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NB Please do not phone to complain if you do not receive a January issue: the next issue is February

As usual, the number of seasonal discs is small; we don't review general collections of carols unless they have a particular early slant, and the Christmas-oriented discs that fill the shops mostly miss us. There are, however, plenty of excellent Christmas presents, especially the cheap boxes, some of new recordings (e.g. the Sweelinck keyboard music or *The Golden Age of European Polyphony*, both reviewed in September), others of stimulating issues that have hitherto been full-price, e.g. the magnificent box of Bach from Musica Antiqua Köln reviewed last month, and the Virgin Monteverdi (see p. 18).

It is encouraging that classical record sales in Britain are not in the decline from which they are suffering elsewhere. It was perhaps fortunate that the popularity of early-instrument performance coincided with the appearance of the CD, so that there was an excuse for extensive re-recording of the earlier part of the standard repertoire. But new forms of recording are unlikely to be as revolutionary and/or universally popular, and any successful new form will need to be compatible with the CD, so will not require extensive replacement of older recordings (though extra features may enable reissues to be less cheap than now). It is disappointing that virtually all DVDs are reissues of older TV recordings or else live concerts, which make very little creative use of the visual aspect. Some are enjoyable, but none show the imagination of the abandoned project of Hans Petri, which (in the case of the Brandenburgs, the programme on which most work was done), was intended to give a complete filmed performance from the place where Bach probably first performed them, the option of seeing the autograph instead of the players, a tour of Köthen, still photos of every document in the local archives that were connected with Bach, and a guide to the music and the instruments. As it is, the technology is improving (though most of us, I suspect, are reasonably content with sound reproduction as it is at present) but there is little cash available to do anything fresh with it. *CB*

Our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

PLAYING WITH WORDS

John Butt *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance* Cambridge UP, 2002. xv + 265pp. Hb £45.00 ISBN 0 521 81352 2; pb £15.95 ISBN 0 521 81358 5

I recently emailed John Butt asking him if he was free for us to call *en famille* to see him in Glasgow on 1 December; his reply reminded me that the annual conference of the RAM was taking place in Glasgow that weekend. I apologised on the grounds that one part of my mind was aware of that since I must have proof-read it in the *EMR* diary, yet I hadn't related it to anything that might affect my own movements, knowing that I couldn't possibly attend since I was giving the Margot Leigh-Milner lecture at the NEMA AGM on 30 November. The problem with John's book is that he seems to have kept his experience as a performer in a different part of his mind from his interests as a musicologist, so what is entirely missing is the interaction between the two – something that he could have supplied more effectively than most others and which would have brought the book to life. Good writer though John normally is, I found this very difficult to read, probably a common phenomenon, since on mentioning to one distinguished author who appears in the bibliography that I hadn't finished it yet, he replied 'Who has?'

Playing with History is a reflection on the theoretical arguments concerning what has recently been renamed (to avoid the discredited word 'authentic') historically informed performance (the acronym HIP is used throughout: presumably it has to be spelt out in oral use, since hip has other musical connotations). John surveys what musicologists have been writing on the topic, and it is interesting to have their ideas related to wider philosophical and cultural issues. But the approach strikes me as largely irrelevant. Most of the discussion follows on what performers have done and listeners have, in varying degrees, accepted without the encumbrance of such arguments. Pushing the argument of what HIPers are aiming at to logical, untenable extremes (as some critics do) doesn't undermine their basic good sense.

The last Leigh-Milner lecturer, Jeremy Montagu, said 'After all, music is sound (that's about the only definition of music on which everyone can agree) and if you're trying to perform it, the first thing to do is to try to get the sound right. If the sound's right, the music *may* be right – if the sound's wrong, the music *can't* be right.' (*Early Music Performer* 10, August 2002, p. 27) Begging the problem of who decides what sounds right, that seems to be a major reason why performers got involved in HIP. In the 1950s and 1960s, some players worked hard on the grammar of baroque music – trills starting on the right notes, tempi that related to dance, etc. But the music still didn't feel right. So they began to experiment with instruments and techniques of the time to see what happened. Also, modern performance style was growing further away from what older players could remember from their youth, and the time was coming, if it hadn't already, when there was little relevant continuity of tradition even for music that had stayed in the repertoire. A consequence of this was a concern with style: not all music sounded right if played in the same way, whereas the stylistic differentiation in normal mid-20th-century orchestral playing was inadequate (*cf* my comments on Buskaid on p. 25). On another tack, musicians such as Noah Greenberg (see the review of his biography below), were independently trying to reach back to show that music was as essential a part of the culture of the middle ages as architecture and literature, and that it was as exciting.

I find John's book deeply disappointing, especially from someone whom I so admire. He is playing the musicologist's game, not the musician's. There's no harm in putting a bit of philosophical beef into the musician's instinct. But this seems to be taking seriously ideas that will fall away as postmodernism drifts into neopostmodernism. Some enthusiasts have been guilty of excessive claims for HIP. But most of us believe that composers were writing with the sounds and styles that they knew and that attempts to approximate to them suit the music better than unthinking modernising. (Explicit, value-added modernising is a different matter.) It is so easy to state our vague beliefs in such a way as to produce the sort of absurdities some of the writers John describes have pounced upon, and so difficult to avoid falling into the traps: I shudder to think what some of the scholars that John quotes would make of my editorials and reviews. But his book at least ends on the right side: 'the net benefit [of HIP] greatly outweighs the disadvantages'.

EARLY GUITAR

James Tyler and Paul Sparks *The Guitar and its Music.* Oxford UP, 2002. xxv + 322p, £60.00. ISBN 0 19 816713 X

I suspect that most of the critics of HIP quoted in the book reviewed above will be utterly scornful of attempts to revive early guitars, on the assumption that there's no music worth playing on them anyway. But one way in which the early music revival is aligned with current musicology is in the suspicion of the older hierarchical approach to music, with a line of descent in worth from high art through the middle-brow to the popular. Most guitar music comes from the lower part of that spectrum, but the

dangers of easy classification is shown by the Monteverdi song on the back page of our last issue. *Si dolce e'l tormento* is a deceptively simple piece. The first half is just a descending scale, but given interest because it runs from the third, not the tonic, which enables it to cadence directly on the relative major. For much of the second half, the voice maintains inverted pedals clashing with the chords. The problem with that sort of music is that it can easily look naïve, especially in editions which only give the voice part and the *alfabeto*. *The guitar and its music* lists over 100 Italian songs books with *alfabeto* between 1610 and 1659. This large repertoire makes little sense on the modern guitar. I suspect that if I had been asked before reading this what were the normal accompanying instruments for Italian songs of the period, had I thought of the guitar at all, it would have been after lute, theorbo, harpsichord, organ, harp and lirone, and a glance through recent recordings would have confirmed this bias.

A problem, of course, is to decide what sort of guitar, since for the earlier part of the period covered here the organological information is small. This improves in the later 18th century, so there is a difference of emphasis between the first two parts of the book (by James Tyler) and the third, on the origins of the Spanish Guitar (by Paul Sparks). The six-string instrument that is the precursor of the modern instrument appeared around 1750 and, after dominating Paris, was standard in most of Europe by around 1800. Reception in Britain was delayed by the popularity of the English Guitar (a variant of the cittern): music from this period for guitar is likely to be for this instrument.

The first sections of the book are a very revised version of Tyler's 1980 *The Early Guitar* (see below p. 26). Even then he had spent many years researching the subject, and for him research means playing, not just studying. His survey draws attention to the good and bad music in the MSS and editions he describes in a way that suggests that he has tried it out. The reports on each source seem a bit casual, but giving a full inventory of each of them would probably have taken the book way beyond what was publishable, or at least what would be affordable to players. It is, though, essential to look at the notation as a player. Often there is nothing explicit to indicate the intended tuning; in most cases, absolute pitch is irrelevant, but whether courses are tuned in octaves or unison can be vital. Each section concludes with lengthy lists of sources, so this will be invaluable to players seeking further repertoire. It is difficult for the non-player to make sense of the sources and state anything significant about them; at least you can transcribe lute and organ tablature, but a transcription of the strummed style of guitar music merely looks silly (as our Monteverdi last month showed).

Incidentally, when reading the biography of Noah Greenberg (see p. 7), I noticed that the one person mentioned as playing for him that I knew (and subscribes to EMR) was James Tyler, who came to London in the late 1960s, played in David Munrow's Early Music Consort and was an original member of The Consort of Musicke. I remember particularly lute duets in which Jim played the showy treble lines and Tony was the straight man on the bass.

MACHAUT'S MOTETS, HOCKET & MASS

Anne Walters Robertson *Guillaume de Machaut and Reims: Context and meaning in his musical works*. Cambridge UP, 2002. xx + 456pp, £65.00 ISBN 0 521 41876 3

Sometimes one feels that current musicology is too obsessed with context and meaning, but here such an approach sheds enormous light on one section of Machaut's oeuvre. The title is right to include Reims. Robertson has already located the Mass in a specific place in its cathedral (her chapter in Thomas Kelly's *Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony* is incorporated here) and now shows how some of the motets are specifically related to time and place. Motet 21 (*Christe qui lux/Veni creatur/Tribulatio*), for instance, is dated to Dec. 1359/Jan. 1360. This is one of the few pieces in which the music itself is a significant part of the discussion: most of the arguments and explanations relate to the texts. But how did the potential 'audience' manage to understand them? In the piece just mentioned, even if the long opening duet were sung with a text [the underlay is editorial], would a listener really deduce from 'Chri' and 'Ve' what the words are? Later, duplum and triplum tend to begin phrases separately, so, if you have the words in front of you or in your head, you can hear where you are. But were word-books circulated to listeners? Or was the message one of no concern to anyone save the performers (and even then, did the singer of the triplum follow the meaning of the duplum?) Or if the words were circulated, did the reader treat the text as independent? Or was understanding only available to those with access to the various 'Collected Works' manuscripts that Machaut circulated? (And even then, how did the reader hear the music notated in separate parts?) One assumes that the density of meaning that Robertson uncovers wasn't just a secret word game, so it is a pity that her speculations do not extend to how the whole creation was understood. This happens to be the first piece of Machaut that made a musical impression on me – a broadcast in 1964 with, I think, Alfred Deller singing one of the texted parts. It was clearly a fine piece of music, irrespective of the text and (to anticipate the first point on which an analyst might concern himself) the structure of the tenor. Why? Did I accidentally hear something that Machaut didn't put there or thought of little importance? How did Machaut decide which notes were meaningful and which weren't? A subject for another book, since there is quite enough to absorb in this one.

One small point that relates to the way she covers this piece is the lack of emphasis on how intimately Machaut would know *Christe qui lux*. I like the way she specifically locates him in stall 40 on the left side of the choir and mentions the likely effect of the glass in the window opposite. He would have sung that hymn at compline nightly (or would at least have said – or being a musician, probably have sung – it in his private devotions). It would have been ingrained on his consciousness. (Although I was not brought up within the catholic liturgy, somehow the hymn's words and chant have become part of my store of mentally-reproducable aesthetic experiences.) There was no need to quote John Lydgate –

only ten years old when Machaut wrote his piece, and in another country – to justify its use. This is an example of the overkill of analogues which sometimes threatens to obscure the argument.

Giving a meaning to the separate texts of a motet like No. 21 is easy compared with making sense of those with courtly love texts above snatches of chant. Robertson works very hard to persuade us that the courtly love sentiments are allegorical (using the word in its looser sense). Some of her arguments may seem individually questionable, but in cumulation the case is, at the least, tenable. Musicians will find themselves led into areas of mystical writing that may be fresh to them. I was intrigued by the importance of Suso, whom I had otherwise only encountered because he heard angels sing *In dulci*. Robertson's table relating Machaut's tenors to themes from accounts of spiritual journeys in medieval mystics (pp. 98-99) makes the outlines of a spiritual interpretation of Motets 1-17 (in the order of the MSS) clear almost without the need to read the detailed arguments that follow. Apart from the mass, the other work discussd, the Hocket, is also shown to have a meaning, time and date: the coronation of Charles V in 1364.

70 pages of footnotes contain more than bibliographical references and deserve to be accessible on the page, particularly since the reader will have to keep one finger in Appendix B, the texts and translations of the motets. It is very useful to have them, but they would have been even more useful if some attempt had been made to align translation with the text, a discipline that any conscientious record-sleeve and programme-note translator needs to master – though it helps if the translator has some control over the page design. Has anyone designed a computer-publishing programme format that would allow the multilayered format of a medieval manuscript page?

This is a stimulating book. I remember once seeing Chris Page walking out of a lecture on Machaut in fury at the lecturer talking so dryly about music that he loved. I was tempted to ask him to review this: I hope he will be doing so elsewhere. I miss any feeling that one aspect at least of its Machaut's motets is still alive, the music. The insight on what the words meant is nevertheless extremely valuable, even though I still don't know how Machaut's colleagues might have experienced it or why writing texts of motets was the best way of expressing these ideas. Or are music and words best heard virtually independently? There are no facsimiles of manuscripts here: perhaps the appearance would tell us something. So I'd like to see a review by Emma Dillon as well.

WORDS AND NOTES

Hsi-Ju Chen *Zum Wort-Ton-Verhältnis im musikalischen Humanismus* 2002 Verlag Dohr Köln, 2002. 278pp. ISBN 3-925366-95-4

This University of Köln thesis explores the relationship between secular texts and their musical settings by composers from around the middle of the 16th to the middle of the 17th century. After an introductory chapter on what exactly Humanism is, Chen explores the three major genres of the period, the madrigal, the chanson and the lied. The book is well written with plentiful musical illustrations (though rarely lasting more than a few bars). These are, however, often full of analytical markings, which are rather distracting and, when it came to the notion of unaccented passing notes being used as a means of expressing some darker side of a text's meaning, I'm afraid it was a bridge too far. There is a general difficulty in describing in words what a composer is trying to do (if, indeed, it is a conscious process at all) in setting a text – where does meaning stop and musical technique take over? When does a neat piece of counterpoint take priority over sense? Should Gesualdo's extremely intense music be included in such a general study? I don't know the answers to these questions, but you'd never catch me trying to write a book about the subject either. Interesting and stimulating reading, though. *BC*

THE RETURN OF CURTIS TO NOVELLO

Monteverdi *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*... Score/vocal score... Libretto by Giacomo Badoardo, English libretto by Anne Ridler, edited by Alan Curtis. Novello (NOV 090664), 2002. xlii + 237pp, £49.95.

I was a little suspicious of Curtis's *Poppea* when it appeared in 1989, chiefly because he seemed not to have worked out clearly the relationship between the sources. There is both less and more of a problem with *Ulisse*. With regard to the music, there is just one source, and that presents fewer cruces than the Venice MS of *Poppea*. (My contention is that the Venice MS is a stage nearer what Monteverdi & Co may have written than the Naples MS, in which the oddities have been corrected without recourse to any authoritative musical source.) Curtis does, however, produce an interesting list of 'miswritings-by-a-second' in *Ulisse* (p. viii); many of the passages are not obviously mistakes when examined in isolation, but the cumulative effect is persuasive. More confusing is the testimony of the dozen MSS of the words; neither they nor the underlaid text is self-evidently authoritative, and here Curtis is probably right to use common sense rather than construct an unconvincing stemma and try from it to work out readings on objective grounds.

In both *Poppea* and *Ulisse* ,Curtis/Novello are in competition with me/King's Music. Interestingly, we are in almost complete agreement over how to present the works, though curiously our paths have never crossed. (The nearest was when I stood behind him in a queue for expenses in the Berkeley Music Department office in 1990; I was too shy to introduce myself.) The two-stave score, with simple editorial figuring but no realisation, is the only sensible way to print music of this sort. Customers still request 'vocal scores' from us, and Novello cover themselves by including the term on their title page. But there is no point in producing for any early 17th-century (and, indeed, much later) anything other than a complete score with no realisation. I

don't feel very strongly about reducing note values in triple time: Like Curtis, I have reduced them in *Ulisse* and *Poppea*, but not in the 1610 Vespers. (The matter barely arises in *Orfeo*.) Curtis irons out those mysterious inconsistencies between semibreves and tied minims in the bass, whereas I prefer to leave them because we don't understand them: they can't all represent mid-bar line breaks in previous copies. I am not so convinced about a couple of comments on instrumentation: the use of 16' and the doubling of strings. Two theorbos might sound a lot louder than one, but the reverse is the case with violins.

I haven't liked to test the binding by folding it back hard enough to see if it will stay open on a music stand: I suspect it will. I see no sign of the care for page-turns that exists in my version, which in that respect is more comfortable for continuo players. The chief merit in the new edition is Curtis's greater knowledge of Italian.

I've taken Iro's Act III solo for comparing the two editions It is the morning after the night before. Curtis suggests that the scene is played before the curtain; the alternative is among the dregs of the previous night's party. (The plot, incidentally, fits into the classical 24-hour timescale, which an interval here helps by having a break when there is a gap in the dramatic time. I am less happy with a single-interval performance than Curtis.) Curtis is more pedantic in showing by a line the chordal continuity of the opening quavers. He tries to make something of the beam-break in the octave leaps that begin bars 5 & 6, though follows modern practice in not having more than four quavers to a beam. He bothers to show a minor chord at bar 14, whereas I assume that by p. 136 the player will realise that a major cadence doesn't imply a major beginning to the next phrase – though my omission was careless rather than intentional. (Incidentally, the spaciousness, not necessarily a virtue, of Curtis's score is shown by the equivalent page number being 187.) Curtis regrettably uses the natural sign to figure an A minor chord: I prefer the practice of the sources (on the rare occasions when figures are used) of using a sharp sign for major, a flat sign for minor. Despite his introductory strictures against too many 6 chords, he adds a 6 to bar 20. I add a similar footnote to his at bar 23 about the *proci/porci* pun. In bar 30, he spells out the cadence whereas I just print the MS sharp, leaving it to the player to follow the voice or not as he chooses. In 38 & 40 I have put a dash under the second note rather than a 3: the effect is the same, since I assume that the player may well accompany GAB with BCD while playing a G major chord for the bar. The first harmonic difference is in bar 44, where I misprint the original sharp (natural in Curtis) as a flat. This happens to be at a page turn, with the bar divided into two tied minims, each of which is tied. [An advantage of our cottage-industry system of publication is that all future copies will be correct.] The opening of bar 49 is an example of Curtis eschewing the obvious 6 for a 5. I won't continue in detail: enough to show that our differences in this area are minimal. In general, Curtis has more editorial comments (all visible on the page) and pays more attention to the text.

Curtis includes a singing English translation. In these days of surtitles, I'm not sure how valuable this is. It is less useful to singers of the Italian than a literal one that preserves the original word-order as far as possible, such as is printed at the foot of the page in our *Poppea*; but I didn't manage that for *Ulisse*. Since Curtis prefaces his edition with the libretto set as verse, it's a pity he could not have supplied a line-for-line translation alongside. I too have wavered with the problem of whether to capitalise the beginning of each line of verse when underlaid (see p. xiii) and see the inconveniences; like Curtis, I didn't do so in *Ulisse*.

