

Early Music

REVIEW

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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>
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I had a strange email from a graduate student at the University of Kansas asking 'when preparing an edition or performance of early music, how does one decide 1) whether to apply *musica ficta* at all? and 2) if *musica ficta* is to be applied, where that should be done?' The piece he had in mind was Josquin(?)'s 'Mille regrets,' as edited in the OUP *Madrigals and Partsongs*. What a question to answer in a brief email (especially with about 50 other messages waiting to be read). Here's my reply: can anyone do better?

Assume that a cadence demands a major chord as its dominant. (Current theorists rightly avoid such modern terminology, but the same acoustic effects are described by both renaissance and classical concepts and I'm trying to be brief and (over-)simple.) Put yourself in the position of someone singing from a single-line part. Does your line sound as if you've got the leading note? If so, sharpen it. If the penultimate interval is a sixth, it must be major; the singer who can hear a cadence coming and has a straight progression down has the option of flattening it unless there is a stronger feeling of leading note in the upper part (to which, of course, you are listening intently). There are various other guides like avoiding tritones and the solmisation system that make such decisions more clear-cut, though there will always be places where the signs are ambiguous. Then you need to check parallel passages.

If you want to emphasise a cadence, give it a major dominant; but if you want to de-emphasise it, or if it isn't a cadence at all, don't sharpen the leading note. (A similar principle applies to cadential *appoggiature* in late baroque recitative.) Whether final chords should be major is another issue, especially in the piece in question. I feel that a major end sounds a bit vulgar, but there are more objective criteria. One is that if you play it on instruments, you may well not have a G sharp that is even remotely in tune. Later uses of the piece (e.g. the Morales mass) confirm the G natural. Pieces in the E mode tend anyway to sound more archaic.

Is the interest mainly horizontal or vertical? Keyboard and lute intabulations tend to emphasize the latter, so are not necessarily a model of *ficta* for singers, though they do show that major dominants are a standard feature of the sound-world by the 1540s.

CB

BOOKS & MUSIC

Clifford Bartlett

THE BRITISH ALMAIN

Ian Payne *The Almain in Britain, c. 1549-c.1675*. Ashgate, 2003. xviii + 268pp, £42.50. 0 85967 965 9

There was a period a few years ago when 'Britain' was very un-PC. Here its use instead of England is a little pedantic, since the main focus is London, particularly the Inns of Court. The world of dance scholarship and historically-informed performance for many years lagged behind that of early music, riven with faction and its practitioners out of touch with the evidence music could supply. Over the years, I have had a variety of encounters with early dance, most of which were handicapped by my inability to dance and the dancers' inability to describe how they wanted the music to go. Now the relationship between the two sides is improving, and this book by a musicologist who knows all the sources and can both play and dance will be invaluable to those involved in both sides of the artificial divide.

It is based on the seven MSS of the period that give choreographies. These are carefully transcribed as appendices; since they are so short, it is a pity that facsimiles are not included as well. After a chapter on the sources, the first section of the book offers a good survey of the subject. Then follows a long chapter on the dance steps, a chapter on 'measures' that are not almaines (chapter 2 rejects the idea that measures were always pavans), and a series of chapters with choreographies and plausible four-part settings of the dances specified in the sources. The author is convinced that the Almain quickly developed characteristically English features, and that Playford's 1651 *English Dancing Master* calls upon much older practice.

Irrespective of the dance material, the book is useful for musicians who encounter dance-based music in other contexts. No – the dance does not determine the tempo, a vain hope that made players turn to dancers two or three decades ago. But there is a relationship between even the most obviously abstract Almain and the dance's physical movement that an understanding of the dance will assist in bringing to life.

IVO DE VENTO

Ivo de Vento *Sämtliche Werke, Band 3: Neue Teutsche Liedlein mit Fünff stimmen* (München 1569), *Neue Teutsche Lieder mit viern, fünff und sechs stimmen* (München 1570) herausgegeben von Nicole Schwindt. (*Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Bayern, Neue Folge*, 14). Breitkopf & Härtel, 2002. cxxvi + 137pp, €150.00

Ivo's music has not had much success since his death in Munich in 1575. He spent most of his life in the Bavarian Hofkapelle there, starting as a chorister in 1556 and later

becoming an organist. The editor is only able to find modern editions of three of his German songs, one published by Heavy Metal Music, though I'm not sure if I understand why three modern editions are listed on p. xxxi and more under individual song titles on the following pages. Our readers are likely to know this part of his output from two London Pro Musica publications: *Anthologies of Renaissance Music* vol. 7 has eight songs a3 from Ivo's 1572 print, vol. 8 has another eight a4 from the second set included here.

This substantial volume (it is not only long, it has large pages) continues a lavishness that was characteristic of some previous volumes in the century-old series, monumental not only for assembling the major works of the past but for the inclusion of almost book-length introductions. The prose is mostly devoted to the context of Ivo's German-texted songs. The songs are then listed with their sources. Prose returns with a separate introduction to the texts, which are edited separately and lavishly (with much white space on the pages: I thought Germans were concerned about paper wastage, and two columns would have been more economical; the index of names is similarly spacious). Then comes the critical commentary, which is unhelpfully separated from other comments on each piece. So if you want to see what information there is on a single song, you have to consult the separate text, the commentary on the text, the commentary on the music, the list of variant readings, and several lists of sigla and bibliographical references. It would have been better to have amalgamated at least some of these sequences to make them easier to consult. There is a useful table on pages lxxix & lxxx listing the contents in order with mode, 'key' signature, final, clef, part-names, clef, range and 'time' signature; such lists immediately show the logic of the original arrangement of the 1569 book, though the 1570 one is a little more complex. They also show the two clef patterns, with the implied need to transpose one set to the compass of the other.

The edition itself is in most respects ideal. But there is one handicap: the retention of old clefs. This will restrict its use to a small number of musicologists and exclude all except a handful of specialist singers, which seems a pity. I suspect that amateur singers who have got used to old clefs in singing from facsimile can't manage to relate different clefs in a score. Despite my dislike of unnecessary modernisation, I find this hermetic practice a pity, unless a companion practical edition is intended. As for the music, the sometimes-coarse vigour that characterised German song earlier in the century has become smoothened under Italian influence (Duke Albrecht had sent Ivo to study in Venice). Inevitably, one compares him with his colleague Lassus and finds him wanting a little. But I hope at least some of these pieces find their way out of the library and into the hands of small vocal ensembles.

Gesang zur Laute herausgegeben von Nicole Schwindt. (Troja: Trossinger Jahrbuch für Renaissancemusik, 2, 2002) Bärenreiter, 2003. 211pp, £25.00. ISBN 3 7618 1612 X

What is the connection between the Siege of Calais and the *basso alla bastarda*? I knew of the musical prowess of Giulio Cesare Brancaccio, but hadn't realised his role in expelling England from its last European patch of soil in 1558. (Gibraltar? That was acquired later.) Richard Wistreich discusses (in an article called 'Real Basses, Real Men'...) the tension between the traditional role of a nobleman as a warrior, which was undermined by military developments, and Brancaccio's value in the more feminine world of music. He seems to have been the first singer to have practiced the device of improvising a solo performance, ornamenting snatches from each part, with a lute or keyboard accompaniment, using a range stated as 22 notes. This isn't necessarily as precise as the author suggests, since it is another way of saying three octaves. Some music survives requiring such ranges; older readers will remember David Thomas's LP of Caccini and Puliaschi.

The other contribution that interested me was by Dinko Fabris, who points out that, despite their being published for three voices, accounts of performance of the *Villanella alla Napolitana* generally assume a voice self-accompanied on lute or guitar. He also reminds us that the form comes from the top, not the bottom stratum of society. There are a variety of articles (six in English, five in German) on topics such as vihuela songs, the apparent lack of lute songs in France, Dowland and Campion: well worth reading.

RIGATTI MASS & PSALMS

Rigatti *Messa e salmi, parte concertati* Edited by Linda Maria Koldau. (Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, 128-130). 3 vols, 2003.

Part 1 [Mass]: xxii + 116pp, \$65.00; parts \$21.00

Part 2 [Dixit - Laudate pueri]: ix + 192pp, \$69.00; parts \$37.00

Part 3 [Laudate Dominum - Ave regina]: x + 160pp, \$66.00; parts \$30.00.

As I have mentioned before, editors and publishers have paid remarkably little attention to the big Venetian liturgical prints. We still don't have a good edition of Monteverdi's 1640/41 edition! Rigatti's Mass and Psalms was published in 1640 by the same publisher; the printer must have been worked on them in succession, if not simultaneously, and both are dedicated to members of the Habsburg family in Vienna; another similarity is the carelessness of Bartolomeo Magni's printing. Rigatti was a boy soprano at San Marco early in Monteverdi's period as maestro there, but by 1640 he was not apparently connected with San Marco. So his liturgical music was not intended for the specific circumstances of the basilica.

It begins with a mass for eight voices, two violins and three *viole* or trombones, though the bass is a *beneplacito*: presumably Rigatti expected an organ whose bass was strong enough for the ensemble not to need a melodic bass instrument. This is one of those pieces that makes the

need of transposition of *chiavette* explicit, since although the violins are printed at sounding pitch and marked *si suona come sta*, all the other parts are notated a fourth higher, with *Alla quarta* included in the heading to confirm the implication of the clefs. The edition makes the transposition, but does not use a key signature. The *stet* violin parts do not have one; but the other parts have accidentals adjusted so that the user cannot see what accidentals are in the source. The very first soprano note, for instance, is a high B in the original notation, but is given in the edition as an F with an accidental sharp. Luckily, the harmony is straightforward enough for ambiguities to be minimal. It's a bit of a cop-out for the editor to say: 'the performer should add inflections that are typical of seicento performance conventions'. She quotes Banchieri that Venetians transposed all modes to D; a fair number of pieces here are in that key, though I can't see many of the others making any sense transposed thus. The *Laudate pueri a3* is headed in one voice part *transportato alla terza bassa*; here the performers have their part written at sounding pitch, but the point of the rubric is to show that the mode is transposed, so that it should be read as if in D major even though many accidentals are omitted. (D-major as a key signature was not available.)

One of the best-known pieces is the *Dixit a8*, thanks to performances and a recording by Paul McCreesh and the Gabriellis. When first transcribing it, I was worried by the potential tedium of the battle sinfonia, but it (and the rest of the Psalm) work brilliantly – though I still wonder whether the battle section has any extra-musical meaning. This has the same scoring as the Mass. In both versions of my edition (it circulated in photocopies of a pencil score long before BC typeset it) I set the voices out in two choirs. Some of the choral writing does not demand it, but in other places there is a clear grouping of SATB I and SATB II. Assuming that the choirs are spaced, this means that the frequent duets between equal voices are sung with the two voices separated, which may be more difficult to synchronise and tune but is more interesting for the listener. So Koldau's setting out of the voice parts as a single choir is misleading. It is less so in the Mass, but I don't think she visualises how difficult it would be to decide how an eight-part vocal ensemble should be placed when working just from partbooks: I suspect that eight-part pieces were always divided into two choirs, whether it was necessary or not. I haven't done a thorough note-check, but I happened to spot that in bar 427, the last note is sharpened in both bass parts only by MS additions in the original; I don't remember noticing any editorial policy on such situations. The translation of the text shows the editor falling into the trap of following the authorised version (do we really need to know that she used an edition of 1994); the prayer-book version of the Psalms more often matches the Vulgate, but it is often necessary to correct or use an old Catholic translation.

The other pieces are smaller in scale. A striking feature of the *Nisi Dominus a3 con 2 Violini* (also recorded by the Gabriellis) is the explicit demand for flexibility in tempo, like Monteverdi's *Lamento della ninfa*, published two years earlier and also on a descending four-note ground. The

one that I most want to hear is the concluding *Ave Regina caelorum* for solo soprano with five *viola* (C1 C3 C4 C4 F4 clefs) and organ. Unusually, trombones are not named as alternatives, and (after the introduction) one can see why. The range of the top part is high (taking a *viola* an octave above its open A) and would look better in treble clef, so I wonder if in this case the *viola* are *viols*: not perhaps likely for Venice, but the piece is dedicated 'Alla Sacra Cesarea Maestà dell'Imperatrice Maria d'Austria'.

There is plenty of music here that deserves to be revived. Instrumental parts are available: I hope A-R permits photocopying of individual pieces for singers. One feature of the source is ignored. Although unbarred, the parts have bar lines at the ends of sections. These are the equivalent of double-bars in a modern barred score, and should be printed as such (though they need to be tidied up a bit, a practice that is done without fuss for fermatas). They make the structure more visible and it is often quicker in rehearsal to say 'back to the double bar' than to 'bar 293'. The editor provides a substantial and valuable introduction – though I think it a bit far-fetched to imagine a 17th-century reader going back through the partbooks to recognise that a Gloria recapitulates a psalm-tone quoted at the start of a piece: another example of thinking in terms of a score.

This edition is most welcome. Fine but little-known music well edited and beautifully printed and with excellent editorial material: what else can one ask for?

PRIMA LA MUSICA!

Readers will have seen adverts in our last two issues for a new publisher, Prima la Musica. After spending many years typesetting for us and various other publishers and performers, BC has branched out on his own, using as his logo an ornamental structure perched on top of a church across the road from his flat in the centre of Centelles, a small town about 30 miles north of Barcelona. The items mentioned here are a selection of his rapidly-growing catalogue. The general style will be familiar from the music that has appeared in *EMR* recently (indeed, as in this issue), mostly produced on Sibelius rather than the PMS programme that we have used since 1988. A change which probably will not particularly benefit our readers but which should make the editions more marketable is the inclusion of simple keyboard realisations. These follow modern conventions for accidentals, while elsewhere Brian keeps with our normal practice of retaining redundant sharps and flats except on repeated notes. He is rapidly enlarging his output, so check his website. Orders should be made through the site, paying with credit card through a safe system.

There are various series.

Echoes of Venice. Legrenzi appropriately named his sonata for four violins, 'violone' and continuo *La Cremona*, the centre of the violin industry then and now: to play it on four recorders, as suggested in the introduction, is almost an insult! It has the excitement of the three-violin repertoire, though with more homophonic sections. It comes from op. 8, as does *La Fugazza* for two violins, two violas and bass, with a continuo part for organ. I'm not sure that the repeated C-major chords in bars 57-8 are interesting enough to bear such emphasis, but the contrapuntal opening movement works well. (The complete op. 8 is available in facsimile from King's Music.)

German Baroque. Rosenmüller's 1682 collection has been available in facsimile, but the separate modern editions published by Robert Lienau in Berlin in the 1950s didn't circulate very widely. The Sonata in E minor for two violins and continuo is a fine piece requiring panache but not technically too difficult and staying in first position (apart from a pair of Cs). The editor very properly believes the source and doesn't supply a copy of the continuo part for a cellist, though in the other publications reviewed here, 'continuo' is treated as meaning both a melody and a chordal instrument.

Glories of Vienna. The only vocal piece in this batch is a Requiem by Schmelzer for SATB, three *viola* and continuo (the term here implying a string instrument as well as organ). Brian reckons that *viola* means a viol consort (treble, two tenors and bass). There are no markings to distinguish between solo and tutti in the voice parts; it can be sung by four soli, but none of the solo and duet sections are more tricky than the rest of the piece. According to an old library catalogue, there was once a *Dies irae*, but that

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isn't extant. I wouldn't claim that this has the melodic power of that other anger-less Requiem by Fauré, but it is a piece worth singing and playing through, and would be useful to have around at summer schools where singers and players might like to mix. There is also a group of three five-part Balletti (*di Done Veggie, di Puffoni* and *di Alchimisti*), each with three short, binary movements.

An intriguing, and under some circumstances useful piece, though a bit late for us is a March for Six Violas by Theodor Richter dated 1854. There is some stratification of the parts, with the lowest two having lots of bottom Cs and making little use of the top string, while the top two parts have to be able to change position (cue for a viola joke!) The title doesn't imply that a military precision in execution is needed or that it is in a march & trio form.

THE JOY OF TELEMANN

Telemann *Chorale Cantata 'Jesu, meine Freude' (TWV I:970)* edited by Ann Kersting-Meulman. PRB Productions (Bozz), 2003. xiii + 37pp + parts, \$48.00; VSc \$11.00.

