Early Music REVIEW

Number 90 May 2003

ISSN 1355-3437 Price £2.50

Published on the first of each month except Jan. and Aug.
By King's Music, Redcroft, Banks End, Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE28 2AA

Tel +44 (0) 1480 52076 fax +44 (0)1480 450821
E-mail clifford.bartlett@btopenworld.com
Http://www.kings-music.co.uk

UK: £17.50 Europe: £22.50
Rest of World: £35.00 (air) £22.50 (surface)
Sterling cheques made payable to King's Music
French cheques in Euros (€36.00)
$US ($50.00 airmail, $33.00 surface)
Payable to C. A. J. Bartlett

When we sent round discs to our reviewers for this issue, we enclosed a letter about the future of *Early Music Review*. We have decided that, in its present form, it will cease at issue 100 (i.e. in May 2004). That does NOT, however, mean that it will cease altogether. We enjoy writing and producing the magazine, but of late the clash between the time we devote to it and the time required by King's Music has become impossible. Readers will, of course, have noted that each issue this year has been late, and June is likely to be no exception.

It is too early to be at all precise about what the post-100 *Early Music Review* will be like, except that the content will still be based round reviews of books, editions, concerts and CDs. We plan that the main magazine will be available electronically as well as in hard copy. The latter is likely to be more expensive, but by offering the alternative we can make it cheaper for those living outside Britain, and even here post takes up a substantial part of the subscription income.

With regard to the diary, that has further complications. We were asked in January whether we could cover the functions of the diary in *Early Music News*. We sent an outline reply, but heard no more on the topic. Meanwhile, another organisation with which we could collaborate has put in a proposal. It is too early to guess what might happen and how the financing of it might work. (If you have a diary that depends on payment for entry, it is not comprehensive; but if entry is free and it has to be paid for by subscriptions, then it advertises chiefly to those who are likely to be on other mailing lists anyway.) Up till now, *Early Music News* (but not *EMR*) has received public money; but there is no guarantee that will continue.

When we have further information, we will pass it on. Meanwhile, we will invoice renewals to expire at issue 100, which will enable us to make a clean start with the transformed *Early Music Review*. *CB*

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

ODHECATON A

***Harmonice musices odhecaton A Venezia 1501: Introduzione de Iain Fenlon.* (*Bibliotheca Musica Bononiensis* IV, 95) Forni, 2003 xviii pp + 104ff, €55.00.**

One of the frustrations of those who tried to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the first book of printed polyphony was the unavailability of the basic documents: Broude's facsimile was out of print till the following year and Helen Hewett's edition (to some extent the model of the MMR series reviewed below) was available in remarkably few libraries. The original printing of *Odhecaton* does not survive complete. This facsimile is the first to appear of the copy in Bologna. But over half of that is made up from two later printings and there are also missing leaves, which are supplied (at the end of the book rather than in sequence) from the Colon library's second edition. It seems odd to me that preserving the identity of the copy (whose missing pages are a matter of accident, not intent and which is by no means pure anyway) is thought more important than printing the book as near as possible to how Petrucci's customers would have received it. All the bibliophile needs is a table stating the origin of each folio (or perhaps some indication added to the editorial foliation), whereas it is extremely inconvenient to find two parts of a four-part piece relocated at the end of the book. The introduction is mostly dependent on recent work by Bonnie Blackburn, but doesn't explain how it is known that some pages are not of the first printing. Nor is there any speculation on how the book was used. The format, though familiar in from many prints and MSS, isn't convenient for performance, with four parts on an opening all facing the same direction, unlike the English lute-song books of a century later, where four people can gather round one. It was probably too expensive for musicians, but was presumably used by musical employees of the wealthy as a source for manuscript copies. It is excellent that this significant copy is available.

MOTETTI B

Ottaviano Petrucci *Motetti de passione, de cruce, de sacramento, de beata Virgine et huiusmodi B, Venice, 1503* Edited and with an Introduction by Warren Drake. (*Monuments of Renaissance Music* xi). Chicago UP, 2002. ix + 297pp, $130.00 (£91.00). ISBN 0 226 16236 2

More Petrucci, this time his second motet print in the magnificent series that has already included Odhecaton's successor, *Canti B*. It is some time since we have had any new *Monuments of Renaissance Music*, and when two packages arrived on consecutive days I first thought that I was the lucky recipient of two copies – enough to sing from, since the print is quite large. But no: see below. Unlike other early Petrucci prints, notably the *Odhecaton*, this is not a retrospective anthology but a carefully focussed collection of music on particular themes. One might guess from the lengthy title that the function was liturgical, but the editor is sceptical, whatever the original function of some of the contents. There are pieces which relate to the lauda – not so much the jolly type recorded with shawms and drums but the more refined, courtly sort by Innocentius Dammonis, published by Petrucci and recently recorded by the Consort Veneto (see CD review on p. 17). The editor traces the liturgical origins of the texts and the use of chant, but it seems that the collection as a whole (as do some of the texts) relates to private devotion. Some of the pieces, however, seem to demand the resonance that church rather than chamber is likely to offer: the slow chords that begin Josquin's *Officium de Passion* is a good example, and Brumel surely expected his *Lauda Sion Salvatorem* to be completed by alternatim chant. There are 34 pieces here, annoyingly divided between two pages in the contents list, which might have shown the page number for the commentariesas well as the edition. In addition to the *Officium*... Josquin features with his six-section, 505-bar *Qui velatus facie fuisti, Tu solus qui facis* and *Domine non secundum,* the last also set by De Orto and Vaqueras, all three beginning with duets and having other similarities. Further familiar composers are Agricola, Compere, Isaac (*Quis dabit capiti meo*), Obrecht.

The edition is primarily an edition of *Motetti B*, with no detailed collation of other sources (which are few anyway: only 11 of the pieces have other sources that are not copies of *Motetti B*). The extensive commentary includes much information on the text and rather more discussion of the music than is customary. Some pieces would have benefited from fewer bar-lines, though I suppose that making chords last two bars may stop singers taking them too quickly. I'll resist wondering whether there is any need to reduce note-values nowadays: the series has a strong and consistent editorial personality so it would be a pity to change it. An edition of *Motetti A* would have offered better-known and more exciting music; but this is a worthy addition to the growing number of editions based on Petrucci's anthologies and a fine addition to the MRM series.

THE ANDREINIS

Anne MacNeil *Music and Women of the Commedia dell' Arte in the Late Sixteenth Century.* Oxford UP, 2003. viii + 360pp, £55.00. ISBN 0 19 816689 3

If you think that commedia dell' arte is just about the stock comic characters which can be seen, to take a

musical example from the period of the book, in the joint nine-voice madrigal by Marenzio and Vecchi *Diversi linguaggi* published in 1590 (modern ed. in *Das Chorwerk*, 125), read this to extend your horizons. Everyone (well, those interested in the matter) knows that famous 1589 Florentine intermedi were interspersed in a rather stolid play *La pellegrina*. But there were four performances of the intermedi, only two with *La pellegrina* (on 2 & 15 May); between them (on 6 & 13 May) came two with comedies from the Commedia dell' Arte 'Compagnia de' Gelosi', and what they performed was not improvised farce but symbolic actions that link with the neoplatonic allegory of Bardi's intermedi texts and their elaborate sets. I was a little worried by the title: why single out the women rather than produce a study of the whole ensemble. But the women do seem to have been the most prominent participants, and the book, while dealing with other members of the family, concentrates particularly on Isabella Andreini. The other main occasion covered here is the wedding celebration in Mantua in 1608, which involved Monteverdi's *Arianna* and *Ballo delle ingrate*. So the book impinges on two key musical events. I was sometimes suspicious of the way the author hops between wide knowledge of late-renaissance culture and modern academic thought-processes, but I've read much worse! There is a useful chronology (how nice to be told what day a date is – the two Commedia dell' Arte 1589 shows were on Saturdays – and when Easter was) and a substantial selection (56 pp) of documents, some (mostly the Latin ones) translated. A valuable, cross-disciplinary book that will widen the horizons of those performing Italian court music.

A few specific comments:
p. 2. What does an 'art form as a reprise from, and even an antidote to, war' mean?
p. 9-10. Does the author reject too easily the idea that an ensemble might be amorphous enough to appear in two places simultaneously? It's not unknown with modern music ensembles; I once played in a Monteverdi Vespers in London when the named wind group was also playing the same night in Edinburgh.
p. 13. The surprise at quick memorisation is unnecessary. Even apart from skills acquired from the contemporary Arts of Memory, one would expect professional theatrical companies to be pretty quick at learning: try consulting older actors who grew up in weekly rep.
p. 16. What are 'flatted ficta'?
p. 131. How can a serious study of *Arianna* or *Il ballo delle ingrate* be based on Malipiero's edition?
p. 145. Utterly irrelevant to the book, but the mention of Aristotle reminded me of a recent radio programme that mentioned that prospective film-script writers are taught Aristotle's *Poetics*. I once tried to suggest to an opera director that the lighting plot of *Il ritorno d'Ulisse* should reflect the opera's Aristotelian 24-hours duration: he was scornful!
p. 172. The idea that songs in Caccini's 1614 publication might have been written some time earlier could have been supported by the precedent of previous circulation of songs in his 1602 collection.

LATE MADRIGALS

Marco da Gagliano *Madrigals Part 1:* Il primo libro de madrigali a cinque voci *(Venice, 1602)* Edited by Edmond Strainchamps. (*Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*, 124). A-R Editions, 2003.xxii + 86pp, $60.00. ISBN 0 89579 522 1
***The Madrigals of Michelangelo Rossi* Edited with an Introduction by Brian Mann. (*Monuments of Renaissance Music*, x). Chicago UP, 2002. ix + 227pp, $150.00/ £105.00. ISBN 00 226 50338 0**

It is easy to assume that the madrigal reached its climax around 1600 and that the disintegration into solos, duets, ensembles with instruments and the dependence on continuo instruments shown in Monteverdi's output was typical. But even the leading monodists like d'India and Gagliano published books of madrigals, and it is good to see the first in what, judging from the 'Part 1' in the title, will be a series of editions of the six books (all in the by-then-standard a5 figuration) which Gagliano published between 1602 and 1617. Nine are for SATTB, seven for SSATB; ten use chiavette so need downward transposition unless you lack a bass. The book begins and ends with settings of Guarini's *Il pastor fido*, with several reputable poets included as well. They are sensitively set in a fluent contrapuntal style not dominated by extreme effects. The editor gives a description of each piece, though doesn't sum up his comments into an overview of the book as a whole. There seem to be no editorial problems, except for the inconsistency of retaining all original accidentals but treating them as lasting till the next bar line; in fact, the necessary cancellations are shown by editorial naturals. These pieces look as if they would be rewarding to sing, but not too difficult, apart from the high pitch. Altos will need to read octave-treble clef (which shouldn't be a problem for experienced singers of music of this period).

Rossi is chiefly a one-piece man: the extraordinary Toccata VII, which still amazes unsuspecting audiences. His two books of madrigals emerged in 1948, when the dealer Aldo Olschki showed a MS score to Edward Lowinsky (subsequently the instigator of the series in which they are now published and also the author of an important article 'Early scores in manuscript') who had it photographed and was probably responsible for its sale to Berkeley. The madrigals remained little-known (they are not mentioned in the Grove[6]), and this is their first publication. Other sources are collated, but add little to the score: indeed, they mostly seem to be copied from it. It seems an interesting document, and I would have liked to have seen more than the single opening that is reproduced. The editor is a little surprised that it is laid out with each system running across the opening. But the best-known madrigal score of the period, dating from within a few years of when Rossi's were probably composed, uses the same layout, Tregian's Egerton 3665. That too has a feature that Mann thinks is odd: it lacks braces at the beginnings of systems, as do most of the sample of printed scores that I've checked. When using barred sources of the

period, especially keyboard music, we are used to the length of bars varying according to the density of their content. If the movement is in minims, there may be four of them in a bar; but when quavers and semiquavers appear, the barlines then occur after every two minims, and occasionally there will be irregular bars. Tidy-minded editors will worry about this, but the experienced player is happy with them as they stand. (Keeping with Tregian, see FWVB 85, Philips' 1580 *Pavana*, as an example.) I wouldn't read anything of great significance into such barring, except to suggest that in scores, barlines were helpful but did not have to be consistent and that the number of beats per bar wasn't important. The modern edition of FWVB has been used for a century without inconvenience, so there is no great problem in retaining such irregular barring for modern editions; I've checked, incidentally, and in the example I quote it is accurate. Mann, however, has looked at the score publication of Gesualdo's madrigals and decided that the principle of adding barlines was to split each system regularly into five for visual reasons. In fact, the result is the same, since bars with short notes come out durationally shorter than bars with long notes. But as with Tregian and other early MS scores, bars contain two or four minims, not three (i.e. there is none of the barring according to stress that makes the first editions of *The English Madrigal School* so annoying). So it is a pity that the editor decided to ignore that aspect of the main source (since the chief secondary source is a set of parts, it is, of course, unbarred) and stick rigidly to two minims per bar. In a way, this is a trivial issue; but the only reason for ignoring this feature of the source is to make the notation easier for performers, which is something that in another aspect he has not done.

I refer to the pitch notation. The 17 madrigals of Book II are all in low clefs for SATTB. So are 10 of Book I, but nos. 12-14 are for SSATB and nos 1 & 6 are in chiavette (G2 C2 C3 C3 F3). Transposing down the chiavette pieces in the Gagliano set requires considerable mental agility from the singers (probably, the better the singer, the greater the difficulty), but to do so while negotiating Rossi's chromatic notation is more of a problem. Admittedly, the two chiavette pieces are not as extreme as some of the others, but it would have been worth printing them at two pitches. (The divergence in ranges between high and low clef pieces in both the Gagliano and Rossi is distinct enough to presuppose that the convention of notating comparable tessituras in two configurations still applies.)

No more criticisms! Otherwise, Brian Mann has done an excellent job. The substantial introduction deals with the composer's life, discusses the music itself in considerable detail and includes a thorough critical commentary, particularly thorough over the notation of accidentals (though 'footnote in the score' (p. 55) surely means 'noted in the commentary'). Gesualdo looms, not just over the barring, but the music itself, though other composers too wrote extraordinarily chromatically: the editor quotes a section from d'India on p. 18, basically in F sharp major but with, for example, enharmonic F minor and major chords, with every note in 16 bars sharpened. Rossi's notation is careful, with an accidental on every note that needs it and the assumption that notes with no accidental are never adjusted, whatever comes before or after.

As to the crucial issue of whether the music works, the editor does drop a few hints that Rossi's technique was not quite what it should have been. He certainly had imagination, but sometimes seems to be trying a little too hard for effect. Their difficulty is sure to attract performances, and probably a recording. I look forward to hearing them, though suspect that it will be one of those discs where a few tracks at time are sufficient. This is perhaps stretching the series title to its limit, but the music is contrapuntal, doesn't depend on a continuo line (indeed, like the Gagliano, doesn't even have a *basso seguente*), and provides an interesting example of chordal thinking that is not progressing towards modern tonality.

HAYDN FOLKSONGS *continued*

Joseph Haydn *Volkslied-Bearbeitungen Nr. 151-268. Schottische Lieder für George Thomson* herausgegeben von Marjorie Rycroft in Verbingung mit Warwick Edwards & Kirsteen McCue. (*Werke*, XXXIII, 3). Henle, 2001. xi + 385pp, £186.00.

I wrote a brief note of this in EMR 88 p. 9, promising a longer review from Mhairi Lawson: here it is.

George Thomson (1757-1851) of Edinburgh enjoyed the title of 'Clerk to the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Arts and Manufacturers in Scotland' and decided that folksongs should be made available to as wide an audience as possible, so from the 1790s he commissioned arrangements from such composers as Pleyel, Kozeluch, Beethoven, Weber, Hummel and Haydn.

The Haydn Institute's volume is extremely welcome, as it makes available a wealth of material which has only really been available via the photocopying services of libraries such as the British Library and the Scottish Music Information Centre. It contains songs (solo and duet) published from 1800 to 1802 with parts for keyboard, violin and cello. The layout of the songs is as a full score with the text of the first verse underlying the melody and then repeated with the other verses separately (with a couple of exceptions). The original project published the violin and cello parts separately – performers using this new edition will have to make 3 or 4 copies of each song, one each for the singer, pianist, fiddler and cellist. The book itself is large and could only really be used in performance by the pianist, depending on the strength of the stand, and the publishers should probably give this issue a bit of attention. Of the songs with variations, only one of them has a verse of text underlay; whether the singer should be involved in these much more intricate settings is unclear. These variations were never published by Thompson.

Haydn apparently was only sent copies of the song melodies, so the arrangements were made with no knowledge of either the titles of the airs or the contents of the poems with which they were matched! One of the reasons for this was that some of the traditional texts were

deemed unfit for genteel consumption, and the services of various poets (including Burns) were acquired to provide alternative sets of words. In certain cases the new words had not yet been written. These texts are all provided. (Scots Song enthusiasts will be able to find even more text matches for various melodies in publications such as *The Scots Musical Museum*.)

The foreword contains a lot of interesting information – in German. The notes at the back, as well as containing the usual critical info, have transcriptions of letters sent by and received by Thompson (quite a lot of haggling over fees), a copy of the preface to volume 3 of *A Select Collection*, a copy of the glossary of Scots words from volume 4, and a table of the songs, including publication dates and information showing which ones appear in other editions: William Napier 1792-95, William Whyte 1802-4, Rudolf Genee 1901, Bernhard Engelke 1927, and David Wyn Jones pub 1984.

