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Any non-specialist opening the latest volume of *Early English Church Music* (see review on p. 2) is in for a shock. Not only are the note-values mostly breves, semibreves and minims: some of these are filled in, and bar lines are reduced to minute dashes. The modernisation of early notation has varied a lot since the revival of early music. Many 19th-century editions preserve original clefs and note values but add dynamics and are transposed for the comfort of SATB choirs. As the 20th century progressed, note values and clefs were thought to need updating, and editors sometimes extended this to express their ideas of how early music should be performed. In England, this reached its peak in the suggestions of Thurston Dart's *The Interpretation of Music*, which went so far as to advocate renotating Beethoven. (Stravinsky renotated a passage of *The Rite of Spring* in the spirit of an editor of the time.)

Now the trend has moved the other way – selectively. There is still a strong resistance to C clefs, and players often cannot read on one instrument clefs they can read on another. So it can be difficult for an editor to decide whether middle parts should use treble, octave-treble, alto or tenor – a few of the doubling parts for our Monteverdi Vespers psalms are in all four. The ability to mentally substitute clefs is one way to transpose, which is now a rare skill. Additional performing indications are out: performance is a matter for performers, not editors. A few editions have left *musica ficta* to performers as well, though the main series to do so – Garland's scores of 16th and 17th century sources – made a virtue of necessity because the typesetting programme used was rather primitive. The practice works for one-to-a-part performances, but is time-consuming with choirs. Texts are no longer always modernised: we sometimes see medieval Latin with *e* for *ae*, though Italian editors are still keen to remove the superfluous initial *h* in *Hor che ciel*, etc. Contemporary music suffered a phase a few decades ago of composers inventing their own notation: the result, of course, was that there were few people prepared to wrestle with it. Editors must beware of retreating into a private language, but may expect performers to accept some variety of notational practice. *CB*

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

BENET, POWERS, ETC

Fifteenth-Century Liturgical Music V: Early Masses and Mass-Pairs transcribed and edited by Gareth Curtis (*Early English Church Music*, 42). Stainer & Bell, 2001. xiii + 177pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 85249 846 2

Apart from the new EECM page-size, this differs from Vols I-III of the sub-series by a complete change in transcription policy. The use of original note values for Thomas Morley in EECM 41 is hardly such a shock as for music from 150 years earlier. Here the rhythmic notation of the parts is maintained in a score in modern clefs. The typeface is pseudo-antique: has Silverfen created its own font, or is it readily available? Ligatures are expanded (and indicated in the usual way) but coloration is preserved. There are no bar lines; the position they would have is indicated by short dashes beneath each stave, but no notes are broken to accommodate them – tactful *Mensurstrich* (a system which, in its normal manifestation, defeats its object by having such obtrusive bar lines). Both professional and amateur singers have of late been making attempts to sing from the original notation, and dealing with the compromise here is not at all difficult: even if you don't know why some semibreves look like crotchets without stems, the presence of bar indications and the careful placing of notes in the score enables the code to be cracked even on the first sing-through. This does not completely address one of the advantages of using facsimiles: the way that a compact single part can show the shape of a phrase more readily to the eye than can a more spacious score. (That feature is of musicological as well as practical value when dealing with manipulations of a cantus firmus.) One wonders if the usual proportional spacing might have been over-ridden, since the horizontal spacing is mostly rather generous. I was reminded of criticisms of Tudor Church Music (probably made by scholars favouring reduced note values) that the pages of white notes could fade into invisibility if you were sharing a copy in poor or over-bright light. Since most of the music here can be sung by just three voices, all that is needed for performance is one score and a music stand (the volume is a bit heavy to hold).

This volume contains ten trios or pairs of mass movements by Benet, Power, Bloym, Driffelde, Binchois/Bodoil and anon. Some may be complete compositions, others may be the only surviving movements of full mass settings, and the pairings may be the result of 15th- or 20th-century editorial decisions. The editor gives a succinct introduction to the style, with some emphasis on proportional relationship between sections and movements as a feature of relating them. The textual commentaries (placed before each piece) are models of clarity compared with previous volumes. The closer representation of original note values is no substitute for a sample facsimile or two, which can show other aspects of the editorial modernisation more concisely than any commentary – the treatment of underlay especially. Even if complete facsimiles have been issued (as with the Trent Codices), they are not necessarily readily available, so it would have been useful if reproductions of individual pages had been cited. Although the edition seems more geared to the needs of musicologists than before and, apart from the clefs, looks like a regression to the DTO volumes of the Trent Codices of a century ago, I hope people will try singing the music from it.

MUSIC ON VIEW

H. Colin Slim *Painting Music in the Sixteenth Century: Essays in Iconography* (*Variorum Collected Studies Series* CS727). Ashgate 2002. xii + 312pp, £62.50. ISBN 0 86078 869 5

After last month's volume in this series, I am relieved to be back on familiar ground, with a collection of 18 articles, most of which I have read and, indeed, of which I already have copies. The worlds of the musicologist and the art historian overlap rather less than one might expect, and Slim is one of those useful characters who manage to keep abreast of two minimally-related academic disciplines. Art historians have, we hope, learnt a lot from his explanation of the nature and possible significance of the music in the paintings he discusses, and why music appears in them at all. He is not, on the whole, interested in providing the sort of detail that might help instrument makers or specify performance forces: it is dangerous to do that without knowing what the artist is trying to do. (I can imagine a future historian trying to work out how to play the harpsichord from a publicity photo I had done once, though in fact my posture was utterly impossible and was chosen merely for the convenience of the photographer.) Slim doesn't fall into that sort of trap; but I am puzzled by the way he worries at what realistic object the artist is representing when he includes actual music. It seems to be pushing verisimilitude too far to assume that, if a page of a printed book shown in a picture does not exactly match any of the surviving editions, it must have been copied from a lost edition. A painter may try to copy accurately if he doesn't understand musical notation, but is likely to slip up occasionally; but if he does understand the notation (especially if he also has the music in his head), he may well include minor variants. Absolute accuracy is difficult for either, and the modern explicator needs to explain why in such cases it was thought important. I think there must be more to say about the differences between the versions of the three ladies singing and playing *Jouyssance vous donneray*.

This is a fascinating book. What it really needs is a more lavish production, where all the illustrations can be reproduced afresh, more abundantly, in colour where helpful, and with further details. Sadly, economics will not permit that. Slim is, however, excellent at tracing different versions of paintings to get behind what the ravages of time and restoration may have destroyed. Apart from the intrinsic interest of the various paintings here, this provides models of the scholarship necessary for others wishing to study music in paintings.

BRUNELLI

Antonio Brunelli *Opera Omnia. I, 1. Arie, Scherzi, Canzonette, Madrigali A Una, Due e Tre voci per sonare e cantare (1613)* a cura di Marco Mangani. Edizioni ETS, 2001. xxvii + 39pp, €15.49. ISBN 88 467 0512 2

Brunelli's date and place of birth having quite recently been discovered, his local authority appears to be sponsoring the publication of his collected works – a scheme sadly unlikely to be emulated in Britain. Whether without such patronage, Brunelli would be deemed worthy of such treatment may be doubted, but it is good that minor composers as well as major ones are available for study and performance. His 1614 *Scherzi* are reproduced in facsimile in Garland's *Italian Secular Song* vol.2. This edition has the prelims in facsimile, but regrettably none of the music. That is a pity, since it is also useful to have a sample, even if only one page, of the original notation, especially for an edition based on a single and authoritative source. The cover design includes a facsimile of the vocal part of No. 7 (though the original is presumably a score); only from that, not from the edition, can we see that its original barring (with a signature C3/2) has six minims a bar, starting with a half-bar, as opposed to the edition's three to a bar. The original barring fits the hemiola patterns neatly. The modern edition is at fault, too, because the typesetter keeps to the same proportions for his note spacing for long-note triple time as for short-note duple time, rather than adjusting so that the spacing roughly represents the duration of the pulse. No. 6 on the facing page (in duple time) has four or five bars per line, whereas there are only three or four short bars of triple time in No. 7. The layout is spacious and the notes large. Singer and accompanist could easily share a copy, at least for a sing-through; in public it would work for singer and lute sitting side-by-side, but would look odd for singer and keyboard. The music itself is competent enough, but not gripping. It would make an excellent starting point for someone learning to play continuo. The harmony is clear-cut and fully figured, and a student could get a good idea of the harmonic style of the time by playing through this (with or without a singer) and following the given harmonies. The editor has more to say about the texts than the music, and there is a separate edition of them in original orthography, whereas the underlaid version is updated. That is acceptable here, but I find it odd that so much writing about Italian madrigals and songs is devoted to the verse forms, yet editors will not preserve the singer's cue to the verse – the capital letter that implies a new line. We also lose the 'Oxford' commas before *ed* (which itself is often a replacement for *et*). But at least the original is included as well, for those who are interested. There are 16 items for voice and continuo, mostly headed Madrigal, Aria or Scherzo, one duet and nine trios (mostly with the middle part ad lib.) Brunelli's opus numbers go up to 15 (this is op. 9), but not all of them survive: it will be interesting to see subsequent volumes.

BUONAMENTE

Giovanni Battista Buonamente *Canzonen (Nr. 6-8) für Violine, Baßinstrument... und Bc aus 'Libro Sesto', Venedig, 1636.* Verlag Martin Lubenow (BU 36.07), 2002. €12.00.

Martin Lubenow's editions are always welcome. His new catalogue lists a complete edition of Buonamente's *Sonate et canzoni... Libro sesto* for €108.00; this is one of the various components available separately in groups of similar instrumentation. These three pieces all have explicit scoring for violin; no. 6 has a bass for *dolzaine ò Basso da Brazzo*, no. 8 for *fagotto ò Basso da Brazzo*; but number 7 is labelled more vaguely *Basso*. There is also a fairly thoroughly figured *Basso continuo*, which the edition conveniently prints separately – since Martin is an organist and his wife Suzanne a lutenist, they are more aware of the need for continuo parts than some editors. I suspect Martin will also have tried out the violin part on his cornett: apart from needing some long breaths, it probably works quite well, and if half a bar is rewritten to avoid a bottom A, they will also work in recorders in C. No 6 is intriguing for being a canon at the 12th, and the others are quite imitative: none of them go off into the virtuosic solo breaks that characterise some duos of the period. I'm not sure if they would really be very exciting at a concert, but they look fun to play.

HANDEL AS ORPHEUS

Ellen T. Harris *Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas.* Harvard UP, 2001. xi + 430pp, £27.50 ISBN 0 674 00617 8

Handel's music is full of sex, love and passion; but with his apparent willingness to swap music between male and female singers in revivals of operas, not to mention the sexual ambivalence of castrati, I would not expect to be able to detect the sex of a character in one of his operas or cantatas purely from the music. I'm still not sure if I can, but this book argues that certain forms and styles are, at certain periods in Handel's career, gender-specific (or at least gender-suggestive) and that the sex of the role affects the styles of music adopted for the music. The argument is very convincing, though it may be that Handel is following the tone and imagery set forth by the librettist.

This is particularly valuable as a study of the texts Handel set: the milieu of the poets, the traditions in which they worked, and the meanings – overt and hidden – of their

verses. The controversial aspect of the book (which will no doubt help sales, anticipation of which has enabled the price to be kept surprisingly low for an academic study) is the argument that, apart from those obviously so, many other texts which Handel set may have had a homosexual meaning. The author draws back from arguing that the composer was of that inclination, which is just as well: apart from Goupy (whose cartoon is so over the top that it must be assumed that he was prepared to pile any sort of calumny on Handel, whether true or not) the evidence is minimal. One would expect the private correspondence of the Delanies and Harrises to offer the occasional hint, especially as Mrs Delany was not above mentioning gossip about a lord being caught *in flagrente* (quoted on p. 19). Having been simultaneously reading the Harris correspondence, to be reviewed next month, I'm not convinced by the arguments on p. 262. Some of the evidence on what stories might have gay significance are a bit far-fetched – Proust is hardly a witness that Handel's contemporaries would have seen hidden meanings in the story of Esther. Handel may well have moved in gay circles and set gay texts. But Harris should have been as suspicious of the 'gay Handel' currently-fashionable among American genderists as she is of the 'various sexual scenarios, ranging from Handel the lady-killer to Handel the avowed celibate' which she decries (p. 14). She looks very hard for proof, finds some hints, but much remains equivocal. The alleged meaning of the Orpheus myth is particularly questionable – or will her next book be called *Orpheus Britannicus* and re-sexualise Purcell? (It might explain why his wife locked him out one night.)

The Italian cantatas (including in the term those which Handel wrote in his first decade or so in England) have long been undeservedly ignored. The text-first approach here is helpful. and the carefully-argued interrelationship of date, form and style is convincing.The inclusion of properly set-out texts and good translations for the cantatas with continuo as Appendix 2 is particularly welcome. (Those with instruments are treated thus in HHA). Harris sometimes reinforces her arguments about the significance of an aria by the use to which Handel later put it. A further appendix listing all of Handel's later borrowings from the cantatas might have given a statistical basis and made it easier to see if such examples revealed a general habit of such reuse.

Another theme is that of patronage. Handel's relationship with his employers is shown to be of considerable significance in his musical development and his success as a composer. The writing of cantatas seems to be linked to a private cultural world, in London as well as in Italy, which Handel only abandoned with his formal management of public opera from 1720. How closely he was involved is a matter that is not clarified here; indeed, there is inadequate evidence. We just don't know if he merely set the words he was given, with no more responsibility than a modern composer of background music to TV dramas, or whether he was an integral member of these refined circles. Harris raises lots of possibilities, but does not show at what level Handel related to the world she describes. Was he colleague or hireling, or did his status change during the period? At times she gives the impression that she knows the period second-hand from studying modern books rather than reading the literature of the period itself. To quote Sterne and Garrick in connection with Handel's increased use of silences in the 1710s is perverse, as is the linking of dramatic silence with secrecy: surely musical silences are expressive (even 4' 33").

