unnervingly simple repetition of arpeggios from Johann Kapsberger that did far more than just clear the palate for the fireworks to come. It was helped by some very effective, but quite blatant, manipulation of the audience in the long held silences before and after the piece. It takes a brave player to grab the audience in such a way, but it is an essential part of performance. It was great to hear Buxtehude's astonishing Sonata in D minor (Op1/6) with its runaway train sections. This piece brings my only criticism of the playing in this concert. The impression was given, both from the spoken introduction as well as the playing of the opening section, that when the word German is associated with a piece, suddenly things get rather ponderous and predictable. The opening of this Sonata certainly matched this mood, belying the frothy Italian mood that pervades the texture. But they soon got into the swing of this wild piece, giving it the vigour and emotion that it deserves. Buxtehude and Biber were of like minds, judging by the opening of Biber's Sonata in F and its strong similarities with the Buxtehude Sonata (written 15 years later). This was a most invigorating concert by a most exciting young group.

ACIS in LEEDS

John Bryan

Handel *Acis and Galatea*. Leeds Baroque Orchestra & Leeds University Baroque Choir, Peter Holman *dir*

Since his appointment as Reader in Historical Musicology at the University of Leeds, Peter Holman has enlivened the baroque musical scene in Yorkshire with his formation of the Leeds Baroque Orchestra. This is closely modelled on a similar venture in Essex: it brings together local amateur players and students, with a professional leader (Judy Tarling) and some other judicious 'stiffening' and works to a tight schedule, producing a concert after a full weekend's rehearsals. Although there has been a long tradition of amateur baroque playing in Yorkshire, this is the first time that a viable orchestra has been formed. Some players also come over the Pennines from the North West, and there is a small number of students which will hopefully burgeon with time.

Leeds University's concert hall is a chapel converted with funding from the local company of Clothworkers, so made an appropriate venue (Sunday 18 March) for an Arcadian setting peopled by shepherds and shepherdesses (seemingly untroubled by the current ravages of foot and mouth disease). *Acis and Galatea* raises a number of problems for performers, not least deciding in what genre the piece is. Having started life in 1718 as a small-scale serenata for Cannons, Handel later revised it for larger forces on the operatic stage. Peter Holman's version for Leeds basically used the 1718 music in an adaptation with chorus and orchestra rather than solo forces, adding the extra chorus that rounds off the first part in the later version. This made for effective pacing and his performers responded enthusiastically to Handel's inventive and cheerful music.

This was a concert performance, though the solo singers, perhaps unwisely, indulged in some histrionics. The vision of the giant Polyphemus clouting the shepherd Damon with a polystyrene rock whilst juggling his vocal score in the other hand made for an unintentionally Pythonesque experience! Although physically convincing in his massive role, and sonorous enough in the depths, Adrian Peacock as Polyphemus had moments of uncertainty in the upper register. Philippa Hyde's Galatea was consistently mellifluous, but all too frequently overwhelmed by the power of the orchestra, to the detriment of clear diction. Rupert Jennings as the shepherd sang incisively, though with a disconcerting bleat on sustained high notes that was at variance with the orchestral style.

Leeds University Baroque Choir, nineteen in number, made a well balanced and expressive contribution, not least because of the high proportion of older (i.e. non-student) voices amongst the men. Holman's orchestra played with plenty of spirit, and made up in energy for what they as yet lack in subtlety. There were stirling performances from the largely student oboe section, and Judy Tarling's coaching was evident in the tight ensemble in the violins. The bass department (three cellos, two violones – one of them of unusually large build – two harpsichords, theorbo and bassoon) rather dominated proceedings, thickening the texture unduly and at times militating against the airy melodic writing that characterises Handel's pastoral score.

The lasting memory, however, is of a tangible dedication to music-making, from performers of all ages, both professional and amateur, which must surely be close to the atmosphere enjoyed by the many musical societies that flourished all over eighteenth century England.

John is leading to a discussion about what sort of performances the historically-informed performer is trying to recreate. Should it always be the first performance or other performances under the intended circumstances? A complete score of Acis and Galatea *was in print from 1743 and could have been performed anywhere, so why not imagine you are in Leeds around 1750? I have heard rumours of the 'new' Handel/Mozart* Judas Maccabaeus *being done as in Halifax a century later.* CB

A STERNDALE BENNETT AUTOGRAPH DISCOVERY

Peter Leech

Those of us who are scholars as well as performers probably share Clifford Bartlett's disdain at the lack of accurate information produced by the national press in the wake of recent musicological discoveries. Clifford regrets that there are few journals in which such findings can be explored with a modicum of informed discussion without the need for a lengthy and heavily-footnoted article under a 'high falutin' title. *EMR*, he says, would be the best place for such an announcement. It is therefore with great pleasure that I rise to the challenge and offer this modest but rare exclusive to *EMR*. With the help of a friend and colleague Mr. William Davies I recently acquired an autograph in the hand of Sir William Sterndale Bennett. It is an arrangement by the composer of the tenor aria 'His Salvation is nigh them that fear him' from his Sacred Cantata *The Woman of Samaria*.

Readers may well wonder whether an article on Bennett in *EMR* challenges the perceived boundaries of its sphere of influence. In recent times this has expanded to include observations on Georgian Psalmody up to 1830 and the occasional reviews of recordings by Roger Norrington or Nikolaus Harnoncourt of the music by Schumann and Brahms so perhaps such an offering is not entirely inappropriate. Bennett was also teacher at the RAM from 1837 to 1858, in whose library the recent Handel discovery was made. [The RAM library also has a few Bennett MSS. *CB*]

Ranked by Nicholas Temperley as 'the most distinguished English composer of the Romantic school' and by Geoffrey Bush as an adolescent prodigy 'both as a composer and pianist', Sterndale Bennett was lauded by Schumann as 'an artist of the most refined nature'. Unfortunately, our knowledge of him today seems not to have moved much further than Bush's estimation of it in 1972 as being 'confined to a patronising paragraph in the history books or to one of the uncharacteristic anthems of his later years which linger in the cathedral repertory'. The most recent biography was written by his son James in 1907 but we do at least have Bush and Rosemary Williamson to thank for a number of interesting articles, a Musica Britannica volume and an excellent catalogue of his works published in 1996.

Not being a Bennett scholar I relegated any investigation of the exact origins of the find to spare time spent waiting in archives for more relevant items to emerge from their labyrinthine abodes. Slowly a picture emerged of Bennett and his connection with the Fitzwilliam Music Society in Cambridge (a forerunners of the present Cambridge University Music Society), a relationship which has received only brief coverage in scholarly articles and books about him. The manuscript itself carries what any dealer in antiquities would regard as at least a basic provenance. It has been bound into a vocal score of *The Woman of Samaria*, immediately before the corresponding aria and between two protective manuscript sheets, one of which is inscribed with 'this is the original ms of the arrangement of the song by the Composer with accompaniment for Piano Forte violoncello and oboe written specially for the concert of the Fitzwilliam Society Cambridge. It was there performed by Mr. Sir William Sterndale Bennett the Rev'd T. P. Hudson and Mr. James Bennett'. The vocal score is also inscribed inside the fly leaf with the following '[to] the Rev'd Percy Hudson with the Author's kind regards. London. March 26. 1868.' These comments gave me some assurance that the item was genuine and a quick comparison with one or two known facsimilies of Bennett's hand proved that this was indeed his autograph. The vocal score is bound in red half-morocco with gold tooling and heavy boards and was once owned by a former University Librarian at Cambridge, the late George de Fraine. I fully expected the arrangement to have appeared in Rosemary Williamson's excellent catalogue of Bennett's works, but to my surprise there was no mention, nor was it reported as being lost. Indeed only one or two chamber pieces in the catalogue seem to have been associated with the Fitzwilliam Music Society. I rang Rosemary, who said she was delighted with the find and totally unaware of its existence. The most important task seemed to be to determine the date of the performance and I sent an email to John Wells at Cambridge University Library asking about Bennett documents in the manuscript collections. He informed me that a rare minute book of the FMS had recently been transferred to the CUL and that it might be of use, so on one of my regular trips to the CUL I ordered up the minute book and it is from this source that some of the following information has been taken.

After a promising career as a young adult prodigy with four piano concertos and several symphonies to his name Bennett composed very little after 1844 and dedicated the rest of his life to teaching and conducting. In 1856 he was made professor of music at Cambridge and although he visited the city regularly, few published sources offer anything other than a handful of anecdotal accounts of his dealings with local musical organisations. The Fitzwilliam Music Society, a group of respectable Cambridge amateur musicians, first met in the summer of 1858 in a small room at St. Peter's College. Later in the same year the Fellows of Sidney Sussex granted them the use of their hall when it became clear that the St. Peter's rooms were too small to accommodate increasing membership. Bennett came into contact with the Society in 1858 and was elected an honorary member on 16 March 1859. On 9 May the FMS performed his oratorio *The May Queen* with the composer

presiding at the piano. The work was nominated for a repeat performance in the spring of 1860 and on this occasion Bennett conducted it. On 21 March 1859 the minute book records the election of Revd. T. P. (Percy) Hudson M.A., fellow of Trinity College, as a performing member of the society. The brother of the brilliant violinist Frank Hudson, Percy was a gifted cellist and conductor who later founded the Hovingham Festival. Bennett's appearances at FMS events grew more numerous through the 1860s. In March 1863 he conducted one of the Bach Passions (only nine years earlier he had conducted the first English performance of the St. Matthew) and in March 1864 composed a part-song specially for the installation of a new member. Percy Hudson featured regularly in the ranks of the orchestra and appeared as a soloist on 9 March 1867. On Monday 8 March 1869 at the thirty-sixth meeting of the Society Bennett's new cantata *The Woman of Samaria* was presented with the composer conducting. It was a great success and a second performance was nominated for March 1870. It is therefore not surprising that at some stage Bennett was called upon to arrange one of the arias of the work for a chamber ensemble. Although the minute book contains a great deal of information, it is unfortunately incomplete and does not record events after 1872. There is no reference in it to any arrangements made by Bennett for the society between 1859 and 1872, though it should be noted that the style of reporting is not consistent and where on some days performers and repertoire are listed on others there is hardly any information at all.

The Woman of Samaria was composed in 1867 and Bennett died in 1875 so the manuscript certainly comes from the last eight years of his life. As such it is rare, because he wrote very little during this period that was either original or arranged. The time span can be further narrowed by the fact that the composer's son James, a talented oboist, was nominated as a performing member of the society on 8 November 1869. The FMS constitution included strict rules concerning who was allowed to perform in their concerts so it is unlikely James Bennett appeared on stage before this date. The inscription accompanying the manuscript is probably in Hudson's hand, though I have not had access to other examples of his handwriting to check this. If it was written soon after the concert had taken place, then the fact that the composer is acknowledged as a knight narrows the time scale even further to the period 1871-1875; his investiture took place on 24 March 1871. Conversely, it could easily have been written after Bennett's death, in which case he would have been referred to as Sir William regardless of when the arrangement had been written.

Rosemary Williamson's catalogue contains a survey of the types of manuscript paper Bennett used through his life. From around 1854 to 1867 he bought his paper primarily from the London firm of De La Rue & Company. This has a characteristic double-lined border with a length and width that varies slightly with each new batch. The measurements of the 'His salvation' arrangement are 25.6cm by 19.6cm, dimensions with no corresponding listing in the catalogue. This information probably has little significance as far as dating is concerned as Bennett may easily have had old paper lying around after 1867, but it would certainly be important for anyone making a more detailed study of Bennett paper types in the future. It would indeed be significant if the manuscript came from the period after 1872 as it may well have been one of the last things the composer wrote.

I was forced to give up my search for the sake of other more pressing matters, so it may be for someone else to determine exactly when the piece was performed. Perhaps the most important thing about such a find is not the fifteen seconds of fame achieved by the discoverer but an increase in knowledge, in this case hitherto obscure aspects of the life of composer whose career is largely unknown today.

Peter Leech is conductor of the Bristol Bach Choir, City of Oxford Choir and Chandos Chamber Choir in London. He also maintains a busy freelance career as a singer and keyboard player and is currently undertaking a Ph.D. at Anglia Polytechnic University. The title of his thesis is 'Music and Musicians in the English Royal Catholic Chapels 1662-1692'.