All libraries that subscribe to the Haydn Collected Edition will have copies on their shelves. If you are feeling flush, I'd heartily recommend splashing out 186 euros on it. It's a beautiful book and already there are at least three projects this year in which I'll include some of these songs – I can't wait for the next one, upon which Marjorie has already started to work. *Mhairi Lawson*

There is an article on George Thomson by Kirsteen McCue in Music Librarianship in the United Kingdom *reviewed below.*

REICHARDT FOR CHRISTMAS

Johann Friedrich Reichardt *Weihnachtskantilene* edited by Hermann Patsch und Matthias Walz. Carus (23.016), 2002 xv + 87pp, £39.80.

Reichardt is a name that one comes across more often when reading about others rather than in his own right, so it is interesting to see a work of his. The libretto was written for him by Matthias Claudius, and the music tends towards simplicity. Despite the use of Lutheran chorales, set in four parts but printed in long notes with barlines only at the end of each line of text, it was never performed in church: it had its premiere in a hotel in 1784. I'm not sure if it would withstand detailed rehearsal, but it would certainly be interesting to sing through it. The scoring is ST soli, a chorus that is mostly SATB but capable of dividing, pairs of flutes, oboes, horns and bassoons, and strings, with no sign of an organ.

LOCKWOOD'S BEETHOVEN

Lewis Lockwood *Beethoven: the Music and the Life* Norton, 2003. xix + 604pp, £28.00. ISBN 0 393 05081 5

Books by distinguished scholars for the general reader are sadly rare, so it is gratifying to find a musicologist of Lockwood's distinction moving away from studies of sketches or detailed investigations into single works to view his subject's life and works as a whole. He alternates chapters rather than constructs a single thread mixing life and music – sensibly in the case of Beethoven, since otherwise there is a temptation to yield too specifically to speculation about the possible biographical impetus to individual works. Beethoven did not have the sort of career that in itself sectionalises his output (such as Bach with his different places of work), though Lockwood does give greater weight to Beethoven's pre-Viennese music than most writers. With the space available, there is no way he can be exhaustive about every major work, but Lockwood has the knack of picking on points of importance and interest without labouring them to excess. He would be an ideal programme-note writer: I hope the Boston Symphony Orchestra uses him for that purpose. In just one respect I fear he might be unfair on the non-specialist reader: the biographical sections are not always straight-forward enough for easy following if you don't know a fair bit about Beethoven's life already. There are other recent books for the non-specialist on Beethoven, though none have the biographical detail of Thayer-Forbes – the collapsing 1141-page paperback is one of the most-used books on my shelves. Lockwood approaches his subject from an eminently sensible viewpoint, avoiding psychoanalytic or postmodernist musicological fads: this book should have a long and successful life.

* Lockwood's scepticism of parts of the standard stories is backed up by a fascinating article in the Feb. 2003 issue of *Music & Letters* (vol.84/1, pp. 19-54) by K. M. Knittel which compares the elements in the many accounts of visits to Beethoven, pointing out the patterns they share and showing that they represent a strong tradition with suspicious similarities. There is no need to assume on principle that, because accounts are so similar, they must be untrue: the narrative convention could be based on a behavioural one. But in view of so many inbuilt inconsistencies and improbabilities and lack of external evidence to back personal accounts, many familiar stories must be rejected.

UK MUSIC LIBRARIANSHIP

***Music Librarianship in the United Kingdom: Fifty Years of the United Kingdom Branch of the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres* Edited by Richard Turbett. Ashgate, 2003. xix + 252pp, £45.00. ISBN 0 7546 0572 8**

This is somewhat peripheral to *EMR*, but impinges to the extent that its editor will be familiar to readers as editor of the *Annual Byrd Newsletter* (the material for the next issue is already in my computer) and because I was heavily involved in the organisation for about a dozen years (1972-83) and was interested to see how other people's recollection of events in which I was involved differs from mine. Not that the volume is a history of the Branch: rather a collection of contributions, some of which are historical, others current, while a couple seem to be there to show that music librarians can contribute to traditional musicological knowledge – and seem a bit out of place, though valuable in themselves. Perhaps it is following the policy I tried to adopt when editing the Branch's journal

Brio of trying to include articles of musicological significance so that academic libraries would need to subscribe even if they thought much of the content was ephemeral.

Then, a major preoccupation was how to computerise information about books, e.g. cataloguing and indexes like RILM: this is still largely so, with surprisingly little concern for the availability of the content of books and music on the net, even though as far back as 1965 Barry Brook (founder of RILM) could predict easy access from a home computer to distantly-stored information, which could be printed off as required (p. 142).

As to my interest in how the historical sections relate to my memory, the chapter on *Brio* by my former co-editor Malcolm Jones is fine – though it should be recorded that the quaver that was the main feature of the cover design from its beginning was suggested by John Thomson (of *Early Music* fame). But there are only passing references to the annual conferences (or study weekend, as they are now called). One of the UK Branch's skills was in organising such events: why else would the International body have met in the UK four times in 30 years, when most countries only host it once? The annual national conference was the major event for the organisation; each had its own character, each provided the main opportunity for reaction among the members, and each helped the organisation to become a partnership of friends. As the main organiser for a decade (I think I was nominally the chairman of the conferences and meetings subcomittee), I always planned the programme to maximise the time for informal and social interaction – something that has been lacking at conferences by other organisations that I have attended. Writing a readable history of them would be difficult, but without it a significant part of the history is missing. The reference to annual midnight walks does not explain that the tradition began, under the influence of Malcolm Jones and Alan Pope, with the object of visiting defunct railway sites.

I don't know if IAML has a project of writing its own history. The founders are no longer with us – and the significance of Walter Stock is curious. I wasn't in IAML while I worked alongside him at the Royal Academy of Music; but in view of his limited awareness of music and librarianship, his role can surely only have been as secretary for Alec King and John Davies, both strong, far-seeing and knowledgeable characters. Brian Redfern is still with us, as are Eric Cooper and Liz Hart: perhaps they should get together and write a history that extends beyond the dry pages of minute books, or there could be interviews for an aural or audiovisual archive.

The most interesting historical article section is in fact on the period before IAML began: 'Music Provision in Public Libraries, 1850-1950' by Malcolm Lewis. Potentially valuable is the Cecilia project sketched out in chapter 12, though the web site is so-far rather disappointing, with promises rather than results. I checked the performance-material catalogue, using Monteverdi Vespers as test. It's a bit messy, chiefly because the cataloguer was cautious in identifying editions that are probably the same but were inadequately identified by the contributing libraries. (Was there a policy of not correcting obvious mistakes like Denis Stephens?) But it is sad that the public library system has neither the most-recorded edition (by guess who?) nor the recent Oxford UP one. In fact, apart from Birmingham Public Libraries, the library world has bought very little from King's Music. The site is, however, very useful for organisers seeking choral and orchestral sets.

This is in part a survey of IAML(UK)'s first 50 years, but also a snapshot of what it is up to at the moment, much of it different from what it was doing twenty years ago. The decline in the formal training of music librarians doesn't seem to have diminished the skills of the profession, though there is one circular 'index reference: under 'Compton, Sheila', there are several page references plus '*see also* Sheila Cotton', though all we find under the latter name is '*see* Compton, Sheila'. And two sets of misprints: the first editions of BUCOS (p. 7) and BUCMP (p. 9) did not, as implied, appear in the same year as their second editions. I enjoyed the book, though it is not one that outsiders will read from cover to cover.

COUNTRY HOUSES & HARPSICHORD

A Handbook for Studies in 18th-Century English Music XIII **edited by Mark Humphries. Oxford: Burden & Cholij, 2003. vii + 65pp. ISBN 0 9531708 5 3**

The major portion of this issue is devoted to the completion of Lance Whitehead and Jenny Nex's extracts from the Sun Fire Office's insurance policies on keyboard instrument builders in London between 1775 and 1787, begun the previous edition and described briefly in our review of it. As well as covering makers from Ohrman to Zumpte, there is an index of names, of occupations, and of addresses. More readable (not, of course, disparaging the insurance information) is an introduction on 'Access to Country House Archives' by Jennifer Thorp, who for one day a week looks after the archives at Highclere Castle, the Hampshire house of the Earls of Carnarvon. My particular interest relates to the review above, since I was once on a body that I remember as an interorganisational rather than a IAML one, though Richard Turbet (whom I first met as a member of it) thinks it was a IAML body (and has probably kept minutes to prove it!) Anyway, one topic I particularly tried to pursue was that of music in country houses and invited discussions with the National Trust. We had a couple of meetings, but didn't get anywhere. The situation was more promising in Scotland, with (Richard reported) fruitful results in the Aberdeen area. Jennifer Thorp's article reminds potential users of the difficulties of access and the private nature of family collections: attitudes to the public can vary a lot. (I remember giving a concert in a Sussex country house some 30 years ago and being told as if it was a great joke about a scholar wanting access to an early-19th-century MS of Cornish carols; fortunately, it is now safe in the county archives in Truro.) The article concludes with a useful list of addresses and websites.

Next month's issue will include reviews of the more practical and affordable editions that we have not covered this month. There are, however, reviews of Catalunyan editions on pp. 13-15.

RAVENS' VIEW

Simon Ravens

There are few things more revealing, to a middle-ageing musician, than rehearing a recording that was seminal in his own development. The other day a re-release of the Clerkes of Oxenford's recording of Tallis and Sheppard came into my shop, and out of curiosity I played it. When I first heard these performances on LP twenty years ago, the effect they had on me was profound. I think they confirmed that what I most wanted to do with my life was to direct an early music choir. Listening to them again now I can detect, between the lines, the very special fervour that made such an impression on me as a student. When I listen to the lines themselves, though, what strikes me most is that since the late seventies there has been an aesthetic shift in my – and I strongly suspect our – appreciation of early music.

That shift concerns sonorities. Listen to the Clerkes singing Tallis's *Spem in alium*, for instance, and inevitably the ear is drawn upwards to those stratospheric treble parts. Critics at the time invariably used the same terms – ethereal, unearthly, purity – to describe their sonority. If I compare that Clerkes recording to more recent CDs of Renaissance choral music, the contrast could not be more marked. Take the Huelgas Ensemble singing Cipriano de Rore – a fairly typical example of the sound world currently being created by continental early music choirs. From the outset, one seems to be gazing downwards into a very deep, very clear pool of sound. The great paradox here is that although the effects used by David Wulstan and Paul Van Nevel lie at polar extremes, the spiritual affect they achieve is much the same.

I have one reason for believing that this growing love for deeper sonorities is not unique to me, and that is the response of customers to certain discs. If I had to cite one recording which has converted ambivalent customers to the power of Renaissance music it would be Jordi Savall's recording of the Morales Requiem. Almost invariably, when I put this disc on for customers, they are smitten by the time we have reached the first subterranean cadence. Conversely, when I play recordings by a cappella English groups in the tradition of the Clerkes of Oxenford they tend to keep playing.

It is tempting to suggest the obvious – that if there has been a shift in our predeliction for lower sonorities, at least in Renaissance music, its causes are musicological, since the growing trend to treat the counter-tenor as a tenor rather than a falsettist has inevitably led to the adoption of lower pitches. There is some truth in this, but I doubt whether it tells the whole story. Another equally valid musicological reason, it strikes me, is the growing realisation (excuse the pun) of the continuo possibilities in Renaissance music. Andrew Lawrence King's recent *Missa Mexicana* neatly underlines this point: whatever antics the voices might get up to above, it is impossible not to focus on the kaleidoscope of instrumental colours below.

Back in the late seventies, even had they wished to explore the possibilities of continuo lines, the Clerkes of Oxenford would have been limited by the availability of players and instruments. When they recorded the Gibbons verse anthems and hymns, the Clerkes dipped a toe in the water by deploying a consort of viols, but compare their thin textures with the rich velvet of a Phantasm or Hesperion XXI and it is difficult to credit that the same instrumental family is involved. There is no denying that purely from a technical standpoint, the modern viol player is better placed to seduce the listener's ear with depth of sonority. Likewise the baroque violin. Take the opening notes of Bach's unaccompanied G minor Sonata. When I listen to one of the early recordings, and then Rachel Podger's wonderful performance on Channel Classics, I am quite thrown. This is one of those aural illusions, whereby the same note can be played by one performer after another and sound about a third lower.

Perhaps singers have changed in the same way. I remember, in a performance a few years ago, standing next to one of the basses of Concerto Italiano, and being wowed by his sound. Until then, the basses I had worked with had either been rich and fruity or steely and rather anaemic. Here, I realised, was a sound at once beautifully round and beautifully straight. These are qualities that seem to have become an industry standard on the continent.

Last but by no means least, there is a reason for the prevalence of deeper sonorities which has nothing to do with music or musicians, but simply with the way they are recorded. Twenty years ago, the main players in recording early music were Archiv and Reflexe. Listening to many of their recordings, particularly of large-scale music, still strikes me as like reading an illuminated manuscript below a plate of glass: I can gain everything, but frustratingly I just can't touch the sound. The main players in recording early music now are the European independent labels. Whether it is because of the venues they record in, the aesthetics of their artists, or simply the quality of their equipment, I don't know: but I do know that the quality of recorded sound these discs offer is generally superb. When I take the plunge into a new Harmonia Mundi, Alpha or Channel Classics disc, I can dive right down to the bottom. I may not like the performance or the music, but chances are I will like the sound it makes.

The Original Version of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*

Peter Holman

Reviewing a new edition of the St John Passion last month, CB made the point that during the last thirty years we have become accustomed to the idea that major Baroque works such as *Messiah* and the St John Passion tend to exist in more than one version. A number of people (including myself) have performed the 1725 version of the St John Passion, attracted by the quality of the arias and chorale settings Bach added to the work, and perhaps worried by the fact that the version normally performed today is a hybrid. Bach began a revision of the work around 1739, but only got as far as no. 10, so after that the 'standard' version reverts to the original 1724 text. To do the 1725 version (or the 1724 version, for that matter) you need to use the unrevised versions of the first few numbers, though unfortunately they are only included in the Bärenreiter full and study scores, not in the vocal score or the set of parts.

It is less well known that there are two versions of the St Matthew Passion. The version normally performed today comes from a revision Bach made for a performance on Good Friday 1736, and survives in a beautiful fair-copy autograph score and a set of parts. As anyone who has taken part in a performance of the work knows, Bach specified his intentions in the later version with especial care. The instrumentation is worked out in precise detail, there are numerous slurs and expression marks, and the length of the continuo notes in the recitatives is specified exactly, contrary to the normal practice of the period.

It comes as something of a shock, therefore, to open the facsimile of the score copied by Bach's son-in-law Johann Christoph Altnickol (1720-59); it is published by Bärenreiter as a supplement to Alfred Dürr's Neue Bach-Ausgabe volume (Kassel, 1972). Altnickol must have made his copy of the St Matthew Passion after 1744, when he arrived in Leipzig to study at the University and became drawn into Bach's circle, though it is likely that he had in front of him a source that was considerably earlier than the 1736 score. We know that the work was first performed on Good Friday 1727 and again in 1729, and it has been suggested recently that Bach began to compose it as early as 1725. Altnickol's score seems to preserve this first version, and its almost complete lack of slurs, dynamics and expression marks suggests to me that the copy source was Bach's original composing manuscript, made at a stage before he brought the work to performance. Unfortunately, Altnickol was none too accurate a copyist, so it is often difficult to distinguish between genuine variants and his errors.

The most striking difference between the Altnickol score and the 1736 version is that there is only one continuo line, written at the bottom of the system in the double choir movements. This seems to imply that in the original version the voices and upper instruments were deployed antiphonally around a single central continuo group. In the later version there are two separate continuo parts, both marked 'organo', presumably for the main St Thomas's organ and a portable instrument. Perhaps this change of scoring reflected some change in the way Bach's forces were laid out, though Bach scholars seem to be agreed that both the 1727 and the 1736 performances took place in the main choir and organ lofts at the west end of St Thomas's, Leipzig. One change in the layout that does seem to have been made is that the chorale melody 'O Lamm Gottes' in the first chorus was sung in 1736 by ripieno sopranos supported by the organ of the 'swallows nest' gallery, across the nave from the main galleries. In the Altnickol score the chorale is marked 'Organo', is mostly doubled in octaves by the flutes and oboes, and is not underlaid after the first two phrases. This suggests that in the original version the chorale was played rather than sung, as in many movements elsewhere in Bach's sacred music; the 'organo' was presumably the main instrument, not the one in the 'swallows nest'.

Bach made a number of other major changes to the 1736 version. He added a second version of the 'Passion Chorale' (no. 17) at the beginning of the Garden of Gethsemane scene, and replaced the simple chorale 'Jesum laß ich nicht von mir' at the end of Part 1 with the concerted chorale setting 'O Mensch, bewein' (no. 29), which he had used to begin the 1725 St John Passion, and which probably came from a lost Weimar passion. In the Altnickol score 'Ach, nun ist mein Jesus hin!', the first number of Part II is a bass solo rather than an alto solo, while in the arias 'Erbarme dich' (no. 39) and 'Gebt mir meinen Jesum wieder' (no. 42) the violin soloists come from the second and first choirs respectively; in the 1736 version it is the other way round. Most striking, in Altnickol's score the aria 'Komm, süßes Kreuz' and the preceding recitative (nos. 56 and 57) have lute rather than viola da gamba obbligato. The parts are almost identical, but the aria is a much more private contemplation of the Cross with a lute rather than a viol, requiring an intimate style of singing from the bass soloist. It is likely that there was no viola da gamba at all in the original version: there is no part for it in the recitative 'Mein Jesus schweigt' (no. 34), and in the following aria 'Geduld' (no. 35) the bass part is unmarked; it is still marked 'Violonc. e org' in the autograph score, but is allocated to 'Viola da Gamba' in the set of parts. Another interesting change of scoring is in the recitative 'O Schmerz!' (no. 19), where the parts marked 'flauto' (recorders) in the later version are labelled '2 Travers:' (i.e. flutes) in the Altnickol score. Is this the only example, at a time when the recorder was rapidly being superseded by the flute, of a composer replacing flutes with recorders?