I'm not trying to persuade readers that my edition is better: I would go no further than to say that it is only half the price (£25.00). But the similarities show a consensus on how such things should be done, and it is good to see Novello, in other Monteverdian areas a bastion of older practices, being in touch with current editorial and musical ideas.

HANDEL'S CORONATION

Handel *Four Coronation Anthems (HWV 259, 258, 260, 261)... edited by Donald Burrows and Damian Cranmer.* Vocal score. Novello (NOV072507), 2002. xi + 123pp, £9.95.

By a strange coincidence, both of the Novello scores reviewed this month are in direct competition with my editions, though in this case mine was published by Oxford UP, not King's Music, so I did not have full control over basic editorial decisions. I still maintain with King's Music the older convention of beaming vocal quavers by syllable, but both Novello and OUP use instrumental beaming, so there is no choice for the user. On a very practical level, some singers may choose by weight, since in the absence of solo movements, the copy has to be held in a singing position for (by the Novello timing) 38 minutes: OUP is 270g, Novello is 390g. On the other hand, some prefer the traditional Novello vocal-score size to the OUP wider format. OUP notation is a bit squashed, but that affects the rehearsal pianist more than the singers. Comparison of the two piano reductions shows that at times Novello goes for a much more detailed piano reduction (e.g. the opening of Zadok) but it can be simpler (eg bars 9-18 of *My heart is inditing*). Novello gives details of instrumentation in the reduction, useful for an edition which has no purchasable full score (material is on hire only, whereas OUP has full score and parts for sale as well as hire). The OUP score is quite expensive at £65.00; a cheaper alternative is Damian Cranmer's Eulenburg miniature scores, each anthem separately at £3.50, £3.50, £5.50 & £4.00. The OUP vocal score lacks a critical commentary, but there is one (that includes remarks on specific performance problems) in the full score. For the same reason, the OUP vocal score has a shorter introduction, though it includes a table giving the order of service from two major sources compiled by Donald Burrows which does not appear in his edition. There is no serious problem in evaluating the sources: the autograph is clearly the primary one, though it offers a few differences of interpretation, chiefly with regard to inconsistency of

rhythmic notation in triple time. But that is a matter of performance, and the editor should do no more than suggest. Burrows restores what he believes to be the original performing order; I'm not sure that it matters, unless you are going to imitate Robert King and try to reconstruct the service, and *Zadok* makes a good start, whether or not feedyou treat the opening 22 bars as a crescendo. Robert was the first user of the OUP edition from whom I received any -back, and he objected to the excessive indication of hemiola patterns; the Novello edition has as many. (While checking them, I noticed that Novello's bar-numbering is wrong on p. 96.) The price difference is negligible (OUP is slightly cheaper £9.50; NB there are various misprints in the first issue of the OUP vocal score, corrected in the second printing.) I'm not going to offer a best buy. If you want to own the orchestral material, there's no choice; if you are happy to hire, you could just toss a coin!

COUPERIN MIRRORED

Jane Clark and Derek Connon *'The mirror of human life': reflections on François Couperin's* Pièces de Clavecin. King's Music, 2002. 125pp, £10.00. ISBN 1 871775 10 8
School of Politeness: Pièces de Clavecin (Couperin *Ordres 1, 6, 13, 19, 27*) Jane Clark 68'22" **JAN D208**

Jane Clark has been exploring the personalities behind Couperin's often enigmatic titles for many years and has previously published what can now be seen as preliminary versions of the present study, beginning, I think, with an article in the April 1980 *Early Music*. (It did strike me as odd that these earlier writings are not at least mentioned in the bibliography even though parts of them may now be superceded.) This new publication is rather a 'home-made' production that seeks not only to identify the people and events that inspired *le Grand* but also to sketch the world in which he moved, which was rather more varied than the rarified atmosphere of the Versailles court. To this end there is an opening Foreward (sic), then a Preface (by JC) that introduces the general themes of the book and this is followed by chapters on the social and cultural background (JC) and the literary/theatrical world (DC), both within the court and outside. These will be of interest to more than just lovers of Couperin as his milieu was, of course, also that of his contemporaries. However, I suspect that most readers will do what I first did and head straight for the book's heart — a catalogue of all the *Pieces de Clavecin* with comments on their titles. There is a wealth of fascinating detail here even if *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* still defies definitive explanation (two possibilities are offered) which players should certainly read and find helpful in forming interpretations of the music, though they will need to draw on their knowledge of French and, in one place, German to appreciate all the subtleties of the wordplay that often underpins Couperin's ascriptions. Jane Clark does this herself on the complementary CD (they are separate publications and must be bought as two independent items) which includes the first six movements of the lengthy first *ordre* and then complete performances of nos 6, 13, 19 and the valedictory 27. The playing is all thoroughly competent though there are times when I felt that the intimacy of the performer with her subject causes her to try too hard to make an ornamental or interpretative point with a consequent excessive distortion of the pulse. The notes naturally draw on the book and should also have included identification of the tuning system in use, if only to reassure less well-informed listeners and readers that the more piquant moments are, in fact, intentional! *David Hansell*

The involvement of King's Music is primarily to provide an outlet with an ISBN; we can supply copies of the book, but if you wish to order book and disc together, contact Janiculum, 4 Scarth Road, London SW13 0ND (www.janiculum.co.uk) or Lindum Records.

RAMEAU for BASS

Rameau *Aquilon et Orithie: Cantata for bass, violin & basso continuo* [edited by Cedric Lee]. Green Man Press (Ram 1), 2002. 23pp + parts, £6.90.
Rameau *Thétis: Cantata for bass, violin & basso continuo* [edited by Cedric Lee]. Green Man Press (Ram 2), 2002. 21pp + parts, £6.90

In his search for music for bass, Rameau is an obvious target for Cedric Lee's series of music for his own voice, since an unusual proportion of his cantatas (three out of seven) are relevant. They are available in facsimile from Fuzeau, and I expect there are French editions by now; but if so, they haven't circulated widely and are unlikely to be as cheap and well thought-out as these, with two scores (one realised, one not) and two parts. It is nice to see an editor not concerned whether a quaver's worth of space is

occupied by 5, 6 or 7 demisemiquavers (as in the opening of *Thétis*). Each cantata comprises three recitative-aria pairs, the recits by no means routine and the arias extremely varied and dramatic. There could be problems in the voice overpowering the instruments in its enthusiasm, but these are hardly pieces to sing with too much decorum. The presence of bottom As in *Aquilon et Orithie* implies a bass viol rather than cello; the B in *Thétis* probably does too, though I suppose a bass violin would be possible; the repeated semiquavers in *Thétis* makes the use of a harpsichord alone unlikely, at least in public. Any bass who can find a violinist should try these, and even the violinist isn't absolutely necessary, since a keyboard player can occupy his right hand with the violin part rather than a realisation.

NOAH GREENBERG

James Gollin *Pied Piper: the many lives of Noah Greenberg.* Pendragon Press, 2001. viii + 427pp, $46.00 (£43.00 from Rosemary Dooley). ISBN 1 57647 041 5

Those who think of London as the centre of the early music revival are probably too old to remember the impact of Noah Greenberg. He hit London with a tiny advert on 9 May 1960 in the personal column of *The Times* asking for 'fire-eaters, sword-swallowers, preferably with ecclesiastical experience', a way of catching the attention of the press which led to much free publicity. The occasion was the European tour of his greatest success, *The Play of Daniel*. I know the music so well in Greenberg's rhythms that I probably saw the performance at Westminster Abbey, but I can't remember it, so perhaps I just bought the LP. It certainly drew attention to the ability of medieval music to hold an audience, though also set an example of overdoing the multicoloured aspect that may just have been appropriate for an entertainment on the Feast of Fools, but was less so when he moved on to the more liturgically integrated plays of earlier in the Christmas season (in which he was not the pioneer he thought he was: Inglis Gundry and the Sacred Music Drama Society performed them annually from 1962). Gollin makes a few mistakes in his account of *The Play of Daniel*. Coussemaker's edition is in his *Drames liturgiques du Moyen Age* (1860), not his *Scriptorum de musica...* (1864-76), and the treatise known as Anonymous 4 from the latter work is not devoted to secular music. Other minor slips show his ignorance of English geography, maybe excusable in an American but suggesting that the book wasn't very carefully checked: Wroxham is on the Broads, not the Wash (p. 299) and Totnes has only one s (p. 300); and I don't think that 'Queen Mum' was a common expression in print in 1960 (p. 299). Smolden hardly lacked formal scholarly credentials (p. 231): his 1940 London University PhD is a massive piece of work. Gollin describes himself as an enthusiastic follower of the group from 1953. He has performed a valuable task in backing up public knowledge with a thorough study of the surviving documents and recollections of his subject's friends and colleagues. Completely new to me was Greenberg's left-wing, working-class background. He was, however, happy to cast aside his earlier principles when he became an employer, and also enjoyed becoming connected with the wealthy and artistic leaders of New York society. Like most conductors, he neede to be in charge; the New York Pro Musica Antiqua (the last word was later dropped) was his show. It had to be; the whole impetus in terms of musical ideas, organisation and flair came from him. But it did involve him hiring and firing in a way his youthful principles would have abhorred. Despite a complete lack of academic qualifications, he fished into the past and drew out much marvellous music, making early music performed in an attempt at an authentic way (however dubious the claim might seem now) fashionable and exciting. The book is short on detailed musical information: Gollin probably lacks the vocabulary and knowledge to give any idea of what happened during rehearsals or how Greenberg shaped a madrigal differently from anyone else. The only recording I have of the group comes from after his death, but apart from Daniel, I remember the impact of his LP of English carols; it was issued here by the World Record Club, and it brought to life music that didn't leap off the page at me in *Musica Brittanica* IV. (I think, incidentally, that MB IV's editor, John Stevens, had not heard the recording until I lent him my copy.) I also remember the striking cover — I got it back from John, but wish I knew who has borrowed it subsequently.

In some ways this is comparable with the biography of Walter Bergman, which I reviewed last month – though Greenberg was a far more significant figure, except to recorder players. In neither case does the author really come to grips with the essence of the subject: what fired Bergman and Greenberg musically and how that related to the rest of their emotional life. The English equivalent of Greenberg was in some ways David Munrow. Both were determined to have complete control of everything they were involved in, and in different ways it is possible that the inability to let things go was contributory to their short lives. But mention of Munrow draws attention to the problem of Gollin's title: on this side of the Atlantic, 'Pied Piper' reminds us of the title of Munrow's long-running and brilliant radio talks – four a week for several years.

I try to clear everything in hand before the two-month's Christmas break, but have not been able to cover here the William Lawes Collected Vocal Music *(A-R Editions) , David Yearsley's* Bach and the Meaning of Counterpoint *(CUP), Richard Will's* The Characteristic Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Beethoven *(CUP),* EECM 43 (Fayrfax *O bone Jesu*) *and* Encomium Musicae: Essays in Memory of Robert J. Snow *(Pendragon).*

MUSIC IN LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

It is always encouraging to hear promising young groups. Opera Quarta (Sophie Gent and Tuomo Suni *violins*, Emily Robinson *cello*, and Haru Kitamika *harpsichord/organ*) were formed in 2000 by students from the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and base their playing on the trio sonata repertoire of the 17th and 18th centuries. Their very impressive UK debut took place in the Royal Academy of Music's David Josefowitz Recital Hall on 8 October. The two violinists made a very good partnership – there was no element of 'first' and 'second' instruments, and they were very well matched both in tone and performing style. Neither of them was afraid to add colour to individual notes through the inobtrusive use of vibrato. The opening piece was a test of their ability to mesh together – Bonporti's Sonata X (1696) featured beautifully played *sotto voce* lines in parallel thirds in the central section and they shared a single phrase between them in the concluding Presto. In the Allegro of Fiore's Sinfonia II (1699), the eloquent shaping of phrases helped to make sense of what could have been a throwaway movement. Gabrielli's *Sonata a Violoncello Solo* featured some expressive shading and shaping of individual notes and a good sense of the direction of phrases: the restrained but colourful organ continuo playing effectively caught the mood of each section without intruding or dominating. Although there were a few little note slips in Storace's *Ciaccona* for solo harpsichord, there was a good variety of touch and some effective colouring of the more lyrical moments without losing the overall pulse. The ending was particularly well paced. The concluding *Sonata en Trio III* (Oeuvre IV) by Leclair was a much grander affair that the group grasped with aplomb. An impressive debut from a group that clearly enjoys its music-making.

Assistance to a diabetic cyclist found unconscious by the side of the road, combined with the attempts of the Temple complex to keep people out, meant I missed the first piece of the concert by Cantores in The Temple Church (12 October). But I did hear David Allinson direct this fine young choir in the concert's major work, Cardoso's 1625 Requiem. Solidly based in the Palestrina tradition, this sensual work included some wonderful moments of harmonic ingenuity, notably a delightful slither down a gear at 'dona eis' in the opening section. A relaxed rate of harmonic change gave an almost timeless quality to the music (notwithstanding some moments of drama in the Offertory), which David Allinson's sensitive directing reinforced. Rebelo's exquisite Lamentations of Jeremiah for Maundy Thursday, written a generation later, completed the programme. Despite most of the 15 or so singers having colds, this was a most impressive performance. The choir has developed from a student choir at Exeter University, and still retains that element of friends singing together. Their voices are clear and coherent, with commendably clear enunciation and intonation, and refreshingly free of those wannabe soloists that can so often disrupt the unity of chamber choirs.

On their way to the recording studio, Paul McCreesh's Gabrieli Consort and Players stopped off at The Barbican (13 October) for a performance of Handel's *Saul*. The solo line- up was headed by Andreas Scholl as David and Susan Gritton as Merab. I ran out of superlatives for Andreas Scholl a long time ago, but he really does seem to be getting better. His experience on the opera stage has loosened up his stage presence and given a greater emotional depth to his voice. Singing without a score, he totally immersed himself into his role. Susan Gritton was on excellent form, using her operatic experience to good effect, both in her gentle acting and in her ability to colour words expressively. Mark Padmore used his exquisite voice to steer Jonathan through his changing emotions, notably in 'O Filial Piety!', and Neal Davies portrayed the self-important Saul with his characteristic vigour. The only let down was Nancy Argenta, standing in for Deborah York. I am afraid that I have never felt comfortable with her voice, but in this line up she seemed particularly out of kilter with the style of the rest of the singers. Her words were unclear, her tone narrow and nasal, her vibrato disturbingly excessive. Of the many soloists drawn from the choir, Julian Clarkson was an impressive Doeg. The role of the High Priest was omitted, as was the harp Symphony that might have soothed Saul's savage breast. Charles Jennens' account of his visit to Handel in 1738 is well known, with its reference to Handel's latest 'Maggots' – including a new carillon and organ. The former made its presence very much felt in Act I and the following few numbers – a rather silly sound if you ask me, but I suppose it is what Handel intended. The organ was far more effective in Act II, aided by some nice playing by Rob Howarth. In a work where Handel grabs the emotions and hurls them about, Paul McCreesh showed a commendable sense of gravitas in his directing and an impressive ability to see the broader canvas. The recording will be worth listening to, but I do hope the originally intended cast is available.

The day after their appearance at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment repeated their concert of Italian operatic arias and chamber works in The Anvil, Basingstoke, five minutes walk from home, so saving me a bob or two on transport to London. In any case, the acoustics in this impressive new concert venue are far more suitable than the QEH, giving a warm, resonant and coherent sound. Although they work with a distinguished bevy of conductors, I often think that the OAE are better when they do it themselves, either in automatic pilot under a less than inspiring conductor or when one of their own directs. What their home-grown directors (it was Alison Bury this time) might lack in directorial elegance and style, they

make up for in their intimate knowledge of their colleagues, who seem to respond with almost sibling pride. The opening Locatelli Concerto Grosso (Op 1/7) went well beyond the usual Baroque formulaic writing, with some real harmonic interest in the first two movements and a jaunty off-beat fugue in the final movement. The OAE also tend to draw their instrumental soloists from the ranks, this time with Anthony Robson and Richard Earl, oboes, for Albinoni's Concerto in F (Op 9/3) and Alison Bury and Catherine Weiss, violins, for Vivaldi's Concerto in A minor (Op 3/8). The latter work is well known to organists from Bach's transcription: Bach fills Vivaldi's pause in the third movement with a tricky little passage on the pedals, but the OAE featured an impromptu (and possibly accidental) solo strum from the theorbo. All four soloists (and the theorbo player) played with impressive lyrical and expressive sensitivity. Geminiani's enlargement of Corelli's *La Follia* into a concerto grosso was given an expansive reading, by turns quixotic and lyrical, if occasionally rather syrupy and definitely rather long. Despite the excellent playing of the OAE, the star of the evening was mezzo-soprano Alice Coote, making a most impressive step across from the opera stage for some of Handel's operatic arias. For once, here was an established opera singer who could work with a period band without frightening the horses. Her consummate communication skills, combined with an effectively restrained stage presence, immediately won the hearts of the audience, and her control of any operatic tendencies her voice might have won the heart of this normally critical reviewer. She has a beautiful tone to start with, but adds to it by perfect intonation and pronunciation and an exquisite ability to shape notes. It was interesting to compare the Basingstoke audience with the usual QEH one. As a result of OAE's excellent educational work, there were an impressive number of young people in the audience, although there was a noticeable drop off in the number of boys over the age of 10 or so. I found myself surrounded by pubescent girls, most of them quietly but determinedly eating chocolate throughout. I hope their love of music will last as long, and give them as much pleasure, as their love of chocolate is likely to.

SPLENDOUR OF THE SPANISH BAROQUE

Over seven days (12-18 October), the Instituto Cervantes and the cultural section of the Spanish Embassy, in association with the Royal Academy of Music, celebrated the wealth of musical riches that flourished at a time when the worldwide political influence of Spain was beginning to wane. The festival opened with a semi-liturgical setting of a Spanish Vespers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrating the Feast of *Nuestra Senora del Pillar* and the national day of Spain. Appropriately this took place in the London church most associated with the Spanish community in London, St James Spanish Place (12 October). The Psalms were either plainchant or settings by Victoria *(Dixit Dominus* and *Nisi Dominus)*, the *Magnificat Octvavi Toni* was by Sebastian Aguilera de Heredia, and the hymn *Ave maris stella* and concluding Marian antiphon *Salve Regina* were by Carlos Patino. Judging by these two pieces, Patino is particularly good at endings, the *Ave maris stella* resolving under a long held upper note, and the plea at the end of the *Salve* creating one of those sublime moments when time stands still – as it usually does with Victoria, of course. Sebastian Aguilera de Heredia is a composer normally only known to organists, so it was appropriate that the service/concert opened with one of his organ pieces, the *Falsas del Sexto tono,* albeit shorn of most of the ornamentation that one would expect for this period. The concluding organ voluntary was a curious choice. The *Batalla Imperial* by Cabanilles is not only one of the less impressive of the Spanish battle pieces but also of a different era than the rest of the music. But it served to separate out those who had come as an audience for a concert and those who formed the congregation for a service. The former sat quietly throughout the organ piece, the latter either started talking loudly to each other or just left. The choir was from the London Oratory. It was the first time that I have reviewed them, and they impressed. Directed by Patrick Russill, they normally form the professional choir for the Oratory services. They have a wonderfully coherent sound, with a good soprano line up and are obviously well used to singing in a large acoustic. Patrick Russill directed with stylistic integrity and a good sense of the musical pulse.

