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First, our apologies to some of you with a name in the second half of the alphabet and living in the UK who received the February 2002 instead of the July issue. We are extremely puzzled how this can have happened. As far as we knew, we had no copies of the February issue left, yet a batch seems to have got mixed in somewhat haphazardly with the July issues. Our printer cannot see any way in which this could have happened in the printing or finishing process, and we don't understand how an unknown batch (20 or 30 copies) appeared while we were sending them out. Our apologies – and a request that libraries check their copies.

The July issue was also sent out late: no apologies for that, since we allow ourselves that licence to diminish the gap between it and September. This issue should be on time, but the October issue may be delayed, since we will be away for a fortnight in early September. We intend to drive from Florida to New Orleans; we have only one subscriber on that route to disturb by unexpected visits. BC will be looking after things here in our absence. By the time this appears, he will have left Dundee behind him and settled at St Ives, a few miles from us. The November issue will probably appear just after the London Early Music Exhibition, 25-27 October, which this year is at Trinity College of Music, now moved to the historic buildings of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich (one of London's most imposing architectural complexes).

As usual, I spent a week in July playing and talking about continuo at the Beauchamp Summer School, where five days of Schütz (mostly *Symphoniae Sacrae* III) were followed by another assault on Praetorius's *Vater unser*. (Some singers found it rather boring at a course earlier this year: that was my fault for not giving all singers the solo vocal choir.) It retained its power. The duration was interesting. Philip Thorby thought that he conducted it at a more relaxed speed than before, but it still came out at about 22 minutes, although Praetorius suggests half an hour. It is difficult to balance the chorale melody and the embellishments (themselves worthy of study) at any very different speed. Perhaps as well as a Brunswick foot there was a Brunswick hour! CB

PS A further apology. We have had to photocopy this issue since, in spite of getting it to the printer earlier than usual, when we came to our very final deadline for mailing, it was still only on film.

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

MUSIC THEORY

The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory edited by Thomas Christensen. xxiii + 998pp, £100.00 ISBN 9 780521 623711

I started reading this on the train on the way to the Associated Board press launch of their new *Art of Fugue* edition (see below), so wondered how the title related to 'theory' as understood by the pupils and examiners of the ABRSM grade exams. There is an enormous amount about the discrimination of intervals, rather less about rhythm and not very much about notation as such. As a publisher, the theoretic issues that particularly interest me are how music is transmitted in notation and how notation has changed, both in its appearance and in the expectation the performer has of it. This is not a topic that looms large here. But there is enough else to satisfy any musician's curiosity about what has been considered to be music theory for the last two and a half millennia. I can't sum up or evaluate 31 chapters in a brief review; indeed, I must admit that I haven't read all of them. The distinguished authors generally manage to cover their subjects in depth without letting the reader realise how skilful the compression and selection of information has been. This should be one of the most consulted books in libraries used by students, though purchasing a private copy is sadly way beyond the means of all except the wealthy. It is a book to be studied at a desk: 1.838 kg (the packing slip conveniently gives the weight) is a lot to hold when reading in the train or in bed or adding to an air travel bag (the last discouraging me from delaying the review so that I could read it on an Atlantic crossing). But one of its values is its wide scope, both of topic and period, which demands the space. I've learnt from every chapter I have read, not just new ideas, but new ways of relating what I already know. Histories written by a group of specialists inevitably leave gaps and their structure usually avoids a direct narrative (or story: a rare example of a current academic term being simpler than its predecessor). Here, editorial control seems to have been tight and the volume coheres better than most multi-authored compendia. Highly recommended, especially to those with deep pockets and strong arms.

SWEELINCK

Sweelinck Studies: Proceedings of the International Sweelinck Symposium, Utrecht, 1999 Edited by Pieter Dirksen. Utrecht: STIMU Foundation for Historical Research, 2002. x + 256pp. ISBN 90 72786 09 2 (email: oom@oudemuziek.nl)
Sweelinck The Complete Keyboard Works NM Classics 92119. (9 CDs with 216pp booklet)

The publications of the Utrecht symposia are always worthwhile: it is a pity that STIMU does not list previous volumes. This starts with a surprisingly naive introduction from Rudolf Rasch: his text – 'In the past, neither composers nor listeners cared much about the stylistic characterisations of the music they composed or heard' – strikes me as so obviously wrong that it hardly needs demolishing. He redeems himself, however, by a discussion of modality in Sweelinck's psalms which is essential reading, even if you have no interest in the psalms themselves, since it approaches the still-controversial question of clef configuration and transposition from a different angle from Andrew Parrott's pioneering discussion in *Early Music* xii (1984) pp. 490-516. (The only overlap is the mention of the relationship of vocal and lute pitches in Adriaensen's *Novum pratum musicum*, discussed in the extensive footnote 51 which I think was one of my contributions to Andrew's article.) The 'fact' which is retailed in innumerable programme and CD booklet notes (including mine) that the organ at the Oude Kerck was not played liturgically is not entirely true: the music played before the service probably had to relate to the melodies to be sung during it, hence Sweelinck's variations on psalm tunes. David J. Smith writes on Sweelinck's relationship with Philips and Bull; the English background to much of his style is clear, but I am less certain where other strands of his keyboard style came from, especially the pieces that are more obviously for organ. What struck me in listening through the CD set is the way Sweelinck formalises the less-disciplined English manner; I wonder (perhaps prompted by a point made in the book or the CD booklet) whether this is the result of thinking in a specific number of parts, as required to notate in tablature. Keyboard music dominates, which accords with the general perception of the composer, though vocal music forms a far larger part of his Collected Works. The expected names in Sweelinck scholarship appear, along with Ton Koopman. This is an essential purchase for those interested in Sweelinck's music.

As is the CD set, whose timely arrival was a few days after the book. The bound booklet is in five languages, so not quite so informative as the 216 pages might imply. But in addition to 32 English pages of notes, there is a catalogue of works (numbered as in Pieter Dirksen's *The Keyboard Music of Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck*), noting who plays each of them on the recording and on what instrument (though without stating the disc and track number) and registrations and pictures of the organs. The collection is deliberately comprehensive: unlike those scholarly projects which try to exclude every work whose ascription is not impeccably attested (several Collected Works and thematic catalogues come to mind), works on and just over the borderline of

authenticity are present, and commendably so: who knows if current assumptions will be overturned by a new source?

The nine organists include Peter van Dijk, who seems to be the mind behind the project; Pieter Dirksen, the leading Sweelinck scholar, is one of the six harpsichordists. The series offers a conspectus of historical instruments as well as the current ideas on performance style – though the playing is in no way didactic. I'm not sure that playing the discs through in fairly close succession was the best way to enjoy them, though at least it brought home powerfully the range and maturity of Sweelinck's keyboard art; and that I am sure is what all those involved in this monumental project would have most desired.

LA GALATEA

Loreto Vittori *La Galatea* Edited by Thomas D. Dunn. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 119). A-R Editions, 2002. xlix + 1282pp, \$94.00. ISBN 0 89579 506 X

Vittori (1600-1670) was a soprano castrato, a member of the Papal chapel from 1620 until the mid-1640s, a poet, and a composer. Libretti for five dramatic works survive, but this is the only one with music, published in Rome in 1639. The text is quite verbose, and a little action is spread a long way. I suspect that for a modern performance before a non-Italian-speaking audience, quite heavy pruning would be required. Some of the recitative is uneventful, then there are sudden turns of expressive harmony, which often work well, though sometimes seem weird: an occasional editorial figure would save false attempts from sightreading players. The *Dramma* starts with a virtuosic prologue for a bass Nettune with a range an octave and a ninth from bottom C; Polifemo has a suspiciously similar compass, suggesting that the two roles may have been doubled. The editor gives vocal ranges but not original clefs, nor does he make suggestions for doubling among the cast of ten named roles and further soloists from the chorus (which needs to be at least eight strong for the SATBx2 chorus of Sylvas). Instrumental requirements are just two [violins] for ritornelli and unspecified, but probably extensive, continuo. The edition is a pleasure to use, editorial procedures and typography doing as little as possible to distract the user. I do, however, prefer that the notation of bass figures not to be modernised to include naturals: I spent a week recently teaching that, in this period, # means major chord, b means minor; ♯ is irrelevant. And I wonder why there has to be such a gap between staves.

FROBERGER

Froberger *Neue Ausgabe sämtliche Werke... III. Keyboard and Organ Works from the Copied Sources. Partitas and Partita Movements, Part I...* edited by Siegbert Rampe. Bärenreiter (BA 8065), 2002. cvi + 164pp, £29.50.

The first impression is of the tail wagging the dog: the critical commentary begins at page 117, so the volume

contains 154 pages of editorial material for 116 pages of music. On the other hand, had it been published separately, it would have cost far more than this volume, would have been in German only (without the English translation) and probably would have appeared much later. So the only problem is the weight (nearly a kilo) on a harpsichord desk. The music is in what I will continue to think of as organ-format (landscape) although this volume is for harpsichord. The English wording on the title page (given above) is not entirely clear (the German is 'abschriftlicher Überlieferung'); the volume contains alternative versions of the partitas (suites) to those published in vol. I & II from the autograph MSS of 1649 and 1656, and additional works in the form; i.e. in the editor's Frescobaldi catalogue (which will appear in vol. 6), FbWV 601a - 607c and 611b-625a. (I suspect that I'm not the only person for whom FbWV gets corrupted by the fingers to FWVB.) The editor argues, rightly, that in this sort of music, the idea of working through variants to establish a single authoritative text (or even a sequence of revisions) is irrelevant. The composer may well have made changes every time he copied it. Some may be of substance, others may merely show that certain aspects are variable. Even trivial examples of the latter need to be studied by players so that they know what elements in the notation (whichever source is used for an edition) need not be followed literally; yet to show them is incredibly fussy and looks petty. That is a problem with this edition. It works in a series of short pieces, but the space involved will present problems with page-turns in later volumes. One specific quibble is the numbering of footnotes on the music itself. Apart from possible confusion with fingering, they make the score look very fussy and other solutions might have been possible – using Greek letters for the sources of each movement might have helped. The publisher has done a good job: it could look terrible with less professional setting. Much of the introduction is taken up with a thorough description of the sources, and there is a commentary on each piece. Players will need to be Froberger enthusiasts to prefer this to existing editions based on the Vienna autographs; but even if you continue to play from that, perusal of the variants here may change how you read their notation. Thanks are due to the nine sponsors without whom the edition would probably not have been published, or would have been issued in a scholarly series at a price beyond the mere player.

MARCELLO'S SEASONS

Benedetto Marcello *Il pianto e il riso delle quattro stagioni*. Edited by Michael Burden. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 118) A-R Editions, 2002. xxiv + 167pp, \$87.00. ISBN 0 89579 499 3

Marcello wrote oratorios for the Feast of the Assumption in 1731 and 1733, of which this is the first. Spring, Summer and Autumn vividly express to Winter their grief at the death of the Virgin, but in part II they rejoice because 'Maria e viva'. The music, for SATB soli and strings, looks impressive, particularly with regard to the interest in the string writing, with middle parts unexpectedly (in the city

of Vivaldi) independent. The edition seems fine, though a few points (presumably representing the original notation) puzzle me. In no. 1, for instance, the bass has a slur covering 8 minims (bars 12-15); there is a similar passage for the violins in No. 19, bars 34-9. I assume they mean legato rather than slurred. It is also strange to see trills with an accidental referring to the inflection of the upper note (No. 14): is that original or editorial? In no. 4, for which we are given the first six bars in facsimile, I puzzle why sets of semiquaver triplets in 6/8 need be linked under a single beam: the original notation with each triplet separate looks perfectly normal to me. Even more archaic is the bass in bar 4, where a beam links two quavers separated by a quaver rest, while the original follows the normal modern practice of not linking the quavers. I find it very difficult to work out what the marks above the first two notes in bar 1 of the two violin parts mean, and the commentary does not help. These are, however, trivial points. More serious is the convention for editorial dynamics, which are in roman in contrast to original dynamics in italic. Since the roman font looks bolder than the italic, the reader is inclined to take them as being original, particularly since that is the convention in some Bärenreiter Collected Works. In the score, with both markings usually present in different parts in proximity, there is little problem; but players using single-line parts are likely to be confused. What is wrong with square brackets? There is no mention of performance material, but I hope that string parts will be made available. I haven't timed the work, but it looks a bit long to put in a programme with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* – an obvious marketing ploy; but it certainly deserves performing.

ART OF FUGUE

J. S. Bach *The Art of Fugue... BWV 1080. Edited and annotated by Richard Jones. The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2002. 126pp. ISBN 1 85472 870 9*
Includes two-disc CD played by Davitt Moroney

Richard Jones and the Associated Board have done sterling work in their editions of baroque keyboard music; this latest example is outstanding. Despite (or rather because of) the existence of an autograph as well as a posthumous authoritative edition, there are serious editorial problems that impinge on the least musicological listener or player, such as the order of pieces, how the last *contrapunctus* should end, what (if anything) to do with *Wenn wir in höchsten Nöten sein*, what instruments are appropriate, and whether the music should be printed in open score or on two staves. Richard Jones presents this unequivocally as keyboard music on two staves, with parts distributed between them according to playability. *Contrapunctus XIV* is left unfinished, on the recording as well as the score, though Davitt Moroney's own edition (Henle) contains a completion.

All of Bach's keyboard collections are at least partially didactic in intent, lessons in composition as well as performance, a fact which is here emphasised by the presence of an accompanying recording. It is also a convincing

demonstration that the harpsichord is the ideal instrument: the part-writing is absolutely clear. At the press launch, when some movements were played by Davitt on the harpsichord and by Yonty Solomon on the piano, some listeners commended the piano's ability to bring out the inner parts; but I thought that was unsubtle and that the harpsichord presented the parts far more clearly. The recording was made specially for this project, and is not a reissue of Davitt's early one. Students shouldn't, of course, copy its details, but it offers a demonstration of a level of musicality and style at which to aim. The editorial information includes an introduction on the sources, extensive analytical notes (with the score of one *contrapunctus* set out to show the structure), performance notes, and textual notes. An unexpected bonus is the complete absence of fingering, which makes this the ideal edition for all purposes, not just keyboard students, though it is necessary to turn to other editions for the two-harpsichord version of *Contrapunctus 13*. Curiously, the ABRSM doesn't think it necessary to advertise its prices: I can find no figure on any of the publicity material I have received (nor, for that matter, does the leaflet for the series of performance practice books to be reviewed in October or November – the launch is October 2nd – have any prices).

BÄRENREITER BAROQUE

J. S. Bach *Concertos for Harpsichord BWV 1052-1059... Edited by Werner Breig. Bärenreiter (TP 420), [2002]. xxi + 367pp, £16.50.*

One of the more recent NBA volumes is VII/4, containing the harpsichord concertos, so the rapid issue of a study score at a reasonable price is most welcome. Parts are also available (BA 5224-5230); the 'piano reductions' presumably contain a usable part for the soloist. We have been accustomed to think of Bach's seven solo harpsichord concertos as a set, but the editor, Werner Breig, points out that BWV 1052-7 is presented in the autograph as a single set of six, like the Brandenburg Concertos. Although surviving in the same volume, BWV 1058 and nine extant bars of BWV 1059 are independent of the set. The compilation of the scores seems to have been quite late (c.1738), suggesting that Bach had a higher regard for these transcriptions of earlier works than some of his commentators and links them with the compilations (*alias* major works) of the 1740s, which have generally had a far higher standing among critics. The MS scores do not represent Bach's final version, and the edition is based on the parts, though the unrevised keyboard part of the score is printed in full as appendixes to BWV 1052-6. An earlier transcription of the violin concerto on which BWV 1052 is based made by C. P. E. Bach in 1733/4 is also printed in full. The score is clearly authoritative and replaces previous ones, though it is a pity that just a little space isn't given to a brief listing of the source materials: Breig's introduction mentions parts as well as the autograph score, but there is no information about them other than the revised keyboard parts. Not every user will have access to the NBA critical commentary for elucidation.