This is one of a series of eight cantatas commissioned in 1754 for performance in Danzig (now Gdansk). The scoring of this setting of Johann Franck's hymn (one of the six extant settings by Telemann – four more haven't survived) is for 2 oboes, 2 bassoons (not specified on the title page), strings and SATB soli. One would like to know what parts are included in D-B Mus. ms. 21750/50 (strange that they are listed in the introduction for 21750/30 but not for /50). It seems from a comment on p. vi that the oboe 2 and bassoon 1 & 2 parts only include a single movement each, though I suppose they may have doubled oboe 1 and the continuo in other movements: it is odd for Telemann to have assumed the presence of two bassoons if that wasn't normal Gdansk practice. There seem to have been only single voice parts, so the addition of a chorus (which is specified on the title page) is optional. Like Bach's motet, the verses are separated by short commentaries; Telemann's are verse, not Biblical quotes. There are fairly straightforward chorale settings for the framing verses, but he avoids any symmetrical scheme by making verses 1 & 5 share an elaborate orchestral accompaniment, but the concluding verse 6 is a note-against-note chorale. Verse 2 is for tenor solo with each vocal statement repeated by 'chorus' (which here does look like just four voices). The bass has a vigorous Verse 3 ('Trotz dem alten Drachen') and there is a duet for SA for verse 4. No prizes for guessing the key of the cantata. The edition is clear to read and is backed up by a very thorough critical commentary. I don't understand the comment in the vocal score that it contains a realised continuo suitable for rehearsals: it's a piano reduction and doesn't even realise the secco recits. While not striving for the intensity of Bach's setting, this is worth hearing, and perhaps the familiarity of the tune will encourage performance.

I was amused recently to hear a BBC announcer translate the title of Bach's setting as 'Jesus, my friend'.

IN BRIEF

Charles Coleman *The Six-part Fantasies* Edited by Julie Jeffrey. PRB Productions (VCo46), 2003. 24pp+parts. \$27.00

Coleman was described as 'ancient' when he was buried in 1664; his birth-date is unknown, and the earliest record of him is as a performer in a masque of 1617. His five fantasies a6 may date from around this time, since they survive in Oxford Christ Church Mus. 61-6, probably compiled before 1620. Other sources in the same library supply later copies of Fantasies 1-3; these include organ parts, which are omitted from this edition, which is a pity for those who play organ rather than viol. Until we know whether the presence of organ parts in later sources is a sign of an enlargement of the ensemble or a change in notational practice, editions should preserve the evidence. With crossing bass parts, it's much easier to play an organ accompaniment from a proper part. As with other PRB editions, the music is labelled as for viols with no indication whether that is what the sources specify: it is a basic requirement that an edition distinguishes between explicit, implied (by the nature of the partbooks or awareness of style) and hypothetical scorings. That apart, though, this edition is very welcome. The music is rather more audience-directed than most such fantasias, and should be enjoyable to listeners as well as players.

Louis Couperin *Préludes non mesurés für Cembalo: An attempted Reconstruction of the lost Autograph* by Glen Wilson. Breitkopf & Härtel (EB 8705), 48pp, €21.00. (includes CD 50'41").

The linguistic mix in the main title (three languages in five words) is a nice sign of the international nature of music and its publishing, even though information of what is available is still erratic even within the European Community. If ever you had wondered how to turn the notation of unmeasured French preludes into music, this is the place to start. First, Wilson is convinced that scribes found Louis Couperin's notation difficult to understand, so copied it erratically. Then people have misunderstood what is unmeasured: it is the notation, not the music, which is free but not metrically unstructured. The edition has a helpful preface, 16 Preludes are printed in the editor's correction of the MS layout, and the whole is accompanied by a CD with Wilson's convincing performance of the music. It would obviously be against the spirit of the form to listen to the performances and try to copy them, but they are excellent guides to the variety of temporal relationships that can lie behind the apparently equal semibreves. To some extent, editorial changes such as to pattern of slurs push the performer towards Wilson's performance decisions, so the experienced player will need to consult the facsimiles as well. Both edition and performance need to be used with creative criticism. One tiny grouse: the CD is in a white envelope stuck to the back cover, mine in such a way that you had to pull it off (along with a layer of paper) to open it: please at least stick the envelope on so that its flap is at the top.

Alessandro Scarlatti *Bella Dama di nome Santa* Edited by Rosalind Halton. Saraband Music (SM43), 2002. 15pp + 5 parts, As25.00.

The editor has been putting out editions of Scarlatti cantatas on her web site (www.scarlattiproject.com) but not everyone can or wants to receive music thus, so here is another in hard copy. The piece is scored for recorder, two violins and continuo. It begins with an *Introduttione* (an *Adagio* and a *Lento alla francese*, presumably with the dotted quavers underdotted), then there are two recit+aria pairs. The text is about a lady called Santa not living up to her name because she has no mercy on her admirer. The recorder part is more virtuosic than the voice and violins, so this will be welcomed by players of that instrument. The voice part is presumably for soprano (the original clef isn't stated), though dramatically it is for a male. The parts include a realised bass. There's a nice bit of expressive harmony to indicate the absence of pity, which the singer can camp up a bit, though otherwise the piece seems a bit bland – or is it just a challenge to the performers to find more in it? Text and translation are included.

Telemann *Der Melancholicus 'Bin ich denn so gar verlassen'*: Cantata for Soprano or Tenor, Violin and Basso Continuo TWV 20:44 edited by Wolf Hohohm, Continuo realisation by Walter Heinz Bernstein. Deutscher Verlag für Musik (DVfM 9525), 2002. 24pp + 2 parts, €12.00.

I'd feel happier writing about this if the edition had printed the poem separately with a translation alongside it, as is done in the Scarlatti edition reviewed above: it is very difficult to catch the tone of texts that might be parodic or ironic if one only has a smattering of the language. The editor's afterword is rather heavy going and too general. The music is welcome, though the realisation tends to fill too many gaps with movement. There are three arias separated by two secco recits; for the accompaniment of these, the editor prints both semibreves, as in the earliest source (dated 1720), and crotchets from later MSS. Other differences between the sources are silently dealt with. The music is mostly flippant, and I haven't yet caught its tone. I am awaiting feedback from a friend who will be performing it as part of her degree course. (DVfM music comes from Breitkopf.)

Handel Trio Sonata in F major for two Treble Recorders and Basso Continuo HWV 405 Edited by Terence Best. Bärenreiter (BA 4261), 1988/2003. 6 pp + 2 parts, £6.00

This is a reissue under Bärenreiter's colours of the reprint from HHA IV/19 that was previously issued as Hortus Musicus 263. It is an early work, dated at the beginning of the preface to 1707-1719 but placed more precisely to 1707 by the end of it. It isn't one of the composer's most characteristic pieces, but there's not much choice if you have two recorders and continuo and want to play Handel.

Leopold Mozart *Sinfonia in Re 'Non è bello che è bello ma quello che piace'* (Eisen D.13). Critical Edition by Juhana Hautsalo. Edition Escobar, 2002. xi + 11pp + parts.

This is an entertaining little piece in three movements. The first one has a presto coda to each half. An unexpected subtlety is the way the opening of the finale takes up a phrase from the second half of the second minuet. The scoring is for two violins and bass with two horns that (although not stated) could be omitted. The editor assumes that the bass line is for cello as well as double bass; in view of places like bars 29-32 in the first movement, where unisons are two octaves apart, I wonder whether a viola should double the bass line up a octave. The editor figures the bass on the assumption that a keyboard should be added. Despite the listing of four sources, there is in effect only one: a set of parts of unknown pedigree in Augsburg. The set has two copies of each violin part but only one bass. Edition Escobar is new to me. It was sent by its publisher, Jari Eskola, who is music librarian for the Gothenburg Symphony. The back of the score lists 13 other editions, ranging from the mid 18th century to Tchaikovsky with durations from 2 to 25 minutes: this work is listed as 8 minutes. It is very well done, apart from the page turn in some parts between the first and second minuet.

Mozart *Ascanio in Alba: Festa teatrale in two acts*, KV 111... Vocal score... by Karl-Heinz Müller. Bärenreiter (BA 4504a), 2003. xv + 378pp, £19.50.

Unlike the HHA vocal scores, which have been appearing soon after the full scores, this ancillary to NAM II/5/5 comes 47 years after its progenitor. 268 pages of full score take up 378 pages of vocal score. I'm not, as with Handel, disputing the usefulness of vocal scores, but for music that is going to be sung from memory and only played from in rehearsal, does the notation have to be so big? Any singer holding the score through a stage rehearsal is going to get a strained wrist. The vocal score has a German translation added below the Italian. The instrumentation of each movement is shown, and significant entries identified. If you want a vocal score, this does its job well, but the full score will set you back about £100 and the miniature score is (or was) only available in the 20 volumes of the complete works. There is a useful preface.

Mozart *Concerto for Horn and Orchestra in E flat major KV 370b+371* completed and edited by Robert D. Levin. Breitkopf & Härtel (PB 5357), xii + 23pp, €18.00.

If you look for these movements in the new Collected Works (NMA V/14/5) you will find a first draft (mostly with one or two staves of music) of 127 bars or a first movement and, mostly fully-scored, 219 bars of a Rondeau. Since then, a further 60 bars have turned up, fitting after bar 26 of the Rondeau (in a place where previously nothing was thought to be missing). This new edition presents movements of 154 and 279 bars. The extensive introduction and commentary describes the

background and the state of the manuscript, and argues convincingly about what needed to be done. I am hesitant to pronounce from the score that it has been done to perfection, but Levin's long experience in reconstructing Mozartian fragments and improvising cadenzas ensures that his restoration of this two-movement concerto (whether or not the movements were written as such) adds a further concerto to the hornist's repertoire.

Diderot & D'Alambert *L'Encyclopédie: Musique*. (Bibliothèque de l'Image) Inter-Livres, 2002. €7.99.
ISBN 2 914661 18 5

I happened to see this in a bookshop in Cremona recently and thought it worth buying. It is a reproduction of the article *Musique*, and its title page reads: 'Recueil de planches sur les sciences, les arts libéraux, et les arts mécaniques, avec leur explication. Musique.' It comprises 22 folio pages, 19 plates plus another series of 16 plates, and finally a page of text and two plates on *Choregraphie*. It's an important document which I've read about but never seen, so it is (at the price) useful, though I would have welcomed some bibliographical information. The publisher is French, but no address is given. Strangely for something about a quarter of a millennium old, it claims to have reserved all rights of translation and adaptation.

ED. HOGWOOD

Haydn/Salomon Symphony Quintetto after Symphony No. 92 for Flute, String Quartet and Piano ad libitum... Edited by Christopher Hogwood. Bärenreiter (BA 4635), 2003. viii + 44pp & parts.

Mendelssohn Bartholdy *Die schöne Melusine: Overture* Edited by Christopher Hogwood. Bärenreiter (BA 9051), 2003. xxi 82pp, £29.50. (Wind set £29.50, strings £3.50 each.)

The progress through Haydn's London symphonies in Salomon's chamber arrangement continues. Readers will remember that Salomon's score is a rather better source than the printed sets, so I anticipate a decline in the number of copies of our reproduction that we sell – we can't complain, they were taken from the editor's copies anyway. The introduction discusses some notational features, such as Salomon use of a wavy line above dots rather than a slur, which is what the early print used, and the occasional change from Haydn's markings.

When I first started listening to classical music, Mendelssohn's overtures were regularly played. But now the pattern of Overture-Concerto-interval-Symphony has long been abandoned by programme planners, a whole strand of 19th-century orchestral music has disappeared. This is sad, and I hope that the publication of a series of new editions of Mendelssohn's examples in the form will encourage a rethink. Hogwood's introduction gives a clear account of the origin of *The Fair Melusine*, which was commissioned by the Philharmonic Society and performed in

London on 7 April 1834. The original programme is listed in the introduction. The first half began with Mozart's Jupiter symphony, followed by an aria by Meyerbeer and first performances of a piano concerto by Moscheles and a motet by Horsley before ending with the Mendelssohn: would the Society now put on a concert with three premieres? In the second half, Haydn's Oxford symphony introduced an aria by Neukomm, Spohr's 8th violin concerto, a duet and chorus from *The Creation*, and ended with *Belshazzar's Feast* (an overture by Griesbach). The Overture was not received with any enthusiasm, so was drastically revised. Mendelssohn asked the Society to destroy its MS. They didn't, and one wonders what his reaction would have been to this score which gives both versions, carefully edited. (I haven't seen the parts, but since timings for both versions are given, I presume that both are in the parts available for performance.) The score is certainly nicely produced. All editorial matter is in English and German.

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RAVENS VIEW

Simon Ravens

The new edition of the Penguin Guide has, with a significant thud, landed on my desk at work. Given prominence of place on the rear cover is a quote by David Mellor, writing in the Daily Telegraph, who assures us that this is 'the bible for the discriminating record collector'. Is it just me, or is there something unnecessarily fusty, train-spottery even, about that term 'record collector'? And how do we feel about the notion that 'discriminating' people would want, or need, to place their trust in a 'bible' of this sort. If it is true that you can judge a man by the friends he keeps, what should we make of a guide that allies itself with a Tory politician writing in a conservative newspaper? Quite a lot, I would suggest in this case. This book is reactionary.

Having taken such a swipe at the Penguin Guide, I should now come clean and admit that if you took my shop copy away from me I would be quite lost. When a customer wants to know the relative merits of, say, the Bohm, Klemperer and Karajan recordings of the Mozart operas – about which, frankly, I don't have a clue – Penguin is my first port of call. Or, if I were to be asked (I haven't been) whether the recorded sound on volume 24 of Leslie Howard's complete Liszt is any different to that on volume 23, Penguin will offer me the rare – perhaps unique – perspective of someone who has intelligently listened to both. I take my hat off.

For someone trying to cut a swathe through the standard repertory, there are worse guides than this Penguin. But for the listener wanting a few steers off the main drag, particularly into the field of early music, follow this particular Penguin and it will at best leave you floundering on featureless ground, and occasionally lead you into crevasses.

I say this with some reluctance, since for the first time one of my own recordings appears in the Guide. And ooh! – they've given me three stars. My chest puffs out for just as long as it takes me to read the other Palestrina entries, and realise that out of 24 discs, only two fail to get three stars. If that's discrimination, then frankly, I'm the same as the rest. Doubtless the directors of the Tallis Scholars, Pro Cantione Antiqua and New College Oxford feel the same despondency when they see Musica Contexta's name bracketed with theirs. I'm all for the broad church of musical appreciation, but the four groups I've just mentioned are so radically different in approach that I simply can't imagine anyone intelligently listening to all of us and forming no pecking order of preference.

When a customer asks the significance of a recording being awarded three stars, I tend to comment that three is the maximum – 'like Michelin', I say. Liar! Or, so as not to

libel myself, I should perhaps say that I am being economical with the truth when I say this, because if Michelin judged restaurants as Penguin judges recordings, every cook with aspirations above those of the Little Chef would be on a par with Gordon Ramsay. It's a lie too, because although three stars might theoretically be the maximum, Penguin does also offer a rosette to 'certain special records'. There are no rosettes in the Palestrina pages, and relatively few for any pre-classical recordings.

Fundamentally, I don't think that the authors of the Penguin Guide actually *like* early music. They might give Sigiswald Kuijken a rosette for his recording of Haydn's Paris Symphonies, but with the caveat that he 'wears his authenticity lightly'. In other words, his OAE are recorded in such a blooming acoustic that, wonderful though their verve and sprung rhythms are (and they are) they barely sound like a period instrument band at all.

Kuijken is in no danger of gaining a Penguin recommendation for his recordings (either of them) of the Bach unaccompanied violin works: although there are no less than 8 recommended recordings, no less than 8 are on modern instruments. This is, in my mind, the most revealing early music entry of all. In the previous Guide, Rachel Podger got a mention (I can't call it an honourable one) for her sublime recording on Channel. It began with the statement that she 'uses a period instrument, but her technique and intonation are secure'. 'But'! How about 'and'? In comparison to Rachel Podger, to my ears Perlman (who is awarded a Rosette) plays not so much in tune as around the tune. But the old Penguin's attitude to Podger gets worse, when they add that 'there is much to praise in this artist's simplicity of approach, but in the last resort this cannot compete with the very finest versions'. There is something desperately patronising in Penguin's tone here. If that counts as a commendation, Rachel Podger is well out of it in the new edition.

As for the more esoteric diversions into early music, Penguin barely even recognises them. I have searched in vain for any of Alia Vox's or Alpha's adventures into early repertory. There is no section for 'collections', which itself rules out the majority of themed, multi-composer recordings of mediaeval music. And, although Paul van Nevel, Marcel Peres and Jordi Savall get mentions, the continental early music scene's entries are far outweighed by those for white middle-class English performers. Such as me. Pick up this Penguin aware of where it might lead you, but also aware of where it won't.