The Spanish organist José González Uriol gave a lunchtime concert in St Marylebone (14 October) and led a workshop for Royal Academy organ students the following day. His programme spanned the early-17th to 18th centuries, taking in some rather more sensible Cabanilles pieces on the way. Francisco Correa de Arauxo published his massive *Facultad Organica* in 1626, and it is one of the cornerstones of the early baroque organ repertoire. His *Tiento de IV Tono a moda de Cancion* is often played with considerable rhythmic freedom, so it was interesting to hear it played straight. The sinuous solo line of his *Tiento de tiple de VII Tono* demonstrated the complex world of Spanish baroque ornamentation and the relaxed rhythmical conventions of the time. Pablo Bruna's *Bajo de Primer Tono* returned to the steady pulse of the first Correa piece, but perhaps needed to be a bit livelier. His *Tiento de II Tono sobre La Letania de la Virgien* suffered from a detaching of the first note of the melody from the rest. The last few pieces were decidedly 18th century, a particularly silly period for Spanish organ composers. I am afraid that I could not take Cosuenda's *Sonata en Re* as anything more than cheeky rococo twitterings, and the concluding *Gran Batalla de Morengo,* by a composer who wisely prefers to stay anonymous, was one of the daftest of the repertoire – even worse than the Cabinilles piece mentioned in the review above. The workshop explored more fully the many performing conventions of the time that need to be fully absorbed to make the music come alive. This is an extraordinary repertoire, and deserves to be heard more often, although the distinctive sound of the Spanish organ is really needed to do it justice.

The indisposition of Montserrat Figueras meant a change of programme for the concert by Hespérion XXI (15 October).

Their purely instrumental concert, with viols, guitar/theorbo, harpsichord/organ and percussion, included Spanish, Neapolitan and *Nuevo Mundo* composers ending, as it started, with *Folias*. A selection of the 1553 *Tratado de glosas* by Ortiz opened the programme. Some very effective accompaniment from Luca Guglielmi on organ and harpsichord showed that it is possible to include florid upper continuo lines without dominating the soloist. As with a number of early music groups, the inclusion of percussion in any of the other pieces might raise the hackles of the authenticity police. Although some of the riffs veered towards a New Age style, it was all good fun, even if the relation of the seemingly randomly applied sticks to the rhythm in the *Rujero & Paradetas* of Lucas Ruiz de Ribayaz was not immediately apparent. Not unusually with Hespérion, there were some performance practices that seemed curious. Late starts seem to be part of the deal with them, but their habit of walking off stage between each piece soon began to grate. There is only so much applause that an audience is willing to give, and it is generally best to save it up for the ends of sections, halves or even the whole concert. Artificially creating stage entries every few minutes risks a less than enthusiastic response, as did the overly lengthy tuning pauses at the start of pieces. Our southern European friends seem to have a rather more relaxed attitude to time than we do in the Protestant north, so perhaps this is a cultural thing.

Maggie Cole's harpsichord recital (16 October) was a model of masterly concert performance. A consummate professional, she played, entirely from memory, a programme of Scarlatti, Soler, Alberof and de Nebra. Scarlatti's ingenious jesting with art was particularly apparent in the first two Sonatas, in C K132, with its converging arpeggios, and in C minor K84, with arpeggios this time chasing each other up and down the keyboard. Arpeggios also featured in first of the concluding group of Scarlatti pieces, seemingly struggling to push themselves up the keyboard in the Sonata in D minor K213. The final Sonata in D minor K18 was a wild and virtuosic fantasy, and a stunning conclusion to a stunning recital. Maggie Cole's freedom of expression within a carefully controlled pulse was just right for this repertoire, which can get a bit anarchic at times. For some reason, this concert and the opening Vespers were the only two concerts (of those in the festival that I got to) that included programme notes – quite a serious failing for a festival of the type.

The final concert (18 October) was by a group new to me, Al Ayre Espanol, directed by Eduardo Lopez Banzo in their programme, *La Cantata Barocca Espanola*. Their singer, Marta Almajano has an impressive velvety mezzo and a sure grasp of the notes. Unfortunately the chosen series of cantatas by Jose de Torres did not really impress me, although *Divino hijo de Adam* had a nice mournful ending. His concluding cantata *O, quien pudiera alcanzar* was not unpleasant or without drama, but included very little that sounded Spanish in its Italianate pan-European style. Antonio de Literes's *Ah del rustico pais* was more successful in its depiction of country pursuits. In this piece I was surprised to see the director specifically conducting the solo singer – he didn't need to, and it is certainly not the normally etiquette with soloists. Al Ayre Espanol search out unknown Iberian works (of which there are thousands), but some works do not readily transfer to the concert stage. Along with the cantatas of de Torres, the two extraordinarily lengthy harpsichord solos included in each half fell into this category. The anonymous *Obra de sugundo tono* started with a nice enough free toccata, but soon settled into an increasingly predictable round of fugal sequences. A mind-bogglingly boring fugue subject (of just seven notes) was then subjected to a frustratingly lingering death. Sebastion de Albero's *Recercata, Fuga y Sonata* was little better. Although he managed a slightly longer fugue subject, that also quickly dissolved into an endless series of sequences that made me want to scream. Eduardo Lopez Banzo attempted to vary the mood of the different sections, but his rather curious physical performing style became increasing disconcerting, including his habit of loudly tapping his foot, but never quite in time with the music. Their publicity blurb promises glittering things, but in practice the group came over as earnest and intense, without lifting themselves above the competent.

EARLY MUSIC NETWORK SHOWCASE

I will not attempt a full review of the concerts in the Early Music Network Showcase, some of which were private in any case, but will tell readers a bit more about the event and make some comments on issues arising from it. The Early Music Network is the national early music development agency and is tasked with promoting the understanding and enjoyment of early music and historically informed performance. It has a range of activities, including the monthly listings magazine *Early Music News*, but the highlights are the International Early Music Network Young Artists Competition (held during the York Early Music Festival) and the Showcase events, designed to present performers to potential promoters. These alternate with each other bi-annually. The 2002 Showcase was held in the splendid new home of Trinity College of Music in the old Royal Naval College in Greenwich over the same weekend (25/27 October) as the annual Early Music Exhibition. There were five concerts, each featuring two or three of the twelve groups invited to participate. Three of the concerts were open to the public, the rest reserved for Showcase guests. The gaps between the concerts were filled by opportunities for 'networking' and eating. The invited promoters included representatives of most European countries, including a good number from Eastern Europe. The groups and performers on show ranged from the very well known and very experienced to some much younger groups on the lower steps of the ladder. There were some surprising omissions from the groups invited to perform and, to be honest, some almost as equally surprising invitations. Each group had about half an hour of playing to strut their stuff, before peddling their wares through networking with potential promoters. Some groups, or their publicity arm, overdid the hard sell, which was not always productive.

One went to the extraordinary lengths of fly posting advertising posters round the town (in some cases on top of posters for other musical events), all rather over the top considering that they only had a half-hour slot in concert shared with two other groups (who, of course, did not get a mention in the posters). It was noticeable that those with the most prominent or pushy publicity rarely came up with the goods when it came to performance.

A number of general points arose that might be of interest to other performers, and will probably be on the mind of potential promoters and concertgoers. First, the need to be clear as to what the group actually consists of. One group displayed a photograph in the glossy brochure that included only one person (the director) who was actually performing on the day – indeed the line up was completely different instrumentally. Another group was nearly as bad, with only three out of the seven photographed performers appearing. Many groups are in practice umbrellas, under whose covering name any number of combinations can be fielded, but at least try and match the photo with the reality. Secondly, changes of programme are rarely endearing to audiences, and can be even more frustrating to promoters who might have specific reason to have wanted a particular set of pieces. Thirdly, the ability to keep to an agreed time slot: several groups overran their allocated time, some by a long way. There were several examples of awkward stage presentation, including uncoordinated bowing (of the 'bending over during applause', rather than the 'what you do with your right hand' variety) and unfocused and/or unclear spoken introductions. In one case a (very experienced) player walked on stage during a spoken introduction and started to set up his music right in front of the speaker, then the speaker erred by blaming the audience for putting her instrument out of tune. However sweetly this might have been said, it is probably best left unsaid.

Finally, of course, there is the performance itself. Sadly a number of groups did not show themselves at their best – or, if it was their best, they have a bit of thinking to do. But they were matched by some very good performances, and one group that found itself on devastatingly good form. All had thought about their programmes and the need to get over the gist of what the group was about in a short space of time. Some were let down by individuals on an off day, but some seemed to lack the cohesion that any group performance demands. In one or two cases, there seemed to be little communication or sharing of intent between the director and the performers. Groups that displayed a sense of common purpose and shared leadership came off best, as opposed to those made up of performers who seem to have just accepted a booking for the day from the director, however good their individual performances might have been. The groups and performers that impressed me on the day were, in order of appearance, Musica Antiqua of London with their new matched set of 16th century viols and the delightful tonal blend from Clare Wilkinson's mezzo voice; Apollo and Pan, winners of the 2001 International Early Music Network Young Artists Competition with their programme of music for violin, dulcian and organ; I Fagiolini, winners of an earlier Young Artists Competition, in two excellent contrasting programmes that showed their ability to switch from prancing about with prosthetics on their noses (in Venetian carnival masques) to some sublimely pure singing (in Sheppard's *Libera nos*); Rachel Elliot's exquisitely soulful singing of Purcell's *The Plaint* with Concordia; the talented young English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble with some inspired singing by countertenor Mark Chambers (and a neat linkup with I Fagiolini for their opening extract from the Monteverdi Vespers); and Stephen Varcoe for some outstanding singing, aided by his considerable personal charm.

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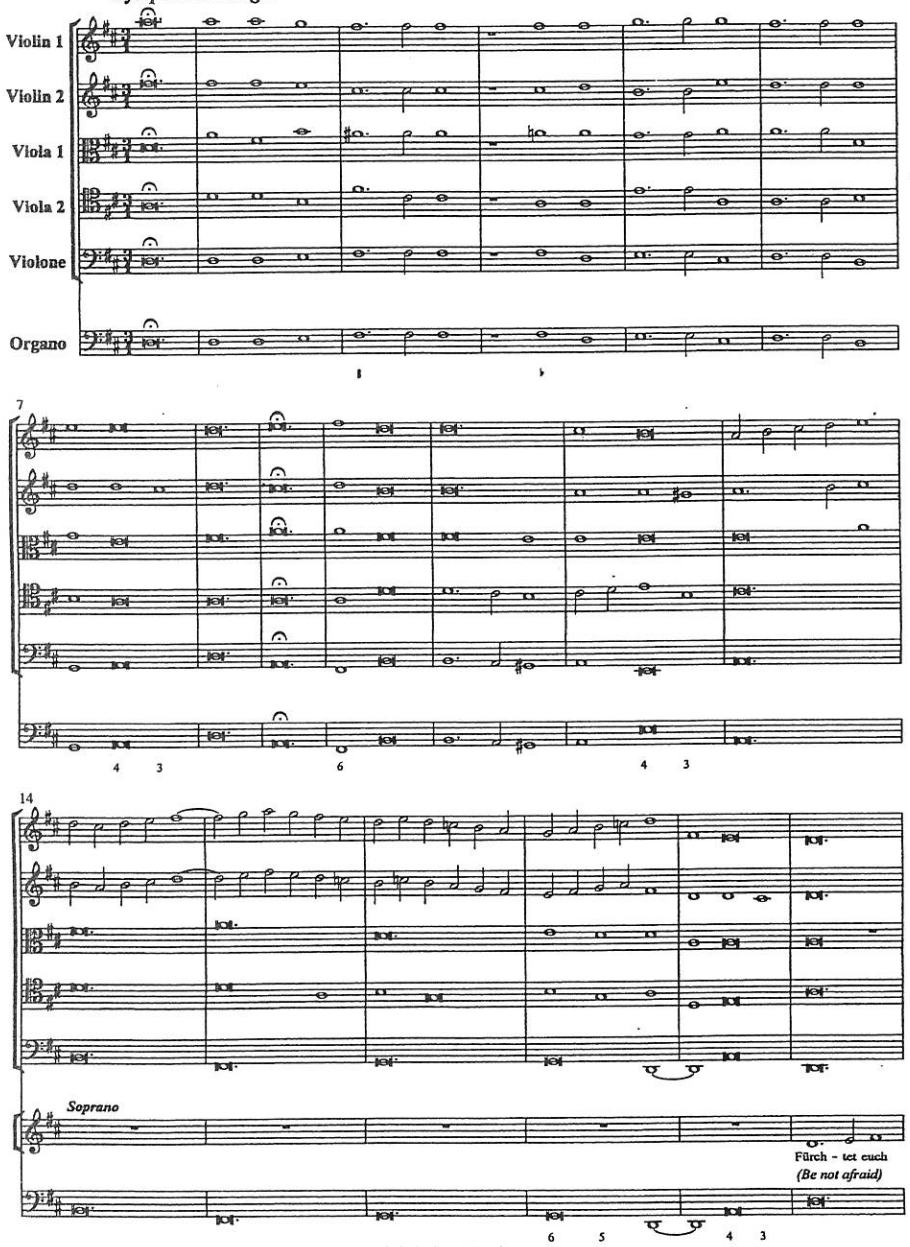
WOLFGANG CARL BRIEGEL
1626-1712

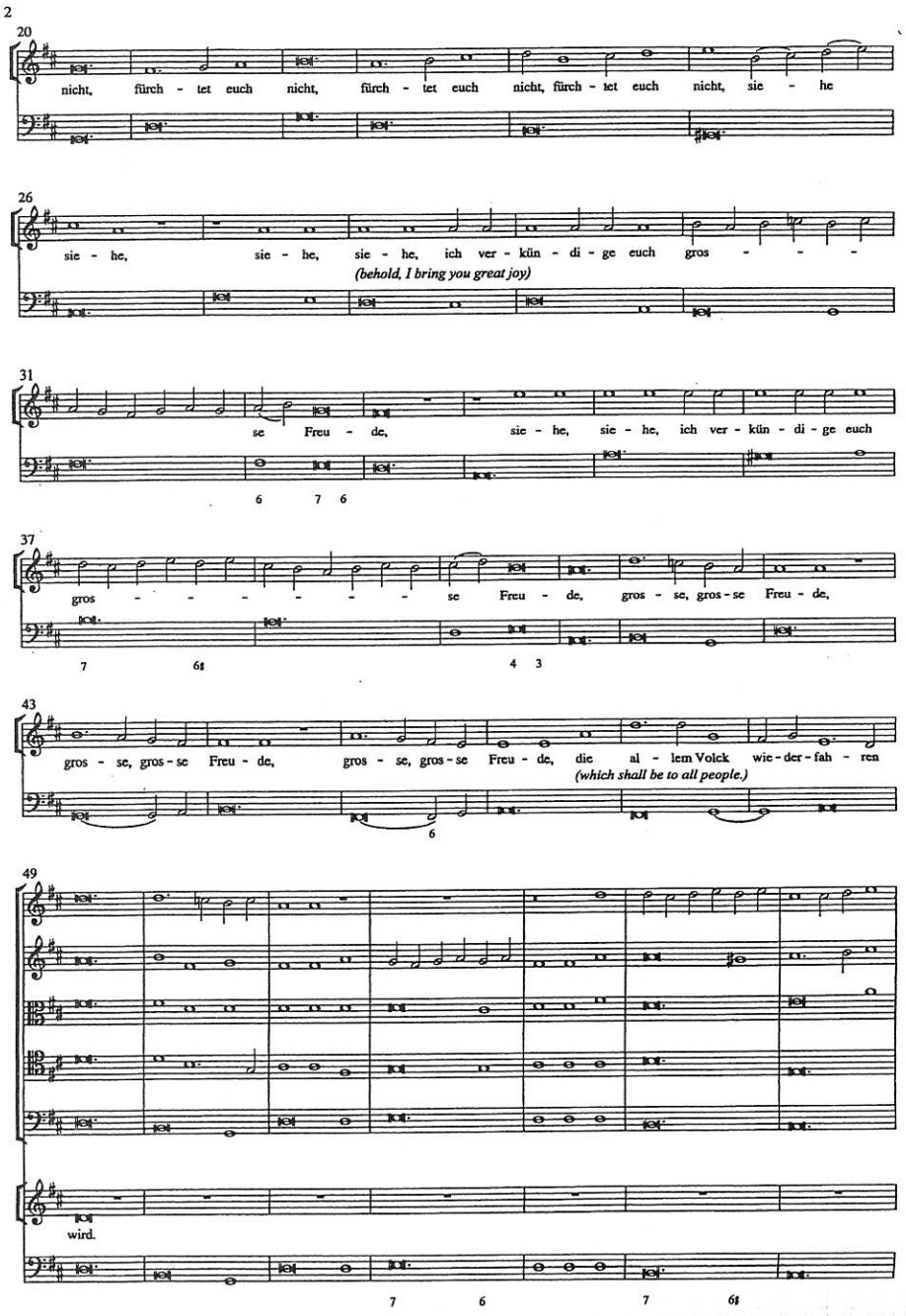
Briegel was a chorister at the Frauenkirche in Nruemburg, studied at Altdorf, became organist and teacher at Schweinfurt and in 1650 was appointed Cantor and music teacher at the court of Gotha. From 1671 to his death he was Kapellmeister at Darmstadt. Most of his extant music is religious: his operas and ballets do not survive. His three books of *Evangelische Gespräche*, from which the work on the following pages was taken, was published between 1660 and 1681 and contains liturgical music for the church year.