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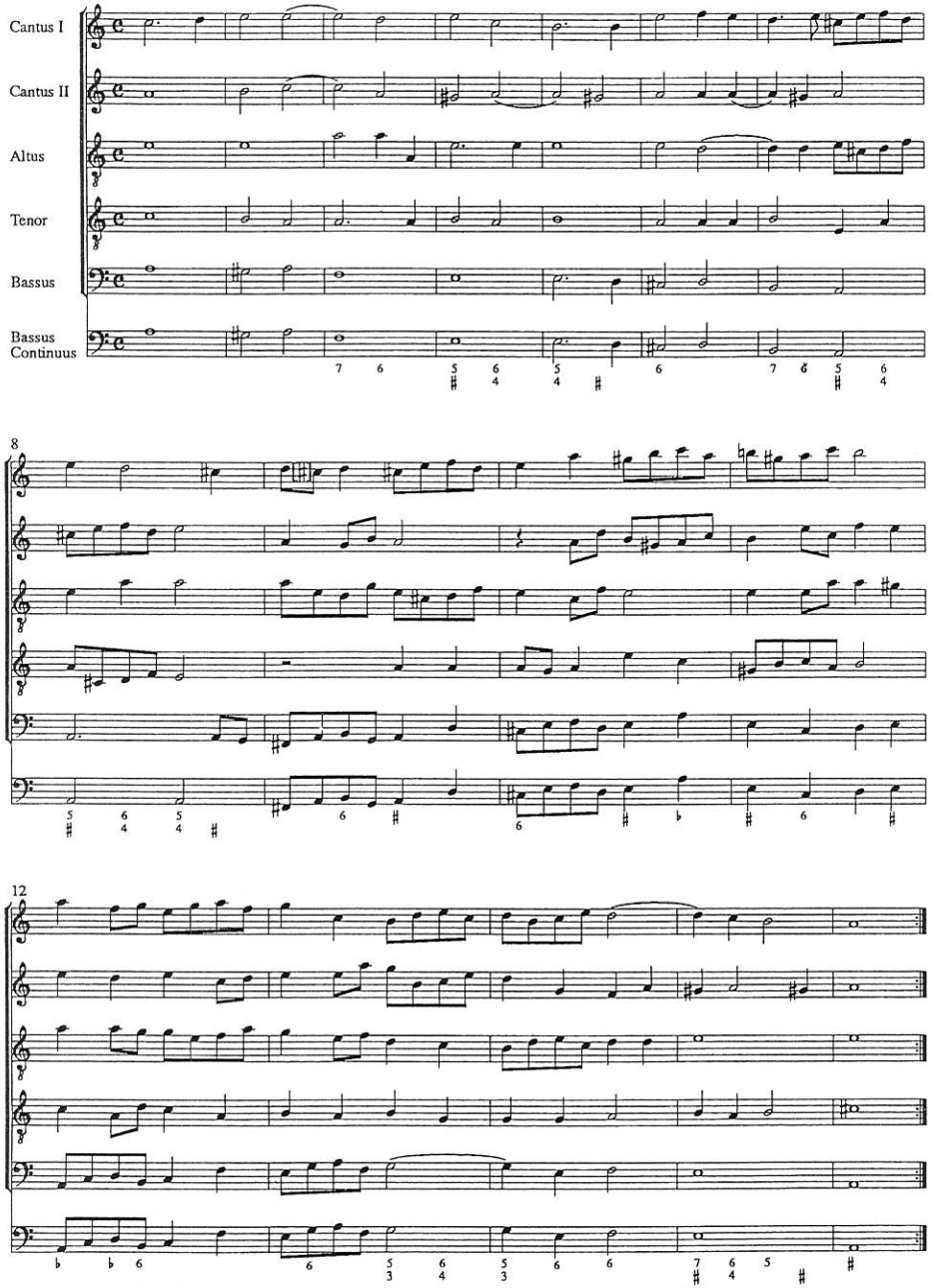
BERLIN MUSIC AT KIEV

In addition to music by Bach, the Sing-Akademie Library contains substantial holdings (in part stemming from the Bach estate) of works by Georg Philipp Telemann (220-plus cantatas), Carl Heinrich and Johann Gottlieb Graun (more than 150 vocal and 20-plus instrumental sources), Johann Adolf Hasse (ca. 130 vocal and 80 instrumental sources), Franz and Georg Benda (ca. 120 works), and compositions by many musicians from 18th- and early 19th-century Berlin, most of them associated with the Prussian court. Goethe's letters to Zelter, from the famous Goethe-Zelter correspondence, also form part of the archive.

Rosenmüller – Suite in A minor (Studenten-Music, 1654)

40. Paduan



Original clefs G2, G2, C3, C4, F4

KM785 a

Nos 40-42: the last bar is printed again as a breve after the repeat sign.
edited by Brian Clark

JULIAN RHODES
Keyboard Player

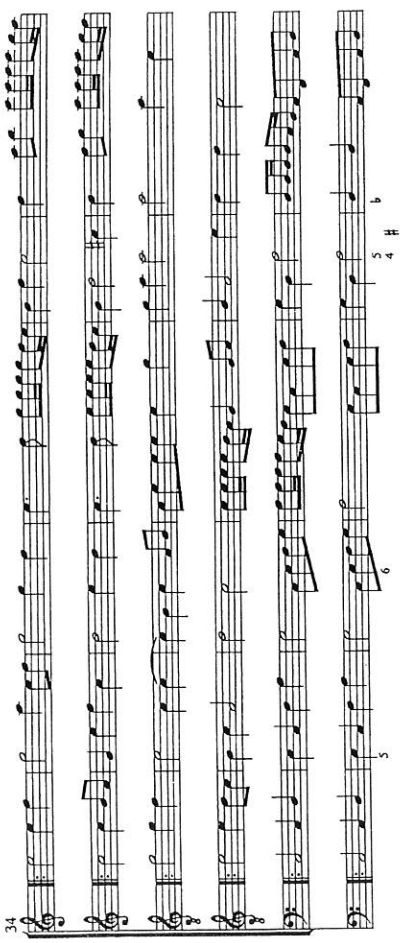
Born 10 November 1964 – died 16 March 2001

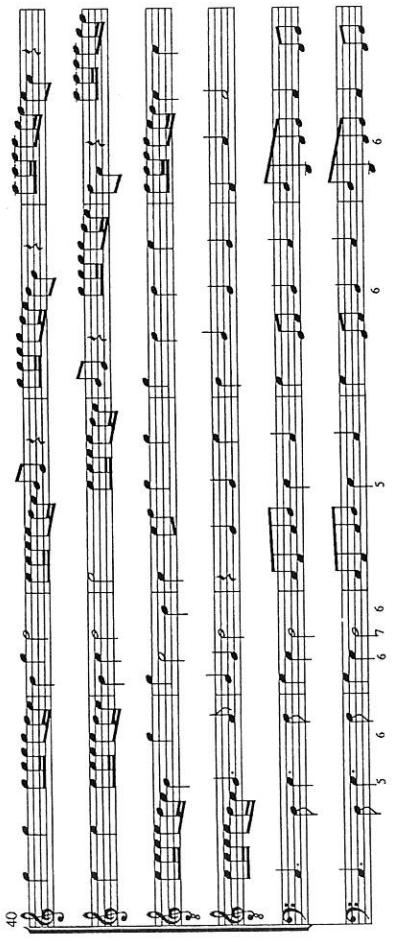
Julian Rhodes was born in Chesterfield and received his musical education at Chetham's School of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Guildhall School of Music. He was active as both a soloist and ensemble player, most notably with Red Priest. His performances were highly acclaimed. His recordings include *Priest on the Run* as harpsichordist (Upbeat Classics): *Shine and Shade* as pianist with Piers Adams (Upbeat Classics); *The Temple of Tone* as organist (Colossus Classics); *Julian Rhodes Live* as pianist (Colossus Classics); and *The Complete Harpsichord Works of William Croft*, 2 CDs, (Ismeron). His career was cut short by a malignant tumour on his left arm, which was amputated before last Christmas. Unfortunately, the cancer had spread to his lungs, and he died on 16 March at St. Leonards-on-Sea,

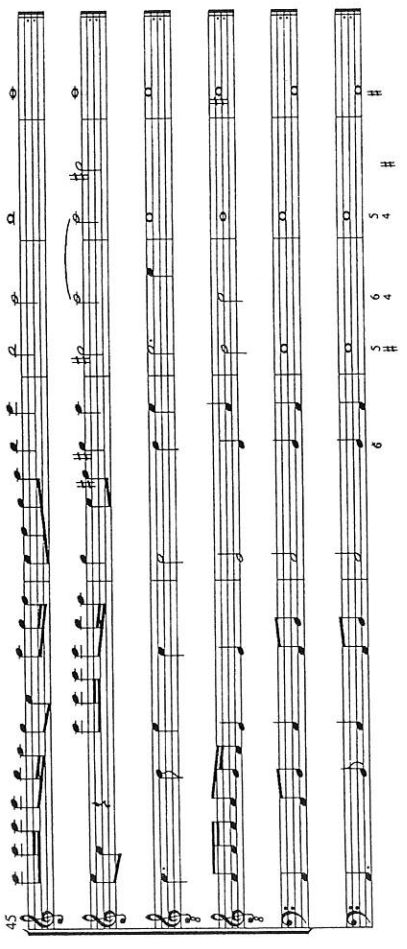
Martin Stafford

Rosenmüller: Studenten-Music

Apart from the complete facsimile (£45.00). King's Music has editions of Suites in A minor (Nos 40-44), B♭ (45-49) & D minor (55-60). Each costs £10 for score and parts (with parts 3 & 4 in both alto and octave-treble clefs).







The rest of the Suite comprises 41: Alemanda, 42: Courant, 43: Ballo, 44: Sarabanda

2000, ANOTHER BACH YEAR!

Don Franklin

For those of us active as Bach scholars and performers in 1985, the 300th anniversary of Bach's birth, the prospect of yet another Bach celebration (this time, 250th anniversary of his death) was greeted with some scepticism: the *Neue Bach Ausgabe* would not be complete for several years, and its critical reports, with the appearance of new sources and the availability of libraries holdings via internet, are in danger of becoming outdated even as they are published. Bach performances and recordings seemed to be proliferating by the day – at least in the months preceding 2000. And the controversy surrounding performance issues, such as one-on-a part, clearly would not reach any kind of definitive resolution with the allocated twelve month period.

Furthermore, the year's many scholarly conferences drew upon a limited circle of participants, many of whom were working on large scale projects. These include my own study of what I call Bach's temporal procedures, that is, the set of principles by which he constructs his music 'in time' as well as the notational means by which he indicates how to realize his 'time' structures. Bach's application of both principles and procedures, as I reported on several occasions in 2000, are proving to be as systematic and as broad in scope, as, for example, his use of ritornello and fugue.

So, after a year of conferences and festivals, many of which were exclusively, and some partially, devoted to Bach's music, what is the residue; what can be said about the current state of Bach studies?

At least three trends strike me as worth noting:
1) a renewed interest in critical/analytical study of the music, representing a return to compositional process and how Bach's music works, rather than where or in what state it is found. This revival is seen particularly in German circles, with work of Friedhelm Krummacher, Werner Breig and Ulrich Siegele returning to the forefront. Despite the publication in 1996 of Laurence Dreyfus's *Patterns of Invention*, a similar revival has yet to take place in Anglo-American Circles.
2) a more systematic exploration of the theological content of Bach's music. A conference in Utrecht organized by Albert Clement, President of the International Society for Theological Bach Research and a member of the Utrecht music faculty, featured papers by two of his students, Anne Leahy (Ireland) and Isabella von Elfgren (Netherlands), along with one by Mary Greer (USA) which set forth interesting results regarding what could be described as the theological foundations of Bach's music. (The addition of three women to the somewhat masculine Bach scene is welcome.) But as that particular conference and others have demonstrated, Bach studies have barely scratched the surface with regard to a critical assessment of Bach's texts.
3) an ever-broadening examination of the role of Bach's music vis-à-vis that of his sons and contemporaries. To some extent the Bach-Archive in Leipzig set this new course by its new staff appointments, namely, Peter Wollny and Ulrich Leisinger, who wrote their doctoral dissertations on W. F. and C. P. E. Bach; and the Archive's new publication series will focus on documents and repertory that relate to the Bach sons and other members of the Bach family. Further impetus was given, circumstantially, by the discovery, or what might better be described as 'formal acknowledgment' by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, that the long-lost musical estate of Bach's second son, C. P. E., a central portion of the Berlin Sing-Akademie archive missing since World War II, was stored in a museum in Kiev. The close collaboration between Christoph Wolff and Patricia Kennedy Grimsted (Harvard University) and Hendaii Boriak, Deputy Director of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences led to its discovery in the summer preceding 2000. Including 5000 items, mostly manuscripts, the estate includes the 'Old Bach Archive', a collection of works by members of the Bach family (many in copies from J. S. Bach's hand), as well as the bulk of C. P. E.'s own compositions in autograph or authorized copies, among them 20 Passions, 50 keyboard concertos, and many other vocal and instrumental works. Most of the works, including all the Passions, more than two thirds of the keyboard concertos, many chamber works, and songs are unpublished and have never been available for performance or study. Reports on the contents of the collection were a part of almost every scholarly conference in 2000. But scholarly access to the manuscripts and a fresh look at at the repertories and performance practices associated with Bach's sons and contemporaries was assured only in January of this year when a treaty was signed by the Ukrainian government, returning the collection to the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin possibly as early as this summer.*

Indications of the expanded scope of Bach studies is also seen in current performances and recordings. Those of us who conduct university and community concert series, for example, find ourselves turning increasingly to the works of a Fasch, a Telemann or a Stoelzel, to give ourselves and our audiences new music to savor, as well to provide a larger framework in which to hear Bach. (For Fasch, the publications of King's Musick have been of immense help, as have the spate of Telemann recordings from cpo, Capriccio and elsewhere). If this movement continues to gain momentum, the next series of Bach celebrations will focus less on the music of Johann Sebastian than how we hear and perceive his works in light of the larger musical and cultural context that will unfold during the next several decades.