Ivan March, Edward Greenfield and Robert Leyton *The Penguin Guide to Compact Discs & DVDs*. Penguin Books, 2003

MUSIC IN LONDON

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Over the past five or so years the Classical Opera Company has been building a sound reputation for imaginative programming of unusual repertoire. Although not an opera this time, their latest offering was by far the best yet. The Classical Ensemble, with soprano Gillian Keith, gave a programme of 'premieres' (17 September, St John's, Smith Square), including reconstructions of works by Mozart and Beethoven. There is evidence that the last Act of *Le nozze di Figaro* was changed from Mozart's first thoughts (and Da Ponte's original libretto), but only after Mozart had sketched part of the slow section of the aria for Susanna that was eventually omitted. Stanley Sadie has reconstructed that aria (*Non tardar, amato bene*) from the surviving fragments, including the provision of a new faster section. Without any suggestion that this was Mozart's intention, Sadie has adapted the finale of the Piano Quartet in E flat (493) on the grounds that the music fitted the words well and that music by Mozart was preferable to a 21st century attempt at that style. A more comprehensive reconstruction was needed for *In te spero, oh sposo amato*, based on a surviving fragment of a work probably intended for Constanze around 1782/4 and consisting of incomplete sections of the vocal line and the bass, missing the opening ritornello, half the central section and the whole of the recapitulation. In this case Sadie has composed new music to complete the work, matching Mozart's musical language but sensibly avoiding delving too deeply into his often quirky imagination. Without getting into a musicological debate, both of these arias worked for me. Gillian Keith was a convincing interpreter of these works, and also of *Deh vieni, non tarder*, Susanna's aria from *Le nozze di Figaro* that eventually replaced *Non tardar, amato bene* – a tricky piece, starting out as a light-hearted show number but transforming itself into a love song. The Classical Ensemble and conductor Ian Page were both on excellent form for Beethoven's *Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* and the concluding Symphony No 2 with some nicely controlled structural moments and a fine attention to detail. Although Page occasionally allowed, or encouraged, seemingly unimportant phrases to come into dominance in the Symphony, this performance was otherwise full of insight into a work that is often overlooked. Anthony Robson was also an excellent soloist in Duncan Druce's reconstruction, from scant evidence, of the *Largo* from Beethoven's missing Oboe Concerto (Hess 12). One curiosity was the prominent role given to the flutes at the opening, before the oboe managed to get a word in edgeways. Altogether a fine concert, and a welcome sign of the increasing maturity of these forces and Ian Page's direction.

An opera company that is even newer to the London stage is the Bampton Classical Opera who transferred their

version of Cimarosa's 1783 *Two Barons of Rocca Azzurra* (*I due baroni di Rocca Azzurra*) from Westonbirt School to St John's, Smith Square (18 September). Although Cimarosa had his supporters in his day, the comments of one of them (Antonio Sacchini) perhaps outlines one of the main problems with his music for those used to that of his contemporary, Mozart: 'The composer who can write contrasting arias without changing key shows far more talent than the one who changes it every few moments'. Although this aspect may have made his music 'comprehensible to less practiced ears', I fear it led my ears, and whatever lies in between, towards a degree of tedium which not even the impressive stage frolics could lift me from. The youngish cast included some singers that are already fairly well established on the London platform, alongside others new to me. Although the acting standard was good, with some lovely comedy routines, some of the singing was a bit too operatic for my taste. The (period instrument) orchestra suffered with some alarming intonation problems. The direction also had its oddities in terms of period style, particularly in some very quirky continuo realizations that were totally out of keeping with the normal understanding of simple late classical accompaniment. By far the best feature was the witty English translation – it even included a reference to the Hutton Inquiry. What might have suited on a summer's evening in Gloucestershire did not, I am afraid, quite meet the usual standards of the London opera stage.

During the reconstruction of *The Coliseum*, English National Opera are running a shortened season at The Barbican Theatre, including a new production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (20 September). Audiences in Mozart's day would have been comforted by the fact that the two sisters, Fiordiligi and Dorabella, having been tricked into pairing off with two other men (their fiancés in disguise – and they prefer each others partners) while their fiancés are apparently off at war (all to fulfill a macho wager put up by the creepy Don Alfonso), eventually end up back in the arms of the right chap and all, presumably, live happily ever after, the divorce laws being not so liberal in 18th century Vienna. But Samuel West's production is very 21st century and very 'right-on'. Early on in the plot, Fiordiligi peels off the moustache of the disguised Ferrando. A simple stage act, but from then on the whole show changes perspective. Without doing anything to da Ponte's text or the music, West gives us the woman's angle and a story of how the sisters, aided and abetted by the feisty maid Despina, collaborate knowingly in their partner's antics – indeed, in the end, one of them decides to stick with her new love. Fidelity, indeed, is not the usual way! Of course, this early revelation makes nonsense of the usual final scene. West's solution is to deconstruct the

plot. Although Dorabella seems willing to stick with her sister's former partner, Guglielmo, he backs away from his new love. Despina has a huff, and Don Alfonso looks set to have a new wager with an unsuspecting quartet that venture on the stage right at the end (adding some confusion to those still trying to work out who has just done what to whom). There are some clues in the music – for example, Mozart gives Fiordiligi and Ferrando the most sensuous music, and so they always were the couple most likely to succeed. The setting, with some stylishly simple framed sets by Alison Chitty, nicely lit by Peter Mumford, matched the contemporary nature of the emerging plot. The more intimate setting of the Barbican Theatre might have brought us closer to Mozart's acoustic, but the acoustics in the orchestra pit seemed non-existent. A shame, as the band played well and with stylistic sympathy, directed by Mark Wigglesworth and with some appropriately straightforward harpsichord continuo playing from Martin Pacey. The young cast featured several members of the ENO's Young Singers Programme, with impressive performances from Colin Lee and Toby Stafford-Allen as the cuckholding officers. Of the female roles, I liked Mary Plazes (Fiordiligi), finding the vibrato of Victoria Simmonds a bit much. Alison Roddy was a tough cookie as the maid, Despina, her impressive acting ability clearly showing the degree to which she had taken over the key fixer role from Don Alfonso – an impressive performance by the experienced Andrew Shore.

The Wigmore Hall debut of the Brook Street Band (27 September) was preceded by some rather embarrassing claims about the 'Oxford' chamber version of Handel's *Water Music* being a 'first performance'. It turned out not to be, and the eventual programme note clarified things. But the performance still raised questions. The scoring of the work is clear – two violins, bassoon and continuo, but this performance rearranged the work for two violins, sopranino recorder, oboe and cello and harpsichord continuo. The reason for this change of instrumentation was not given – the oboe/sopranino player was already an addition to the group's usual forces, so why not add a bassoonist? Whether this was a first performance or not, this approach did rather surprise me and made me rather lose confidence in what I was hearing. I am not sure if the cello was taking the continuo rather than the bassoon line (or indeed, if the bassoon part was originally independent of the continuo bass), but the structure of the sound did seem slightly empty of at times. The sopranino recorder and oboe were used to create an alternative sound to the two violins, rather than adding additional texture to individual movements. At times, the sopranino, sounding well above the other voices, had the unfortunate effect of allowing the violin's alto line to come into undue prominence. Another curiosity, which I assume must be in the score, was the odd sounding doubling of the bass and treble line at the end of phrases in the opening F major 'Aire'. Not quite the done thing, Handel, old chap! The rest of the programme was of more traditional trio sonatas by Handel, Corelli and Leclair, the Handel Op 2/5 using the oboe as well as violin. The Brook Street Band's playing

was restrained, to the extent that the various dance movements of Leclair's *Première Récréation de Musique* all sounded rather similar. Their use of expression was undemonstrative and they avoided the rhythmic flexibility that is often heard in this repertoire. The tone of the two violins was remarkably consistent, and the oboe was pleasantly mellow in tone. Although this might be an element of the score that I have missed, the timing of the gaps in Handel's Op 5/4 seemed more to do with page turns than any musical considerations. But one nice feature in this work was the plucked strings in the Minuet. Finally, they are not the first group to use one of the very few English-sounding chamber organs on the London hire circuit just for Italian works. It is a shame that it is not heard more often in the English repertoire for which it is so suited.

The BBC Proms

Amongst the relatively few early music concerts at this year's Royal Albert Hall Proms were two late night concerts, the first featuring the nine singers of The Clerks' Group together with His Majestys Sagbutts and Cornetts, directed by Edward Wickham (5 September). Their programme was of music by Isaac, Busnoys?, Josquin, Tye, Byrd and an impressive work written for the occasion by Robert Saxton. It was quite an extraordinary sight to see just nine singers gathered around a single score in the vast space of the Royal Albert Hall. Making no apparent effort to do any more with their voices than they usually do, the sound still seemed to fill the space, and transfix the audience. Little passages, like the bell-like repeating phrase at the end of Isaac's *Angeli, archangeli*, took on a new prominence. The programme was built around Josquin's *Missa Fortuna desperata*, preceded by the instrumental version of the chanson 'Fortuna desperata' attributed to Busnoys. This complex Mass setting treats the chanson theme in a number of ways, including changes of speed, giving an increasing sense of momentum and tension to many of the movements. Of course, music of this mathematical complexity cannot just be appreciated by the ears alone – most 21st-century ears will be moved by the changing textures of what later became known as harmony. One such moment occurs in the middle of the Gloria, when all the voices come together for the 'Miserere nobis': the tension ratchets up towards the end, before the sensuously flowing Amen. A similar moment occurs in the middle of the Credo, when the movement almost grinds to a halt. The two slowly evolving movements of the Agnus (one section has not survived) are a superb culmination to this exceptional work, both set low until a brief rise just towards the end, and a magical dying away on 'Dona nobis pacem' – brilliantly captured by the singers. The Clerks' Group were on good form and were well (and subtly) directed by Edward Wickham. Although the male alto was occasionally a bit prominent, his tone was tempered by a female alto – a solution to this vocal timbre that is not without controversy, but which certainly worked for me. The Mass was interrupted by the Saxton piece which was, in turn, interrupted by works by Tye and Byrd played on

those used to hearing works like 'Crye' and 'Howld fast' on viols. The singing in the Saxton showed the extent to which the sopranos, in particular, had managed to control aspects such as vibrato during the 'early' pieces. Good to know that it can be done. Incidentally, for a pretty obscure late night Prom, the audience was one to be proud of.

The Clerks' Group might have boosted their impressive late night audience by booking Anne Sofie von Otter as one of the singers. Her own late night Prom (10 September), with Les Musiciens du Louvre under Marc Minkowski, certainly packed them in for a programme of Bach, Handel and Rameau. Les Musiciens du Louvre are irregular visitors to the UK. With a string formation of 8,8,4,6,3 plus woodwind, they produced a rich, warm sound that emphasized timbre rather than volume – generally a sensible strategy for the Royal Albert Hall. Their suite from the orchestral works of Rameau (newly compiled by Minkowski and due for release in CD next year) produced some exquisite orchestral colour and impressive individual contributions, notably from an unnamed percussionist who did some amazing things with his hands and a bass drum. It is a well thought out compilation, including the Tambourin and Chaconne from *Dardanus* and transcription of 'La Poule' alongside less familiar works. Marc Minkowski demonstrated a masterly control of pace, texture and dynamics, conducting with a broad sweep and producing some gorgeous details of timing, notably in the more subdued sections of the final Chaconne. Anne Sofie von Otter sang two contrasting arias from Handel's *Ariodante*, to huge acclaim, but opened with an exquisite performance of Bach's heart-wrenching Cantata 170 'Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust'. Although she has quite a strong and deep vibrato, it works at quite a slow speed, ensuring that pitch and intonation are never in doubt. She also applies vibrato only to longer held notes, keeping her passing notes and flourishes absolutely clear – an important lesson for many singers. Kate Clark *flute*, Patrick Beaugiraud *oboe d'amore*, and Jory Vinikour *organ* made excellent contributions. Although the organ produced a strong sound in its important solo role, the sound was still rather thin and top-heavy, compared to that which Bach probably intended. I was also uncertain as to whether the long-held chords during the recitatives were entirely authentic. But the grief-laden and angular solo in the aria 'Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen' worked very well against the weeping of the violins. An oddity of the stage lighting in this concert (and I have noticed similar things at other Proms) was that the back desks of the violins were spotlighted with far greater emphasis than Anne Sofie von Otter.

South Bank Early Music weekend

The annual South Bank Early Music weekend (5/7 September) was badged as 'Fiesta Italiana', with an emphasis on vocal and string music from Italy. Christophe Coin's Ensemble de Limoges made a welcome visit to the UK (6 September) with a Saturday afternoon programme of Italian Concertos by Tartini, Locatelli, Vivaldi and Dall'Abaco.

As is the practice with many continental bands, there was very careful tuning beforehand, with the leader walking around the various groups of instruments. The complexity of Tartini's character showed through in his Concerto for Cello in A – the expansive melody of the first movement, with its little echoes and harmonic byways and slightly military tinge, was set against the yearning central Larghetto and more up-beat final Allegro assai. Vivaldi's 'Goldfinch' concerto (RV428) produced yet another programme note reference to wind instruments being phallic – somebody on the South Bank early music scene seems to be fixated by such things as this crops up in many programme notes and talks. As it happens, I could think of a few choice things to do with a wind instrument to the people in seats G24/25 for allowing their mobile phone to ring. The Cello Concerto in B minor (RV424) is not one of Vivaldi's most gripping works. There is far too much idle and repetitive figuration, which even Coin's excellent playing couldn't really overcome. Evaristo Felice Dall'Abaco moved from Venice to Bologna (coming under the influence of Torelli, the pioneer of concerto form, at San Petronio) to Modena (where he developed a taste for French music) and finally, as Konzertmeister and electoral councillor, to Munich during which time his Op 5 Concertos were published (in 1719). The interplay between two solo violins in his Op 5/6 'concerto a più strumenti' seemed to owe more to the stereo possibilities of San Petronio than the Munich court, and his harmonic writing owed more to Vivaldian circles of fifths than French writing of the time. But this was an effective piece, with a rum-ti-tum 'Giaccona' third movement and an increasingly excitable concluding folk dance. As well as Coin, I was also impressed with the theorbo playing of Pascal Monteilhet, the lyrical violin playing of Gilles Colliard and the solo flute of Maria-Tecla Andreotti.

The early evening concert (6 September) was of vocal music by Cipriano de Rore, sung by the 14 member of the Huelgas Ensemble directed by Paul van Nevel. The programme was centred on the *Missa Preter rerum seriem* a 7, although it was a shame that this spanned the interval. Works heard before and after the Mass included *Ave Regina caelorum*, the scrunchy *Mon petit coeur*, the slightly anarchic and growling *Plange quasi virgo* and the extraordinary *Calami sonum ferentes* sung by four bass voices. The final piece suffered a false start, which van Nevel took in his stride, getting the singers to quietly sing the opening chord before starting again. A very professional approach – as was his ability to control the audience's applause. In fact, there were one or two slightly shaky starts, but once they got going, the singing was impressive. The cadences, in particular, were most effectively shaded. One rather unusual aspect of this performance was that voices, once they had entered at a certain volume, would often stay at that volume as the other voices came in, rather than the usually practice of shading a line down once it has made its mark. This produced 'layered' crescendos, rather than a gradually build up of volume and intensity as parts enter. An interesting approach, but one that might take a bit of getting used to. The Mass was impressive, with some

delightful moments of detail from composer and director, including having a single voice land prematurely on a cadential chord, leaving the other voices to join in a sort of reverse suspension. The vigorous ending to the Gloria was another such moment, as it suddenly broadened its pulse at the Amen, as was the lightly tripping Hosanna. The blend between the voices was excellent, with no single voice dominating and some impressively controlled sopranos.

Anybody put off by the two Vivaldi works in the earlier concert might have been a bit alarmed at the prospect of hearing eight of them in a row. But *La Serenissima* proved to be worthy promoters for Vivaldi, with some sparkling and musical playing (7 September). Led from first violin position by Adrian Chandler, *La Serenissima* demonstrated playing that was both expressive and punchy. If it lacked some of the oomph of some recent groups, it also avoided the aggressive style that often goes with that oomph. The programme, 'Vivaldi in Arcadia', concentrated on the more pastoral works with several soloists, combined with arias from *Dorilla in Tempe*, sung by Mhairi Lawson. The Concerto 'La Pastorella' featured some nicely timed speed changes in the opening Allegro and an effective fluidity of line in the Largo – one of the highlights of the concert. The similar movement in the Concerto RV551 was a similar highlight, although the theorbo might have been a better foil to the extremely delicate playing of the muted solo violin and pizzicato second violin. I was initially unsure about the position of the soloists for the Concerto (RV553) for 4 violins and viola – they were placed more-or-less in a line leading away from the audience. But the interplay between the instruments, with echoes and motives passed down the line, eventually made this a successful formation. The slightly spooky opening Allegro was countered by a punchy final movement, also making use of pairs of solo violins. The Concerto RV520 has a curious beginning – it sounds as though everybody has started in the major key by mistake, so they all stop and start again. Mhairi Lawson charmingly introduced 'Il povera mio core' as the most miserable song that she had ever sung, although she did seem to find something to smile about while singing. Unfortunately it often sounded as though she was singing very slightly behind the beat – this was not helped by a habit of working her way into notes with a little crescendo. She was often still opening her mouth as the note began to form, so there was also a change of tone as the note arrived. She managed to keep the continuo group on their toes as they tried to judge the end of the cadenza of 'Bel placer saria d'un core'. Of the many soloists, Adrian Chandler, Matthew Truscott and Sarah Sexton impressed on violin, as did Gareth Deats on solo and continuo cello and Eligio Quinteiro (theorbo) and Robert Howarth (harpichord). There was an interesting contrast in stage manner between the rather rigidly stage-struck string players to the left, and the ebullient and jovial continuo group to the right.