Handel *Esther... Oratorio in six scenes. First version HWV 50^a...* Vocal score... by Andreas Köhs. Bärenreiter (BA 4047a), 2002. 145pp, £21.50.

A press release sent with this score draws attention to the publication of the 60th volume of the Halle Handel Complete Edition, which is scheduled for completion in 2023 (roughly 50% longer than Chrysander took for his edition). Speed of late has been encouraging, as has the quality of the new editions, though I haven't seen the latest, *Imeneo*, nor the full score edited by Howard Serwer on which this vocal score of the first version of *Esther* is based (HHA I/8; £105.00). Like *Acis and Galatea*, this is a Canons work that was subsequently magnified, adapted and diluted for London performances in the 1730s. Unlike *Acis*, modern revivals have been few and have not necessarily reverted to the original form. King's Music issued a score and parts (not involving detailed study of the sources) in 1995, keeping Chrysander's title of *Haman and Mordecai* to distinguish it from the later versions, though that title seems to have no particular authority and I will probably change it to *Esther* when I have time. But we did not produce a vocal score, just the vocal parts and continuo. The work is dominated by its fine final chorus (taking 41 of the 140 pages of this edition); it is well worth performing, especially if you want a Handel work shorter than the usual three acts. It isn't cheap, though, with an orchestra needing trumpet, two horns and harp as well as the usual oboes, strings and bassoon. No doubt the full score's preface will explain why the orchestra includes a viola (not normal in Canons works) from No. 16. The aria with harp (no. 6) in particular makes me wonder whether it would be sensible to give more information on instrumentation: while cueing instrument names in the reduction is fussy, it would be useful to note the scoring of each movement, partly to warn singers what to expect when they meet the orchestra (usually, in UK practice, only on the afternoon of the concert), and partly so that the demands of individual arias can be seen when planning separate performance of them. Orchestra managements ringing us for parts of Handel arias often have no idea what the orchestration is, and the singer is unlikely to be able to tell them. The underlay is in English only, but a German translation is appended. (Curiously, an 18th-century Hebrew translation of the libretto survives, which has been performed in Israel and, I believe, New York.) This vocal score is very welcome, and perhaps will encourage more performances.

Handel *Complete Works for Violin and Basso Continuo* Edited by Terence Best. Bärenreiter (BA 4226), 2002. 70pp + 2 parts, £12.50

This collects together the violin sonatas from three HHA vols (IV/4, 18 & 19). IV/4 was originally one of those inadequate volumes from before the series became a proper critical edition, but was replaced last year; this is not just a reissue of that, but also includes three sonatas from IV/18 and two isolated movements from IV/19, presenting all Handel's music for violin and continuo, along with the four

spurious sonatas published by Walsh and reprinted as part of op. 1 by Chrysander and included in many uncritical modern editions. Reviewers of Andrew Manze's recent recording that includes the spurious pieces have found them far less despicable than Handel scholars have. The introduction states the sources for each item, though there is no critical commentary. Strangely the Sonata in g published by Walsh for oboe is numbered 364^a in the introduction, 364 in the main text; the full HWV volume has HWV364^a for the standard version, HWV364^b for the gamba version, with no unsuffixed HWV364. The original HHA IV/4 made a half-hearted attempt to represent Walsh's publication format by supplying as violin and cello part a two-stave score, which is how such pieces were generally published in Handel's time. Now the three-stave score (with editorial continuo realisation) is accompanied by separate violin and cello parts, probably better for performers, but making a strong implication that a cello is necessary. Since the cello part is often more difficult than the violin, I suspect that Walsh's violin-playing customers were more likely to be accompanied just by a harpsichord; Terence Best agrees. The figures are included in the cello part (sadly, they were omitted from the earlier HHA IV/4 two-stave 'part'). The realisation in the score is sometimes a little higher than I would play, but is stylish enough to be played as it stands.

Vivaldi *Le Quattro Stagioni...* Edited by Christopher Hogwood. Bärenreiter (TP 399), [2002]. 95pp, £8.50.

I reviewed the full-size version of this in *EMR* 74 (Oct. 2001), so there is little to add here apart from renewed recommendation. The price is competitive with the available miniature scores but the larger format permits a better layout. But, unlike the Bach concertos reviewed above, the full score is an affordable price (£19.50) and that is preferable for the music stand if you are conducting, offers no strain to tiring eyes, and has the advantage of a critical commentary.

Haydn *Missa in Eb In honorem Beatissimae Virginis Mariae...* (*Great Organ Mass*), Hob. XXII:4. Vocal score... by Olga Kroupová. Bärenreiter (BA 4646a), 2002. 64pp, £11.00.

Haydn *Missa Sancti Nicolai...* Hob. XXII:6. Vocal score... by Olga Kroupová. Bärenreiter (BA 4645a), 2002. 48pp, £6.50.

Both these useful scores are based on the Collected Works, published by Henle but with scores and orchestral parts from Bärenreiter. The prices quoted for full scores are so cheap (£21.50 and £14.50) that I assumed they referred to study scores; but they have BA rather than TP numbers, so are presumably large ones. They are cheap and clearly readable, so the whole performance package for each mass can be strongly recommended. It is not at all easy to see from the piano reduction why the *Great Organ Mass* is so called, since the organ interjections are generally omitted. But in these scores I'm less worried at the omission of instrumental information than in the Handel reviewed above.

REGOLA RUBERTINA

Robert Oliver

Ganassi *Regola Rubertina* (1542) and *Lettione Seconda* (1543) translated Richard Bodig. Saraband, 2002. A\$35.00

This makes available to a general public the 20-year-old translation published in the Viola Da Gamba Society of America's *Journal* in 1981 and '82 by the late Richard Bodig. The translation included the full text of both books, facsimiles and 'graphsimites' of all of the music and most of the graphic illustrations. The journals are difficult to play from, because the facsimiles are small and side-on, and one had to photocopy and enlarge them. This new publication is to be warmly welcomed. The text is reset, but otherwise unaltered, and the layout is changed to make it easier to read and to play from, encouraging all viol players, in this case, to respond to the exhortation in Annette Otterstedt's book to learn from the old masters, as indeed they should.

The importance of Ganassi's two treatises is well understood by everyone who plays renaissance music, and both have been available for some time in translation. Dr Hildemarie Peter's edition and translation of *Fontegara* has been available in an English version since at least 1960, and her German translation of *Regola Rubertina*, also in an English version, since 1972. They are both user-friendly books, large, in landscape format, allowing them to be read on the music stand with instrument in hand. *Regola Rubertina* has un-cleaned-up facsimiles of all the music and most of the graphic illustrations, plus transcriptions into modern notation. It also has useful appendices explaining the solmisation system, notational symbols etc. There is another German translation, published at about the same time by Bärenreiter, by Wolfgang Eggers, also with facsimiles, but so laid out that one had to photocopy them to play them. Its rather small format, extensive commentary and transcriptions of all the music, aimed it at academics rather than players. This new version has a further advantage: it is a direct translation from the Italian into English, a significant stage nearer the original.

It is in 'portrait' format on A4, and it displays all the music so that it is comfortable to read from the music stand. The facsimile music examples are cleaned up or redrawn, and their captions replaced with English versions. It doesn't bother with transcriptions, perhaps less necessary now that players who are moderately serious tend to want to manage tablature. This could well encourage more to do so. The publisher confines herself to a brief informative preface, warning of pitfalls, for example that Italian tablature is upside down (bass strings on top line) and that one definitely shouldn't follow Ganassi's advice to move the bridge because his readership played viols with no soundposts, and modern readers could get into trouble that

way. Thus the publication is sensibly aimed at the enthusiast who simply wants to play, rather than be endlessly educated about all the details required by an academic. This directness and the price means that many players who would otherwise not bother will find themselves fascinated.

There is one detail of the layout which could be improved on a subsequent printing. In Book I Ganassi prints *recercars* in both tablature and staff notation. Saraband's page layout means that in the case of the 4th *recercar*, you have to turn a page to compare the two versions, yet there is space to have them on the same page.

Ganassi's instructions, in turn specific and vague, are expressed in a way which warms the reader to him. This translation certainly conveys this charm, which also comes across in the English version of the Peter edition. But Bodig seems to have more understanding of the Italian lightness of touch, although the English is occasionally awkward, perhaps reflecting the original. The translation itself feels authoritative enough and has that convincing absence of modern assumptions.

There are continual differences of detail, some of which are quite significant. Here's an example.

Bodig Chapter XX: Demonstration of the method of playing *ricecari*. It should be noted that the exercises written for the bass viol can also be played on the other viols, if it seems to you that they have been intended only for the bass. I selected the bass simply because it is the most important voice and because it was more convenient to settle on one voice only for the exercises.

Peter Chapter 20: Explanation of some of the *Ricecari*. Take note: the exercises (see previous chapter) to be played on the bass viol can also be used for the other instruments. Do not be surprised that I have written the exercises for the bass viol. It is the most important voice and I wanted to make allowance for this.

My instinctive reaction is that the Bodig translation is exactly that, and Peter's version, twice translated, is more interpretative. Unfortunately I have neither access to the facsimile version of the text, nor the skill to read it, so cannot judge. It is important to have a judgement on this, perhaps a reader can help out.

As for the music itself, the books each have a number of *recercars* and exercises, all of which are well-worth playing, if not necessarily performing. The books' immense significance is in the light they cast on what a bass viol player was expected to be able to manage technically in 1542, and on attitudes to music generally. This is essential information

for anyone who wants to perform any music of that period, not just Ortiz or the bastarda repertoire, though heaven knows, we need all the information we can get about that. There is a chapter on the art of accompanying one's own singing, and an example given. Many of the truisms of fingering and bowing were established early on, and it is clear that bass viol players were fluent in chords, and above the frets, from the very beginning – the highest note for bass is e'. Although some fingerings are unexpected, they make illuminating study. Well done, Saraband Music.

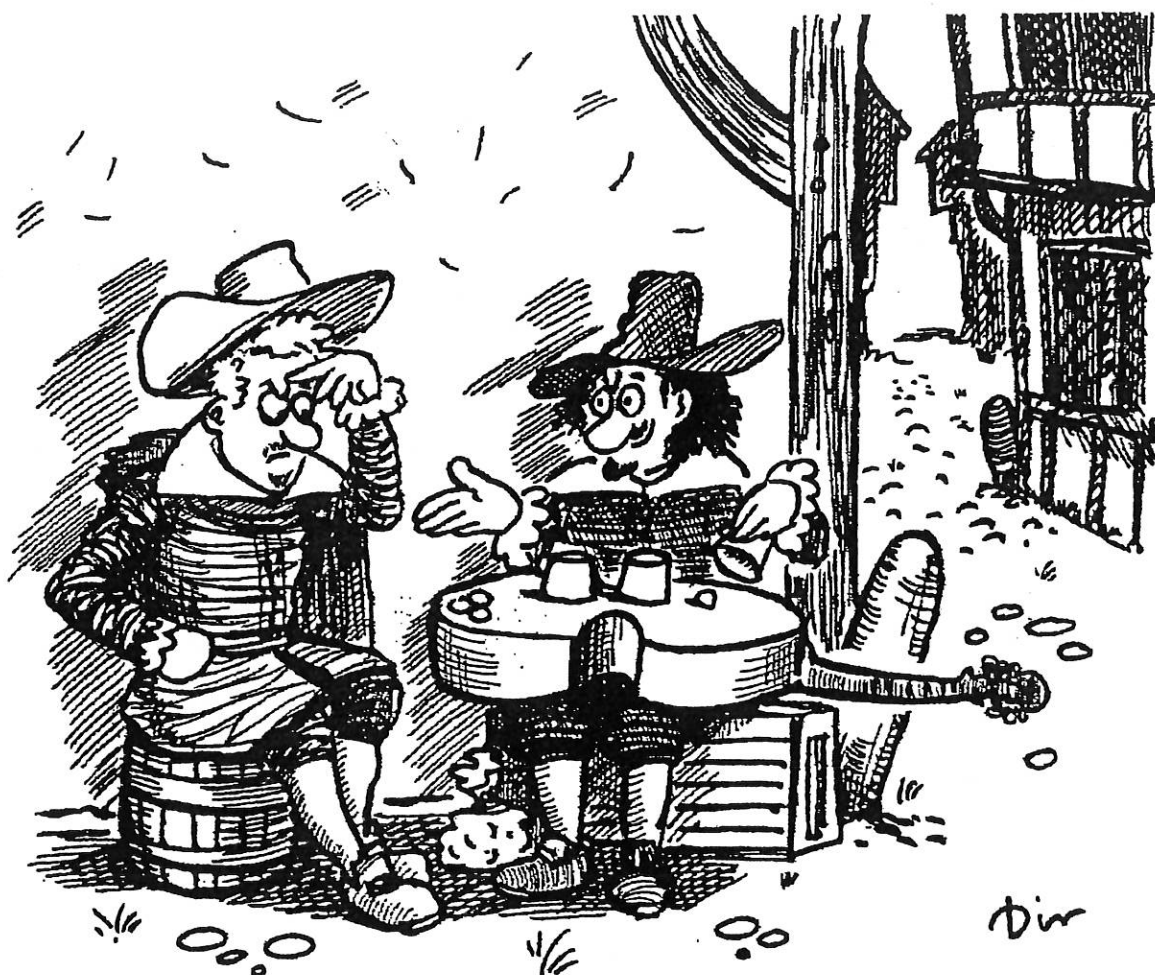
Robert has been reading and sending me comments on Annette Otterstedt's The Viol, reviewed last month. He shares my disquiet, though is in some respects more positive. The following came in his covering letter with the above review.

While I agree with your comments, I nevertheless found the book very enjoyable, sometimes infuriating, but stimulating, interesting, and well worth having. I think it should only be read by people with reasonable knowledge of the subject, who would enjoy it, even while disagreeing.

As you say, there is much that is wrong or contentious, and, because of the point of view of the author, omitted or briefly and erroneously summarised (my example, catlines, page 249). Therefore it is emphatically not the book for someone starting on their journey of discovery. An up-to-date book is still to be written, and it's surely time for someone to write it. There used to be such books – Gerard Hayes and Nathalie Dolmetsch, not to mention Meyer.

The viol seems to have been hijacked by scholars. There are many who play the viol who don't need to read Ian Woodfield's book. Similarly, there are plenty of people who listen to viol music for whom Alison Crum's book is inappropriate because they don't want to play it.