Bach also made many detailed changes to the 1736 version. Some of them consist of minor changes to melodic

lines and harmonies, though in a few cases, such as 'Geduld' (no. 35) and the aria 'Ich will bei meinem Jesu wachen' (no. 20), the changes amount to recomposition. Many of the minor changes involve the addition of ornamentation to vocal and instrumental lines. For instance, it is not clear whether he intended the main idea of 'So ist mein Jesus nun gefangen' (no. 27a) to be sung and played entirely without appoggiaturas, as in the Altnickol score, or whether he expected them to be added by the performers. Similarly, the main solo violin theme of Altnickol's version of 'Erbarme dich' has no slide on the first down beat, and no appoggiaturas in the first two bars. Again, it is not clear whether Bach intended the performers to add the 1736 ornaments in performance; a possible solution would be to add some or all of them to subsequent appearances of the theme.

Why perform the early version of the St Matthew Passion? Although editors and performers often prefer the final versions of composers' works – the received version of *Messiah* is closer to Handel's versions of the 1750s than to the original 1742 Dublin version – it has become common to explore and perform early versions of Bach, if only to throw light on his subsequent revisions. Thus in recent years we have had recordings of the first versions of the Brandenburg Concertos, the Orchestral Suites, the presumed original string or wind versions of the harpsichord concertos, and a number of the cantatas, including 'Christ lag in Todesbanden' BWV4 and 'Himmelskönig, sei willkommen' BWV182. So far as I can discover, the 1727 version of the St Matthew Passion has never been performed in this country, and it is possible that it has never been revived anywhere since the eighteenth century. If so, then the performance at Stoke by Nayland in Suffolk on 26 May needs no justification; I hope it will provide new insights into a great masterpiece.

For details of the performance on 26 May, see Diary, p. 9

MUSIC IN LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

It was no surprise to find that the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin had been invited to be part of the Wigmore Hall Director's Festival. They have given a number of excellent concerts there in recent years, both on their own and as a backing group, and so I approached their concert ('Handel and his contemporaries', 13 March) with high expectations. In the event, however, although there were some strong points, overall this concert disappointed. Their playing has always been strong, but they have usually avoided the overly aggressive style of playing that some groups have adopted of late. Until now, that is. Although I do not usually have a problem with punchy playing at appropriate moments, this was frankly overdone. Their force frequently caused havoc to string tone and intonation. The dominant playing of their leader (Georg Kallwit) was also curiously romantic in style, with frequent application of a strong vibrato and portamento. Some of their interpretations were also far too romantic for my taste, notably Geminiani's Concerto Grosso version of Corelli's *La Folia* (Op. 5/12), which was just slushy. That the audience seemed to love it raises a number of questions, but I certainly didn't. I am usually relaxed about the use of rubato to outline the structure of a piece (indeed I would encourage some of our more rigid performers to use more of it), but it needs to be applied far more circumspectly than in this performance. That said, their were some nice moments, and their opening work (Handel's *Ouverture* to *Rodrigo*) was impressive, particularly through their use of sensible speeds. The gigues of works like this are often taken far to fast, so it was good to hear some of the notes. Their burlesque interpretation of the Matelot movement was appropriate (although it irritated when used in much of the rest of the concert), and there was some splendidly agile bassoon playing from Christian Beuse in the Bourrée. And the gentle swaying of the whole band was so gracefully done it appeared almost balletic. It was in Corelli's Concerto Grosso in D (Op. 6/7) where things began to go wrong, starting with the over-percussive opening Vivace. Two lesser-known Handel organ concertos (Op. 4/3 and the Concerto in A from the 'second set'), were played on one of the few chamber organs on the London hire circuit that actually sounds English, with the distinctively quinty sound of a Stopped Diapason. Sadly the soloist also succumbed to too many romanticisms, with many slurred notes, over-articulation and rather mannered phrase endings. He also played the organ like a harpsichord, a common failing these days and something that rarely works – it is possible to get away with far more on a harpsichord than an organ, so some technical faults were also rather exposed. Fortunately, the final movement of the second of the two concertos was much better played, with clean finger work in some tricky passages. Some lack of communication between the author of the programme notes and the performers was apparent in the description of instrumentation for the concluding Handel Sonata a 5 (HWV288). It has to be said that the Wigmore Hall was packed, deservedly so for a group of this stature, and also that the audience seemed to love the concert. But I hope this performance does not represent a permanent change of style for the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin.

The South Bank 'Haydn: The Creative Genius' series continued with another performance by the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, this time directed by Elizabeth Wallfisch *violin* and Robert Levin *fortepiano*, (Queen Elizabeth Hall, 17 March). This was preceded by a pre-concert performance of Haydn's Piano Trio in C (Hob.XV:27) by three students from the Royal Academy of Music who had

been coached by Robert Levin, who then improvised on themes from it. The late Piano Trios were described in the programme note as one of Haydn's 'best kept secrets', and the performances by two of the students, and later by Robert Levin, Elizabeth Wallfisch and Richard Lester (Piano Trio in E flat, HobXV:29) were certainly compelling. In many ways, the students (Huw Daniel *violin*, Caroline Ritchie *cello* and Edita Keglerova *fortepiano*) gave the better performance. Their playing was delicate and expressive with some beautifully timed pauses that highlighted the seemingly randomly applied little surprises that feature in both works. They successfully portrayed the contrasting moods of the work, with some deliciously dark colours offset by a jaunty Finale. Robert Levin's improvisations were probably very clever, but were dashed off with such speed and overuse of sustain as to lose most of the clarity that such cleverness required to make itself apparent. I had similar doubts about his playing in the later Piano Trio and in Mozart's Piano Concerto 18 in B flat (K. 456). Whatever his skills are at adding authentic sounded twiddles and cadenzas to such works, his talents are somewhat hidden by a barely disguised air of 'what a clever boy I am'. Without going so far as one reviewer in calling him 'smug', I can see what he means. Perhaps I am being terribly English to dislike the way he sits in the middle of the orchestra, at the centre of attention, facing the audience, and directs by sidelong glances over his shoulders while making rather too frequent peeks at the stalls. It is all rather little boyish or, dare I say, American.

The concert opened with Haydn's Notturno No. 7 in F (Hob.II.28), originally written for the *lira organizzata* (a type of hurdy-gurdy with a little organ attached) but later rearranged with the flute and oboe taking the solo lines alongside pairs of horns, violins and violas. However, judging from this performance, listeners would have been forgiven for thinking that they were listening to a violin concerto. For the second concert running, there was a lead violinist that dominated the proceedings with playing that was out of synch with the rest of the band and with what is generally accepted as historically informed performance practice. Excessive vibrato and portamento was just the beginning. Elizabeth Wallfisch's excessively forceful playing also pushed her own instrument out of tune from her colleagues and added an inappropriate harshness of tone. The Notturno relies on the subtle interplay of the constituent parts, notably the flute and oboe contributions (played with characteristic excellence by Lisa Beznosiuk and Anthony Robson) – even if it was going to be treated as a work for solo violin and underlings, then at least the soloist should play cleanly and with a sure grasp of the notes. The concluding piece was Haydn's Symphony 45 in F sharp minor, the *Farewell*, which ends with the players in turn getting up and leaving the stage until just two violins are left. And yes, you have guessed it – one of the two violins was still, to the very last, dominating the other one and playing slightly out of tune. Such a shame as the concert was potentially a fascinating one, and the rest of the OAE players were well up to their usual very high standard.

The appearance of the Biber Ensemble at the Purcell Room (18 March) turned out to be only half a concert. Arranged by the Kirkman Concert Society to promote young musicians, the second half featured some very romantic cello and piano works, in stark contrast to the more delicate sounds of the baroque violin and theorbo (Qin Tan and Kazimierz Michalak). In works by Castello, Biber, Piccinini, Bach and Telemann, they demonstrated clarity and crispness of tone and a very solid ability to play together as a team – a lesson to the far more distinguished performers in the two previous concerts. Castello's *Sonata Seconda a soprano solo* showed the technical skills of both performers. Often used as an excuse for wild extravagance by performers, such *stylus phantasticus* pieces often benefit from the simpler style of reading given by Tan and Michalak. However, although they avoided the excesses of some performances, they also lost some of the expressiveness. This was a bit of an issue throughout the concert. Although technically assured, the playing could have done with more light and shade, using a greater variety of tone colours, more expression and a greater use of structural rhetoric. Perhaps their rather formal stage presence (which includes the violinist facing 'east-west' across the stage, rather than acknowledging the audience) adds to the overall air of detachment from the music and the event. I am sure that they have something to say, but they do need to be a bit more forthright in saying it. That said, they made a refreshing change to those performers who overdo the stage and musical antics.

Some impressive advertising, an intriguing programme title and Emma Kirkby conspired to produce a full house for the concert of 'Baroque Music of the Chiquitos and Moxos Indians of Bolivia' at the Wigmore Hall (19 March). The concert was arranged by the Friends of Bolivia to celebrated their 20th anniversary and to raise funds for 'Hombres Nuevos', a Bolivian youth orchestra in a shanty town on the edge of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The introductory talk featured a Pole who lives and works in Bolivia, and a Bolivian who lives and works in Newcastle. The former, Dr Piotr Nawrot, gave a fascinating account of the vast amounts of music collected by the indigenous people connected with the Jesuit missions active in the Amazon forests of eastern Bolivia between 1680 until their expulsion in 1767. The *Maestro di cappella* of these missions was always Indian, and there was, apparently, a rich tradition of non-Western instruments and musical style. I say apparently, because none of this was evident from the concert itself, which was really rather dull, both in the quality of the music and in the performance thereof. Florilegium fielded two violins, flute, cello, double bass, theorbo/guitar and harpsichord/organ, but sadly omitted all the more exotic instruments mentioned in the programme note as having been used by the Indians in their music making (including bassoons, oboes, cornets, spinets, clavichords, zithers, bandolas, rabelones, chirimias, sackbuts, trumpets, clarions, lyres, harps, sea shells and 'large lugubrious flutes'). The only exotic sound to be heard was a couple of rather half-hearted appearances by a rattle – and the only audible native instrument of a primitive

people was a mobile phone. The tenor Andrew Kennedy and bass Thomas Guthrie were by far the best singers, the former notably in Zipoli's motet *In hoc mundo*. Unfortunately the only rattling during this piece was the sound of the keys of a chamber organ that did not like being played like a harpsichord – a distraction throughout most of the concert. From the first *Beatus vir* (attrib. Zipoli) onwards, the pieces generally suffered from rather predictable phrase structures and harmonic development, with very few moments of real musical interest. It was all rather formulaic. Perhaps it needed the exotic sounds of the original instrumentation to lift it above the everyday.

The latest of Concerto Cristofori's regular concerts at the Purcell Room (21 March) was based on music of the Italian Virtuosi. Although the programme note concentrated entirely on the vocal works, there were also a number of instrumental pieces for lute, viol, recorders, harpsichord and virginals. The harpsichord used was the recently built copy of the Royal College of Music's 1531 Alessandro Trasuntino, pitched at A348. This worked extremely well for most of the repertoire, although the solo pieces by de Macque and Frescobaldi needed a later sound. I wasn't quite sure of the reason why the copy of the Queen Elizabeth virginals was used for some of the pieces – it may have been to do with pitch, although both keyboard instruments were used with other instruments. The tone of the Trasuntino is distinctive. It is not as bright as later instruments, and has a strongly defined fundamental tone with limited development of the upper harmonics that give many harpsichords their 'ringing' sound. It sounds a little like a later harpsichord being played in a cupboard. One unlikely combination that worked very well was the harpsichord and lute, playing together in Verdelot's *Chi bussa?*, a delightful piece, full of hocketing between the two instruments. The virginals was slightly brighter, with a gentle and rather subdued sound and not so much resonance as the harpsichord. Sharona Joshua's keyboard playing was straightforward, but often lacked a real sense of direction, particularly in the free works. She does seem more at home playing the later fortepiano repertoire. Instrumentally, the star of the show was Jacob Heringman with some exquisitely eloquent lute playing, notably of Kapsperger's *Toccata Settima*. Susanna Pell's otherwise beautiful performance of Rogniono's Divisions on *Ancor che col partire* suffered a little from intonation problems above the frets, although she more than made up for that by producing a beautifully breathy sound on the concluding descending phrase. Pamela Thorby also suffered a few intonation glitches on her higher and louder recorder notes. Faye Newton has one of those beautifully clear and clean, rather boyish, 'early music' voices that, on a good day can sound heavenly. Sadly that type of voice is more susceptible to revealing slips in intonation and articulation. But although her vocal runs sometimes lacked clarity and her vocal leaps were occasionally less than sure-footed, I would much rather hear a voice like hers for this repertoire than the operatic voices so often heard nowadays, where pitch and articulation are something of an irrelevance hidden beneath the mist of vibrato. One general issue that often affects groups like this, based around one person and with a changing line up for each concert, is that the players may not always have time to get used to working together. In this concert there were a number of hesitant moments, little slips and an overall lack of cohesion that suggested that the programme might not have been over-rehearsed.

In an early bid for the Easter audience, Sir John Eliot Gardiner with the Monteverdi Choir and English Baroque Soloists brought Bach's St John Passion to St John's, Smith Square on 25 March. Although he must have conducted the work hundreds of times, he managed to find new insights and little details to make this a very personal performance of Bach's most personal liturgical work. I often get a feel for its interpretation by the mood of the instrumental opening, with the swirling strings and overlying oboes. This element of outlining little details was apparent from its repeat, when the violas were given a remarkable solo role, accenting their repeated intervals like a litany, albeit one with a hint of a sinister undertone. Other telling moments came in the choruses and chorales, notably in the crowd scenes, like the bustling tittle-tattle of 'Lasset uns den nicht zerteilen' or the accented syllables of 'Verlacht, verhöhnt und verspeit' and 'Weg, weg, mit dem, kreuzige ihn!'. Gardiner kept the text flowing well, setting a good pace between numbers. The only odd moment of direction was at the very end, when Gardiner held his posture for so long that he almost prevented the audience from applauding at all. I can understand why conductors feel the need to do this, but it can become over-theatrical. The well-balanced choir (6,4,4,4) was in particularly good form, the sopranos, in particular, controlling their tendency towards vibrato well. Although Katharine Fuge made a good job of 'Zerfließe, mein Herze', the soloists drawn from the choir were no match for the four principals: Mark Padmore, as the Evangelist, Peter Harvey, Michael Chance and Hanno Müller-Brachmann as Jesus – the last with a hesitant, breathy voice with a slight edge to it that sounded rather youthful, but was contrasted with a very stiff posture and stage presence. The other soloists were more adept at the little gestures or stage positioning that bring the inter-relationships between the characters to life. Michael Chance (a last minute stand-in) was particularly effective in his quieter moments, notably, of course, 'Es ist vollbracht'. Peter Harvey was excellent in portraying the varying emotions of Pilate, and in the sensuous arioso 'Betrachte, meine Seel' and the bittersweet aria 'Mein teurer Heiland', sung over a chorale – the concluding questioning to the dying Christ who tacitly answers 'Ja', was one of the most moving moments of the whole work. Mark Padmore was, as ever, outstanding as the Evangelist and tenor soloist. His ability to colour the text through vocal inflexion is spellbinding, and I do like the idea of the Evangelist stepping out of his literal role for the very personal arias and ariosa – it makes this most introverted of works all the more real. Amongst the players, there were particularly effective contributions from the leader, Kati Debretzini, Richard Campbell *gamba* and Silas Standage, playing a larger than usual chamber organ.

CDs & MUSIC FROM CATALUNYA

Brian Clark

From the outside, Spain may seem like a single entity. In fact, although the struggle for independence in the Basque country (an area which, like Catalunya, extends over the border into France) is widely known, similar feelings exist in Galicia and Catalunya, to name but two of the richest areas in the country.

la mà de guido is a Catalan enterprise, and the CDs which have been released so far are solely from that region. The Department of Culture at the Generalitat de Catalunya (the regional government) has lent financial assistance to some, while the Ajuntaments de Valencia and de Villena (amongst other sponsors) supported the two Victoria Musicae recordings discussed below. The company has recently agreed a distribution deal in the UK with Codaex, so the CDs should be available through the main suppliers, and certainly via Peter Berg's Lindum Records. With such a range of interesting titles, we wish them well.

Bella de vos som amorós (1999, LMG 2035, 61' 46") is subtitled 'Music at the courts of the Catholic Monarchs and Charles I of Spain'. Capella Virelai, directed by Jordi Reguant, take their material from six 15th- and 16th-century sources, performed by up to four voices with flute and shawm (one player), gamba, vihuela, keyboards and percussion. There is a broad mix of vocal and instrumental material, and they are generally well performed, although I have to confess that the percussion seemed superfluous at various points, and rather unimaginative at others – was the 'jingle bells' tambourine really used in 15th-century Spain? Notes in Catalan, Spanish, English and French, texts only in the original.

The focus of **Ave, praesul Barcinonae** (1999, LMG 2034, 72' 19") is Catalan medieval music, performed by Isabel Aragón with Taller d'estudis medievals, directed by Montserrat Oliveras. 16 of the 20 tracks are sung in unison; where there are two voices, the tuning is slightly strange (perhaps deliberately, of course), and some striking what I take to be ficta, where both the sharpened leading note and the flattened supertonic occur simultaneously at passing cadences. The named soloist is not particularly well recorded, but that's maybe because she was located in a different part of the church from everyone else. Booklet notes again in four languages.