Later the same day (7 September), Rinaldo Alessandrini's Concerto Italiano gave a concert of music by mid-16th century Mannerist composers based on the work of the

early 14th century poet, Francesco Petrarca, with settings by Lassus, Wert, Marenzio, Willaert and Monteverdi. Petrarca had a lifelong obsession with the 17-year old Laura, whom he had briefly met in his early 20's. When he first saw her she had already been married for two years, and it seems they may never have met again. But Petrarca's devotion was to produce an outpouring of poetry in her honour, consolidating the pattern of the sonnet along the way. With their sense of structure and flow, it is not surprising that they formed the basis for so many madrigals in later centuries. The six singers of Concerto Italiano produced a very impressive consort sound, all blending imperceptibly with each other. The alto voice made a particularly good blend, in comparison with many other male falsettists, and the two sopranos carefully controlled their volume in their higher registers. The harpsichord, harp and theorbo continuo, used in various combinations, was equally effective, producing restrained realizations of the harmonic structure. As with other concerts with these forces, I do wonder whether there was the need for so much conducting from the harpsichord – the singers seemed to work well enough on their own and could have been as, or even more effective with minimal intervention. One let-down, in this and all other concerts over the weekend, was the lack of texts in the original language to read alongside the translations – although the programme notes, by Andrew Stewart, were otherwise excellent.

The late night concert that ended the weekend (7 September) was by the extraordinary Mala Punica, directed by musicologist Pedro Memelsdorff with a lively programme of the allegorical madrigals of the early 15th century Florentine abbot, Don Paolo da Firenze. Despite an apparently impeccable career in the church, he left only secular music, albeit full of 'philosophical ideas, political positions, moral precepts, eulogies and invective'. Paolo was one of those fascinating composers on the cusp of major changes in artistic direction – in this case, with strong roots in late medieval style but with glimpses of the coming Renaissance. Interpretation of such early works is fraught, and much depends on individual arrangers – in this case an emphasis on complexity was apparent, with multi-layered heterophony and a love for the interval of the 2nd. The four singers (sopranos, countertenor/tenor and tenor – two of whom had also sung in the previous concert) demonstrated the clear projection and focused tone that is essential for this complex repertoire – apart from during 'Una smaniosa e insenata vecchia' when the lads let rip with funny voices as they sang of the old crone who had had their gentle love away (sung by two people in the first person, perhaps suggesting that 'my' gentle love was a bit of a goer). One star amongst the instruments (fiddles, chitarrino, organ, slide trumpet, recorder and bells) was an echequier – basically a baby harpsichord, but with a strikingly twangy, and undamped sound, rather like a clavicytherium (and unfortunately not on the companion CD to this concert). The instrumental pieces, included some by Landini (Paolo's contemporary), so it was a shame that they did not use the portative organ associated with

Landini – the standard issue box organ didn't look, or sound, the part. Pedro Memelsdorff displayed some demonically virtuosic recorder playing, leaping from his seat and tying himself up in knots. For some reason, he chose to conduct 'Godi Firenze' (from Dante's *Divine Comedy*), adding some visual curiosity value, but little else. The concluding *Benedicamus Domino*, sung in unison, was splendid – if I were The Lord, I would rather like to be blessed in this fashion. An exhilarating concert to end an interesting Festival.

CORRECTION. A sentence became garbled in the review of the *Earthquake Mass* concert from Innsbruck in the last issue of EMR (page 14). The sentence beginning – "In a 12-voice work ..." should have read: "In the *Missa*: Et ecce terrae motus est, the harmony is particularly slow moving and the interest has to be focussed on the movement of the, often complex, inner parts particularly when, as in this case, some sections are taken much slower than others."

THE SUFFOLK VILLAGES FESTIVAL 2003

Richard Rastall

How do you fill a church these days? A glib answer to the question asked by countless clergy is 'give a concert in the Suffolk Villages Festival', which over the years has built up an enviably large and enthusiastic audience. One can see and hear why. My first taste of this Festival was delectable in prospect, promising as it did a feast of early music and a relaxed long weekend (22–25 August 2003) that I could treat as a holiday (the gastronomic metaphor is unpremeditated but not irrelevant). I must say immediately that it more than lived up to my hopes, and not merely because the weather was impeccable: but I must also own up to circumstances that make me a less than impartial auditor. My wife was performing as a narrator in *King Arthur*; the Musical Director, Peter Holman, is a colleague at Leeds University; and he also runs the Leeds Baroque Orchestra (of which I am chairman), which is effectively the newer and northern arm of what is becoming a two-pronged operation. That said, I shall try to be factual in what follows.

The Festival took place in the parish churches of four villages, all within a few miles of each other and of the Essex border near Colchester. Hadleigh, Nayland, Stoke by Nayland and Boxford are not famous churches, but they come within the general heading of 'wool churches', which is to say that they are larger than you would expect. Broadly speaking, they date from the 15th century and are built in a spacious style that allows for large windows (including a depth of clerestory window that is surprising to a relative northerner like me) and wide aisles. They are, then, light, airy and spacious, which means that they are physically as suitable for concerts as any churches I know (and indeed, at Stoke by Nayland there was space for a small but very interesting exhibition by local instrument-makers at the back of the church); but in addition they have surprisingly good acoustics, with a consistent result for the audience and enough feedback for the performers, even with a full church.

The venues were no doubt one result of a very efficient organisation, which was evident in various ways. The logistics of setting-up, rehearsals, performances and set-striking in four venues with even a relatively small group of soloists, choir and orchestra is daunting, especially as the performers and set-up gang need to eat and sleep. Apart from one problem, when a pub expected to be open at lunch-time remained closed for unforeseen reasons, the whole Festival seemed to go smoothly: music, music-stands, lights, chairs and performers all arrived in the right places at the right times; everyone was fed and watered; and the audience was looked after by a small army of willing and efficient helpers. Add to this a splendid Festival program-booklet with a Constable painting on the outside and a wealth of necessary information (including texts and translations) on the inside, and all seems set up for the promised musical feast. Ah yes, the music ...

On the evening of 22 August the Festival started with a choral and orchestral concert of music by Pachelbel (born on 1 September 1653) and J.S. Bach, in itself an obviously interesting idea because of the musical and social connections between the two. An entertaining and very helpful talk on this aspect of the evening, given by Stephen Rose, preceded the concert. Pachelbel, the older composer by 32 years, emerged as a versatile, inventive and very satisfying composer with a logical but individual way of doing things. In two chorale concertos (*Christ lag in Todesbanden* and *Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan*) and in the solo aria *Die freudeerfüllten Abends-Stunden* (with Claire Tomlin in good voice) the great assurance and efficiency of his handling of mixed forces was apparent, while two instrumental suites confirmed the high quality of his string writing. The famous Canon was perhaps inevitable, and the concert was none the worse for that: a gutsy and breath-taking performance by Judy Tarling, Theresa Caudle and Tassilo Erhardt included the Gigue that is usually omitted after the Canon.

Two early works by Bach, *Nach dir, Herr, verlangst mich* (c. 1706–7) and *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (c. 1707) – cantatas 150 & 4 – provided an interesting comparison with Pachelbel, especially in the latter case where the two composers set the same text. One might have expected the young Bach to adhere fairly closely to the style and methods of his predecessors, and indeed the stylistic and structural continuities between Pachelbel and Bach were apparent: but I found myself quickly revising my assumption that Bach's innovations dated from his maturity. He was already doing some serious mould-breaking in his early 20s, and for the first time I began to understand the complaints of the congregation at Arnstadt. Listening to the Bach pieces in this concert against the background of Pachelbel was very like hearing Beethoven after a diet of Haydn: the anarchic gestures of the younger composer simply take one unawares.

Before leaving this concert I must say a little more about the performers bearing the brunt of the work in the Festival. The core of the operation is the Essex Baroque Orchestra and the choir Psalmody, both very competent groups that have played and sung together often enough in the last few years to have a clear understanding of what is needed and the ability to produce it. Smaller groups, as in this first concert, are mainly taken from these two: in the present case, the three violinists were supported by Paul Denley *viola* and a wonderful continuo group consisting of Imogen Seth-Smith *cello*, Sally Holman *bassoon*, Steven Devine *chamber organ* and Peter Holman *harpsichord*, while the singers were Claire Tomlin, Jennie Cassidy, Patrick McCarthy and Julian Perkins.

The following lunchtime Philippa Hyde and Fred Jacobs *theorbo* gave a recital entitled *Monteverdi and his Contemporaries*, which was an opportunity to hear both some obvious contenders (Rossi, Landi and Cavalli) and the more rarely-heard Constantijn Huygens, a sensitive songwriter well worth an airing. Hyde apparently has a virtually impeccable technique, and she is highly successful at imparting textual meaning to an audience. All of the songs came over well, and I was impressed throughout by both her huge ability at musical drama and the way in which this is backed up by a serious linguistic competence. She is already a regular and very welcome visitor to the Leeds Baroque Orchestra, and I hope that she will remain so.

She was backed up, supported and complemented by the quiet and (as far as I could tell through the weekend) always smiling Jacobs, whom I hadn't come across before. My loss, since he is a very accomplished performer indeed. His accompaniments in the songs were exactly right – supportive, inventive to the right degree, and not afraid to take the musical initiative when necessary – while his performance of various dance movements by Kapsberger were a delightful foil to the songs and a real joy in their own right.

The Saturday evening brought out the full forces of the Festival for Purcell's *King Arthur*. It is difficult to know

how to deal with a play in which the mortals speak and the supernatural characters both speak and sing. The solution chosen here, with two narrators speaking all the roles in a shortened text, is a good one: it allows time for the story to unfold while giving enough prominence to the music in the context of a concert. I was interested to witness this solution again, because *King Arthur* had been done this way a year or two back with the Leeds Baroque Orchestra, only three performers being at both occasions: Jane Oakshott (narrator), the hard-working leader of both orchestras, Judy Tarling, and the musical director, Peter Holman. The Suffolk performance was the more assured, as one would expect of a longer-running operation, and the venue much superior (the fine concert-hall at Leeds being largely out of commission 2001–4). A great deal depends on the two narrators – the other here being Jack Edwards – who must share all the roles between them (plus a few stage directions for clarity). There was some good development in this area since the Leeds performance, and the audience seemed to enjoy the unfolding of the rather inconsequential story. *King Arthur* is also a musical feast and, fine as all the music is known to be, it gains in stature when it is put in its dramatic context. Choir, orchestra and soloists were in good shape, and the musical performance was firm and thoroughly enjoyable. Altogether a most successful evening.

The Sunday evening saw a return to German-speaking lands, with a recital called *Beethoven and his Contemporaries* given by Colin Lawson *clarinet*, Sebastian Combetti *cello* and Steven Devine *fortepiano*. It was fascinating to be able to compare trios by Beethoven and the Archduke Rudolph and duos by Beethoven and Weber (the former's cello sonata op. 5 no. 1 and the latter's *Grand Duo* for clarinet and piano op. 48). Rudolph was briefly a pupil of Beethoven in his 'teens, and then his patron: his three-movement trio is a very attractive work that compares not too unfavourably with the Beethoven work that ended the program. Splendid playing by all the performers made for an excellent evening.

The last day of the Festival, Monday 25 August, again brought two events. At mid-day Sally Holman introduced a rackett, dulcian and several bassoons in a lecture-recital on the bassoon and its predecessors. Along the way she played music by Bartolomé de Selma y Salaverde (17th cent), Boismortier, Telemann, Mozart and Elgar, with a small contribution from Ivor the Engine. Her playing had given a great deal of pleasure earlier in the Festival, and it was good to hear her given the chance to explain her instruments and to show off something of the versatility of the bassoon family. In this she was joined by her sister, the cellist and Festival Administrator Louise Jameson, and Steven Devine, playing various keyboard instruments.

The evening concert brought three concerti grossi by Corelli, with Judy Tarling, Tassilo Erhardt and Mary Pells as the concertino group, and a bassoon concerto by Vivaldi (with Sally Holman), before Handel's glorious *Apollo e Dafne* ended the Festival. As in the first concert,

it was the relations between composers that provided the theme, for Handel probably wrote this dramatic cantata in Rome (1706–10), where he met and worked with Corelli (1653–1713, and born the same year as Pachelbel). Claire Tomlin and Eamonn Dougan were the protagonists in this tale of aborted seduction, beautifully told in both music and gesture (has ever a vestry door been slammed to such effect?). The quality of the music is very high throughout, with some virtuoso solos for violin and bassoon (Tarling and Holman) and, for my money, some of the most ravishing playing of the Festival from the flute of Bill Summers.

I have not mentioned half of the performers, and by no means all of the soloists, but no disrespect is intended to individuals: the quality of performance was high throughout, matching the logic and interest of the programs and (to return to my opening) the skill and efficiency of the back-stage and front-of-house crews. So go to this Festival if you can, and to the winter series, too, in which Peter Holman will again be directing Psalmody, the Essex Ba-

roque Orchestra and a constellation of soloists. In this context, perhaps a plug will be permissible. I have noted the connection between the Leeds Baroque Orchestra (with its largely student-based choir) and the Essex/Suffolk operation, and it is clear that Holman sees both operational and musical advantages in mounting particular works in both places. In the coming year we shall have performances of the original version (1718) of Handel's first English oratorio, *Esther*, in tandem with the Leeds Baroque Orchestra and Choir in the Great Hall of Leeds University on Sunday 15 February 2004, and with the Essex Baroque Orchestra and Psalmody in St Mary's church, Hadleigh, Suffolk, on Monday 31 May. The results should be interesting!

Finally, note that the next Suffolk Villages Festival takes place 27–30 August 2004, when – among other matters – the 300th anniversary of the deaths of Heinrich Biber and Georg Muffat will be celebrated. Be there.

RHETORIC, PERSUASION AND THE POWER OF MUSIC

JACKIE HUNTINGFORD

Cambridge Early Music Summer School – Baroque Week 27 July – 2 August 2003

Rather than give a descriptive review of this well-established course, run at Trinity Hall, Cambridge by the Parley of Instruments and Philip Thorby, I thought that I would concentrate on a particular theme which ran through the week – how to communicate the essence of the music in order to give a convincing and moving performance.

This was the second year in a row that my husband Geoff and I attended the 'Parley' week of this course, which follows Sirinu's course the previous week. This year we concentrated on English music including Blow, Boyce, Deering, Draghi, Handel, Purcell and Stanley in a mixture of large tutti sessions, small-scale chamber music and various sizes in between. However another theme soon began to take shape, allied in part to Judy Tarling's interest in the subject of rhetoric, especially as applied to music, but demonstrated both instinctively and overtly by the tutors. As a singer I was tutored mainly by Philip Thorby and Peter Holman so most of the examples below come from them, but my impression is that the 'rules' were applied by all.

For the singers, the day began with 'choir', though with around a dozen singers it didn't feel like a chorus. From

the start Philip made us think about the moods we were trying to express at different points in the music. Unlike the players, we had words, of course, but we don't always make full use of musical devices to emphasise them. He showed us a variety of ways, which included brighter or darker vowel sounds and shorter or smoother articulation, in order to put across a mood. Dynamics markings weren't exactly forbidden, but were too limiting. Piano or forte wasn't enough – for example, piano can be intense, relaxed or resigned, and forte could be joyous, determined or angry. There must be a reason for a dynamic change, not just as something else to do. My copies are littered with instructions such as 'stately, angry, smooth, alert, more energy, excited, resigned'.

We were also encouraged to look at the shape of the music to gauge a mood. The leap of a fourth, octave, tenth for example can add tension, whereas stepwise movements are smoother. A dotted rhythm among otherwise even note values was also important. We kept hearing – 'he could have written it like this, but he didn't. Why?' Even 'It took more ink to write a dotted rhythm and ink was expensive. It's not an accident'. During rehearsals with players and singers together, both Philip and Peter advised the players to shape certain phrases to anticipate the pattern of the vocal phrase they were introducing. For example, in Handel's *Let Thy Hand be Strengthened*, for the words justice and judgement' the singers were to sing

'justi-sand judgement' so the tension moved forward into 'judgement' and the players asked to make a four-bar phrase rather than two two-bar ones. We also worked with the bass line on some bars full of leaping quavers, to build the tension through a bar and release it on the first note of the next instead of landing heavily on it, then starting to build it again for the next one. After all, tension is usually released towards a cadence in Baroque music and these were in effect mini-cadences. But the whole effect was more interesting this way.