Robert also wondered, in connection with my remarks on her blinkered view of instrumental music, whether most writers on those musical subjects that interested him seemed to see, or rather hear their music through a keyboard. We wonder if other readers have thought the same. CB



The Viola da Gamba II

MUSIC IN LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

A brace of English National Opera performances kicked off a couple of months that featured more than their share of operas. Their new production of *Così fan tutte* gives me a rare chance to praise an ENO production unreservedly. Director Matthew Warchus, designer Laura Hopkins and conductor Mark Wigglesworth have combined to put together a show that sparkles with inventive insight into the Mozart's characters, adding a few thought-provoking twists of their own. Refreshingly free of the mannered oddities (usually involving some sort of nudity) that have beleaguered ENO productions in recent years, this production tells it straight. Set in the late 1930s, the Scottish baronial austerity of the log-fired stage-front set alternated with Italian arcaded sunny splendour, a contrast mirrored in the different personae as the opera progressed. Don Alfonso, for example, was, by turn, threateningly sinister and jovially bumbling as his devious scheme evolved. Similar contrasts were revealed through a number of surrealistic allusions – not least the setting of the jovial overture to a macabre re-enactment of the cloth-covered heads of Magritte's *The Lovers*. The cast was on top form, both as actors and singers. Clare Weston stood in for Susan Gritton as Fiordiligi, Mary Plazas was Dorabella (demonstrating the seductive power of chocolate), Christopher Maltman was Guglielmo, Toby Spence – Ferrando, Janis Kelly – Despina, and Andrew Shore – Don Alfonso. They produced a satisfying melange of sounds, serving the quintets and sextets well. Each allowed their character to unfold, not always in the normally expected direction. Indeed, the ending of the opera was left dangling by Matthew Warchus – I could write an essay on what seemed to happen, and what might happen next. The lack of a chorus removed one of my usual gripes about the ENO, and Mark Wigglesworth's inspired conducting removed the other. Although a long way from period instrument performance, Wigglesworth managed to produce a sound that was closer to it than any other I have heard from the ENO orchestra. He also set them a sensible pace and kept the singers well in time – not an easy task in *The Coliseum*. Jeremy Sams's translation also deserves a mention.

Although my praise of ENO's revival of their 1995 *The Fairy Queen* is slightly more reserved, this is another thumping good production. Purcell's music is performed with only one minor re-ordering and a couple of repeated numbers. But rather than setting the music into the context of a play, the music is allocated to a series of nine sung and danced Masques based on a similar, but rather more sensible, interpretation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to that of then original. Characters are allocated to the various vocal numbers with a consistency that flows throughout the work, with Titania and Oberon given the main vocal roles

and the Indian Boy and Puck the principal dance roles. The Drunken Poet becomes one of six Mortals, and the remaining cast are Fairies of one sort or another. There are no Mechanicals, rude or otherwise. The Sixth Masque (Act Four of the original) is set as a Divertissement, 'The Birthday of a Curmudgeon', centred on the 80th birthday of the grumpy Theseus, earlier seen chairing the bizarre Board Meeting which sets the Mortals off on their travels. His appalling family are herded around the stage by the Barbara Windsor, Carry On like figure of The Party Organiser, a role that Carolyn Sampson (a well known singer in the early music world) seemed to get into rather well. Purcell's Act Five is recast as three further Masques, concluding with Theseus, last seen climbing resignedly into his coffin, resurrecting himself as an equally grumpy Hymen to perform the marriage ceremony between Oberon and Titania. This (literally) all singing, all dancing show was a huge hit with the audience, as it should have been. The structure of the production made sense, and visually it was a delight, with some extravagant dance sequences. Paul Daniel did his best to control the singers, but their all-too-frequent inability to keep time with his beat eventually became a distraction. His string players let him down rather too often as well, particularly on matters of intonation, although there was some excellent playing by the bought-in early musicians notably the energetic Mark Caudle on viola da gamba. The singing was of the operatic rather than the early-music kind, which would have upset a number of *EMR* readers. I have said this before, but surely a production like this cries out for a specialist early music orchestra and singers, with all the instrumentalists (not just gamba and theorbo, as in this performance) raised from the cavernous pit to closer to the stage level – it certainly worked superbly for *Poppea* in 2000.

The third opera was a more intimate affair at the Royal Academy of Music on 21 June when their Period Instrument Baroque Orchestra, directed by Laurence Cummings, presented Rameau's *Pygmalion* and the Suite from *Les Fêtes d'Hébé*. The instrumentalists showed an understanding of French Baroque style, although their leaning into the typical cadences in the Suite was emphatic rather than tastefully subtle. The strings have some particularly vigorous runs to negotiate, which they did with apparent ease (and lots of practice, no doubt). The sound was crisp and articulate, and they had a good grasp of period ornamentation and the combining of the rumbustious with the lyrical. Of the three student singers, Anna Dennis (Céphise) projected her rich textured and solidly grounded voice well and showed some attractive colours. Jin Hee Choi was similarly clear and focussed as L'Amour. Both singers had strong voices, but were mercifully free of the operatic vibrato that so many

student vocalists tend to develop – long may it last, as they will both be an asset to the early music vocal world. The third singer's vibrato sadly clouded what might have been some nice ornaments. James Oxley was the token professional as Pygmalion, giving a nice demonstration of how to colour a voice without interfering with intonation or tone. The Academy had a particularly strong set of instrumentalists this year, some of whom are moving on. I hope next year's students are as good.

Although this column generally aims to reflect performances in London there is, of course, a thriving musical life outside the metropolis, sometimes in fascinating venues. One such is the Desmoulin art gallery in part of the old wharf buildings in Newbury. An enterprising series of concerts has been running there over the past couple of years. The small, long, rectangular space is not the most obvious of spaces for music, but the acoustic was surprisingly effective. Although the concerts are not necessarily based on local professional musicians, the concert on 15 June was given by London Baroque, whose local connections were revealed by vibrant portrait drawings on the gallery walls, which happened to be by Hannah Medlam, the talented 13-year-old daughter of two members of the group. In such surroundings, it seemed appropriate that the programme was centred on Rameau's own musical portraits of those around him, in three of his five *Pièces de Clavecin en concert*. These pieces relegate the violin and viol to the accompaniment, giving the harpsichord player a chance to step out of the usual continuo role – an opportunity that Terence Charlston did not waste. Rameau depicted his apparently cultured, sensitive but rather self-important patron in *La La Poplinière* (*Pièces* 3), and further portraits came in the first piece of the 5th set, with a depiction of Jean Baptiste Forqueray that was also adopted in Louis-Antoine Dornel's Sonata for violin and continuo *Le Forcroy*. The latter piece was another to blur the boundary between soloist and accompaniment, giving the bass viol a leading role in the lyrical high tenor register in the third movement and giving equal weight to viol and violin in the concluding Chaconne. Ingrid Seifert (violin) and Charles Medlam (bass viol) gave another demonstration of their ability to produce great things together. The lyrical register of the bass viol was also a feature of Telemann's Trio in G, with its allusion to Bach's St John Passion in the 3rd movement. The elder Forqueray himself was represented by a self-portrait, *La Forqueray* and *La Leclair* for solo harpsichord. Abel's Sonata in D minor for gamba solo completed the programme. A delightful concert, in a packed hall, by three musicians at the top of their profession.

LUFTHANSA FESTIVAL OF BAROQUE MUSIC (CONTINUED)

The Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music continued into June with its exploration of the more exotic reaches of baroque music, starting with Ensemble L'Arpeggiata (St John's, Smith Square, 8 June) and their programme 'La Tarantella: music from Naples'. L'Arpeggiata is a multi-

national group founded and directed by the Austrian lutenist, Christina Pluhar, now based in Paris. They field an astonishing collection of plucky things (shared out amongst four plucky players), including the colascione and gitarra battente, which they combine with psaltery, lirone, viola da gamba, cornett, violin, percussion. Their sound world was rich and revealing, with some marvellous combinations of instruments. The distinctive sound of the sizable table psaltery, played brilliantly by Elisabeth Seitz, added much colour, as did the lirone. It was Athanasius Kircher who wrote about *tarantismo*: the symptoms caused by the bite of a spider but which varied between individuals depending on the temperament both of the person bitten and the offending spider. Kircher wrote that only music could cure this malaise, and the music had to be chosen to reflect the specific form that the illness had taken in each individual. A key part of this musical therapy was that those afflicted had to dance for days, without eating or sleeping, to rid their bodies of the poison – the dance that has influenced our current interpretation of the tarantella. The programme explored the many different moods that *tarantismo* could take, from the slow and sensual to the exciting and exotic. A common thread for all these different tarantellas was the use of an ostinato bass. Another example of the soothing power of music was explored with the *ninna-nanna*, a lullaby that inspired the villanelle form. At the opposite end of the human span, a traditional Pugliese lament 'Povera Antunuccio' was an example of the tradition of singing by old women at a funeral. It ended with an unearthly screech intended to liberate the pain of the mourners. As befitted the programme, the two singers were Italian: Lucilla Galeazzi, soprano, with occasional contributions from Massimo Carrano, notably in *Lo Guarracino*, a helter-skelter run through the eventful life of the ugly black croaker fish. A lively and entertaining concert, with a well-balanced programme and excellent performances from all.

The score of Mozart's opera *Zaide* was discovered by Constanze in 1799 in a pile of Mozart manuscripts. Until then she had been unaware of its existence, a state shared by many today. It is a curious work. All the spoken dialogue is lost, apart from a few cues, although it seems to have been similar to the text used by Frieber in his *Das Serail* (possibly the intended title for Mozart's opera), which was based on Voltaire's tragedy of Sultanic enslavement. It was clearly a forerunner of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, written two years after *Zaide* in 1782. Mozart's experimentation with the melodrama or *melologo* style of spoken quasi-recitative is one of the most striking elements of this work. Mozart believed that most recitatives should be treated in this way, although there is only one other tiny example in his works. The first melodrama comes immediately after the 'it's off to work we go' opening chorus of slaves. Over a sweeping string melody, which recurs in short bursts between his declamations, the slave Gomatz (Topi Lehtipuu) bemoans his lot with varying degrees of bitterness, until he eventually falls asleep. He allowed the spoken text to take on almost recitative-like snatches of melody, and there were moments when the orchestral accompaniment seemed to predict an

arioso. With an oboe melody that Elgar would have been proud of, supported by gently pulsating strings, Zaide, the favourite of the Sultan, sings the gorgeous love song 'Ruhe sanft, mein holdes Leben' to Gomatz. Veronica Cangemi was a short notice stand-in for the role of Zaide, but acquitted herself magnificently with her beautifully expressive voice and facial gestures – and it was good to see a singer who is not afraid to open her mouth. Any slight hints of portamento were quickly forgiven. The first of the hiccups inevitable in an opera where all the recitative is missing saw the story leap ahead to find Gomatz in a foul mood. But he and Zaide get together, fall in love, escape (with the help of Allazim, one of the Sultan's guards), are captured, are hauled before the Sultan, plead for each others' lives and are preparing to be chopped up when... the opera ends! Mozart's finale hints at magnanimity, and Frieber's text (summarised in the programme note) comes up with an unlikely series of complicated revelations that Gomatz and Zaide are, after all, not only brother and sister, but are also the children of their aid Allazim, who just happens to be a Duke. One hopes that they have behaved themselves. The Sultan is so touched (or bemused) by this that he not only sets them free, but also sends them on their way laden with gifts. I would love to have heard the missing recitative that managed to summarise that lot! Ivor Bolton directed the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra (St John's, Smith Square, 17 June) and a strong cast of singers. As well as the exciting Veronica Cangemi and Topi Lehtipuu, Darren Jeffery was a solid bass as Allazim, and Rufus Müller was a suitably dramatic Sultan, although he was at times a bit underpowered for such a powerful character. Tómas Tómasson had the character role of Osmin, which included the fun aria 'Wer hungrig bei der Tafel sitzt' with its moans, whines and whimpers tempered by a few ha-ha-has. All the singers demonstrated good diction and a sure-footed grasp of the notes. The orchestra produced a lovely warm violin tone with not a hint of shrillness, whatever Mozart threw at them. Ivor Bolton is one of our most experienced opera directors and, as ever, he produced a nicely paced and musical performance.

Hesperion XXI started their programme of English and Italian music 15 minutes late (at St John's, Smith Square, 22 June) and then made some complicated changes to their programme which did not endear them to the audience. Nor did the overdone encores: the final applause was polite rather than enthusiastic, and many people were leaving before they launched into their third encore. In fact, the encores were the best part of the evening, vocally at least. Sadly their singer, Monserrat Figueras, normally such an exotic contributor to the Hesperion sound, was in far from good voice. She either swooped up towards notes, then slithered off them (often aided by hairpin crescendos and decrescendos on individual notes), or she bounced Zebedee-like along the tops of notes, rarely quiet hitting the centres. With such a focussed voice as hers, intonation is critical. The other glaring issues were diction and pronunciation – the latter wayward in the extreme. This is the first time I have heard her sing in English – perhaps this

was her revenge for the thousands of British tourists [and even singers] who ritually massacre the Spanish language each year. She was a bit happier in the Italian numbers, particularly the florid vocal embellishments of Caccini's *Dolcissimo sospiro*, but she only really came into her own during the encores of Catalan songs – far closer to the style that I associate with her. The six instrumentalists went some way towards redeeming the evening though, with their colourful and expressive playing. Whether this style of (generally Mediterranean) expressiveness is seen as appropriate for the likes of Dowland, Lawes and Purcell is a matter of opinion. The contrast with the more restrained playing of most English viol groups is apparent. Rather than letting the music unfold gently, Hesperion coerces it into being, exploring all the detail and nuances. For my taste, their style was better suited to the Italian works and, of course, the lively Catalan encores which are clearly so close to their heart.

The Festival ended with Handel's *Alexander's Feast* (Westminster Abbey, 28 June). Those who know my past reviews will appreciate how lovely it was for me to find a large-scale choral work (or opera) where the performing style of the singers and the instrumentalists were equally up to the expected early-music standards. So often an 'authentic' orchestra is contrasted with overly operatic singing. But this homegrown group of singers were excellent without exception, showing, yet again, that it is possible to fill a large acoustic space without excessive vibrato and forced tone. The Westminster Abbey Choir are, of course, very used to singing in such venues, and the Abbey's Director of Music, James O'Donnell, showed himself a master of pacing, articulation and volume control. Letting both vocal and instrumental tone float naturally into the space, he produced a sound that was sophisticated and subtle. His control, for example, of the relaxed final cadence was exemplary. Frances Kelly further demonstrated this by filling the vast Abbey with the sound of the solo harp during the *Concerto per la Harpe* that occurs after the introduction to the work. Her delicate and expressive playing won many hearts. It was a shame that there was no organ concerto. Deborah York showed her characteristically superb mastery of the florid line, articulation and diction. She draws the listener into the music, both by the expressiveness of her voice and by her own physical involvement with each piece – her facial expressions alone tell the story. Rufus Müller was outstanding as the principal commentator, exploring the changing moods of the complex recitatives. Peter Harvey excelled in the contrasted moods of 'Bacchus, ever fair and young' and 'Revenge, Timotheus cries', and Charles Humphries wrung out the passion in the ode to Darius and 'Behold a ghastly band' – not, of course, a reference to the St James's Baroque Players, who were on very good form.

The Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music is one of the gems of London musical life, and is going from strength to strength. Long may it reign.