* There is a brief note of non-Bach works on p. 13.

RECORD REVIEWS

CHANT

Eternal Light: Music of Inner Peace Priory of the Resurrection, New Hall 64' 24"
Deutsche Grammophon **471 090-2**

This was launched with enormous publicity: it will be interesting to see if the vogue for chant is over. But idea that the function of music is to calm (underlying virtually all ClassicFM trails, for instance) still seems to be alive and is used as a selling-point on the back cover of this disc. As with the recording of the Monks of Silo that started the trend, there is little information in the booklet about the music (though that was later remedied for the Silosians). This collection starts with the *Missa de angelis* with organ – which I suppose is how most catholics expect this most popular of chant (or perhaps early pseudo-chant) to sound – but the instrument is apologetically distant. The chants without it sound better, and indeed sound very well, though nothing melismatic is attempted. As with the Mirfield disc reviewed last month, early material is mixed with music written for the current liturgy; again, it works in context, though I wouldn't want to hear it in a concert. It is gratifying that chant is still a living force in religious communities. *CB*

Gregorian Chant Benedictine Abbey Münsterschwarzach, Pater Godehard Joppich 152' 54" (2 CDs) rec 1982
Deutsche Grammophon *Panorama* **469 241-2** £

This derives from the five-LP Archiv set issued with a lavish booklet containing full texts, translations and music (in conventional chant notation with added St Gallen neums). The selection keeps the mass for the First Mass of Christmas and for Easter Sunday intact, and presents a selection of the rest. It is, of course, a pity that the documentation has gone, but these are benchmark recordings, so their wider availability is to be welcomed, even if the lack of texts encourages use as background rather than foreground listening. *CB*

MEDIEVAL

Almisonis melos: Latin Motets and Mass Fragments in the Ivrea Codex Cantica Symphonia, Giuseppe Maletto 64' 29"
Opus 111 **OPS 30-309**
Music by Machaut, de Vitry & anon

The group picture worried me: 11 musicians, five of whom carried instruments (and one of the others is the organist, giving the players the majority). Aurally, this did not always present a problem. The Chipre *Kyrie*, for instance (track 2), works well enough as scored here. But overall I found the sound tiring, the instruments getting in the way rather than helping. They may be more authentic than the cor anglais and bassoons that I remember from Gilbert Reaney broadcasts in the 1960s, but I wish they had been kept in their place: that seems (as far as I can see) to have been away from liturgical music. (There's a nice example quoted in Andrew Tomasello's *Music and Ritual at Papal Avignon* p. 34 of a lavish religious event in which the instruments are carefully separated from the voices.) These singers are good enough for me to want to hear them unadulterated. But if that doesn't bother you too much, this is a useful disc, presenting 16 of the 81 pieces in one of the main sources of late 14th century music, with a flow and style that convinces. *CB*

Juden im Mittelalter: Aus Sepharad und Ashkenas Jalda Rebling *voice*, Hans-Werner Apel, Stefan Maass *lute*, Susanne Ansorg *fiddle*, Sabine Heller *harp*, Veit Heller *portative*, Michael Metzler *perc* 61' 18"
Raum Klang **RK 9901**

Two issues of reconstruction: the first, which haunts any medieval music programme or CD, is the nature of surviving musical documentation. The second, which haunts cultural reconstruction, is the way in which a minority group, subject to dispersal during periods of persecution, sustained its musical tradition. To this we can add a third for music associated with the Jews – the vexed question of the role (or not) of music in religious observance. In the clutch of recent medieval ensembles in this country, we have become used to a mixture of improvisation, based on fragments or known styles of music; a mix of instruments – chiefly percussion and string, but occasionally wind, and an interplay of influences. In the latter case the Mediterranean pot pourri of Spanish, Moorish and Sephardi (Jewish) inflections. To this mix Jalda Rebling and her colleagues add French and German medieval pieces, providing a lightning tour around the centuries of the middle ages. On the whole, this is a contemplative CD, not pushing any overt religious message, but relying on the calming effect of an insistent drone, with only occasional improvisatory flourishes from the fiddle. A portative organ lends perspective and sometimes provides a melodic interpolation – so discreet was it that I wanted the clearer focus of a recorder sound. Rebling has found a middle-way pronunciation, with some discrepancies. She uses the guttural 'r' for the Hebrew (as in the modern spoken language), but not in the German, where the Italianate 'r' dominates. Her voice is sweet and calming in its middle range, but she has little power at the top, and when she sometimes descends into chest voice, defeats the purpose because she is simply not sufficiently supported. I

would, however, recommend the CD as a peaceful and gentle listen; the performances actually managed to cross my boredom threshold in relation to medieval music. All too often I lose interest after ten minutes of the stuff. But then, the medievalists might have said exactly the same about the music which came after them!
Michelene Wandor

Perceval: la quête du Graal (vol. 2) La Nef, David Taylor *cT* 57' 15"
Dorian **DOR-90294**

I find this an unacceptable mish-mash. It can only work on a listener who knows nothing about medieval music, likes polite performances of British folk music, has no concept of Chrétien de Troyes's verse or what French operatic chaconnes are like, and can forget completely what Wagner made of the myth. It may perhaps make an entertaining stage show, but the musical and verbal elements seem like *The Waste Land* imitated by a greetings-card versifier. *CB*

15th-CENTURY

Dufay *Missae Resveillies vous & Ave regina coelorum* Cantica Symphonia, Kees Boeke & Giuseppe Maletto *dirs* 71' 25"
Stradivarius **STR 33569**

I don't want to bore readers or pretend that I have some direct line to divine wisdom on the subject. But as far as I can see, the liturgical use of instruments until well into the 16th century was minimal if not non-existent. They may have played in church for ceremonial occasions, but in most places, players were from separate institutions from singers and are unlikely to have mixed, even when the desire of monarchs for pageantry overcame the theological distaste for them. Like the Ivrea disc by the same ensemble (see p. 17), the approach seems 30 years out of date. The booklet note is strong on analysis but says nothing on performance practice. Whether or not the 1990s English countenance is musicologically correct, it certainly produces a better sound. If your main interest is how the masses are constructed, you can hear the music very precisely and the individual lines are more clearly distinguishable than with voices. But when we do hear the voices alone (as in the Kyrie of the second mass), they are rhythmically too undisciplined. *CB*

Harmonice Musices Odhecaton A, Ottaviano Petrucci, Venedig 1501 Les Flamboyants, Michael Form *dir* 61' 13"
Raum Klang **RK 2005**

It is perhaps odd that this harbinger of the new century is placed under the heading of the previous one. But Petrucci's *Odhecaton* was pioneering more because of its technical innovation, while it was the *frottole* series which introduced new repertoire. The selection has most of the standards of the last thirty years or so of the 1400s, though the familiarity of much of the music may be because of the fine edition and study of *Odhecaton* by Helen Hewitt published in 1942, which has allowed the music to have been accessible for much longer than the rest of the repertoire it represents. I'm not sure that I would choose this as the ideal 500th-anniversary disc, chiefly because I don't associate the sound of the recorder as the characteristic one of the period. None of the scorings is individually implausible and the playing is entirely stylish, but in cumulation I find the disc monotonous. The new sound around 1500 was the viol – I hope someone produces a disc exploiting its reedy sound and lower tessitura. But if you are more recorder-tolerant, this is a fine disc. *CB*

16th-CENTURY

Contino *Missae Benedicta es caelorum regina & Illuminare Hierusalem* Nova Ars Cantandi, Giovanni Acciai *cond* 63' 44"
Stradivarius **STR 33551**

Contino (1513-1574) was born and died in Brescia; Acciai's interest in his music seems to arise from the fact that he composed polyphony for the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Careful attention is paid to the correct liturgical presentation of the two mass settings as they would have been sung during the progress of the Council, the organ (the only instrument permitted in church by the Council) taking an active part in the liturgy of *Missa Benedicta es*, which is interspersed with ricercari played with rhythmic verve by Luigi Panzeri on a perfect-sounding organ of 1588. This mass is one of many based on the motets by Josquin and Willaert, which were themselves based on the sequence melody. [Had the Council got round to excluding sequences by the time this was written?] Contino's mass is based on the Willaert motet, sticking quite closely to the rules of parody (as in Pietro Ponzio's *Ragionamento di Musica*) towards the beginning and wandering further from them as the mass proceeds.

My reactions to the recording were mixed, some moments are really lovely, particularly in the second mass, *Illuminare Hierusalem*, but others irritate. This is mainly the fault of the singers, whose tuning is pretty rank; but in other places the music itself seems to lose its way – for instance in the first 'Qui tollis', where both performers and listeners are apt to lose concentration. The singers are at their worst in long, complex phrases, in which I craved clearer lines, and at their best in rhythmic, upbeat sections such as the Hosannas; the vocal sound is pleasing, and the phrasing is intelligent and tender. Other male quartets should give Contino a try. *Selene Mills*

Moro *Concerti ecclesiastici, 1604* Nova Ars Cantandi, Giovanni Acciai *cond* 39' 49"
Stradivarius **STR 33582**

This is a lovely disc, consisting of a parody mass on Giovanni Gabrieli's *Lieto godea* with all the propers and instrumental canzone. The style is rather unassuming, the singing (one per part) is excellent without drawing attention to itself (as some Italian groups tend to), the instrumental playing very stylish, and the music rather fine, considering the composer is, to say the least, rather obscure (although Moro sometimes has 'da Viadana' appended to his name, he's not the better-known Lodovico of that ilk, whose most famous work has the same title). Once again, this CD is the result of someone taking an interest in musicians who worked in his city and working hard to promote the music through festivals which draw attention to the town as a by-product – in this case, with every justification. Recommended. *BC*

Padovano *Messe à 24 voix* Huelgas-Ensemble, Paul Van Nevel *dir* 54' 27"
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901727**

There's a certain amount of invention of the wheel here: if Paul Van Nevel 'had the honour of discovering end editing... the *Missa a24* which was unknown until a short time ago' how come I could be listening to it with a score of one movement in my hand? The work is discussed in some detail in Anthony Carver *Cori spezzati* (Cambridge UP 1988) and some readers will have sung/played a movement at the Beauchamp Summer School a few years ago. But laying aside primacy, this is a fascinating work, possibly written for the 1568 Munich wedding (when the Striggio motet a40 was also performed). The grand style is exciting to participate in, and I was pleasantly surprised that this carried over into a non-participatory experience. The performances work well. The *Agnus Dei* is particularly impressive. The work is recorded twice, with different scorings, once mostly vocal, once mostly instrumental; both versions are effective, and there are some brilliant cornett divisions above the vocal version (tracks 6-10, not 1-5 as the booklet states). Padovano certainly justifies the conductor's enthusiasm, even if he didn't discover the Mass. Apart from some reissues, this is certainly my favourite disc this month. *CB*

Incidentally, the Grove 7 Padovano entry has no mention of the Carver book in its bibliography; I would guess that its contributor had not seen the mass.

Tallis *Missa Salve intemerata* Winchester Cathedral Choir, Philip Scriven *org*, David Hill *dir* 67' 50"
Hyperion **CDA67207**

Tallis's Mass and votive antiphon *Salve intemerata* are believed to be early works, and yet display a sureness of touch which already mark out their composer as a master musician. Both works are presented here in association with chant, although regrettably not as a genuine liturgical reconstruction. The singing of the chant is occasionally rather foursquare, although the cathedral ambience helps the music to flow, and the polyphony is sung accurately and expressively. The best singing on the disc is reserved for the second votive antiphon, *Ave rosa sine spinis*, a lovely work in which the young Tallis makes clear his debt to the masters of the Eton Choirbook. The Winchester choristers warm to its elegant vocal

lines and perform them with great sensitivity, while David Hill relaxes the tempo to allow the music to breathe. Specialist mixed-gender ensembles may achieve more consistent perfection of tuning, tone and blend, but the great English cathedral choirs will always have a valuable contribution to make to the performance of early choral music, and probably still supply us with the most accurate representation of the soundworld of Renaissance choral composers.