I found this a frustrating book. There is much that is good, but it is intermingled with copious information on a matter of ephemeral interest. It is worth buying for the appendices; read the rest for the good points without getting too worked up about the author's fashionable obsession. I look forward to future books arguing that Handel was a Zionist, a Papist spy, or a nonjuror.

COMPLETE SOR

Fernando Sor *The New Complete Works for Guitar.* Reingraved in eleven volumes. Edited by Brian Jeffery Tecla, 2001. 11 vols, $199.00.

It has become a truism that the gap between early and modern music is closing. For most music from Beethoven on, the use of modern instruments is still the norm. But early 19th-century guitar music feels more distant, and probably benefits more from performance on an early instrument than Beethoven's piano sonatas benefit from a fortepiano. So a new complete edition of Sor's guitar music comes within our area of interest. Robin Jeffery has already issued a complete facsimile edition (9 vols for £135.00), and it is probably that which is of more interest to players of the guitar of Sor's time. The new edition is clearly printed with minimal and basically trivial updatings of notation. None of the editings that so often disfigure modern editions of guitar music are added. Vol. 1 of the new edition (containing op. 1-9) was published separately in a different format five years ago: anyone who has it can swap it for the new one. The division into volumes follows that of the the facsimiles, which is sensible. The new one has two extra volumes, since it prints the duets in vols. 8 & 9 in score and in 10 & 11 in parts: the facsimiles only have parts. It is a pity that more attention was not taken to make the parts have better turns: there's a copy-book example of how not to do it with a first-time bar immediately after a turn (vol. 11, p. 66). My eye fell on a similar example in the solo music: vol. 2, p. 63 where a bar with a pause begins the new page, rather than ends the previous one. Even if guitarists are expected to memorise their music, such layout disrupts the flow when practising. The new edition is well presented and opens flat on the music stand. Players who prefer the transcribed texts can rest assured that what is given here has suffered the minimum interpretation (and, indeed, facsimile players may like to see how the editor has handled problematic passages) and the commentaries on the pieces are both scholarly and practical. Individual volumes are available separately, and some of the music is accessible online. Further information from www.tecla.com.

NEW FROM GERMANY

Brian Clark

MUSIC FROM BAD KÖSTRITZ

The Heinrich-Schütz-Haus in Bad Köstritz has started publishing music in the past year, and they have very kindly sent me eight new editions for review. The first three I have are cantatas by Römhildt: *Bleibe fromm und halte dich recht* (Köstritzer Hefte 2) for the third Sunday in Advent, *So hat Jesu nun gesieget* (KH3) for Easter Day, and *Ich werde euch trösten* (KH4) for Whitsunday. The bar numbers in the second movement of KH2 are wrong, and it seems strange that the violins are *col basso* in the Da Capo section while the viola is tacet. KH3 is an Aria-Recitative-Aria cantata for solo soprano with oboe, two violins and continuo, but the 2nd violin is only separate from the first in tutti sections, where the 1st doubles the oboe anyway. I don't see any point in giving it a separate staff in the last movement. The 'Klarinetten' of the modern title-page of KH4 (which omits the Tympana) are trumpets. Each of the editions is in a fine card cover, with the parts inserted in the back flap. I received parts only for KH2 and KH3, so any comments I make are confined to them. I would draw attention to the fine quality of the music – it's very singable, and certainly deserves to be more widely known. The series is still in its infancy, so my criticism is intended to suggest improvements for future issues. There are basic flaws in each of the sets, some musical and some typographical. Editorial *Fine* markings need to be added, and *Da capo* markings in the bass part of the score should be placed in the upper parts before extracting parts from the computer file. The parts would look more spacious if the abbreviated names were omitted at the beginning of each system. Spacing and the practical consideration of page turns are the weakest aspect: the 2nd violin has an impossible page turn in the second aria of KH3, though the 1st violin has the entire movement on one page – albeit with some silly spacing and neither a *Da capo* nor a *Fine*. KH4 has the most ridiculous critical commentary I have ever seen: each of the eleven parts which have a pause added in Bar 9 of Movement 7 [Chorale] is listed on a separate line: square brackets in the text would surely have sufficed!

Two Stölzel cantatas next: *Gott aber sei Dank* (KH6) for the feast of St Michael and *Wer sich lässt dünken, erstehe* (KH10) for the 9th Sunday after Trinity. Both of these are nicely shaped and contain some fine movements for chorus and soloists alike. The original title-page of KH6 makes no mention of oboes, but the editor decides that, because there is an Oboe 1 part (albeit in a different hand) in the surviving performance materials, he should add an editorial 2nd Oboe throughout. Personally, I would have followed the score – especially when the performance-history of Stölzel's cantatas suggests that other composers, let alone other copyists, had a hand in producing materials. KH10 has another example of Teutonic efficiency gone mad – the entire recitative (No. 3) is printed again as an appendix, but the only difference (apart from better typesetting!) is that the solo alto sections are taken an octave lower by the bass (presumably there was no alto soloist available for one performance). A needless waste of paper, as is the printing of two violin lines in the following aria, since they are in unison throughout (not uncommon in Stölzel).

Two other releases will be of particular interest to our readers: *Gott hilf mir* (KH7) for soprano, two violettas and continuo, and *Die Seele Christi heilige mich* (KH8) for soprano, three 'viole' and continuo, both by Johann Theile. I've given the original designation of the string parts, but the editor here (Simone Eckert) opts for violin, one or two gambas and continuo. I would not be as prescriptive – especially since the top note of the 1st violetta part in KH7 is an E flat, so is easily manageable on viola. In both editions, the modern approach to beaming the vocal parts is taken (in contrast to the previous issues), and the overall spacing is not good: squashed-up common time, luxuriously spacious tripla. Small editorial accidentals above notes are not nice, and I'm not a great fan of dynamics above the staff either. The biography in KH8 is the same as KH7, but it is set out differently (more nicely, in fact). There is no serious attempt at a Critical Commentary in either. If the scores are not very pleasing on the eye (I particularly dislike having separate bar numbers at the beginning of every system – including the first! – above every part), the parts are worse. As they stand, only the continuo part of KH7 is usable; the gamba parts of KH8 are very neat, but the violin part looks silly, and there is no separate continuo part.

KH9 is interesting in that a modern composer, living in the USA, has taken texts from the *Jenaer Liederhandschrift* and set them for the city's Jubilee Singers – the five pieces look sonorous (Jean Berger has a bit of a penchant for triadic super-imposing and consecutive fifths). They were obviously typeset as a single movement, as the piece in C has a key signature that cancels the flat of the previous one, and each begins with Bar 1 clearly numbered in all the parts. Spacing is once again the issue – p. 16 has some peculiar examples: a basically spacious page (again, too much is wasted!) also has one system where the first bar has 12 squashed-up quavers, while the second expands two crotchets and three quavers to fill the line.

In summary, then, the music is well worth publishing, and (where students are involved) it is clearly sensible to train the next generation of music editors to be hands-on typesetters. These first fruits of the project are to be commended for the effort involved (and the financial backing they have received). But producing an edition for

publication requires greater intervention in the automatic output of music typesetting programmes than is shown here. Looking good on the page, as well as being of practical use to performers, is every bit as important as merely publishing hitherto unavailable material. Different ways of notating editorial intervention should also be explored to cut down the ridiculously convoluted Critical Commentaries, while those editions with none should at least provide the minimum information: is the source a score or a set of parts, printed or manuscript, in staff notation or tablature, in which clefs? These are questions which any self-respecting editor or performer should always ask.

All title have ISMN numbers (KH 2 is M-700183-03-5: the others do not follow the sequence E numbers, even ignoring the check digit). We have prices for only KH 7 & 8: €8.00 for score, €10.00 with parts.

RATHGEBER COMPLINE

Like the Vespers set I reviewed a couple of issues ago, Dohr Verlag's edition of Valentin Rathgeber's Compline setting of 1732 is an attractive package (Edition Dohr 21826 €39,80; vocal score €7,80 for more than 20 copies; instrumental parts (3/3/0/2/1, wind, organ) €49,80). Four soloists and four-part choir are accompanied by a pair of violins, with organ and optional two trumpets (or horns) and drums. It comes from the composer's Op. 9 set and would make a nice concert with the afore-mentioned Vespers. There are six movements, of which the most complex (and possibly most attractive) is the Nunc Dimittis, each of which is also available separately from the publisher.

MOZART AT GLYNDEBOURNE

Helmut Reinold *Mozarts Haus: Eine Geschichte aus Glyndebourne* Verlag Dohr, 2001. 376pp, €24,80. ISBN 3-925366-82-2.

This book tells the interesting story of the creation of Glyndebourne and its rise to world standard under the guidance of Fritz Busch and Carl Ebert, starting with a nice description of Sussex, and leading through the inheritance which made the whole project viable and a brief account of their activities in pre-War Germany to discussions of different Mozart productions. It makes an enjoyable read. Of particular interest (possibly) to our readers will be the appended list of people associated with the Busch/Ebert era, which shows that even in the 1930s a diversity of nationalities worked in the company.

CARTOON

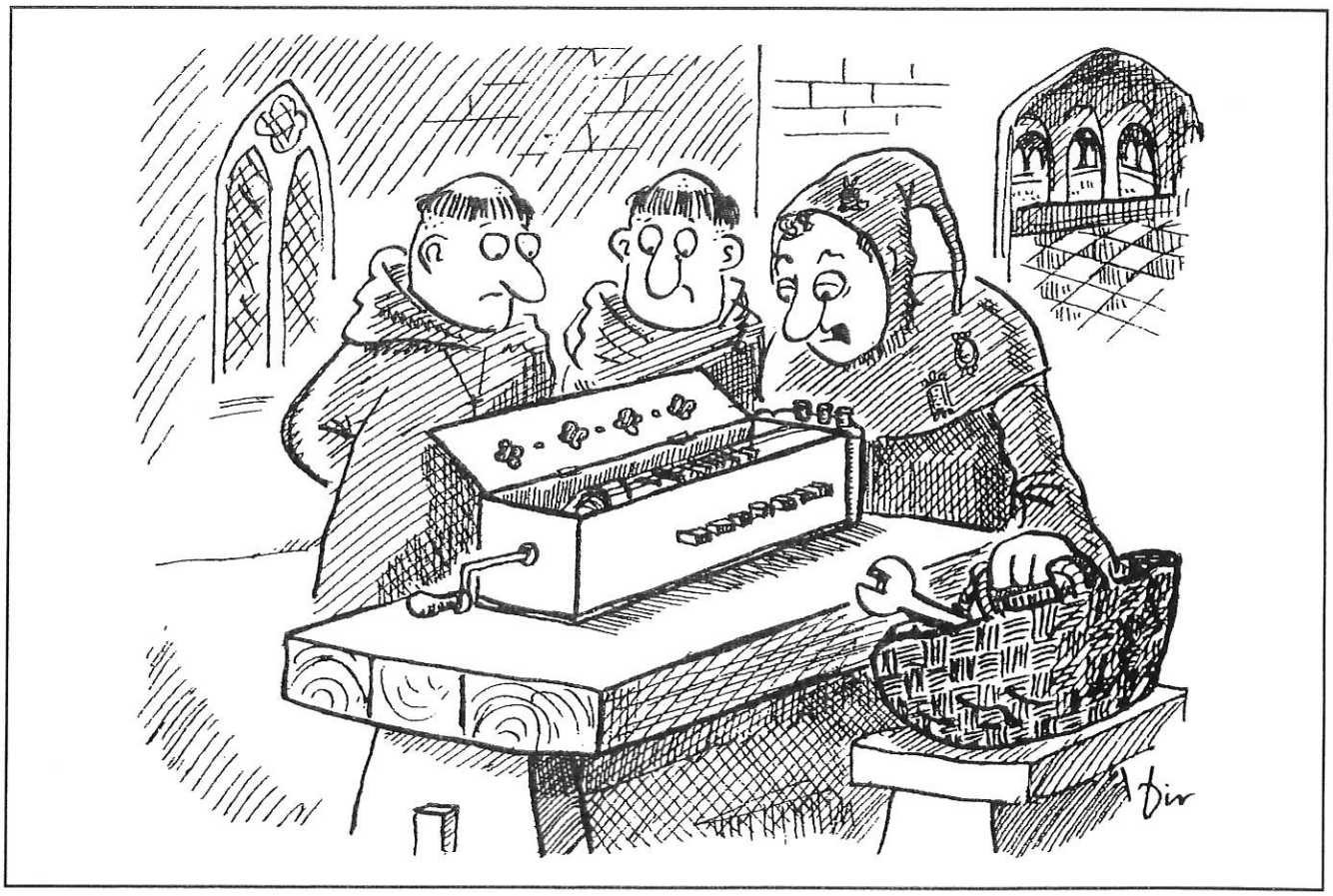
Our cartoonist offered several titles this month, or wondered if we could think of a better one yourself. Here is his list: let us know of any others. (The winner will appear in next year's Early Music Review calendar.)

1. "Ooh... this is going to cost you!"

2. "Of course, you can't get parts for this model these days!"

3. "This is a wind up... You're having me on, aren't you?"

4. "Trouble is, we have to import the spares from abroad..."