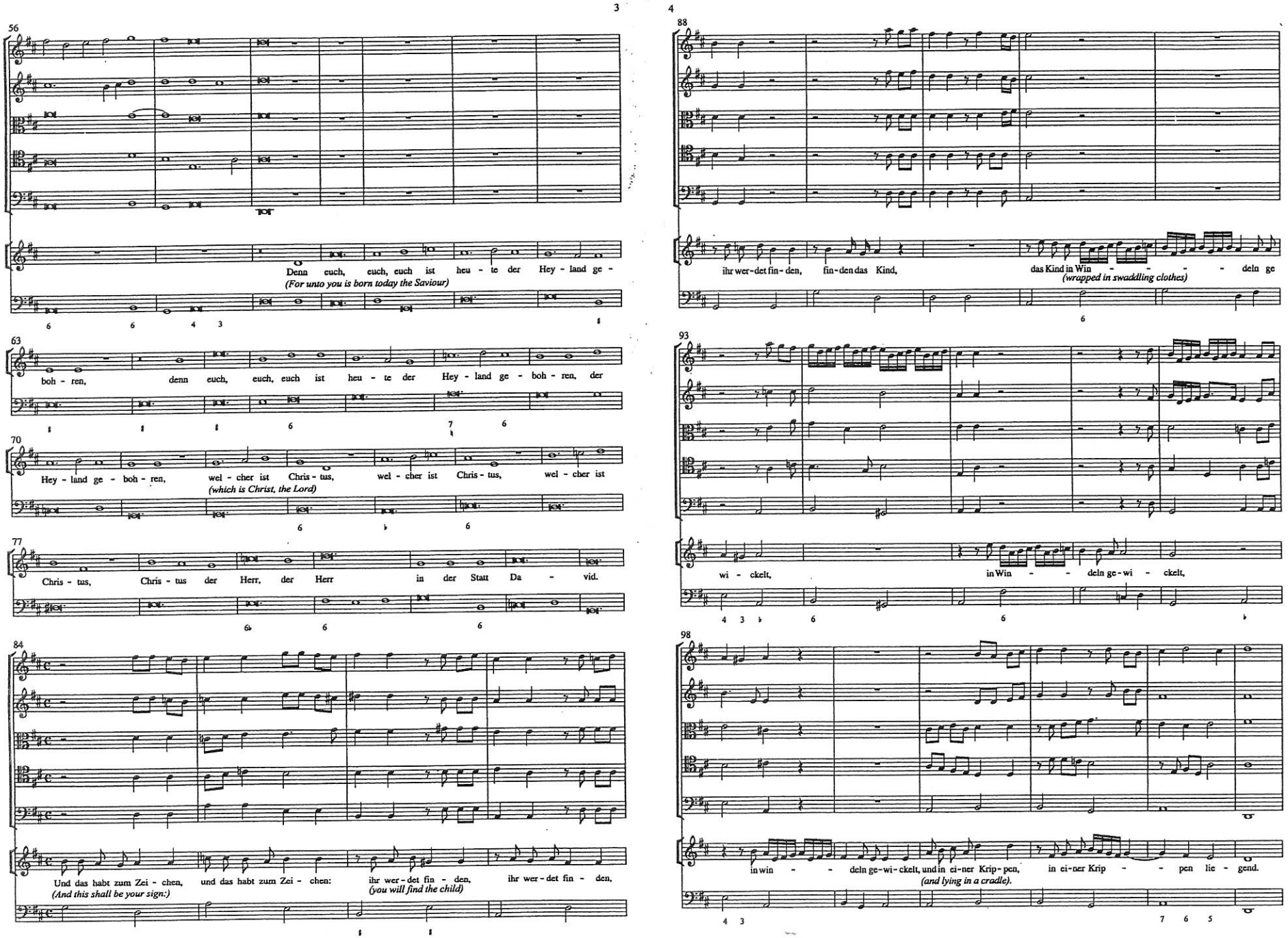
Our musical content has been a bit short for the last few months, so in this issue we have include a substantial work. It is the first product of an arrangement whereby King's Music will publish editions prepared by Jean-Luc Gester, musicologist brother of Martin, whose recordings we often review. BC and I met Jean-Luc when, on our way home from the first Vienna early music exhibition a few years ago, we invited ourselves to spend the night on the floor of Martin's house in Strasbourg. Brian and Jean-Luc had a lengthy conversation on his studies of 17th-century music in the area (on which I passed, since I don't have Brian's linguistic skill). The link established then has now born fruit. The opportunity to circulate this now has anticipated the completion of all the editorial process, in that we have as yet no editorial commentary: that will be available for those ordering full-size scores and parts for Christmas 2003. Further titles will follow.

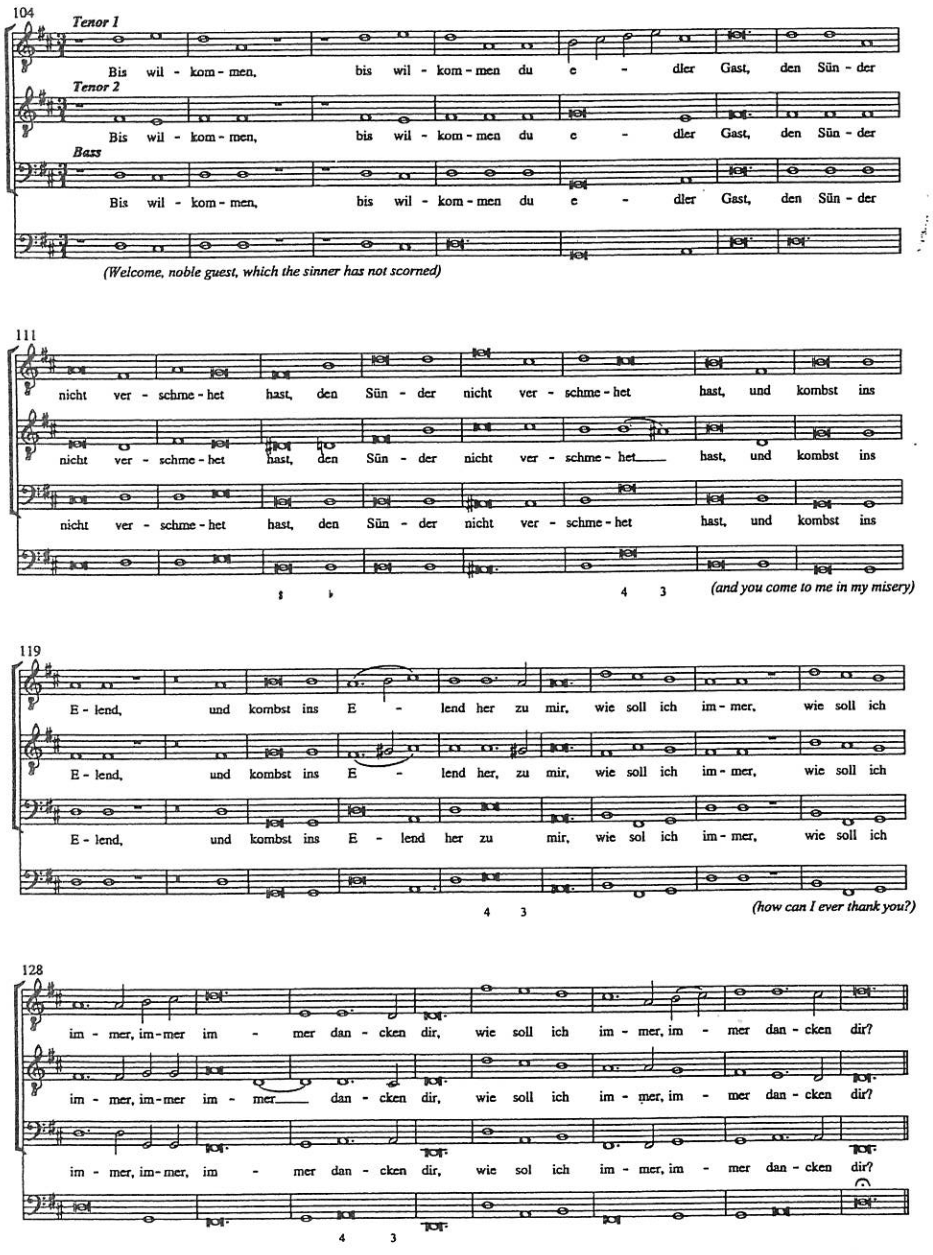
W. C. Briegel - Fürchtet euch nicht

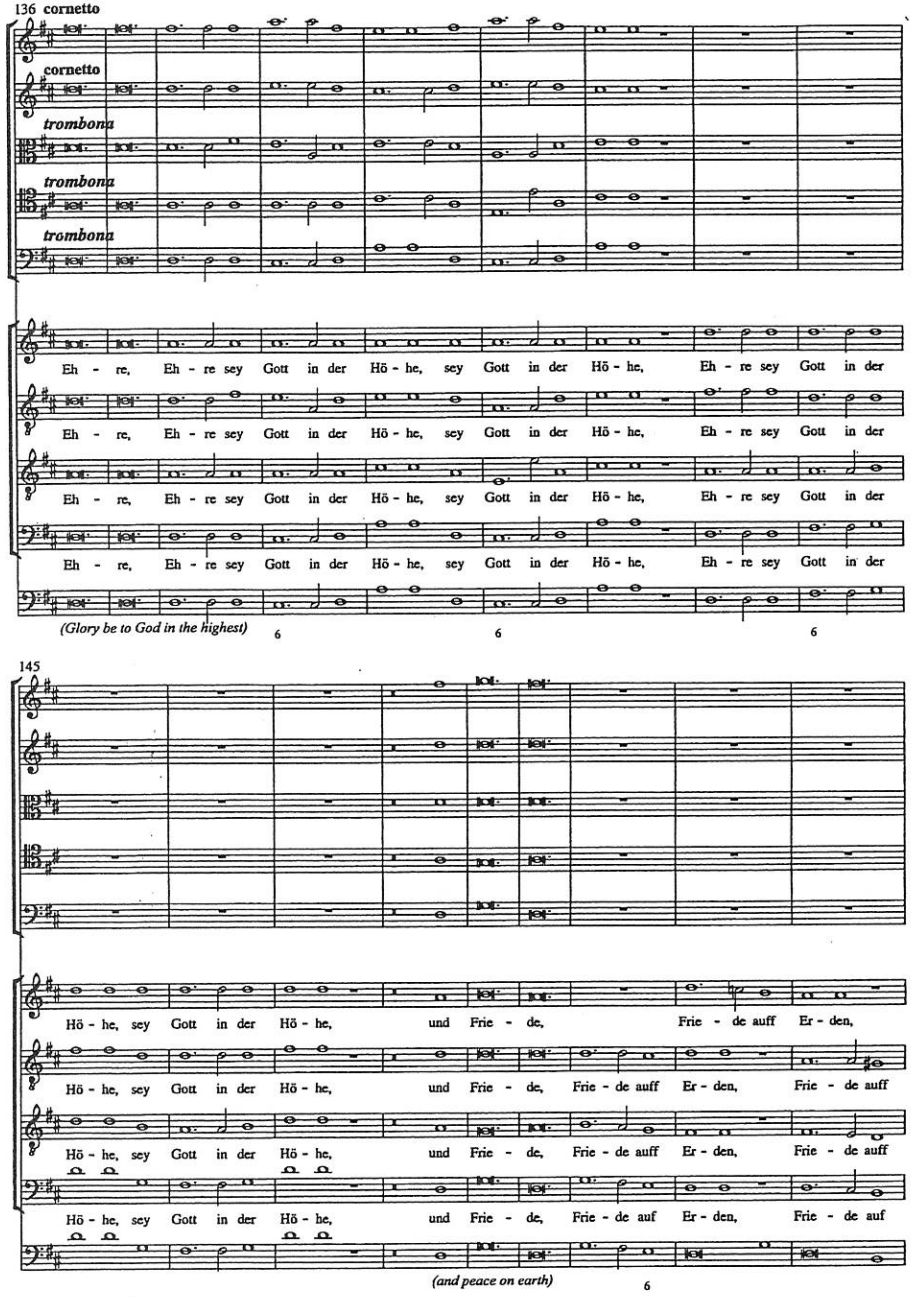
Symphonia Adagio

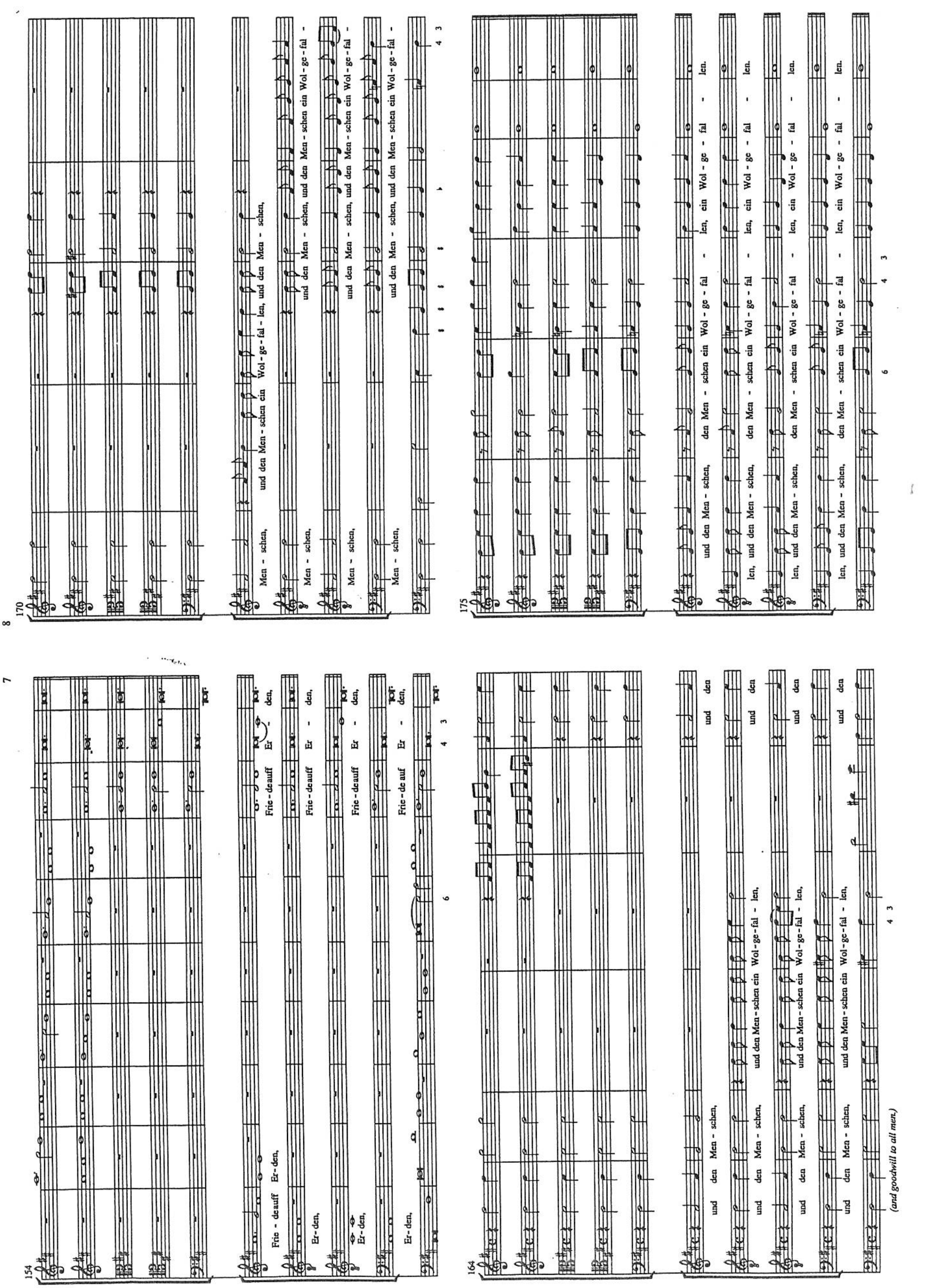





3
56
Denn euch, euch, euch ist heu - te der Hey - land ge -
(For unto you is born today the Saviour)
63
boh - ren, denn euch, euch, euch ist heu - te der Hey - land ge - boh - ren, der
70
Hey - land ge - boh - ren, wel - cher ist Chris - tus, wel - cher ist Chris - tus, wel - cher ist
(which is Christ, the Lord)
77
Chris - tus, Chris - tus der Herr, der Herr in der Statt Da - vid.
84
Und das habt zum Zei - chen, und das habt zum Zei - chen: ihr wer - det fin - den, ihr wer - det fin - den,
(And this shall be your sign:)
(you will find the child)
4
88
ihr wer-det fin-den, fin-den das Kind, das Kind in Win - - - - deln ge
(wrapped in swaddling clothes)
93
wi - ckelt, in Win - - deln ge-wi - ckelt,
98
in win - - deln ge-wi-ckelt, und in ei-ner Krip-pen, in ei-ner Krip - - pen lie - gend.
(and lying in a cradle).


5
104
Tenor 1
Bis wil - kom - men, bis wil - kom - men du e - dler Gast, den Sün - der
Tenor 2
Bis wil - kom - men, bis wil - kom - men du e - dler Gast, den Sün - der
Bass
Bis wil - kom - men, bis wil - kom - men du e - dler Gast, den Sün - der
(Welcome, noble guest, which the sinner has not scorned)
111
nicht ver - schme - het hast, den Sün - der nicht ver - schme - het hast, und kombst ins
nicht ver - schme - het hast, den Sün - der nicht ver - schme - het hast, und kombst ins
nicht ver - schme - het hast, den Sün - der nicht ver - schme - het hast, und kombst ins
4 3
(and you come to me in my misery)
119
E - lend, und kombst ins E - lend her zu mir, wie soll ich im - mer, wie soll ich
E - lend, und kombst ins E - lend her, zu mir, wie soll ich im - mer, wie soll ich
E - lend, und kombst ins E - lend her zu mir, wie sol ich im - mer, wie soll ich
4 3
(how can I ever thank you?)
128
im - mer, im - mer im - mer dan - cken dir, wie soll ich im - mer, im - mer dan - cken dir?
im - mer, im - mer im - mer dan - cken dir, wie soll ich im - mer, im - mer dan - cken dir?
im - mer, im - mer, im - mer dan - cken dir, wie sol ich im - mer, im - mer dan - cken dir?
4 3


6
136 cornetto
cornetto
trombona
trombona
trombona
Eh - re, Eh - re sey Gott in der Hö - he, sey Gott in der Hö - he, Eh - re sey Gott in der
Eh - re, Eh - re sey Gott in der Hö - he, sey Gott in der Hö - he, Eh - re sey Gott in der
Eh - re, Eh - re sey Gott in der Hö - he, sey Gott in der Hö - he, Eh - re sey Gott in der
Eh - re, Eh - re sey Gott in der Hö - he, sey Gott in der Hö - he, Eh - re sey Gott in der
(Glory be to God in the highest)
6 6 6
145
Hö - he, sey Gott in der Hö - he, und Frie - de, Frie - de auff Er - den,
Hö - he, sey Gott in der Hö - he, und Frie - de, Frie - de auff Er - den, Frie - de auff
Hö - he, sey Gott in der Hö - he, und Frie - de, Frie - de auff Er - den, Frie - de auff
Hö - he, sey Gott in der Hö - he, und Frie - de, Frie - de auf Er - den, Frie - de auf
(and peace on earth)
6


Frie - de auff Er - den,
und den Men - schen ein Wol - ge - fal - len,
Men - schen,
und den Men - schen, und den Men - schen ein Wol - ge - fal - len.
(and goodwill to all men.)