D. James Ross

Court Jesters: Tudor Minstrel Music Sirinu (Sarah Stowe, Jan Banks, Henry Stobart, Matthew Spring, Jon Banks) 62' 44"
Griffin **GCCD4013** (rec 1996)
Music by Byrd, Cornsh, Dowland, Henry VIII, E. Johnson, Holborne, Ravenscroft & anon

One tends to assume that there is a fairly sharp divide in English music in the middle of the 16th century; it is certainly true for church music, but a case can be made for continuity in the secular world. Technically, it depends on the presence of some chord-pattern music in the early repertoire: most of the popular Elizabethan pieces are chord-based. This disc covers the whole century, and offers a variety of folky sounds, generally convincing but perhaps a little polite (except, of course, for the bagpipes). But it is entertaining, a good advert for and souvenir of Sirinu's live shows. *CB*

Dances of the Renaissance Collegium Terpsichore, Fritz Neumeyer *dir*, Ulsamer Collegium, Josef Ulsamer *dir* 138' 27" (2 CDs)
Deutsche Grammophon *Panorama* **469 244-2**
£. rec 1960-1973

Much of this is well past its sell-by date, though if you like Savall-style orchestrations you may enjoy his predecessors. Disc 1 ends with a group of medieval pieces, nicely done; otherwise the dances are mostly late-16th- and early-17th-century, starting with tarted-up Praetorius. The mistranscribed travesty of Neusidler's *Der Juden Tanz* should have been suppressed (does it transgress our ludicrous race-relations legislation?), though otherwise the second disc is preferable. You certainly get quantity here (80 dances), but it all seems rather passé. *CB*

17th-CENTURY

Charpentier *Actéon* Dominique Visse *Actéon*, Agnès Mellon *Diane*, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie *dir* 46' 45" (rec 1982)
Harmonia Mundi *Musique d'abord* **HMA 1951095** ££
+Intermède pour *Le Mariage forcé* (H 494)

This reissue needs no commendation. It is the means by which Charpentier's delightful opera has become known, and the performance wears very well. The only disadvantage is that there are no texts or translations. Harmonia Mundi's Classical Express series, which I reviewed on the back page of the Diary section in March, had this material available on the net, but there is no mention of such an arrangement facility here, unfortunately. *CB*

Hassler *Cantate Domino: Motets & Organ Works* Martin Böcker (Huß/Schnitger organ at Stade),Weser-Renaissance Bremen, Manfred Cordes 72' 42"
cpo 999 **723-2**

This is as fine an introduction to Hassler's music as one could wish, ranging from a short four-part *Gratias agimus* to *Domine Dominus noster* a23. The former has a solo voice and three sackbuts; a feature of the disc is a variety of scorings, all of which fit and don't sound as if they are imposed merely for the sake of variety. Performances are utterly convincing. Organ pieces on discs like this often seem to be inserted merely for contrast: here they are a positive bonus, displaying a fine instrument, if half a century late for Hassler. Whoever wrote 'is guett' on the MS of the Canzon played here had good judgment. Strongly recommended. *CB*

Hassler *Ihr Musici: Geistliche und weltliche Vokalwerke* Regensburger Domspatzen, Georg Ratzinger 56' 44" (rec 1990)
Ars Musici *Essence* **AME 3011-2**
Ecce quam bonum a5, Lauretine Litany a6, Missa Ecce quam bonum a5 & secular pieces.

This reissue is unfortunately timed: not many readers are likely to buy two Hassler discs in a month, and this is definitely second-best. Not that there is anything wrong with the choir. It's just that the Weser-Renaissance approach seems to me to suit the music better and is more in accordance with how I now imagine the music, in singing style as well as in the scorings. How much that is an advance in knowledge, how much a change in fashion I don't know, and those more in accord with the a capella tradition will prefer this. It is good that Hassler is getting the attention he deserves. If you like boys' choirs, Regensburg offers one of the best. It is bigger than the famous English ones, though doesn't sound at all cumbersome and makes a more natural sound. *CB*

Rossi *Oratorio «Giuseppe, figlio di Giacobbe»* Cappella Antiqua, Bernhard Pfammatter *cond* 59' 46"
Divox Antiqua **CDX 75239-3**
+ *Carissimi Historia de Exechia*

The mid-17th-century oratorio is a difficult genre. The action is often remarkably static – everyone knows the story – which is just as well, as there are no texts or translations included, so those who are not Latin speakers will just have to use their imaginations, as well as the sections of the brief notes headed 'The Story'. Fortunately, the composer is more often called upon to capture the overall mood than to tell the story. Rossi and Carissimi were undoubtedly two of the outstanding oratorio composers and the works performed here show why. These live performances are good, the best of the singing being the ensembles (which I think was Rossi's strong point anyway). I was not taken at all by the solo alto's voice, but the others were fine. I would have expected organ to be more prominent a continuo instrument than harpsichord, but harp and lirone were both present, as Rossi often stipulates. There are plenty more Rossi pieces awaiting recording. *BC*

Criticism is disarmed by a note on Bernhard Pfammatter's covering letter: '*O Lord, my God, do not, I beseech, enter into judgement with thy servant. Do not ever remember the sins of my youth and my errors...* from the translation of the Kings Music edition of Gabrieli *Domine Deus meus.*' *CB*

Rovetta *Vespro solenne pour la naîssance de Louis XIV* Cantus Cölln, Konrad Junghänel Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901706** 79' 26"
Rovetta *Vespers Psalms (1639); Domine ne in virtute tua a3, Dominus illuminatio mea a2, Jubilate Deo a2 (1635);* **Buonamente** Sonata 1 a4, 5 a2 (1636)

I was hoping that the review copy of A-R Edition of Rovetta's 1639 *Messa e salmi concertati* (1639) would have arrived before the deadline for this issue; unfortunately, it hasn't. So for the present I will just say that this is an extremely worth-while disc, drawing attention to first-rate music with brilliant performances. I'll come back to it when I review the score. *CB*

Schütz *Der Schwanengesang (SWV 482-494)* Dresdner Kammerchor, Ensemble Alte Musik Dresden, Hans-Christoph Rademann 88' 29"
Raum Klang **RK 9903** (2 CDs)

Schwanengesang, completed a year before his death, brought Schütz's composing career to an imposing end. It is a setting of Psalm 119 in eleven movements for double choir, plus versions of Psalm 100 and the German Magnificat. In this recording, Hans-Christoph Rademann arranges the double-choir texture for favoriti and ripienists, and substitutes instruments for some of the vocal parts. This colourful realisation is in keeping with the performing advice Schütz gave in the preface to his *Geistliche Chormusik* (1648). Indeed, Schütz asked his pupil Constantin Dedekind to arrange the *Schwanengesang* in this way. I particularly enjoyed the delicate favoriti opening of the seventh movement of Psalm 119; it is good to hear a period-instrument group from Saxony that, ten years after reunification, matches any in the west. But although this performance does its best to enliven the long psalm setting, two discs of unrelenting polychoral writing may be too much for all but cori spezzati devotees. *Stephen Rose*

Vitali *Partite sopra diverse Sonate per il Violone* Diego Cerofolini *vlc/b.vln*, Luca Franco Ferrari *violone*, Massimo Lombardi & Maurizio Pancotti *lutes/gtrs*, Gabriele Micheli, Luca Dellacasa *kbds* 50' 29"
Stradivarius **STR 33543**
+ 3 pieces by G. Colombi

In something of a cello-dominated month for me (you can read reviews of Jean-Baptiste Masse, Giovanni Bononcini, and Leonardo Leo below), this disc was possibly the most difficult to evaluate. The chosen repertoire is the earliest surviving material for solo bass stringed instrument. Diego Cerofolini plays some on cello, others on bass violin (tuned a tone lower) and two pieces on cello with the top string tuned down to G.

Around this, a continuo group of violone, an assortment of plucked and keyboard instruments provide accompaniment and elaboration. Five of the tracks are simple solos and only two feature all six players. I have to confess to having found it rather hard going. That is not a criticism of the playing, which in all respects is very good. I simply did not particularly enjoy listening to what amounted in most cases to realisations of simple bass lines. Of course it is an interesting release and might provoke some discussion about performance practice, as well as bring Vitali and Colombi to wider notice, but I doubt if the disc will be a best seller purely as entertainment. *BC*

Battaglie & Lamenti 1600-1660 Montserrat Figueras, Hespèrion XXI, Jordi Savall
Alia Vox **AV9815** rec 1981-99
Fontei *Pianto d'Erinna*; **Monteverdi** *Lamento d'Arianna*; **Peri** *Lamento d'Iole*; **Strozzi** *Su'l rondano severo*; instr. music by Chilesi, Falconieri, G. Gabrieli, Guami, Scheidt

The main reason for buying this disc is for the three laments recorded by Montserrat Figueras in 1981 (the Monteverdi is from eight years later and shows more of her mannerisms). When I first heard her in the early 1980s singing Italian 17th-century music, her voice and style were a revelation. I haven't been so enthusiastic about her development, so it is a pleasure to be able to recommend these. The instrumental pieces are much more recent (1997 & 1999) the playing is brilliant, but I don't believe the fussy orchestration: does Scheidt's Paduan 6 a4 really benefit from 13 players, with changes of instrumentation even within a strain? As usual, Savall assumes that every phrase needs its own sound and tempo, whereas I'm happier with the idea that a 17th-century dance needs just one of each, within which the players suggest a variety of sounds and moods. But the battles make a good contrast with the laments and their performances are lively and entertaining. *CB*

Mission San Francisco Xavier: Opera y Misa de los Indios Ensemble Elyma, Gabriel Garrido 71' 30"
K617 **K617111**

Hispano-American early musicians probably find enthusiastic reviews which concentrate on their vitality and primitive vigour patronising. But as with some types of music nearer home that are more in touch with popular culture (e.g. that on the Sirinu disc reviewed on p. 19 or English and American 18th & 19th century hymns and anthems), such music brings a breath of fresh air into our lives, and is genuinely to be welcomed. This disc presents music associated with a Bolivian festival for Saint Francis Xavier, recorded in the church of the Mission San Javier, with an 'opera' and a mass from around 1740. The opera and some of the additional music is in the local language, Chiquitan, and it is possible that the Mass was composed by a native, not a Spanish musician. The music is engaging and the performances have great panache; the children's choir from Cordoba (presumably the town in Argentina, not Spain, or is there another in Bolivia?) is particularly refreshing. *CB*

I would have found some clear geographical information helpful: despite owning a 1250-page South American Handbook, *I haven't been able to locate any of the places mentioned in the booklet. A page of propaganda for the Moselle region, whose cultural programme supported the recording, is disorienting!*

Fritz Wunderlich: Geistliche Lieder 76' 09"
Hänssler **CD 93.025** rec 1956-58
Buxtehude *O wie selig*; **C. Graupner** *Wie bald hast du gelitten*; **J. P. Krieger** *Wo willst Du hin*; **Rosenmüller** *3 Lektionen aus den Klageliedern Jeremias*; **Schütz** *Es steh' Gott auf, Was betrübst du dich*; **Telemann** *Warum verstellst du*

Fritz Wunderlich (1930-66) recorded these German sacred concertos between 1956 and 1958. This reissue makes salutary listening. Although Wunderlich was born only a few years before tenors such as Nigel Rogers, his early death may make him seem to belong to a more distant culture. Indeed, the instrumental playing on this disc sounds very dated. By contrast, Wunderlich sings with compelling warmth and immediacy. The disc consists mainly of duets, with Wunderlich always outshining his vocal partner. There is also a Graupner cantata, sung by soloists and with all the quartet save Wunderlich wobbling indiscriminately. Of Wunderlich's two solo items, the Telemann cantata was the last to be recorded and here his singing is slightly more affected. His excerpts from Rosenmüller's Lamentations are superbly communicative. For such an interesting reissue, it is inexplicable why Hänssler have not provided booklet texts. *Stephen Rose*

KAMMERTON

This batch of discs from KammerTon comprises recordings from the 1990s that seem not to have been distributed in the UK until recently being taken up by One for You UK Ltd; they can be ordered from Lindum Records. As well as the number quoted, the discs also bear a year and opus number.