Antoni Soler may not be known outside Spain as a Catalan composer, but his first name is a clear enough indication of his ethnic origins. The pieces recorded on **Concerts per a dos clavecins** (2000, LMG 2041, 73' 10"), played by Marju Vatsel and Jordi Reguant, were written for performance on two organs, and may indeed have been played on a strange instrument by Joseph Casas, assisted by a clockmaker, Manuel Zerella. There are six concertos, all but No. 2 in two movements (it has an added Allegro second movement), and although they are pleasant enough I don't recommend more than a couple at a time. The recorded sound is clear, and the booklet comes this time in five languages (German is the addition).

Ginés Pérez's **Officium Defunctorum** (2000, LMG 2048, 68' 53") is performed by Victoria Musicae, using broadly the same forces as the composer discovered on arriving to take charge of music at the cathedral in Valencia in 1581. The Officium consists of psalms and funeral motets (with one of the latter by Cotes, his successor, and Comes, probably a pupil), and there are three other previously unrecorded motets. The choir has 19 singers (6-5-4-4) and there are two recorders/flutes, two cornetti (including Jeremy West), shawm, two sackbuts, string bass and organ. Some of the pieces are performed instrumentally, without any loss of gravitas. I particularly enjoyed Cotes' seven-voice *Mortuus est Philippus Rex*. The notes are in five languages (Catalan here qualified as Valencian Catalan), and the texts are given in Latin, Catalan, Spanish and English. Highly recommended listening for anyone interested in Iberian polyphony.

The **Duos i Exercicis sobre els vuit tons** (2001, LMG 2043, 53' 15") come from the *Cançoner del duc de Calàbria*, otherwise known as the *Cancionero de Uppsala*, of 1556. There are 12 duos (two with music by Juan del Enzina) and eight exercises on the tones. Alexandrina Polo *S* and Margarida Lladó *mS* (also heard on the Sor disc reviewed below) are joined by two recorder players (on descant, trebles in F and G, and tenor based on models from Praetorius) and two viols in a variety of combinations, some of which work better than others. The duos (originally conceived for beginners on the organ) are played on a variety of recorders, and the sound is strangely organ-like. Notes in five languages, texts only in the original.

Alfred Fernàndez uses two different five-string baroque guitars on his disc **Ad hunc modum** (2001, LMG 2044, music in Catalan manuscripts by Sanz and Guerau, 54' 26"). I found this a very satisfying disc: the different timbres of the instruments (the newer one – both are by the same maker – is after Italian rather than Spanish models, and has a brighter sound), the mostly relaxed nature of the music (which in some ways reminded me of Ste. Colombe's viol music), and the excellent recorded sound combine to make this very easy listening. As well as the two named composers, there are three anonymous 17th-century pieces, and ten unattributed 18th-century works. Booklet notes again in five languages.

Ambrosio Cotes, who featured on the Pérez CD reviewed above, is the subject of another Victoria Musicae disc, **Opera varia** (2002, LMG 2053, 62' 30"). The 20 tracks are divided into four sections, all opened with an instrumental *cancion*: *Missa in adventu et Quadragesima* (a mass without Gloria alternating plainsong and polyphony), *In festis variis* (four motets and an organ piece), *De Virginibus* (three Marian motets) and *De Sanctis* (four motets, including another for seven voices). The performances are well paced, the choral sound is nicely balanced and blended, and the instruments retain the air of gravitas I mentioned in reviewing their earlier disc. Only one of the pieces has been recorded before. Again, I'd recommend this unreservedly to anyone interested in the repertoire. Notes in Valencian Catalan, Spanish, English and German; texts in Latin, Spanish and Catalan.

Ferran Sor is another composer who non-Spaniards will not immediately recognise as Catalan. Margarida Lladó and Xavier Coll's CD of **Ariette Italiane and Seguidillas** (2003, LMG 2054, 60' 14") includes nine of the former and 12 of the latter. The music is not heavy and dramatic – the arietta is not the most profound of media – although there is a marked gear change (in terms of emotional intensity when the language changes to Spanish!) Lladó's voice is full (as one would expect), and clearly she enjoys singing both the repertoires (perhaps especially the boleros – which is essentially what the Seguidillas are). Coll is a skilful accompanist (his trills are remarkable). English translations of the song texts are given, the notes in four languages (no French). In another tie-in, the editions are available from www.tecla.com and have already been reviewed in *EMR* by CB.

TRITÓ editions are also from Catalunya, with a shop in Barcelona and an excellent internet site (www.trito.es). I came upon them while looking for music by the symphonist Carles Baguer, who had come up in conversation during a recent visit from Catalan friends. Tritô has very kindly sent a wide range of materials from their catalogue (not all 100% relevant to our readers, but all worthy of note, and without exception extremely well produced).

Ramon Carnicer wrote his ***Obertura (simfonia) per a Il barbiere di Siviglia*** for a Barcelona production of Rossini's opera in 1818, since the original overture had already been used by Rossini in *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, which had recently been performed in the city. Rossini, hearing the Carnicer work in Madrid (it had become the normal overture in Spanish productions), endorsed the substitute. Josep Dolcet's edition is based on the composer's original version, and is scored for strings, double woodwind, horns and trumpets. Background information is given in Spanish, Catalan and English, and there is a four-page critical commentary. (TRITÓ 1, €36.05)

Carnicer's ***Fantasia per a clarinet obligat*** was written as a test piece for candidates for Madrid Conservatoire's clarinet professorship in 1849. Antonio Romero's reputation was apparently such that all the other candidates withdrew. Carciner was so impressed by his sight-reading of the piece that he arranged it for clarinet and orchestra. Both the original orchestration and a reduced version by Josep Dulcet (who prepared this edition) are rentable from Tritó. The piece, as one would expect, is extremely virtuosic, and quite a test even for very good clarinettists. Players of period instruments will doubtless be happy that it is available for study once more. (TRITÓ TR76, €15.03)

The ***18 Danses Anònimes del Sigle XVIII*** (edited by Josep Dolcet in 1995, and re-printed in 2000) come from a manuscript discovered in a Catalan farmhouse in the 1960s. The edition puts treble and bass parts into score (they originally faced each other, with the bass on the right hand page), modernises the G minor key signature from one flat, but preserves the original ordering, which was done by key. Most are short binary pieces (one has a *da capo*), and all of them look simple and suitable (especially with their large print) for beginners – treble recorder players would find them specially useful. (TRITÓ 2)

Josep Duran was *maestro di capella* at Barcelona Cathedral, having studied in Naples with Durante. He was therefore perfectly placed to introduce Italian ideas into his music and Anna Cazurra's edition of the ***Obertura en Re major*** and the ***Obertura en Fa major*** reveals a very Neapolitan style. Both are in three movements, the central slow movement being for strings only, and the final allegretto being triplas. The D major is scored for pairs of oboes and horns, two violins and bass. There are no oboes in the F major. They look good fun. (TRITÓ 3; €29.44)

Manuel Pla's *Concert per a Flauta en Si Bemoll major (IV-2)*, as edited by Josep Dolcet, comes in two forms: an 18-page score accompanied by 10 pages of introductory material and critical commentary, or a solo flute part (with a separate sheet of cadenzas) and keyboard reduction (with the same introductory materials but little critical documentation). Scored for solo flute, four-part strings and continuo, it looks an interesting piece, and the solo part is not difficult enough to put amateurs off playing it. (Score: TRITÓ 6; €29.44; Reduction: TRITÓ 7; €16.22. Performing material is also available)

Josep Vinyals's *Sis Quintets per a Instruments de Vent* of 1804 are actually quite short pieces (three in D major, three in D minor) for pairs of oboes and horns above bassoon, mostly in binary form (No. 2 is slightly more complex). The parts slip inside a flap in the back cover, and the horns are given in C (the scores give concert pitches). The music is hardly challenging, but they seem attractive enough. (TRITÓ 12; €26.13)

As I said in the introduction, it was Carles Baguer's music that brought me to TRITÓ in the first place. The second volume of their **La Música Orquestral de Carles Baguer** series was the first to appear. It contains symphonies 5, 6 and 12, edited by Josep Maria Vilar. There are 19 in all, as well as a concerto for two bassoons. No. 5 and 6 are in D

major, while No. 12 is in E flat. All three have four movements. The horns drop out of the slow movement of No. 5. The music looks truly very good, and it's difficult to understand why his music has not drawn wider attention. (TRITÓ 18; £36.05)

The largest score in the bundle we were sent was Domènec Terradellas's oratorio, ***Giuseppe riconosciuto***. It sets a text based on Metastasio, which was the composer's graduation piece after studying in Naples for around four years. There are three soprano solos, one alto, and two tenors. The orchestra consists of oboes, horns and strings. The three choruses are taken by divided sopranos and altos. Altogether there are 45 movements, sequences of recitative, even over several scenes, being counted as one. The arias look fairly demanding. The edition by Josep DDolcet and Ignacio Yepes looks as clean as the others I've looked through, and they are sensible enough to suggest cuts in performance, listed in the introduction, but there is no detailed critical commentary. Orchestral material is available. (TRITÓ 21; £36.05)

Volume 1 of **La Música Orquestral de Carles Baguer** (again edited by Josep Maria Vilar) contains symphonies 1-3 (in C major, C minor and D major respectively). In one of his most dramatic moments, the second section of the D major's first movement begins with a new key signature: B flat major. The horns are omitted from the slow movement of that piece too. Once again, there seems no reason why this music should not be much more widely known. (TRITÓ 28; £36.05)

Francesc Mariner ***Obres per a Clave*** (ed. Martin Voortman) contains 14 works under the heading 'Tocatas [sic] and Sonatas', six as 'Pastorellas' and two 'Juguetes'. Mariner was born in 1720 and died in 1789. Almost half of the manuscript sources for his music are from Montserrat, and the editor has attempted to present the works in chronological order. The music is rarely in more than two parts, and I think even my limited keyboard skills would be up to the technical challenges. The notation is large and clear, and page turns generally work well, although the *Tocata en Sol major* is in binary form and having the turn at the mid-point would make rather more sense, especially when there is empty space on the fourth page of the piece. (TRITÓ 29; £29.44)

The Tritó edition of the ***Obertura de l'òpera 'Una cosa rara'*** by Vicent Martín i Soler was produced in 1998, as the piece had been chosen as a set piece for a conducting competition in Barcelona that year. A contemporary print of the piece adds 24 extra bars to the manuscript source but omits the trumpet parts. The editors have decided to incorporate the extra bars and compose suitable trumpet parts for them – in fact, they simply double the horns for the last eight bars. Orchestral material is available. (TRITÓ 31; £22.83)

Ferran Sor's ***Obertura del ballet "Alphonse et Léonore" ou "L'amant peintre"*** was given its first modern performance by the Orquestra de Cadaqués, directed by Sir Neville Marriner in 1997. It was also one of the set pieces for the conducting competition mentioned above. Sergi Casademunt's edition stays as loyal as he can to Sor's original manuscript (in the Opéra Library in Paris), and only standardises note values at the ends of phrases. Scored for double woodwind, horns and strings, the piece is quite short, but looks entertaining. (TRITÓ 35; £22.83)

Among the better-known Catalan composers are the three Pla brothers. The **Sis Sinates per a Flauta, violí i Baix Continu**, edited by Josep Dolcet and Eduard Martínez, come from manuscript sources in Genoa, and consist of two contrasting movements. The flute part looks quite demanding, and the violin even more so, while the unfigured bass generally seems straightforward. The editors have added a very basic interpretation of the continuo part, and (as far as I can see) removed the double-stopping of the original without noting it in the critical commentary. The parts are arranged so that each movement starts a new page, which leads to some appearing rather cramped – especially when the adjacent page has lots of space at the bottom. (TRITÓ 44; £21.03)

The overture to ***Los Esclavos Felices*** by Arriaga was written in Bilbao in 1820 when the composer was only 14. The score takes up just over 40 of the 75 pages that constitute Willem de Waal's edition. The extra pages of the introductory material are given to yet another Iberian language: Basque (or Guipuzco, as it's properly known). After the thoroughly discussed background (including a helpful note to performers that the piece lasts around ten and a half minutes), comes the music itself, a remarkable testimony to the skill of the boy who would be another tragic loss to music through premature death. Already he uses the woodwind to colour passages; he is not afraid of reducing the texture to a pair of violins, or even single lines; he employs a wide range of dynamics, and the piece certainly captures the happiness of the title. Perhaps only the limited harmonic range reveals some inexperience. Performance materials are also available. (TRITÓ 45; £32.45)

Symphonies 16, 18 and 19 make up volume 4 of **La Música Orquestral de Carles Baguer** (ed. Josep Maria Vilar). The first is in G major, and the others are in B flat major. All are scored for oboes, horns and strings, although the slow movement of No. 16 calls for flutes instead of the oboes. Even though this is the fourth volume, the publisher still has not sorted what I consider to be the only silly thing about his editions: the way some pages end with only one system of music – surely it makes sense to pad out the previous pages to make for a neater end? Regardless of that, though, this is another beautiful and worthwhile print. (TRITÓ 50; £36.05)

Terradellas's **2 motets a solo**, edited by Josep Dolcet, with a keyboard realisation by Eduard Martínez, come from manuscripts in the Conservatoire Library in Brussels. *Nocturna procella* is scored for soprano or tenor with trumpets and strings (the trumpets have some impossible

notes, but the editor sensibly decided to leave the remedy to the performer), while *Plaudite populi* is written for soprano, oboes and strings. The texts are Latin and partially in verse. Both pieces include some fairly florid writing which will put amateurs off, but a composer of Terradella's standing (among his contemporaries, I mean) should encourage our professional singers to take a look. (TRITÓ 52; £21.03)

Organistes de Barcelona del segle XVIII (ed. Martin Voortman) includes music by Rafael Crest, Josep Elies, Josep Closells, Francesc Vilar, Joan Vila, Francesc Mariner, Anton Mestres, arranged chronologically. Mostly in three parts, the music sometimes extends to four, but more often reduces to only treble and bass. Once again, I reckon that I could play most of the pieces, which generally fit on one or two of the traditional landscape pages. Most have sharp key signatures, but they seem to divide equally between duple and triple time. Useful, I would have thought, for church organists looking for new material to play as exit music. (TRITÓ TR81; £21.03)

INTERNATIONALE FASCH-FESTTAGE

Every two years the city of Zerbst in Middle Germany plays host to a festival celebrating the life of the Kapellmeister there from 1722-1758, Johann Friedrich Fasch. As well as a civic reception, there are nine concerts, two religious services and a musicological conference, this year dealing with Italian influences in Fasch's music.

I was lucky enough to enjoy three concerts: a group called barock a.c.c.u.u.t. from Leipzig played two pieces by Fasch during the official opening, at which the Fasch-Preis was awarded to the Akademische Orchester der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg for its continued championing of Fasch's music; I suonatori della gioiosa Marca and the fantastically exuberant bassoonist Sergio Azzolini played half a concert by Vivaldi and the other half by Fasch, and this was Fasch as we'd never heard it before – it was quite electrifying. Kammerorchester Basel Barock played a programme selected by Hans-Georg Hofmann, one of the participants in the conference who also happens to be their artistic advisor, as something of an illustration of his talk on the Italians at Dresden – their Vivaldi and Veracini were excellent, but best music of the day was definitely Zelenka's Concerto a 8. Zelenka was also reported back to me the next day: I'd opted to miss Epoca Barocca's concert at Wendgräben, but everyone was full of excitement on their return – the group includes the aforementioned bassoonist and apparently his colleagues are every bit as involved in the music as he is.

The conference had threatened to be a little academic and dull – tracing national styles within a composer's work is not something that can easily be quantified with elegance. In fact, there were many interesting papers and the scope was widened by discussion of Fasch's music at other courts (Jan Stockigt confirming that his Vespers Psalms were written for Prague, and Samantha Owens talking about the flute-playing Prince of Württemberg) and the revelation that the Singakademie Library (now being made available on microfiche so that you can buy access without going to Berlin) has produced three previously unknown 'Fasch' pieces – Elena Sawtschenko discussed two (a serenata from 1757 which is an autograph source, and a Trauer-Cantata of which I'm very dubious) but had no access to the third.

One further aspect of the conference is worthy of note. Both days opened with music from students at the Leipzig Hochschule für Musik und Theater 'Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy' playing Stölzel, Vivaldi and, of course, Fasch. The latter included the quartet for violin, oboe, horn and continuo, which was excellently played, although I missed a string bass. Five young musicians with a certain future in early music.

The economic situation in Germany is a far cry from the '80s and '90s, and the groups which the International Fasch Society attracted this year (including The King's Consort and Musica Alta Ripa) don't come cheap. It is more than possible that there may not be another festival in 2005, or that rescheduling and more commercial sponsorship may have to be considered. Personally, I think it admirable that the town, the region and the state combine to focus on Zerbst, which has been transformed since I first visited in 1989. It would be a tragedy if no solution could be found. *BC*

THE EARLY FLUTE

Polly Emma Bowden on Rachel Brown

Rachel Brown *The Early Flute: A Practical Guide.* Cambridge UP, 2002. ix + 184pp. hb ISBN 0 521 81391 3 £42.50; pb 0 521 89080 2 £15.95

I embarked on this book, pencil in hand to mark any particularly interesting or relevant points, but soon discarded the pencil in danger of obliterating the entire text with such annotations. This surely points to writing that is in essence concise, discerning and well presented.

The title would seem to suggest another flute history book to join the others lining the shelves, but if one proceeds past this somewhat unimaginative title, the contents reveal something refreshingly different. Whilst being a clear and accurate historical account, this book achieves an effective balance between academic content and practical application – something attempted to a smaller extent in Solum's book by the same title. It also fills the hitherto vacant role of contemporary early flute tutor combined with stylistic guide. This is a highly practical performance handbook, which, far from being dogmatically prescriptive, opens up a colourful palette of possibilities for baroque and modern flautists alike.