The Spitalfields Festival will be reviewed in the next issue

HAYDN, MOZART & WEBER OPERAS

Peter Branscombe

Weber's *Euryanthe* at Glyndebourne (14 July) Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne* and Haydn's *L'isola disabitata* at the Ryedale Festival (19 July)

Two very different operatic evenings within a few days of each other: a Sunday at Glyndebourne, with glorious weather, gardens near their peak, but clear signs of corporate hospitality; and a soaking, foggy Friday night at Hovingham Hall in the Yorkshire Dales, with an audience totally absorbed in the operas. *Euryanthe* was anything but an integrated experience: the musical side of the performance beautiful, wonderfully assured – and the production miserably misguided. Mark Elder and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment gave an admired concert reading of the score in London a few years ago; they surpassed themselves in this performance. The clarity and warmth of the orchestra, with Weber's imaginative instrumentation appreciated to the full, was the foundation for a vocally rewarding experience. In the name part Anne Schwanewilms showed a well-produced, even, accurate lyric soprano voice, excitingly offset by Lauren Flanigan's wheedling, then fiery and vengeful Eglantine; and Rebecca von Lipinski sang sweetly as Bertha in her one scene. Of the men, John Daszak was a sound if uningratiating Adolar, and Pavlo Hunka as the evil Lysiart made the most of his several opportunities, with flexibility and firm tone. Clive Bayler was adequate as the king, though more than most in the cast he was hampered by the staging. The production was very disappointing. An opera that few in the audience could have seen in a top-class performance needs to be put on in a way that librettist and composer would approve of, or even recognize. Richard Jones seemed determined to know better. All right, Helmina von Chezy's libretto is pretty inept, but not so weak as to call for obloquy. In place of knights and ladies at a royal court, and for contrast a

peasant couple, we had padded, dusty guerrilla outfits, the king distinguished merely by a dark red suit. What should have been colourful court scenes were played round a long, angled table; the forest consisted of blasted trees, with huge thorns (also brandished as weapons, in place of swords); the desolate place to which Adolar takes his supposed erring bride has tubby prickly pears; from time to time the moon (with the face, one supposes, of Emma, Adolar's dead sister) drifts across the backcloth. This backcloth, handsomely lit and evocative, is almost the only picturesque element. The serpent from which *Euryanthe* tries to protect Adolar (he has brought her to the desolate place to kill her) is a giant who chases the hero round the prickly pears before losing the clumsy fight. But for the musical side of proceedings – alert, beautifully paced, revelatory – one can have nothing but gratitude and praise.

The indoor riding-school at Hovingham Hall provided a simple setting for the Goldberg Festival Opera's double bill. In John Warrack's clear and effective new translations, Mozart's little *Singspiel* and Haydn's short *azione teatrale* made their full impact. Annabel Lee's set consisted of a large disc, tilted forward for *Bastien*, backwards for *The Desert Island*, thus suggesting the cave that has sheltered the sisters during their years of Crusoesque abandonment. Effective lighting and colourful flats helped evoke the requisite atmosphere for Mark Tinkler's resourceful and imaginative direction. Malcolm Layfield conducted the very good little orchestra with clear textures and fine insight into the nature of Haydn's score which, lacking recitativo secco and with only one ensemble, an elaborate closing quartet, needs to be carefully paced, with firm control of the movement from *accompagnato* and *arioso* to the lyrical solos. The young cast were outstanding: Sinéad Pratschke was a sprightly *Bastienne* and, as the little sister in the Haydn, touching, bemused, then ecstatic. Jessica Walker made much of the role of Constanza, the wife who imagines herself abandoned on the desert island, and who runs the gamut from grief and near despair to joy when her husband, long held captive by pirates, finally returns to rescue her. In this part, and as Mozart's *Bastien*, David Murphy, though hampered by a heavy cold, rose to the challenge. Liveliest of all was Richard Morrison, a superbly funny soothsayer in the Mozart, and an ardent, musically assured *Enrico* in the Haydn, fully deserving the love of young Silvia, the first man she sees (shades of Ferdinand and Miranda). In a pardonable, witty alteration to Metastasio's libretto for Haydn, the new couple enthusiastically stay behind on the island while big sister and her husband opt for an immediate return to civilization. This was an evening to cheer the heart of a listener earlier tempted to despair at trendy modern opera directors.

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6th FESTIVAL DE MUSIQUE SACRÉE DE LIGUGÉ 5-7 JULY 2002

Jennie Tribe

I think this friendly festival, in which ten singers/viol players from the UK became involved as the 'Choeur du Festival' (directed by Malcolm Bothwell), deserves a mention.

Ligugé is a very small town just south of Poitiers, notable for its Benedictine abbey, housing thirty monks. Their hospitality was amazing, and part of our brief was to assist in the social aspect of the three days of recitals and lectures. I don't imagine that any performers got paid more than expenses. There were no well known names, but there were some outstanding performances and the commitment of all the performers and organizers was total.

The festival opened with an all female group, Aliénor Voices, in a recital entitled 'Répons-séquences-hymns, IX-XII'. Of their two soloists, Elsa Papatanosios was outstanding. Her voice has a velvety clarity and her tuning is impeccable. She used the subtlest of decoration here and there. Bérengère Suarez-Pazos sang with a forthright enthusiasm; a good contrast. Words were crystal clear, and the use of drones was hypnotic, the lower voice floating effortlessly as low as the D below middle C.

Having already sung motets for the Abbey Mass at the feast of St. Martin in Summer, we had already been impressed by the improvisations of the blind organist Jean d'Albi. He shared a concert with the monks of Ligugé, alternating plainchant with associated organ pieces and improvisations.

The third concert (still day one) was provided by Ensemble Oktoich from Wraclow, Poland. The ten or so male singers had arrived the previous evening after a twenty five-hour bus journey. After supper they joined our rehearsal of *This is the record of John* before falling into bed. Their excellent recital ranged from the 9th to 17th century, with plenty of Slav sound and low bass notes.

Three concerts (two midnight events and a lunch hour) were directed by Manolo Gonzalez, who seems to be the instigator of the festival, (no CV provided, but some groups seemed to be past students of his) with the active support of the Père Abbé, a most intelligent, open-minded man. We were a little surprised at Manolo's approach, adding Jacobean viols to Dunstable as well as Guerrero. The countertenor (Fabrice Barré) and bass (Gérard Daviet) were outstanding in this group.

As the Choeur du Festival, we sang a fanfare at the start of each concert, composed by Malcolm (with apologies to Tomkins). This seemed a very strange concept, but it

worked well, demanding the audience's attention, and announcing the entry of the artists. We heard the delightful opening plainsong procession of a children's choir from Poitiers before setting off for our own first concert elsewhere. Other festival concerts (in our absence) were: Ensemble Figura Corta (soprano, recorders, keyboard), Quatuor Annesi playing the Haydn Seven Last Words, and Ensemble Circe (three sopranos, keyboard and various winds).

Our programme of English renaissance music (Whyte, Byrd, Tallis, Gibbons etc) was well received, and the festival closed with a work composed and directed by Manolo Gonzalez depicting European cities with religious significance. This involved the monks, and other singers, viols, keyboard and percussion.

Quote from a King's Music customer

Ordering multiple copies (or even single copies) from a music store in Italy is difficult; in fact, in Naples they recommend photocopying from a photocopy as most small choirs and ensembles do here'.



The London International Exhibition of Early Music

2002

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G. M. Bononcini - Brando in stil francese à quatro (op. 2, 1667)

Prima parte

Violino I

Violino II

Viola III

Basso

2. parte

3. parte

4. parte, Gavotta

John Marsh Anniversary Celebrations Chichester – June 21-30

Brian Robins

The past few years have witnessed a considerable revival of interest in John Marsh (1752-1828), the gentleman composer and diarist whose Journals provide such a vivid insight into the musical and social life of 18th- and early-19th-century Georgian England. June marked the 250th anniversary of the birth of Marsh, an event celebrated in Chichester during the course of a ten-day festival mounted to mark the occasion. Chichester's adoption of Marsh as one of the city's noted sons has considerable justification, for it was there that Marsh chose to settle for the final forty years of his life, reviving and leading the local subscription concerts over the course of twenty-five years in addition to playing a major role in the more general public and social life of the city. The anniversary was built around an exhibition mounted by the West Sussex Record Office (which holds a complete microfilm set of Marsh's journals), a series of concerts and lectures, and two guided walks round 'John Marsh's Chichester'.

The first day saw the opening of the intelligently organised and well-presented exhibition at an evening reception, during the course of which I presented a general introduction to Marsh and his connections with Chichester. A notable feature of this event was the varied range of interest in Marsh among those who attended, doubtless a reflection of his own extraordinarily broad sympathies. The following evening's concert with the Consort of Twelve Chorus and Orchestra under the direction of Judy Tarling and Ian Graham-Jones had promised to be one of the highlights of the week, an expectation duly met. The venue was James Wyatt's Assembly Room built in 1783, just four years before Marsh arrived in Chichester, and recently the subject of a spectacular refurbishment. Marsh himself praised the acoustic of the room, which was indeed excellent at the near-sellout concert, although the resonant acoustic had proved a problem in the empty hall during afternoon rehearsals. The programme added to such authentic surroundings by including the diverse mix of vocal and orchestral music typical of those of the 18th century. Marsh was represented by four works, two symphonies and a pair of glees. The Symphony No. 1 in Bb (the numbering is that of Marsh's published *Eight Favorite Symphonies*), with its racy *Chasse* finale, is a particularly appealing work, while the last movement of the Symphony No. 8 in G, here receiving its first public performance in modern times, is an infectiously bucolic country dance characterised by Marsh's distinctive melodic gifts. *The City Feast*, a humorous glee parodying an aldermanic dinner, is unusual in including parts for two violins and cello. Both Marsh glees and those by William Paxton, Samuel Webbe the elder, Benjamin Cooke and the Earl of Mornington were projected with considerable character by Close Harmony, a

vocal group consisting of the six lay vicars from Chichester Cathedral (another authentic touch), although Marsh would not have approved of the doubling of parts. The remaining orchestral and choral works reflected the judicious juxtaposition of 'ancient' (Handel, Corelli and Boyce) and 'modern' (Pleyel) styles that formed such a feature of Marsh's own programming. Throughout the evening, orchestra and chorus produced lively, spirited playing and singing, only the odd rough passage from the horns and a weakness in the choral bass line marring the generally pleasing performances. The strings of the Consort in particular have much improved since I last heard them, doubtless a reflection of Judy Tarling's positive leadership, while Sally Holman's beautifully shaped playing of the ravishing bassoon obbligato part in Boyce's air and chorus 'Softly rise' (from *Solomon*) merited special praise.

Two days later those who assiduously followed the whole festival were treated to a positive feast of Marsh, commencing with a lunchtime recital in the cathedral at which a number of the organ duets and solos were interspersed with appropriate readings from the Marsh journals. The performances of the duets by Alan Thurlow and Mark Wardell may have lacked the stylish registration brought to the solos by John Collins, but had the merit of being more lively than Collins' disappointingly prosaic readings of four of the voluntaries. Some three hours later it was back to the cathedral for evensong, which included the touching funeral anthem 'Man that is born of a woman', composed by Marsh on the premature death of his protégé and Chichester Cathedral organist and choirmaster, James Target (1778-1803).

The main event of the day found us back at the Assembly Room for the evening's concert by the Fitzwilliam String Quartet. A problem with leader Lucy Russell's violin on the morning of the concert resulted in a reversion to modern instruments instead of the advertised period strings, a change no doubt at least in part responsible for the richly sonorous sound produced in the room's generous acoustic. The Fitzwilliams took Marsh's accomplished Quartetto in B flat of 1784 (his only surviving chamber work) under their wing some time ago and here their poised and elegant performance was the best of the work I've yet encountered, the first Menuetto in particular being given a delightfully infectious lilt. The other rarity was a fine C minor Quartet by Rosetti (op. 6 no. 4), the powerful drama its *Sturm und Drang* finale given full value in the thoroughly committed performance. The programme was completed by the last of Haydn's op. 1 Divertimenti (the set upon which Marsh based his quartet) and Mozart's K590, the latter having the unintended effect of brutally reminding us of the stark difference between genius and talent.

Two days later the Ensemble Türk brought another chamber music programme to St John's Chapel, a building that has close associations with Marsh, who was a founder trustee. The emphasis here was firmly on domestic music making, the evening being almost entirely devoted to arrangements of the kind popular at musical evenings in polite Georgian society. Marsh's arrangement of Haydn's Symphony No. 74 in Eb for keyboard with violin accompaniment reflects his keen appreciation of the composer's works long before he became fashionable in this country and is a rather more skilful piece of work than the arrangement of four movements from Mozart's Posthorn Serenade, K320, for piano trio by the immigrant Charles Frederic Horn dating from around 1790. The large symphonic structure and lavish orchestration of the opening movement in particular defeated Horn. The most intriguing aspect of the work is the question of how Horn, who arrived in England in 1783, came by a work that had little circulation outside Salzburg. Marsh also made a number of four-hand keyboard arrangements, originally inspired by the success of similar adaptations by Charles Burney, for harpsichord and/or organ, three of which were deftly performed by Carole Cerasi and James Johnstone. Those of the 'Grand Hallelujah in the Messiah' and 'Grand Coronation Anthem' (i.e. the concluding chorus 'God save the King' from *Zadok the Priest*) probably work better on the organ (in which guise they had already been heard in Tuesday's lunchtime concert), but the overture to Thomas Carter's popular *The Rival Candidates* (1774) proved great fun. The outstanding playing of the Ensemble Türk throughout compensated for the lightweight content of a longish evening, but I imagine that I was not the only auditor left longing to hear them play something more substantial.

The last Sunday of the celebration again necessitated a fair amount of perambulation, this time between the cathedral, where two more of Marsh's sacred works were performed within the context of the liturgy, and St. Paul's church, the venue of the final concert given by the Chichester Concert (an augmented version of The Consort of Twelve). The *Jubilate* sung at Matins is a relatively simple verse setting that effectively exploits contrasts of weight and tonal colour, while the longer and more ambitious *O praise God in his holiness* (Psalm 150) given as the anthem during Evensong has an 'elaborate accompaniment for the Organ deliberately calculated to display all its principal stops', to quote its composer. Both were well sung, although the diffuse nature of *O praise God* might have been more effective in a tauter performance.

Unlike the programme given by the Consort of Twelve, the evening's concert directed by Judy Tarling made no attempt to replicate an 18th century programme, being a straightforward orchestral concert that would nevertheless have pleased the eclectic Marsh in its juxtaposition of ancient and modern styles. The latter, represented by Marsh himself, included his biggest and arguably best extant symphony, the Haydnesque No. 6 in D of 1796, here given a strongly projected performance with markedly faster tempos in the inner movements than those on the

recording made by the same orchestra in 1989. The *Conversation Symphony* for 2 orchestras in E flat (1778) was also given a confident, if not flawless, performance, Marsh's imaginative distribution of instrumental timbre between the two groups being effectively exploited. The late (1799) *Grand Military Finale* No. 3 in E flat, here being given its first modern performance, is a considerably less successful work, although the central section for wind has a certain appeal. The 'ancient' part of the concert drew spirited playing in music by Handel (excerpts from *The Water Music*), Arne (the fine C minor Symphony) and Boyce (the fifth of the *Eight Symphonies*).

For the surprisingly large number who followed the anniversary celebrations through their course, the ten days provided a unique opportunity to access in depth aspects of both the man and his music. While no one is likely to have come away regarding Marsh as a forgotten master, the craftsmanship, melodic invention and the sturdily open Englishness of his music mark him out as a composer of no mean ability. Add to that his value as a documenter of his times and his organisational skills as a concert manager and the handsome tribute paid to him by Chichester in June was by no means unmerited.

Apologies for a misprint in the email address appended to last month's review (p. 6) of the book on Marsh and the organ: martin.renshaw@wanadoo.fr

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 RIC 212 Bach *Die Leipziger Choräle* (BWV 651-668) + BWV 546-7 Bernard Foccroulle (rec 1991) 127' 09" (2 CDs)
 RIC 214 Landini etc *Music for organetto* Christophe Deslignes organetto, Thierry Gomar perc (rec 1998) 54' 56"

The Ricercar label has been a focus for early music in Belgium for the last twenty years. Its in-house band, the Ricercar Consort, has made pioneering recordings of such repertoires as the German baroque cantata. Ricercar discs have always been lively and imaginative, even if the playing can be raw and uneven. Now the label has a new image and uses card CD cases that are less fiddly than the usual plastic ones. It has an ambitious programme of new releases and is reissuing the most important or unique parts of its back-catalogue.