Lust und Leben um 1700: Lieder, Arien und Instrumentalmusik von Johann Pachelbel u. a. Anke Herrmann *S*, Boreas Ensemble, Midori C. Seiler *dir* 52' 42" (rec 1998)
KammerTon **KT 2008**
P. H. Erlebach *Es hat Fröhlichkeit, Es lindert sich, Der Gedanken Heimlichkeit, Die Zeit verkehret*; **Kremberg** *Stürmt ihr tollen*; **J. P. Krieger** *Sonata in C 2 vln & bc*; **Pachelbel** *Partita in e 2 vlns & bc*; **Schwartzkopf** *Sonata in g 2 vln & bc*

Monarca della Musica: Die Musik der Mächtigen im 17. Jahrhundert Barocktrompeten Ensemble Berlin, Johann Rosenmüller Ensemble Leipzig, Klaus Eichhorn *org* 61' 57"
KammerTon **KT 2006** (rec 1998)
Music by Biber, Buonamente, Byrd, Clarke, Ferrabosco II, Froberger, Kerll, Marini, Monteverdi, Purcell, Rittler, Schmelzer, Stanley

Musik für Sans-Souci: Konzerte der königlichen Hofkapelle Friedrichs II Ensemble Sans-Souci Berlin 73' 34" (rec 1997)
KammerTon **KT 2003**
F. Benda *fl concerto in G*; **J. G. Graun** *Concerto Grosso in G (fl, vln, gamba, vlc & orch), Gamba concerto in G*; **Quantz** *Fl concerto in e* QV5:120
Ristori *Calandro* Egbert Junghanns *Calandro*, Jan Kobow *Alceste*, Martin Wölfel ***Nearco***, Maria Jonas *Agide*, Clizia *Britta Schwarz*, Batzdorfer Hofkapelle, Stefan Maass & Stephan Rath *dirs* 73' 09"
KammerTon **KT 2005**

Ruggiero im Aufbruch: Musik des italienischen Frühbarock Movimento (Nele Gramß *voice*, Veronika Slupnik *vln*, Hille Perl *gamba*, Christoph Lahmann *kbd*) 71' 23" (rec 1997)
KammerTon **KT 2004**
Music by Caccini, Castello, Falconieri, Frescobaldi, d'India, Marini, Monteverdi, Negri, Notari, Quagliati, Rore, Storace

KammerTon is a new label to *Early Music Review*. We have been sent five CDs covering repertoire from Italian music around 1600 to Ristori's Dresden opera, Calandro, from early baroque music for brass to the sophisticated concertos from the palace of Sans-Souci, recorded between 1997 and 1999.

Ruggiero im Aufbruch builds a love story out of settings by a variety of composers. Movimento is a new group to me, but at least two of the names are familiar: gambist, Hille Perl, and violinist Veronika Slupnik. It was a little disconcerting to hear the ensemble tune up at the very beginning, but this is an enjoyable collection of pieces very beautifully done. The singing is emotionally charged without ever losing the clarity of line or a sense of direction. There are sonatas as well as vocal pieces, and this is a thoroughly recommendable disc.

Monarca della Musica is a mastered disc of a live concert. There are two groups involved, one a trumpet consort, the other a mixture of cornetti and trombones, with organ continuo. The pieces range from arrangements of keyboard music by Byrd to a 7-part sonata by Schmelzer and trumpet music by Purcell and Jeremiah Clarke. There's also the ubiquitous *Sonata Sancti Polycarpi* by Biber, and the Toccata from Monteverdi's *Orfeo*. The playing is bright and clear. I wasn't entirely convinced by the arrangements, although the idea is, of course, not ludicrous. I was disappointed by the absence of any of Rosenmüller's *Studentenmusik*, which I've been editing lately, especially since one of the groups is named after him! Nevertheless, an interesting and rewarding CD.

Lust und Leben um 1700 is perhaps the least successful of the five CDs. The programme comprises four arias by Erlebach, a song by Kremberg, and trio sonatas by Johann Philipp Krieger, Pachelbel and Schwartzkopff. The instrumental playing is very good, but it took me a while to warm to the singing. The voice is slightly too large for the music, although there are occasional flashes of brilliance. The first track was not a good start, partly because the piece was rather slight and unimaginative. The later pieces are a marked improvement. Far better are the sonatas, where the continuo section underpins two finely balanced violins.

Ristori's *Calandro* was written for a performance at the chateau of Pillnitz (to the

south of Dresden on the Elbe) on the 2nd September 1726. It's a fine piece, with richly scored accompaniments to the arias and a lively sinfonia to open. The recitative is rather bland, to be honest, but several of the arias are very nicely crafted and beautifully sung. It's a comedy (Calandro falls in love with a bear...), recorded here in a live performance, notably clear of any public intervention. There is some very nice horn playing, and a delightful ensemble, brightly captured by the recording technicians, brings the piece to a cheery close.

The disc I most enjoyed, though, was *Music für Sans-Souci*, which features concertos by Quantz, Johann Gottlieb Graun and Franz Benda, naturally featuring the flute very prominently. The two outstanding pieces on the disc are the Graun concerto grosso for flute, violin, gamba and cello with strings and continuo, and the gamba concerto, played by Hille Perl. The Ensemble Sans-Souci Berlin is very good indeed. The soloists (Christoph Huntgeburth, flute, Irmgard Huntgeburth, violin, Perl, gamba, and Joachim Fiedler, cello) are excellent, achieving a fine balance between the different instruments. It was nice to hear the three composers alongside one another and hear Burney's notion that everyone in Berlin was under Quantz's charms well and truly dispelled. If only for drawing wider attention to Graun's lovely orchestral works, I recommend this disc very warmly. *BC*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Easter Oratorio, Magnificat* Kimberly McCord, Julia Gooding, Robin Blaze, Paul Agnew, Neal Davies *SSATB*, Gabrieli Players, Paul McCreesh 65' 16"
Archiv **469 531-2**
Bach *Magnificat; Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen* Nancy Argenta, Patrizia Kwella, Charles Brett, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, David Thomas *SSATb*, Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner (Emma Kirkby *S* & Crispian Steele-Perkins in Cantata 51)
Philips **464 672-2** 41' 44" (rec 1983) ££

The Gardiner disc is the second one this month in which I have been surprised to find that I'd written the booklet note. At least this one was 17 years ago. The disc is one of Philips' series commemorating the Label's 50th Anniversary. It is a distinguished issue, the Magnificat representing how many of us expected the work to sound in the hey-day of the early-music revival. This makes the contrast with McCreesh particularly interesting. The obvious matter of the chorus is not quite as clear cut as one might expect, since there are slight problems with McCreesh's 'authentic' use of a group of soloists. I wouldn't want to exaggerate, but occasionally I was reminded of the problems in some later works in the choral repertoire when four soloists have to sing short passages together and sound distinctly less of one mind than the choir. I suspect that the one-to-a-part chorus needs a regular ensemble, not ad hoc solo voices. Gardiner's chorus, of course, is impeccable, and his tempi initially seem right; but McCreesh's are less predictable, make one think, and justify adding another performance to one's collection. At times in both performances (but chiefly Gardiner's) one can feel the conductor pushing the performers a bit too hard: if musicians of the stature of those used on both discs (sadly, Philips doesn't list theirs) can't maintain a tempo, perhaps there is good reason for it.

I suspect that it will not be for the Magnificat that our readers are likely to buy either of these but for the couplings. The Gardiner disc may be cheap, but it would be very poor value in terms of pennies per minute did it not include Emma Kirkby's stunning performance of Cantata 51, ably partnered by Crispian Steele-Perkins. On the McCreesh disc, the Magnificat itself is the supporting feature for the far less familiar Easter Oratorio. I must confess that I usually feel a little let-down when the voices come in after the two and a bit movements of marvellous sinfonia, and in this performance I would have preferred another instrument to duet with the marvellous flautist in the lengthy 'Seele, deine Spezereien' rather than the soprano Kimberly McCord, who doesn't sound as if she belongs to the world of the rest of the recording. No complaints, though, about Paul Agnew and the recorders in 'Sanfte soll mein Todeskummer'. I don't think that this disc *demands* to be heard as most of the other recordings from the Gabrielis do, but it is still well worth buying. And it has one particular virtue: the use of a proper and suitable church organ for continuo. *CB*

Bach *Clavier-Übung III (German organ mass)* Masaaki Suzuki *org*, Bach Collegium Choir
BIS-CD-1091/1092 104' 52" (2 CDs)

Masaaki Suzuki is best known as director of the Bach Collegium Japan and its acclaimed Bach cantata recordings. But like many such directors, he started life as an organist and harpsichord player and keeps a hand in as a soloist. A product of the Ton Koopman school, his playing has absorbed some of the wilder uses of articulation, touch and tempo of his teacher. Some may find this irritating. *Clavierübung III* is one of the finest of Bach's collections of chorale preludes and includes some of Bach's most intense and moving works, including the E♭ Prelude and Fugue that frame the chorale works. A good selling point is the sung verse before each group of chorales. The text of the first verse is given, even though Bach's influence does not always seem to have been the opening lines, and the works are played in their written order of large and small scale versions, rather than grouping them into 'greater' and 'lesser' organ masses. The four Duets are correctly included (evidence increasingly pointing to their being an integral part of the structure of the whole work), although I could happily live without the frenetic performance of the duet in E minor. The organ is a vast affair, with stops covering most organ schools from Renaissance to French Romantic. As such it does Bach no favours, but will no doubt give Japanese students a preview of the sort of organ they are most likely to find in Europe and the USA. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Organ Works Vol. 8* Gerhard Weinberger (organ of Martinikerk Groningen)
cpo **999 754-2** 68' 00"
Toccatas & Fantasias

Many of us were weaned on Bach recordings on North German organs of the Schnitger school, in the days when it took an adventurous soul to venture beyond the Iron Curtain to hear and play the organs that Bach himself lived with. Although the north German organs are the preferred choice for many of Bach's earlier works, his later works demand the more fundamental sound of the Thuringian and Saxon organs. Problems of pedal compass on the Groningen organ means that Krebs's version of the Toccata in F is played. It is also played without its normal fugue, as is the Fantasia in g (BWV 542) for the commendable reason that it seems unlikely that works like this were originally intended to be performed as the Prelude and Fugue pairs that later copyists have led us to expect. As well as these powerful works, two other major Bach warhorses get an outing: the concerto-like piece known today as the Toccata, Adagio and Fugue and the 'other' Toccata and Fugue in D minor. All these are given strong readings by Weinberger, although his characteristically individual style of articulation does rather impose. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *The Complete Partitas BWV 825-830* Bernard Roberts *pf* 144' 19" 2 CDs
Nimbus **NI 5673/4** ££

This is elegant, noble Bach playing. There's nothing self-consciously 'authentic' about the performances, but there's no hint of Gould's abstraction, or the 'bash out the theme' mentality either. The Allemandes flow nicely, and the A minor Sarabande positively dances along, barely concealing its compound-time tendencies. In general there's a refreshing lightness of touch, and crystal-clear separation of contrapuntal lines. There's also a fine architectural understanding, so longer movements, like the E minor Toccata and D major Allemande, rarely meander but have a clear sense of direction and purpose. A thoroughly enjoyable recording (with flaw-less sound quality) – who says Bach should only be played on the harpsichord? *Robin Bigwood*

G. Bononcini *Divertimenti da Camera, London 1722* Tripla Concordia (Lorenza Cavasanti *rec*, Caroline Boersma *vlc*, Giorgio Mandolesi *bsn*, Sergio Ciomei *hpscd* 73' 42"
Stradivarius **STR 33578**

When I took up music as an academic subject in my last year at school, I simultaneously took up the recorder (for my practical examination, since I'd sat enough violin tests for a lifetime!), and Bononcini's Divertimenti were an oft-visited source of new pieces in my lessons leading to Grade 8. This CD has some very nice things about it – the recorder playing, first and

foremost. The continuo playing is nice, the cello and harpsichord being pretty much in the background for much of the time. The bassoon, by contrast, cannot help but be something prominent, especially as a picture in the booklet shows the player standing alongside the flautist. Perhaps if he had sat at the other side of the keyboard from the cellist, a truer balance might have been found. He is a fine bassoonist, but that is not the point. Having two melody instruments on the bassline is a matter of some doubt anyway, and when one of them is so prominent, it becomes a problem. The cello sonata (Bononcini himself was a cellist) is very nicely done, (with bassoon and harpsichord continuo!) *BC*

Handel *Music for the Royal Fireworks & Concerti à Due Cori HWV 333 & 334* Il Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht 49' 47"
Passacaille **922** (rec 1997)
Reviewed unenthusiastically by Anthony Hicks in EMR 50 (May 1999), p. 20; apart from musical merits, it is rather short measure so there would have been room for the other Concerto. *CB*

Leo *Six Cello Concertos* Hidemi Suzuki *vlc/vlc.picc*, Orchestra Van Wassenaer, Makoto Akatsu *vln/dir* 79' 30"
BIS-CD-1057

These six pieces were written towards the end of Leo's relatively short life. Three of the concertos (Nos. 1, 2 and 4) are played on a violoncello piccolo, the remainder on a standard cello. Most are in the four movement da chiesa layout, but their musical substance is far more rococo than that designation might suggest, the texture basically consisting for the most part of unison violins (sometimes divided) and bass with the continuo filling in the harmony. Concerto No. 2 adds a fugue before the final Allegro. The Orchestra 'Van Wassenaer' has seven members – four violins, two cellos and a harpsichordist. They play very well (there are some lovely duetting passages for the solo cello and a solo violin). Hidemi Suzuki is content to be part of the texture rather than the showy soloist, but he is perfectly well able to project even the most difficult passages with the greatest of ease. Highly recommended. *BC*