LONDON CONCERTS

Andrew Benson-Wilson

DISCOVERING HANDEL

Although the South Bank (the re-packaged generic name for the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room) is not having its usual spring series of early music concerts, it has put together a sequence of concerts under the 'Discovering Handel' banner. I am not the first reviewer to question whether Handel really needs discovering any more, but Tess Knighton, the artistic director, has come up with a sequence of programmes that will widen the musical scope of those attracted by the Fireworks or Water Music as well as revealing some lesser-known works for those to whom Handel is more than a bang and a splash. As resident period-instrument band, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment got most of concerts, but there are also one or two welcome visitors.

The opening concert was the opera of the moment, *Rodelinda*, an ideal chance for those who missed Glyndebourne in 1998 or the provincial road show that followed. Although the cast was not quite the same, this concert performance (RFH, 11 February) had its roots in the 1998 production. Despite the huge increase in interest in Handel opera in recent years, this was the first Handel opera to be performed at Glyndebourne. With a story line that does not demand Valium or intravenous alcohol to aid interpreta-tion, a small cast of approachable and believable characters and music of the highest quality, the resurrection of this opera to mainstream musical life is well overdue. It is one of Handel's best. An everyday story of shenanigans around the 7th-century Lombardic court, the opera centres on the personality of Rodelinda, which Handel and his librettist explore in great depth. Emma Bell was an apt interpreter of this demanding role, in command of the huge range of emotions that the libretto demands, from her anguished opening arias 'Ho perduto il caro sposo' and 'L'empio rigor del fato' to her rather happier concluding 'Mio caro bene'. 'Spietati, io vi giurai' showed her ability to colour her tone within a single phrase, appropriately exposing the con-fusion of mood in the aria. Daniel Taylor was an ideal Bertarido, his voice effectively filling the stylistic gap between fellow countertenors Andreas Scholl (the Glynde-bourne Bertarido) and David Daniels. A slightly breathy tone quality in 'Dove sei' was balanced by the vigorous 'Confusa si miri' that concludes Act I. The other singer to catch my attention was the gently lyrical tenor Kurt Streit as Grimoaldo, despite a couple of memory lapses (one neatly rescued by an alert harpsichord player who not only managed to pitch the missing line correctly, but in countertenor register). Streit seemed to have a surer grasp of Handel's melismas than some of the other singers. Artur Stefanowicz had some nice cameo moments as Unulfo, including the jaunty 'Un zeffiro spirò' with its bassoon and recorder accompaniment. William Christie set appropriate speeds for the acoustic and juggled the continuo instru-ments well, appropriately omitting the harpsichord on a number of occasions. Cadenzas were generally simple, and the more effective for it. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment were on their usual good form, although their four oboes made a bit of a racket in 'Vivi, tiranno!'.

This impressive opening to the series was followed by one of my favourite Handel works, the early Italian oratorio *La Resurrezione di Nostro Signor Gesú Christo* (QEH 21 February), given by Paul McCreesh's Gabrieli Consort and Players and an excellent cast of soloists. One of Handel's earliest works, it's 1708 production in Rome was caught up in the transfer of the banned operatic style to the safer oratorio genre, producing an opera in all but name. The in-depth portrayal of the leading characters, Mary Magdalene and Saint John, is balanced by the sideshow of an engaging battle between The Angel and Lucifer, all making for an entrancing evening. Since her stunning performance at the Lufthansa Festival in 1999, I always associate soprano Deborah York with The Angel, a role blessed with one of the most remarkable opening scenes of any Handel work. Her opening aria, 'Disserratevi, o porte d'Averno', forming the third movement of the overture, starts with a wonderful tumble from the heights as she demands that the gates of Hell be opened – an ideal vehicle to display her agile and fluid voice. She kept up her vivid portrayal through-out, with some engaging side glances at Lucifer, notably a saucily raised eyebrow and a gleeful stare into his back during his penultimate aria. If angels are really as cute as this (and I retain my belief in angels as beautiful young women), I could be encouraged to make rather more effort to get into heaven. Notwithstanding the sacred text, Handel provided his patron Cardinal Colonna with the whole gamut of operatic numbers, the love songs and duets including the Angel's early aria 'D'amor fu consiglio', with its expansive melody, and San Giovanni's exquisite concluding 'Caro Figlio, amato Dio'. Susan Gritton's clear and focussed voice made for an effective Magdalene and Mark Le Brocq's lyrical tenor voice was well suited to St John. Christopher Purves's dark and rich bass fitted Lucifer to a tee. Jane Irwin's voice was rather too operatic and large scale for my liking and stood out alongside the other singers. Paul McCreesh made good use of the continuo forces at his command, notably during Magdalene's arias, and balanced instrumentalists and singers well (although the cello and bass obbligato was given rather too much leeway in the sunrise aria 'Ecco il sol'). He tours with this work during this season – do hear it if you can.

It was good to see an effort to make the stark stage of the Queen Elizabeth Hall rather more inviting for Andreas Scholl's Handel concert (28 February) – eight vertical white drapes and a warm parquet floor made a big

difference. Scholl was joined by his regular harpsichord player, Markus Märkl, together with Christophe Coin, cello, and the ubiquitous and always excellent Katharina Spreckelsen on oboe. I usually like Märkl's playing but on this occasion I felt that his accompaniments were too busy, clever as they may have been. His improvised introductions to many of the pieces were frequently imaginative, but they came over as an attempt to grab rather too much of the limelight – understandable but not really 'done'. He generally responded well to Scholl's pieces, but was less in tune with the other soloists, missing a number of attractive gestures thrown down by Katharina Spreckelsen in Handel's Oboe Sonata in C minor, for example. The cadential trills added well after the oboe had resolved the melodic line were inappropriate, and he made the opening Adagio sound far too plodding. His also overdid the addition of the leading note to spread chords. Christophe Coin was an effective continuo cellist, though his performance of a Geminiani cello Sonata owed more to a late Classical than a late-Baroque playing style. But the packed and enthusiastic audience had come to hear Scholl, and he didn't disappoint. It sounds churlish to suggest that a performer of his stature is improving, but he really is. Possible due to his increasing opera experience, his stage manner has loosened up. Although still solidly rooting his feet to the ground, as his first teacher no doubt taught him, his increasing flexibility results in a more engaging presence and an increase in fluidity and expression in his voice. Notwithstanding the publicity hype, Scholl really is a master of his art, with outstanding clarity of articulation, sensitive embellishments, and a sure grasp of intonation. His programme of two secular cantatas and obbligato oboe arias from *Giustino* and *Admeto* was well devised.

The series continues until April, but the last of the current group of concerts was the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Nicholas McGegan with Dominique Labelle, soprano, and Anthony Robson, oboe. I have a great deal of sympathy for horn players. Of all the period instruments, theirs is the most susceptible to problems of tone and intonation. But I have to say that the horns' contribution to the opening Concerto a due Cori in F was quite dreadful – indeed all the band was rather ragged. Fortunately everybody redeemed themselves magnificently in the concluding *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, a stunning performance masterfully directed by McGegan. He never let the bluster overtake matters of detail. There was a delightful moment in the *Ouverture* when he turned to the four viola players and extracted a little melodic moment that I would not otherwise have noticed. The final Menuet featured some beautifully shaded tone colour – a reminder that this was, after all, refined Georgian England. Anthony Robson was on his usual top form (admittedly fielding an easier instrument to control than a horn) in the Oboe Concerto No 3 in G minor, although the oboe produced a rather pinched tone in the higher registers, particularly when the bell was raised towards the audience. This raised the interesting side issue of the directionality of instruments. In the opening Concerto, the brass were divided on either side of the stage, which meant that the horn players on the left sounded far more prominent than those on the right. Horns, trumpets and oboes also produce a distinctly more focussed tone when directed straight at the audience – and when swept around the audience can even produce a semi-Doppler effect. Although Dominque Labelle has a lot of experience of singing with period bands, she is not what I would call a period singer. Her vibrato does not have a large width of pitch variation, but the comparatively fast vibrations resulted in a reedy edge to her tone that did not always do the music much favours. There was also too much portamento for my taste. She produced a fairly uninspiring performance of the new Handel *Gloria*, but turned in a captivating interpretation of 'Ti pentirai, crudel' from *Tolomeo*. *Rinaldo* was Handel's London calling card and he clearly wanted to become known as a harpsichordist as well as an opera composer. Hence he included several extended cadenzas to 'Vo' far guerra', the first starting after just a few chords and well before the singer enters. These were played with considerable panache by Alistair Ross although, as a last minute substitute, he missed the chance of a programme mention. The main event had been preceded by a short concert of the first two of Handel's Op 3 Concerti Grossi by a group of talented conservatory students who had been working with Anthony Robson.

DON GIOVANNI at COVENT GARDEN

At last, a Royal Opera House production that I can recommend more or less unreservedly. Francesca Zambelloe's new production of Don Giovanni is set to become the cornerstone of their repertoire, so there will be plenty of chance for readers to hear it in the future. The opening run featured two casts and two conductors, the first fielding Bryn Terfel and Colin Davis, the second Simon Keenlyside and Charles Mackerras. I chose the latter cast – rightly, judging by newspaper reviews comparing both. The playbill for the first British performance, at the King's Theatre in 1817, described Don Juan as 'a young Nobleman of licentious manners'. That is one way of putting it. Nowadays we might feel some discomfort at what seems to be a sympathetic portrayal of a serial rapist and murderer; but, to an extent, Mozart uses the central figure of Don Juan (who seems to have had a historical foundation) as a picture frame through which the surrounding characters can be perceived more closely. Mozart rarely allows Don Giovanni to expose his soul: his solo arias are rare, most of his music is shared with others, and the few arias he does have to himself are hardly self-revealing. Whatever his reputation, and however hard he might try, he never actually manages to seduce anybody during the time-span of the opera. The fact that he spends most of the opera trying it on with somebody or other suggests that personal reform is not imminent, but his apparent willingness to be cast into Hell with the murdered Commendatore at least shows an apparent abandonment of his earthly pleasures. Simon Keenlyside was excellent in the title role, his serenade 'Deh vieni alla finestre' being one of the highlights. Ildebrando D'Arcangelo's continually put-upon Leporello, Natalie Christie's erotically charged Zerlina and Ana Maria Martinez's heart-wrenching Elvira were all outstanding

portrayals. Apart from a weak sequence in the middle of Act I, largely caused by indistinct scene changes, the pace was kept up well by Zambelloe and Mackerras. The action-packed opening and concluding banquet scene of Act I were particularly effective, as was the drive towards the inevitable final conflict in the second Act. The London opera stage would not be complete without at least one oddity, and this came with a huge wire-mesh fickle finger of fate swinging across the stage, partly to represent the statue to the dead Commendatore and partly, I assume, to show in which direction Don Giovanni was about to be cast. But he has perhaps not abandoned all pleasures, because Zambelloe gives us one final fleeting glance, as the curtain falls, of the Don in Hell with a beautiful naked girl draped seductively across his arms. A fast mover! Perhaps an eternity in Hell will not be so bad after all.

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Having been horrid to young performers who invited me to review them last month, I was relieved to find that a similar invitation this month revealed a promising young group under the name of Sociall Musick. Their lunchtime concert (St Martin-in-the-Fields: 26 February) used Roger North's 1728 *Musical Grammarian* as the basis for a programme of 'Musick to Various Intents', with a musical tour that took in the home, theatre, dance hall and music house, and the composers Purcell, Bray, Simpson, Corelli, Mr Shore and Anon. The contrasting groups of short pieces were well planned and well timed, catching the differing moods of the respective original venues. Owen Morse-Brown produced a delightfully unforced tone on his recorders, avoiding the intonation horrors that can bedevil the instrument. He was well supported by Arngeir Hauksson on (thankfully non-percussive) guitar and theorbo, and Patxi del Amo, viol de gamba, who produced some well-shaped lines in one of Christopher Simpson's Divisions upon a Ground, even though his ventures into the uncharted lands beyond the fret were occasionally fraught. This was a most sophisticated performance – indeed, I wondered if a more raucous Musick House set would have been more authentic. My only criticism would be the over-large gaps caused by page turns between the Adagios and their related Allegros in Corelli's Sonata Op5/3 – a solecism which is common to many ensembles.

Lutenist Matthew Wadsworth well deserves his selection for the South Bank's 'Fresh' series of showcase concerts for young musicians. Joined in the second half by harpsichordist Steven Devine, he presented a programme of Kapsberger, Piccinini and de Visée in the Purcell Room (1 March). I have praised Wadsworth's playing before in this column, and continue to be impressed by his ability to shade and colour individual notes and his acute musical maturity. He started with a piece I have heard him play on a number of occasions, Kapsberger's deceptively simple *Arpeggiata* (1604), a hypnotic sequence of semiquavers changing on a four-beat harmonic pulse. He captured the improvisatory nature of some Piccinini Toccatas well – Toccata XIII (1623) was particularly fetching, building on a short rising scale that inverts towards the end with the addition of a blue-note. With the exception of one less- than-confident piece early on, Wadsworth's playing was excellent throughout. He has the ability to grasp the audience's attention and retain it through carefully timed pauses before and after pieces – I have rarely heard such a silent audience. His controlled delay of the applause after a spellbindingly poetic performance of Kapsberger's Passacaglia was almost too much to bear. Kapsberger's 1640 works for Chitarrone and harpsichord continuo are fascinating. The continuo bass was well realised by Steven Devine, who also contributed a neatly paced and articulated reading of Picchi's anarchic Toccata and a performance of Frescobaldi's *Capriccio sopra l'aria di Ruggiero* that kept the pulse flowing – not always easy with Frescobaldi's variation sets. The well-balanced programme concluded with Kaspberger's *Canario*, built on a jauntily laddish little bass riff.