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Chevrefoil – The medieval tale of Tristan and Isolde in poetry and music Istanpitta
Riverrun **RVRCD58** 63' 11"

Chevrefoil (Honeysuckle) is a lai by Marie de France, written around 1160, on the story of Tristan and Isault (though she avoids the name, referring to her just as 'la reine'). The lai itself comprises only 118 lines, here spoken, and is interspersed with songs on the story and some later dances: curiously, no call is made on the instrumental pieces surviving in the same MS as the source used for the poem, BL Harley 978 (whose best-known piece, *Sumer is icumen* in, begins *Nou make we merthe*, reviewed below.) The idea is interesting, but sadly not enough personality comes over to sustain the listener's interest. *CB*

Pastourelle The Art of Machaut and the Trouvères *Fortune's Wheel* 68' 23"
Dorian **DOR-93245**
Music by anon, Conon de Bethune, Adam de la Halle, Machaut

While not focussed on so clear a theme as the disc reviewed above, the performances come over as much stronger and the musical logic is clearer. I am more familiar with the work of the two players (Shira Kammen and Robert Mealy), but the two singers (Lydia Heather Knutson and Paul Cummings) have considerable medieval experience and are confident in voice and style. After reading Anne Robertson's book on the intellectual and ecclesiastical resonances of Machaut's polyphony (see p. 3), it is refreshing to hear the secular musical background to his monophonic music. Brilliantly done, by performers who sound as if they enjoy the music. *CB*

Sancta Maria – songs for Virgin Mary Super Librum (Nancy Mayer, Eric Mentzel, Jonathan Talbott, Jankees Kraaksma)
Emergo **EC 3917-2** 74' 23"

This is the first of several issues that have appeared over the last couple of years from a Dutch label which have reached us this month. This one contains a pleasing mixture of Latin and vernacular songs to the virgin, performed in a secular style by four performers, two of whom sing, three of whom play instruments (yes: the arithmetic does work!) I found it an instructive and pleasing anthology, instruments and voices working together well in an imaginative selection of pieces, though the singers have a touch too much vibrato for me to give this the highest rating. Congratulations on the content and print-size of the booklet. *CB*

Now Make We Merthe Medieval English Lyrics, Rounds and Carols The Purcell Consort of Voices 65' 10" (rec 1965-69)
Boston Skyline **BSD 121**

A good CD to play to friends who believe that early-music performance continually gets better and better. I am not listening nostalgically — I didn't own the original discs; these offer first-rate performances that need no special allowances for their age, even if some of the instrumentation may seem implausible. (The James MacGillivray who plays the heckelphone in *Nowell: The borys head* isn't related to Katherine and Alison.) The singing doesn't have quite the post-Gothic Voices purity of pythagorean intonation, but if the name Robert Tear makes you fear lachrymose wobbles, don't worry! First come 12 tracks from *Medieval English Lyrics* (Argo ZRG 5443), a foretaste, recorded in 1965, of E. J. Dobson and Frank Ll. Harrison's thorough study *Medieval English Songs* (Faber, 1979). Amazingly, the rather stiff-looking instrumental versions printed in the book actually work. After an irrelevant track of Farnaby, these are followed by 11 items from *Now Make We Merthe* (Argo ZRG 526) of 1966, carols and Christmas music directed by Grayston Burgess. I must confess that I am predisposed to praise him, since he wrote recently a review one could only dream about on my OUP *Madrigals and Partsongs* anthology; but I've only met him a couple of times, so there is no mutual backscratching. To pick out one sample, try the treble duet *Lullay, lullow: I saw a sweete* (track 18). I now see the background to the selection of medieval items in the *New Oxford Book of Carols*, though the editions vary somewhat. The odd Farnaby comes from the same disc as the two concluding tracks of a wind-band disc: were there not more transferable tracks from the medieval LPs? My only other complaint is that the corner of the booklet (which, unlike many reissues, retains the original notes, texts and translations) was barbarously cut off, presumably to discourage resale. If you buy no other Christmas disc, get this. *CB*

15th CENTURY

Busnois ***Missa L'homme armé*** **Domarto** ***Missa Spiritus almus*** The Binchois Consort, Andrew Kirkman 79' 07"
Hyperion **CDA67319**
+**Busnois** *Anima mea liquefacta est, Gaude celestis spina*; **Pullois** *Flos de spina*

The Busnois mass is, if not the first, one of the most influential of the many based on the armed man tune and is given a mostly vigorous performance here, with the counterpoint clearly enunciated in French Latin. Damarto was a figure of minimal consequence until recently: Grove[6] allocates him just 6 lines and a word. But an important article by Rob Wegman (*Early Music History* 10) put him and in particular his *Missa Spiritus almus* on the musicological map, and it is good that we can hear it in such a fine performance; among other things, it shows that there is more to the music than the specific elements which fascinate scholars. Three fine motets complete this full programme, convincingly sung by nine fine musicians. *CB*

Josquin ***Missa malheur me bat, motets & chansons, Liber generationis Jesu Christi*** The Clerks' Group, Edward Wickham *dir.*
Gaudeamus **CD GAU 306** 60' 40"

This CD is something of a masterclass in counterpoint. The Mass is one of its composer's most elaborately contrapuntal creations, while the motets from Petrucci, the *Liber Generationis Jesu Christ* with its seemingly inexhaustible chains of imitation, and the chansons, among which is the remarkable six-part setting of *Baisés moy* with its three simultaneous two-voice canons, all seem designed to confirm Josquin's formidable reputation as a technical wizard. However, the truly remarkable thing is that in these compelling performances by the Clerks' Group it is the sheer musicality of Josquin's writing rather than any technical wizardry which is the most noticeable feature. The ensemble's daunting discography means that they are ideally placed to present definitive performances of this challenging repertoire, and their practice of singing directly from manuscript sources pays dividends in the variable phrasing of Josquin's marvelously inspired flights of musical fancy. If I occasionally felt that just a smidgen more ambience would allow the music to breathe more freely, this is a tiny reservation relative to the enormous merits of this recording.

D. James Ross

16th CENTURY

William Mundy ***Cathedral Music*** The Sixteen, Harry Christophers *dir* 71' 00"
Hyperion *Helios* **CDH55086** (rec. 1988) ££
Adolescentulus sum ego, Ah helpless wretch, Beatus et sanctus, Kyrie, Magnificat, Nunc dimittis, O Lord the maker of all things, O Lord the world's Saviour, Sive vigilem, The secret sins, Videte miraculum, Vox patris caelestis

For a wallow in the richest cream of English Reformation church music, you couldn't do much better than this. The spare textures and restrained writing of English anthems, such as the justly well-known *O Lord, the maker of all thing*, spiced

by the judicious inclusion of false relations, are contrasted with the glorious Latin complexities of the masterpiece *Vox patris caelestis*. This piece alone lasts nearly 18 minutes, which must account for its absence from cathedral services. The Sixteen manage to sustain the impetus throughout, in spite of the heavy vocal demands made by this music: the build-up is splendidly climactic, and the performance a triumph of controlled ecstasy. There is an odd change of tonality at the start of the Magnificat, and the words seem to mean little to the performers (there is no sense of awe in *Videte miraculum*) but I can find very little else to criticise in this sumptuous recording. Harry Christophers has a crack team at his command, including the 'secret weapon' of the two high trebles who lift the music into a new element with their soaring fifths and cascading English cadences. The instructive notes provide a good key to the ways in which Mundy responded to the changing political and religious demands of the 16th-century church, his genius chafing at the liturgical impositions of the time and breaking free in the glorious Amens. *Selene Mills*

Esteban Daça (1537/8-1575?) & José Marin (1619-1699) Spanish Songbooks Maria Luz Alvarez *S*, Lex Eisenhardt *guitar/vihuela*
Emergo **EC 3928-2** 56' 28"

Of the seven vihuela publications, Daça's *El Parnasso*, printed in 1576, is the least well known. The music is less immediately appealing than that of the earlier books. Apart from the 22 fantasias for vihuela, all but the last four solemnly contrapuntal, all the pieces are arrangements of vocal works. Nevertheless the music is attractive and it is good to have a recording of a selection of the solo fantasias and the secular songs for voice and vihuela. Most of the songs were composed originally as *a capella* partsongs; half are attributed to Daça's Spanish contemporaries, including Guerrero, Navarra and Ordonez. All but one of those included here, however, are unattributed so presumably by Daça himself. They are melodically simple, the range of the solo voice part seldom exceding a sixth. The accompaniment is predominantly homophonic, relieved only by occasional points of imitation or brief cadential formulas. All have the freshness and charm of folksongs.

It was an inspiration to combine them with songs by José Marín from the *Cancionero de Cambridge* (Fitzwilliam Museum Mu.Ms.727). These were conceived as solos for a virtuoso singer with continuo accompaniment and explore a whole gamut of emotions from the melancholy of *Corazón en prisión* to the insoucience of *Mi señora Mariantaños*. The different styles of the two composers offset one another in such a way that each seems to highlight the qualities of the other.

Alvarez is completely at home with both repertoires. She brings sufficient variety and ornamentation to the plainer melodies of Daça to hold ones attention throughout, making the most of limited opportunities to contrast moods. Most of the songs are tinged with sadness, full of woeful shepherds and dusky maids languishing beneath the olive trees, but the sequence concludes on an optimistic note with *Alegrias, alegrias*, a *villancico* to the Virgin in a major mode. Lovers may be fickle but there is always joy in Heaven! She comes into her own in the Marín songs with faultless performances, deliciously ornamented, which capture perfectly the more down to earth and convincing passions of the late 17th-century operatic tradition. Eisenhardt resists the temptation to play the more showy *Fantasias de redobles* in favour of a selection of six contrapuntal fantasias. His reflective interpretations suite the serious character of the music well and as an accompanist he is discreet and supportive. This is an enchanting disc of some attractive music not to be missed by anyone interested in Spanish music of the 16th and 17th centuries. *Monica Hall*

This is an abridged version of a review which appeared in Lute News 56, December, 2000.

17th CENTURY

Biber *Virtuoso in the Making* Ricordo
Linn **CKD 195** 67' 51"
Music by Biber (one piece possibly by Bertali, another arranged by Ferdinand Fischer) and Schmelzer

Ricordo is an impressive group of four youngish but well-established players, (Kati Debrezeni *vln*, Alison McGillivray *gamba/violone*, Matthew Wadsworth *theorbo, lute* and Rob Howarth *kbd)* here augmented by Penelope Spencer *vln* and Adam Woolf *trombone*. The disc contains seven pieces by Biber and one by Schmelzer, all from MS sources and relating to the young Biber. The Pastorales by Schmelzer and Biber offer an intriguing 'compare and contrast' exercise, and there may be some doubt whether the sonata for two violins and trombone is by Biber or Bertali, who may have been his teacher. The lutenist surprisingly has a solo spot, an arrangement by Ferdinand Fischer of a Passacaglia related to Sonata 6 of the 1681 set. Some of the music is a bit sprawling, so this is a disc for the sympathetic Biber-lover rather than strangers to his music. BC felt a little more strongly than I did that the playing lacked a little of the vitality that might have held together some of the more rambling sections. But this is a disc that all Biber enthusiasts will require and an impressive debut for the ensemble. As a bonus, the scores are included on the disc as PDF files; they would cost rather more to buy than the price of the CD, so it is good value. *CB*

Charpentier *Noëls and Christmas Motets* Vol. 2. (H416, H420, H460) Aradia Ensemble, Kevin Mallon *dir* 62' 12"
Naxos **8.557036** £

The first issue in this potential series (8.554514) mainly focussed on M-AC's short *noëls* though the more substantial 'mini-oratorios' H393 and H414 were also included. Now, this Toronto-based group offer two much more substantial pieces from the composer's very considerable output of Christmas music, both of which dramatise the visit of the angels to the shepherds. Both are really lovely pieces, scored for soli, choir and ensemble of recorders, strings and continuo and include remarkable instrumental evocations of night, rich food for connoisseurs of the suspension and other harmonic crunches! The singers use a French pronunciation of the Latin which produces some delicious new sounds for some familiar words but which also might be the cause of some occasionally uncertain tuning from all the soloists. Charpentier does give them some fine material, however, and they do enjoy it. As fill-ups, the disc includes three modern arrangements of the carol tune H460. These are pleasant but otherwise pointless: the time would have been better spent on another motet, of which plenty remain both unperformed and unrecorded. The booklet for this issue is adequate, with notes in English, French and German, though the sung texts are translated into English only.

David Hansell

Dowland *Lachrimae or Seven Teares and other Pavanes* Musica Antiqua Köln, Reinhard Goebel 60' 46"
Challenge Classics **CC 72017** (rec. 1998)
Music by Dowland, Farina, Holborne, Scheidemann, Scheidt, Schop

This begins with the Seven Teares and later includes *Semper Dowland...*, but the second section of the disc is chiefly comprised of lachrimae-connected pieces, such as Scheidemann's keyboard variations and a violin and continuo version with weird chromatics by Schop. I like the bold string playing of the violin-family strings in the *Tears*, with no apology for not sounding like viols. I've heard the group play Scheidt's marvellous Pavane more convincingly than here, and the concluding Dowland/Simpson Pavane a4 is also a bit disappointing, but the disc is worth buying if you missed it first time. *CB*

Lalande *Grands Motets* Salomé Haller *dessus*, Damien Guillon *contre-ténor*, Howard Crook *haute-contre*, Hervé Lamy *taille*, Alain Buet *basse*, Les Pages & les Chantres de Versailles, La Grande Ecurie & la Chambre du Roy, Olivier Schneebeli *dir* 68:18
Virgin *veritas* 7243 5 45531 2 7
Audite coeli quae loquor, Beati quorum remissae sunt, Quam dilecta

It was the composition of *Beati quorum* in the context of a famous competition that launched Lalande's Versailles career and secured his place in the Sun King's circle. This and the other pieces are here recorded in their earliest known versions (Lalande was such a compulsive reviser of his music that at one point Louis forbade this activity, fearing that insufficient energy was being given to the composition of new works), though even these, as Jean Duron's exemplary note makes clear, may not quite be the 'originals'. Psalm texts were much favoured in the grand motet repertory for the kaleidoscopic imagery they offered and Lalande is never found wanting in this regard, though lovers of relatively studious counterpoint will also find much to admire here. The secret of Lalande's appeal and success was the careful balance of dramatic gesture and musical logic and these pieces show that he mastered this at the very start of his career. As on the Ex Cathedra disc, the pronunciation of the Latin is Gallic in flavour and the performers sing with both understanding and commitment. The French choral sound is not always as refined as that of their English counterparts, the top line in particular becoming rather diffuse when the going gets tough but this is nonetheless a thoroughly recommendable issue. *David Hansell*

Lalande ***Music for The Sun King*** Ex Cathedra, Jeffrey Skidmore *dir* 72' 09"
Hyperion **CDA67325**
Te Deum, Panis Angelicus, La grande pièce royale, Venite exultemus

The indefatigable researches of Lionel Sawkins and the forces of Birmingham-based Ex Cathedra here combine with Hyperion to produce a disc that is splendid in just about every way. All these performers are now thoroughly at home in the oft-elusive French style, sound comfortable with the Gallic pronunciation used, and show great commitment to the cause, as well they might, for Lalande himself was on particularly good form when writing these pieces. Among the soloists, Carolyn Sampson is the main beneficiary, obviously savouring the lyrical music she is assigned amid the trumpeting of the *Te Deum* and producing a lovely line in combination with Rachel Brown's flute in *Panis angelicus*. This extract from a longer motet is followed by a comparatively rare appearance on disc for Lalande the composer of instrumental music in a multi-sectioned piece of *musique de table* notable for the tenor-register musings of the solo bassoon. The programme ends with a return to the grand motet with *Venite, exultemus* of which the fifth movement is a real masterpiece of scoring and harmony. Treat yourselves and stand by to be impressed by all concerned. *David Hansell*

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

Monteverdi ***L'Orfeo, Vespro della Beata Vergine, Combattimento etc, Quarte e Quinto Libro dei Madrigali, etc.*** 488' 47" (8 CDs)
Decca **470 906-2** £ (rec 1971-93)

The *Vespers* and *Orfeo* are the Pickett recordings (1989 & 1991) and the *Combattimento*, the *Ballo delle Ingrate* and *Tirsi e Clori* are from the same performers (1993); Books IV & V are Consort of Musicke recordings of 1981-4; a disc with the *Lagrime d'amante, Movete*, and some of the larger Book VIII pieces come from Norrington recordings of 1971 & 1975, with a modern-instrument band that includes the outspoken anti-early-instrument Quintin Ballardie on viola and the King's Singer Simon Carrington on double bass. This particular disc is of some historical interest: in many ways old-fashioned, with modern instruments, a choir and slow tempi, yet with considerable feeling and character, it is a useful reminder of the passing nature of authentic styles. The rest of the box needs no special pleading: all excellent performances in their individual ways. Although not perhaps suiting all tastes, this gives a fine conspectus of secular Monteverdi and the *Vespers* for those not knowing where to start. And it contains full texts and translations, unlike the Bach box reviewed last month. *CB*

Classical Kirkby. Orpheus and Corinna: 17th-century songs on classical themes Emma Kirkby and Anthony Rooley 54' 11"
BIS-CD-1435
Music by Boyce, Blow, Campion, Eccles, Ferrabosco II, Greene, Henry Lawes, Weldon, Wilson

It was a neat PR idea of the Classical Association to appoint an escaped classicist as its honorary President a year or two ago. Her condition of acceptance was that her presidential address should be sung, and here it is on CD. There are two settings of Anacreon in Greek by Henry Lawes, two settings of Horace in Latin by John Wilson, and various translations, paraphrases and classically-themed poems by the other composers listed above. Although I escaped from the classical fold even earlier in my career than Emma, I find the programme fascinating, and it seems from the informative but often informal booklet notes by Tony and Emma that audiences have too. (Out of context, the sentence 'Lesbian lays were very much the in thing during the 1690s' might excite a TV producer wanting to push back earlier than the recent 19th-century serial.) There's no need to review a new recital by this pair; in addition to the outstanding performances, and even apart from the attraction of the theme, this is a fine anthology (and not a compilation: Emma's note reminds us of the difference). The only slight weakness is that the later songs sometimes need an accompaniment that is just a little stronger than a single lute, though I wouldn't complain at a live concert. *CB*

English Country Dances: 17th-century ballads & dance tunes from the publications of John Playford (1623-86) David Douglass *vln*, Paul O'Dette *theorbo*, Andrew Lawrence-King *harps* 77'42" (rec 1997) £
Harmonia Mundi *Classical Express* **HCX 57186**

This is the first of four reissues this month of 17th-century English popular music. The City Waites (see p. 22) are probably the most experienced in the area, going back some thirty years, and have developed a stylistic homogeneity that unites the various styles of material that they incorporate. The Toronto Consort has a wider range, is in some respects more skilful, but has less of a period feel. David Douglass writes in his booklet: 'Overall, I would say that all of these pieces are played in a dance style, but with an eye towards the arty. You could dance to them, and I hope you'll want to, but I think you'd rather listen.' In fact, very few have the rhythmic strength and freedom of country dances (or, for that matter, grounds) that go on and on with musical interest created against that pattern. This disc also has less variety than the others because of the absence of a singer. But with three such fine musicians, it cannot fail to entertain and amuse. *CB*

This was originally called Apollo's Banquet *on* **HMU 907186**; *I reviewed it somewhat ambiguously in EMR 42, July 1998, p. 23.*

Mariners and Milkmaids The Toronto Consort, David Fallis *dir* 75' 41"
Dorian **DOR-93247**
Bateson, Bennet, Byrd, Ravenscroft & mostly anon

This is the most varied of the 17th-century English folky discs reviewed this month. The playing is brilliant, but sometimes seemed just a little contrived, and a few more sophisticated vocal pieces rather stuck out: the City Waites are better at showing the folk elements in art music. Use of rustic accents helps singers to get away from the modern cultured voice that classical singers adopt, so is all to the good, and the ballads come to life. *CB*

Music for the Duke of Lerma Gabrieli Consort & Players, Paul McCreesh 121' 54"
Archiv **471 694-2** 2 CDs
Music by Cabezón, Gaudi, Gombert, Guerrero, Lobo, Morales, Rogier, Romero, Urreda & Victoria

I first played this in the car while stuck in a variety of traffic jams one evening in north-east London. The music seemed interesting, but as much for the variety of sound and texture as its innate virtue. Then I pulled out of the usual queue for the Blackwall Tunnel and suddenly found the road to the City virtually empty; as my spirits rose, I heard the four-note intonation to the *Salve Regina* and the opening of Victoria's 8-voice setting. It's probably my favourite double-choir piece, and the exciting performance (voices supplemented by wind,

two organs and harp) raised my spirits even more than they might have done had I been sitting at my desk – though I did confirm my reaction later with score before me (just to check the transposition, though with choir and organs at A=415 and wind at 465, how do you describe the result? It sounds down a major third at an A=440 standard). If you are wealthy, it's worth buying the set just for this.