Masse *Sonatas for Two Cellos Book One* (1736) Brandywine Baroque (Douglas McNames, Vivian Bartin *vlc*, Karen Flint *hpscd* 59' 04"
Dorian **DOR-93222**
Masse *Sonatas for Two Cellos Book Two* Brandywine Baroque 64' 27"
Dorian **DOR-93223**

Not one but two new releases for a composer I'd never heard of! Little is known about Jean Baptiste Masse, as far as the booklet notes tell us, but they claim him as something of a father of the French cello school. The music is pretty much a Leclair-like combination of French and Italian ideas. There are few overtly French gambiste ornaments and the virtuosity owes something to Italy rather than France. The playing is very good, the balance between the two cellos nicely controlled with unobtrusive harpsichord continuo. Anyone interested in instrumental music of the period should have these, but if you're simply intrigued, I recommend the music in Book 1 before the later material in Book 2. *BC*

Telemann *Harpsichord Overtures* Harald Hoeren 75' 27"
cpo **999 645-2**
VI Ouverturen TWV 32:5-10; Concerto in b TWV App. 33:1

Most of the harpsichord music by Telemann I've dabbled with has not left me yearning for more, but this enjoyable disc has forced me to revise my opinions somewhat. The *Ouverturen nebst zween Folgesatzen*, printed between 1745 and 1749, are all based around a three movement design – a French Overture followed by a slow piece then a final Allegro or Presto. The writing in the slow movements is at times a touch sparse, with expressive melodies supported by simplistic single note left-hand parts that cry out for continuo-style realisation. But the Allegros are surprisingly good, and contain some exciting figuration and some pretty good contrapuntal writing. Much of the interest lies in the performance, though – Harald Hoeren plays with great musicality and considerable gusto. The harpsichord, by Ahrend after various Flemish c.1750, sounds superb, and has been recorded in an ideal acoustic. A rewarding disc. Try it - you might like it.
Robin Bigwood

Zelenka *Complete Orchestral Works 3* Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre, Jürgen Sonnentheil 58' 17"
cpo *999 697-2*
Capriccio IV, Ouverture a7, Symphonia (Melodrama de S. Wenceslao)

This third disc brings Das Neu-Eröffnete Orchestre's survey of Zelenka's orchestral music to a close. It includes the infamous *Capriccio IV* with its tortuously high horn parts, and a rather leisurely account of the *Ouverture a 7 concertanti* which surprised me by its effectiveness at the chosen tempi, and the *Symphonia* to the St Wenceslas oratorio, which is basically a da capo aria for trumpets, drums and the standard string orchestra and oboes. The playing is one to a part and very nice indeed. This is, in my opinion, the best of the set. It would be nice to have more of his concertato church music now, including the rest of St Wenceslas. *BC*

Baroque Oboe Sonatas Ray Still *ob*, Leonard Sharrow *bsn*, Robert Conant & Thomas R. Still *hpscd* 70' 30" (rec 1974 & 1986)
Nimbus **NI 5672**
Bach *Sonata in g BWV 1030b*; Handel *Sonatas in c & g HWV 366, 364a*; Telemann *Kleine Cammer-Music* Partitas 2, 5, 6; Vivaldi *RV 58*

This is a remarkably good CD, considering the fact that it is played on modern instruments and that the sessions date from 1986 (the Bach sonata) and as long ago as 1974. Ray Still was clearly one of the outstanding talents of his age, and his playing, though obviously not quite as one of the leading baroque oboists of today might perform these pieces, is very good of its kind. The Bach is played only with harpsichord, and a rather resonant and heavy beast it is, but the other pieces also have bassoon continuo, which is very well done. All in all, thoroughly enjoyable. *BC*

Reel of Tulloch: Baroque Music of Scotland & Ireland Chatham Baroque 62' 19"
Dorian **DOR-90291**
Music by Baltzar, Geminiani, McGibbon, Oswald & anon.

I was recently heard to remark that it would be wonderful to feel as at home with anything as Chris Norman seems to be with his flutes, and this CD is further evidence if any were needed of the exceptional talent and musicality he possesses. His playing of this charming repertoire is never less than utterly convincing, but what is perhaps slightly surprising is that in Chatham Baroque he has apparently found four soul-mates of equal talent and sensitivity. A recent revival in interest in 18th-century Scottish and Irish music, in which the distinguished part played by David Johnson deserves mention, has led to several important recordings, but for sheer idiomatic playing and infectious enthusiasm the present recording is one of the finest. As with recordings by the Baltimore Consort, some purists will take exception to the jazzy cross-rhythms, but I regard such musicianly responses to the cold notes on the page as fully justified. While musical characters such as Chris Norman are rare in any generation, we would be arrogant to assume that they are unique to ours!
D. James Ross

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *The Solo Keyboard Music 6. 'Leichte Sonaten' II* Miklós Spányi *clav 76'31"*
BIS-CD-978
Wq 53/4-6, 62/18 & 20

Miklós Spányi has now recorded 13 discs of Emanuel Bach's Concertos for keyboard and 6 of works for solo keyboard. The sensitivity and technique with which he plays his chosen repertoire is only matched by the delight which he expresses in so doing. Since the music is only now starting to attract the attention and admiration it once commanded, particularly because of the excellent instruments placed at his disposal, recordings like this are not simply new to our recording catalogue, but also remarkably authoritative. Spányi and BIS make excellent partners, and already we have nearly one half of the proposed complete recordings – 19 discs in all. The whole operation deserves to be far better known. *Stephen Daw*

J. A. Benda *Sonates pour pianoforte* Brigitte Haudebourg *fp* 65' 16"
Lyrinx **LYR 158**
Sonatas 1-3, 7, 8, 10, 11

One thing that's almost certain about these sonatas is that they are not 'pour pianoforte'. Nos.1-3 come from *Sei Sonate*

per il Cembalo Solo, published in Berlin in 1757, and the others from collections of *vermischte Klavierstücke* of 1780-1781. There is no reason to doubt that *Cembalo* and *Klavier* mean *harpsichord* and *clavichord* respectively, and it is perverse to play them on a copy of a Stein fortepiano when nothing remotely similar was available in 1757. Astonishingly, the booklet makes no mention of the clavichord at all but speaks only of 'sonatas for harpsichord or fortepiano'. The music is interesting if not particularly distinguished, very much in the C. P. E. Bach manner with a tendency, common in the music of his imitators, to fall apart into disjointed gestures: there are some good ideas but they are not always properly integrated into a larger structure. Sonata No.10 is well constructed, however, and the more concise 1757 pieces have a greater sense of forward drive.

Haudebourg has a fluent technique and plays the sonatas quite nicely, but I don't like the way she automatically uses the 'moderator' for every slow movement instead of reserving it as an occasional special effect. In any case Stein never fitted such a device to his instruments, so it's hard to see why this alleged copy has one. It makes a certain sense in the harpsichord sonatas, perhaps, where a change of registration would have been in order, but it is hardly appropriate in the clavichord music. *Richard Maunder*

Boccherini *String Quintets* Europa Galante
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 5 45421 2 1 59' 57"
op 25/1, 4 & 6 + *the* minuet, op. 11/5

There is some superb playing here in three of Boccherini's numerous quintets with two cellos. The players gets to the heart of these works which bring to light the features of the music – which some may regard as at times being a little shallow – with occasional rubatos and some real pianissimo playing, while never going over the top. The music's lack of forward momentum, when compared with the chamber music of Boccherini's great classical contemporaries, is compensated for in these stylish performances. In contrast with the substantial first movements, performed with repeats, the remaining movements are comparatively short. Indeed, listeners may be forgiven for thinking they have heard some of the music before, as the finale of the C major quintet opens with the same material as the first movement. The famous A major Minuet from the Op. 11 No. 5 in E major is used as a filler. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Haydn *Armida* Cecilia Bartoli *Armida*, Christoph Prégardien *Rinaldo*, Patricia Petibon *Zelmira*, Oliver Widmer *Idreno*, Scot Weir *Ubaldo*, Markus Schäfer *Clotarco*, Concentus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt *dir*
129' 04" (2 CDs)
Teldec *Das Alte Werk*, **8573-81108-8**

This splendid recording is proof positive that, given the right theme and libretto, Joseph Haydn could write a work for the stage as vividly dramatic as any composed by his supposedly more theatrically gifted fellow musicians. *Armida*, written in 1784, is his penultimate opera and the last of the many that he wrote for his master Prince Esterhàzy. As he realised, it is also his best – a richly orchestrated score of sustained theatrical pace that captures the passionate drama of the Saracen sorceress at least as well as those versions of the story composed by his illustrious predecessors Lully and Gluck and, as I think, rather better than was to be done by his successor Rossini. Of all Haydn's fourteen or so operas, *Armida* stands out as the single perfectly achieved masterpiece and never has it been so well served as it is here by the incomparable Cecilia Bartoli as the eponymous heroine, a distinguished cast whom she by no means overshadows, and the incisive playing of the Concentus Musicus under the direction of Nikolaus Harnoncourt. From the opening chords of the overture, with its alternating episodes of passion and tenderness, one knows that this is to be a work of high drama and neither Haydn's music nor the performances it receives here subsequently let the listener down for a moment. The closing scene, when the betrayed enchantress gives full vent to her frustration and fury, is surely one of the greatest moments in opera of the 18th or any century, and Bartoli's is the voice that most exactly brings it to present life. This recording is simply one that no lover of opera can afford to be without, and given the tendency of even the best of previous recordings of Haydn's operas to disappear all too swiftly from the catalogue I can only suggest that you go out and buy it as soon as possible. You will not be disappointed. *David J. Levy*

Mozart: *Il Sogno di Scipione (K.126)* Malin Hartelius *Costanza*, Lisa Larsson *Fortuna*, Christine Brandes *Licenza*, Bruce Ford *Scipione*, Charles Workman *Publio*, Jeremy Ovenden *Emilio*, Choeur des Musiciens des Louvre, Freiburger Barockorchester, Gottfried von der Goltz, 110' 00' (2 CDs in box), Astrée **E 8813**

So far as I know this is only the second recording of Mozart's festal cantata of 1771 and the first to employ period instruments. Originally intended to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination of one Archbishop of Salzburg it was, following his death, ultimately employed to celebrate the installation of his successor, Hieronimus Colleredo. For the occasion the 16-year-old Mozart set a libretto already nearly forty years old and Metastasio's text, while devoid of anything much in the nature of a theatrical plot, gave the young composer ample opportunity to employ his talent for musical characterisation in a succession of extended arias distributed among the various characters, allegorical and ancestral, who populate Scipio's dream. The idiom of the music is, predictably enough, that of Italian opera seria, of which Mozart had already shown himself a master in *Mitridate re di Ponto*; and though, of its nature, *Il Sogno di Scipione* has nothing like the dramatic impact of that precocious masterpiece, it is nonetheless a thoroughly enjoyable score especially when performed, as it is here, by an ensemble thoroughly attuned to the particular requirements of the style. Among the cast I particularly appreciated the faultless vocal articulation of Malin Hartelius as Costanza, whose second aria especially demands feats of vertiginous display and control that would tax the abilities of even the most experienced exponent of the role of the Queen of the Night. Special mention should also be made of the harpsichordist Attilio Cremonesi whose sensitive and imaginative continuo playing is a model of what such a work as this requires as its essential support. It is hardly the fault of the record company if the cantata's playing time of rather under two hours is somewhat short for a double CD set. The would-be purchaser may rest assured that the invariable vigour and exuberance of the young Mozart's music will not leave him, or her, feeling in any way short-changed. *David J. Levy*

Mozart *Early Symphonies* Il Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht 53' 35"
Passacaille **930**

The works included are the symphonies K16 in E flat, K19 in D, K19a in F, K22 in B flat and K45b in B flat (the latter of uncertain attribution); the last two of these are here separated by a very brief four-movement 'symphony' in D, taken from the draft version of the *Galimathias musicum*, K32, preserved in Paris. The performances are sharp-edged, very lively, closely (and rather loudly, but certainly not brashly) recorded. With well-mastered period instruments the twenty players that make up Il Fondamento respond keenly to Paul Dombrecht's vivid direction. The issue will give innocent pleasure as well as call forth wonderment at what a boy could achieve, even with the assistance of an extremely talented father. *Peter Branscombe*

Mozart *The Complete Piano Sonatas* Ronald Brautigam
BIS **CD-835/837** (6 CDs) ££
Sonatas K.279-284, K.309-311, K.331-333, Fantasie K.475 and Sonata K.457,Sonatas K.533/494, K.545, K.570, K.576

I must confess to an initial misgiving at the idea of listening to over six hours' worth of a complete recording of some extremely familiar music, but in the event I was very pleasantly surprised. There is much to enjoy in Brautigam's performance. His impressive technique, though formed on the modern piano, is successfully transferred to the earlier instrument, and in particular Mozart's careful articulation markings, well-nigh impossible on a Steinway because of its less crisp damping, are for the most part scrupulously observed. Brautigam can turn a beautifully shaped phrase; his control of part-writing, with each voice given a subtly different tone-colour, is a joy; and he captures the humour of Mozart's delightfully cheeky acciaccaturas (which I've always regarded as the musical equivalent of a two-finger gesture to the Establishment). It's nice to hear a little extra ornamentation on a few repeats – I would have welcomed more. The choice of speeds is

almost always felicitous: prestos are excitingly fast, andantes are not too slow, and it was good to hear the *Alla turca* of K.331 played at a true allegretto instead of the all-too-prevalent prestissimo. Three cheers, too, for all the repeats.