The English Concert's Wigmore Hall concert (6 March) featured Trevor Pinnock, harpsichord, Rachel Podger, violin, Pamela Thorby, recorder, Katharina Spreckelsen, oboe, Alberto Grazzi, bassoon, and Anthony Pleeth, cello. It was a more-or-less perfect performance by a most talented group of soloists. Rachel Podger starred with Trevor Pinnock in two of Bach's sonatas for violin and obbligato harpsichord, her unforced tone and lyrical sense of pulse grasping the essence of these complex works. Indeed the whole concert was imbued with a superb sense of phrasing, avoiding the temptation to dissect the music into little motifs but taking a broad view of structural units, each pointed up with subtle use of rhetorical gesture. The rather bucolic pairing of bassoon and recorder was frequently heard, often without continuo harpsichord. This was particularly effective in the central Largo in Vivaldi's *La Pastorella* concerto for violin, oboe, recorder and bassoon, with its long descending bassoon line. Pamela Thorby's recorder playing was spot on – her ornaments sounded 'like butterflies' according to my companion. Katharina Spreckelsen and Alberto Grazzi also excelled in both solo and consort roles. A programme of four sonatas and two concertos may not always look instantly appealing, but this was a concert to gladden the heart.

A break from my normal panicky completion of these reviews, moments before the deadline expired, saw a Saturday afternoon dash down the M3 and A3 to the cornerHOUSE community arts centre in the obscure backwaters of Tolworth for the first of a series of concerts put on by the Kingston and Richmond Early Music Festival (9 March). Hazel Brooks and David Pollock presented a mixed programme of works for violin and harpsichord, ranging from Bach to a well-placed medley from Playford's *English Dancing Master*. Presentation and performance were good, with nicely balanced pieces and confidently spoken introductions from the performers. Hazel Brooks communicated well with the audience, making good eye contact and discarding her music stand on a number of occasions. Her cantabile lines in the slow movements of Bach's Sonata in C minor were particularly melodious. The little girl in

front of me jigged about gleefully during the *giga* from Corelli's F major Sonata, but wasn't too sure about Froberger's hesitantly melancholic harpsichord Suite in C minor. David Pollock produced some effective continuo realisations, contrasting the early Italian style of Castello with the later baroque mood of Handel, although his rather insistent repetitions of the tuning notes could have been subtler.

Finally, another Handel event that caught my eye. The role of the continuo player is vital to the performance of much of the music covered in these reviews, so I was interested to hear how the experts teach it. The Royal College of Organists and the Handel House Museum ran master classes by Laurence Cummings (organ) and Christopher Hogwood (harpsichord) on 14 February in Handel's own church of St George's, Hanover Square, using the organ built for the Handel House Museum and now resident there. Hogwood admitted that a player can get away with murder on the harpsichord, and the realisation of the continuo on the organ certainly appeared to be the more complex subject. Laurence Cummings is a most sensitive continuo interpreter himself, and his insights were extremely apposite. I particularly liked his description of the organ touch that produces a light articulation as 'springy pads'. Advice on the way that the resolution of cadential suspensions changed during the course of the eighteenth century was valuable, as was the more general 'if in doubt, leave it out' – advice that at least one of the harpsichord players in the afternoon session could have done with observing. The four organists worked with a violinist and cellist in movements from Handel's violin sonatas. Their styles ranged from gently effective and supportive to the frankly domineering. Christopher Hogwood worked with four student groups with harpsichord continuo players. Despite the elaborate nature of the Italian continuo style of the early 18th century, his advice was that the harpsichordists should never dominate or add new ideas of their own – advice that many current professional players could do with remembering. One interesting experiment was to move the continuo cellist to a position just behind the harpsichord, both softening the presence of the cello and also allowing harpsichordist and cellist to work closer together in the vital partnership. This was an interesting day, and a good example of the important educational work of The Royal College of Organists and the Handel House Museum.

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POPPEA AT QUEENS

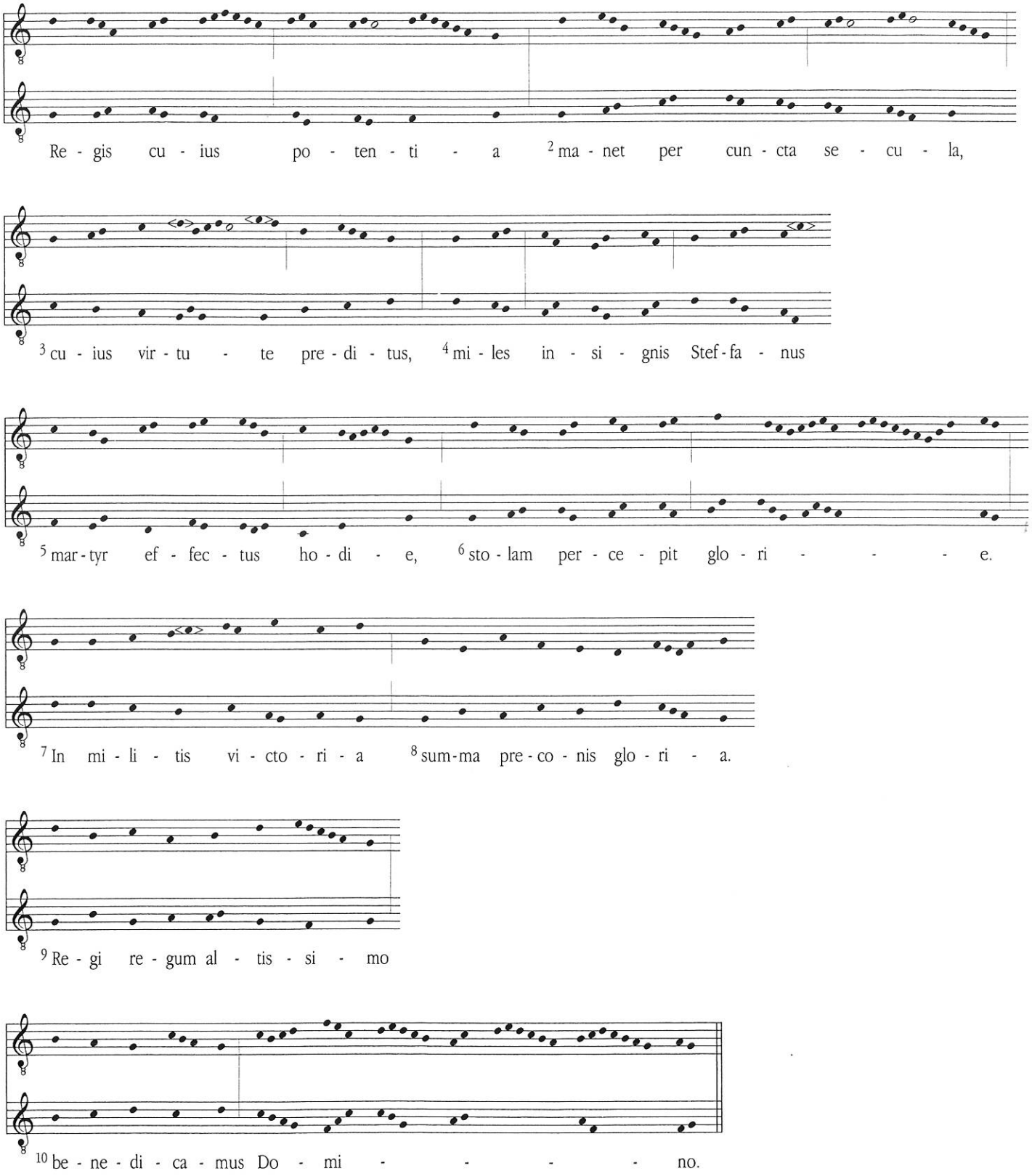
Clifford Bartlett

I was intrigued when Nicholas Suckling came to me at the end of last year to negotiate use of our edition of *L'incoronazione di Poppea* for performances at The Queens' College, Cambridge (1 & 3 March: I saw the latter). I'd often thought that Oxbridge college halls would be ideal places for a production: interesting architecture (so no need for sets) and intimate acoustics. He was going further: there were to be scene changes, but effected by using different spaces within the college, with performers and audience moving from place to place. This worked brilliantly, though did, of course, depend on a smallish and mobile audience – I had thought of inviting a friend with a wheelchair, but it was probably as well that I didn't. The opera was heavily cut, but the story was maintained by extending of the role of the three Goddesses of the Prologue; they were given a script, which continued the arguments between them and interpreted the story, as well as filled the gaps (Drusilla was cut competely, and Act III was mostly omitted). This would have worked even better if their speaking and singing aspects had been performed by the same people. Costume was modern, but not too self-conscious; many of the singers were dressed as they might have been for a rehearsal in tight trousers and T-shirts. The acting was simple: I was grateful for the absence of imposed directorial ideas, but there was a lack of close attention to detail. The most disappointing feature was the rather stolid Nerone (Benjamin Hulett). He sang well – and I must confess that I far prefer a tenor to the attempts by male sopranos that I have heard – but acted more like a small-town bank manager. His scenes with Poppea were utterly sexless – was he was inhibited by having his fiancée in the audience? The passion in the music was not matched visually. Nerone and Poppea don't have to roll around together naked, but something is needed to suggest that Nerone is besotted and Poppea may be at least partly in love (the music implies that, if not the libretto). Poppea (Louise Kateck) was better in showing her lust for power than her love. I still haven't worked out how Seneca should be played – as a force for good or as a pompous ass (the estimation that we are given before we see him). Thomas Guthrie impressively took the former line. Other members of the cast all fitted with the scale of the production and sang stylishly.

The instrumentation was the perfectly-adequate minimum of harpsichord, theorbo, organ, two violins and cello – maybe a fraction too much cello, but it was played by the director, so he can be forgiven. One scene was played outdoors, and it was amazing that Ottone (on one side of the court), balanced perfectly with the theorbo on the other.

Poppea is not a particularly difficult opera to sing and, with its abundance of small roles, its small instrumental requirements (only five players at a minimum), and the way it can be rehearsed scene-by-scene without a lot of standing around, it is surprising that small-scale performances are so rare. The music colleges have discovered it (this year at the Opera School Wales, the RAM, Trinity College and Birmingham, to mention only those I know about because they use our edition), and while it may not be entirely suited to ensembles accustomed to G & S, it can, as this performance showed, be creditably performed without massive theatrical paraphernalia, so long as it is directed by someone who knows how the music works. Despite cuts and some immaturity in the singers, I enjoyed this performance more than any since the first time I saw *Poppea* (RAM in the mid-1960s): congratualations to all involved.

Regis cuius potentia



In memory of John Stevens, we are printing an item from the edition he was preparing for publication by Oxford UP under the title *The Later Cambridge Songs*. I asked his collaborator Christopher Page whether there was a copy in John's distinctive hand, but the edition has now been typeset. Until the complete edition appears, readers requiring information and a translation will find it in the Gothic Voices recording *The Earliest Songbook in England* (Hyperion CDA67177).

OXFORD MADRIGALS

Eric Van Tassel

Madrigals and Partsongs Edited by Clifford Bartlett *Oxford Choral Classics; series editor John Rutter*) Oxford University Press, 2001. vii + 378pp, £11.50. ISBN 0 19 343694 9

For many readers of *EMR*, the series title *Oxford Choral Classics* and the volume title *Madrigals and Partsongs* will seem oxymoronic: can a madrigal be 'choral'? But since choruses do sing madrigals and will go on doing so, it is well that they should sing them from collections as good as this one.

The repertoire is mostly very well chosen; editorial principles and practice seem sound, as one would expect from this pair of hands; I've found no wrong notes; the book is physically appealing. In fact, the only task I can assume as a reviewer – in these pages, anyway – is to suggest some ways in which an excellent publication might have been better still. So what follows is 'the soft impeachment of a friend'.

I'd omit the earliest pieces (Josquin, Isaac, Senfl) to make room for Verdelot, Willaert, Andrea Gabrieli or Palestrina, or more of Rore and of Lassus, whose Italian dimension is short-changed. Earlier pieces by Monteverdi (*Baci soavi* or *Ecco mormorar l'onde*) would be more apt for choirs; *Ohimè se tanto amate* seems to me simply unbearable with more than one per part. Instead of the *Lamento d'Arianna*, I'd have chosen the Sestina: a (comparatively) marketable name like Monteverdi's should be exploited to extend singers' repertoire by offering the less well-known of his cycles (which would also suit choral performance better).

Among English composers, I'd prefer less of Dowland and Gibbons (they get three pieces each, several of which are too obviously not designed as vocal polyphony); they could have made room for Bateson, Farnaby or, especially, Tomkins, whose *Weep no more* would afford a glimpse of the Jacobean vogue for extremes of chromaticism – no challenge to choirs that can handle the Britten or Delius examples here.

The 19th- and 20th-century choices also include some gems and some specimens that to my ear are more like paste. The Haydn, Pearsall, Brahms, Sullivan, Parry, Finzi and Britten choices are all treasures. But the selections from Stanford, Elgar and Vaughan Williams are uneven. For me, Stanford's *Heraclitus* lies dead on the page; the Elgar examples are all too (as it were) orchestral to make a good fit with the madrigals or the 19th-century partsongs (and *There is sweet music* takes up a lot of space with one system per page). I'd happily forgo Delius, whose wordless pieces sit oddly in a collection that is mostly sensitive to the marriage of words and music.

Copyright issues may have limited the selection of 20th-century Germans – where are Wolf, Distler, Karl Marx (if only for his name!) and, especially, Hindemith? But then, where are Schumann (a Burns setting would be fun) and Mendelssohn (*Auf dem See*), and why only one piece by Brahms? Schubert could be squeezed in only by admitting a piece with obligatory accompaniment, otherwise consistently avoided. (CB's preface refers us to Judith Blezzard's *German Romantic Partsongs* from the same publisher; but, then, why invest 31 pages in the Monteverdi *Lamento* when that too exists in a separate OUP edition? Ditto the Debussy Charles d'Orléans pieces, which cost 21 pages, or Vaughan Williams's Shakespeare Songs, which use up 14). Earlier German music is short-changed too: I'd have been glad to see some Regnart or Lechner.