But I don't want to underestimate the rest. Disc 1 contains a reconstruction of First Vespers for the Translation of the Blessed Sacrament (Friday 6 October 1617). Disc 2 begins with a group of instrumental pieces to represent the following day's procession through the town (did Tormod Dalen hang his bass violin round his neck and play while processing?) and the evening's Salve service. The reason for the grand celebration was the presence of Philip III and the Duke of Lerma. Early accounts of the event mention five choirs, which is plausibly interpreted to mean three vocal groups + one of strings and one of wind. The three vocal choirs are heard to good effect (accompanied by two organs and harp) in Victoria's Magnificat a12. Much of the disc is *alternatim*. I am puzzled why the chant is so often doubled at the lower octave but not the higher: the first account of Spanish cathedral practice I looked at (in the Snow Festschrift, to be reviewed in the next issue) mentions choirboys, whose voices probably broke rather later than they do now, so shouldn't they (or their falsettist equivalent) be singing? The whole experience offered by this disc (mostly researched by Douglas Kirk) is rich and sumptuous: fine music (ignore the of my enthusiasm by traffic jams) supported by very thorough documentation. The only oddity in the booklet is the conductor's portrait, which reminded me of the song 'It takes a worried man to sing a worried song'. Is he reflecting on the current state of the classical recording industry and the recent financial troubles of one of the other major early-music ensembles? *CB*

Spanish Music of the Golden Age, 1600-1700
The Extempore String Ensemble, Maria del Mar Fernández Doval S, George Weigand *dir* 64'46" (rec 1988)
Hyperion *Helios* **CDH55098** £
Music by de Celis, Guerau, Hidalgo, Marin, Ribayaz, Sanz & anon

George Weigand and his Extempore String Ensemble were pioneers in believing in improvisation within the stylistic constraints of the music they were playing, and it is good that this disk has been revived – though the note that all the music was arranged by George and his wife Rosemary Thorndycraft (who plays gamba and harp in the ensemble) does suggest that the improvisation had been prepared earlier. If I have any complaint, it is that some of the string playing sounds a bit English, though the plucking of Robin Jeffrey and George himself is vigorous enough. The long-named singer tends towards the strident rather than the gutsy, but the recording works very well as a whole, and is a reminder of what we have lost in George's early death. *CB*

Zarambeques: Música española de los siglos XVII y XVIII en torno a la guitarra
Armonisioi Concerti, Juan Carlos Rivera *dir*
harmonia mundi **HMI 987030** 73' 58"
Music by Antonio de Santa Cruz, Guerau, Martin i Coll, Pérez de Zavala, Santiago de Murzia, Sanz

On this disc two baroque guitars, theorbo, viola da gamba and zanfoña (a sweet-voiced Spanish hurdy-gurdy) provide the resources for an exemplary excursion through the rich repertoire of music written for Spain's most characteristic instrument in the years around 1700. This is a repertoire rooted in the folk music of the peninsula and successful performances of these pieces demand that the musicians convey a vivid impression of improvisation if they are to achieve their full effect. In this recital Juan Carlos Rivera and his colleagues are wholly successful in conveying this sense of live musical creation even though all the pieces they play survive in relatively well-known written and printed sources. On a cold wet autumnal night *Zarambeques* is a disc to remind us of another, warmer world. My only quibble about this issue is that the editors did not find more room on the recording for the evocative sound of the zanfoña which, sadly, figures, in only two of the 24 tracks in what is, overall, a most satisfying programme. Highly recommended, especially to all who want a touch of southern sun to see them through the months ahead. Admittedly I have no way of knowing if the particular combinations of instruments employed on individual tracks were those that would have found favour with the original audience for these hypnotic pieces but they certainly sound right, and that is surely the surest test of authenticity in music such as this.

David J. Levy

LATE BAROQUE

Bach ***Cantatas 131, 152, 161*** Suzie LeBlanc, Daniel Taylor, Jan Kobow, Stephen Varcoe *ScTTB*, Theatre of Early Music, Daniel Taylor *dir* 57' 04"

This is a Bach recording that commands attention. Three early cantatas are performed one-to-a-part, by a distinguished team of soloists who truly understand the nature of Bach's concertato writing. They shape phrases with both care and ebullience, finding details overlooked in larger-scale renditions and enjoying the interplay of voices and instruments. Intonation is consistently spot-on; balance is perfect. In Cantata 131, the singers' deftness matches Bach's responsiveness to every turn of the words. The intimate style is ideal for Cantata 152, with its chamber scoring for only four instruments and two singers. I also enjoyed Cantata 161, especially the poised delivery of the recitatives and the invigorating tempi. The recorded sound is close and may seem to lack atmosphere, but this dryness shows up the detail that the performers find in their lines. The booklet has a useful note by Bruce Haynes on the problems of transposing instruments for pieces conceived at high pitch (Chorton). Outstanding: do buy this.

Stephen Rose

Bach ***Complete Violin Sonatas Vol. 3***
Musica Alta Ripa 63' 06"
Dabringhaus und Grimm **GOLD 309 1075-2**

Both CB and I raised an eyebrow when we spotted this disc in the listings last month. I'm not aware of any series of accompanied sonatas stretching to a third disc. (Unless you also include works by his son, as Jacqueline Ross and David Ponsford have done on their ASV discs, that is!) Here we have the enigmatic sonata in F for violin in scordatura and harpsichord, the suite based on a piece by Silvius Leopold Weiss, the alternative cantabile from BWV1019a (the only piece played by Anne Röhrig), the harpsichord arrangements of the BWV 1003, and the first movement of BWV 1005. Like the previous two releases, the playing is excellent and the recorded sound beautifully clean. I wish Musica Alta Ripa would look around for some German trios of the time, or slightly later (Telemann, Fasch, Gottlieb Graun, etc.) and bring that repertoire to life too. *BC*

Bach ***The Art of Fugue*** Fretwork 76' 13"
Harmonia Mundi **HMU 907296**

The Art of Fugue is a strangely rootless piece. Bach did not specify its scoring and so it can be legitimately played on almost anything. Here Fretwork bring the sound of a Jacobean viol consort, but this is not such an anachronism as it might seem. Bach used the viol in cantatas for archaic or distant moments detached from everyday musical life. Moreover, viols were associated with death in Baroque Germany, and Fretwork thereby reinforce the myth of this contrapuntal album as a deathbed piece. Indeed, the booklet cleverly links the Art of Fugue to the learned elaborations of the *Nunc dimittis* that Buxtehude performed at his father's funeral. The viols give an equality to the contrapuntal parts and respect the fact that Bach didn't figure the bass line. Fretwork find many moments to be quietly enjoyed, such as the languid *Canon alla duodecima*, but on the whole prefer to be demure rather than demonstrative (so much so that the booklet doesn't identify which players are involved on each track). For 76 minutes of music based on the same theme, I sometimes wanted more variety and characterisation. Musica Antiqua Köln's 1985 recording, for instance, used harpsichord

to good effect in the duos; its violins gave more incision and character to the strides of the opening theme and to the French overture of *Contrapunctus 6*. But the Art of Fugue can be played and enjoyed in many different ways, and Fretwork's reflective and insightful performance is well worth buying. *Stephen Rose*

Handel *Arcadian Duets* Laura Claycomb, Natalie Dessay, Véronique Gens, Juanita Lascarro, Anna Maria Panzarella, Patricia Petibon *SSSSSS*, Marijana Mijanovic, Sara Mingardo *AA*, Brian Asawa *cT*, Paul Agnew *T*, Le Concert d'Astrée, Emmanuelle Haïm
Virgin *Veritas* **5 45524 2** 62' 18"
Chamber duets HWV 179, 189, 182a, 192, 185, 197, 199, 178 and 194

There have been several single CDs offering selections of Handel's chamber duets, but none quite as bizarre as this. Let's start with the title. Why 'Arcadian' duets, exactly? The texts do not involve idealised pastoral imagery, and though David Vickers' notes hint at a connection with the Arcadian Academy in Rome, the musical sources and other documentation for the duets exhibit no link with the Italian cantatas Handel composed for that context. Presumably someone in Virgin's marketing section just thought the word sounded nice. And why the lavish pool of distinguished singers? Only four voices are needed for the nine duets included here, but ten are used: each duet has a different pair of singers, and six singers appear only once. The financial backing provided by Fondation France Télécom for this extravagance must have been considerable, but it brings no obvious musical advantage, since the voices do not differ greatly in timbre. Haïm fails to bring a unifying influence, with the result that the performance of each duet is an individual venture, uninformed by wider experience. The items that work well seem to do so only because the singers involved have a bit of background in Handelian style. In the first duet recorded, *Ahi! nelle sorti umane*, the star qualities of Dessay and Gens are dimmed by organ harmonies and sluggish tempos, and in *Qual fior che all'alba ride* (one of the duets reworked in *Messiah*) Petibon and Panzarella bring no laughter to the word 'ride' in their lumpy treatment of the opening section, while the darker minor-key tones in the closing section are lost in the hectic tempo. (It is 'sorti', by the way, not 'sorte' as printed consistently in the booklet, whatever Chrysander and old *New Grove* may say.) Three duets are marred by intrusive vocal cadenzas, all the more inappropriate when the music leaves no space for them. Fortunately the ST setting of *Caro autor di mia doglia* (with Petibon and Agnew) is one of the more successful performances – happily so, since it seems to be a first recording, though not claimed as such, and its presence makes this disc essential for Handel collectors.

Haïm's use of continuo instruments needs a further word. She follows modern whimsy rather than historical precedent in the combinations she uses, and in her persistent practice of changing instruments during the course of a duet. I doubt whether a lute would often have been used in combination with a harpsichord – if it was, the players would surely have avoided the chordal clutter heard here – while an organ in this music would have been highly unlikely and would not have been played in alternation with harpsichord. It is equally implausible that an 18th-century continuo cellist would have abandoned the bass line in a final playout and improvised a treble line of his own devising, as happens here on two occasions. The historical dislocation becomes absurd in *Va, speme infida pur*, where Haïm unexpectedly moves to the organ after the central declamatory section, and then makes an instantaneous switch back to the harpsichord for the final section, an effect impossible in live performance without a second player. If she had concentrated less on making her presence felt, and more on bringing out the best in the singers, this would have been a much more satisfying disc. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel *Coronation Anthems, Silete Venti*
Rebecca Ryan *S*, Tallis Chamber Choir, Royal Academy Consort, Jeremy Summerly
Naxos **8.557003** £ 66' 28"

Zadok the priest and its three companions have been well served on CD, with Simon Preston's 1981 recording with the Westminster Abbey choir still holding its own among period-instrument interpretations in spite of subsequent worthy competition, including the recent King's Cambridge version with the AAM under Stephen Cleobury. A new recording with modern instruments needs to have some distinctive quality to justify itself, even at bargain price, but this Naxos issue does not quite provide it. The performances are generally very pleasing under Summerly's safe direction, but I missed the raw thrill that *Zadok* and some of the other trumpet-and-drum choruses should generate. A significant factor is the thinnish sound of the orchestra (mainly RAM final-year and post-graduate students), despite prominent timpani; as a result, it is the lightly scored *Let thy hand be strengthened* that comes off best. The Tallis Chamber Choir bring clarity to the counterpoint but are a shade underpowered, or perhaps recorded too far back in the sound picture. The latter impression is reinforced at the start of *My heart is inditing*, where a forwardly placed solo quartet suddenly gives way to the more reticent chorus. (This feature seems in any case to be misconceived. Summerly claims that *My heart* 'is a verse anthem rather than a full anthem' because it begins with 'solo voices'. Handel may have used soloists when he performed the anthem in *Esther* in 1732, but in 1727 he marked the opening ATB parts for two singers each, and did not reduce the trebles at all. Besides, it is surely the presence of well-defined solo sections, not the occasional appearance of solo voices, that characterises the verse anthem.) Failure to elide adjacent vowels in the 'Alleluia' choruses exposes the use of outdated editions. Rebecca Ryan's fresh and versatile voice is apt for the motet *Silete venti*, and she is excellent in the vaguely erotic languor of the opening movements. However, the performance then sags a bit: the outpouring of ecstasy in the main section of 'date serta' is inhibited by a leisurely tempo (though the contrasting middle section is admirably gutsy), and the final Alleluia lacks brilliance. I would not wish to discourage Naxos and Summerly from their further exploration of Handel's English church music: the much neglected and modestly scored Chapel Royal anthems would seem more suitable to the forces used here. *Anthony Hicks*

Handel *Harpsichord works, vol. 2* Sophie Yates 70' 58"
Chandos *Chaconne* **CHAN 0688**
HWV 431-3, 440-1, 442/1

Sophie Yates's third volume comprises the last three suites of Handel's first set of 1720 (the other being on her vol. 2, praised by Robin Bigwood in *EMR* 77 p. 18) and almost completes the coverage of the 1733 set begun in her vol. 1 (reviewed by me in *EMR* 54, p. 24); only HWV 442/2, the longer and more naïve of the two chaconnes on the 'Goldberg' bass is lacking (it would not have fitted on this disc), though its Prelude is included. I complained about the use of outdated texts for the earlier 1733 items, and while that remains a valid reservation for both the 1720 and 1733 items in this selection, the textual errors are tiny and are unlikely to be noticed by anyone not already aware of them. Yates's playing is very fine, reflective in the preludes and allemandes, energetic in the courantes and fugues, and always with a singing line enhanced by the rich sonority of the imitation of the Colmar Ruckers which she uses. She includes all repeats, adding discreet and appropriate embellishments within the written notes. (In the Sarabande of the G minor suite of the 1720, HWV 432/4, she repeats bars 9-24 and plays bars 25-32 as a coda — an interesting and effective reading, though not supported by any source.) In general, her three CDs are a valuable survey of the 1720 and 1733 sets as originally printed. I hope she will continue by exploring the posthumously published keyboard music (especially that in vol. IV/17 of the Halel Handel Edition), still poorly represented on disc. *Anthony Hicks*

Tartini *Four concertos for violin and orchestra* László Paulik, Orfeo Orchestra, György Vashegyi *dir* 70' 58"
Hungaroton Classic **HCD 32045**

The original sources for the four concertos on this CD are in Paris. I don't know quite what was lacking in the recording, but it never seemed to settle. In fact, it's not the first time I've had this problem with Tartini CDs before, so maybe he's just a composer to whom I just can't relate. The playing is generally very good (there are some slight intonation worries), and the music is (of its kind) accomplished, balancing the virtuosity for which the composer was renowned with striking thematic material and sound structures. The cadenzas were variable — one went on for at least ten times more than it need have done, and that was before the gypsy twists at the close. Strangely, though, on a second listen through, I found rather more to enjoy. Tartini – just possibly – straddles the baroque / classical divide, and heard after a feast of German rococo repertoire, it made more sense. The orchestral accompaniments also sounded more convincing than first time through – maybe I was just having a bad day! Do listen for yourself if Tartini's your thing. *BC*

Telemann ***Flute concertos*** Emmanuel Pahud *fl*, Berlin Barock Solisten, Rainer Kussmaul *dir* 66' 26"
EMI Classics 7243 **5 57397 2** 8
Concertos for Flute (TWV 51:G2, D2), Fl, violin & cello, 2 fl and violone, Fl, oboe d'amore & viola d'amore (TWV 53: A2, a1 and E1)

This CD is interesting in that it claims to include two premiere recordings (a reconstructed concerto for flute and strings TWV 51:G2, and a concerto for two flutes, violone and strings TWV 53:a1). The approach is interesting: these are all "modern" players, the strings using different bows for their varying repertoire, and the modern wind players have done their homework with regards to general early music practice. The fact remains, though, that there is something about the advanced technology of modern instruments that makes the music sound that much easier than it is on the period equivalent. Actually, I'm not sure that it's not that period players use the colour of different ranges on their instruments to help shape the lines, where a modern flautist jumps through the octaves without a care in the world because the phrase starts here and ends there. It's also slightly disappointing that two of the other concertos are among the most widely recorded of the composer's output. Still, it might bring Telemann's music to wider note, because Pahud is one of this generation's superstars, and that's all for the better. *BC*

Telemann ***12 Fantasien for solo violin*** Kojla Lessing 71' 38"
Capriccio **10 852**

I'm afraid Kolja Lessing is not a name with which I am familiar. His previous recordings include one of solo sonatas including Bartok and the other of piano transcriptions by Schreker. The booklet note is (to me, at any rate) a silly and slightly pretentious letter 'from Telemann' to the violinist, defending his approach which has been compared unfavourably elsewhere with Bach's contrapuntal style (nothing new there, then!) The playing is for the most part clean, with some nice articulation and very stylish baroque trills and improvised ornamentation. There are other passages by which I wasn't very impressed. I've used these as teaching pieces for many years, and it seemed (in some places) that the actual structure of the movements (those that have what might loosely be called structure, that is) has escaped Lessing. And then there are glissandi (not many, mercifully!) I'm sure that other reviewers will like this, and it's doubly interesting that such a high-calibre violinist (not suggesting for a moment that professional baroque violinists are any less able) and the record company are prepared to issue the disc. Good for them! *BC*

Vivaldi ***Concerti per mandolini, Concerti con molti strumenti*** Europa Galante, Fabio Biondi 67' 29"
Virgin *veritas* 7243 **5 45527 2** 4
RV 319, 425, 532. 555, 558, 564, 576

I enjoyed this CD. There were (inevitably, I guess) a few moments when the Why word came to my mind, but they were few and far between. Mostly, Biondi's approach to these pieces did bring them more to life than possibly straight readings might not have done. He is (and I've never denied it) an outstanding violinist, and he shows what a wide range of bow strokes he has at his command in several of the concertos featuring solo violin(s). The wind playing, and that of the mandolines, are excellent. Readers will know that I have problems with recordings which reveal more about the performers than the composer, but I'm glad to report that this is not one of them.