The book includes chapters on style and technique in which Rachel Brown meticulously collates evidence from all major 18th century treatises in a form that is clear and approachable, but also adds perceptive comments and performance suggestions. Contrasting case studies then bring these discussions to life. Other texts have dealt with similar subjects, but the relative size of the chapters here shows a different focus, with most space devoted to style – an area where clear but imaginative academic material is a valuable addition.

In examining the historical treatises, the author displays a thorough and shrewd awareness not only of the content, but also of their relevance within the context of flute development. She concisely summarizes the fundamentals of each text, and rather than listing, shows how they compliment or contradict one another, how they may pre-empt later practices or revere earlier ones.

There is ample material available on the development of flute construction, but the chapter devoted to this subject points rather to the need to identify 'the *musical relevance* of each model'. This I feel is the key to the freshness of Brown's approach – that she presents a musical and performer orientated perspective on what has been in danger of becoming a chart of mechanical inventions. This section is therefore closely focused on *sound*, giving many contemporary descriptions of tone, which indicate how ideals of sound were constantly changing. She also gives valuable advice, both on which flutes might form the performer's collection by identifying the musical qualities required to suit each period, and for the amateur player on choosing and maintaining an instrument.

There is no shortage of 18th century pedagogical 'bibles' for the flute, but it requires considerable dedication to thoroughly digest Quantz, C.P.E Bach, etc. Brown has the ability however to extract points of key relevance from a myriad of sources rather than including all extraneous material. This said, the chapters on technique and style are not easy reading, but I would suggest are better read with instrument in hand and in conjunction with the music being discussed – the intricacies of 'tootle tetle did'll' double tonguing are probably best taken off the page and into the practice room rather than being suitable silent train journey reading!

The discussion of style is particularly interesting, as it stems from the principals of rhetoric or rules of public speaking which firmly establishes the context of the music: that the primary aim of 18th century art was to move the 'affections' of the listener. Therefore style is not just about learning a list of acceptable conventions, but finding an effective method of expression. With this in mind, the lengthy and at times, complex discussion of ornamentation highlights the wide variety of expressive devices and the importance of learning how to add them appropriately.

The case studies in particular set this book apart from its neighbours through the practical application of principles of style and technique. Pieces discussed range from one of the earliest baroque flute works to a Boehm Fantaisie which stretches the 19th century ring-keyed flute to its limits. Each case study has a different focus, be it the character of dance movements in Hotteterre, problems of articulation in Bach, the possibilities of alternative fingerings in Gluck, whilst twelve different options for the ornamentation of a Handel Adagio surely cry out to be tried and tested! perhaps making these studies suitable material for a lesson or workshop.

I would highly recommend this book as academic, practical and readable, with something valuable to offer to a wide variety of musicians: it is sufficiently clear and approachable for the amateur, yet succinctly distils the learning of the experienced player into a logical and discerning discussion; modern flautists would gain much from a greater knowledge of early practices, and are given specific hints to interpret these. It does not focus solely on flute sources but draws on a variety of instrumental methods, and consequently this is a work of significance for all those interested in early performance practice.

CD REVIEWS

We have received several discs this month that are either reissues or reimportations into the UK of discs that we have already received. We have listed them some with references to previous reviews; others are noted at the end of the review section. There is also a separate section devoted to discs from Catalonia on pp. 12-13.

MEDIEVAL

Love's Illusion: Music from the Montpellier Codex, 13th C. Anonymous 4 64' 04"
Harmonia Mundi **HMX 2907109** ££
Reissue of 1994 rec with HM catalogue

I reviewed this, Anonymous 4's third CD, in *EMR* 5. I began enthusiastically: 'The four women make a marvellous sound and present the music intelligently and appealingly' but was worried about 29 minimally-contrasted, two-minute pieces. The 86-page booklet I commended has shrunk to 43. The group recently announced that it would disband in 2004; four further CDs are expected, the first being of music by John Tavener. *CB*

15th CENTURY

La Rue ***Missa de septem doloribus*** Capilla Flamenca, Psallentes, Dirk Snellings *dir*
Musique en Wallonie **NMEW 0207** 63' 01"
+ Josquin *Stabat mater* & chant

This is an absolutely beautiful disc. It opens with the most perfect performance of Josquin's five-part *Stabat Mater* I have heard, and then presents La Rue's five-part *Missa de septem doloribus* in a limited liturgical setting, the intervening plainchant superbly sung by the male voices of Psallentes. This is all very attractive music, but such is the quality of the singing that I feel these singers could still impress if they sang the Renaissance equivalent of the phone book. The sheer confidence and full tone of the Capilla is breath-taking, with some particularly fine singing from the altos and the lower basses, while the unanimity of attack and consistently splendid intonation are a delight. Dirk Snelling's subtle readings of the polyphony are utterly convincing, while Psallentes' inventive approach to the plainchant, complete with drones and florification is the perfect foil to the polyphony. The resonant acoustic of Iers College, Leuven provides just the right amount of bloom, and the resulting sound is perfectly captured by engineer Grégory Beaufays. A landmark in early choral performance. *D. James Ross*

Obrecht ***Church Music*** Vocal Group Ars Nova, Paul Hillier *cond* 63' 00"
Ars Nova **VANCD-02** (rec 1997-8)
Alma Redmptoris, Ave Regina celorum, Ave maris stella, Beata es Maria, Magnificat, Missa Sub tuum praesidium

One of the leading vocal group in Scandinavia, Ars Nova have benefited from the attentions of a number of specialist early music conductors, and as a result approach the music of Jacob Obrecht with confidence. The singing is thoroughly competent and pleasant, with a particularly sweet tone from the female voices on the top lines, and if the reading is slightly bland, this must be as much due to the direction of Paul Hillier as to the singers themselves. There are also occasional dips in pitch and moments of indecision, reflecting relative inexperience in the singers. Obrecht's music is impressive, and the *Missa Sub tuum praesidium*, which gradually expands movement-by-movement from three to seven voices, is intriguing. He is certainly a composer who deserves to be more strongly represented on disk. *D. James Ross*

Musica aldersoetste konst; Polyphonic Music from the Low Countries Huelgas Ensemble, Paul Van Nevel 60' 38"
Klara **MMP 013** (rec 1985)
Music by Agricola, Brumel, Faignent, Florius, Gheerkin De Hondt, Isaac, Josquin, Laurentius de Oude, Obrecht, & anon

Paul Van Nevel features prominently this month, thanks to Klara and Globe. This is a worthwhile reissue, though I'm not sure how many sales there will be of a disc of Dutch songs without translations (however attractive the language sounds). Loud wind playing has got a fraction subtler over the last 18 years, but the 26 pieces here all work well, and the edgy tone of the singers is very effective. *CB*

16th CENTURY

Byrd ***Motets*** Vocal Group Ars Nova, Paul Hillier *cond* 50' 25"
Ars Nova **VANCD-01**
Infelix ego, Laudibus in sanctis, O Lord make thy servant Elizabeth, Prevent us O Lord, Regina caeli, Retire my soul, Salve Regina, Sing joyfully, Tristitia et anxietas

This and the Obrecht reviewed above are the first two discs recorded under the Danish vocal group's own label, and very good it is too. There are twelve singers, the conductor being democratically mixed with them to make 13 in the group picture. The voices are used in varied ensembles, only one requiring all 12 but with only *Retire my soul* one-to-a-part (it is the least satisfactory sound on the disc). The balance is fine throughout, as is the shaping and tuning, with a less aggressive sound than has become fashionable. In principle, the running time seems short measure, but as a listening experience it is about right. The notes by the late Philip Brett point out that motet is an anachronistic term for most of the music. Paul Hillier has been principal conductor of this well-established ensemble since last summer; this was recorded in 1999 while he was guest conductor. *CB*

Innocentius Dammonis ***O stella matutina: Laude Libro I, Venezia, 1508*** Laura Fabris *S*, Consort Veneto, Ensemble Vocale Dodecantus, Marina Malavasi *dir*
Bongiovanni **GB 5614-2** 58' 57"

Their use to accompany flagellants is at one extreme of the function of the lauda; here we have the more refined version as sung and played in the wealthy households that could afford to buy Petrucci's expensive publications. The music is fairly simple (too simple for concentrated listening through a whole disc), though overlaps with the less complex motets in *Motetti B* (see review on p. 2). The performances work well and make the best case possible for the music, though it really needs sympathy with the language and belief to be fully absorbing. *CB*

A. Gabrieli ***Psalmi Dividici qui poenitentiales nuncupantur*** Netherlands Chamber Choir, Huelgas Ensemble, Paul Van Nevel *cond* 64' 37"
Globe **GLO 5210**

I was disappointed with the last recording of Andrea Gabrieli's Penitential Psalms (*EMR* 87), but this is far more convincing. The one criticism I carry over is the retention of the notated *chiavette* pitch: in the opening psalm, the second section with a cornett on the top line sounds fine, but not the solo voice going up to G. Van Nevel gets an enormous amount of nervous energy out of the music; perhaps the appropriate decorum is not observed, but it makes the music live, and the varied scorings (with some sections turned into consort songs and instruments liberally used elsewhere) are aurally convincing. One might argue that the use of instruments (as suggested

by the composer) implies that the music cannot have been performed liturgically and that domestic music was more likely to be performed one-to-a-part and with soft instruments than with cornetts and sackbuts; but I'm not worried. *CB*

Tallis *Videte* The Chapel Choir of St Catherine's College, Cambridge, Alexander Ffinch dir. 60' 57"
Priory **PRCD 727**
Audivi vocem, Homo quidnam, In pace, Loquebantur, Magnificat, Nunc dimittis, Salvator mundi Domine, Salvator mundi salva, Videte miraculum

This is a good selection for those who find the ongoing complete Tallis overpowering, whether in bulk of style yet are not looking for another Lamentations and *Spem in alium*. The performances sometimes concentrate on line at the expense of text and are occasionally over-shaped, but are worth hearing. The recording level is very low – I was almost deafened when I put on the King's Singers' disc at the same setting. It is good to hear yet another Cambridge choir, though the translation of *In pace* wouldn't have passed when I was a student. *CB*

16th Century Italian & French Dance Music Musica Reservata 64'16"
Boston Skyline **BSD 123** (rec 1970-71)

This compilation from Philips 6500-102 & 6500-293 was first issued in 1994. It is a useful memory check for those of us who flocked to Musica Reservata's Queen Elizabeth Hall concerts in the late 1960s: the sound, especially of the voices, is still exciting, though I'd forgotten that Jantina Noorman could sing her divisions out of tune (track 19). This disc doesn't represent the best of the ensemble but is still worth adding to your collection if you don't have it already. *CB*

Amore, Venere, Tersicore: Music of XVIth and XVIIth Century Collegium Flauto Dolce, Jiri Kotoue 61' 04"
Nuova Era **7271** ££

This is a re-importing of a disc I reviewed in *EMR* 51. It looks a bit of a rag-bag of 37 late-16th- and early-17th-century pops, but the playing is entertaining, despite some odd scorings. Perhaps not for serious listening, but as background, it offers some pleasant surprises. *CB*

King'Singers renaissance: england, france, españa 139' 59" (2 CDs) (rec 1992-999)
RCA Red Seal **74321 886 862** £
Music by Byrd, Josquin, Tallis etc

This is one of the series Artistes Répertoires, a double-fold card box with joky covers that fold out to give two pages of notes; the contents lists are hidden underneath the CDs. It looks a bit meretricious but the content is substantial and mostly serious. Disc I has nearly an hour of Tallis (including the Lamentations) and Byrd, ending with a selection from the recent Spanish disc with The Harp Consort. Disc II has 70 minutes of Josquin, mostly for six voices, framed by *Benedicta es* and *Paternoster/Ave Maria*. I wish I could give it 100% enthusiasm. But the King's Singers, when performing early repertoire, fall back on the style of their youth (the English music is by the later generation, but two of the originals, Simon Carrington and Al Hume, are on the Josquin disc) and only partially reflect the changes which early-music singing has undergone since the 1960s. I so often I find myself enjoying a piece, then something happens that breaks the spell. It would be fascinating to set up a discussion on the changes between Simon (one of our enthusiastic readers) and a singer from one of the younger groups. This is worth getting for the Josquin: don't be put off by the cover. *CB*

Music for Sir Anthony Currende, Erik Van Nevel dir. 75' 30"
Klara **MMP 014**
Anon, Amner, Bull, Byrd, Dering, Gibbons, Hollanders, Luython, de Monte, Monteverdi, Philips, Regnart, Tomkins

It isn't at all obvious until you unwrap the cellophane and find the booklet that the relevant Sir Antony is Van Dyck, born in Antwerp in 1599, in England in 1620-1, in Italy from 1621-27, back in Antwerp from 1627-32, and in England again till his death in 1641. The programme is a bit thin on Italian music, though there are intensely dramatic perfomances of Monteverdi's *Domine ne in furore* and *Cantate Domino*. The English part of the programme is refreshingly less stiff-upper-lip than we are accustomed to. I'm not particularly convinced by the associations with Sir Anthony, but the disc itself is compelling. *CB*

17th CENTURY

Blow *Venus & Adonis, Organ Voluntaries* Catherine Bott *Venus*, Libby Crabtree *Cupid*, Michael George *Adonis*, Choristers of Westminster Abbey (Martin Neary *dir*), New London Consort, Philip Pickett *dir* (rec 1992); Gustav Leonhardt (organ of Grote Kerk, Hervormde Gemeente, Edam) (rec 1994) 70' 17" ££
Decca *The British Music Collection* **473 713-2**

Stephen Daw reviewed this and Decca's twin *Dido* in *EMR* 3. I had been at the sessions of both recordings to interview the singers for Decca's press packs, though don't remember listening to the CDs when they appeared, so this was new to me. Apart from the few places of dramatic intensity, it sounds pleasingly relaxed and easy-going, especially the choruses; they have more impact than on other performances I have heard, though even so I think they could have been a bit tighter. The four organ pieces are hardly relevant, despite being by the same composer, and are not made to sound very English, though they sound the more interesting for a touch of Dutch spirit. The booklet ignores them. The disc is well worth getting if you don't have a good Venus and Adonis . *CB*

Carissimi *Jephthe*; D. Scarlatti *Stabat Mater a10* Sandrine Piau *S*, Simon Jaunin *Bar*, Ensemble Vocal de Lausanne, Michel Corboz 46' 49" (rec 1996)
Cascavelle **VEL 1060**

We have reviewed a 1970s performance by Corboz of *Jephte*, but we evidently missed this on its 1996 release. If you want choral performances (18 singers in the Charpentier, 33 in the Scarlatti), this is extremely effective; but the Scarlatti cries out for ten soloists and has no location in historical time when sung chorally. *Jephthe* flows well, with a fine, dramatic Filia in Sandrine Piau, who makes the part much more positive than most singers of the part; the closing chorus, however, drags. The booklet has not texts, but unusually sports three music examples. *CB*

Corelli *Sonate da chiesa a tre, Opus 1* Ensemble Mensa Sonora, Jean Maillet *dir* Pierre Verany **PV703031** 64' 06"

Having been so complimentary about Mensa Sonora's Rosenmüller, I am glad to be able to endorse that recommendation. This disc of Corelli's first set of trios is excellent stuff. The violins are beautifully clear, the cello displays great dexterity in the solo passages and the organist declines to interfere with the flow, which is something continuo players sometimes cannot resist doing. Ornamentation is stylish and controlled, although I could not help squirming in the penultimate section of Sonata 1 when the first violinist trilled with a major third, having reached the cadence via the minor third, not once but twice. One thing is not clear: why are there only nine sonatas on the disc? With playing of such high standards, it's a major shame. *BC*

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

L. Couperin ***Tombeau de M. de Blanrocher, Preludes, Pavane, Galliarde*** Glen Wilson *hpscd* 74' 41"
Naxos 8.555936 £

Glen Wilson is a committed and distinguished advocate of Louis Couperin. For this well-constructed programme he has created three 'suites' of dances, prefacing each with one of the composer's enigmatic unmeasured preludes. Preludes also introduce the 'free-standing' works which include the famous *Pavane* in F-sharp minor, and two further, substantial preludes stand on their own. These tricky movements are given persuasive performances in which tension, as it surely must, ebbs and flows and, in many ways, I enjoyed them more than the more obviously appealing dances. These include a spirited *Rigaudon et Double* and a noble *Passacaille* as well as *Allemandes,* etc, all of them ably characterised. The instrument used is a Ruckers copy playing at A415. The sound is lovely and well recorded though the temperament is rather conservative – the *Pavane* should surely hurt more than this. But as so often with Naxos and the French Baroque this disc offers many rewards for modest outlay. *David Hansell*

Stefano Landi ***Homo fugit velut umbra*** L'Arpeggiata, Christina Pluhar *dir* 54' 56"
Alpha 020

This recording is so hugely enjoyable that I have procrastinated lengthily before attempting to describe it. Landi's music is beguilingly simple, yet has a piquancy which catches the heart. In the hands of this serendipitous gathering of performers, it is lifted to the height of persuasiveness, exceeding even the acme of what its composer could have imagined, by the application of authentic period practices and modern ideas and techniques together, in a way which Landi would surely have loved if only he could have heard it. My guess is that these infectiously engaging singers have sung folk and pop music as well as classical: the close miking enables them to croon effortlessly, even in the high tenor range. Yet their technique and diction are fully under control, with crispness and sharp rhythm ably contrasted with melodrama or tenderness, as the words demand. Enhancing the singers' expertise, the battery of instrumentalists paint a background for the protagonists as expertly as any artist. The harmonies bathe the singers in light or shade, ebbing and flowing with complete interpretative unanimity; the sweeping effects are achieved through minute detail, almost *pointillisme*, with tight rhythms, perfectly judged ornaments, dynamic subtleties, and throughout everything a total enjoyment of the music and of the moment. So while some purists might turn their noses up at the use of a psaltery with baroque violins, the Sixties fade-outs or the jazz *pizzicato secco* of the final number, for me the result is sheer delight.
Selene Mills