The reduction of early time-values seems to be based on pragmatism rather than some theoretical principle, but the results generally make sense. Transpositions, too, are pragmatic and are mostly acceptable; but putting Gabrieli and Marenzio (with G2 C1 C3 F3 and G2 C2 C3 F3 clefs respectively) down a major third produces a four-flat key signature, which seems inexcusable when taking the pieces down either a tone or a fourth would have stayed within the ranges allowed in 20th-century pieces.

A few details: Le Jeune's word 'Revecy' sings itself, but singers may stumble over the emended 'Revoici'. In Bennet's *All creatures now*, I'd re-spell 'fa-la-la-ing' as 'fa-la-lay-ing'. In Hassler (*Tanzen und springen*) and Dowland (*Can she excuse*), performers should be warned somewhere that such galliards exploit hemiola at more than one level. In Gabrieli's *Lieto godea*, the metre change for the middle section is indicated by equating a dotted minim to the minim in the foregoing cut time – confusingly, since no one can feel a dotted minim in this 3/2 passage. (The sesquialtera solutions in Pilkington's *Rest sweet nymphs* and Vautor's *Sweet Suffolk owl* are clear and practical, if palaeographically casual.) Rhythmic cruxes in Haydn (*Die Harmonie in der Ehe*: appoggiaturas in the last phrase) and Elgar (*As torrents in summer*: dotted-quaver-semiquaver versus triplets in bar 6) should be tacitly emended in the score, with the original notation described in the notes. For Monteverdi's *Lamento d'Arianna*, I'd say more emphatically that the continuo is optional (and, in my view, unwelcome).

Perhaps the series style requires alphabetical order by composer, but a chronological sequence would have been more illuminating – and would make the editor's notes at the back of the book clearer and more appealing. Those notes are a concise mix of historical background, performance suggestions, and source details, interesting though not very consistent in the amount of information they offer. (The note to *What is our life* might have glossed 'tiring-houses'.

Americans will find 'Henry Longfellow' as odd as 'Gerard Hopkins' or 'William Yeats' would seem to British readers.) The music page as a whole is easy enough to read from. In the inescapable trade-off between leaving enough space (by using rather spidery fonts for notes and text) and using weighty enough characters (but with a more crowded visual effect), editor and/or publisher have gone for the spacey-but-pallid option. Blacker, albeit more crowded, notation would be easier to read in a dimly-lit performance venue.

One more observation about repertoire choices. One-per-part consorts aren't the market for this book, but they do exist, and they often need 19th- and 20th-century pieces to diversify a madrigal programme. Several partsongs here – Pearsall, Schubert, Sullivan, Brahms, Finzi – may even be more effective with a consort than with a choir. But almost half of the 19th- and 20th-century pieces here have significant divisis rendering them unusable by consorts. (In a few others, e.g. Sullivan and one of the Stanfords, the only divisi note can be fudged if necessary.) I wish CB had tried harder to exclude divisis altogether. (NB: he errs in referring, in the Preface, to an 'absence of divisis' in the third Debussy piece, unless he knows a bass who can sing double-stops in parallel thirds for 6½ bars.)

It's a long while since I've spent so much time just reading a book of polyphony, silently or at the keyboard. Thanks to this enjoyable and instructive exercise, I've now had to move Pearsall's *Lay a garland* and Sullivan's *The long day closes* out of the heard-once-or-twice-before-and-vaguely-enjoyed category and into that of must-try-to-sing-soon-by-hook-or-crook.

The reasons for some of the points Eric questions is, as he says, the policy of the series as a whole. One requirement was to include a basic repertoire. In fact, we began with the assumption that, if we could include the Debussy and Ravel chansons at a price less than it would cost to buy them separately and include another 55 pieces, that would make the book a bargain. Sadly, the almost-surreptitious change in European copyright law (there was no public discussion of it in Britain until after the European decision was made) extending the copyright period from 50 to 70 years after death scuppered that approach. But I retained the desire to keep some more substantial items in the volume as an aid to the problem of too many short pieces in concerts: hence the Lamento' d'Arianna *and Vaughan Willams's* Three Shakespeare Songs *in addition to the Debussy. The availability of individual items separately is standard practice for the series.*

One criterion for inclusion for the series is that people should find what they expected to find: i.e., there is an obligation to include the standard pieces that everyone knows. I managed to pop in a few items that I like but are not in that category, and I made a deliberate point of including some Dowland, since some of his songs work well with vocal ensemble (especially Weep you no more, sad fountains*); with the ubiquity of* The Oxford Book of Madrigals, *which has no lute-songs, they have dropped out of the repertoire.* Heraclitus *falls into the standard-repertoire category; it reminds me of school (not, I hasten to add, because we had masters like Cory). In fact, the whole book was an exercise in nostalgia for formal and informal ensembles in which I have sung. Apart from the school madrigal group (a few readers may have met Alan Morgan, who ran it before he became Head of Music at Dulwich College in 1958), it reminds me of various friends I met at or through the Dartington summer school; and since I moved back within reach of Cambridge 20 years ago, I became involved in John Stevens' choir (where I first met Elgar's partsongs) and its annual midsummer madrigals at The Old Vicarage at Grantchester. I also included a few pieces that I didn't know but which looked good and which were recommended by reliable judges (e.g. Elgar's intriguing-looking, double-keyed* There is sweet music*). We avoided music for male or female voices, which is a contributory reason for the neglect of the 19th-century German repertoire; but the main reason for that is that I did not know it first-hand and have never sung it.*

The note-relationship given for Lieto godea *is a slip: it must have been taken over from a version in which the note-values of the triple-section were halved. As for its transposition, a compass between bass low F and soprano high F seemed comfortable. (If you want any other pitch, you can order the King's Music edition!)*

The reference in John Rutter's note to the edition he contributed of Debussy's Trois Chansons *specifically refers to the first two pieces not having divided voices – or Eric has picked up a remark elsewhere that I haven't noticed.*

The pronunciation of All creatures now *is curious, since most of the rhymes are, at least in modern English, bad: minded/winded, playing/falalaing, discover/hover. I don't think it's the editor's job to deliberately mis-spell a word to indicate a possible pronunciation – and there are enough sexual innuendos in madrigals without adding a batch of lays! I think the verse form is, when sung, too diffuse for the listener to need exact rhymes, whether or not intended by the poet. I was sorry to lose old spelling from the early French texts – I prefer* Jouyssance vous donneray *and* revecy– *but old spelling was out of style with the series.*

There is an additional group of errors. In the commentary, the superscript numbers for RISM printed anthologies were corrupted in transmission and have lost their superiority. So the source of the Gabrieli, for instance, is RISM 1587[12], not 158712. CB

RECORD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Minnesang: The Golden Age I Ciarlatani, Ensemble für frühe Musik Augsburgs, Andrea von Ramm, Estampie 57' 29"
Christophorus **CHR 77242**

So many recordings of medieval song favour high voices (Paul Hillier's are a notable exception) that it is refreshing, after getting over the shock of the first piece – a rather Orffic version of a song from the *Carmina Burana* – to hear a fine baritone rendering of Bernart da Ventadorn's *Can vei la luazata.* Sadly, apart from Andrea von Ramm, no singers are named, so I cannot credit him. This, with plucked interludes, was for me the highlight of the disc. Perhaps such anthologies should have an automatic device that stopped the disc after each track to prevent the unnatural listening of one piece straight after another. The presentation of a continuous sequence ultimately undermines the music by demanding a variety that the original listeners would not have required. This goes too far, in that, even if we allow that these songs were often accompanied, it is surely implausible that they were always performed thus. Even Andrea von Ramm (who has two lovely low-pitched songs and one less-satisfactory high one) has her lines doubled. The programme, a compilation from four previous discs, is excellently annotated by Volker Martens (the inclusion of a Provençal song is justified) and is well worth hearing. *CB*

15th-CENTURY

Josquin Des Prez *Missa Faisant regretz; Motetti de Passione... B* The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham 69' 09"
ASV *Gaudeamus* **CD GAU 302**
Motets *Ave verum corpus, Christem ducem/Qui velatus, Domine non secundum, O Domine Jesu Christe, Tu solus qui facis* + Frye *Tout a par moy*

The repertoire selected for this disc shows Josquin at his most austerely beautiful, writing in what has hitherto been referred to as his 'Milanese' style. However, as Edward Wickham's booklet note wittily points out, the dating game is a hazardous business, and it has now emerged that the Milanese Josquin is not the composer at all. It now seems much more likely that this sort of minimalist music was not a phase Josquin went through, but simply one of the many compositional idioms he had mastered. Furthermore that this idiom is so thoroughly represented in the *Motetti di passione* published in 1503 by Petrucci could be as much the product of the taste of the person who selected the music for publication as anything else. That the style eminently suits the sentiment of the texts it sets is not in doubt, and nor is the ability of The Clerks' Group to give it eloquent performances. Equally beautiful is the performance of the minimalist *Missa Faisant regretz*, based on a melodic device in the chanson *Tout a par moy* by Walter Frye, which itself is also given an idiomatic rendition. The performance of the mass is informed by the group's new commitment to sing from facsimiles of original MSS, and once again I think the music has a heightened sense of flow and organic growth as a result. *D. James Ross*

Narcisso speculando: Madrigaux de Paolo da Firenze Mala Punica, Pedro Memelsdorff
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901732** 56' 25"

This collection of madrigals, ballate and istampitas by the 15th-century Florentine Abbot Paolo di Marco provides a remarkable window on one of the more bizarre periods in musical history. This repertoire was memorably described by David Munrow as 'the avant garde of mediaeval Europe', and its spicey dissonances and extremes of virtuosity and passionate expression make challenging listening almost 600 years later. It is music which Mala Punica and their director Pedro Memelsdorff specialise in. Their performances display a complete familiarity with this unusual idiom and demonstrate a simply stunning facility with Paolo's highly ornate writing. The occasionally eccentric instrumentation also reflects the essential 'otherness' of the writing, and while Memelsdorff's approach (honed in the ranks of Savall's Hesperion XX) has its down sides – a rather narcissistic lingering over passing dissonance, a cavalier approach to tempo – these performances are consistently entertaining and often thrilling. They certainly provide a lively introduction to a school of composition which has too often in the past received worthy and ultimately rather tedious interpretations
D. James Ross

16th-CENTURY

Hoyoul *Sacrae Cantiones* Ensemble Hofkapelle, Michael Procter 66' 42"
Christophorus **CHR 77234**

Noel O'Regan reviewed this last July; it reached us again because Christophorus has changed distributors and has sent a retrospective batch; the excuse for mentioning it again is that we reversed the last two of the disc numbers.

Morley (comp) *The Triumphs of Oriana, 1601* I Fagiolini, Robert Hollingworth *dir*, David Miller *lute* 73' 06"
Chandos *Chaconne* **CHAN 0682**

Having enjoyed a session at the last NEMA AGM on three pieces from Morley's anthology chosen primarily on the grounds that neither BC nor I had ever heard them and found that they amply repaid closer investigation, I was interested to try the whole set, and pleased to find that they were enjoyable to hear in sequence (not the original one) and, despite the common verbal close, surprisingly varied. I Fagiolini have a distinctive sound, which worried me slightly for a minute or two, but which I soon accepted. These pieces respond more than most English madrigals to a dramatic, outgoing style: although there is no evidence of any such use, some of them have a more public feel than the general run of madrigals; perhaps they reflect some lost aspect of court entertainment and pageantry. This celebratory aspect comes over well, but without any undue pomposity. Fine notes by John Milson and delightful lute interludes (by Holborne and Byrd) complement the impressive vocal performances. *CB*

Italian Renaissance Dance Vol. 2. The King's Noyse, David Douglass *dir*, Paul O'Dette *lute* 78' 37" (rec 1994)
Harmonia Mundi *Classical Express* **HCX 3957127** £

If you've had enough of the 1578 Mainerio dances or ensemble versions of the mid-century standards published by Gardane in 1551, don't worry: this has much less hackneyed fare. Vecchi and Banchieri represent the lighter side, played with panache. Ellen Hargis makes everything she sings enjoyable (yes, she does have a vibrato, as Andrew Benson-Wilson noticed in a concert review a few issues ago, but for me it adds warmth without distorting intonation). Paul O'Dette adds spice to any disc. So if you didn't get this first time round, enjoy the bargain. *CB*

17th-CENTURY

Buxtehude *Cantates et sonates avec viole de gambe* Ensemble Baroque de Limoges, Christophe Coin 66' 16"
Naïve *Astrée* **E 8851**
Fried und Freudenreiche Hinfahrt, Den Himmel zu dem Vater mein, Jubilate Domino; op. 1/3 & 4, Prelude in g BuxWV 163, Toccata in d BuxWV 155

Whereas most Buxtehude recordings are confined to a single genre, Christophe Coin has assembled an imaginative programme of vocal, chamber and keyboard pieces. There are invigorating accounts of two trio sonatas, including Op. 1 no. 4 with its perky opening ostinato. We then hear a similar fantasy in two praeludia played by Willem Jansen on harpsichord and organ. The cantatas include the well-known *Jubilate Domino*, with the gamba and singer chasing each other through the texture. The disc also contains two of Buxtehude's funerary offerings, the pulsating lament of the *Klaglied* and the learned elaborations of the Nunc Dimittis. The latter is here realised on organ, but I feel Jansen should use registrations in the style of Scheidt (perhaps always playing the chorale line on the pedals). Otherwise, this is an excellent disc. The performers seem absorbed in the music yet are always communicative; the recorded sound is warm and inviting. *Stephen Rose*

Rosenmüller *German Sacred Concertos* Johann Rosenmüller Ensemble, Arno Paduch 72' 07"
Christophorus **CHR 77227**

When he reviewed this in July 2000 (*EMR* 62, p. 20), BC was more impressed with the playing than the singing, but found it a welcome addition to the catalogue.