Ricercar launches its new image in regal style with a disc of the grands motets of Henri Du Mont (202). These pieces show the splendour with which Louis XIV acted out his piety. I particularly enjoyed the energetic *Nisi Dominus* and the mixture of ecstatic adoration and dissonant plaints in *O flos convalium*. The Ricercar Consort and Namur Chamber Choir perform with éclat and revel in the rich textures. The booklet discusses the likely sizes of ensemble in the royal chapel and suggests the grands motets can be performed by just a *petit chœur* and solo strings, as in the performance here of *O flos convalium*.

A musical byway is explored by Wieland Kuijken in the first recording of some mass movements by Johann Christian Bach (211). These sacred pieces date from Bach's days in Milan and are quite different from his more familiar stage and orchestral music. The highlight is a festal *Gloria*, whose arias use four concertante instruments, including organ. This imaginative play of instruments and voices makes up for the rather dull choruses. Les Agréments and the Namur Chamber Choir are enthusiastic performers but the intonation and wind playing can be rough.

In the 1950-70s Michael Praetorius's *Terpsichore musarum* (205) was a testing-ground for early wind and brass, with rumpity-tump renditions and plenty of percussion. But this Ricercar disc breaks away from the 'Renaissance circus' style, instead presenting *Terpsichore* in the light of our improved knowledge of early strings. The dances are played by one of four ensembles: a cornett and sackbut band, a violin band, a viol consort or a lute band. The wind band gives a Germanic sound; the violins represent the up-to-date French manner with lively, incisive textures; and the viol consort (sometimes beautifully enhanced by a transverse flute) is for more reflective, intimate moments. This disc goes beyond the well-known dances of modern performing editions, delving deep into Praetorius's vast collection. I recommend it highly: the playing is well-informed, stylish and full of gusto.

Two discs present creative experiments with solo instruments. Jean Tubery uses the cornett and recorder for virtuoso diminutions on motets, madrigals and chansons by Lasso and Palestrina (208). Several different decorated versions are given of popular pieces such as Palestrina's *Vestiva i colli* or Lasso's *Susanne un jour*; there are also divisions sung by a solo bass. Palestrina's *Song of Songs* motets particularly suit such ornamentation, given that their words speak of adorning all that is beautiful. Tubery's playing is at times spell-binding and at times graceful; when he combines forces with the bass, his cornett truly sounds (to paraphrase Mersenne) like a ray of sunshine piercing the shadows in a great cathedral.

Equally inspired is Christoph Deslignes's CD of organetto music from 14th-century Florence (214). The organetto is a hand-blown portable familiar from late medieval paintings. It has very little mechanism and so is almost part of the player's body and breath. Deslignes controls the wind pressure to give remarkably vocal effects, using vibrato and varying the volume such that I thought I was hearing a singer from the Middle East. He uses a range of touch, sometimes clattering the action, sometimes gliding across the keyboard. The music includes virtuoso dances and paraphrases of songs, although the booklet is vague about how much is improvised by Deslignes. Indeed, I'm not sure of the historical basis for his playing style or for the poly-rhythms set up by his percussionist. But it is inspiring and thought-provoking to have so imaginative a recreation of lost traditions.

One of Ricercar's new series is of organ music by Bach's predecessors, played by Bernard Foccroulle. The first offering – the complete organ works of Reincken and Bruhns (204) – couples a new recording of Reincken with tracks made in 1988 for the

Ricercar set of Bruhns's entire output. The long, multisectional pieces of Reincken and Bruhns can be hard to interpret, but Foccroulle is imaginative and persuasive. He maintains continuity across the many sections, achieving some electric contrasts and intensifications in the preludia; the chorale fantasias are more relaxed and eloquent. Foccroulle uses the Schnitger organs at Norden and the Hamburg Jacobikirche, getting the ideal sounds and acoustics for his programme.

Ricercar's first batch of reissues offer some good performances of Bach and Haydn. Foccroulle plays Bach's '18' Chorales (212) on the Silbermann organ in Freiberg cathedral. Again this is an ideal instrument, allowing registrations that are attractive and also historically informed. Some of the slower chorales perhaps need a little more raptness and expansiveness. But this is a satisfying account. Foccroulle changes the order of the set, making refreshing listening if you play the disc straight through.

Another Bach reissue is a double disc of motets and cantatas by the Bach family (210) from five different groups, ranging from the affected phrasing of Collegium Vocale Ghent circa 1982 to the plangent singing of Henri Ledroit with the Ricercar Consort. Such a mix of sung styles and acoustics is a bit disconcerting, and there's no excuse for the booklet omitting the all-important sung texts. Nonetheless this set is invaluable for reference and contains most of the vocal music of Johann Christoph and Johann Michael Bach.

A third reissue is devoted to that curious backwater of Haydn's output, the baryton divertimentos (206). Haydn wrote them so that Prince Esterházy could play his favourite instrument with his leading musicians. The baryton line is rarely exposed or independent, saving the prince's blushes if he made a mistake; much more interesting are the positively virtuosic horn parts. This is pleasant enough listening: the fast movements are cheery and spirited, while the slow movements are surprisingly anguished, using minor keys that are quite rare at this stage of Haydn's career. The Ricercar Consort plays vividly and with assurance, although the intonation is unhappy at times.

Some of these Ricercar releases give short measure, with running times of fifty minutes or so. The booklet notes are variable: sometimes scholarly, sometimes tendentious, and always translated into execrable English. Quality control is not Ricercar's strong point, but I greatly value their imagination and sense of adventure. Look out for their forthcoming releases, which will include vocal music by Franz Tunder, the works of composers from Liège, troubadour songs, and pieces by Venetians linked with the imperial court at Vienna. *Stephen Rose*

RECORD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

The Rheingold Curse Sequentia (Benjamin Bagby dir, voice, lyre, Agnethe Christensen voice, Lena Susanne Norin voice, Elizabeth Gaver fiddle, Norbert Rodenkirchen fl, lyre) Marc Aurel Edition MA 10016 89' 22" (2 discs in box; superaudio CDs playable as normal CDs)

This is Benjamin Bagby's second re-creation of medieval Icelandic music. Sequentia's imaginative recordings of Hildegard, liturgical dramas and medieval song were closely based at least on surviving pitches. I was convinced by Bagby's Beowulf, which, despite being based only on a small amount of evidence on what Anglo-Saxon music might have been, came over as a powerful and gripping performance, even without understanding a word (at the performance I attended, it was too dark to read the translation provided, which anyway was in Dutch, so would have been less comprehensible than Anglo-Saxon). But this is a more elaborate 'composition' which stretches the credibility of the listener in its historical plausibility even more. That said, it is brilliantly done. Apart from any musical value, it presents to a new public the Icelandic poems that tell one of the versions of the story that Wagner pulled together for his own mythical and moral purposes. The pre-existing English translation could have been adapted a bit to improve line-for-line correspondence, and the reader needs the previous Edda disc (DHM 05472 77381 2) to supplement the introduction. CB

Tracce della tradizione orale in manoscritti italiani del XIV, XV sec. Patrizia Bovi voice, drum, Gilberto Casabianca voice 57' 36" Opus 111 OP 30333

To sample this, skip the percussive track 1 and try track 9, a folk *Stabat mater*. Whether or not you are convinced by the parallels between Italian late-medieval 'art' music and folk traditions, the two ladies produce a marvellous series of vocal performances. Pieces from the Reina Codex and elsewhere are placed among traditional music, to the illumination of both. Well worth hearing, though I would welcome a greater variety of pace. There is a little too much emphasis on the quality of the sound itself, which although exciting, eventually palls a little. CB

15th-CENTURY

Amours amours amours: Duos de luths c. 1500. Karl-Ernst Schröder, Crawford Young 58' 27" Harmonia Mundi HMC 905253 Music by Agricola, Ambrogio, Busnois, Dalza, Ghiselin, Hayne, Isaac, Japart, Josquin, Lapicida, Newsidler, de Orto, Roellerin, Spinacino & anon

Not everyone will want a recording of

popular favourites from around 1500 played on two lutes. But judging by the surviving sources, it seems to have been a common ensemble, and it is here presented with compete conviction – I defy the innocent listener to tell which pieces are arrangements from those created by the performers themselves. Most of us will only be able to take a few tracks at a time, or else use it as background music; but if the latter, the music and playing are strong enough to distract you from whatever else you are doing. CB

Cancionero: Music for the Spanish Court 1470-1520 The Dufay Collective 63' 50" Avie AV0005

Music by Anchieta, Badajos, Cabezon, Encina, Escobar, Gabriel, Luis de Milán, Isaac, Narvaéz, de la Torre, Valderrábano, Vilches & anon

A lot of this will sound familiar to collectors of Spanish secular music of c.1500. This selection is distinguished for its concentration on plausible ensembles and the quality of the playing and singing. There is, however, a problem in the 'realistic' maintenance of dynamic levels between loud and soft ensemble. The lute and Vivien Ellis suffer particularly – a shame, since songs like Encina's *Ay triste que vengo* are hauntingly beautiful. The other solo singer is John Potter (the disc ends with his characterful *Calabaça*); some of the players also sing to provide a vigorous four-part vocal ensemble. It must be annoying for purchasers who don't know the musicians to have a cover picture with seven people and a performers' list of ten; but the booklet is good (the space 'wasted' in giving a displayed cast-list to each language makes the layout so much clearer) and my only regret is that it has taken five years for the recording to reach the public. CB

16th-CENTURY

Guerrero *Requiem* Orchestra of the Renaissance, Richard Cheetham dir, Michael Noone cond 78' 19"

Glossa GCD 920012 £ + Cabezon *Tiento sobre Ad Dominum cum tribularer*, Esquivel *In paradisum*; Josquin *Pater noster* & chant

This is an imaginative re-creation of music that might have been played at Guerrero's Requiem Mass and Burial Service in November 1599. Recorded in 1999 (and reviewed enthusiastically by D. James Ross in *EMR* 57, p. 20), it has now been issued at budget price accompanied with a Glossa catalogue. The main work is the composer's own Requiem, which is set amid the relevant chant and other music. The eight singers are accompanied by cornett, two shawms, two sackbuts and dulcian, making a marvellous sound. (The shawms are more integrated than they sounded at the live concert that preceded the recording.) Harp and organ play continuo, and a drum

accompanies two pieces that are performed instrumentally as processions. The event is impressive as music and performance. CB

Tallis *The Complete Works*, vol. 5. Chapelle du Roi, Alistair Dixon, Andrew Benson-Wilson org 77' 53" Signum SIGCD016

The vocal items are the best performances in this series so far; the opening high-voice piece, *Audi vocem de coelo*, is not a typical sample, but the next item, the responsory *Candidi facti sunt*, shows a successful balance between parts, shaped (but not fussy) melodic lines, and a well-judged tempo. Much of the disc is devoted to hymns, including the short organ settings. I'm puzzled why they have to sound so high. The major organ work, *Felix namque II*, is a substantial (12' 29") and tricky piece to bring off. Before hearing it, I played it through (needless to say, very badly) to remind myself of the problems, and am pleased to say that Andrew solves them brilliantly. Very occasionally there is a wobble of tempo, but the complex mensural problems are handled with confidence and conviction. CB

Dangerous Graces: music by Cipriano de Rore and his pupils Musica Secreta 70' 34" Linn CKD 169 Music by Ingegneri, Luzzaschi, Rore, Wert

These 18 polyphonic madrigals by Giaches de Wert and others (despite the subtitle 'Cipriano de Rore and his pupils', 10 pieces are by Wert, only four by Rore) are performed as they might have been heard at Ferrara (and elsewhere), where virtuoso women held the spotlight nearly to the exclusion of male performers. Essentially, several low parts are transposed up an octave to bring them into alto range, and various parts are taken on instruments, with varieties of embellishment and adaptation too diverse to summarise here. This is music of the greatest intrinsic value, and the issues raised here are central to the whole 'early music' enterprise. So the experiment is of more than passing interest. If I find the results unsatisfying, almost offensive, I realise the error may be wholly mine. These ingenious adaptations may be much closer to the composers' ideal than performing the music as it appeared in print, with mixed voices taking all the parts; the prints may represent a dumbed-down concession to the marketplace, grudgingly accepted by the composers. Preferring the performing practice implied in the prints may be just as anti-historical as preferring the Parthenon as a moonlit ruin and being offended by the dazzling polychrome spectacle that its creators intended. But is it also possible that Rore, Wert et al. meant exactly what they published, yet were perfectly willing to adapt – distort?

vulgarise? – their polyphony to gratify the faddish taste of Alfonso d'Este and others who paid the bills? Wert's *Forsennata gridava* opens with an upward leap of a 10th in each part. To sing a 10th safely is damnably hard, to play one too damned easy: if three parts are sung and two are played, isn't something meaningful lost? In a more significant example, Rore's *O sonno* essayed something radical and important, in at least two aspects: turning the poet's pentameter into musical prose, and turning polyphony into homophony. Melding the three lower voices in a bass viol 'paraphrase' privileges the first aspect but distorts the second – the dimension without which we'd have no Monteverdi. My reservations would matter less if these pieces weren't relatively obscure even to devotees of the madrigal; as it is, few of us can usefully compare and contrast these versions with more conventional ones, so the undertaking is flawed even as a learning experience. On its own terms, the recording is hugely impressive. The instrumental work (though it seems a bit overcrowded at times) sounds eminently capable; the adaptations and rescorings are well balanced and, so far as I can judge, historically stylish. The singing is adept and almost always beautiful; in places it is expressive enough to bring a lump to my throat. But doubt will not leave me.

Eric Van Tassel

I played the disc before sending it to Eric, and am more sympathetic. Whether we like it or not, the popularity of embellishment manuals and fame of the Este court female singers makes clear that performance something like these was thought desirable. Just as with the extensive keyboard transcriptions and variations, subtlety of the original is replaced by a surface glitter that may seem to some to be trivial but, when well done, offers an alternative experience.

CB

The Golden Age of the European Polyphony
Laudantes Consort, Guy Janssens 666' (11 CDs in box + CD with texts etc)

Cyprès 1630 £

Music by Machaut, Dunstable, Dufay, Ockeghem, Josquin, Gombert, Morales, Tallis, Lassus, Victoria, Byrd, Palestrina

This 11-disc set offers a wealth of renaissance music (and some a little earlier). It was perhaps a mistake to begin with the Machaut Mass: it needs sharper intonation and almost invariably sounds better with four solo voices (and was probably written with that intent). Otherwise, there is much to enjoy. The style sometimes inclines towards the slow, and cadences are pulled up too much; but the sound is gently pleasing. On the whole, the less well-known pieces are better than the popular ones. This is partly, I think, because the conductor is measuring himself against earlier performances, whereas in music without a modern performance tradition, he is prepared to keep the music moving. It is excellent value if you want to get to know a wide range of renaissance vocal music; I dipped into it rather than tried to play each disc systematically, which is

probably the best way to enjoy it. Relaxed listening, however, is impeded by the need to have a computer at hand to see the texts and translations, which are contained on a separate disc, not printed in a booklet. As an alternative, you can buy a print-out from Lindum Records for £7.50. Most of the contents are sacred. The secular Lassus on disc 7 are among the weakest tracks. If my assumption of the meaning of 'mi ficcar tutta notte' in *Matona mia cara* is right, the performance here doesn't give much idea of it, and the repetitions of 'I come' at the end of *Im mayen* are surely meant to sound orgasmic? But the secular disc (11) is better; coincidentally, 14 of its 27 items overlap with the choice in my OUP *Madrigals and Partsongs* anthology, a sign of recognition of repertoire, not collusion. Even before its origins were explained, it was clear that the closing *Mon cœur se recommande* was unlikely to be by Lassus. It is for the ecclesiastical repertoire, however, that this set will primarily be bought. Masses include Dufay *Se la face ay pale*, Ockeghem *Caput*, Josquin *L'homme armé VI toni*, Gombert *Beati omnes*, Morales *pro defunctis*, Victoria *O quam gloriosum* & Palestrina *Ecce ego Johannes*. Each disc also has a selection of, mostly, motets and runs for about an hour. There are also discs for Lassus, Tallis and Byrd. I wouldn't recommend the set at full price, but at under £50 it provides a useful survey for college libraries and for enthusiastic individuals.