At the outset I accepted and noted these ideas as part of Philip's amazing ability to get to the heart of the music and give it shape after an unpromising run-through. But then on Tuesday evening, Judy Tarling gave an illustrated talk on the application of the rules of rhetoric to music and this started to give an insight into general methods that one might always apply. I knew of Judy's interest and expertise in the subjects of rhetoric, oratory and gesture through the ages and what was known of their power to move and persuade. She has studied the topic exhaustively and can quote sources from classical times onwards, always appropriate to the idea she is trying to convey. She spoke about some of the rules and how they can be employed to deliver your message. For example: for general shape, start by laying out your ideas quietly but clearly; then, as you build on them, use a variety of devices (my word) to excite, build tension, persuade; finally, release the tension as you come to your conclusions to leave the audience relaxed and hopefully convinced. This is an oversimplification of course, and I don't have the background to do her justice, but she went on to illustrate these ideas as applied to music. She first used her violin to demonstrate them, quoting references from rhetoric and in some cases giving names to the devices. She then explained that in music we had an enormous advantage as with more than one player we could enhance the delivery of the message greatly. She engaged the help of another violinist, Fiona Allinson, as well as Mark Caudle on cello and Peter Holman on organ. She talked about and demonstrated simple harmony and simple rhythms for a relaxed statement of ideas, repetition or imitation for reinforcement or to build tension (fugue, stretto), use of harmony for both creating and reducing tension, dotted vs regular rhythms, leaping vs stepwise pitch changes and of course articulation in the form of shorter or longer, smoother or even slurred progression between the notes.

These are all ideas of which we are instinctively aware, but don't always analyse and use to the full. Once something is found to work, the act of formulating and naming it can help to identify it and keep it in mind when deciding how to interpret a piece. However, Judy also warned against doing this too rigidly. Once something is named it might be used for its own sake rather to help deliver the message. The warnings already given about forte, piano, staccato illustrate this point but Philip was also cautious when wanting, say, an *esclamazione* or *messa da voce*. For example he was afraid that if he asked for the

latter he would get a huge formulaic hairpin up and down, when he might actually require something far more subtle. He took pains to describe what he was trying to achieve, afraid that we'd put it through our choral 'filter' and think 'ah, what he really wants is one of these' instead of understanding why something was required and doing it precisely and with feeling.

Knowing the rules also allows you to break them occasionally if you have good reason and know that the effect is consistent with what you are trying to communicate. In fact, when I asked her about this, Judy gave me another quote to the effect that the result could be greatly enhanced by informed rule-breaking, but she warned that you have to know them first. This comment followed Philip's overruling of her 'conventional' Baroque bowing for something more unusual in order to whip up some excitement at one point in *Let thy Hand be Strengthened*. In this case, he did of course know the rules and I think she approved of the change in that instance! Also, in rehearsing the end of *Handel's As Pants the Hart* he said that 'Peter would hate him for this', but he wanted a strong cadence (instead of the usual relaxation mentioned earlier) because it moved towards the 'Him' of the final 'Put thy trust in God, for I will praise Him!'.

I hope these ideas rubbed off on us. By the time Peter started suggesting phrasing to me for a chamber piece with strings and continuo on Friday, I was already thinking along similar lines. The same words were repeated later in the piece, but by then the 'story' had moved on so they were delivered in a different mood, and he also made suggestions for that change of mood as the piece unfolded, which felt absolutely right. Others commented during the week on how our performances had been transformed by the application of all these ideas and we worked particularly hard to apply them in the public concert. Many people at the final rehearsal and concert remarked on how moving some of it was, so I venture to hope that we took something precious away from the course as a whole. Many thanks to all the tutors, and to Selene Mills, Nick Ward and Linda for all their hard work and enthusiasm.

Reprinted from the Thames Valley Early Music Forum Newsletter. I have included this, since it describes better than any other report I have seen what the various courses many of our readers attend are about. I've had a week and a weekend with Philip in the last few months, with three separate days to come in the next few months, and am continually amazed by his ability to take a disparate group of singers and players and get them to make music. Because of an unfortunate clash of dates, I missed Peter taking the Eastern Early Music Forum through Draghi's pioneering St Cecilia ode since I was committed to a weekend with Philip in Lincoln (courtesy of the Berghs, alias Lindum Records) in which we managed to give an exciting (if variably perfect) performance of most of L'Incoronazione di Poppea to a small audience. We may not have staged it, but the dramatic intensity that Philip could see in every phrase and explain to the singers was amazing. We had fluent singers (they

Poppea to a small audience. We may not have staged it, but the dramatic intensity that Philip could see in every phrase and explain to the singers was amazing. We had fluent singers (they sailed through selections from the Oxford Choral Classics Madrigals and Partsongs on the Saturday evening – my first chance to sing any of the pieces since my edition appeared), and they were eager recipients of the ideas offered, even though not all had the technique to manage all the suggestions. *Poppea* is a strange work: all the main characters (except Drusilla – who came over strongly in this performance) are nasty, yet Monteverdi somehow offers such richness in the emotional expression of virtually every word, often questioning the apparent meaning, that there is nothing that can match it. (He also, I think, undermines what the librettist thought he was writing: a performance of the play without the music would offer an interesting comparison.) Both Philip and I would put it very high in our list of favourites.

HAYDN OPERAS

Peter Branscombe informs me that the Dorati recordings of the Haydn operas, whose reappearance without the documentation of the original LPs I deplored last month, had been reissued on CD in 1993 accompanied with the original essays and a trilingual translation.

CHARPENTIER

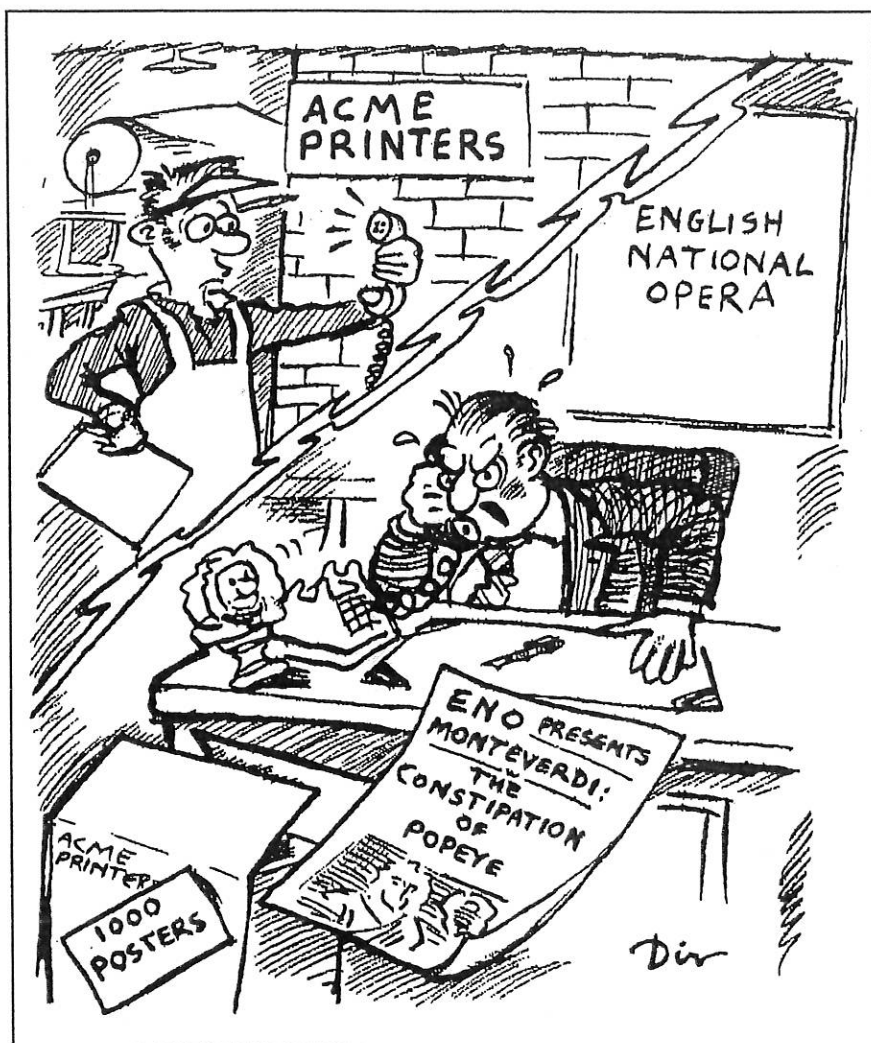
Ouverture pour l'Eglise (H 524)

(see pp. 18-19)

Source: Paris Bibliothèque nationale Rés. VM¹ 259, XX f. 23v-24r

There are no instrumental indications in the MS except for fl & viol in the penultimate bar. The original clefs (G1, C1, C2 & F4) imply violin, two violas and bass violin, and recorders presumably doubled the upper three parts. (The piece could also be played as a recorder quartet.) Chordal instruments are unnecessary – the contemporary theatrical overture was probably played without continuo, and there are no figures. However, the piece which immediately follows in the autograph MS, the Elevation *Famem meam* (H 46), begins with a four-stave Prelude whose bass stave is headed 'basse de violon et clavecin'.

Instrumental parts are available from King's Music. The second and third parts are printed in both the alto and the treble clef. Price: score & set £6.00, extra strings £1.00



REMINISCENCES OF A CARTOONIST

Years ago, in what seems another life, I worked in record shops. Customers would come in bearing scraps of paper upon which they'd scribbled notes about the music which they had heard on Radio 3 and wanted a recording thereof. Many were wonderful misprints and howlers, and I started to write them down. These are all totally genuine requests – I've not embellished or improved them! Here are some samples:

- Acker Bilk's Canon
- Al Bowlly's Adagio
- Mendelssohn's Wedding Mask
- Sibelius's Tapioca
- (and Potholer's Daughter)
- Chopins Military Bolognese
- The Bog Roll from the Tales of Hoffmann
- Bach's Kestrel Sweets
- Cream of Gerontius
- Cavalier Rusty Meccano

I particularly liked a Monteverdi one – a request from an old lady who wanted to mug up on an opera she was going to see at Glyndebourne (Peter Hall/Raymond Leppard in 1984). She really did call it

Constipation of Popeye.

M-A Charpentier: Ouverture pour l'Eglise, H. 524

The image displays a musical score for M-A Charpentier's *Ouverture pour l'Eglise*, H. 524. The score is written for four staves (treble and bass clefs, and alto and tenor clefs) in 2/4 time. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into four systems, each containing four staves. The first system (measures 1-5) features a complex melodic line in the first staff, with a trill in measure 1 and a fermata in measure 2. The second system (measures 6-11) continues the melodic development, with a trill in measure 6 and a fermata in measure 11. The third system (measures 12-18) includes a first ending bracket in measure 18. The fourth system (measures 19-24) includes a second ending bracket in measure 19. The score is marked with various musical notations, including notes, rests, trills, and fermatas.

27

System 1 (Measures 27-35): Four staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major, 4/4 time. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes with various rests.

36

System 2 (Measures 36-44): Four staves in G major, 4/4 time. The melody continues with more complex rhythmic patterns including eighth and sixteenth notes.

45

System 3 (Measures 45-51): Four staves in G major, 4/4 time. The music includes some sixteenth-note runs and rests.

52

System 4 (Measures 52-58): Four staves in G major, 4/4 time. The system ends with a double bar line. Labels "Fl." and "Viol." are present on the third staff.

CD REVIEWS

MEDIEVAL

Regina Pretiose: Una Celebrazione Mariana del Trecento Fiorentino L'Homme Armé, Fabio Lombardo dir 71' 04"

Tactus TC 350001

Music by Bartolo, Gherdello & Lorenzo da Firenze, Paolo tenorista & anon

There are two styles here. The laude are performed on the too-common assumption that multi-stanza'd pieces need vocal and instrumental variety to be acceptable to audiences who are not interested in the words. But these are interspersed with more sophisticated and precisely notated compositions, which are beautifully (perhaps a touch too beautifully) performed. What is missing is any sense that the singing of laude was a congregational activity, though the booklet notes give clear descriptions of the sort of event (a Marian mass) the programme is based on: everyone sang, with no mention of instruments. You'll want to join in with the catchy melodies. The problem of recording them is a bit like hymns: the desire to make them sound varied to satisfy the mere listener. The virtuosic liturgical polyphony makes a fine contrast, and despite criticisms I commend this strongly. CB

16th CENTURY

Corteccia Firenze 1539: Musiche fatte nelle nozze dello... Cosimo de Medici et.... Leonora da Tolletto Centro de Musique Ancienne di Ginevra, Studio di Musica Rinascimentale di Palermo, Schola "Jacopo da Bologna", Gabriel Garrido dir 46' 56"

Tactus TC 5000301 (rec 1987)

I can only assume that there are not many alternative recordings of these intermedi, since this is the fourth impression of the recording since 1990. The repertoire is lush and splendid by turns as sensuous tributes to the serenity and pleasures of marriage intersperse the accolades provided by the wedding guests invited from the city states. The the postprandial entertainment merges into the still, poised – and suggestive – move into the fall of night. However, alas, almost everything in the recording disappoints. *Sacro et santo Himeneo*, a very sexy piece, is a musical cold shower. The instrumental playing is no less wooden. The animating idea behind the interpretation is perhaps the idea of splendour, but the effect misfires. The state tributes are the nearest to having some

shape – maybe by then the performers are simply more tired. The final ballo is thrown away and just comical. I think, as a guest, I would have slipped out of this wedding and sought entertainment elsewhere. Stephen Cassidy

Daser Missa super Ave Maria, Proprium De veneratione Virginis Mariae, Psalm-Motetten Vokal Ensemble München, Die Gruppe für Alte Musik München, Martin Zöbele

Aeolus AE-10076 62' 36"

The disc opens with the double-choir *Benedictus Dominus*; the other motets are *Ad te levavi*, *Dominus regnavit me*, *Ecce nunc benedicite*, *Salvum me fac Deus* & the version of Josquin's famous *Ave Maria* with two extra parts. Ludwig Daser's place at the Munich court of Duke Albrecht was taken over by Lassus, either as a result of Daser's ill health, his religious persuasion which differed from the Duke's, or because he was eclipsed by the towering musical talent of the younger Lassus. If you are not familiar with Daser, listening to this recording will convince you that the last of these three reasons cannot be the real one. It is true that the mass and *Ave Maria* on the recording are reworkings of great works by Senfl and Josquin. But listening to the opening *Benedictus Dominus* shows the bridge he created between the old formal style of his models towards that of Lassus. The Vokal Ensemble München sounds fresh and unforced, singing from the inside of the music rather than imposing upon it. The result is infectious and meditative. It is a welcome change from the more usual vocal landscapes. The brass ensemble which supports many pieces is delicate and unobtrusive, blending well with this same feel. There is a fairly extended instrumental piece in the middle which is very well conceived. I recommend this wholeheartedly as a new group (and a new sound) to me.