Theile *Kantaten für Schloss Gottorf* Hedwig Westhoff-Düppmann, Martin Backhaus *SB*, Hamburger Ratsmusik, Simone Eckert 63' 55"
Christophorus **CHR 77245**
Music by Förtsch, Schop & Theile

Johann Theile (1646-1724) was a fascinating figure: a founding member of Hamburg's opera and for three generations the leading German teacher of counterpoint. He wrote operas, church concertos and also contrapuntal puzzles as arcane as alchemists' exercises. This CD offers a mix of his church music with some contrapuntal teasers from the *Musicalische Kunstbuch*. The *Kunstbuch* pieces are played on string consort; strangely, the otherwise excellent booklet does not explain their use of double counterpoint. Theile's vocal pieces show a strophic tunefulness (*Jesu, mein Herr*), sometimes with more dramatic moments (*Gott hilf mir*). More striking are the two cantatas by Philipp Förtsch recorded here, notably the supplicatory pleas in his *Aus der Tiefe*. The disc also contains consort pieces by the Hamburg string player Johann Schop, who belonged to the Anglo-German musical tradition, as shown by his version of Dowland's *Lachrimae* pavan. The Hamburger Ratsmusik perform with elegance if sometimes a touch of understatement. A rewarding release. *Stephen Rose*

Valentini *Motetti e Madrigali a due soprano* Duo Ilaria Geroldi & Marina Morellin Ensemble La Moderna Prattica, Stefano Molardi *dir* 67' 49"
Christophorus **CHR 77328**

Relatively little of Valentini's work was published, but he composed prolifically for his patrons in Austria and Italy, and was highly regarded by Michael Praetorius and various Holy Roman Emperors. This CD illustrates a good range of his work, and includes some valuable additions to the repertoire for two sopranos. Possibly a pupil of Giovanni Gabrieli, Valentini was well-versed in both monodic and strophic styles. He uses the duet element sparingly, often effectively delaying the introduction of the second voice until a dramatic point late in a piece, and has plenty of new things to say in this idiom, often using complex and unexpected rhythms. There are many inventive touches; the repeated words 'libera me de poenis inferni' provoke an unexpected series of hair-raising images in *Deus qui pro redemptione mundi*; Valentini uses the same three-chord trick again in *Ti lascio anima mia* at 'ch'entro m'accora', reflecting a similar emotion but in a secular context. At such dramatic climaxes, thrilling use is made of the singers' chest voices, with nicely vulgar twanging of the theorbo's diapason strings. These Cremonese performers are good exponents of this inventive and passionate music, giving plenty of variation in tempo and mood, but they strive excessively for variety in the instrumental texture, changing from organ to harpsichord and back several times within a single piece, and contrasting a simple, moody, melodic piece (such as *O bone Jesu*) with violent clattering in *Gaudeamus omnes*. The voices are well-matched, and meet their demanding task well, though as usual there is too much vibrato for my taste. The violin sometimes sounds frighteningly like a harmonica, though played with agility. It seems odd to begin the disc with a vocal solo, as the introductory two-violin ritornello leads us energetically to expect two voices. (Only one violinist is credited.) The pieces are mainly grouped together as sacred and secular, but with one exception in each half – why? Apart from a few such oddities, this is an attractive recording, and well worth hearing. The thorough booklet lists the sources of the music in exceptional detail. *Selene Mills*

Il Giardino Corrupto: Italian influence in German & Austrian chamber music 1650-85 La Luna 65' 42"
Wildboar **WLBR9903**
Music by Bertali, Kerll, Kindermann, Muffat, Rosenmüller, Schmelzer, Weckmann & anon

No prizes for anticipating a rave review for this disc: it combines some of the gems of 17th-century Austro-German chamber music with one of my favourite trio sonata groups. Rosenmüller, Bertali and Schmelzer (three of my all-time favourite composers – when, oh when, will someone record some of the church music of Bertali and Schmelzer?) are here joined by Muffat, Kerll, Weckmann, anon (of course), and – in the title track – Kindermann. He earns his place among the musical elite by having one violin play the music in the traditional manner, and the second violinist reading around the border and then following numbers above the bars as through a maze. Listening to it in all innocence, I didn't have a clue to its complexity. As usual, La Luna are exceptional: the violins cavort beautifully, the gamba enjoys her flights of fancy to the full, and Mr Schenkman excels in both his roles. If you haven't heard the group before, buy this ; but be warned: you'll want to splash out on all their previous releases, too! *BC*

(With the recent death of Joseph Spencer, Wildboar's manager and factotum, we are not yet sure of the availability. Lindum Records are investigating.)

Hermosuras: beauty, sacredness and passion in the Spanish Kingdom Janas Ensemble, Paola Erdas *dir* 69' 45"
Stradivarius **STR 33601**

This begins and ends with folky Sardinian pieces, though the rest of the disc isn't located there. It delighted and infuriated me. There is a marvellous vigour, and the witty playing of a composer who can often sound tedious – Bartolomeo Selma y Salaverde – is a treat. But so much is overdone. When a song has 51 statements of the descending four-note ground (Sances' *Usurpator tiranno*, which owes more than just its ground to Monteverdi's *Lamento della Ninfa*), the last thing one wants is to hear the ground thrust continually in one's ears. The close miking of the harpsichord produces a jangly sound that is far too near that of the tambourine that sometimes joins it! The CD is stimulating and brilliantly performed; but the ensemble should perhaps employ at least one introvert to moderate the excesses. *CB*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Organ Works* Ton Koopman (Christian-Müller organ, Waalse-Kerk, Amsterdam & Gabler organ, Weingarten) 116' 71"
Hänssler *Masterpiece* **CD 94.020** (2 CDs in box. rec. 1986 & 1988) £
BWV 529, 542, 546, 549, 552, 565, 593, 639, 645, 653-4, 767

An interesting anthology, with well-known Preludes or Toccatas and Fugues framing the *Partite diverse* on *O Gott, du frommer Gott*, chorale preludes, a Vivaldi concerto and the trio sonata in C recorded on fine early instruments by a player who always has something to say. I found the less-famous pieces worked better, perhaps because Koopman seemed a little more relaxed in them and less inclined to push the music on a fraction faster than felt right for the organs. There are no booklet notes, but the notes from the original releases are on the haenssler-classic website. Since the printing of booklets is a considerable part of the cost of reissues, this practice should help to keep prices down. *CB*

Bach *Goldberg Variations* Malcolm Proud
Maya Recordings **MCD 0102** 79' 38"

To record the Goldbergs is not only a technical challenge: the player must also carry the listener through 80 minutes of music of great likeness yet variety. Malcolm Proud succeeds triumphantly on both counts. His account is authoritative rather than idiosyncratic, founded on superb technical control and a sense of every detail's place in the whole. Ornaments and rhythmic placings are subtle, selective and therefore always meaningful. There's great energy, particularly in the springy bass lines of Variations 1 and 3 or in the sweep of the French Overture; there's a beguiling ease in some of the trickiest movements, e.g. Variation 11. Yet Proud can also smile: Variation 23 captures the almost Lego-like effect of playing with basic musical building-blocks. By the time he reached the closing Quodlibet and reprise of the aria, I was sad that such a performance should be coming to an end. Strongly recommended. *Stephen Rose*

In EMR 64 I mentioned that we dropped in on the Camphill Community in Ballytobin near Kilkenny and were shown the new hall they had built, and recommended it as a possible site for

recordings. So it is good to see that this recording by a local harpsichordist (organist at St Candace's Cathedral in Kilkenny), who I think launched the hall, was made there. The new label (contact: maya@eircom.net) bears the name of the violinist Maya Homburger, who moved to the area from Cambridgeshire a few years ago.

Entwurff einer wohlbestallten Music: Instrumente und Instrumentierungen bei J. S. Bach *(Instrumentarium Lipsiense 3)* Leipziger Concert, Thomanerchor Leipzig 72; 46"
Raum Klang **RK 2001**
BWV 68/2, 76/8,140/3, 245/31, 672, 1027, 1039, 1046, 1079/5 + **Schelle** *Lobe den Herrn*

If one needed an introduction to the music of Bach or to the current early-music culture of Leipzig, this recording would serve well. The choice of music is entirely standard, containing fairly popular works such as 'Mein gläubiges Herze' from Cantata 68 and the first Brandenburg Concerto. There is absolutely no connection with Bach's famous Leipzig *Entwurff* of 1730, and there is no sense in which the CD presents the reconstruction of a liturgy or concert from Bach's time, as the packaging might somehow suggest. However, it offers a good opportunity to hear some wonderful instruments from the Musical Instrument Museum in the University of Leipzig (three gambas, a violin and a violin piccolo) and a brief piece on a Hildebrandt organ. Most heartening is the playing of the Leipziger Concert (founded 1997) and the influence of the violinist Susanne Scholz as leader of the group. The playing in the opening psalm-concerto of Johann Schelle is as impressive as the singing of the centuries-old Thomanerchor is disappointing – a clear proof, if we needed one, that tradition does not enjoy an automatic supremacy over reconstruction. In short, this disc is an oddity, more a promise of things to come out of Leipzig than an authoritative record of its past. *John Butt*

Graun *Concertos and Chamber Music* Waldemar Döling *hpscd*, Gernot Schmalfuß *ob*, Andrea Lieberknecht *fl*, Andreas Krecher, Martin Schäfer *vlns*, Helman Jung *bsn*, Sofia Chamber Soloists, Emil Tabakov *cond* 58' 17"
Dabringhaus & Grimm **MDG 601 0505-2**
C H.Graun *Concerto hpscd & str in c*; **J.G.Graun** *Sonatas fl, ob, bc in D & G*; **either** *Concerto ob d'am, 2 vln, bc in D, Sonata fl & bc in C*

This CD combines a performance (dated 1986) of a harpsichord concerto by C. H. Graun with newer recordings (dated 2002) of chamber music most likely by Johann Gottlieb Graun by a different ensemble: only the keyboard player is common to both. The orchestral playing is surprisingly good, as, generally, is the chamber playing. Modern instruments are not ideal for this sort of music, because it all sounds too easy, and it leaves too much room for 'interpretation': somehow period instruments encourage a more natural treatment. Maybe it's the slight quirks of tuning, or do period players tend to recognise phrase structures in a different way? Pleasant enough, but not the last word. *BC*

Handel *Italienische Liebeskantaten und Kammermusik* Stephanie Houtzeel *mS*, The Bouts Ensemble (Charles W. Brinck *fl*, Ulrike Kunze & Margret Baumgartl *vlns*, Heike Johanna Lindner *gamba*, *vlc*, Léon Berben *hpscd*) 75' 19"
Raum Klang **RK 2101**
Mi palpita il cor HWV 132b/c, *Süsse stille* HWV 205, *Tu fedel? tu costante?* HWV 170; op. 1/1a & 6 (HWV 264b & 379), op. 2/1 & 4 (HWV 286b, 289)

The Bouts Ensemble (led by American flautist Charles Brink, otherwise German/Dutch) is 'devoted to the works of... the "high" baroque and pre-classical periods' and aims 'to present thematic programs... from this rich and varied period'. There is little reflection of that variety in the standard Handel repertory chosen for this 'calling-card' CD, but presumably promotional considerations dictated safe content. The ensemble makes a good impression in the four instrumental works. Brink's flute and Ulrike Kunze's violin blend well in nos. 1 and 4 of the Opus 2 trio sonatas, and Heike Johanna Lindner gives a pleasantly fluent account of the viola da gamba version of Op. 1 no. 6. However, they are somewhat uneasy partners of Stephanie Houtzeel in the two Italian cantatas and one of the nine German arias. She is a fine operatic mezzo whose roles include Strauss's Octavian and Rossini's Rosina, and one has a sense of a large voice being held in check while the one-per-part instrumentalists strive for orchestral sonority. The harpsichord is over-prominent, especially in recitative. (Cadences are delayed: has some new support for such practice been found?) A mezzo voice is in any case not quite apt for these pieces, and in *Mi palpita il cor* Houtzeel compromises by opening with the soprano version (HWV 132b), then switching to the alto version (132c) to allow for Brink's flute obbligato. (In the soprano version the instrument is an oboe.) Overall Houtzeel is a little too earnest for my taste in the cantatas, but she nevertheless sings with intelligence and commitment. (She also provides the competent translations in the booklet.) I should like to hear her in a serious Handel operatic role. *Anthony Hicks*

Hasse *Flötenkonzerte* Laurence Dean *fl*, Hannoversche Hofkapelle 72' 17"
Christophorus **CHR 77228**
Concertos in C, D, G, b; sonata in A, sinfonia a5 in G, Trio in e

Lying somewhere between Telemann and Quantz, Hasse has somehow fallen into a ditch, his music having little exposure in recordings. These three concertos for solo flute, a trio and a sinfonia for two flutes, and a flute sonata with continuo only help to fill the lacuna. Although Hasse's music does not have the dramatic impact of Telemann, nor yet the galant elegance of Quantz's later output, all the works are exquisitely written, the concertos with interesting ritornelli and some relatively virtuosic solo writing and some of the slow movements look forward to the more daring experiments of C. P. E. Bach. All except the fine G major concerto are scored without viola. The performances are highly commendable, with good tempi and stylish playing throughout. *Ian Graham Jones*