Nenna ***Il Primo Libro de' Madrigali à quattro voci*** Ensemble Vocale Palazza Incantato, Sergio Ella, dir. 47' 48"
Tactus TC 551401

Nenna is remembered chiefly in connection with Gesualdo, who murdered the dedicatee of Nenna's first book of madrigals 35. Nenna later worked for Gesualdo, but the Gesualdic features of his style probably show the influence of the Prince rather than vice versa. Some more extreme passages in these madrigals (published in 1613) are not entirely convincing. The performances here show the variety of vocal and instrumental ways in which madrigals of the period may be performed, though the use of the whole 13-voice ensemble is a little disconcerting to ears expecting one-to-a-part. But they and the seven players make a good case for Nenna's music. The director's interesting note on performance is in Italian, English and French but the biography of the composer by Dinko Fabris and the texts are in Italian only. *CB*

Rebelo ***Psalmi, Magnificat & Lamentations*** Currende, Erik Van Nevel *dir.*
Eufoda 1344 79' 37"

Well, I had certainly never heard of him, and he is described in the booklet as 'an amateur composer' whatever that means. He certainly had serious intent, and, like his much older contemporary, Heinrich Schütz, clearly had studied the music of Monteverdi and Gabrieli, whose influence, together with that of Frescobaldi, is always evident. Yet he is no imitator: his voice is entirely individual, and he writes music of wonderful expressiveness and power. It's very much in the idiom of the 17th century – unexpected harmonic moves, expressive dissonance, word painting etc; but he manages them with great assurance and intensity, and is capable of writing beautiful counterpoint. The psalm and Magnificat settings are with violins, cornets and sackbuts, the Lamentations with just continuo – the best performed and stunning, powerful music as well – beautifully sung by the small (13-voice) group who judge the intensity of their phrasing to perfection. The instrumental playing is assured and mostly well-balanced, although the sackbuts don't always play their rapid passages in tune. I also wonder why the violone has to always double at 16' pitch, whatever the texture. But the music is fabulous. Rebelo is a real discovery, and this recording will lead to many demands for editions.
Robert Oliver

Scheidt ***Tabulatura nova I*** Franz Raml *hpscd & org*, with Christina Landshamer *S* 134' 03" (2 CDs in a box)
MDG 614 1155-2

I first encountered Scheidt's keyboard music before Franz Raml was born, and am now on to my third edition (Hermann Keller's Peters anthology, Mahrenholz's complete works, which I bought by weight at a sale, and Vogel's recent Breitkopf volumes). Despite Scheidt's slightly dogged determination to persist with systematic variation, he's a composer well worth study and playing. His carefully arranged publication makes sense as an aural as well as a printed entity, and this complete performance is an ideal accompaniment to the editions. Both instruments are interesting. The organ, at St. Jacobi, Lüdingworth, dating from 1598 and worked over by Arp Schnitger (1682/3) and Jürgen Ahrend (1981/2), is a substantial three-manual one that enables the music to be presented with clarity, while the newly-built copy of an unusual 17th-century single-manual harpsichord with six registers has a fine characterful sound which I'm sure we will hear in other German repertoire. My only disappointment is the singing of some of the chorale melodies – not for their presence but because of the rapid vibrato that disfigures the higher notes; and I'm puzzled what Mr and Mrs Arnolfini are doing on the cover. This is a set that all enthusiasts for 17th-century German music will need to buy. *CB*

Tomkins ***Above the starrs: verse anthems & consort music*** Emma Kirkby, Catherine King, Charles Daniels, Donald Grieg, Richard Wistreich, Jonathan Arnold *SATBarBB* Fretwork 73' 31"
Harmonia Mundi HMNU 907320
Above the starrs my saviour dwells, O Lord lett me knowe myne end, Rejoice asnd singe, Sing unto God, Thou art my king, Woe is me & viol music

Superb performances by some of the outstanding singers of our time, the premier consort of viols, and Tomkins himself, provide over 70 minutes of marvellous music. Fretwork play fantasies, In nomines and dances for 3, 4, 5 and 6 part consorts, and accompany the singers in all the verse anthems in their own publi-

cation of nearly 10 years ago, which introduced these important and very characteristic pieces to so many. Here they receive performances which fully justify their stature. The singers use unobtrusive period pronunciation, and, incidentally, ignore some of the recommended accidentals of the edition, and all sing as superbly as one would expect. Charles Daniels is outstanding. Emma Kirkby brings out the expressive details of Tomkins' declamation – not always easy, but she does it with ease. Catherine King does duty as high tenor and second soprano, also with ease, and delivers the only consort song – a deeply melancholy psalm setting – beautifully. Richard Wistreich's astonishing range fulfils Tomkins' astonishing demands. The viols double the singers throughout, with such delicacy and ensemble that at times they make a composite tone. The consort pieces have marvellous variety. Tomkins varies his textures in the 6-part fantasias, so that all six instruments only play all together at climactic moments, and the results are very satisfying for the listener. His 3- and 4-part pieces bring moments of instrumental brilliance, but for the most part, mere display is the least of his concerns. The music requires this level of performer, but also this level of ensemble excellence – a rare combination, to be snapped up. *Robert Oliver*

Sing on Sister Songs of divers Airs and Natures [by] Thomas Vautor (fl. 1590-1620)
Gesualdo Consort, Rose Consort of Viols, Gerald Place dir. 64' 03"
Meridian **CDE 84434** (© 2001)

Selene Mills reviewed this in October 2001; she generally liked it, though found that the tracks with the Rose Consort raised it to a higher level than the purely vocal ones. It is certainly worth hearing to extend ones knowledge beyond the one (Sweet Suffolk...) or two (Mother I will have...) pieces which is the extent of most people's knowledge of Vautor's 'Songs of divers Ayres and Natures' (which, as the booklet avoids mentioning, dates from 1619). *CB*

'The fam'd Italian Masters': Music for two trumpets, strings and continjo from the Italian Baroque Crispian Steele-Perkins, Alison Balsom *tpt*, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman *org* 62' 28"
Hyperion CDA67359
Cazzati, Grossi, Jacchini, Lazzari, Legrenzi, Melani, A. Scarlatti, Stradella, Torelli, Vitali, Vivaldi

It comes as no surprise to have a well researched, well presented and beautifully played issue from this team of artists and recording company. The trumpeters, representing the pioneering and the newest generations of players, are well matched and sparkling in duet and share the solo works equally. Inevitably, there is a lot of D major, but the necessary variety is provided by the interspersed string sonatas being in minor keys and by the finale – Vivaldi's well-known double concerto – which is in C. In keeping with recent thought, all the pieces are played with just one player per part, the bass at 8-foot pitch and organ (only) continuo. The players sound happy and that is certainly how their playing left me. It scarcely needs it, but this gets the warmest of recommendations. *David Hansell*

The Jesuit Operas **Kapsberger** ***Apotheosis sive consecratio SS. Ignatii et Francisco Xaverii;*** **Zipoli** ***San Ignacio de Loyolla***
Ensemble Abendmusik, James David Christie *dir* 129' 54" (2 CDs)
Dorian **DOR-93243**

I was excited by the prospect of this set. My mind was filled with the hope of getting some insight into the music for Jesuit plays by Muffat, Biber, etc. My expectations were not quite met, however, partly because I'd been unrealistic: the Kapsberger is far too Roman and early to be anything like Biber, etc., and the second compilation drama (given from a Bolivian source, but the piece was performed throughout much of South America) is too Neapolitan and modern. The instrumental contributions to both pieces are very good, but I found some of the singing hard work, especially high-pitched men. Somehow ensembles are always better than solos. Without doubt a worthwhile project, and one I'm glad to see Dorian producing, but not something I think I'll listen to very often.The texts are given in Latin/English and Spanish/English. *BC*

New World Symphonies. From Araujo to Zipoli: an A to Z of Latin American Baroque
Ex Cathedra, QuintEssential, Jeffrey Skidmore 69' 40"
Hyperion CDA67380
Padilla *Missa Ego flos campi* interpersed with music by J. de Araujo, G. Fernandez, H. Franco, A. Lobo, Zêspedes & Zipoli

This recording is dedicated to Michaela Comberti, leader of Ex Cathedra since 1987: it is a tribute to Hyperion that, in spite its own loss, the booklet can mention her death on March 4th yet be in circulation less than a month later. It is a strange coincidence that this was being recorded just as *Missa Mexicana*, the overlapping recording by Andrew Lawrence-King & The Harp Consort, was piled up in the shops (see *EMR* 83). Both feature Padilla's *Missa Ego flos campi* and end with Juan Garcia de Zéspedies's catchy *Convivando esta la noche*. But the two recordings are very different, so don't worry about duplication. Both directors have a strong feel for the Mexican rhythms, though AL-K sometimes makes them more explicit, which some listeners may find a bit lily-gilding. In principle, I prefer AL-K's use of an ensemble of vocal soloists rather than the Ex Cathedra choir; the latter has no problems with the music, but the bulk expressivity in slow pieces can feel overdone. AL-K's use of instrumental improvisation (anyone who has been on a course with him will know his ability to get players away from the written notes) is immensely stimulating; but repeated listening to improvisation undermines its purpose. I'm not going to weigh up the merits of these two discs: both are first rate, and had Harmonia Mundi got their recording out as quickly as Hyperion so left several years between the releases, the clash would have been less obvious. On a trivial note, I was amused that an Indian text of six words needed 12 words for the translator's credit. *CB*

LATE BAROQUE

Bach ***St Matthew Passion*** I: Deborah York, Magdalena Kozena, Mark Padmore, Peter Harvey *SATB*; II Julia Gooding, Susan Bickley, James Gilchrist, Stephan Loges *SATB*; Gabrieli Players, Paul McCreesh 161' 32" (2 CDs)
Archiv **474 200-2**

Bach ***Sacred Vocal Works*** Various soloists, Monteverdi Choir, English Bach Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner 510' 01" (9 CDs)
Archiv 469 769-2 (rec 1985-8) £

I've placed these two sets together because I happened to listen to the Matthew Passions on consecutive days and the Gardiner version is a good example of the earlier generation of early-music performance with which to compare the McCreesh. The most notable feature of the latter is the relationship of voice and instruments in the arias: I'm not degrading the importance of the conductor by saying that they sound as if he isn't there and that the musicians are making chamber music together. The two outstanding voices are the ladies of Choir I, with Deborah York by no means outclassed by the more famous Czeck mezzo. The other six (+ the ripieno soprano Ulla Munch) are all fine; one would normally single out the evangelist, and Mark Padmore is excellent, but I don't think I've heard a Bach Passion with a poor evangelist: if you're no good, you don't get the job!

McCreesh takes seriously Bach's layout into two choirs. But Gardiner's Anne Sofie von Otter starts off in Choir I and finishes in Choir II while his less-satisfactory Ann Monoyios moves in the opposite direction. A distinctive characteristic of the Matthew Passion is the layout for two ensembles; so it seems a bit perverse in a no-expenses-spared recording to ignore that, especially since the Gardiner disc has such clear stero spacing.

The feature of the McCreesh peformance that has attracted particular publicity is the use of just nine singers. If you have no preconceptions that the work is for chorus, it makes perfect sense of the score and surviving performance materials (except that implies additional singers for the Ancillae & Pilate's wife, for Judas & Priest 1, and for Peter, Priest 2 & Caiphas – but earlier versions may have differed). In fact, I found that the small ensemble felt just right (apart from the opening chorus taking a while to settle). The part-writing was absolutely clear, without the need of individual lines of interest to be artificially brought out, and the balance with the orchestra sounded better than in Gardiner's recording.

One great assets of the McCreesh recording is the use of proper organs, not the usual portables. Gardiner's allocation of his three chamber instruments is another example of his lack of interest in the two-choir layout of the forces, with one for the evangelist, one for arias and a third chiefly for choruses and chorales. Bach may have originally performed the work with one, but McCreesh takes advantage of two fine new instruments by Marcussen in Roskilde Cathedral (the magnificent old instrument heard in previous recordings there is not used), and it is thrilling to hear a proper organ sound, especially in the dramatic sections of recitative, played confidently by James Johnstone.

The McCreesh recording shows the advantages of looking at the music, trusting what it seems to imply about how it should be performed, getting the best performers available, then working with them to present the music with understanding, sympathy and skill. The music can seem overpowering and heavy (especially the opening chorus). McCreesh's lighter manner illustrates *Komm* rather than *klagen*; is it fanciful to detect a pastoral tone in the 12/8, reminding us of the last big feast of the Church year, Christmas, hinted by the words 'als wie ein Lamm'? Gardiner takes nearly a minute longer for this movement, with four heavy beats per bar. Curiously, he is a few minutes shorter over the whole work, though I wouldn't have guessed it. I'm not sure whether his analysis of the story into sections helps the listener. The McCreesh version flows better; it is also virtually a mid-price set, since it is on two discs rather than three. Buy it, forget about the single-voice controversy, and just enjoy it: I recommend it strongly.

The rest of the Gardiner package includes the Christmas Oratorio, St John Passion and Mass in B minor, nine discs with a fat booklet containing excellent notes but no translations. (An annoying feature of the McCreesh booklet, incidentally, is the way that the texts for the second disc are numbered as in the score rather given the track number). Things have changed since the late 1980s, and I suspect that the conductor himself might like the chance to re-record (though he is unlikely to change his mind about the vocal forces). But this set offers good performances and can be recommended to anyone wishing to buy such a packet: perhaps a useful present (along with the Bärenreiter scores) for a young relative studying music. It is advertised on the back of this week's Radio Times at £5.99 + £2.49 p & p: 0870 09 45678 (quoting 3 30002 or www.britanniaclassical.co.uk *CB*

Bach ***St John Passion*** James Gilchrist *Evangelist*, John Bernays *Christ*, Joe Littlewood, James Bowman, Matthew Beale, Colin Baldy *SATB*, Choir of New College Oxford, Collegium Novum, Edward Higginbottom 110' 17" (2 CDs)
Naxos **8.557296-7** £

This is very much an in-house New College production. All the singers are past or present members of the choir, and the orchestra has been specially assembled for the recording. In the booklet Higginbottom speaks of aspiring 'to a level of authenticity almost entirely absent in other recordings', pointing to the use of boys' voices and to the fact that New College, like the Thomaskirche, draws on both university and church performers. Of course, Bach's choir probably sounded very different from an English collegiate one, but this is undoubtedly a distinctive recording. Christ's trial is compelling, with vivid narration by James Gilchrist and incisive choral contributions. The choir conveys the vehemence of the crowd and delivers the chorales with conviction. But not all of the arias are as persuasive: I thought that 'Ach mein Sinn' and 'Erwäge wie sein blutgefarbter Rükken' needed more detail and projection. Thus a slightly uneven performance, but it gains effect from being a collegiate enterprise, and I found it a moving musical accompaniment to Holy Week. *Stephen Rose*

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

Bach ***Orchestral Suites*** Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Jeanne Lamon *dir.*
Analecta FL 2 3134 67' 32"
BWV 1066, 1068, 1069

These are rewarding performances of the orchestral suites. Tafelmusik favour brisk tempi: the bourrées are energetic, and there is nimble playing from the oboists and bassoonists in the fugal sections of the overtures. Each movement is judiciously characterised with a strong sense of its dance metre. There's plenty of lift on the upbeats and sometimes a Frenchified lilt in the quavers. Overall, highly recommended. *Stephen Rose*

Couperin ***Keyboard Music*** **– 1** Angela Hewitt *pf* 74' 07
Hyperion **CDA67440**
Ordres 6, 8, 18

I would worry if performance practice moved back a century and Couperin was heard almost exclusively on the piano. But I am surely not our only reader who first played his music on that instrument (indeed I didn't even see a harpsichord close-up until my Cambridge interview when I was eighteen), and the piano is still the most widely-available instrument for 'classical' musicians. So I have no hesitation in welcoming so fine a recording on the 'wrong' instrument. True, something is lost, especially in the slower movements; these can take a little more pulling around on the essentially less poetic harpsichord (there's my neck in the noose!), but need to move a bit more on the piano to avoid sounding sentimental. Angela Hewitt doesn't try to make her piano sound at all harpsichordy, but has mastered all the problems of the notation, and makes it feel right on the piano. Those who don't like the harpsichord (yes, such people exist), can grasp from this much of what Couperin's music is about; those who do can hear that, despite the loss in the transference of instruments, there is an essence that a fine player can distil from any keyboard. Angela Hewitt has also written a fine booklet note*. *CB*

** referring to Jane Clark & Derek Connon's 'The mirror of human life', published by King's Music and reviewed in EMR 86.*

Fiocco ***Missa Solemnis in D, Ave Maria, Homo Quidam*** Greta De Reyghere, Hilda Coppé, Jean Nirouit, Jan Van Elsacker, Jan Van der Crabben, Werner Van Mechelen, Dirk Snellings *SSATBBB*, Capella Brugensis, Collegium Instrumentale Brugense, Patrick Peire 60' 30"
Naxos **8.567120** £

This is the third Fiocco CD I've seen in around a year, and I'd say that it's possi-

bly the best so far. The music is lovely, with a lot of chorus (one or two real fugues), graceful solos, difficult trumpet parts, and stylistic string writing. All of the performers contribute magnificently to the mass. I'm not so persuaded by the *Ave Maria*, which I found slightly weaker. The undeniable highpoint is the amazing *Crucifixus* for three basses, two cellos, bassoon and continuo – it made me think of the gorgeous *Lamentations* by Franz Xavier Richter, but I guess we know which way around the borrowing went... There is lots more Fiocco to do, and I hope Peire will persevere. *BC*