Stephen Cassidy

Dowland Lachrimae Norsk Barokkorkester, Randi Stene mS, Rolf Lislevand lute/leader 48' 02"

Linn CKD 184 (SACD/CD)

Contains the 7 Pavans + *All ye whom love of fortune, Flow my tears, From silent night, I saw my lady weep, In darkness let me well, Lasso vita mia & Fortune* (lute solo)

The publicity blurb for this CD claims that Rolf Lislevand has been trying since 1987 'to reconstruct an authentic way of performing Italian music from the first half of the 17th century'. I do not know whether he has succeeded in Italian

music, but he misses the target by a mile here. Dowland stated on the title-page of *Lachrimae* that the collection was 'set forth for the Lute, Viols, or Violons, in five parts', so he clearly envisioned a violin consort as an alternative to viols, though he would have been surprised by what sounds like a late-Baroque orchestra, with cellos and a violone doubling the bass at the octave instead of bass violins, and with a layout of two violins, two violas and bass rather than violin, three violas and bass, the proper scoring for five-part pieces such as the *Lachrimae* pavans that have a single soprano and three inner parts. Furthermore, the instruments make a dark, covered sound that suggests that they are eighteenth-century models with covered strings and late-Baroque bows, a recorder is unnecessarily added from time to time, and the playing style is best described as sub-Goebel, with ugly bulges on most long notes. Just about the only 'authentic' thing about the recording is Randi Stene's thick Scandinavian accent in the songs, which Dowland doubtless had to endure during his time in Denmark, though to be fair to her she manages to scale down her (evidently big) voice effectively, and turns in some sensitive performances. Overall though, this is one to miss, particularly since with a playing time of only 48' 02" it is outstandingly bad value for money. Peter Holman

Ferrabosco I & II Consort Music The Rose Consort of Viols 75' 36"

cpo 999 859-2

75 minutes of music with pieces by both Father and Son offer an intriguing chance to decide whether musical style is inherited. It is certain that Ferrabosco senior's music is healthy fodder – his counterpoint Flemish with a didactic, slightly severe quality. His son's well-schooled counterpoint adds engaging melody and a sensuousness which carries the listener in its stream. The father is represented by two *In Nomine*'s and 5 fantasies in 3, 4 and 5 parts, and his curious fantasy for 6 basses. From Ferrabosco II are two of the 4-part fantasies, several 5-part dances including the Dovehouse Pavan, 2 Hexachord Fantasies, four 6-part fantasies and two *In Nomines*, one of which is the Fantasy with the *In Nomine* theme through all the parts. The 6-part pieces in particular are splendid music, with a profusion of ideas and wonderful feeling of climax. The recording was made in 1997, and the

playing is always beautifully shaped and full of understanding of the complex structure of the music. Robert Oliver

Palestrina *Stabat mater* The Cardinal's Musick, Andrew Carwood 76' 11"
Gaudeamus CD GAU 333

On this beautifully sung and recorded disc Andrew Carwood's inspired programme planning uses motets and other settings to tell the Holy Week and Easter story. The music ranges from the opening plainchant *Hosanna filio David* to the glorious double-choir *Victimae Paschali* which ends the CD. The polyphony (all by Palestrina) shows a wide variety of styles from the luminosity of the 4-voice 1584 *Pueri Hebraeorum* to big 6-voice pieces like *Haec dies* and an alternatin Magnificat, to 8-voice polychoral settings, including a splendid performance of the *Stabat mater*. The one-per-part singing brings great clarity of line and text while the resonant acoustic of Arundel Castle Chapel can often give the effect of having more singers. This disc makes a most persuasive case for solo voices in this music as in Cappella Sistina performances. Carwood varies the tempo between pieces quite a lot, reflecting the mood of the text, but he and his singers always show a tremendous sense of line and cadence which gets to the heart of Palestrina's style. A 'must buy' – especially for anyone who thinks of Palestrina as just an esoteric composer of masses. Noel O'Regan

Palestrina *Music for Advent and Christmas* Westminster Cathedral Choir, Martin Baker 78' 22"
Hyperion CDA67396

This makes a fascinating comparison with The Cardinal's Musick's CD reviewed above. It has all the qualities long associated with this choir: opulent sonority, tremendous conviction in the singing, and a strong sense of liturgical place highlighted by the very resonant acoustic of the Cathedral. This is Palestrina for the grand occasion, built around the bright and very public style of the double-choir *Missa Hodie Christus natus est*. The unaccompanied performance of the mass allows the interplay of vocal lines to shine through. The rest of the music picks up on this celebratory theme: the singing is consistently forceful and there is little introspection here; one sometimes wishes for more of the contrast given by the occasional solo sections within larger pieces. The full choir is inevitably less flexible than the solo voices of the Cardinals' Musick and the Christmas/Easter polarity in the two programmes accentuates that contrast. But this is equally fine

Palestrina singing and another 'must buy' which brings to life the experience of pilgrims in St. Peter's in Rome at the start of the Jubilee Year of 1575. Noel O'Regan

Utendal & Monte *Motets* Capilla Flamenca, Oltremontano Bart Demuyt dir
Passacaille 937 73'06"

Extraordinary: if there are any discs devoted to Utendal, I don't remember them (nor does the new Penguin CD Guide), then we get two together – and Monte himself is recorded minimally in relationship to his fame. The motets here are convincingly performed by solo voices (AATTBarB), two cornetts and four trombones in a variety of scorings. The disc contains 11 sound recordings as well as a further four pieces on video which can only be heard on a PC. I must confess that I couldn't tell from a blind listening which pieces were by which composer. Normally, one expects vocal performances to be more expressive than instrumental ones, but here I sometimes felt disappointed when voices joined the cornetts and sackbuts, who phrased more vocally than the singers. Recommended to those who, like me, enjoy wind and voices in renaissance polyphony. CB

Utendal *Fröliche neue teutsche und frantzösische Lieder* Romanesque, Philippe Malfeyt dir 63' 28"
Ricercar RIC 227

Utendal (1543/5-1581) started his musical career as choirboy for Marie of Hungary (governor of the Netherlands), worked for Archduke Ferdinand in Prague and, from 1564, in Innsbruck. There seems to be no anniversary to justify this interest in him, but the music is reason enough to enjoy this recording of his 1574 publication of 13 songs in German, 13 in French. The performers follow the suggestion of the original to utilise diverse instruments (mostly viols), with just soprano and bass to supply the words. It all works very well and is certainly an entertaining disc, though the serious streak in me would make me prefer the church music if I had to make a choice. CB

Chansons musicales: *Joyssance vous donneray* Arianna Savall S, harp, Thomas Kügler rec, Il Desiderio 66' 17"
Aeolus AE 10006
Music by Cadéac, Du Caurroy, Gervaise, Jacotin, Janequin, Le Jeune, Lassus, Sandrin, Sermisy, Willaert

This delightful disc presents a series of popular 16th-century chansons along with instrumental treatments of the same airs in a very pleasing and varied programme. Chief among the delights are the lovely,

clear soprano voice of Arianna Savall, and the distinctive sound of the massed flutes of Desiderio. The use of several flutes together in consort is suggested by a number of 16th-century paintings, including the one chosen for the CD cover, whose glowing opalescence hints at the tone of the flutes within. While most of the music performed is very familiar repertoire (overlooking the rather misguided 'improvisation' which concludes the programme), the idiosyncratic instrumentation and the freshness of approach make this performance a thorough delight in every respect. Refreshingly different.

D. James Ross

Just in case your dealer is trying to locate it from an alphabetic list rather than a computer search, the apparent title from the cover could be either Chansons... or Joyssance... but on what (in book terms) one would call the spine, where ambiguous design has to give way to a clear order, Chanson... comes first.

Estremeses del Siglo de Oro: *Lope de Vega y su tiempo, 1550-1650* Montserrat Figueras, Hespèrion XX, Jordi Savall 77' 36"
AliaVox ASVA 9831 (rec 1978 & 1987)

The presentation of this anthology is lavish, and the technology, presumably the justification for the re-issue, a little intimidating at first sight – the CD is styled a 'super audio hybrid' but, reassuringly, can be played on what it calls 'standard' CD players, which mine appears to be. The great playwright Lope de Vega included many songs in his plays, some using traditional and old settings by Vasquez, others set by his colleague and friend Juan Blas de Castro. Their music, together with that of Cabezón, Guerrero, Ortiz, Heredia and others of the period, includes many songs featuring Montserrat Figueras and various instrumentalists playing viols, guitar, vihuela, cornetto, tromba, dulcian, harpsichord, and percussion of course: a total of nearly 80 minutes of marvellous music. Robert Oliver

I noticed at the Parador at which we stayed in Catalunya recently a whole cabinet of Savall discs for sale: effective marketing, but there's music more appropriate to medieval castles than that in the AliaVox catalogue, a copy of which is included with this disc). CB

Madrigali diminuiti e passaggiati tra voce e cembalo Silvia Rambaldi kbd, Tadashi Miroku cT 77' 44"
Tactus TC 500003
Versions of music by Arcadelt, Caccini, D. Ferrabosco, Palestrina, Rore,

This fascinating programme of madrigal arrangements for voice with keyboard and intabulations for solo keyboard is entertaining and intriguing in equal measure.

In adapting the madrigals for solo voice and keyboard, the contemporary arrangers have frequently included ornamentation for both performers, and the disc is at its most successful when Rambaldi and Miroku seem to vie with one another for the spotlight. For me the most engaging feature of the performances is Miroku's expressive male alto voice. A frequent performer with the excellent Bach Collegium Japan, Miroku has clearly picked up some very good habits, transforming an already remarkable voice into an extremely versatile instrument. This is not to diminish the majority of the tracks on the CD devoted to keyboard intabulations, in which Silvia Rambaldi's sensitive playing ensures that interest is supported through frequently quite lengthy stretches of passaggi and elaboration. *D. James Ross*

The Toledo Summit (1502): Early 16th-c. Spanish & Flemish songs & motets The Orlando Consort 74' 48"

Harmonia Mundi HMU 907328

Music by Anchieta, Agricola, Brumel, Díaz de Aux, Divitis, Josquin, La Rue, La Torre, Lagarto, Luchas, Monágar, Peñalosa & anon

As I am particularly fond of this type of imaginative programming, I found the concept behind this disc deeply thought-provoking. Tess Knighton's excellent programme note sets the tastebuds a-tingle with her account of the summit at Toledo between the houses of Burgundy and Aragon/Castile and her convincing speculation as to the music which would have graced the occasion. She makes it clear that large numbers of singers and instrumentalists would have been on hand to perform for the assembled royalty, and it seems not a little perverse to present the whole programme with only the four unaccompanied voices of The Orlando Consort. While some of the lighter secular music would doubtless have been performed this way, I am sure that the ostentatious use of instruments combined with a larger choral group would have been the favoured method for the more weighty repertoire at this time. I certainly found that a programme, which on paper was bursting with variety and bristling with novelty, in execution sounded lacklustre, samey and sometimes just plain dull.

D. James Ross

Tess Knighton's book *Música y músicos en la corte de Ferdinando El Católico* is reviewed in *Goldberg*, issue 24, p. 30, by Michael Noone, who commends it. This is the first of the new pattern *Goldbergs* which will appear every two months with separate editions in Spanish, French and English – so more text and an easier layout than in the previous Spanish and English version.

17th CENTURY

Battiferri *Vola de Libano* [Motets & Ricercars] Sacro e Profano (Roberta Invernizzi S, Juan Manuel Quintana gamba, Carla Marotta vln, Giovanni Dalla Vecchia vln/vla, Judit Foldes vla, Claudio Ronco vlc, Marco Mencoboni hpscd, dir) E lucevan le stelle CD EL 992309

Luigi Battiferri (1614-82) was unknown to me, but I was glad to make his acquaintance. Roberta Invernizzi is a generally convincing advocate for his monodies, though occasionally a run was not quite under control and there were a few patches of sour intonation – but not serious enough to outweigh her confident and stylish performances. (I'd better be polite, since the credits include legal advice and I don't want to be sued for libel.) The booklet makes some excessive claims about the ensemble pieces included; they are more enjoyable if you don't think of Bach. The packaging is confusing: no mention of composer on front or spine. The disc is part of a project of research into music of Pesaro and the Marches: I look forward to further examples of the local produce. *CB*

Böhm *Die Claviersuiten* Mitzi Meyerson hpscd 96' 02" (2 CDs) Glossa GCD 921801

Böhm's suites tantalise the keyboardist with a mix of Frobergian and strongly Gallic ingredients. Equally intriguing are the notated texts, which can be precisely detailed but also include skeletal passages that perhaps the player should flesh out. Mitzi Meyerson characterises most of the dances vividly, bringing vigour to the courantes and dreaminess to some of the allemandes. Once or twice she misjudges, as with the messy scramble in the gigue of the D major Overture. She is both stylish and pragmatic about the mix of precision and sketchiness in the sources. In the F minor Suite no. 7, for instance, she adorns the skeletal bars of the Sarabande during repeats, but does not go as far as to reorder the Chaconne in the way advocated by Peter Williams (*Early Music* 17, 1989, 43). More contentious is her liberal rhythmic flexibility, particularly the heavy ritardandos during and at the end of pieces. Some listeners may find her rubato expressive, but others will consider it melodramatic or over-indulgent. In the booklet Meyerson is sometimes wilfully eccentric: to cope with the big stretches that Böhm demands of the left hand, she says she chose to grow her finger-nails rather than use a short-octave keyboard! But there is no doubting her passion for the music: this is a committed and characterful disc. *Stephen Rose*

Comes *In festo Corporis Christi, València, ca. 1635* Victoria Musicae, Josep Ramon Gil-Tàrraga dir 78' 02" Ars Harmonica AH 107

Joan Baptista Comes was a forward-looking composer in early-17th century Valencia, a proponent of Baroque music at a time when Lobo and Vivanco were still publishing purely Renaissance polyphony. Although over 200 of his works are extant, they are rarely heard. Most of the music presented here, including the *Missa Que fértel que es el año*, has not been recorded before, and is well worth hearing. The Mass is performed by a choir of soloists, supported by harp and bass viol, and a larger choir with wind instruments; contemporary documentation exists to justify the use of all the instruments. The Corpus Christi Sequence *Lauda Sion Salvatorem* is a magnificent three-choir setting which demonstrates Comes's adventurous use of the polychoral idiom, with independent instrumental parts and some glorious harmonic experimentation. It features a trio of dulcians accompanying a male alto – a delightful sound colour. The performance is not above good amateur standard, and more could have been made of this rich material: I would love to hear what Andrew Lawrence-King and The Harp Consort would do with it. But bravo to this Valencian group for making a commendable effort to promulgate the music of their compatriot. This is something of a mission for their director, Josep Gil-Tàrraga, but the recording is more than a political point-scorer – it reveals the fervour of the performers for Comes's music, which certainly merits more attention from the world beyond Valencia. *Selene Mills*

Monteverdi *Madrigals Book 2* Delitiae Musicae, Marco Longhini cond 62' 24" Naxos 8.555308 £

This recording is captivating – perhaps even more than the same group's recording of Monteverdi's first book of madrigals, reviewed here earlier this year. The singers seem better matched than before, especially the pair of countertenors, and the low bass (particularly low, since the music is transposed down for the all-male singers) gives a lovely warmth while sustaining the clarity of line characteristic of this group. They are at their best when they dare to take risks: the unbelievably long pauses in the two-part madrigal *Non si levav' ancor* permit no lapse in the listener's attention: we are held by the silences, since the whole piece has built up towards these moments of anguish, every phrase being painted with a separate colour and emotion. In contrast, *Donna,*

mel mio ritorno is sung in a matter-of-fact way belying its Palestrina-like imitative polyphonic writing – until the very last words, *con voi son io*, when passion at last prevails.

Instruments are used judiciously and appropriately, mainly in the faster pieces; I enjoyed the contrast between the chirpy harpsichord and the voluptuous bass viol in *Tutte le bocche belle*, and the lute infilling in *Dolcemente dormiva*. But the voices provide their own orchestration, with a great variety of expression almost matching the inventiveness of Monteverdi himself. The acoustic of the Veronese church is fully exploited, for example with the rapidly diminishing 'O' in *Ti spontò l'ali*. For a real painting in music, close your eyes and listen to the dawning day in *Ecco mormorar le fronde*: the leaves tremble in the morning breeze, as the singers give an unconscious musical yawn. This performance contains some untidy ensemble, but perhaps this adds even more to the expressionistic vision, since each voice is allowed the space to express itself individually. The excellent booklet notes not only aid the listener to appreciate some of the music's niceties, but also explain the principles guiding Longhini's performance style, by quoting Vicentino (1555), whose rules for singing madrigals are followed to the letter. This is a winner. *Selene Mills*

Purcell Sonatas of III Parts, Sonatas in IV Parts Ricercar Consort. (François Fernandez, Enrico Gatti *vlins*, Philippe Pierlot *gamba*, Bernard Focroulle *org*, Pierre Hantaï *hpscd*) 154' 10" (2 CDs) Ricercar RIC 217 (rec 1990 & 1994)

Two recordings are reissued and combined to form a 'complete trio sonatas'. Philippe Pierlot is the excellent bass viol player, who leads the Ricercar Consort in various recordings I have favourably reviewed elsewhere, and Pierre Hantaï is the harpsichordist. The violins, François Fernandez and Enrico Gatti are unfamiliar names to me, but they are very fine instrumentalists, if inclined to play rather legato and with some vibrato. But they play very expressively and with a lovely rounded (but not too rich) sound. In contrast, the Chatham Baroque recording, reviewed last month, is altogether more brisk and articulate (for example the g minor Chaconne from the 1697 set takes 2 minutes less than the Ricercar's time) but the music is fabulous, and marvellous listening. *Robert Oliver*

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

Trabaci Il Primo Libro de Ricercate, Canzone francese, Capricci... Luca Scandali *org*, Marie Bournisien, Masako Fujimura *harps*, La Moderna Pratica, Stefano Molardi *dir* 77' 31" Tactus TC571801

This is very much a game of two halves: all the music is taken from Trabaci's 1603 publication, but the first half is performed on varied combinations of harpsichord, harps, string quartet and percussion, while the second half is played on the characterful organ of the Basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio in L'Aquila. I guess the sonorities were not presented alternatively because of the differing pitch levels (organ at 396; ensemble at 415). Trabaci himself recommended that this music was suitable for harpsichord, organ or 'other instruments', and the galliards are particularly effective with strings and continuo. But I'm pretty sure Trabaci would have been surprised by the varied array of percussion that La Moderna Pratica add to a few tracks here – an unnecessary intrusion that undermines the composer's own inventiveness. The strings (violin, two violas and cello) are less convincing in contrapuntal pieces, where their lack of clear articulation undermines the pulse and clarity of texture. Quarter comma meantone tuning on the keyboards gives a wonderfully exploratory colour to the more chromatic pieces, and there's beautifully poised playing from the two harpists, as well as some prominent birdsong from the neighbouring cloister. The drums aside, these performances make good advocacy for the music of a Neapolitan master of the early baroque. *John Bryan*

Ward Upon a bank with Roses: Consort Music Rose Consort of Viols 71' 38" cpo 999 928-2

Another generously full (71 minutes) disc with a representative selection from Ward's not very substantial output. His madrigals are well-known to singers, and several of them are included – the booklet points out that Ward put viols ahead of voices in his title page – and work very well. There is some very lovely music on this disc, particularly the *In Nomines*, which are brilliant and genuinely innovative. Devotees of this consort and this music will enjoy the whole disc, others may find that a few pieces allow their attention to wander, particularly some, but not all, of the Italian madrigals, which need their texts to give meaning. The duets with organ are brief and undemanding, a pleasant change in texture. Ward's music is generally more sectional and clearly defined than Ferrabosco's and

less varied in its scope. It is more immediately easy to comprehend, sympathetically played, and the best of it, well represented here, is arrestingly beautiful.