Porpora *Arianna in Nasso* Tiziana Fabbricini *Arianna*, Anna Maria di Micco *Teseo*, Damiana Pinti *Antiope*, Marita Paparizou *Onaro*, Christophoros Stamboglis *Piritòo*, Orchestra Sinfonica di Savona, Massimiliano Carraro 142' 46"
Bongiovanni **GB 2250/51-2** (2 CDs)

In 1733 Nicolò Porpora was brought to London by the Opera of the Nobility to provide a rival attraction to the works of Handel, and *Arianna in Nasso*, premiered on 29 December of that year, is the first of five pieces written for the company over the next three seasons. It is a powerful work and though this performance is unashamedly non-period in feel, recordings of Porpora's estimable theatrical works are sufficiently rare to make this an issue worth considering by all but Baroque performance purists. I particularly admired the contralto Anna Maria di Micco as a suitably virile Teseo and Christophoros Stamboglis as his rival Piritòo, a part originally written for the bass Antonio Montagnana (who had been lured to the competing company from Handel's Royal Academy of Music and for whom Porpora wrote three of the opera's most effective arias). As for Arianna herself, she is sung by Tiziana Fabbricini with great expression though with a constant use of vibrato that sometimes disturbs the purity of Porpora's melodic lines. Apart from this failing, she is generally acceptable as the eponymous heroine of Porpora's opera, which Romain Rolland, writing in 1910, even compared favourably with Handel's contemporary work on much the same theme. The modern strings and wind soloists of the Savona Orchestra play consistently well under the direction of Massimiliano Carraro, even though, given its rich part-writing, period instruments would certainly have been preferable in bringing out the individual textures of Porpora's score. Nevertheless, there is still much to appreciate in the taut ensemble achieved by instrumentalists and singers alike in this welcome revival of an opera that certainly deserves the attention of anyone interested in the music of Handel's operatic contemporaries and not altogether unworthy rivals. *David J. Levy*

Telemann *La Bizarre: Suites* Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, Midori Seiler *vln* 71' 03"
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901744**
Overtures TWV 55: B5 *Les Nations*, D18, G2 *La Bizarre*; **vln concerto** TWV 51: A2 *Les Rainettes*

I enjoyed this CD. It contains three suites (the eponymous *La Bizarre*, the oft-recorded *Les Nations* and one without any sub-title, but bizarre in that three oboists are credited in the booklet but are completely inaudible) and a violin concerto which is very strange indeed – it sets out to imitate frogs. I transcribed it for a recording by Pavlo Besnoziuk and Philip Pickett once, and even wrote notes for the CD, but never once did it occur to me (as it did to harmonia mundi's note-writer, Peter Huth)

that old Telemann might have been having a laugh at the Red Priest's expense! Played (as it is here) for laughs from the gallery, it was obvious. Elsewhere the playing is excellent, possibly the best I've heard from this group. *RC*

Telemann *Overtures for Wind Quintet* Consortium Classicum 56' 53"
Dabringhaus & Grimm **MDG 301 1109-2**
TWV55: F5, F8, F9, F15, F18

There is a reasonable corpus of music by Telemann for pairs of oboes and horns, with bassoon on the bass (a double bass is added here), presumably written for outdoor performance. They may, in fact, have been written specifically for the court at Darmstadt (where much of the performing material survives), since the Langraves were particularly fond of hunting. For all Telemann's creativity, I grew rather tired of the modern instruments' sound: although the whole disc lasts less than an hour, I'm afraid I listened to it in chunks rather than at one sitting – even as background music. That said, there are some nice concertos for the same combination, and I hope Consortium Classicum might record them too: it would be better, though, if they could pair up with a small string band and alternate wind-only pieces with full ensemble. *BC*

Telemann *Das Selige Erwägen (Passion)* TWV 5:2 Barbara Locher, Zeger Vandersteene, Stefan Dörr, Berthold Possemeyer, Johan-René Schmidt *STTBB*, Freiburger Vokalensemble, L'Arpa Festante München, Wolfgang Schäfer *dir* 111' 44" (2 CDs in box)
Amati **AMI 89051/2**

This passion oratorio is divided into nine sections, dominated by soloists (the seven named parts are here taken by five singers), with some colourful orchestration (a solo soprano doubled by bassoon, for example) and only ten chorales (the extra one comes after *Es ist vollbracht*). It was considered so controversial that a performance was only allowed in one of Hamburg's lesser churches, despite Telemann's status in the city. Nowadays, it is difficult to see what all the fuss was about. The playing is good on the whole (there is some rather dubious tuning from the recorders), but the success or otherwise hinges on the soloists, and I found them a bit lacklustre. Only the previously mentioned *Es ist vollbracht*, with its Zelenka-like suspensions, was anything out of the ordinary, and there was none of the drama that either Handel or Bach would have brought the text. So, if I have reservations, it's as much Telemann's fault as anyone else's. *BC*

Vivaldi *The Four Seasons* Marion Verbruggen, Flanders Recorder Quartet 38' 37" (rec 1994)
Harmonia Mundi *Classical Express* **HCX 3957153** £

Angela Bell, reviewing this in *EMR* 22 (Sept 1996), was rather more sympathetic to the idea of such an arrangement than I feel, but wished for rather more élan. It's just too neat and tidy, and the jokes don't work. More entertaining, because more musically played and because, in principle, the concept is more outrageous, is Rousseau's version for unaccompanied flute on the Barthold Kuijken anthology reviewed below. Only for recorder fanatics! *CB*

Vivaldi *Concertos pour violoncelle Vol 2*. Roel Dieltiens *vlc & dir*, Christine Busch *vln*, Richte Van der Meer *vlc*, Ensemble Explorations
Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901745** 70' 29"
RV 407-8, 411, 420-1, 544, 561

Of the three Vivaldi discs I've had this month, this is my favourite. An excellent soloist, a creative band playing one-to-a-part (which allows freedom of expression, without encouraging flights of madness) and a beautifully rounded recorded sound. I knew the concertos where cello/cellos combine with violin soloists, but all the solo cello concertos were new to me. I particularly enjoyed the opening work, RV420, which sounded like a sonata to which Vivaldi had added string ritornelli pretty much as an after-thought. I'm annoyed I missed Vol. 1 of the series, as this is exceptional music-making. *BC*

Vivaldi *Concerti per flauto traversiere* (*Concerti per stromenti a fiati*, vol. 1) Barthold Kuijken, Academia Montis Regalis 63' 19"
Opus 111 **OPS 30298**
RV427, 431, 432, 436, 438, 438bis, 440, 533

At first I was not taken by this CD. The orchestral playing was just a little too rough, especially in the bass department. Repeated listening has, as usual, changed my opinion. No doubt about the soloists, though: Barthold Kuijken is on superb form, and he's well matched by the second flautist Marcello Gatti (although you have to go all the way into the booklet to find his name) and Elena Bianchi (the bassoonist, who has solo parts in the concerto for two flutes). The only remaining puzzle is why there is a young red-haired girl on the cover, looking something like a modern-day (and better-dressed) Venus de Milo. Ignore the slightly eccentric package and enjoy the music. *BC*

Vivaldi *Stabat Mater RV 621, Nisi Dominus RV 608, Longe mala umbrae terrores RV 629* David Daniels *cT*, Fabio Biondi 55' 25"
Virgin *Veritas* 7243 **5 45474 2** 3

It's very difficult to come to any new recordings by Fabio Biondi without the prejudice from previous experiences, but I do try. At first, I quite enjoyed this new disc of vocal music although I did not take to David Daniels' voice (and I'll ask once again: did Vivaldi write this for countertenors?) As time went on, though, Biondi started letting his hair down, and I grew less inclined to listen to much more. Track 4 was enough to spoil the *Stabat mater* – although the spikiness of track 7 was very exciting (even if a few extraneous notes resulting from the string-crossing virtuosity slightly mar the opening ritornello), but the *sul ponticelo* of track 8 is curious. For aficionados of Biondi and Daniels only, I'd say. *BC*

Zani *Sonate a Violino e Basso intitolate 'Pensieri Armonici' 1735*. Andrea Rognoni *vln*, Ensemble L'Aura Soave 63' 50"
MV Cremona **MVC/001-004**
Zuccaro *Sonate a Violino, è Basso, ò Cembalo, Opera Prima, 1747* Andrea Rognoni *vln*, Ensemble L'Aura Soave 71' 03"
MV Cremona **MVC/000-003**

Previous releases by this group on this label have been of 17th-century music, and I've been rather less than favourable in reviewing them. These two discs (of sonatas dating from 1735 by Andrea Zani da Casalmaggiore and 1747 by Carlo Zuccari, also da Casalmaggiore) fare better. The violinist sounds slightly lost (lots of treble and no bass) in the acoustic, and although there's theorbo and harpsichord, I can really only hear the cello on the bass line. That said, these are nice performances of pretty much unknown repertoire and will make a welcome addition to any collection. *BC*

We received several items from MV Cremona this month; review of the others have suffered delays. Details from www. mvcremona.it

Il Barocco Concertante: Music for Trumpet and Organ Joachim Schäfer, Uwe Komischke *tpts*, Matthias Eisenberg *org* 55' 28"
Christophorus **CHR 77240**
Albinoni op. 7/12; **Francescini** *Sonata 2 tpts*; **Handel** *Oboe concerto 2* HWV 301, *Suite in G* from *Water Music*; **Hertel** *Oboe concerto in G*; **Manfredini** *Concerto in D 2 tpts*; **Telemann** *Fantasie in A (orig fl solo)*

I fear that there is little here to please *EMR* type ears. The repertoire consists mainly of arranged oboe repertoire and I, at any rate, found the conflict between substance and sonority unconvincing. There are also regular conflicts of intonation between the instruments and some unsteadiness in the organ ritornelli. The original trumpet music (Francescini and Manfredini) gives more satisfaction, but not enough to justify a recommendation in these columns.
David Hansell

A London Concert John Holloway *vln*, Jaap ter Linden *vlc*, Lars Ulrik Mortensen *hpscd*
Naim **naimcd037 60' 58"**
Arne *Vln Sonata in E*; **Babell** *'Sulla ruota di fortuna'* (transc of Handel *Rinaldo*); **Geminiani** *Vlc sonata in a* op. 5/6; **Handel** *Vln Sonata in D* HWV 371; **Veracini** *Vln Sonata in d, op. 2/12*

With such a title, I wondered whether this CD would re-create a typical concert programme that might have been heard in London in the second quarter of the 18th century. (The early music movement has yet to exploit the potential of period programming.) But 18th-century concerts would hardly compress into an hour's worth of music. Apart from the two Handel sonatas – two of his finest examples – the other pieces were new to me. The Arne, a two-movement work, is pleasantly galant, but the interest really comes in the Festing, performed without harpsichord continuo. The frequent double stopping in the violin part contributes to a distinctive texture, helped by a chordal accompaniment from the cello when suitable. It

was the Veracini that proved the most stunning work. Within the framework of the conventional slow-fast/slow-fast structure the composer has contrived a large-scale *Passaglia* on the standard four-note descending bass, decorated chromatically to match the six-note pattern of Purcell's ground at the end of *Dido and Aeneas*. The last section, in the major key and more in the style of a French chaconne, concludes with references to the opening passacaglia. The Geminiani cello sonata is one of the best of the op. 5 set, with some surprises – the improvisatory chordal passages linking the two faster movements and the stunningly lyrical melody in the major key introduced before the final repetition of the minuet theme. Least interesting was William Babell's harpsichord transcription of 'Sulla ruota di fortuna' from *Rinaldo*, which, for all its virtuosic scales, got firmly stuck for 3½ minutes in F major. Here is a record that is a must for all those wanting to explore the high-baroque string sonata repertoire. As would be expected from this highly experienced team of soloists, the performances are excellent.

Ian Graham-Jones

Solo pour la flûte traversière Barthold Kuijken
Accent **ACC 20144** 71' 34"
CPE Bach *Sonata in a* H562/Wq132; **JS Bach** *Solo* BWV 1013; **J. C. Fischer** *Minuetto con variazioni*; **J. Hotteterre le Romain** *Airs*; **Vivaldi** *Le Printemps* arr, J. J. Rousseau; **Weiss** *Suite in G* (arr)

Barthold Kuijken's recital of flute solos predictably contains a great deal from which one may learn; it is also extremely enjoyable. The playing is best of all in the famous C. P. E. Bach solo, composed in 1747 and, as the composer may have said later (in 1783), apparently never played by the famous virtuoso for whom it was composed. Also very pleasant is a long Suite adapted from Weiss by Kuijken himself. The Rousseau version of Vivaldi's *La primavera* for flute alone deserves to be far better known and so does the neat little set of variations on a popular Minuet by J. C. Bach's oboist colleague Johann Christian Fischer. Fascinating notes by the soloist.