BC

Wassenaer ***Concerti Armonici*** Aradia Ensemble, Kevin Mallon *dir* 58' 54"
Naxos **8.555384** £

The Concerti Armonici are well known (whether under his name or Pergolesi or Ricciotti) and have been recorded on numerous occasions before. Their appearance on the budget Naxos is very welcome. I've heard the Aradia Ensemble on various recordings with choirs, but this is the first featuring purely instrumental music and I was very impressed. The pieces really deserve their prominence in the baroque concerto grosso field – balanced violin parts, opportunities for the solo cellist to grab the limelight, contrasting movements in a variety of styles. All that at Naxos's bargain price! Even if you have a recording already, you can afford this alternative, and it would make a lovely Christmas present.

BC

CLASSICAL

J. C. Bach ***La Clemenza di Scipione*** Linda Perillo *Arsindo*, Christine Wolff *Idalba*, Jörg Waschinski *Luceio*, Markus Schäfer *Scipione*, Hans Jörg Mammel *Marzio*, *SSSTT* Rheinische Kantorei, Das Kleine Konzert, Hermann Max *dir* 131' 04"
cpo **999 791-2**

La clemenza di Scipione was JC's last Italian opera, written for and performed in London in 1778. It is a lovely work, generously and imaginatively scored, with fine *accompagnati* as well as beautiful arias and ensembles, and powerful choruses. With so few of JC's operas available, it is a particular pleasure to welcome this issue, recorded live (with little extraneous noise) at Mönchengladbach-Rheydt in September 2000. The fairly straightforward plot tells of Scipio Africanus's generosity towards friends and foes alike; having joined two couples, and secured the loyalty towards Rome of a troublesome Iberian prince, he at the close stands alone, an earlier Titus. The performance makes a vivid impact, lacking something in grace, perhaps – but finely sung and played. Hermann Max keeps things moving, and the five soloists are very good, all high-voiced, all fluent in runs even if occasionally strained by the taxing vocal lines. The male soprano Jörg Waschinski as the reluctant conscript to the Roman cause displays his unusual art to fascinating effect. Both women are good, the tenors better still. Markus Schäfer is an impressive replacement for Valentin Adamberger, who created Scipione before moving back to Vienna and creating Belmonte in *Die Entführung* (could he have told Mozart of the superb Act II aria for the heroine with obbligati for flute and oboe, violin and cello – thus a model for Konstanze's 'Martern aller Arten'?). The leaflet contains a useful essay as well as three-language libretto, clearly printed. Such treats as this tend not to linger in the catalogue; that Christmas CD token couldn't be put to better use. *Peter Branscombe*

Haydn ***Sonatas (Vol. 8) 28, 29 and 30***
Ronald Brautigam *fp* 61' 57"
BIS-CD-1174

The first movement on this disc is a reconstruction by Christa Landon and Karl Heinz Fussl and it is typical of Ronald Brautigam's meticulous and intelligent preparation that he differs from this version very slightly in the second half. He places a couple of turns between the chords of imperfect cadences rather than performing them around the first chord as they appear in the text. The turn therefore becomes a decoration that leads the listener on to the moment of rest and an attractive variety is introduced to the cadences of the movement as a whole. The performances on this disc are second to none, with the artist giving us

excitement as well as speed in the very fast movements. He never loses the sense of line where there are a few very short note values and his interpretation of the trio is particularly fine. The recording is of good quality as well. *Margaret Cranmer*

Haydn ***Nelsonmesse (Missa in angustiis), Theresienmesse*** Donna Brown, Sally Bruce-Payne, Peter Butterfield, Gerald Finley *SmSTB*, Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner *dir*
Philips **470 266-2** 89:27 (2 CDs) ££
Also includes *Te Deum, Hob. XXIIIc:2*

This superb series (the first pair was reviewed in the July *EMR*) continues with the Masses of 1798 and 1799, the earlier of them, the *Missa in Angustiis* or 'Nelson' Mass being the most familiar of the final six; the later one, probably named for the empress, Marie Therese, who sang the soprano solos in the first Vienna performance, being less well known but every bit as fine. They make a fine pair: the 'Nelson' bold, even brazen, the Therese more lyrical, intimate (though it too is marked by the dark shadows of war). The performances, recorded in November 1997, are eloquent, powerful, precise. The *Te Deum*, recorded four years later, and included after the 'Nelson' Mass, is a very welcome bonus. If I have a criticism, it is that at times Haydn's dynamic contrasts are smoothed over; and (a more personal point) I should have preferred the hard Austro-German pronunciation to the Italianate soft consonants favoured here. A very fine solo quartet is matched by the Monteverdi Choir; the EBS are in glorious form, with excellently balanced strings, and winds, brass and timpani adding characteristic colour. The player of the organ obbligato should have been named in the credits. The venue (Colosseum, Watford) is sympathetic, allowing clear textures and church-like resonance. And the notes are all one could ask for. Haydn could not be better served than by John Eliot Gardiner in this winning cycle.
Peter Branscombe

Hummel ***Mass in D major, Mass in B flat major, Alma Virgo*** Susan Gritton S, Collegium Musicum 90, Richard Hickox, dir. 76' 19"
Chandos **CHAN 0681**

Ever since I heard a radio performance of a keyboard rondo by Hummel (I was a student, so it must be at least 20 years ago now!), I've wanted to hear more by the man. This new release, the first CD I've had of his music, is a delight. The two masses do not involve any solo singing at all. The D major, in fact, opens in D minor, most mysteriously. The Alma virgo, an offertory setting, reveals both Hummel's ear for a good tune and Susan Gritton's sensuous voice, soaring with ease above the orchestra. If you're intrigued to know what other music was happening in Haydn's and Beethoven's Vienna (in fact, for many years before that, for all three pieces have much in common with works by Vanhal, for example – especially the contrapuntal choruses), make sure you buy this. The best news of all is that it's labelled Volume 1, so there's more to come. *BC*

Kraus Complete Symphonies Vol. 4
Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Petter Sundkvist 58' 44"
Naxos **8.555305**
VB143-6, 154

There are three full symphonies on this the latest offering from the Naxos Complete Kraus set, with the Swedish Chamber Orchestra under Petter Sundkvist. The other three shorter pieces are a one-movement church sinfonia, a march for the convening of the Swedish parliament in 1789, and an alternative slow movement for the E flat major symphony, VB144. For my taste, the orchestra tries a little too hard, with fairly staccato playing from the strings, neatly punctuating horns, and what I'm afraid I consider fairly bland oboes. The flutes were slightly more delicate and interesting, and the bassoons kept on their feet by Kraus's bass lines and fairly regular excursions to tenor register. Enjoyable music for all that. *BC*

Music of Russian Princesses from the Court of Catherine the Great Talisman, Oleg Timofeyez *dir*, Anne Harley *S* 62' 00"
Dorian **DOR-93244**
Princess Dolgorouky, Countess Golovine, Princess de Kourakine, Countess de Licoshin, M L Naryshkina, E A Siniavina, G Tepper de Ferguson, N de Veriguine, M Z Zubova, and Mlle. ***

This CD contains an agreeable selection of music created by Russian women composers of the late 18th century. The pieces are mostly songs, in French and, in one case, Italian, with the addition of a number of instrumental pieces, of which two are extended sets of variations for harpsichord composed by professional, male musicians on themes provided by their aristocratic female patrons and students. Accompaniment to the songs is variously provided by Oleg Timofeyev on a seven string Russian Guitar, an instrument I have not encountered before, by the keyboard of Irina Rees and by Etienne Abelin on violin, The result is an unusual recital that gives an insight into the domestic musical life of the circles surrounding the court of Catherine the Great. Of the composers represented, the most lyrically gifted appears to have been Princess Natalie de Kourakine, who is here represented by four songs that show a notable gift for graceful melody and sensitive word setting. Nothing on the disc approaches great music but no track makes for anything less than acceptable listening in performances that admirably capture the spirit of works that were never meant to do much more than divert a class at ease with its privileges if not always its Russian identity. Only in the last two tracks of the album do we hear the Russian language in pieces that tastefully imitate the style of the indigenous folk music in ways acceptable to an audience far removed from the conditions of life of a still servile population. Though hardly an essential buy for the general collector, this disc will give a modest pleasure to anyone with a desire to gain entry to a place and time of musical creativity that is wholly unfamiliar without being in the slightest bit unapproachable or exotic. *David J. Levy*

SOUND ALIVE

Music from the time of Charles II The City Waites 70' 10" (rec 1995)
Sound Alive Music **SAMFN/CD/302** £
Ghosts, Witches & Demons: From the Castle to the Graveyard The City Waites 56' 44"
SAMPP/CD/401 (rec 1995) £
Mixture of traditional and art music
On the Boards: Songs from the Victorian Music Halls The Down East Band 74' 31"
SAMHS/CD/204 (rec. 1995) £

I assumed when requesting them that these were new issues, but we reviewed the first two listed in *EMR*26 (Dec. 1996) p. 22. These are a mix of art and folk music of, mostly, the 17th century performed with the panache that is characteristic of the City Waites (who are not on the outside of the packaging). *On the Boards* has different players, but retains Lucie Skeaping from the other discs. It differs in that the material is exclusively popular, including songs from an earlier period of the Music Hall than one usually hears, though some that have survived in the repertorie appear, like *The man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo* and *Oh Mr Porter*. One song is by the disc's male singer, Tim Laycock. The polite applause emphasises rather than diminishes the slightly formal feel of the performances, and neither singer has the presence apparent in early 20th-century recordings of the star singers — but perhaps the more restrained style is more authentic (sorry, more historically informed) for the 19th century. But like the rest of the series, non-experts buying the discs on impulse should have their curiosity enjoyably satisfied. *CB*

SACRED MILLENNIUM

1000 Years of Sacred Music 385' 34" (5 CDs)
Virgin Classics 7243 5 62126 2 6 £

You certainly get your money's worth here: an average of 77 minutes per disc.

There's some marvellous music, too, often in ideal performances. The arrangement is chronological, not like Naxos's recent sacred compilation thematic. The first two discs, running from plainsong to Schütz, are mostly in styles still fashionable (to be cautious), though the two Binkley tracks are period pieces. Movements of Machaut's mass (the Taverner performance) are labelled EXTR[acts], but in later discs this practice is not followed, and listeners less experienced than our readers could be left with the impression that, for instance, Rameau's *In convertendo* had only three movements. That apart, it's an excellent collection, extending up to Gorecki and Pärt: an ideal present for any impoverished music student or chorister. The booklet prefers an attempt at a history of church music by Adélaïda de Place to more specific notes or texts and translations. *CB*

CAROLS

Traditional & Modern Carols The Pro Arte Singers, Indiana University Children's Chamber Choir, Paul Hillier *dir* 62' 58"
Harmonia Mundi *Classical Express* **HCX 3957233** £ (rec 1998)

I don't remember the original issue of this delightful disc, so I am very happy to commend it as our only carol CD this year. (Herald sent us ***Dancing Day*** from Exeter Cathedral, **HAVPCD 279**, but it is too 20th-century to be reviewed here.) The range is wide, with much attractive but unfamiliar material, in an effective, non-chronological arrangement. If the selection is to some extent an autobiographical statement for Paul Hillier, it has similar resonances for me, with many pieces relating to the New Oxford Book of Carols; but much of the American material from Shaker sources is new to me (not overlapping with the disappointing 1908 Shaker Hymnbook I bought at the Hancock Shaker village near Tanglewood). There is no sign of the usual fear of boring the listener by either cutting or adding irritating variations to multi-verse carols, so we can get the narrative, balladic effect of William Walker's *Babe of Bethlehem*. If only the providers of seasonal mood music in shopping centres would use discs like this!

CB

LATE ARRIVAL

We have already quite a pile of discs waiting for review in the February issue. But since this features a contributor in the present issue, we thought we should mention it straight away.

L'Italia in Giro Musiche Varie, Martin Lubenow *dir*, with Jenny Cassidy *mS*
amphion records **amph 20644**
Buonamente, Merula, Neri, Scheidt, Schütz, Selma y Salaverde

DVDs

Monteverdi *L'Orfeo* Monserrat Figueras *La Musica*, Furio Zanasi *Orfeo*, Arianna Savall *Euridice*, Sara Mingardo *Mesaggiera*, Antonio Abete *Caronte*, Adriana Fernández *Proserpina*, Daniele Carnovich *Plutone*, Fulvio Bettini *Apollo*, Mercedes Hernández *Ninfa*, Marília Vargas *Eco*, Gerd Türk, Francesc Garrigosa, Carlos Mena, Iván García *Pastores*, Le Concert des Nations, La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Jordi Savall *dir*
BBC Opus Arte **OA 0842 D** 140'

Although *Orfeo* was a set work in my first year at university, I have never seen the piece before (I was ill when my classmates watched a video). This production (at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona earlier this year) was thoroughly enjoyable with fine contributions from soloists, orchestra and choir alike. The main feature opens with Savall sweeping down the centre aisle dressed as Monteverdi – an idea he had to be talked into accepting as part of at the cuthe director's ploy – followed by Monserrat Figueras as La Musica. From there on, the drama unfolds, the music tells its story (the most dramatic performance was that by Sara Mingardo as the Messenger, and she received a particularly rowdy reception at her curtain call), and human emotions are laid bare for our consideration. It was interesting to hear the director explain his approach to the piece, though there was really very minimal directive influence. Most enjoyable. *BC*

Mozart Così fan tutte Amanda Roocroft *Fiordiligi*, Rosa Mannion *Dorabella*, Rodney Gilfry *Guglielmo*, Rainer Trost *Ferrando*, Eirian James *Despina*, Claudio Nicolai *Don Alfonso*, The Monteverdi Choir, The English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 193'
Archiv **073 026-9 193**

Recorded in 1992, this production by John Eliot Gardiner at the Théatre du Châtelet in Paris is excellent. The conductor's essay argues that, for the piece to work as drama, the two pairs of lovers have to be ill-defined; his realisation of that makes as convincing a case for the plot as ever was made! The playing and singing is, as one would expect, excellent. Tightly regimented, the orchestra is not very well covered by the camera, but the singers (where, of course, one would expect the angles, etc., to be calculated well in advance) gain a lot by close-up shots, where a telling glance is all that is required for an idea to work. The second disc also includes extracts from other Gardiner Mozart productions: scenes from *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magi Flute* the impressive end to *Don Giovanni*. The DVD inexplicably loaded its own player, apparently unhappy with the two already on my computer, which was quite annoying. *BC*

LETTERS

Dear Clifford,
I have noticed that composers have not always set the Gloria Patri at the end of psalms and canticles according to the correct Latin accentuation, *spi-RI-tu-i sancto*. It bothers me most at the beginning (and after each psalm) of Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, where in most of the large number of recordings in my collection the words are sung *SPI-ri-TU-i sancto*. It appears that some composers set the music to produce this result, while others (Bach) set it correctly. Perhaps some settings are ambiguous, allowing the performers to emphasise the syllables as they choose. Have any of your readers ever looked into this? Certainly in singing Gregorian chant the *Liber Usualis* has the wit to insert all the Latin accents! *Jerome F. Weber*

Monteverdi very clearly expected the 'wrong' accentuation in each Gloria except possibly in Lauda Jerusalem. A spot check of some Magnificats showed that Morales and Victoria also got it 'wrong', though Palestrina gets it 'right'.

Dear Clifford,
I was very interested in your memoire of Philip Brett (*EMR* 85), which I think largely correctly stated his interests at various times in his life. It nevertheless ignores what to me is one of the saddest musicological omissions of the late 20th century, though I doubt if Philip saw it that way. As a legacy of his work on William Byrd's songs and services Philip left a clutch of very important articles, and it is sad that he never pulled all his material together to write the long-hoped-for book on Byrd's songs and English-texted church music.

This would have been the second volume of the trilogy on Byrd's music, of which Oliver Neighbour's *The Consort and Keyboard Music of William Byrd* (1978) and Joseph Kerman's *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd* (1981) were theoretically the third and first, respectively. Of course, as time went on and the writing of Philip's volume became less likely, it was also recognised that his book would be more up-to-date than the other two, and that the need to revise those would in consequence be obvious to readers.

But in fact the existing volumes, concentrated and comprehensive studies of those repertories, have stood the test of time remarkably well, and have not been superseded. The lack of a similarly close examination of the rest of Byrd's work is sorely felt, therefore, and The *Songs, Services and Anthems of William Byrd* would still have been given a rapturous welcome. That the trilogy has remained incomplete is the sadder because Faber did such a splendid job on the first two volumes.

It would be good to think that Philip's mantle could fall on one of the handful of fine scholars – I can think of three, offhand – who might be tempted to take up this tough challenge. I wonder if one of them could be persuaded to plug the gap, now that the last hope of Philip doing it has been dashed? *Richard Rastall*
I thoroughly agree. CB

Dear Clifford,
I would like to take the opportunity while renewing my subscription to make my annual criticism of the critics.

This year the topic is 17th-century pitch. Whereas any ensemble performing French music at any pitch higher than a=390 regularly has scorn heaped upon them by your critics, or a group performing Roman music such as Carissimi is praised for (correctly) using a low pitch standard. However, I have never, ever in either *EMR* or any other English magazine seen any comment about the use of anachronisticly low pitch-standards in the performance of German 17th century music. Although you claim to have a special interest in music of this period, it seems for some reason perfectly acceptable to you to perform this repertoire at modern pitch (a=440) or even lower at a =430 or as in some recordings of Buxtehude even at a=415. The record low is a recent French recording of Buxtehude at a=390, almost a major third lower than Lübeck pitch, which is known to have been higher than the usual Chorton. I wonder what you would have to say if a German group performed Rameau at a= 465?

I guess the reason, that this topic is irrelevant to you and you colleagues, is chauvinistic; as all English groups perform this repertoire at 440 or lower, it must therefore be unquestionable.