CB

The Queen's Goodnight Charivari agréable (Susanne Heinrich, Kah-Ming Ng, Lynda Sayce) 69' 03"

Signum SIGCD020

Music by Allison, Byrd, Corkine, Dowland, Gibbons, Hume, Johnson, Robinson & anon

Not surprisingly, this is a fairly sombre disc. EB and I listened to it together, and we agreed that the outstanding track is the first, an arrangement of John Johnson's *Dump*, of *The Queenes Treble* played brilliantly on viol by Susanne Heinrich. But the fact that, with a fine lutenist among the trio of performers, a piece surviving for lute is played on viol is a typical feature of the programme. Innocent listeners will accept what they hear, which is nearly always convincing. Despite Lynda Sayce's booklet-note reference to visual evidence, I'm not persuaded by the lute-and-virginals duet sound. The disc presents a selection of real Elizabethan music, mostly less Italianate than the more familiar late-Elizabeth-Jacobean style. It seems a bit perverse to perform so much of it in scorings other than that in which it survives. It's fine to adapt material to different scorings; but here it seems to be done almost as a matter of principle. I was reminded of David Munrow's *Early Music Consort*, which gave brilliant concerts thirty years ago, but whose constitution suited specifically very little of the music it played. It worked in concert, but one expects recordings to be a bit more rigorous. I expect that Kah-Ming would claim that he is being post-authentic. No complaints about the playing, but I found myself longing for some singing.

CB

Shakespeare's England: Music of his Plays & People James Griffett T, Brian Wright lute, English Consort of Viols, Nicholas McGegan dir, org. 63' 12"

Griffin GCCD4036 ££

Music by Byrd, Campion, Cornysh, Dowland, Farnaby, Gibbons, W. Lawes, R. Johnson, Jones, Lupo, Morley, Nicholson, Tomkins, Wigthorpe, Wilbye & anon

The most enjoyable genre on this disc is the viol consort, with fine performances of some classics of the English repertoire. James Griffett isn't the ideal soloist, more in the style of Peter Pears (though without his character) than is favoured now, and he seems to be recorded in a different sound-world from the subdued lutenist. As far as one can tell from the slight information on the booklet, the songs have appeared before but the viol tracks are new (or at least not previously issued).

CB

17th-CENTURY

Charpentier Vêpres aux Jésuites Ensemble Vocal de Lausanne, Ensemble baroque L'Arpa Festante, Munich, Michel Corboz dir, Jean-Yves Haynoz plainsong dir 201' 25" (2 CDs) Cascavelle VEL 1030 (rec 1993)

H. 32, 35, 67, 78, 160, 204, 203, 208, 225, 361, 536.

Although I had a lot of Corboz recordings in my youth, it was more because of their availability than any genuine artistic merit that drew my attention and I have to confess that I was in no way ready for the beauty and class of this 1993 recording. The two CDs contain five psalms, a Magnificat, a hymn, three motets (including the amazing *Sancti Dei* for unaccompanied solo bass), and an orchestral overture. I have thoroughly enjoyed listening to the performances several times.

BC

I sent BC this CD to review, received it from him, and had the page format finalised when a proof-reader pointed out that David Hansell had already reviewed it in EMR 75. The two reviewers are more or less in agreement.

CB

Cozzolani Messa Paschale Magnificat, Warren Stewart 69' 38" Musica Omnia mo0209

It is clear from this CD that Chiara Margarita Cozzolani was a distinctive and gifted composer. The convent of S. Rade-gonda, where she was professed as a teenager and later became prioress and abbess, was one of several houses in early-17th-century Milan where liturgical music was apparently quite a tourist attraction. The picture of visitors enthusing over the performances of cloistered and invisible musicians implies a certain ambivalence between modesty and display – a polarity mirrored in this liturgical reconstruction, which interleaves chant with Cozzolani's polyphony and her concerted music. It is her concertato settings that I find most convincing and stimulating, but a whole programme of such pieces would appeal far less than this mix does. The performances seem entirely satisfactory. The varied continuo groups are deft and

persuasive; the singers – naturally all women except for a ‘celebrant’ – are thoroughly likeable, especially the lower voices. (Not only here but also in the *Musica Secreta* CD also reviewed in this issue, my spirit rejoices to hear vocal violas in a violin-mad world: contraltos and mezzos of great virtuosity, with voice production neither forced nor mannered.) Not having seen Robert L. Kendrick's transcriptions (included in his recent book on Cozzolani), I don't know if any of the pieces are performed as they were published or if (as I assume) some of the bass lines have been raised an octave as against the early printed versions; but I'm ready to believe that such performance decisions were taken judiciously enough. Whatever octave transpositions there are don't seem to mar the musical logic as they might in much earlier music. The singers' Latin sounds oddly North American, but that's my only quibble. Go for it. Eric Van Tassel

Hammerschmidt *Vier Suiten aus der Sammlung "Erster Fleiß"* Hesperion XX, Jordi Savall 51' 44"
Ars Musici AM 1170-2 (rec 1986)

This is a welcome re-issue containing four suites drawn from Hammerschmidt's two sets of New Pavans, Galliards, Ballets, etc., of 1636 and 1650. Originally intended for five-part *violen*, they are played here by viol consort, wind consort, and a combination of the two. The recording is very pleasant, with nice playing and a clear acoustic. I wouldn't say Hammerschmidt would have expected anything as fancy as the alternating scorings of the fourth suite, and although he would clearly not have had any problem with performers making suites from the collections, it seems strange that consecutive pieces in the same key are not played consecutively and that pieces from the second publication precede those from the first within the same suite. The running time is also a bit short, especially considering that there were another 67 pieces to choose from. BC

Mazzaferrata *Il primo libro delle Sonate a due violino Op. 5 (1674)* La Ghirlanda Musicale (Stafano Montanari, Claudia Combs *vlus*, Gebhart David *cnt*, Alberto Rasi *gamba*, Massimo Lonardi *archlute*, Ugo Nastrocci, Giangiocomo Pinardi *theorbo/gtr*, Edoardo Bellotti *kbd*) 56' 01"
Dynamic CDS 409

This is a complete recording (in the printed order) of Mazzaferrata's Opus 5 set of *Sonatae a 2 violini*. The continuo is played by a variety of line-ups, ranging from organ to archlute, guitar, theorbo and harpsichord. Strangely enough, one of the sonatas is played on violin and cornetto. Overall, I enjoyed the playing and the music, but I can't honestly say that it made much impression on me, whereas hearing Legrenzi for the first time about 15 years ago sparked what has become a lifelong obsession. Nonetheless, nice performances well recorded, and well worth exploring. BC

Merula *Canzoni, overo Sonate Concertate per Chiesa e Camera a due et a tre, libro terzo, op. XII* Ensemble L'Aura Soave TIME
MV Cremona MVC001-005

I enjoyed this. The 24 pieces of the original publication are played, not in the original order, by an eight-piece ensemble (2 violins, recorder, cello, lirone/gamba, harp, theorbo & harpsichord) with flair and fluency. Scorings always seem right (without too much recorder: the original parts are designated for violins) and the music is presented with utter conviction. The booklet notes don't explain why *La Cattarina* quotes G. Gabrieli's *Lieto godea*, though are otherwise excellent. CB

A. Scarlatti *Cantate d'amore* Gunther Schmid A, Batzdorfer Hofkapelle 54' 34"
KammerTon KT 2001
Clori vezzosa e bella, Fermi omai figace e bella, L'armi crudeli e fieri, Siete uniti a tormentarmi, Sonatas a4 in c & f

Another disc which EB and I listened to together, both agreeing that one work was the most satisfactory. We found *L'armi crudeli* more consistent in style and with music that conveyed emotions more clearly. Listening without the package, we assumed at first that the singer was female; irrespective of sex, we found him impressive – this is an excellent debut album. Also included are expressive performances of two of the Sonatas a4 mentioned in *EMR* 81 p. 17 as the originals of the 1640 Concerti Grossi; and fine pieces they are, despite the note-writer's disparaging description of them as 'hopelessly anachronistic in their fundamental conception'. CB

Sweelinck *The complete keyboard works* Various players *hpscd*, org 629' (9CDs in box)
NM Classics 92119 (rec 1999-2001)
see review on p. 2.

Images of Melancholy English Fantasy Consort + Lynda Sayce *lute*, Andrew Wilson-Dickson *org*, John Line *reader* 73' 48"
Riverrun RVRCD57n
Music by Dowland (7 *Lachrymae*, *Semper Dowland...*)
Farnaby, Holborne, Weelkes, A. Wilson-Dickson
check on list

Clifford must think my optimism very robust – it is the third lachrymose disc he's given to me to review, and easily the most successful (the others were Ensemble Daedalus and Musica Antiqua of Cologne). It's a brave idea, a strong endorsement of the power of the music to withstand the potential monotony. Dowland's famous seven pavans are played as the climax of other composers' re-workings of the tune (Farnaby for organ), the idea (Weelkes' Pavan *Lachrymae*) and similarly inspired pieces (Holborne's wonderful pavans, including the title piece). A courageous step is to include readings, and so many of them. They are from the inspirational text of *Corpus Hermeticus* – a curious mix of Platonic, pagan and Christian mythology, enormously influential in renaissance thought, particularly at this time. Classically educated writers such as Ben Jonson show its

influence most clearly, and there is no doubt that Dowland was familiar with the ideas. There are 12 readings, which some will find tiresome, though none of them exceed two minutes and most are less, but the disc is still well worth it. The music is stunning of course, and very expressively played. The balance is very much to the middle voices, the lute very clear, and *Semper Dowland semper dolens* a beautifully played solo. Andrew Wilson-Dickson plays Farnaby's variations beautifully, and improvises accompaniments for the reader, who, with understated quasi-liturgical manner, declaims the texts with great skill (though I found the recorded level too high). Wilson-Dickson's main contribution however is as the composer of *Fantasia Lachrymae* for consort of viols. It opens with the falling theme (like a chaconne bass) and with rhythmic patterns from the lute, varies textures and chords, both rhythmically (the four note theme transformed and sped up) and melodically (the minor third – 'sad infamy') to create a piece totally characteristic of the theme. It is marvellously suited to viols and to its subject, and I found it very moving. The programme is undoubtedly effective. The *Seven Pavans*, starting halfway through, come as a climactic sequence, and the readings mean that our spirits are truly attentive. Not for background listening.

Robert Oliver

Joseph I, Ferdinand III, Leopold I *Sacred works* Wiener Akademie, Martin Haselböck cpo 999 681-2 50' 35"
Ferdinand III *Deus tuorum militum, Humanae salutis, Jesu redemptor omnium*; Joseph I *Regina coeli*; Leopold I *Sonata piena, Laudate pueri*; Schmelzer *Lamento sopra la morte Ferdinand III*

Another CD of music by Hapsburg emperors is very welcome. The only non-Royal item is the far-too-often recorded *Lamento* for Ferdinand III by Schmelzer. How about replacing it with the surviving Requiem setting by the same composer, or any other of the dozens of surviving pieces by his contemporaries, especially as this is such a short CD. That aside, this is a nice programme, with Ferdinand III possibly emerging as the most interesting composer. Joseph I's *Regina caeli* is nicely sung by Linda Perillo. I still have reservations about men singing soprano, and this CD does not persuade me to change my opinion. BC

Missa Mexicana The Harp Consort, Andrew Lawrence-King 69' 11"
Harmonia Mundi HMU 907293
Padilla *Missa Ego flos campi* & music by Cererols, Escalada, Muscia, Vidales, Zavala, Zespedes & anon.

Anything that Andrew Lawrence-King does is imbued with a lively sense of rhythm. Sometimes that is a matter of following standard rhythmic patterns, but often it is far more subtle, exploiting the rhythmic variety within the vocal writing. This disc has both in abundance. Padilla's mass is mixed with a series of pieces that draw on the wealth of popular traditions, some of which still survive. Andrew's excellent booklet note is honest: 'This

programme is a musical exploration, not a liturgical reconstruction; but the music makes a convincing and highly enjoyable sequence. Marvellous poems, too. CB

Pianger de dolcessa: la grande poesia italiana messa in musica Jill Feldman S, Mara Galassi harp, Karl-Ernst Schröder chitarrone 69' 19" Stradivarius STR 33606
Music by Caccini, Castaldi, d'India, Kapsberger, Quagliati, Trabaci

The programme is built round settings of poems by (probably in descending order of status) Petrarch, Tasso, Guarini, Rinuccini and Chiabrera; D'India's *Lamento d'Olimpia* is to his own poem. The 22 tracks are nicely grouped into 8 sections, including some instrumental pieces. Jill Feldman is, as one expects, fully attuned to the style and is accompanied magnificently. If you enjoy early-17th-century monody (admittedly not everyone's taste, since it is so dependent on a feel for Italian), don't hesitate to buy this disc. CB

Violin Masters of the 17th Century Elizabeth Wallfisch 66' 00"
Hyperion CDA67238
Biber *Passacaglia*; Matteis; Schmelzer *Sonata IV* (arr); Westhoff *Suites I-V*

This has been a tricky CD to review. I really enjoyed the Schmelzer sonata, which Libby Wallfisch has arranged herself (so as to avoid having me make a fool of myself by mistaking the bass instrument, she's done away with it completely!) and the Matteis pieces are always fun. I didn't enjoy the Westhoff, mostly because I found the music rather dull; somehow it seemed as if the amazing technical gift he had (and Ms. Wallfisch shares) was the most important thing. I've possibly become too fixed in my mind how the Biber *Passacaglia* should go, so the fact that things weren't as I'd expected caught me unawares. Of course, there's no questioning the wonderful sound picture, or the indisputable quality of these performances. BC

LATE BAROQUE

Bach *Alto arias* Catherine King, A, Norwegian Baroque Orchestra, Julian Podger cond 50' 23"
Linn CKD 158
BWV 42/3, 112/2, 232 *Agnus Dei*, 244/6 & 39 interspersed between movement of Suite No. 2 (with Paul Wählberg fl)

This CD from the enterprising firm Linn Recordings not only features the long-established, but as yet little-recorded Norwegian Baroque Orchestra (some of whose personnel we have heard as members of other ensembles), but also the highly agreeable contralto Catherine King and the (to me anyway) newcomer as a soloist, Paul Wählberg, who likewise makes a successful assault on materials already widely explored by others. A pleasant overall achievement, with slightly quirky booklet notes but a clear demonstration-sound of high musical distinction. Stephen Daw