Handel *Rinaldo* Vivica Genaux *Rinaldo*, Miah Persson *Almirena*, Inga Kalna *Armida*, Lawrence Zazzo *Goffredo*, James Rutherford *Argante*, Christophe Dumaux *Eustazio*, Dominique Visse *Mago*, Freiburger Barockorchester, Rénê Jacobs *dir* 193' (3 CDs in box Harmonia Mundi **HMC 901796.98**)

There will be a lengthy review of this by Anthony Hicks next month

Handel *Duetti Italiani: the 10 duets for soprano and alto* Rossana Bertini, Claudio Cavina *SA*, La Venexiana 66'46"
Cantus **C 9620** (rec 1997)
HWV 178, 181, 185-6, 188, 190, 193-4, 197-8

This was reviewed by Anthony Hicks in *EMR*56, Dec. 1999; he preferred the 1990 Hyperion recording (CDA66440) of Gillian Fisher and James Bowman, which has the same programme except for omitting HWV181. *CB*

Händel *Organ Concertos* Daniel Chorzempa, Concerto Amsterdam, Jaap Schröder *dir.*
Vol. 1 PentaTone classics **PTC 5186 103** (55' 09") Op. 4 Nos. 1-4
Vol. 2 PentaTone classics **PTC 5186 104** (63' 26") Op. 4 Nos 5, 6; op. 7/2, 5; No. 13

I was a bit suspicious of applying the wizardry of modern technology to oldish (1976) but hardly historical performances; I can't test the effect of the Super Audio CD (comment from anyone equipped with SACD would be welcome), but the performances themselves are enjoyable. Each disc is available separately, and it's worth buying at least one of them, whether or not you have four speakers scattered round your listening room (these discs do not use the fifth channel). The organ is Dutch, but is a chamber one not far removed from the English ones. The object of the release is presumably to demonstrate the new technology with music in the new form of the organ concerto. *CB*

Locatelli *L'Art del Violino* *12 Violin Concertos with 24 Capricci* Luca Eanfoni, Reale Concerto 237' 18" (3 CDs in a box)
Dynamic **CDS 394/1-3 ££**

The 1733 publication of the music here presented was one of the major publishing feats of its day - 295 pages costing a month's salary. For their money, purchasers got 12 fairly conventional violin concertos, the general idiom of which is similar to that of Tartini reviewed last month. But they also got the 24 *Caprices*, technique-busting fantasias (one for each *allegro*) that required unprecendented dexterity and skill in terms of extensions and altitude (17th position at a time when conventional tutors went up to 7th). These frequently dwarf the movements of which they are nominally part and are then prolonged further by cadenzas, taken in this instance from a 1743 source. So there is much here for connoisseurs of violin technique but I have to say that I did not find the musical content especially gripping ('sounds like Kreutzer studies' muttered a youthful passing violinist) especially when listening to the set in a sitting, even given the wow factor which is a major ingredient of the caprices. This is not really a criticism of either the (modern instrument) heroic soloist or band who play with a sense of style and impressive ensemble, but even they can only play what is on offer and this, although I found it intriguing, did not ultimately move me. *David Hansell*

We reckon that the Wallfisch recording is the standard, amazingly pleasing in tone, despite the virtuosity of the Caprices. CB/BC

Scheibe Sinfonias Concerto Copenhagen, Andrew Manze dir. 61' 37"
Chandos **Chaconne CHAN 0696** (©1994, re-mastered 2003) ££

Scheibe is best known for his music criticism and his attack on the vocal music of J. S. Bach. This reissue reminds us that he was also a talented composer. His sinfonias show a richness of invention and a knack for memorable themes. Two of the pieces were written for periods of royal mourning at the Danish court and feature solemn processions and plangent sonorities. Some of the other pieces, however, are sheer galanterie in the brilliance of their allegros or the grace of their slow movements; a particular highlight is the racy alternation of major and minor chords in the Sinfonia à 4 in A major. Concerto Copenhagen play with vigour, relishing the contrasts and colours of this music. Well worth getting if you missed the original release. *Stephen Rose*

Vivaldi *La Pastorella and other chamber concertos* The Chandos Baroque Players 58' 15" (rec 1988)
Hyperion *Helios* **CDH55102** ££
RV86-7, 94-5, 105, 107

This Hyperion re-release needs absolutely no recommendation at all from me. The recording is as sharp a testament to the company's high quality as any, and the performances have not lost one gram of their vitality and tastefulness in the 15 years that have elapsed since the sessions. Despite the increasing number of CDs available of this repertoire, this disc is right up there with the best of them. *BC*

Vivaldi *Flute Concertos op. 10* Severino Gazelloni, I Musici 60. 00"
PentaTone classics **5186 108**

I'm puzzled at the use of these pretty-good but a bit outmoded recordings from 1968 and 1973 to demonstrate Super Audio CD. I quite enjoyed them (on non-super audio), but as usual with modern-instrument baroque, the accented chords protruded in the fast movements and the slow ones are too heavy and vibratious. *CB*

Zelenka *Sacred Music* Carolyn Sampson, Rebecca Outram, Robin Blaze, James Gilchrist, Michael George, Peter Harvey *SScTTBB*, Choir of... & The King's Consort, Robert King 73' 52"
Hyperion CDA67350
Lectiones & Invitatorium from Officium defunctorum, Z47, Litany Z147, Regina coeli laetare Z134, Salve Regina Z135,

This disc is the fourth in the series 'Bach's Contemporaries', but the first to fit the title, after CDs featuring J. S. Bach's three Leipzig predecessors. Zelenka served from about 1710 in the Electoral court chapel at Dresden, where he helped create a new corpus of German music for the Catholic rite – August the Strong having gone over to Rome in order to claim the Polish crown. All the music here is dated *c.* 1727–33 (according to Peter Wollny's excellent booklet note). A *Salve Regina* for soprano (adapted from Anon) and a *Regina coeli* for SSA establish a stylistic model of quasi-operatic virtuosity supported by colourful obbligato wind parts. From the *Officium defunctorum* come three solo Lessons, one each for S, T and B: these too are rather operatic in flavour, with a pattern of declamatory arioso introducing an aria with obbligato wind. On the first and longest, the pairing of chalumeau and soprano testifies to Zelenka's imaginative colour sense. Also from the *Officium defunctorum*, the Invitatory alternates declamatory alto solo clauses with refrain-like responses from the chorus. This is the

most original piece on the CD, dark in colour and vividly expressive. In the largest-scale work, a Litany of the Venerable Sacrament, the text again prompts a refrain-like use of the chorus, answering verses from four soloists; the text is of course partly penitential, but the affect that predominates is of a robust and rather showy thanksgiving. King's chorus may be too large at 6-4-4-4 (in 1733, according to Rifkin, Dresden's court chapel could muster only 3-4-2-2) and stands too far back on the aural stage; otherwise the recorded soundscape is basically well balanced. King's tempos are sensibly moderate, the performing style clear and unmannered. The soloists (of whom Sampson is much the busiest) are all very good (though the sopranos could sound more androgynous); their tendency to dramatise is not inapt for Dresden, where Italian opera played a role in shaping polite taste. While Zelenka is fond of a conservative, complex counterpoint, he displays a more modern taste in affective harmonies and idiosyncratic sonorities. This sampling of his *stile misto* is, for my money, one of the most attractive of King's recent outings. *Eric Van Tassel*

El Amore, las penas y las sombras: La rosa purpura del Plata *(Musique et poésie au Pérou et au Mexique baroques)* Bárbara Kusa *S*, Gabriel Schebor *guitar/vihuela* 67' 46"
Voice of Lyrics **VOL BL 701**

The main thing about this disc, irrespective of the music, it that Bárbara Kusa is a marvellous young singer, the best to come out of Argentina since Maria Cristina Kiehr. It is worth buying for her alone. She sings some of the 18 songs in the Codex Zuola from Peru; this contains just the melody, here expanded with accompaniments for guitars and, in a couple of cases, three other voices. I'd rather have had the whole MS, but instead they are mixed with guitar pieces from two Mexican sources, Codice Saldivar 4 (attrib Santiago de Murcia) and MS 1560 from the Biblioteca Nacional de México, stylishly played. It seems very odd that a record label called 'Voice of Lyrics' should consider the words unimportant. There are excellent notes in French, Spanish, English and German but no texts in any language. The songs are enjoyable to hear, but it is frustrating to have only the incipit or title to give a clue as to what they are about. *CB*

Un'alma inamorata (A Soul in Love) Cordaria, Linda Perillo S, Walter Reiter *dir* + continuo: Lynda Sayce, Cath Sharman, Paula Chateauneuf, Tim Roberts, Jo Levine, Jan Walters 59' 12"
Signum **SIGCD033**

Buxtehude *Singet dem Herrn*; **Capricornus** *Surrexit pastor bonus*; Handel *Un'alma inamorata*; **D. Purcell** *Amintas*; **Telemann** *Gott will Mensch und sterblich werden*; **Vivaldi** *Lungi dal vago volto*

This is an attractive and well-planned programme in which multi-movement works by Vivaldi, Handel and Telemann are preceded by earlier sectional pieces, thus offering a survey of cantata evolution c1620-c1720. Both secular and sacred music are represented, the latter including a lovely item from *Der Harmonischer Gottesdienst* as well as the most obscure piece, by Samuel Capricornus. Linda Perillo has a bright, well-focussed tone, the agility required by the passage-work and is also suitably dramatic in all the recitatives. Both she and her constant obbligato partner, Walter Reiter's violin, add ornaments that succeed in being striking on each hearing – no mean achievement – and the pair are ably supported by a starry continuo team, too many of whom play at once, some might argue. Other than aurally, this is actually quite difficult to work out as the relevant information is quite difficult to read and does not all appear on the same page of the otherwise thorough booklet. BC's essay appears in English, German and French and these are also the languages into which the sung texts are translated. This is a recital I have enjoyed several times – recommended. *David Hansell*

CLASSICAL

Anfossi *Giuseppe Riconosciuto* Michela Sburlati *Giuseppe*, Danja Lukan *Beniamino*, Roberto Abbodanza *Giuda*, Chiarastella Onorati *Simeone*, Nunzia Santodirocco *Asenatha*, Ferdinand von Bohmer *Thanete*, Wiener Jeunesse Chor, Ensemble Salieri Wien, Marisa Fabri, 108'17" (2CDs)
Fonè **013**

More than the works of any single composer the libretti of Metastasio, profane and sacred, embody the ideals of 18th-Century musical drama in its most elevated forms, *opera seria* and oratorio. Like the recording of Salieri's setting of *La Passione di Gesù Cristo*, reviewed last month, this pair of discs commemorates, somewhat belatedly, the 300th anniversary of the poet's birth in Rome in 1698. The recording incorporates advances in technology developed by Sony and Philips and, we are informed, only fully appreciable on a new generation of CD players. These, however, deliver a vivid, almost living sound quality on any normal equipment and the result is a very acceptable experience of one of Metastasio's frequently set *azione sacre* in a version, first given in Rome in 1776, by one of the more neglected operatic composers of the Neapolitan school. Generations of composers, mostly Italians, gave musical form to Metastasio's libretti and this particular oratorio, while not exceptional, is a good example of a type of composition that has, for reasons of expense and the limited availability of usable scores, been largely neglected by those involved in the revival of works of the classical period. The fact that there are so many of these compositions by a disconcerting number of gifted composers makes the choice for contemporary performance of any one of them, with rare exceptions, a rather arbitrary matter. In any age masterpieces, neglected or not, are a rare commodity, and I would not claim that Anfossi's *Giuseppe* is among them. It is, however, a very attractive work, especially when performed, as it is here, by a cast of singers and instrumentalists who understand so well the exigencies of a style of music that demands both classical poise and an unforced emotional commitment. *David J Levy*

Duni Giuseppe Riconosciuto Nicola Sette *Giuseppe*, Assia Polito *Tanete*, Rossella Ressa *Ageneta*, Maria Palmitesta Simeone, Antonella Rondinone *Giuda*, Marilena Notarstefano *Beniamino*, Orchestra Barocca del Festival Duni di Matera, Vito Paternoster, Bongiovanni **GB 2305/6-2** 116' 11"

First performed in 1759, a year after he had emigrated to Paris, Egidio Duni's setting of Metastasio's *Giuseppe Riconosciuto* is the composer's sole extant oratorio and probably the last work he wrote before he left Italy to pursue a new career as a pioneer in the emerging genre of *opèra comique*. Duni's piece is distinguished from those of many of his contemporaries by its richness of orchestration, its avoidance of over-dependence on predictable four and eight bar phrase lengths, and a more satisfying use of modulation, especially into minor keys, than is typical of an era often dismissed as somehow chronologically and artistically transitional, when the expressive contrapuntal devices of the high baroque were considered outdated and the imposing majesty of mature classicism had yet to emerge. The result is a potent and effective work that is all the more gratifying for being by a composer who has hitherto been dismissed as a merely secondary talent in an uncertain age of facile and eminently forgettable artistic creation. There is real power in Duni's oratorio and this is well brought out by Paternoster's cast of soloists, who enter into their well-written roles with genuine and often moving conviction. This is overtly theat-

rical music, albeit of a consistently elevated tone, reminding us that Metastasio conceived his oratorios as *azione sacre*, sacred dramas, whose content of human conflict and frailty is at least as important as their religious message of an immutable divine providence which acts, in the economy of the pieces, to resolve the plot as graciously or, if you like, gratuitously as does the act of any pagan deity or merciful monarch in the parallel and equivalent form of *opera seria*. Vito Paternoster understands this feature of the work and brings to his direction a sense of pace and dramatic process that is in the best tradition of Italian operatic performance. In doing this he renders justice to the particular nature of Duni's inspiration and brings the pleasure of yet another welcome rediscovery to a contemporary audience. *David J Levy*

Grétry ***Richard Coeur de Lion*** Richard Edelman *Blondel*, Hubert Zingerle *Richard*, Mannella Pennicchi *Laurette*, Flavia Bernardi *Antonio*, Barbara Pichler *Marguerite*, Orch. Del Giovani del Conservatorio 'Claudio Monteverdi' di Bolzano, &
Denys le Tyran, Bruno De Simone *Denys*, Claudio Di Segni *Timoleon*, Romano Franceschetto *Chrysostome*, Stefania Donzelli *La Femme de Chrysostome*, Orchestra Internazionale d'Italia, Opera Coro At P. A. Ars Pulchrima Artium, (rec 1989).
123' 46" (2 CDs in box)
Nuova Era **7327/28**

This set presents not one Grétry opera but two, distanced from each other by ten years and the ideological if not musical abyss of the French Revolution. *Richard Coeur de Lion*, premiered in 1784, is often regarded as Grétry's best work, not least due to its strong libretto by Michel-Jean Sedaine. In post-revolutionary France, its tale of devotion to a captive king became emblematic for monarchists not least because of Richard's moving lament 'Si l'univers entier m'oublie' and, more especially, Blondel's air 'O Richard! O mon roi!' which became the ubiquitous if unofficial anthem of French royalists. These, however, are only two fine tunes in a musically rich score which also contains several rousing ensembles. In this performance the male roles are sung more convincingly than the female, while the general effect of the piece is somewhat spoiled, to my ears at least, by a style of spoken dialogue that is inappropriately whimsical in this, or any, dramatic context. This diminishes the overall power of a work that, despite its designation as opéra comique, deserves a more respectful treatment. With Denys le Tyran, which occupies one third of the set, we are on different ground. Here we hear the authentic voice of revolutionary opera in a piece that ends with a rousing chorus of La Marseillaise. The libretto may be execrable but, despite this, the piece is redeemed, so far as is possible, by Grétry's music which is, as ever, imaginative and well constructed. These are not ideal recordings of either opera. Richard, in particular, suffers from a rather unfocussed acoustic. However the scores are worth hearing on both musical and historical grounds and so the set may be cautiously recommended to collectors prepared to put up with the sort of extraneous audience noises typical of live and under-edited Italian performances. *David J Levy*

Haydn *Symphonies 41 in C, 58 in F & 59 in A ('Fire')* Cologne CO, Helmut Müller-Brühl 57' 05"
Naxos **8.557092** £

Here, as volume 26 of the Naxos progress through the symphonies, we are given three fine works from the late 1760s in performances that are historically well informed, but performed on standard instruments. There is something old-fashioned about the very deliberate tempo chosen for the slow movement of the *Fire* – it is marked *Andante o più tosto Allegretto*, yet is taken almost as though it were an *Adagio*. Otherwise the performances are unexceptionable: lively, well played and cleanly recorded. The three symphonies might be thought to offer poor value, but at the Naxos bargain price no one should complain. There is a brief note in English and German.
Peter Branscombe

Haydn *Symphonies 82-87 'Paris'* The Hanover Band, Roy Goodman *hpscd and dir.* (2 separate CDs) 79' 16" + 79' 15"
Hyperion *Helios* **CDH55123-124** ££

This excellent series continues with smart reissues of recordings originally made in December 1991 and November-December 1993. All six of the 'Paris' symphonies are comfortably accommodated on two truly long-playing CDs. Almost the only tiny fault I noticed was that the urgent opening *Vivace assai* of *The Bear* lacks the last degree in precision of attack. Generally the readings are as one has come to expect, and be grateful for: crisp articulation, warm and eloquent string playing, especially in the slow movements, perky winds, springy rhythms, vivid timpani – not forgetting due appreciation of the inner parts. The harpsichord continuo at this late stage of Haydn's oeuvre may not appeal to some listeners, but it makes a modest additional contribution to the palette that I rather like; I accept that there are at least equally valid reasons for doubting its validity, certainly its necessity, yet I admire its contribution to the *Capriccio* of 86, for instance. Roy Goodman's unfailingly fresh readings are expertly supported by his players, and there can be few more attractive sets of these superb works. There are brief but useful three-language notes. *Peter Branscombe*

Van Maldere ***Sinfonie*** Academy of Ancient Music, Filip Brai *dir* 58' 30"
Klara MMP 012
In g op. 4/1, in D op. 5/1, in A (Viola obbligato), Sinfonia a4 in F