I have a few (relatively minor) reservations about Brautigam's playing, which now and then reveals remnants of his modern upbringing – unlike Mozart's, whose keyboard technique was learnt at the harpsichord and clavichord. One or two phrases are a little more legato than the notation indicates: for example the opening of K.332 is smoothed out into a long line, contrary to Mozart's single-bar slurs (this point is admirably discussed by Bilson in his article in the May 1992 *Early Music*). A few staccato markings are lost when the dampers are raised. On the whole Brautigam's use of the knee-levers is restrained, but he is rather too apt to engage the 'moderator' at pianissimo markings, forgetting that no such device was available on fortepianos before the 1780s and even then it was nearly always manually operated. Indeed, it is a moot point whether in Mozart's lifetime his Walter fortepiano had knee-levers to raise the dampers or still had only its original hand-levers.

Which brings me to a rather more serious reservation: the choice of instrument. Mozart's sonatas were written over a period of some fifteen years, at a time when the fortepiano was evolving very rapidly, and when a wide variety of keyboard instruments continued to be available to composers and performers. Stein's so-called 'Viennese action' was introduced in about 1780, previous instruments of 'grand' shape all being based on Cristofori's action. We now know that Mozart's Walter was comprehensively overhauled after the composer's death, and the original action was rather different.

Meanwhile the clavichord continued to be the standard domestic keyboard instrument in German-speaking countries, and is probably what Mozart had chiefly in mind for his earlier sonatas. In Paris in 1778 (when he wrote K.310), he may have used either a piano by J. H. Silbermann of Strasbourg or a Backers from London. The last few sonatas were written after his acquisition of a pedal-piano; but also at a time when English square pianos were becoming popular in Vienna.

There is no single instrument, therefore, that is ideal for the complete set. On these discs Brautigam uses an instrument by Paul McNulty 'after Anton Gabriel Walter' (sic), alleged to be 'ca.1795' but more probably made after 1800, for its range of five octaves and a third is not required by any Viennese keyboard music earlier than Beethoven's *Waldstein* sonata. It has a nice sound and a good range of tone-colours, with efficient dampers and a clear bass, but it is distinctly more 'modern' sounding than instruments of the 1780s such as those made by Stein, and there's no denying that it is somewhat anachronistic even for the last of Mozart's sonatas. Of course, one can understand why practical considerations constrain a modern 'period' performer to use an all-purpose Viennese fortepiano suitable for everything up to middle-period Beethoven, but it's a pity that, on a complete recording such as this one, the opportunity was not taken to experiment with a variety of instru-ments such as the composer himself might have used.

This is not the last word in 'historically aware' performance of these sonatas, then, but it's a pretty impressive achieve-ment all the same, and on its own terms it represents some of the best fortepiano playing currently available. *Richard Maunder*

Rolle ***Thirza und ihre Söhne*** Ekkehard Abele *Epiphanes*, Markus Schäfer *Chryses*, Ingrid Schmithüsen *Thirza*, Hans Jörg Mammel *Joel*, Kai Wessel *Jedidia*, Larissa Malikowa *Selima*, Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max, 114' 18" (2 CDs in box)
Capriccio, **10 868/69** ££

Johann Heinrich Rolle succeeded his father as Director of Music in Magdeburg in 1752 and *Thirza und ihre Söhne* (1779) is one of the succession of oratorios that he wrote for the town between 1764 and his death in 1785. Rolle called these works 'musical dramas' and this example, based on an episode of Jewish martyrdom taken from the Book of Maccabees, is certainly a vividly dramatic piece. In a fascinating way, the music of the pagan Syrian protagonists seems to employ an overtly operatic style, wholly of its time, while that of the Jewish characters seems more deeply rooted in a Lutheran vernacular that even reminds one at times, in rhythmic phrasing and orchestration, of the musical language of Bach's Passions. Truly a clash between the sacred and the profane! It is a tribute to Rolle's considerable compositional skill and grasp of overall dramatic structure that the two styles conflict, as if expressive of opposed styles of life and faith, but, despite this, never jar in a musical sense. The music given to Thirza, determined to die with her sons for her faith, is genuinely moving, as are the splendidly grave choruses of the grieving Israelites which recall, in stylistic terms, the nobility of the high baroque. Epiphanes, the Antiochus Epiphanes of history, on the other hand is all that an imperious tyrant should be, arrogant and furious by turns and his music is accordingly closer to that of a classical stage tyrant. Epiphanes' sensitive minister, Chryses, who ends up convinced that Jehovah not Jupiter is God, falls somewhere between the two and is therefore in some ways the most interesting character in the drama and his music seems to change accordingly as he comes to see the falsity of his initial paganism. This finely performed issue is backed by the West German Broadcasting Company and it makes me hope that, though this is my first encounter with one of Rolle's music dramas, it will not be my last. A thoroughly recommended recording and at mid-price something of a bargain. *David J. Levy*

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

18th Century British Symphonies The Hanover Band, Graham Lea-Cox 71' 26"
ASV *Gaudeamus* **CD GAU 216**
Abel *op. 10/1*; **Arne** *No. 4 (1767)*; **Collett** *op. 2/5*; **Kelly** *Periodic Overture 17*; **Marsh** *Conversation Sinfonie in Eb*; **Smethergell** *Op. 5/2*

For those with an interest in 18th-century music this record is a must, and ranks as a companion to The String Quartet in 18th-century England and English Classical Violin Concertos, produced by Hyperion a couple of years ago. It is a shame that it has taken so long to produce a snapshot recording of typical symphonies, surely the most important genre of the Georgian period, but it has been worth waiting for. Graham Lea-Cox has obviously researched the repertoire and chosen some of the best works of the period for inclusion. The Edinburgh Earl's contribution that opens the disc is a surprisingly fine work, particularly when it is realised that its date of publication, 1767, was only two or three years after the first symphonies had appeared in London, when J.C. Bach's and Abel's first set had their airing and the 'modern' symphonic style was only beginning to filter through to the provinces. For this work (and for the Marsh) the Hanover Band choose to use clarinets instead of oboes, an interesting decision as clarinet alternatives exist for these works and it was no doubt easier to obtain good clarinettists from the militia bands than oboists. The Arne symphony, only one of three or four in the minor mode in the English repertoire, is a stunning work, and little heard – partly because of the lost flute parts, which have been reconstructed by Lea-Cox. For a work of the same date as the Kelly, the independent wind writing is remarkable. John Collett, whose six symphonies are dedicated to Kelly (and who retired to Edinburgh in 1770), is represented by the four-movement No. 5, published in the same year. While somewhat dependent on the Mannheim-like measured tremoli typical of the period, it contains some exciting music. Smethergell's symphony, the latest on the disc, is perhaps the least interesting musically and, for 1790, seems surprisingly conservative in style. The Andantino has some charming melodic writing while the finale has some stunning virtuoso playing from the inner strings. The Abel is the only symphony in a sharp key, unusually E major and, judging by this work alone, his later op.10 set of 1771 contains considerably better music than his earlier symphonies. Now nearly fifty, and the father of the English symphony, he preferred to be off on his annual jaunt to France to stock up on claret than attend his own concerts (according to Marsh's Journals of 1779). John Marsh's Conversation Symphony of 1778, written at the age of twenty-six while residing in Salisbury, is unique in pitting the higher instruments (violins, oboes and cello) against the lower (horns, divided violas and 2nd cello), linked by a continuo (on this recording a fortepiano) and reinforced by timpani in the tuttis. It was a pity that the extra manuscript flute

part was used, as the flute, which doubles viola for much of the time (and was presumably written to keep a lone flute happy in one of his local concerts), spoils the high/low tessitura of the printed parts. This work was the most popular of Marsh's forty listed symphonies – only nine of which are extant – receiving performances in Chichester as late as 1810. Programme notes, given the constraints of size and the necessity of translations, are most informative. The Hanover Band are at their best, the recording ambience is excellent, and this CD cannot be too highly recommended. *Ian Graham-Jones*

19th CENTURY

Berlioz *Messe solenelle* *Donna Brown, Jean-Luc Viala, Gilles Cachemaille* STB, Monteverdi Choir, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, John Eliot Gardiner 61' 27"
Philips **464 688-2** (rec 1993)

This is one of Philips' 50th-anniversary reissues, the first recording of the Berlioz's newly-discovered early Mass, written in 1824 when he was twenty. It is an impressive work considering that his formal musical education at this stage was not extensive. I suspect, though, that a mass by his models Cherubini or Leseur, given the Gardiner treatment, might be even more effective. Berlioz rejected the work and reused various sections in later pieces; so it is a curiosity, disconcertingly familiar in places. Bärenreiter publishes a study score. *CB*

Rossini *Otello* (Malibran version) Irine Ratiano *Otello*, Patrizia Ciofi *Desdemona*, Simon Edwards *Rodrigo*, Gregory Bonfatti *Jago*, Bratislava Chamber Choir, Orchestra Internazionale d'Italia, Paolo Arrivabeni 175' 35"
Dynamic **CDS 369/1-3** 3 CDs in box

In its original 1816 version, written for Naples, Rossini cast the title role of Otello as a tenor and gave his opera a tragic ending. However, already by 1819 he had provided an alternative happy ending for its Rome premiere and later, for the London performances of 1829 and the Paris production of 1831, starring Maria Malibran, he rewrote the role of Otello for a mezzo-soprano. Such changes were not unusual in operas at the time and this first recording of the so-called Malibran version of the opera shows that they could be surprisingly effective, especially when the role of the troubled Moor is taken, as it is here, by a mezzo of the heroic quality of Irine Ratiani. Having been critical of the voice of Patricia Ciofi in the role of Aricia in last month's review of Traetta's *Ippolito ed Aricia* I am happy to say that here her performance as Desdemona is pretty near faultless. Indeed the whole cast of this new recording of one of Rossini's many once neglected serious operas is as good as any listener can expect. Except for Wagner there is perhaps no composer of opera who arouses such mixed feelings among music lovers as Rossini; but if you are among those susceptible to the charms of his music you will not be disappointed by these discs. Much of Rossini's best work is to be found in his *opere serie* and of these Otello, though less well known than some, is as fine as any containing some highly dramatic scenes as well as many typically rousing tunes. In this recording we are given both the happy and the tragic endings of the opera – a device which somehow symbolizes the ambiguity with which so many of us regard this undoubted master of musical theatre. *David J. Levy*

Verdi *Falstaff* Jean-Philippe Lafont *Falstaff*, Anthony Michaels-Moore *Ford*, Antonello Palombi *Fenton*, Peter Bronder *Dr. Cajus*, Francis Egerton *Bardolfo*, Gabriele Monici *Pistola*, Hillevi Martinpelto *Mrs Ford*, Rebecca Evans *Nannette*, Sara Mingardo *Mrs Quickly*, Eirian James *Mrs Page*, Monteverdi Choir, Orchestra Révolutionnaire et Romantique, John Eliot Gardiner 121' 17" (2 CDs in box)
Philips **462 603-2**

The same girlfriend who introduced me to early music also put me on to Verdi's *Otello*, which I still cherish 40-plus years later. But I could never see the point of *Falstaff*: all that huffing and puffing with diminished 7ths and pointless scales (diatonic and – aren't we having fun! – chromatic), all those cadences where a tutti chord is whacked with a fortissimo staccato to underscore a punch-line. I suspect the reason why Verdi never essayed a comic opera in his prime was his reverence for Rossini, the Jane Austen of opera, whose humour relies on keeping a straight face. I'd hoped that Gardiner would give me a fresh take on Falstaff, but he seems only to bring out the work's Carry On Up La Scala vulgarity. The brazen harshness of Gardiner's fortissimos is exaggerated by his placing the orchestra at the forefront of the soundstage. Some textures do gain new clarity from the use of period instruments, but with some of Gardiner's sonorities to alert the ear I find Giulini's live 1983 version surprisingly lucid on rehearing. I'm struck by Gardiner's casual disregard for Verdi's obvious intentions. Tempos tend to exceed the meticulously detailed MM numbers, and in particular I hear no hint of Verdi's obsessive concern (emphasised in Jim Hepokoski's useful CUP handbook) for verbal clarity, his demand for acting rather than merely beautiful singing. The cast is generally very good (though as Falstaff I much prefer Giulini's Renato Bruson or Toscanini's ineffable Giuseppe Valdengo); I especially like Sara Mingardo as Mistress Quickly.
Eric Van Tassel