Bach *Organ Pieces* Rainer Oster org 62' 17"
Arte Nova 74321 27785 2 £
BWV 530, 532, 564, 655, 659, 688, 593

The opening bar of Bach's *Praeludium* in D (532) is one of the scariest moments in the organist's repertoire – a very exposed and fast upward D major scale on the pedals. Concerts and CDs have been destroyed by players' attempts at this tricky passage, but Rainer Oster carries it off with considerable panache right at the start of this CD. His bubbly and enthusiastic playing on this and other tracks is a tonic. He combines technical accuracy with musical insight and a considerable degree of excitement, achieved without recourse to hollow affectation. The *Toccata* in C (BWV 564 – *Toccata, Adagio and Fugue*) is another minefield for performers. Oster makes sense of the opening solo manual and pedal passages by judicious articulation and sensible structural phrasing. This is another piece where lesser musicians can get carried away by attempts at virtuosity, usually unsuccessful. The following sections are in Italian Concerto style, and Oster's playing reflects the inner tensions that add to the texture when a group of string players play music like this. Three chorale preludes are given moving readings reflecting the texts, with *Jesus Christus unser Heiland* (from *Clavierübung III*) effectively exploring the mood set by Bach's angrily angular musical lines. The concluding Bach/Vivaldi is given an assured and vigorous reading. This CD will warrant repeated listening and is well recommended. Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Cello Suites* Alexander Rudin
Naxos 8.55592 47' 03" (2 CDs) £

This complete recording of the six suites is supplemented by a stunning performance of the Chaconne from the D minor solo violin partita. Rudin makes musical sense of Bach's lines, has a lovely rich tone, and a wonderful sense of timing, but sometimes there's a little too much technique (particularly in the range of bowings he uses) for my liking, and the close recording often picks up vibrating open strings which can be slightly off-putting. I would say this is possibly the best performance I've heard on modern cello (the violin piece, as I've said, is exceptional), but I'll stick with Pieter Wispelwey for the time being. BC

Bach *Sonaten für Viola da Gamba und obligates Cembalo; Praeludien und Fugen*. Vittorio Ghielmi *gamba*, Lorenzo Ghielmi *Silbermann fp* 61' 01"
Ars Musici AM 1228-2
BWV 871, 874, 893, 1027-9

There is every possibility that Bach's gamba sonatas may have been played by musicians at the Dresden court with access to the newly developed fortepianos of Gottfried Silbermann. By the late 1740s the technical problems and weak treble sound that had earlier elicited a lukewarm response from JSB had been overcome, and the copy by Restelli used here is entirely

convincing in these pieces. Its sparkling treble tone and clear bass are ideally suited to Bach's contrapuntal writing, while the ability to shape phrases dynamically and point thematic ideas in different registers helps create a strong sense of architecture. Lorenzo Ghielmi still uses many a harpsichordist's expressive device (such as spread chords and asynchronous hands) to good effect, but also relishes the variety of colours the fortepiano offers. Vittorio Ghielmi's original Colichon gamba is occasionally too hard-pressed in tone, especially in the bass, but sings gracefully enough elsewhere. These are generally spacious readings, though the bourée-like finale to the G major sonata dances nimbly and there is a fiery approach to the D major's allegros. Between the gamba sonatas Lorenzo provides elegant performances of three preludes and fugues from Book II of the 48, including a bizarre musical-box effect when the dampers are left raised throughout the C minor prelude. John Bryan

J. F. & C. Fasch *Cantatas* etc. Maria Zádori, Lena Susanne Norin, Hans Jörg Mammel, Klaus Mertens *SATB* (JFF); Veronika Winter, Annette Müller, Bernhard Scheffel, Michael Schaffrath, Stephan Schreckenberger *SSTTB* (CF); Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max cpo 999 594-2 79' 09"
J. F. Fasch *Du sollst Gott, Wir müssen alle offenbar werden*. Overture in Bb FWV K: B3; Carl Fasch *Psalm 119*

The names of father and son, Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688-1758) and Carl Fasch (1736-1800) are, like so many minor composers from Saxony and Prussia of their time, all too easily orientated through their connections with J. S. Bach. Yet these do make a useful starting-point if they render the music ultimately better-known for its own sake. Suites and sonatas of the father were almost certainly performed by Bach's *Collegium Musicum* and the son formed the *Berliner Singakademie* in 1791 that was to play so prominent a role in the rediscovery of Bach over the coming decades.

J.F. Fasch's church compositions display the same easy skill as Telemann, accessible music full of detail and colour, but ultimately seldom overwhelming. The Overture in B flat receives an excellent performance from Hermann Max's *Das Kleine Konzert*. Much of this music is vivid and unexpected, especially the fast section of the opening overture, with its wild sequences and chromatic passages; the *Plaisanterie* plays with the unexpectedness of echoes and odd repeats and the second *Air* introduces a captivating bassoon obbligato.

Carl Fasch's arrangement of Psalm 119 (mercifully, given the full length of this Psalm, lasting a mere thirty minutes) is a stunning piece for chorus and associated soloists. Here we learn of the remarkable skill and range of singing groups in the late eighteenth century (something often belied by the apparent simplicity of the style); moreover, we learn more of the choral style in which Mendelssohn learnt his choral craft (something which is some-

times unkindly referred to as 'religious kitsch'). Indeed, much of this music seems portentous of many 19th-century choral traditions. Particularly impressive is the concerted soprano part, especially in the third movement, that provides challenging, expressive music for soprano reminiscent of that in Mozart's Mass in C minor. In all, Max's work on forgotten German musicians of the 18th century is extremely worthwhile, and the choral works of the younger Fasch deserve to become part of the staple diet of all enterprising choirs.

John Butt

C. Graupner *Orchestral Works* Nova Stravaganza, Siegbert Rampe 77' 21"
Dabringhaus & Grimm MDG 341 1121-2
Concerto in e (GWV 321), Overtures in Eb & E (GWV 429 & 439), Sinfonias in D & G (GWV 538 & 578)

It's nice to see another CD devoted to Graupner. Two suites, two sinfonias and a concerto make up the programme, played stylishly by Nova Stravaganza, directed by harpsichordist Siegbert Rampe. I've known the E major concerto for two oboes d'amore for a long time, so it's particularly welcome. Graupner has a quirky style, often stopping and starting in a C. P. E. Bach sort of way, and his music can often look strange on the page. Given performances like these, though, it's clear that he deserves more attention. BC

Jomelli *Miserere (Pietà Signore); Sei duettini sacri* Loredana Bachchetta, Silvia Testoni SS, Ensemble Fons Amoris, Giorgio Ubalid dir Bongiovanni GB 2323-2 73' 14"

All the works on this disc are settings of psalms in the mid-18th century literary versions made by Saverio Mattei. In providing texts that were of 'particular literary and spiritual importance', he hoped to stimulate the composition of 'sacred theatre', a new style that could bridge the stylistic gap between the rather formulaic nature of much contemporary sacred music and the more lively and varied secular styles. The *Miserere (Pietà Signore – Psalm 50/51)* is a substantial work first performed at the librettist's house in 1774, similar in character and scale to Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, the success of which it seriously and deservedly rivalled, as the surviving number of copies testifies. The recording has the feel of a domestic occasion, with solo strings and quite a dry overall sound with the singers in the middle, rather than out front. They work well together in the duets though are sometimes stretched by the solo coloratura. Neither are they immune from the occasional scoop. The strings do not always achieve unison when required, but all the performers demonstrate commitment to this thoroughly worthwhile cause. The Duettini are accompanied by continuo only and are less intense in style with the voices often in thirds. These careful performances are supported by an English/Italian booklet which contains useful comments on the *Miserere* in particular. What, in common with most other

CD booklets, it does not give is a source of performing material for the music. There may be copyright reasons for this but as a potential performer of this repertoire, I find it very frustrating. This will not prevent my enjoying the disc, however.

David Hansell

D. Scarlatti *La contessa delle stagioni* Silvia Piccolo, Elisa Franzetti, Vera Marengo, Vito Martino SSAT, Il Convento Ecclesiastico, Luca Franco Ferrari dir 53' 07"
Bongiovanni GB 2304-2

I enjoyed listening to this serenata a lot. The playing and the singing are bright and nicely executed (perhaps the tenor found his arias a little taxing, but I imagine that they would give even the very best singers a real challenge!) Trumpets, horns, flute, two oboes and bassoon augment the small string orchestra in a piece that sees Autumn (the afore-mentioned tenor!) crowned as the 'Countess of the Seasons' because that's the season of Marianna Gioseffa of Portugal's birthday. Recommended. BC

D. Scarlatti *Stabat mater a10, Missa a4* Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini Opus 111 OP 30248 54' 38"

Opulently scored in ten independent parts (plus, of course, the continuo), Scarlatti's contrapuntal *tour de force* has more in common with Bach's motets than with Pergolesi's setting of the same text. The sources (all non-autograph) suggest that some alternation of solo and choral sonorities was considered appropriate in their time, though here Concerto Italiano opt for soli throughout with organ and theorbo, which leaves my ears, at any rate regretting the lack of a bowed bass to give firmer support to the complexities above. The editor of my score suggests a duration of 38 minutes. This performance is through in about 26. Although the quicker sections are definitely at the fast end of the singable spectrum, a comparable extreme is also apparent in the slow passages: the opening phrases stretch out into eternity, suggesting the epic scale of what follows. Hardly a middle of the road performance, then, but certainly a stimulating one. My only really negative comment concerns the rather thick tone of the (male) altos, which does clog up the middle of what is already a congested texture. It is, however, a marvellous work. The accompanying mass is not nearly on the same level of elaboration or inspiration, though the singers still shape its selfconsciously antique lines with grace and commitment. This music would definitely have benefited from a liturgical context – there is plenty of room for some plainsong propers on the disc.

David Hansell

Vivaldi *Il Giustino* Dominique Labelle Arianna, Marina Comparato Anastasio, Francesca Provvisionato *Giustino*, Geraldine McGreevy Leocasta, Leonardo De Lisi Vitaliano, Laura Cherici Amanzio, Il Complesso Barocco, Alan Curtis dir 136' 13" (2 CDs in box)
Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45518 2 6

The form of the title is taken from Vivaldi's autograph score, but the title of the printed libretto of 1724 is just *Giustino*, which I prefer (as does Reinhard Strohm in his scholarly edition of 1991, published by Ricordi). It was Vivaldi's first full-length opera for Rome, and, possibly with the intention of displaying his talents, he borrowed about half the vocal numbers (apart from recitative) from earlier works. This hardly excuses what Strohm diplomatically calls 'a degree of conflict between musical expression and dramatic logic'. Vivaldi seems to have little interest in depicting the emotions of his characters, except when they are deliriously happy, and some of the numbers are perfunctory. The comparison with Handel's setting of the same libretto (somewhat modified) for London in 1736 is telling. At the end of Act I, for example, when the empress Arianna is in enemy hands and facing death, Handel's soulful D minor aria draws the listener into sympathy with her predicament. Vivaldi's major-key setting of the same text is a good piece in itself, but conveys only a sense of noble dignity. Curtis acknowledges the unevenness of Vivaldi's score in a booklet essay on 'judicious cutting'. In the Great Tradition style of criticism he excuses the omission of several numbers on the grounds that the cuts 'do Vivaldi a service', the omitted numbers being 'routine', 'repetitious', 'among [Vivaldi's] weakest', and so on. He does not, however, make clear how drastic his cuts are: 13 of the 42 arias and much recitative disappear, leaving holes in the plot that have to be explained in the synopsis or in notes within the libretto. The result is a neat 'package' suited to modern financial and organisational requirements (the recording is taken from a concert performance in Rotterdam), but is only about 60% of Vivaldi's opera. It is nevertheless difficult to feel that great injustice is done to the composer, and certainly Curtis and a very fine cast do their vivacious best for the music that remains. The women, especially, are fully equal to Vivaldi's often demanding vocal writing and relish the few opportunities for dramatic expression allowed to them. Another recording of the opera has recently appeared.* I cannot imagine that it will provide a better performance, but those who want to hear as much of the work as possible should perhaps wait to see what it offers before acquiring Curtis's abridged version.

Anthony Hicks

* on Bongiovanni GB2307/10-2, lasting 278'. According to Stanley Sadie's review in Gramophone Sept. 2002, it includes every note that Vivaldi wrote, even passages that he deleted, and has quite slow speeds, especially for the recitatives.

Vivaldi *Stabat mater* RV 621 Sara Mingardo A, Concerto Italiano, Rinaldo Alessandrini Opus 111 OP 30367 70' 45"
+ *Clarae stellae* RV 625 & concertos RV554a, 556, 579

Wow – what a voice! Sara Mingardo's full-blooded alto is quite unlike anything I've heard in the early music field – so strong

throughout the range, so agile in coloratura, and so beautiful in tone. Once and for all, she and the wonderful Concerto Italiano, under Alessandrini, have given us a definitive *Stabat mater*. Elsewhere, the playing of some of Vivaldi's most exotically scored concertos is absolutely wonderful. I had not before known of a definition of the 'viola all' inglese' as a viola d'amore with more sympathetic strings than normal, and it is interesting that they're played here by two of the group's violinists and one of the cellists. I look forward to hearing further volumes in this series, which promises to imbue Vivaldi's church music with perhaps more colour than we're used to. **BC**

CLASSICAL

C. P. E. Bach *The Complete Keyboard Concertos vol. 13* Miklós Spányi, Concerto Armonico, Péter Szűts 72' 06"
BIS-CD-1097
Concerti in Bb & c (H 413, 448), Sonatinas in E & G (H 100, 97)

My enthusiasm for Spányi's excellent series continues unabated, and in this particular volume we find perhaps the ideal introductory volume: on one disc, an early concerto and a late one, both probably revised a number of times. Both suit a slightly more sombre-toned fortepiano than that played in previous volumes. The two Sonatinas are also concertante works, but with a pair each of traversi and horns added to the overall ensemble. The unfailingly original and professional Emanuel certainly explores this new feature to admirable effect. Strongly recommended once again. **Stephen Daw**

J. A. Benda *Viola Concerto in F*; F. Benda *Violin Concerto in Eb* Josef Suk vln, Ariane Pfister vln, Suk Chamber Orchestra, Christian Benda cond, vlc 53' 24"
Naxos 8.553994 £
+ J. A. Benda *Benda's Klagen* arr, C. Benda

Another CD of solo pieces by members of the Benda family, some of it arranged and played by a member of the Benda family (Christian), and a second with a cadenza by one and played by another (Ariane Pfister and her mother Lola Benda, in reverse order). None of the music is particularly memorable, but it's enjoyable enough. The viola concerto is one of the war-horses of that instrument's repertoire, so it will be nice for students to have a performance of this calibre to listen to. Otherwise, mainly useful as *Tafelmusik*. **BC**

Cimarosa *La finta pargina* Anna Rita Gemmabella, Alessia Sparacio, Rodita Ramini, Alice Sunseri SSSS, Juan Gambina, Nunzio Galli TT, Paolo Cutolo, Alessandro Battiato, Giovanni Bellarvia BBB, Orchestra Filarmonica Siciliana "Franco Ferrara", Danilo Lombardini 157' 23" (3 CDs)
Bongiovanni GB 2269/70/71-2

Dating from 1773, this is one of the earliest of Cimarosa's comic operas, recorded from performances given to commemorate the