The neglect of the Netherlands violinist and composer van Maldere is redressed in this recording of four of his three-movement symphonies, which were written in the 1760s. Immaculately played by the AAM, these tuneful works, often characterised by folk influences, give all the interest to the strings, while oboes and horns have a generally supporting role in the first two works. Of the two strings works, the A major symphony is interesting for its string textures, featuring an obbligato viola. Unusually (and perhaps anachronistically) these works use a theorbo continuo. For those wanting to explore the byways of the development of the symphony these are worthwhile works. *Ian Graham-Jones*

Mozart ***Symphony 38 'Prague', 5 arias with interview, rehearsal and filming notes***
Cecilia Bartoli *mS*, Concentus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt 113'
BBC Opus Arts **OA 0820 D DVD**

This DVD was recorded at the Styriarte Festival in July 2001. Since it is the first DVD I have experienced, a few general observations may be permitted: the presentation strikes me as gratuitously swish, aimed lower than one could wish – one has to search hard, and sometimes in vain, for hard facts: list of contents, Köchel numbers, Bartoli's voice-type (as if most people don't know!), the composition of the orchestra, English version of the words (the Italian ones are printed in the booklet, along with notes in English, French and German about the music, the singer and the conductor). The impact, however, is absolutely riveting, with Bartoli in her element in front of the enthusiastic Graz audience – though I find something a bit depressing about the inevitable emphasis on the visual, with the listener/viewer denied the chance to look at an orchestral section whose contribution he may find more interesting than what the cameraman wishes on him, and bitty re-

hearsal material. The sound is of high quality, with lovely playing from Harnoncourt's band, and comparatively few of the interpretative eccentricities that can come between this conductor and the music he so obviously cares about. The *Prague* Symphony is appreciated in its full stature, with strong contrasts and many perceptive touches; the slow movement, though, strikes me as mannered in its phrasing. As for Bartoli, she is electrifying: very bold, precise in coloratura, vivid in the Allegros, wonderfully expressive in the recitatives as well as in the slow sections of the arias. *Peter Branscombe*

Paisiello *Petit Concert Italien* Patrizia Cigna, Intermusica Ensemble, Franco Piva 69' 27"
Bongiovanni **GB 2538-2**
+ *Tirsi a Fille, Fille a Tirsi, La Scusa*

This engaging recital of Paisiello's non-theatrical music includes three solo cantatas – two accompanied by full orchestra and one by strings alone – and a vocal divertissement that features, most unusually, a concertato duet for harp and horn. Patrizia Cigna's assured soprano is ideal in this repertoire which extends into another age the lyric heritage of such figures as Stradella and Alessandro Scarlatti while bringing to light a neglected area of creation in which Paisiello excelled as probably the most naturally gifted Italian melodist of his generation. This is a little gem of a disc that can safely be recommended to those listeners who have less taste for the rough and tumble of the composer's more familiar field of comic opera. As such, it is a credit both to Paisiello's memory and to an ensemble which can so convincingly convey the music's enduring spirit of co-mingled pathos and charm.
David J Levy

Sarti *Enea nel Lazio* Marat Galiachmetov *Latino*, Jana Ivanilova *Lavinia*, Marina Philippova *Enea*, Konstantin Nikitin *Turno*, Camerata Saint Petersburg, The Youth Choir of Saint Petersburg, Arcady Steinlucht, 93' 21"
Bongiovanni **GB 2334/35-2**

Of all the eminent Italian composers who took the Czarina's rouble during the reign of Catherine the Great, Giuseppe Sarti remained longest at the well-rewarded but frequently demanding court of St. Petersburg. By the time he wrote *Enea nel Lazio* in 1799 Sarti was almost seventy years of age and had already spent no less than a decade and a half in Russia. The Empress Catherine, his original patron, was already three years dead when *Enea* was first performed and the work, more *festa teatrale* than *opera seria*, was written for the gratification of her successor and son, Czar Paul I. Though brief, *Enea nel Lazio* is a musically impressive opera whose two concise acts, each of which contains a duet and a trio as well as the normal sequence of recitatives and bravura arias, are linked by a varied and attractive suite of ballet movements somewhat reminiscent of similar interludes in the operas of Gluck. Nothing in the mature classicism of Sarti's well considered score suggests that the composer was losing his creative impulse in the face of advancing years; and if the whole piece, as opposed to its individual numbers, lacks any overall dramatic impetus that is to do not with a failure of the composer's inspiration, which is sustained throughout, but with the nature of a libretto designed, not unlike that of *La Clemenza di Tito*, to celebrate conventional monarchical virtues more than to plumb the troubled depths of human emotion. I am happy to say that Arcady Steinlucht and his Russian cast seem quite at home in this most agreeable reminder of a musical *ancien regime* that remains, despite its overtly Italian form of expression, emblematic of a musical and cultural era that was once pan-European in its scope, making this a recording that deserves a respected place in the collection of any admirer of classical opera.
David J Levy

VARIOUS

The Sound of Cultures: A Musical Journey through Baroque Europe Ars Antiqua Austria, Gunar Letzbor
Vol. 1 Slovakia 56' 05
Symphonia **SY 01191**
Capricornus, Kusser, Speer etc
Vol. 2 Hungary 53' 35"
Symphonia SY 02198
Ebner, Pal Esterhazy, Fux, Haydn, Schmelzer, Speer, Werner, etc

The Sound of Cultures is a series of CDs exploring the relationship between baroque music and folk music that might have its origins in the baroque era. I had two discs to review, one each of music from Hungary and Slovakia. Art music is represented by Werner, Fux, Esterházy, Haydn, Schmelzer and Ebner on the former and Kusser, Esterházy, Capricornus and Speer on the latter. One thing that occurred to me early on in the experience was that I really couldn't tell which area what I was hearing came from, and it all sounded to my inexperienced ears like 'gypsy' music – it could all have been played by Polish bagpipers in a pub in Zary. There is absolutely no doubt that the integration of popular music into Italianate art music was a major step in the localising of the universal – what makes German music German, if you like. I'm not convinced, though, that the performances here are anything like 17th-century folk musicians. Indeed, the sliding about and spiky bowing, combined with the Bartok harmonies, really didn't work for me at all. Others may react differently, of course. My flat-mate enjoyed the Hungarian dance music enormously. *BC*

Resurrexit: The complete Easter Sunday Mass from Westminster Cathedral Westminster Cathedral Choir, Martin Baker *Master of Music*, Robert Quinney & Martin Baker *org*, Mgr Mark Langham *celebrant*
Herald **HAVPCD 284** 78'56"

EB and I listened to this on Easter Sunday, and it was the only disc on we played on a trip to Britanny at the Easter weekend on which we differed strongly. She can't stand loud organ music, while I was fascinated by the bold improvisations on the introit chant and alternatim in the Sequence and Te Deum: the old forms still live with immense vitality. I was less impressed by the service: Dvorak's Mass in D hardly came up to the liturgical occasion and I've heard Peter Phillips' *Ecce vicit Leo* sound more impressive. It would be interesting for those unfamiliar with the modern Catholic liturgy to hear how a major Mass works now, though how common is it to sing it in Latin? CB

ARCHIV BLUE

This series of reissues from Archiv Produktion contains reissues of classic recordings from the label, the colour referring to the lighter-than-Cambridge packaging, not to any erotic content. Unlike some reissue series, jewel-case boxes are retained and full notes and texts are included. The oldest of the batch I have here in terms of recording date is Dowland *Songs & Lachrimae* (with a further title on the front of the booklet 'I saw my lady weep') by Thomas Binkley's Studio der frühen Musik (471 721-2). This was recorded in 1964, and is a fascinating piece of early-music-revival history. The unhackneyed programme is mostly sombre. The main soloists are Nigel Rogers and Grayston Burgess. The former must have been quite young then, but doesn't sound it; he seems uninvolved with the music, which at the time may have seemed a virtue. Grayston Burgess (Burgett on the cast-list) is, perhaps surprisingly, more effective, with some brilliant ornamentation in 'Can she excuse'. The items sung in four parts are notable for the marvellously clear audibility of the individual voices. The booklet-writer, Larry Palmer, is somewhat apologetic for 'Thou mighty God': it isn't ideal, but has distinctive

positive qualities. Andrea van Ramm isn't at her best. But this is the most intriguing disc of the batch.

The most disappointing is the Gilles Requiem in Herreweghe's 1981 recording (471 722-2), with Musica Antiqua Köln accompanying Collegium Vocale Gent. I'm afraid neither the music nor the performance made much of an impact on us (unusually, EB and I managed to listen to quite a lot of CDs together this month). It's also the least-value in terms of the amount of music you get for your money (only 48' 47"), so this is the least attractive of the batch. We were more excited by three cantatas by Blamont, Clérambault and Stuck from Jennifer Smith, Mireille Delunsch and Thierre Félix (SSBar) and Les Musiciens du Louvre with Marc Minkowski, even if vigour was perhaps slightly to the fore (471 730-2).

Turning to England, I enjoyed Purcell's 'Hail, bright Cecilia' (particularly Charles Daniels' 'natural voice') coupled with 'My beloved spake' and 'O sing unto the Lord', recorded in 1994 from our editions (471 728-2). The greatest surprise comes at the very end in the treatment of the closing 'Alleluia'. The English Concert and Trevor Pinnock give a very pleasing voyage through Handel's *Water Music*; the overture to *Il pastor fido* which completes the disc follows Chrysander's score without the second bassoon part (rec 1983 & 1985; 471 723-2): I'm not casting blame – we only corrected our editionrecently.

The earliest (musically) and most recent in terms of recording date is the Orlando Consort's 1997 Ockeghem commemoration, with the Missa De plus en plus and seven chansons (471 727-2). D. James Ross reviewed it in *EMR* 33 and found the recorded sound of the rather monotextural disc a bit unremitting, and I'm inclined to agree, marvellous though each single track be. Gone is the booklet note by David Fallows that James praised. A feature of the series, in fact, is to include notes about the performances themselves and their significance. These could have turned out to be embarrasingly sycophantic, but in fact are measured and of positive value; I'm all in favour of drawing attention to Charles Daniels' 'native voice', so much more expressive than the usual counter-tenor. All in all, a useful series; I wonder what could be rescued from the cream Archiv LPs of the 1950s. *CB*

****

We have deferred to next month letters from Colin Booth commending Jesper Christensens' continuo book and Graham O'Reilly on the performance of *grands motets* and other topics.

MUSIQUE D'ABORD

More reissues have appeared in Harmonia Mundi's cheap ***musique d'abord*** series, all in white card boxes with slip-in booklets. The one I most enjoyed was Handel's (or rather Haendel's) trio-sonatas op. 2 (**HMA 1951379**, rec 1991), with outstanding playing by London Baroque. The disc labelled Haendel Concerti grossi op. 6 from Les Arts Florissants (**HMA 11951507**, rec. 1994) disappointingly only has nos 1, 2, 6, 7 & 10; worth getting for the prominent oboes if your main set is for strings only. If you don't have a disc of Rameau's Pièces de clavecin en concerts, the 1992 performance by Christophe Rousset, Ryo Terakado *vln* and Kaori Uemura *gamba* is a fine economical choice, though we have a new recording from London Baroque awaiting review.

CANTUS

We have recently received a batch of excellent discs from Cantus, most of which we have already reviewed, either on appearance or as reissues. They reappear as the result of changes in distribution (now coming, like so many interesting labels, from Codaex). It is good that they remain available and we list them as reminders of the wealth of excellent recordings that come and go in and out of the world's markets.

Guillaume de Machaut *Le Jugement du Roi de Navarre* Ensemble Gilles Binchois, Dominique Vellard. 65' 25" (rec 1994)
Cantus **C 9626**

Bestiarium Le Revardie 56' 10" (rec 1990)
Cantus **9626**

Vous ou la mort: cantiones flamencas de amour cortes en el siglo XV Currende Consort, Capella Sancti Michaelis, Concerto Palatino, Eric Van Nevel 77' 31" (1990-94)
Cantus **C9607**

Barbara Strozzi *Primo Libro de' Madrigali (1644)* La Venexiana 62.00" (rec 1997)
Cantus **C9612**

Musica Polonica In Stil Moderno 65' 21"
Cantus **C9611** (rec 1995)

M. Mascitti *6 Sonate da Camera op. 11* Fabrizio Cipriani *vln*, Antonio Fantinuoli *vlc* 60' 55" (rec 1994)
Cantus **C9610**

Vivaldi *12 Sonate per Violino op. II* Fabrizio Cipriano *vln*, Antonio Fantinuali *vlc*, Antoonio Frige *kbd*, Ugo Nastrucci *theorbo* 119' 43" (2 CDs) (rec 1992)
Cantus **C9608/9**

There is also a three-record package of Schiaruzala Marazula *(which we will review next month)*, Vous ou la mort *and* Bestiarium.

LETTERS

Dear Clifford,
As one who was for some time the default translator for Hänssler, later Carus Editions, I have to react to your comments on the translation issue, and those of Ian Graham-Jones. Of course it would be convenient for us English to have just everything written in our mother tongue. But translators are expensive (normally earning more than the originators) and in the case of Bach scholarship they are there, so to speak, for the incompetent. Perhaps translations should be available, at a cost, as an optional extra. The claim that 'the international language is English' is widely held and not altogether untrue, though the use of the indefinite rather than definite article might make it sound less arrogant. Arguably the default language for Bach scholarship is in fact German. It is distressing to see in the Diary for 12.4 in the context of a university venue an appalling misspelling of *Thomaskirche*. Such is our contempt for other languages.

But then comes along Ian Graham-Jones, complaining because an English translation is not written in his variety of English. If we go along with the idea that 'English' is the world language, then on a numerical count 'British' English is only a minority variety of the language. Worldwide, in commerce and in communications technology, the American variety has long been king. *Oder schieß' ich hier quer?* *Derek McCulloch*

Thanks for knuckle-rapping. I didn't (since I was writing to fill a specific space) link my remarks with the editorial: if a German publisher makes his edition more user-friendly abroad, it may give it an edge over rivals. If an edition has an underlaid English translation, the pre- and postlims should back it up. Musicology isn't just for the scholars, and not everyone who can cope with the Passion text or read a German newspaper can digest scholarly German. I'm unusual in that I can get more out of a critical commentary than a German novel!

A 'misprint' is not necessarily a mis-spelling A basic rule for textual criticism is: check if there is an obvious reason for an error. A glance at a standard-layout keyboard will show that the mistake was a simple slip of the finger to an adjacent key. It amazes me how accurate EB's diary is. Unlike the magazine itself, it only gets one quick proof reading (and I'm not a good proof-reader), so an occasional mistake is not surprising. I'd rather save the word 'appalling' for something like the invasion of Iraq (or the failure of the rest of the world to back it). CB

****

Dear Clifford,
Thanks also for *EMR* 89, just arrived. Re your references to *Messiah* on p. 5, the AAM recorded the 1754 'Foundling Hospital' version, not the 1742 Dublin version (which, with its recitative substitutes for 'But who may abide' and 'Thou shalt break them', few would want to hear). I don't understand the statement about Don Burrows' table of versions of *Messiah* 'used as an advert' and the implication that his edition does not cover all versions, like yours. It does, doesn't it? *Anthony Hicks*

The danger of relying on memory! After finishing my Messiah *edition, I moved virtually all my* Messiah *material to our storeroom some miles away, so didn't check the AAM LP notes (I can't remember why I have the booklet but not the records). Burrows' table is, of course, in his vocal score (which is indeed complete, though spoilt by the traditional version not being typeset). The table was printed in colour in the leaflet advertising the edition, and I keep copies slipped inside several of my* Messiah *scores.*

****

The overlapping area of folk and early music is tricky. James Ross thought unsuitable for review a couple of Scottish folk discs which I sent him. Elaine and I listened to an English disc over Easter, *And so to the fair: Brandywine Bridge play Music of Warwick Castle* (Sound Alive Music SAMLS/CD/503), and agreed that it didn't work, though the group might have been OK live at a medieval feast. We were reminded of how music as part of life is judged by different standards from that of the concert hall or CD by an impromptu serenade by a shawm band that sent off our ferry from Roscoff to Plymouth on Easter Monday. I doubt if I would have enjoyed a recording, but hearing it on the spot was refreshing, and it set some passengers dancing on deck. We've also seen live groups, presumably sponsored by the tourist office, in Hawaii and Fiji airports.

Dear Clifford,

Paul Simmonds refers in a letter in *EMR* 88 (March 2003) to Michael Zapf's interpretations of the squiggles at the top of the 1722 manuscript of WTC I. I have received details of this directly from Michael Zapf himself. He claims that the sequence of 1,1,1,0,0,0,2,2,2,2,2 loops refers to an equal-beating tuning starting from c, where 2 means a beat takes 2 seconds.

I have checked the maths and everything does indeed work out as claimed. In fact, it is possible to go further and deduce an absolute pitch for the starting note. Assuming that the final fifth f-c beats once per second, the pitch must be about 127 Hz. If this is a c, it must be c below middle c. This corresponds to about a=425.

Keith Briggs

PS: mathematical details:

g =(3/2)c - 1/2	c#=(3/4)f# - 1/8
d =(3/4)g - 1/4	g#=(3/2)c# -1/4
a =(3/2)d - 1/2	d#=(3/4)g# - 1/8
e =(3/4)a	a#=(3/2)d# - 1/4
b =(3/2)e	f =(3/4)a# - 1/8
f#=(3/4)b	c'=(3/2)f - 1/2

This gives 2c-c'=-7153/262144c+907109/262144, so that c=126.8.

Apart from being a subscriber, Dr. Keith M. Briggs is Senior Mathematician, Complexity Research, BTexact Technologies. email: Keith.Briggs@bt.com