I look forward to your reply. *Roland Wilson*

I can think of several reasons which, while not necessarily good ones, are not chauvinistic. The practical one is the availability of instruments. It is sensible for a German ensemble to tune an organ at a=460 or thereabouts and acquire cornetts and sackbuts at such a locally-favoured pitch. Here, where the German repertoire is less often performed and there is less agreement on the most convenient pitch for players whose main earnings come from playing Monteverdi's 1610 Vespers *with mostly non-specialist choirs, there are financial considerations involved. Keyboard instruments that can move a semitone are not uncommon, but it is generally more useful to tune them so that the available pitches are a=415 and 440. There is one work that is often performed at the appropriate pitch: Schütz's* Christmas Story, *but that is done by using the transposed edition by Mendel or, more recently, Neil Jenkins. I'm not sure if transposition is the answer. One hears of Monteverdi Vespers performances in which the wind play at A=460 and the strings play from transposed parts at A=415, thus ignoring one of the arguments for the chiavette transposition: that putting the Magnificat down a fourth keeps the violins in first position with extended little finger; putting it down a minor third doesn't. The use of simultaneous keys seems to have been acceptable for Bach, which is a more convincing argument for something approaching equal temperament than the existence of the '48'. But not all transpositions work at the temperaments plausible for Praetorius and Schütz. I suspect that knowledge of Bach's practice may have subconsciously been used to justify a lower pitch on the assumption that the adjustment of Chorton to Kammerton happened rather earlier than the influx of French wind instruments.*

Dear Clifford,

You asked me if I could supply some references in response to AB-W's reaction to Peter Holman's unnamed player last month (p. 9). So here they are, demonstrating how rife the practice was in France, Italy and even England. AB-W's distaste for the player's constant doubling of the top part was purely subjective; he found the practice cloying (to paraphrase AB-W, after a short exchange). I can see his point, as a sensitive listener, and he may regard the player as not being very imaginative, given the plurality of styles available. But unhistorical he is not. We should allow for a greater variety of continuo accompaniment; continuo realization remains a subject in which there is still a lot to catch up in HIP terms.

Most Italian women singers accompany themselves on the harpsichord when singing in concert. Their manner of accompanying ariettas is very pleasing, not smothering the voice with an abundance of chords, playing them only in moving passages or in situations where the expression of the text demands majesty and strength, and striking chords in strict time in instrumental sections. With regard to pretty passages of figured melody, they most often play the same vocal line on the harpsichord with the right hand. Michel Corrette (1775, p. 46)

This technique of doubling the voice in the accompaniment (to the probable exclusion of other styles of realization) was based on what Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1753, pp. 36-7) referred to as the 'unity of melody', a 'rule' which he regarded as 'indispensable' and equally as important in music as unity of action in tragedy. According to Rousseau, 'this great rule' also explained 'the frequent unison accompaniments that were observed in Italian music'; such accompaniments, he said, 'strengthen the melodic idea, and at the same time produce a sonority which is more gentle, and less tiring for the voice'. Not all were so enamoured of unison accompaniment. Its lack of subtlety did not impress North (*c.* 1710-15/1959, p. 126. n.33), an outraged lover of harmony, who revealed his disdain for the manner in which unison accompaniment appealed to the fairer sex:

I cannot but take notice of a practice in some operas in which certein passages, of which the measure and modulation were the cheif excellence, and contrived to take with the ladys and their light admirers, who are more sensible of tune and measure than of harmony: such as in Minuett or Gavott time, they have filled the consort if I may so call it, with perpetuall octaves these people care for nothing but tune and measure; let us give 'em enough of it, and not trouble them with any harmony, which will but disturb their fancys.

Kah-Ming Ng

There have also been various writings by Peter Holman on the English 17th- century practice, arguing that organ parts (which generally double the top and bottom of the texture) are meant to be played and that, in the absence of parts, scores were used for the purpose. Similarly Italian *Partiture* may have been intended for playing, not (as used to be thought) showing the director what was happening. To take perhaps the most extreme example, I usually now play the violin duet in the *Sonata sopra Santa Maria.* *CB*

BUSKAID

Sadly, I missed the concerts given by The Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble last July in Blythburgh church and Southwark Cathedral. But I was recently sent a video, and hearing it impinged on one point I made in my review of John Butt's *Playing with History* (see p. 2): the importance of style. It is, I think, a commonly held belief that Biber really only works with period strings: but here was a programme which included Biber, Purcell, Mozart, Grieg and Elgar, all on modern instruments but all sounding in period. In fact, the revelation was the Elgar, with the players changing the clean, vibrato-less sound of the Biber for the rich, sliding and fully-vibrated slow movement of the *Serenade.* Trained from scratch (if one can use that term without Gander Music protesting) by Rosemary Nalden, with help from John Eliot Gardiner, these brilliant players (mostly in their teens) have no preconceptions that one style is more orthodox than any other, and sound equally happy in all, as well as in contemporary African music, which they make fit a string orchestra perfectly. They also play extraordinarily in tune. We didn't give Buskaid the plug we should have done in the summer: I was intending to write up their Blythburgh concert but having played a Rosenmüller Vespers there the previous weekend, couldn't face the cross-country drive so soon.

EB happened to be playing recently a CD which Rosemary Nalden must have sent us but which I hadn't heard before, **HIPCD 1001**, dating from 2000, comprising chiefly arrangements of popular material. (The label evidently has a future if the abbreviation for Historically Informed Performance takes off.) Again, what is noticeable is the sense of style, a demonstration that an awareness of early styles is a valuable key to understanding many other sorts of music – though some of the arrangements are not as characterful as the players deserve: the home-concocted material is better. The booklet is taken up by comments from the players: I'll quote a few.

When you are in the studio it feels as if there is no life outside and the time has suddenly stopped. Petunia

Sometimes I played and thought to myself I've done my best, perfect. Then there was this voice from above saying, very good but the B flat was flat, sharp, or something. Of course that was Tim the engineer, not the voice from above in heaven to say very good perfect. Nimrod

One thing that was whipping at the back of my mind was that recording is never the same as performing and you need that continuing sense of motion so that it doesn't sound cut-off or something like that.... We've learned to fly like eagles and sing like birds and have managed to rest the sore hearts of the majority. My mind becomes restless when I see orchestras in my country slowly but surely fading away. It shouldn't take a middleclass women from England to come to the rough and tumble township of S.A. to make a difference. Samson

So may I draw readers' attention to this amazing educational project, which 'promotes and supports the musical education of the less privileged children in the townships of South Africa'. Information is available from Buskaid UK, 6 Long Cross, Enmor Green, Shaftesbury, SP7 8QP (jo.churchill@buskaid.co.uk)

ST CECILIATIDE FESTIVAL I

Artistic director of the St Ceciliatide International Festival of Music, Penelope Rapson unearthed a rare Italian gem and allowed it to glitter once more in the opening concert of this year's festival in London's Stationer's Hall, on 19 November, a concert which featured her own orchestra, Fiori Musicali, the resident ensemble at this festival. It was a work by Venetian composer Baldassare Galuppi (1706-85), a notable contributor, in his day, to the genre of comic opera. However, Rapson chose the more serene *Arripe alpestri*, a work from his later period, which he devoted to sacred music. But her really inspired move was to enlist leading British countertenor James Bowman to sing it.

We are used to hearing Bowman on more mainstream repertoire, but to hear him bring his lyricism, control and ever-changing palette of tonal colour to a relatively unknown, and yet accessible work offered us a whole new window into the man's art.

Bowman made light of the ornamented opening Aria, creating tight and accurate phrasings and unisons with the first violins where required. The Recitative was lyrical, well-paced and positively dripping with colour, Rapson following his rhythmic inflexions with a perfect orchestral response. The singer wisely saved his first full fortissimo for his final phrase in the final Aria, bringing the piece to a telling climax.

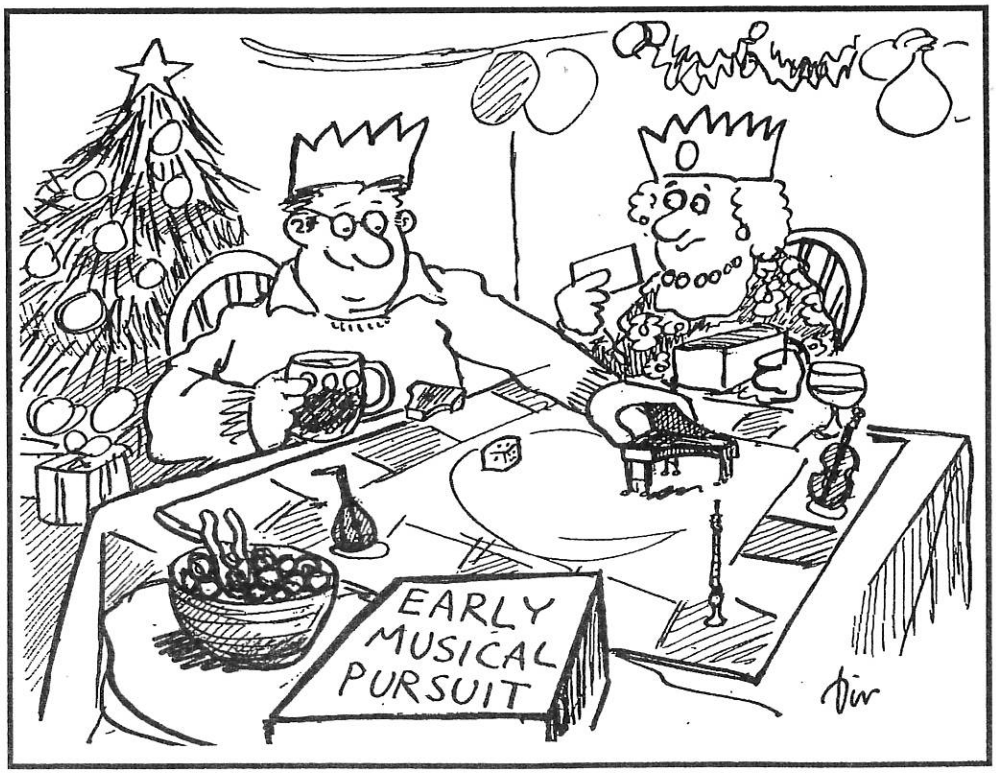
Bowman built on the growing rapport between himself and his orchestra with a riot of sensuous melody in a *Salve Regina* by Johann Adolf Hasse (1699-1783). Described by Rapson as 'the Andrew Lloyd Webber of his day', Hasse was, for several decades, the most widely admired composer of *opera seria* in Germany and Italy. Needless to say, his empathy with the human voice was second to none. Bowman showed us why, from the moment he produced some beautifully graded dynamics on the very opening phrase. Soaring and swooping through his lines with the grace of a bird in flight, he hit high, exposed notes with a caressing pianissimo, before effortlessly swelling them to convincing mezzo forte and forte; with conductor and orchestra measuring him every inch of the way with perfectly paced responses.

The evening began tentatively with cellist Catherine Rimer tackling the challenges of Haydn's virtuoso Cello Concerto in D. Nimble fingering, secure double stopping and some lyrical phrasing compensated for occasionally insecure intonation. It ended with orchestra, director and joint soloists Kerstin Linder-Dewan (violin) and Marianna Szücs (viola) sparking off each other in a much more confident account of Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E flat, surely one of the composer's finest works in any genre.

If Rimer was more at home in her slower, more lyrical passages, then Linder-Dewan and Szücs seemed most at ease ducking and diving through their up-tempo outer movements, as they made their way unerringly to a thoroughly convincing and rousing climax.

Christopher Wood

This review offers an excellent example of how a concert might appear from front-of-house although in fact the background is very different. I happen to have two other sources of information on how the Galuppi came to be in the programme. Penelope Rapson came to us with a score of the work she had received from James Bowman (who had obtained it from another countertenor), asking us to produce a set of parts transposed to the appropriate pitch. So it would seem that the James was booked first, then he himself came up with the idea of performing Galuppi. I happened to see James at the RAM Poppea, *and he confirmed that was indeed the case. He was well aware of the number of mistakes in the score that BC had to correct when producing the transposed parts.* CB



BAROQUE GUITAR postscript

I was frustrated when I was writing about *The Guitar and its Music* (p. 2) because I could not find my copy of its predecessor, James Tyler's *The Early Guitar* (Oxford UP 1980). It emerged at the very final stage of putting this issue together. It is worth making the point that not all the illustrations of the 1980 book recur in the 2002 expansion, so if you have a copy of the earlier publication, it is worth keeping it for the pictures, even if some of the information is outdated.

POPPEA AT THE RAM

L'Incoronatione (or La Coronatione) *di Poppea* is an ideal opera for college productions: lots of roles, none too physically taxing, requiring skilled acting and convincing Italian, with a need for perfect intonation, and the advantage that it generally sounds better from young singers than hardened big-voiced operatic old hands. I didn't see the production at Trinity College last summer, but since the first live performance I saw of the work was a student one when I was working at the Royal Academy of Music in the late 1960s, I was intrigued to see how they would tackle it now. Laurence Cummings was in charge musically. Stylistically, the change was enormous, as one would expect. I can't remember details of the early performance, except that there was more sexual excitement than in any other production I have seen. That had the advantage of using tenors for the high male roles. In the new version the Lesbian overtones of having a female Nerone (Sofia Flodin the night I attended) were successfully avoided. But Nerone is a difficult part, and few singers seem able to handle the two sides of his character: he has to be madly dangerous as well as wildly inlove. Poppea needs to show her ambition as well as her desire: Åsa Danielsson seemed better at the latter.

This is the first time I've seen the work with surtitles. Here, they took the literal translation that I included in my score to give singers a precise understanding of the words. This worked very well (though I would have preferred the text to have changed between sentences rather than after they had begun). So it was possible to follow the details of the plot. It is a difficult work to understand, because the music so powerfully expresses simple emotion that the librettist is showing as ambiguous. Musically, it is easy to treat Seneca at his own valuation throughout; but with the full text we believe the mockery of the other characters until his death scene. The Drusilla/Ottone plot seems silly, almost farce, unless the listener picks up the hint that Drusilla has been after him for some time. She often seems rather silly, but then Monteverdi sets 'Ch'io tragga i giorni ridenti' with six triple-time bars that are so movingly simply that she becomes credible. We know that Nerone and Poppea are awful, yet the music moves the listener without trace of irony. I liked the idea of using the surtitles during the B section of the closing duet to summarise the rest of Nerone's reign.

The production was in modern dress without being objectionably so. I liked the idea of most of the second Nerone/Poppea love scene being conducted on mobile phones, since it was an effective way of showing their passion without having the two girls pawing each other: the sexuality is in the music anyway and doesn't need to be distractingly visual. The one disappointing feature was the Nerone/Lucano scene. It started fine, and the business of destroying Seneca's library was a good one; but the excitement was dissipated and did not cross the few bars of recitative into Nerone's marvellous 'Son rubini amorosi'. The drag Arnalta (Kevin Kyle) seemed to have brought along his camp followers, judging by the cheers from behind me. In this case, cross-dressing is fine and the comedy is in the part.

These are only desultory remarks: Andrew Benson-Wilson will provide proper review in our next issue. *CB*

Biancomangiare

Jennie Cassidy

White Dish

A savoury dish of white meat (or fish), almonds and rice, the blancmange has an extremely long and well-respected heritage. The earliest reference I have found is from an early medieval Arabic source, but the wonders of the blancmange seem to have spread rapidly. Maybe the transporters of the first shawms and uds from Arabia were eating blancmange as they travelled!

Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries recipes appear in virtually every cookbook across Western Europe describing the elaborate and impressive dish often to be served at the most prestigious banquets. They would be crafted into the form of animals, knights or castles and decorated with gold leaf. The pure whiteness of the blancmange was highly prized but they were not always expected to be just white: a 15th century recipe calls for 'A party whitedish in four colours — gold, blue, silver and red'. Blancmange was also a recommended foodstuff for the elderly and infirm as it was easy to digest.

In the English recipes I have come across it is variously referred to as 'blawmanger', 'blankmanger', 'blank maunger', 'blomanger', 'blamang', 'blew manger', 'blanchmane', 'blanc-mangers', 'blancmange', 'mortis' (from the mortar in which the meat was ground), 'whitedish' or 'white things to eat'. In France it was 'blanc-manger' or 'blanc mengier'; in Italy 'biancomangiares alla mandorla' (white-eats with almonds), 'blanmangieri' or 'bramangere'; in Germany 'blancmange mandelcreme' or 'blamensir'; in Dutch 'een blanc mengier van capoenen'. In Spain it was referred to as 'manjar blanco' or 'manjar blanch' and in Latin 'albus cibus' or 'esus albabus'. Despite the wide variety of spellings the essential ingredients remain more or less the same — chicken, rice, almonds and sugar. On a recent trip to Istanbul I was fascinated to find and sample a very popular sweet blancmange made with chicken and rice. I can report that it was quite excellent and has prompted this year's Christmas recipe.

As time went by more spices, vanilla and rosewater were added and the Baroque Blancmange began to lose its meat component altogether, being replaced by stock, alcohol, eggs or cream. By the 19th century the dish had evolved into the dessert we know today. The celebrated books of Mrs Beeton and of Eliza Savoy also provide a 'jaune mange' made with lemon, sherry, sugar and egg yolks.

Biancomangiare

1 chicken breast (about 5 oz)
White wine
3 oz ground almonds
8 fl oz boiling water
4 oz risotto rice
1/2 tsp salt
Extra 6 oz water and 6 oz white wine

Cut the chicken into four pieces and simmer for about 20 minutes in just enough white wine to cover. Meanwhile make some almond milk by pouring the boiling water onto the almonds and gently cooking for about 10 minutes. Put the extra water and wine, salt and rice in another pan and cook until the rice is very soft (20-30 minutes) adding more water or wine to stop it sticking but keeping it as dry as possible. When everything is cooked, cut the chicken up into small pieces and stir everything together. It can be eaten warm or refrigerated until firm.

Many recipes grind all the ingredients together and often have a much greater sugar and spice component but I have found the recipe above to be more pleasing to the modern palate.

The *biancomangiare* was decorated with pomegranate seeds (charmingly called 'pounde garnettes' by the English) and toasted, flaked almonds. I think it looks and tastes good with watercress. If you are looking for a novel way to use up the Christmas turkey I am sure it would make a superb blancmange!

This Italian Renaissance recipe is contemporary with the painter Caravaggio and the musician Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina. Caravaggio was a spirited young man referred to as 'stravagante e scavezzacollo' (extravagant and headstrong). He acquired several police records for misconduct including one for a brawl over blancmange in a pastrycook's shop. Although in Rome at the same time as Caravaggio, Palestrina kept out of trouble as far as blancmange went. His music for three choirs is the subject of this year's Epiphany Party music workshop led by Philip Thorby. It is organised by the Eastern Early Music Forum and held in Beccles, Suffolk, on Sat Jan 4th. If you would like to come and try Biancomangiare (prepared in somewhat larger quantities than the recipe above) or Palestrina please contact me on 01473 718811, preferably before Christmas.