Robert Oliver

Cantate Domino: Motetti e Sonate del Seicento Veneziano Lia Serafini S, Il Viaggio Musicale 57' 00" Tactus TC 590001

Music by Castello, Cavalli, Cornetto, Fontana, Grandi, Legrenzi, Monteverdi, Riccio

Some of the tracks of this CD appear to be claimed as first recordings but this is clearly not the case. I edited Legrenzi's *O dilectissime Jesu* in the 1980s and it has been recorded at least twice since then. This is, nevertheless, an interesting programme, including some very nice pieces (of which, of course, the Legrenzi is the nicest – it is truly delicious) for an ensemble of two violins, bassoon and continuo (in this case, theorbo and virginals) with soprano. Lia Serafini's voice is, unfortunately, a little too wobbly for my tastes, and I have also to report that the instruments are not on the best form either. In the opening sonata by Cavalli, the violinists struggle to keep together, and are sometimes ahead of the continuo. According to my ears, the Grandi motet has one more violin part than is noted in the booklet, which does not include texts for any of the vocal pieces. In summary, this is a bit of a mixed bag: nice repertoire, but perhaps without any particular flair. *BC*

Is it an Italian fashion to prefer theorbo with harpsichord/virginals rather than organ for motets? The Battiferri disc reviewed above does so, as does the secular Si dolce below. *CB*

Es sol claro y luciente: Barocke weihnachtliche Chormusik aus Südamerika Grupo Canto Coral, Nestor Andrenacci *dir* 44' 53" K&K ISBN 3-930643-87-1

Music by Juan de Araujo, Gaspar Fernandes, Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco, Juan García de Zéspedes & anon

This is a live recording of a short concert with German introductions given on 1 June 2002 by an Argentine choir in Kloster Maulbronn. There is only a folded sheet of notes in the case, but a translation is available at K&K's website. Zéspedes's *Convidando está la noche* is becoming the representative sample of the Latin-American ethnic style: I've met it on two courses and heard it on other discs. This is a nice programme, but other discs have more music and better packaging, and the choir, though good, doesn't offer any particular characteristic features: even English singers can produce funny noises and dance rhythms as vigorously as here. But I'm sure the audience enjoyed it. *CB*

Si dolce è il tormento Sacro & Profano
(Catarina Calvi A, Gian Paulo Fagotto T,
Eduardo Egüez theorbo, gtr Marco Menco-
boni *hpscd, dir*) 53' 50"

E lucevan le stelle CD ELL 012302

Music by Barbarino, d'India, Monteverdi, Sances

This is a live recording of a 1997 concert at the Ducal Palace, Urbino. When BC typeset the title song for *EMR* 85, he thought it rather a silly piece. As treated here, with over-cultivated voice and an elaboration which conceals its simplicity, I would agree: the counterpoint between naivety and sophistication is distorted. First time through, I couldn't take the singers at all, but now, despite a certain 'in your face' quality which may be exaggerated by close miking to keep out audience noise, I find that their sense of style and commitment over-rides their aggression. Sances' *Ursurpator tiranno* with its re-treatment of the final duet of *Poppea* is particularly impressive (and does the fact that he thinks it worth using some of the melodic material suggest that it really was by a composer worth imitating?) I was going to comment on the oddity of the combination of harpsichord and theorbo, but having spent a weekend recently accompanying *Poppea* in a combination of two of each with enormous enjoyment, I'll admit that the pairing (or quadrupling) works well. There is no overlap between the members of the performing group here and that of the Battiferri CD reviewed above apart from the director and other members of his family in the support group. CB

La Belle Homicide: Lute Music from the Barbe Manuscript Rolf Lislevand 62' 25"
Naïve E 8880

Music by Ennemond and Denis Gaultier, Mesangeau, Jacques Gallot, Mouton, Bocquet, Dufaut and Dubut.

The Barbe Manuscript, compiled between 1690 and 1700, is the most elegantly intabulated and (with the slightly later Vaudry de Saizenay manuscript, which also contains a large section of music for theorbo especially by Robert de Visée) the most important MS source we have for the repertoire of the great French lutenists of the previous eighty years. The full manuscript includes 168 fine pieces by some 20 composers, several represented by only one item. Of the musicians represented by a broader selection of their work in the original source, Rolf Lislevand has omitted in his own generally excellent choice only Emond and Pinel. The general tone of melancholy characteristic of the repertoire is emphasized by the fact that of all the 21 tracks included only one, a sarabande by Nicolas Dubut, is in a major key and even that

only equivocally so in its characteristic shifts between major and minor modes. It should be mentioned that Lislevand, who plays this elusive music with real commitment and empathy throughout, includes in his recital two preludes by Ennemond Gaultier which do not appear in Barbe. It is notable that the MS includes no unmeasured preludes, though they are otherwise so prominent in the repertoire. With this CD Rolf Lislevand has made an important contribution to a revival of a remarkable field of hypnotic music already pioneered by his own teacher, Hopkinson Smith, and the equally fine lutenist Pascal Monteilhet, each of whom have previously issued anthologies devoted to most of the composers featured on Lislevand's own impressive disc. David J. Levy

LATE BAROQUE

Bach Leipziger Weihnachtskantaten
Dorothee Blotzky-Mields, Carolyn Sampson, Ingeborg Danz, Mark Padmore, Peter Kooy, Sebastian Noack SSATBB, Collegium Vocale Gent, Philippe Herreweghe 117' 21" (2 CDs in box)
Harmonia Mundi HMC 801781.82
BWV 63, 91, 121, 133, 243a

Previous Bach recordings by Philippe Herreweghe have often failed to inspire me: I'm a die-hard devotee of the Suzuki school. This double disc set, though, is compelling. The soloists are, without exception, out of the top drawer, the instrumental contributions are outstanding, and the choir is absolutely fantastic. The first disc features one of my favourite sopranos, Dorothee Blotzky-Mields, in what, I think, is her first 'big label' recording, in which case I hope the delightful performances she gives here convince other conductors to employ her. They also feature the superb Peter Kooy. The middle parts are taken by Ingeborg Danz and Mark Padmore, who also sing on the second CD, where they are joined by Carolyn Sampson (whose voice seems slightly bigger than usual, which I hope is not a sign of things to come – like Blotzky-Mields, she has a beautiful, natural sound with a seemingly effortless coloratura, and does not need to let it blossom into something more operatic) and Sebastian Noack. The arias in BWV 63 are more duets, and it's unfortunate that the booklet (which is otherwise extremely informative and useful) lists only one voice. If the soloists are excellent, they are matched by a choir that, as I said, is on very fine form, particularly in the diction department. They relish the extra movements in the Christmas version of the Magnificat, which is given a slightly

darker tone by being in the original flat key. I shall listen to this set many times between now and the festive season, and would warmly recommend it as a very generous Christmas gift for anyone you know who loves Bach. BC

Bach/Mendelssohn Passion selon Saint Mathieu BWV 244 (1727) Andrew King Evangelist, Paul Robinson Christ, Lynda Russell, Gloria Bantidelli, Axel Everaert, Andreas Scheibner, SmSTB, Valter Vestelio and Elisabetta de'Mircovitch cellos, Alberto Rasi double bass, Gruppo vocale Cantemus, Choeur et Orchestre de la Radio Télévision Suisse Italienne, Diego Fasolis dir. 126' 32" (2 CDs in a box)
Assai 222312 (rec. 1995)

Choosing to do Bach's larger passion in the abbreviated version of Mendelssohn with the choir and orchestra of Radio Television Suisse-Italienne might seem like an excuse to perform the work in the conventional fashion, safe from the miraculously diminishing roster of forces in so many performances aiming at recreating Bach's own practice. In fact, much of this performance sounds like the style we associate with historical performances: vigorous, shapely orchestral playing (even from those clarinets!) and rhetorical, verbally-driven presentation from the chorus. Only the chorales are significantly slower (although this should not be entirely discounted for Bach's own performances). In all, this would be an excellent performance for those who would prefer a passion more along the proportions of Bach's St John, and Mendelssohn's pruning also tends to shift the focus more on to the part of Jesus (indeed, his original singer for this part was the impetus for the project). The chordal cello continuo for the secco recitatives is a pleasing alternative to the normally sober organ accompaniments and the shimmering, vibrato-less string accompaniments to Christ are extremely effective. Paul Robinson provides a rich and sonorous account of the 'lead role' (I'm sure I taught him music theory as a chorister at King's Cambridge). The performance is only marred by odd problems of ensemble. John Butt

My apologies for any insinuation that John hadn't reviewed this and the Violin Sonata disc below out of pique at my review of his HIP book. In fact, the fault is doubly mine. If, at the time they were due, I had bothered to remind him that I had not received the reviews, he would have pointed out that he had sent them in the very email in which he teased me about my critical review of the book. CB

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

Bach *Violin sonatas* BWV 1014, 1018 & 1019 Jacqueline Ross *vl*, David Ponsford *hpsc* 66' 44"

Gaudeamus CD GAU 308

Also includes violin sonatas in C & d by CPE Bach

Pairing Bach's sonatas for violin and harpsichord with two sonatas by C.P.E. Bach (written during his father's lifetime) is an excellent way of providing relief and context for the elder Bach. We can hear how his music rubs against the more ingratiating vernacular of Telemann (here adopted by the latter's godson, Emanuel) and also which elements would have sounded more modish or old-fashioned. Ross's performances show a fine variety of strokes and colours, Ponsford's are generally more accompanimental than true partnerships. However, he comes into his own in the solo harpsichord number in Bach's G major sonata and both performers transcend their relatively safe, respectable norm in the final movement of this work. *John Butt*

Bach *Organ Works*, Vol 1 to 5 Jacques van Oortmerssen

Vol 1 (Waalse Kerk, Amsterdam) 75' 40"

BWV 543, 767, 527, 541, 596, 544

Vol 2 (Roskilde Cathedral)

BWV 531, 1027a, 695, 589, 727, 721, 974, 569, 588, 576, 709, 538

Vol 3 (Trondheim Cathedral) 72' 59"

BWV 546, 525, 571, 645-50, 532

Vol 4 (Bovenkerk, Kampen)

BWV 565, 583 562, 533, 572, 978, 740, 734, 694, 770

Vol 5 (Alkmaar, Holland). 68' 21"

564, 592, 578, 690/1, 537, 768

Challenge Classics 72018, 72033, 72047, 72061 and 72080 ££

I know that many readers have followed my enthusiastic reviews of Jacques van Oortmerssen's Bach CDs over the years and have invested in them. Following a merger with the original Vanguard label, these CDs are now appearing (in their original colours and with the same inserts) under the Challenge label with new catalogue numbers. These first five volumes were originally reviewed in *EMR* in July 95, Oct 96, May 98, Nov 98 and Feb 99, and the newest two volumes are reviewed below. You should be able to find deals on the first five or six on the internet or through an enterprising local dealer. I remain convinced that they are the finest Bach recordings around. Oortmerssen plays with an outstanding authority and musicality, in performances that are distinctively personal and yet also reflect a solid appreciation of historically informed and inspired performance. These are performances that you can listen to over and over again. Oortmerssen is not afraid to interpret, rather than merely perform, but his performances never get

in the way of the music – a factor that quirkier players frequently forget when making CDs. I can recommend this series to anybody wanting to build a complete Bach collection, and would suggest listening to them in their recorded order – there is audible evidence of the performer gaining in maturity and musicality as the series develops. Each CD is a complete programme in itself, including a representative selection of Bach's organ works. Picking a favourite is difficult, but would probably be Vol 4. Vol 2 includes some lesser-known works, include some that are probably not by Bach. If you need one track to convince you of the majestic power of Oortmerssen's playing, listen to track 8 of Vol 4: the Fantasia in c (BWV 562) – an unleashing of almost unbearable emotional intensity and spiritual power.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Bach *Organ Works*, Vol 6 Jacques van Oortmerssen (1734 Christian Müller organ, Waalse Kerk, Amsterdam) 70' 59"

Challenge Classics 72096 ££

BWV 543, 659, 660, 661, 529, 651, 652, 582

Each one of Jacques van Oortmerssen's Bach CDs have grown in stature from its predecessors, and this volume (produced in 2001, but only just received for review) is no exception. As the series has progressed, there has been more of a relaxed fluidity to the playing, pointing up both smaller details (for example the solo pedal line that opens the Praeludium in A minor) as well as larger-scale architectural structures in, for example, the monumental Passacaglia in C minor. A nice example of detail in the Passacaglia is the phrasing of the theme. The last beat of the bar is first accented (by lifting the preceding note off early), and then linked to the first beat of the following bar in a 'structured legato' phrasing. Although this is not normally done, this 'across the bar' phrasing is an entirely logical interpretation. As was the practice for *ostinato* pieces until the middle of the 19th century, the Passacaglia is played throughout on a single pleno, allowing Bach's own written variations in texture and tension to shine through. Indeed the registration choices are one of the many strong points about this CD, recorded on van Oortmerssen's own organ in Amsterdam. The gently singing solo combination of the combined Prestant and Vox Humana on track 2, the subtly buzzing pedal Fagot on track 4 and the simple instrumental style 8' and 8'+4' registrations for the Trio Sonata in C, are all good examples. *Andrew Benson-Wilson*

Bach *Organ Works*, Vol 7 Jacques van Oortmerssen (1737 Christoph Treutmann organ, Grauhof, Germany) 62' 10"

Challenge Classics 72108 ££

BWV 547, 595, 729, 590, 733, 622, 552

The organ is a rather grander affair than that used in Volume 6, and is in a larger acoustic. It has a pedal division that will shiver your bits and send the neighbours diving for cover – try the pedal entry, with the 32' Gross Posaunen Bass, towards the end of track 2 (from 3'40" onwards). The acoustics and temperament give the bass a pulse of its own during the final long-held low C – this is not an organ I know, so that might be an effect that is more pronounced in recordings than live. The Kellner/Bach temperament, based on 5th comma meantone, adds some distinctive colours to certain passages, notably in the Praeludium & Fuga in E flat, BWV 552. As with Vol 6, Oortmerssen's interpretations are thoughtful and revealing. He has something to say, but the roots of his interpretations are clearly found within the text of the music. For example, the rather abrupt ending to the final chord of track 2 (Praeludium & Fuga in C, BWV 547) might surprise some listeners, but it is a feature of the score that players often overlook. As with all the CDs in the series, the notes include an introduction to various aspects of Bach's organ works, the background and details of the individual pieces and full specifications and registrations (but little or no history) of the organ used. These introductions are revealing – for instance, I hadn't spotted before that the final movement of the Pastorale includes references to 'Resonet in laudibus'.