Stephen Daw

CLASSICAL

Cimarosa *Overtures, Vol. 1* Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia, Alessandro Amoretti 69' 06"
Naxos **8.225181** £

Only a lazy listener – or a reviewer – would normally play a dozen opera overtures straight through. In this case, though, the advantage of hearing them one after another is that Cimarosa's powers of invention, and his mastery of orchestration and rhythm, emerge very strongly; he's hardly a master of mood, there being little to distinguish *opera buffa* from *seria* (on this point, the note could have been more informative). The programme includes the overture to *Il matrimonio segreto* (here recorded for the first time in its original, Viennese version – which, surprisingly, is the one printed in my vocal score, Paris: Marquerie, 1839). None of the other works to be heard here is currently available on CD. Performances are lively, poised, and with telling wind detail nicely brought out in the recording. I look forward to further instalments – at the rate of a dozen overtures a CD, there may be a further four volumes to come! *Peter Branscombe*

Haydn *Symphonies, Vol. 25:* 70, 71, 73 *La Chasse* Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia, Béla Drahos 69' 29"
Naxos **8.555708** £

The works performed here are Nos 70 in D, 71 in B♭ and 73 in D, reasonably familiar symphonies from the period 1779-82. *La chasse* is best-known – though the stag, not the fox (as the note has it), was surely the quarry! Béla Drahos secures alert and stylish readings, with much affectionate detail from the wind players and, in the menuetto of 71, the two solo violinists. The hunt-finale of 73, however, is rather a tame affair here, p.c. *avant la lettre*? The recording lacks clarity of focus, though this hardly diminishes the sense of general satisfaction brought about by the latest issue in Naxos' bargain-price progress through the oeuvre. *Peter Branscombe*

Janitsch *Kammermusik* Die Freitagsakademie
Relief **CR 991070** 69' 31"
Cantata *Che debbo rimirar*, Sonatas in c & G, op. 1/1 & 2, in C (ob, vla, vlc, bc), in e (ob d'am, 2 vln, bc), in B♭ (kbd)

Concert Life in 18th Century Berlin Il Gardellino 72' 05"
Accent **ACC 20143**
J.G.Graun *Trio in F* ob, vln, vlc, bc; **Janitsch** *Quadro in g* O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden; *Sonata da Camera in C*, op. 4, *Kammersonate 'Echo' op. 5 in D*; **Schaffrath** *Sonata in A (hpscd & gamba)*

I really enjoyed playing some Janitsch quartets in the evening recreational sessions during last summer's Early Music Summer School at Beauchamp [and so did I *CB*], so it was a particular pleasure to receive not one but two discs featuring his music. Die Freitagsakademie (named after Janitsch's concerts, which he initiated in Rheinsberg in 1738) is a Berne-based ensemble and this is their first CD. They combine four quartets (undoubtedly the composer's favourite medium) with a keyboard sonata and a cantata for tenor and strings, which survives only in manuscript and is a very fine piece (I was constantly reminded of Arne on good form). My favourite track, though, is a gorgeous Siciliana for oboe, viola, cello and continuo. I look forward to more!

The other CD, by Il Gardellino, features three more quartets, including the celebrated *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* movement, which is beautifully performed. In fact, this ensemble fares far better in terms of recorded sound, and it is technically superior, too – hardly surprising when one reads the names of the musicians involved. Marcel Ponseele's oboe floats beautifully over the strings. The other pieces – a sonata for obbligato harpsichord and gamba by Schaffrath and a quartet by Johann Gottlieb Graun – are no less interesting. Altogether, these two discs (and the one of music by the Grauns reviewed above) have given me a real insight into the quality of music in late-18th-century Berlin – with few of the quirks of C. P. E. Bach, who had by that time left for Hamburg. *BC*

Krafft *De profundis, Levavi oculos meos* Il Fondamento, La Sfera del Canto, Paul Dombrecht *dir* 54' 12"
Passacaille **934**

Yet another feather in Paul Dombrecht's cap. After the obscure Pro defunctis, the last release from these forces, this CD is a winner from beginning to end. Fine, beautifully-conceived music brought to life by a first-class orchestra and choir, with excellent soloists and a conductor who can get to the very heart of any music you hand him. Frans-Joseph Krafft (1721-95) died a year after he had ceased to work at St Bavo's cathedral in Ghent (he suffered from gout in the hands and feet), but his final work dates from only four days before his death, showing that he was still a fertile source of music in his 70s. Both the pieces on the CD date from 1766, and they reveal a fine gift for solo and choral writing, using the standard orchestra of the time (strings with pairs of oboes and horns). I have no hesitation in recommending this recording to anyone. *BC*

Mozart *Opera arias* Sandrine Piau, Freiburger Barockorchester, Gottfried von der Goltz *dir* 64' 14"
Naïve *Astrée* **E 8877**

This programme of ten arias comprises two each from *Lucio Silla* (Giunia), *Mitridate* (Aspasia) and *Die Entführung* (Konstanze), and one each from *Die Zauberflöte*, *Il re pastore*, *La clemenza di Tito* and *Zaide*. Sandrine Piau has a lovely voice, which she displays to excellent effect in arias fast and slow, grave and gay – though she takes Pamina's number at a funereal pace rather than observing Mozart's Andante marking; and Servilia's Tempo di menuetto from *La clemenza* is also on the slow side. Her German is markedly less good than her Italian, though she characterizes the music neatly, with clean coloratura. The leaflet contains sung texts and translations, but also some arch biographical material about, and by, the singer. The Freiburg Baroque Orchestra under Gottfried von der Goltz provides stylish accompaniments, and the recording is well balanced and clear. An impressive and enjoyable recital.

Peter Branscombe

Mozart *Piano Concertos* Richard Burnett *fp*, The Finchcocks String Quartet 72' 10"
Hänssler *Masterpiece* **HE 94.011** (rec 1996) £
K 413, 415, pf & str arr. of wind qntet K 452

Margaret Cranmer wrote with enthusiasm about the original issue (*EMR* 24, Oct. 1996) and this cheap reissue is most welcome. The quartet scoring of the concertos is a plausible and authorised option, and these performances have a suitable domestic tone,

though there is nothing amateurish about the pianist or the quartet (Lucy Russell, Daniel Spektor, Alan George and Christine Kyprianides). A pleasing record. *CB*

19th CENTURY

Felix & Fanny Mendelssohn *Piano Trios*
The Atlantis Trio (Jaap Schröder *vln* Enid Sutherland *vlc*, Penelope Crawford *fp* 56' 48"
Musica Omnia **MO 0105** *in box*
+ 23' 55" commentary by the players
Felix: op. 66 in c; Fanny op. 11 in d

These impressive interpretations underline the passion as well as the romantic lyricism of both Felix Mendelssohn and his sister Fanny. The instruments are ideally suited to the music and the second disc contains a commentary by the artists, who give an overview as well as explaining stylistic details such as the sliding technique used by the strings. The admirable Graf fortepiano was discovered in Sweden and subsequently restored in the U.S.A. Felix described the tone of one of his own Graf pianos as 'clear and distinct and songful', but the opening of his trio in this recording is remarkable for its air of mystery, aided by the use of the moderator pedal. People who are unfamiliar with the music of Fanny will be captivated by the last movement of her trio, which has a lovely rhapsodic melody spurred on by little improvisatory flourishes. This disc is exemplary for the quality of the musicianship and the ensemble. *Margaret Cranmer*

MISCELLANEOUS

Early American Choral Music. Vol. 2. His Majestie's Clerkes, Paul Hillier *cond* 61' 23"
Harmonia Mundi *Classical Express* **HCX 3957128**

This first appeared with the title *Goostly Psalmes* in 1996 and was reviewed in June of that year (*EMR* 21 p. 14): the original subtitle now becomes the main title. I thought then that the performances were a bit too pretty, and it doesn't convince as much as, say, Doug Fullington's *The Shape-note Album* (PR-TSNA; reviewed *EMR* 49, April 1999), which EB plays quite often, so its sound has born the test of time. *CB*

£ = bargain price ££ = midprice

All other discs full price, as far as we know

There were more discs to review than last month, though still fewer than usual. However, that is partly because more than usual have been held over until next month. I can't answer for reviewers other than myself, but I have been put out of action so far for nearly a week by a debilitating bug (a virus, I gather from a local medical subscriber who has also suffered it) and did not have time to write up several discs that I had heard. That will also explain this issue being late, if we don't manage to get UK copies out to arrive before Easter.

One reader pointed out the duplication of our reviews of Scarlatti. I don't automatically check incoming discs against previous reviews unless I remember them, but am not too worried, since two different reviews can be illuminating. We could make a policy of it. We tried it indirectly by using as many reviewers as possible for the John Eliot Gardiner Bach Pilgrimage CDs.

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I made a slip in calculating the cost per page of Michele Temle's *The Middle Eastern Influence in Late Medieval Italian Dances*: swapping the digits round when manipulating them. Moral: always check whether calculations done on a machine accord with an approximate mental calculation (a rule I usually follow). So apologies: the book costs about 50c, not $2 per page. But as Ross Hesketh, the reader who drew my attention to it (in an e-mail with the nice title 'beware the reciprocals of March'), pointed out, 'no decision turns on it'.

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According to an intriguing remark in *Gramophone*, Boulez had to call in the aid of a musicologist to study the sources of one of his early works in preparation for a new recording. It is possible that his function was merely that of copyist, copy editor or musical assistant; but this opens up a new world of employment for the probably-excessive supply of musicologists from university music departments: to sort out (using the term to range from very menial to very sophisticated activities) the incomplete MSS of composers so that they can finish or revise them. I wonder what he had to do? Analyse the compositional procedures so that any fresh composition matched what existed well enough to prevent hostile analysts finding holes in the new work? Write pastiche early Boulez? I suppose early Boulez isn't much more recent than Elgar's Third Symphony. Maybe we would have had an even better version than Anthony Payne's if someone had done it while Elgar was still alive to comment. *CB*

OBITUARIES

Chris Turner, who died suddenly on 25 February, will be best known to *EMR* readers as one of a group of early music enthusiasts who became interested in the early 1990s in English psalmody – parish church and chapel music of the 18th and 19th centuries. I – and I suspect a number of others – found the psalmody repertory attractive largely because it preserved almost into modern times many of the features of Renaissance music, including its vigour and directness. But for Chris psalmody had extra dimensions. It neatly combined his twin interests in early music and church music, but it also seemed to provide him with a satisfying outlet for his strong religious beliefs. Chris was a founder member of the choir Psalmody, and made an important contribution to its performances and recordings of the psalmody repertory. He was also the prime mover behind the Clacton conferences in 1995 and 1997 devoted to psalmody research, those exciting if abrasive encounters between early music practitioners and members of the West Gallery Music Association. At the time he was my colleague at Colchester Institute's School of Music, where he proved to me and many others a loyal friend and a witty companion. His last major research project was a survey of English church barrel organs, undertaken with his friend Marcel Glover. It involved them recording nearly all the surviving instruments, and he catalogued, transcribed and analyzed the repertory of tunes. His family and friends would like to see the project completed; only three organs remain to be recorded and we estimate that about three-quarters of the writing-up has been completed. I would be glad to hear of anyone prepared to finish this important project and see it through the press. Please contact me at: peter@parley.org.uk or p.k.holman@leeds.ac.uk.

Peter Holman

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We failed to acknowledge the death earlier this year of Michael Howard (b. 1922). He founded the Renaissance Singers in 1944, an amateur group which concentrated on repertoire that was rarely performed even by cathedral choirs. He later formed a more professional group, Cantores in Ecclesia. His performances of 16th-century music (early-Tudor English and Palestrina in particular) were often enormously impressive and helped to change the direction of people's tastes. By the 1970s (when I knew him), he seemed out-of-touch with the burgeoning world of the authenticists, but any concert by him was always impassioned and overpowering. *CB*

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MONTEVERDI AT LICHFIELD

I resisted retiring to a sick bed on Saturday 16 March to uphold a promise to attend a concert by Ex Cathedra at Lichfield Cathedral of music for Easter at St Mark's by Monteverdi. I had an interest, since it could have been entitled King's Music at St Mark's. But the main reason was that the conductor Jeffrey Skidmore had particularly asked Hugh Keyte to come, and he was staying with us. (Hugh, older UK readers will remember, was responsible for a considerable number of liturgical reconstructions on Radio 3 in the 1970s and 1980s.) We were invited as guests, not reviewers, so I will keep any critical impulses in check. We did, of course, both have some critical comments (which we are happy to pass on in private), but we both found it an immensely enjoyable event.

The audience was impressive – and not just because the nave was full. At similar concerts in London, one has a strange sensation that there must be something peculiar about people coming out for an evening and sitting through such unusual music. But here, as at the Suffolk Schütz concert I had played in the previous weekend for the Suffolk Villages Festival, the audience seemed positively normal. Both in Suffolk and Lichfield, years had been spent building up local audiences, and it is worth it. A short pre-concert recital showed the work Ex Cathedra had been doing with five local schools, whose singers also joined in the chant in the main concert and formed the procession.

The concert was performed at the west end, underneath a new, temporary, *Pala d'oro* – another product of the educational project. At most church concerts, visibility of the performers is minimal even in the good seats. Here a large screen was placed above the *pala d'oro* and monitors down the aisles so that everyone could see. The choice of what to show seemed as good as most TV concerts, and there were few moments where it was distracting or irrelevant. It enhanced the immediacy and directness of Monteverdi's music: definitely a practice to be followed.

The two halves were devoted to an Easter Mass and Vespers. We were not given exact liturgical reconstructions: just the polyphonic items and enough of the chant to space them and show that the services contained more than the polyphonic pieces. The mass was the 1610 setting a6 based on Gombert's *In illo tempore*, a fascinating piece that reaches back a century to a distant style but is nevertheless right up to date in its harmonic structure (so needs its continuo part – we both missed the organ in the *Kyrie* and *Gloria*). Since San Marco had virtually a double Vespers at Easter, we heard both the 1640 Magnificats in close succession – the former rarely done (I don't think anyone had published it transposed down and with the alternatim chant until we did it last month). The two items which most stayed in the mind were duets, the amazingly protracted *Confitebor* (ST) and *O bone Jesu* (SS). The local-boy-made-good Paul Agnew was outstanding, but well-matched by Carolyn Sampson, who herself was successfully partnered by Natalie Clifton Griffith. The choir sung with a clarity of parts that ensembles this size (38 names were listed in the programme) do not always achieve. I presume that the distinction of Sue Addison was responsible for the sackbuts, unusually, being listed before the cornetts. I may have regretted it next day, but it was definitely worth going. *CB*