Eric isn't unique in his relative valuation of Otello *and* Falstaff*; while the former is for me opera at its very greatest, I too find* Falstaff *disappointing.* CB

VERITAS x2

Music for the Spanish Kings Hesperion XX, Jordi Savall 103' 12" 2 CDs (rec 1983)
Virgin *Veritas x2* 7243 **5 61875 2** 8
Purcell *Songs and Airs* Nancy Argenta *S*, Nigel North *lutes*, Richard Boothby *gamba*, Paul Nicholson & John Toll *kbd* 152' 05" (rec 1992 & 1995)
Virgin *Veritas x2* 7143 **5 61866 2** 0
Bach *Goldberg Variations* Frescobaldi *Toccatas* Scott Ross *hpscd* 146' 37" (rec 1988 & 1989)
Virgin *Veritas x2* 7243 **5 71869 2** 7
Rameau *Pièces de clavecin en concerts* Monica Huggett, Mitzi Meyerson, Sarah Cunningham *vln, hpscd, gamba*; Forqueray *Pièces de clavecin 3 & 5 (1747)* Mitzi Meyerson 131' 29" (rec 1086 & 1989)
Virgin *Veritas x2* 7243 **5 61872 1** 1
Albinoni *Concerti a5 for oboe and strings op. 9/2, 5, 8 & 11*; Telemann *Sonatas & Concertos for oboe & basso continuo* Han de Vries *ob*, Bob van Asperen *hpscd*, Wouter Möller *vlc*, Alma Musica Amsterdam 102' 41" (rec 1979-81)
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 61878 2** 5

This series offers bargain packages of two complementary discs which were originally independent at a price that would be good-value for one of them. Most offer generous durations. The notes are brief (not the original ones) and there are no texts: could not the material from the original issues have been made available on the net? All are worth buying, though I'd pick out the Purcell as outstanding pair if I had to make a choice.

The Spanish programme has one disc that extends from the later 15th century to the mid-16th in a typical Savallic style which most readers will be familiar with. The other is devoted to instrumentations of Cabezon, which I find less convincing. I'm not sure if I entirely believe my comment in the booklet: 'Cabezon's notated examples of the improvisational style... can be used as models of how the virtuoso players at the Spanish court my have decorated popular music of the time', but as a reviewer I don't have to justify the disc.

Nancy Argenta's Purcell is a marvellous collection of 42 songs. Perhaps they are not all to be played in a single sitting, but as a collection of high-quality performances and models of the variety of ways in which Purcell songs may be accompanied the set takes a lot of beating. Most of the favourites are here, apart from *Nymphs and shepherds*, plus the non-Purcellian *Halcyon days*.

Scott Ross's *Goldberg* is a fine performance, but it is the pairing with the Frescobaldi that really makes it a bargain. In addition to seven toccatas (I/1, 8, 9 & 10 & II.1, 2 & 10) there are two variation sets (14 on the Romanesca and an 8-part *Aria di balletto*) and a few other items from Book II: had Ross known that the disc was to be paired with the Goldberg, he might have chosen to record the *Cento Partite sopra Passacagli*. Nevertheless, this makes an excellent introduction to the composer and also to the player, who comes over as sensitive without making quite such a meal of being expressive as is now fashionable.

The Rameau is one of the benchmark recordings of the set and needs no recommendation. The Forqueray (gamba pieces by the father arranged, with a few additional pieces, for harpsichord by the son) is less familiar and tips the balance towards this package if you are looking for the Rameau: it's an attractive bonus. It also

makes a fine memorial to David Rubio as harpsichord maker, since each disc uses a different instrument of his. The Taskin model used for the Forqueray responds well to the gamba-based low textures.

The Albinoni/Telemann sounded older than the rest of this batch without benefit of recourse to the information in the booklet. The Albinoni is played eloquently enough, though unless you are an oboist it might be better to save up for a complete set of op. 9. The Telemann comprises three sonatas – in e (*Essercizii musici* 11), in G (*Tafelmusik III*) and in G (*Sonate metodiche*, no. 6) – and three concertos (in d, e & f) and is certainly worth hearing, though for non-specialists two discs of oboe solos is perhaps too much for one sitting. *CB*

THE WORLD OF...

467-781-2 ...Emma Kirkby 66' 22"
467 783-2 ...Thomas Tallis 63' 52"
King's & St John's Colleges, Cambridge
467 786-2 ...English Ayres and Madrigals
70' 24" Consort of Musicke, Anthony Rooley
467 787-2 ...The Academy of Ancient Music
67' 46"

This bargain-price series has some worthwhile bargains. At first I thought that *The World of Thomas Tallis* would seem horribly outdated, and the first few minutes confirmed this. But I soon got caught up in the opening piece, Willcocks's dramatic 1965 *Spem in alium*. Most of the other tracks are from the same LP. The single St John's track (the *Te Deum* – rather more work-a-day music, so not making a fair comparison between Guest and Willcocks) goes back to 1960, as do two pieces played by Peter White on the King's organ; a third piece was recorded by Andrew Davis in 1965 – why should I have remembered his name and not White's? Perhaps nostalgia helps, but I unexpectedly enjoyed this.

The Consort of Musicke revolutionised the way we think of madrigals, so it is excellent to have an anthology from their LPs, not reissued complete on CD alas. These run from 1975 (only ten years after the Tallis!) to 1983. Featured composers are Dowland, Gibbons, Wilbye and Morley. It would be nice to have some singers' names: not everyone will recognise the slightly-raw silver swan as Emma Kirkby (she is identified on the *Emma Kirkby* disc). Some may find the performances a bit inexpressive, but for me, the music speaks clearly and freshly and these performances are ideal.

Sadly, there is no complete recording of *Alcina* with Emma Kirkby from which 'Tornami a vagheggiar', the opening item on her disc, could have been taken. (This and arias by Lampe and Arne come from a programme I put together from the repertory of Cecilia Young/Mrs Arne.) It is nice to have readily available two *Messiah* arias that are not usually sung by soprano. For me the outstanding track is Dowland's *I saw my lady weep*: back in 1979, no-one could match Emma and Tony in this sort of music. The AAM disc is a bit too much of a rag-bag to be attractive to *EMR* readers, with too many movements taken from longer works.

The booklets are brief, but give full details of each item included and have a two pages of concise notes by a colleague from my former existence, Raymond McGill, who I suspect also made the selections. No texts, of course: as with the Veritas series reviewed above, cannot the material from the original releases be put on a web site? *CB*

ARC

ARC Music specialises in what is now called World Music. It is an area we have mostly ignored, because it doesn't relate to the idea of Early Music. There is a comparable distinction between traditional music and that influenced by Western styles, whether 19th-century hymns or late 20th-century pop. I find the former intriguing, the latter regrettable, but such interest I have is in music that has avoided Western influences – an unfashionable viewpoint. We've recently received two discs. *Songs from Rajasthan* (EUCD 1641) contains field recordings by Deben Bhattacharya from 1962 and 1968 and fits my interest in non-westernised music. The other is a localised Western style, *Great Voices of Fado* (EUCD 1639). I heard Fado at a Lisbon restaurant in 1977, but have no aural memory of it – yet what's on the CD sounds familiar, I think from films, but I don't think I've ever seen a Portuguese film: has it been absorbed in other cabaret traditions? The singing is impressive, as is the traditional 12-string *guitarra do fado*, but (as with medieval songs) the listener needs full texts and translations. *CB*

LETTERS

Dear Clifford,

Your editorial this month is as usual, to the point. I would, however, go much further, and not restrict myself to concern over the broadening of repertoire. It may be pure coincidence (and you may, if you agree, draw your own conclusions as to why), but when Nick Kenyon took over Radio 3, I observed a marked decrease of interest in what we call Early Music (which was perhaps still high at that time due to its relative novelty), and it has never recovered. Today's listener gets, for example, far less exposure to my own instrument, the harpsichord, than I did when entering this field of interest 30 years ago. When there is coverage, it is either restricted to occasional items played by Trevor Pinnock, or in the form of an interview conducted with the same air of sycophancy and ignorance as the famous interview with Violet Gordon Woodhouse of 1941. As on ClassicFM, Bach and Scarlatti are normally now performed on the Steinway (I check the schedules, and could prove it). I find audiences at my concerts as curious in their interest in the exotic beast which I play as I was at the age of 14. The BBC is one of the principal reasons for this. I'm afraid I find it incredible that Nick Kenyon can wax lyrical about the victory of authentic performance. I shall keep fighting, but I sometimes feel the battle has actually been lost.

Colin Booth

Dear Clifford,

In response to Graham O'Reilly, *Jehova quam multi* is not unique: see *The Lord is my Light* Z55, with much-repeated B and F♯ major chords set to a text which has nothing of anguish or suffering about it. Few of us would find the effect in quarter-comma meantone matches what a correspondent suggests to me is the 'fascinating expressiveness' of unequal tuning.

A theorbo would not need to be specially tuned. It is beyond reasonable doubt that it would be fretted equally (see *Early Music Performer*, March 2001). But is there any good evidence that plucked strings would be used at that period in churches having organs? This looks suspiciously like a solution to a problem which may never have existed.

Two differently-tuned organs? It is *possible* – i. e. not contrary to the laws of nature, and it is also *possible* that the organ was re-tuned for particular anthems, but I agree that it is highly improbable. It is also possible that Purcell was a progressive and pulled his weight at court to have the Chapel Royal organ tuned at or near equal temperament, demonstrating the value by Z55 & Z135, as Bach may be supposed to have done with the '48'. The option of equal temperament was recognised at the time, but evidence of how far it was used is lacking. Thomas Salmon in 1705 wrote of making 'all our whole Notes, and all our half Notes of an equal size... as the common practice is...' but he may not have been referring to keyboards as distinct from viols.

It is also possible that the organist just left out the mistuned chords, an expedient sanctioned by Quantz (and S. S. Welsey). Most of us would think the effect bizarre.

On 'double keys', North (1650-1733) writes: 'Experiments have bin made, by more additionall pipes which they call Quarter Notes, to gain the perfection of tune; but over and above the increase in charge and incumbrance in the fabrick (sufficient discouragement) they find that it will not by any means be obtained exactly to answer all the scales as may be required. Therefore the nicety is dropt, and [NB] the master are contented'. Z55 exemplifies this statement: it would need many mor than the two split keys per octave of Smith's Temple organ.

There remains the possibility that they just put up resignedly with howling discords. There is evidence of such resignation, however incredible we think it.

As some readers may know, I think that too much fuss is made about temperament on inadequate evidence, for the evidence on historic keyboard temperaments in practice (as distinct from theory) is depressingly inadequate. Let me make two general points. It is one thing for a proposed temperament to be published, but quite another to know how far anyone paid it any attention. Temperament is a problem in technology, and the history of technology is littered with solutions to problems or supposed problems which attractd no significant attention or use. It is also commonly supposed that instruments having different temperaments would not have been used together. That sounds like common sense, but there is convincing historical evidence that they were so used: see the paper in *Early Music Performer* already cited.

John Catch

In view of the way 17th-century music instruction books were so out of touch with reality (see review on pp. 4-5 in our last issue), one can well be sceptical about theoretical comments on temperament. One imagines that most tuning was done by professionals who learnt the traditional method and modified it by practice, not theory. Purcell instilled some realism into the manuals and also, as Hingston's assistant and successor as Royal Keeper of Instruments, would have had responsibility for the tuning of the Chapel Royal organ. For the theorbo in the Chapel Royal, see Peter Holman's Four and Twenty Fiddlers *p. 400. I happened to be playing organ in a concert recently that mostly kept to the basic keys, with modulation tending to be flatwards, but included a piece in D major which included F sharp major chords: just playing the bass proved acceptable.* CB

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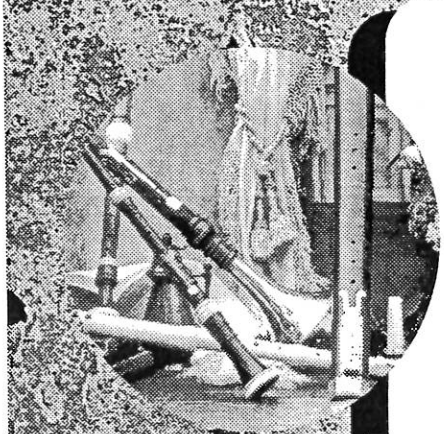

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