Andrew Benson-Wilson

Besozzi *Sei Tri per Oboe, Violino e Fagotto* Luca Vignali, Pavel Vernikov, Paolo Carlini 45' 46"

Tactus TC 7000202

These trios are by Alessandro Besozzi (1702-93), from the middle generation of highly-esteemed dynasty of double-reed players, and are mostly in the galant sonata format: a moderate introduction followed by two quicker movements (except the sixth one, which concludes with a Pastorale marked 'Andante'). The modern instruments are played in a very clean way without losing any of their natural colour, and each of the three musicians rises well to the challenges set by the music, which is tuneful, harmonious and mostly quite jolly. The brief booklet note tells us something of Besozzi's history but not really enough about the pieces in hand. These pieces need no special pleading, and indeed will hopefully inspire other players to pursue the Besozzi family's output – clearly their success at the Concerts Spirituels was not undeserved. *BC*

Caldara *Sonate a tre La Fidelissima* (Philippe & Françoise Couvert, *vlms*, Joël Pons *vlc*, Michel Maldonado *db*, René Veyssières *theorbo*, Carole Parer *kbd*)
Arion ARN 68601 58' 13"
9 Sonatas from Berlin MS

La Fidelissima is a new group to me: they are based in the French Catalan city of Perpignan, and proud of their heritage. They should also be proud of their latest recording, which showcases nine unpublished trios by Caldara (the German copyist decided that the first three were 'too famous' to bother writing out!) from a manuscript in Berlin. They are firmly in the Corellian mould, but possibly more adventurous harmonically, and with some extremely taut contrapuntal writing. Most of them have four movements (slow-fast-slow-fast) but No. 5 replaces the first Adagio with a Vivace, No. 11 has five movements (an additional patch-work introduction), while No. 12 has only three (no opening adagio). They are very nicely played, with a fine balance between the violins, and continuo consisting of cello, theorbo, harpsichord or organ, and (to me, at least) superfluous double bass: I suppose that since the player is one of the core members of the group, and the one behind the whole idea, he could not be left out! BC

Couperin *Le Portrait de l'Amour* Aline Zylberajch *hpscd*, Le Parlement de Musique, Martin Gester *dir* 69' 59"
Assai 222422
Concert 9 Il Rittratto dell'Amore & *hpscd* solos

This might be the ideal disc for anyone for whom an entire programme of Couperin's harpsichord music would be a bit much, as the various character pieces are interspersed with ensemble music which is played with obvious enjoyment and affection. It's such a shame that this director cannot bear to pass a double bar without a change of sonority, especially as the flute, gamba and theorbo play so delightfully when allowed the whole of *La Je-ne-sçay-quoi* to themselves. The harpsichord pieces are drawn from six different *ordres* and are played with exquisite taste and care and make full but sensible use of the instrument. This is the star of the show as far as I am concerned, a Ruckers that, like many in 18th century France, was modified by first Blanchet and then Taskin but survived with both treble brilliance and rich tenor and bass registers, which are heard to striking effect in several of the items. The real oddity of this disc are the extraneous noises on track 25, which could be someone sweeping the floor but which could also be one of the players breathing. The booklet's main essay is in French, English and German,

though information about the harpsichord and performers is in French only.

David Hansell

D. Scarlatti *Mandolin in the capitals of Europe* Dorina Frati *mandolin*, Daniele Roi *hpscd* 61' 06"
Dynamic CDS 375
K 81, 89, 91 + music by R. Capponi, G. B. Gervasio, R. Valentini, G. Venier

This is not the first time I have heard Scarlatti's sonatas for mandolin, but it was the first time I have been struck by the virtuosity of the player. Dorina Frati and her partner on the recording, Daniele Roi, are outstandingly musical; indeed Ms. Frati is something of a virtuoso. The harpsichord used is suitably light for the purpose, and the realisation of the figured bass mostly sparse. The recording itself is marked by a clarity that captures the essence of the instruments without so much as a hint of the players' breathing. As for the music, it is mostly bright and cheery, with lots of notes (neither instrument being able to sustain sound very long, there's no scope for great swooping melodies), and I confess that I've enjoyed listening to it several times through. BC

Telemann *Oden 1741* Klaus Mertens *Bar*, Ludger Rémy *hpscd* 69' 08"
cpo 999 816-2 ££

Telemann's 24 Odes of 1741 are essentially settings of strophic poems by contemporary poets, some of them serious texts, some of them more humorous. They were written under the influence of the father of German Anacreonic poetry, von Hagedorn, and many of them appeared in print for the first time in Telemann's publication, which is for voice and continuo. Klaus Mertens and Ludger Rémy have worked together on many occasions, and they clearly share a passion for Telemann's music – as, indeed, does cpo, whose catalogue includes an impressive list of first recordings, mostly of exceptional quality. In many ways, this is more important as a document rather than as entertainment for its own sake. BC

Vivaldi *Keyboard Concertos* Claudio Brizi *org*, *hpscd*, I Solisti di Perugia, Thomas Indermühle *dir* 57' 59"
Camerata CM-647
RV 541-2, 554/554a 765-6, 780/546

Claudio Brizi appeared in last month's *EMR*, where AB-W described his playing as 'extrovert and energetic'. I would have to agree on the evidence before me: he pulls the speed around in his solos to such an extent that he risks losing the place,

and improvises strange (I won't say anything more, as they may well be HIP in Perugia) ornamentation during the final chord. The orchestra plays modern instruments, although they do have a theorbo and gamba (again, somewhat strangely) in their midst. The solo violins are just a little too gutsy and interpretative for the music, but then they are given their lead by the organist. Even the theorbo cannot resist adding little melodic snippets to final chords. Not for the purist, I'd say. BC

Vivaldi *Motetti RV 629, 631, 623, 628, 630* Anke Herrmann S, Laura Polverelli mS, Academia Montis Regalis, Alessandro de Marchi *dir* 69' 33"
Naïve (*Tesori del Piemonte*, 17) OP 030340

This is Vol. 17 of the *Tesori del Piemonte* series and features six of Vivaldi's virtuosic motets for solo voice and strings. Both of the singers have bags of technique – the opening track is testimony to Laura Polverelli's virtuosity, navigating her way through a forest of semiquavers and trills with plenty in reserve, while Anke Herrmann's *Nulla in mundo* is the best I've heard since Emma Kirkby and The Academy of Ancient Music (which will still remain my preferred option, though). The orchestra is mostly good – there are occasional snatched notes in some of the more dramatic passages. I did, however, find some of the improvised linking passages a trifle strange – the huge harpsichord flourish into the second track seemed extreme until my ears were caught by the cellist's antics in RV628 (not to mention the use of harpsichord and organ with and without the aforementioned virtuoso). The cover design hairdos get more and more ridiculous, but I suppose that's art, too. BC

CLASSICAL

Boccherini *Cello Quintets – 2* The Vanburgh Quartet, Richard Lester *vlc* 68' 35"
Hyperion CDA67383
Quintets in C (G310, op.28/4); C (G349, op.42/2); B minor (G350, op.42/3); D (G353, op.43/2).

It is good that some of these more obscure quintets with two cellos have been recorded in stylish performances (on modern instruments) by the Vanburgh Quartet with the important addition of Richard Lester, who appears to have been given the meaty first cello line written for the composer. The opening C major work is striking for its use of trills in the main subject, given to solo cello at the opening. Both this quintet and the D major work place the minuet and trio before the slow movement, a practice not uncommon in

Boccherini's music. The Rondo, with its spiccato opening theme, is well-known in its 'Grade 8' cello arrangement by Bazelaire, Stutchevsky (and others), but it was good to hear it for the first time in its original context. The second C major work, unusually starting with the Andante, is interesting for its rapid and varied key changes in the first movement. With reminiscences from Handel – Galatea's aria *Heart, the seat of soft delight*, and in Handel's key of E flat major, contrasted with some formulaic passages of arpeggios and broken chords (Grade 1 piano?) followed by the minuet and trio with its cross rhythms, this is striking music. The third movement, the Allegro, is followed by the traditional graceful rondo. The third work on the disc is one of the several *Quintettinos* – two-movement works – where some Vivaldi-like harmonies and textures momentarily emerged from the classical style. The concluding quintet, although exploring key changes perhaps less than the other works, has some pure *opera buffa* moments. For those wishing to explore some interesting works in the classical chamber music repertoire, this is an intriguing disc.

Ian Graham Jones

Haydn *Acht Sauschneider müssen sein*
Derek Adlam clavichord 69' 23"
Guild GMCD 7260
Hob XVI: 24, 29, 32, XVII 1, 6, 7

It's good to hear this music played on the clavichord, which makes a welcome antidote to the ubiquitous standard fortepiano even if it is not necessarily what the composer had chiefly in mind for all the pieces. For example the *Sonate da Clavi-Cembalo* published in 1774 (which include XVI: 24) may have been conceived for two-manual harpsichord; and the impossibly wide stretches in XVII: 1 require the 'Viennese short octave' – available on one extant (fretted) clavichord, to be sure, but more common on Viennese harpsichords. Adlam's instrument (his own copy of a 1763 Haas from Hamburg) has a wide dynamic range and a beautifully singing treble and tenor, but seems to run out of steam below bottom C where, despite the extra 4' rank, the notes are weak and of rather indeterminate pitch. It's a pity, too, that the microphones were close enough to pick up some mechanical noise now and again.

Adlam's performances are thoughtful and sensitive, if occasionally a bit four-square for my taste. If I might be allowed a minor quibble, it is that the dotted semiquavers in the theme of XVII: 6 are slightly underdotted and sound as if they were meant to fit with triplets. But there are many good things on this CD, and I particularly enjoyed the highly expressive

slow movement and exciting finale of XVI: 24. The disc should be required listening for all pianists who aspire to play this music, showing them how to shape a phrase without making everything legato, and that the sustaining pedal is not an indispensable aid to expression.

Richard Maunder

Paolucci *Manoscritti dalla Biblioteca del Sacro Convento di Assisi* Capella Musicale della Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi, I Solisti di Perugia 51' 32"
Tactus TC 721601

This CD is devoted to a composer who spent the last six years of his life at the basilica of San Francesco in Assisi, and who is perhaps better known as a theoretician than a composer; but the works recorded here show that he was a fluent composer in the style of the times. His D major symphony and flute concerto are challenging for neither the players nor the listener, and his church music appears to be equally melodic and enjoyable. The performances by the current choir in the basilica and I Solisti di Perugia (who also play on the Vivaldi keyboard concertos above) are variable. The orchestral works are fine, with little HIP input but without too much effort to make the music sound other than it is – essentially simple. It is unfair to expect wonderful performances from a church choir, and even less so from soloists drawn from it: suffice it to say that the music is well worth a recording, but allowances have to be made.

BC

The Salieri Album Cecilia Bartoli, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Adam Fischer
Decca 475 100-2 68' 16"

Following her immensely successful recitals of Gluck settings of Metastasio and of little known arias from Vivaldi's operas, Miss Bartoli here turns her powerful and convincing advocacy to the controversial figure of Antonio Salieri, a composer so much more talented, not to mention good natured, than the figure so effectively parodied on stage and in opera by Schaeffer and Rimsky-Korsakov. This is an issue that has been so widely publicised and praised that it is unnecessary to say much more about it than that it fully deserves the approbation it has received. The star status of Cecilia Bartoli should not, in all justice, distract us from noting that much of the success of the disc depends on the variety and quality of Salieri's music as well as the excellent playing of the OAE, under the direction of Adam Fischer. Musical genius is an elusive gift but several of the tracks included in this recital, notably the two

arias from the late opera *Palmira* (1795) and the heart-melting rondo 'Ah sia già' composed for the 1783 Viennese revival of *La scuola de' gelosi* and first sung by Nancy Storace, suggest that Salieri possessed it in greater measure than posterity has been inclined to admit. In an interview in *Gramophone* Miss Bartoli tells us that the next composer she will tackle in this series is Cimarosa (surely a rare chance to feature some of the powerful contributions he made to opera seria in such works as *L'Olympiade* and *Artemesia*) and that this album will be followed by others devoted to Caldara and Cesti. If these issues are as accomplished as this, they will only confirm that Bartoli is one internationally feted operatic diva who deserves, for her enterprise and her surprisingly hands-on approach to musicological research, the whole-hearted gratitude of all devotees of historically informed performance.

David J. Levy

ERATO at 50

Goudimel *Six Psaumes; Messe Le bien que j'ay* Ensemble Vocal et Instrumental de Lausanne, Michel Corboz
Sweelinck *Oeuvres pour orgue* Xavier Darasse 72' 47"
Erato 2564 60574-2 (rec 1975) ££

Carissimi *Abraham et Isaac, Exechias, Missa a 8, Tolle sponsa, 2 motets* Choeurs et Orchestre de la Fondation Gulbenkian de Lisbonne, Michel Corboz 68' 47"
Erato 2564 60590-2 (rec 1971 & 1973) ££

Lully *Isis & Armide (extraits); Delalande Premier Caprice our Caprice de Villers-Cotterêts* Chorale Caillard, Orchestre Jean-François Paillard 71' 45"
Erato 2564 60578-2 (rec 1972 & 1985) ££

Delalande *De profundis, Regina coeli, Sacris solemnis* Ensemble Vocal et Instrumental de Lausanne, Michel Corboz cond, Orchestre Jean-François Paillard, Chorale Stéphane Caillat cond 73' 24"
Erato 2564 60240-2 (rec 1970 & 1980) ££

Erato was founded in 1953, more or less at the birth of the LP, and had an instant success with their first recording. This was of the Charpentier *Te Deum* and led to its Prelude being adopted as the Eurovision theme. Their catalogue is particularly rich in baroque and contemporary French music – Lalande, Rameau, Messiaen and Dutilleux, for example – and many distinguished artists have featured on the label, including Gardiner (whose *L'Allegro* is a special favourite of mine), Koopman and Christie in our field. To celebrate the company's 50th anniversary a batch of 10 discs – 're-issues of landmark recordings' – have been released

including important Messiaen and Roussel performances and of which the four listed above fall within the *EMR*-zone. These were pioneering events on first release but, sadly, are unlikely to make much impact on listeners who have become used to and like the work of *Les Arts Florissants* and *Ex Cathedra* in this repertoire. Tempi feel sluggish and the general sonorities are sometimes thick to the point of turgid with vibrato-rich modern strings, relatively large sounding choruses of unfocused voices and studied quaver-and-two-semiquavers style ornaments. Some of the most shapely singing comes from the smaller (ironically) ensemble who take the plainchant proper that permeate Goudimel's mass and in the dramatic Carissimi works though these suffer from a horrible sounding harpsichord in the continuo team. So I will celebrate Erato with, and thank them for, their more recent recordings of Mondonville, Charpentier etc, also pioneering events in their time. What we will think of them in 30 years time is anyone's guess. *David Hansell*

CHRISTMAS

Nativity: Christmas Music from Georgian England Psalmody, The Parley of Instruments, Peter Holman *dir* 71' 55"

Hyperion CDA67443

Music by T. Adams, B. Cooke, J. Fawcett, J. Hill, J. Key, Madan/Miller, W. Marsh, W. Matthews, V. Novello, C. Rider, J. Stephenson, Storace/Williams, R. Taylor, T. Tremain, J. Wainwright & anon

This is the third selection from Psalmody and Hyperion of the once-scorned non-collegiate church music of the 18th and early 19th century. Peter Holman's courses, concerts and CDs avoid cutting 'west-gallery' music off into a rural ghetto, and this disc ranges from an excerpt from an *Ode for Christmas* first performed by the Academy of Ancient Music in 1763 to Joseph Stephenson's 'Arise and hail the sacred day' (probably the setting implied in Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*). The music has a vigour and directness which appeals, though some listeners might prefer a more rough-hewn approach for the more rustic end of the spectrum. This is explicitly rejected in the booklet: what might be fun for the participants would be tedious to hear, and there's no point in imitating performances that were known at the time to be bad – though it would be interesting if there are still choirs that can sing in their local accents. There is a fine sextet of soloists, a choir and a 'congregation' – enabling all four Holmans to take part: next time, they should invite Jill Caudle, since Mark and Theresa are in the band. The organ is a six-stop, one-

manual instrument by Hugh Russell of 1789, restored by Martin Renshaw and played by Luke Green, which sounds well in the inter-verse interludes, blends as continuo, and has just enough body to support the congregation. There are some familiar tunes here, but not always in familiar versions: 'Christians awake!', for instance, has its original shape of treble/bass duet and chorus. The programme is rounded off by Vincent Novello's fine version of 'O come, all ye faithful'. If you want something to cheer you over Christmas, this is a better bet than the discs below. *CB*

Weihnachten, Christmas, Noël Dresdner Kammerchor, Hans Christoph Rademann *Raum Klang* RK 2201 61' 23"

Music by Brahms, Demantius, Freundt, Gundermann, Mandyczewski, Mendelssohn, Pärt, Poulenc, Praetorius, Reger, Rheinberger, Riedel, Schütz

This isn't really relevant to *EMR*, but is interesting for the way it shows how naturally 19th- and 20th-century German composers can use the chorale tradition. The performance style (with a choir of 40) under-emphasises the stylistic differences, but is otherwise excellent. I'm intrigued that an innocuous setting of *Stille Nacht* is attributed purely to the arranger (the well-known editor Mandyczewski) with no acknowledgement to Gruber. The booklet has texts in German but no notes. *CB*

Wolcum Yule: Celtic and British Carols and Songs Anonymous 4, Andrew Lawrence-King 66' 27"

Harmonia Mundi HMU 907325

This is rather different from the previous Anonymous 4 discs, in that the repertoire is, apart from a short piece by Henry VIII, half a millennium later than what one expects. The primacy given to Celtic in the title is just a marketing ploy. From the notes, one would think that track 2 (*Good people all*) was entirely Irish (which doesn't necessarily mean Celtic anyway), with not a hint that the words were also current in England a century ago. The words of track 3 (*The first rejoice our Lady got*) are not particularly Irish. These and other carols are mixed with pieces by Richard Rodney Bennett, Benjamin Britten ('Here we bring new water'), Geoffrey Burgon, Peter Maxwell Davies and John Tavener (the ubiquitous *Lamb*) to make a pleasing anthology. It suffers, however, from all sounding a little too sweet and beautiful. Even the contributions from Andrew Lawrence-King, surely the liveliest harpist around, are dragged into the anonymous prettiness. But take it in small doses and the magic works. *CB*
UK Release date 10 November

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