250th anniversary of his birth in 1999, and sung in broad Neapolitan dialogue. Even by the standards of opera buffa of the time, the plot is of quite dizzying complexity; and though the music is as lively as one would expect from the future composer of *Il Matrimonio Segreto*, most of it is scarcely representative of Cimarosa's finest comic mode. The cast is generally good, which is to say characterful; but I confess that I found Rosita Ramini in the role of Prezi-osa – a mozzarella-vendor no less – a little hard edged for a character who should, I imagine, have a singing voice as smooth as the cheese she sells. Indeed sound quality in this set is more uneven than in many previous live issues I have heard from Bongiovanni, which is surprising given the long experience of live recordings accumulated hitherto by an enterprising company on which opera buffa junkies have come so extensively to rely. This then is an issue that enthusiasts for the genre will certainly want for their collection, especially since, despite their arguably greater if more brittle brilliance, Cimarosa's works are, in comparison with those of his confrère Paisiello, rather under-represented in the catalogue. Others however, with a less ravenous taste for Cimarosa's special brand of comedy, may prefer to wait for a better recording of one of the many more consistently inspired creations of his later years. **David J. Levy**

Galuppi *The Complete Piano Sonatas vol. 2* Peter Seivewright pf
Thè Divine Art 2.5007 62' 00"

Full marks for the way this disc links music to a wider culture, with Burano lace illustrated in the booklet and a note by the pianist arguing that Galuppi was 'the authentic musical voice of the Counter-Enlightenment'. Those who have not bought vol. 1, however, are given no information on the composer or his works, and with so many sonatas, one needs a more precise way of identifying them than just by key. The choice of a modern piano (Steinway Model D, in fact) presents problems. The fast movements are fine, but the slower ones (generally taken more slowly than a harpsichordist or fortepianist would) sometimes have a disconcertingly timeless quality – they don't belong to either the 18th or the 21st centuries. **CB**

Gluck *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762). Ann-Christian Biel *Orfeo*, Mata Boog *Euridice*, Kerstin Avemo *Amor*, Drottningholm Theatre Chorus & Orchestra, Arnold Östman 66' 54"
Naxos 8.660064 £

A recording with period instruments of the original 1762 version of Gluck's *Orfeo* on a single Naxos CD seems an attractive proposition – until you listen to it. It was taken from live performances in 1998 at the 18th-century theatre at Drottningholm near Stockholm, so what you get is a boxy sound and a typical stage performance with imperfections of tuning and ensemble and a certain amount of noise from the stage. That would not have worried me had the performance been better. Arnold

Östman's direction is competent, though the music is not very sharply characterised and the pace is too often sluggish, lacking dramatic punch at crucial moments – such as the great underworld scene, Act II, Scene 1. The cast leaves a lot to be desired. Orfeo is given in 19th-century fashion to Ann-Christine Biel, a heavy vibrato-laden female mezzo-soprano, who sings much of the time in a rather unpleasant chest register; a countertenor would have been a much more appropriate and effective choice. Kerstin Avemo as Amor sings pleasantly enough, though it is difficult to imagine her as a boy, and she lacks the necessary wit and sparkle for the part. By contrast, Maya Boog is vocally and dramatically very convincing as Euridice. As it stands, this recording only lasts 66' 54", which makes it hard to understand why most of the repeats of the dances are cut or why the fine dances in the final sequence are omitted entirely – making a hurried and unconvincing end to the work. A small point: the parts for *flauti* in the beautiful dance at the beginning of Act II, Scene ii are played here, as usual, on flutes, though the range of the parts and the indication *Traverso solo* at the beginning of the next number suggests that Gluck intended them for recorders. **Peter Holman**

Gluck *Lieder et musique de chambre* Le Parlement de Musique (Kirsten Blase S, Stephan van Dyck T, Aline Zylberajch kbá, David Plantier, Stéphanie Pfister vln, Gesine Queyras vlc) Martin Gester dir 72' 22"
Assai 222272

Trio Sonatas in A, F & G minor, 6 settings of Klopstock, 3 settings of French texts + Mozart 'Dans un bois solitaire', Variations on 'Unser dumme Pöbel meint'

An attractive recital, which intersperses vocal numbers among trio sonatas. I was surprised, in view of the inclusion of Mozart's set of variations on a familiar song from *Les pèlerins de la Mecque*, that a different song from this opera was chosen for inclusion. The *Parlement de Musique* play the instrumental numbers and the accompaniments with modest accomplishment; some of the vocal numbers sound under-characterized, with insufficient attention to the words (which are printed in the leaflet, clumsily laid out, and lacking English versions and other information; however, there is a useful note in three languages). The major work is Mozart's set of ten variations on the Gluck tune; it is neatly, quite wittily played by Aline Zylberajch on a fortepiano with lovely upper register but somewhat jangly bass. **Peter Branscombe**

Haydn *Piano Trios vol. 4* (Hob. XV: 21-23) Trio 1790 (Susanne von Bauszner vln, Philipp Basbach vlc, Harald Hoeren fp) 60' 38"
cpo 999 731-2

Three more of Haydn's wonderful piano trios, excellently played by the admirable Trio 1790. As always, ensemble and balance are first-rate, and the period style is impeccable. In particular the violinist uses very little vibrato, and the sustaining lever

on the fortepiano is, quite properly, reserved for occasional special effect. It's a pity that an English piano isn't used for these London works, but I would still strongly recommend these performances. *Richard Maunder*

Haydn *Cantates pour les Esterházy* Sunhae Im S, Vocal Ensemble Köln, Capella Coloniensis, dir Andreas Spering 57' 35"
 Harmonia Mundi HMC 901765
Destatevi o miei fidi, Al Tuo arrivo felice, Qual dubbio ormai Hob.XXIVa 2-4; Symphony 12

The symphony, neatly enough performed and recorded, is an elderly oddity (recorded in October 1990) in this company. Even with it, one gets short value for money. The three cantatas are a real discovery (and a recent one: Cracow, early 1980s), but it's a shame the artists and Harmonia Mundi did not include more of Haydn's vocal music to fill the CD – there are two or three further works of the kind, even if they were not strictly composed for the Esterházy family. These three early cantatas require solo voices, small orchestra and chorus; they are lively, well sung and attractively played by Cologne forces, and it's good to have them available (only the third being currently listed in the CD catalogue); there is a well-presented, revelatory booklet, with four-language texts. Strongly recommended. *Peter Branscombe*

C. Stamitz *Chamber Works* Camerata Köln cpo 999 737-2 57' 44"
 Trio in Eb (horn, vln, bc), in G (2 fl, bc); Quartets op. 4/6, op. 8/1; Quintet op. 11/3

The ill-translated and turgid programme notes, sometimes barely comprehensible without resort to the original German, make preposterously exaggerated claims for Stamitz: 'The chamber music of Carl Stamitz represents... a bridge... between Bach's later works and Mozart's later works' and 'Stamitz's musical imagination points astonishingly far ahead into the future' (compare Mozart's succinct if harsh verdict: 'a wretched scribbler'). In fact the music is pleasant though somewhat undistinguished, but there are some nice concertante flute and horn parts.

The performances are pretty good in general, but I wish that this group would give up their irritating (and surely unjustified) habit of playing many semi-quaver appoggiaturas as acciaccaturas. And I would question their use of keyboard continuo. The original print of Op. 4 (Strasbourg 1774) mentions only the cello, as does the Hummel edition of Op. 8 (which sanctions the substitution of a flute for a clarinet); Siéber's title-page for Op. 8 says 'basse' instead, which just shows that you can't assume that word is an abbreviation for 'basse continue'. In any case, a fortepiano copied from a Stein of a type first made in the 1780s is an eccentric choice for music written at least a decade earlier. Good in parts, then, but the booklet should be thrown away unread! *Richard Maunder*

19th CENTURY

Cherubini *Les Deux Journées* Mireille Delunsch, Olga Pasichnyk SS, Yann Beuron, Étienne Lescroart TT, Andreas Schmidt B, Chorus Musicus Köln, Das neue Orchester, Christoph Spering 78' 23"
 Opus 111 OP 30306

Under its better known alternative name of *The Water Carrier*, Cherubini's *comédie lyrique*, first played in Paris in January 1800, held its modest place on the European stage until the early years of the 20th century. This recording includes all its musical numbers, and very agreeable they are too. Though missing out the spoken dialogue, which was a feature of the form of light opera in France at the time, the accompanying booklet provides a lucid outline of the drama's plot, which is essentially a variation of the tale of rescue from political tyranny that was so popular during this period, and of which *Fidelio* is the greatest example. Certainly Cherubini was no Beethoven, but, on the basis of *Medée* and works like this, one could make a reasonable case that he had a better sense of musical stagecraft than his more illustrious and younger contemporary. Judged by this disc, *Les Deux Journées* would be well worth reviving, especially when performed by a cast of such consistently high quality as the one assembled by Christoph Spering for this welcome issue from one of the continent's most adventurous record companies. Spering's singers are aided by an excellent sound quality which allows the listener fully to appreciate the quality of Cherubini's orchestration particular gift for which he was justly renowned during his lifetime. All in all this is a very pleasing record that should do something to revive interest in the work of a musician whose later reputation has never fully recovered from the waspish recollections of his most talented pupil, Hector Berlioz. *David J. Levy*

20TH CENTURY

Toshio Hosokawa, J. S. Bach, Isang Yun Thomas Demanga vlc, Asako Urushihara, Hansheinz Schneeberger vln, Teodoro Anzelotti accordion, Aurèle Nicolet fl, Heinz Holliger ob, Thomas Larcher pf 144' 03" (2 CDs)
 ECM New Series 1782/83
Bach Cello Suites 5 & 6; Hosokawa Duo for vln & vlc, In die Tiefe, Winter Bird; Yun Espace I, Gasa, Images

There is not really a lot to say about this recording. The Bach cello suites (Nos. 5 and 6) are well played, although I wouldn't say they were anything special, and the Japanese and Korean music is way out of our range. I may well be too ignorant to appreciate merits that others might find in it, but I found myself turning the CD player off after only a few minutes, tense and frustrated. Not for late night listening. *BC*

AN INTRODUCTION TO...

Bach *Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 4 & 5* written and narrated by Jeremy Siepmann; recording by the Cologne Chamber Orchestra Helmut Müller Brühl dir 152' 20" (2 CDs)
 Naxos 8.558055-56

Jeremy Siepmann's introduction to the fourth and fifth Bach Brandenburg Concertos is intended for musical novices who want a deeper understanding of Bach's music. The set comprises a talk on Bach and the concertos, performances by the Cologne Chamber Orchestra, and a booklet which contains the text of the talk, historical information, and explanations of musical terms and concepts. It is aimed at people who have little knowledge of music theory: Siepmann explains each point of his analysis simply, gives supporting background, and follows with an example from the recordings to illustrate it. I was impressed by both the range and depth achieved, moving from such basics as 'what is a?' to a deeper exposition of the intricacies of Bach's use of fugues, in a smooth style which is easy to listen to. The timing of explanation and illustration is for the most part very well-balanced, with just enough description for the listener to be able absorb each point before hearing the example. Siepmann conveys his love of the music in an informal chatty style which is pleasant to listen to and not at all intimidating for a beginner; he not only puts the music into historical context, but also into a cultural context which includes literary comparisons. A student would find the CDs useful, but I did feel that for study purposes the CD format was not exploited to its full extent. The main advantage of having a recording is that the student can review sections: for example, it is useful to replay a description after listening to the excerpt which demonstrates it, to give oneself time to consider the points and check understanding. However, Siepmann uses a standard audio-lecture approach, and occasionally the style and content, though perfectly suited to listening in a linear fashion (and certainly entertaining), is less suited to more serious study. He occasionally strays into anecdotal personal views, which are interesting on first hearing but not relevant to a study of the concertos, and thus loses a little of the advantage of being able to apply a search-and-review method to the CD. It is easier to use the transcript in the booklet for review, but then of course one loses the context of the music. Both the talk and booklet have a wealth of detail about the concertos and their cultural and musical background, and give a very clear explanation of Bach's musical styles. As an introduction which will encourage the novice to continue to explore the music, this set is worth listening to. *Elisabeth Fosbrooke*

£ = bargain price ££ = midprice
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Apologies for a slip in the review by Anthony Hicks of Tamerlano in the last issue. The recording is correctly said to last 181 minutes, yet the text states that an uncut performance of Handel's 1724 score would play for just under three hours, a misprint for 3½ caused by my not checking back the coded text on screen with the hard copy.

LETTER

Dear Clifford,

BC's failure to distinguish the sound of bass viol from cello (*EMR* 82 p. 27) is a textbook example of an aural illusion prompted by suggestion – the word 'cello' in the booklet. A precisely parallel example, but with 'live' sound is in Beaumont *How we hear music* 2001, p. 51. Such aural illusions are more common than is often recognised.

On a different matter, your review of Annette Otterstedt's *The Viol* makes some valid points but has not, in my view, appreciated the general value of this book. Compare it with other general texts on the viola da gamba – Hayes, Dolmetsch, Harders, Crum, König – and this value sticks out a mile, even though I disagree with many of the author's views and can point out some positive errors of fact.

John Catch

BC wasn't the only person to be caught by the misprint: none of the other reviews I have seen showed any suspicion that it wasn't a cello (but later reviews will probably be correct, since Hyperion has drawn attention to the mistake in its latest new-issue list). The 'suggestion' was reinforced by the fact that the player is chiefly known as a cellist and the booklet included a picture of him playing a cello. It is possible (I haven't heard the recording, so I'm only arguing in general terms) that he sounded sufficiently like a cellist that there was little aural evidence to correct what had been presented in print. In general, though, there's no doubt how easy it is to hear what you want to hear. If you like big operatic voices, they sound in tune; if you don't, they don't. Similarly, if you are told as a child that the *Eight Short Preludes and Fugues* you are learning are by Bach, you think they are masterpieces; when you find that they are not, you change your mind.

As for Otterstedt's *The Viol*, its biggest weakness is that the author is, like the viol world I used to know, cut off from the wider musical world. I'm not part of that narrow world now (though have been a member of the VdG Society since the mid-1960s and was on its committee for about 20 years), so concentrated my remarks on areas where her violish remarks impinged

on the wider musical scene. Just as you believe strongly that viol players suffer from isolation from normal technical drills (playing scales, etc), so I believe that they suffer by seeing their music out of its historical context. Otterstedt's book will confirm prejudices, not open horizons.

PS. Just as I had run off the final version of pp. 1-23 of this issue, another envelope arrived from John with further comments on both these topics. He stresses the virtue of Otterstedt's reliance on primary sources; very commendable. But however good her book may be on many matters, its weakness is its parochialism, and one would have hoped that an author from outside the English viol tradition might have avoided that. See also Robert Oliver's remarks on p. 7.

CB

CLIVE WEARING

I sometimes get asked if I have heard anything about the condition of Clive Wearing. I had no news for some years, but a Radio 4 programme *Between Ourselves* on July 28, repeated on August 2, included an interview with his wife. Although there is no fundamental change to his loss of memory, its span has now extended to about half a minute and it seemed that he was a little more relaxed. But there is no essential change. (Clive was a conductor specialising in Renaissance and 20th-century choral music, a BBC Radio 3 producer and an expert on Lassus, who suffered a complete loss of memory in 1985.)

TOM FINUCANE
1955-2002

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Tom Finucane, the brilliant player of lutes and other plucked instruments, who was particularly associated with Philip Pickett's ensembles. He had been ill recently, but went to Japan with the Musicians of the Globe at the end of July, fearing that he had cancer. But instead it was TB, and on Saturday 3rd August, just after his return to England, he died of a heart attack. He will be greatly missed.

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