Leading Notes

JOURNAL OF

THE NATIONAL

EARLY MUSIC

ASSOCIATION

July 1991

Leading Notes

Editor: Tess Knighton

Number 2

July, 1991

Contents

Editorial

In this, the second issue of *Leading Notes*, we are pleased to present a major interview with the singer who, perhaps more than any other in recent years, has become identified with the early music revival. Young singers will find much of what she has to say both stimulating and encouraging. Clifford Bartlett, a regular writer for *Leading Notes*, will also give performers an incentive as he explains the policies behind his new performing edition of Monteverdi's *Vespers* – a major work that raises major questions of moment to both singers and instrumentalists. Bernard Thomas provides comments on a German manuscript of *circa* 1600 which, unusually, provides some *answers* to performance and instrumentation problems. We trust that these, and the other articles in this issue, will be of interest to our readers.

Tess Knighton

Published twice a year by NEMA.
Editorial address: 8 Covent Garden, Cambridge CB1 2HR.

Produced for NEMA by Duane Lakin-Thomas on an Apple Macintosh system, using Microsoft Word and QuarkXPress. Set in Palatino, 10 on 13 pt.

Nema
NATIONAL EARLY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

Leading questions

Lindsay Kemp talks to Emma Kirkby.

LK What first interested you in singing early music?

EK I always enjoyed singing. It was just something I did all the time – nothing inspiring, just humming to myself the way children do. And I enjoyed music. I was a pretty useless pianist, and I took up the flute at a late age and made progress the way you do when you take it up late; I didn't get very far but I enjoyed it. When I left school I stopped playing instruments of any kind, but I was singing very seriously by then. I was a serious choral singer, but it never crossed my mind for a minute that I would be a professional singer. It was a complete accident really, but I landed up in Oxford with the Schola Cantorum – a marvellous choir – and we did such wonderful repertoires. Before that, at school, I'd sung in the madrigal group and been delighted with that repertoire, particularly when we got together with the boys' school and sang Byrd's four-part Mass and things like that. I really loved it; I knew that the music was something special for me, and so when I came across the Schola I got myself in there somehow. It was the basis of my social life all through my university years, because we used to tour in the holidays and do festival concerts. In those days it really wasn't possible for a conductor who liked nice, straight singing to get a professional choir together to make that sound – professional choirs simply weren't doing it because they were all aiming at operatic sounds, full of vibrato – so there was quite a market for the sort of sound that this good student choir made.

LK That's something that has really changed, isn't it?

EK Yes. I think nowadays the professional scene has absorbed a lot of those good qualities, so a conductor can get a string of professionals to make that kind of bright, clear sound. It's very exciting how things have changed, and the London choral scene is amazing now.

LK Conductors don't have to rely on cathedral choirs any more.

EK No. You still get a few puritans who must have boys at any price, and use some of the good choirs like New College, Westminster, King's and so on – that's a different thing. Those choirs have always been good, but I think that the new excitement in London is definitely with the mixed-voice choirs; these people who are absolutely accomplished trained singers and who are as good as anyone in any other field of singing. I'm very aware when I do a concert with one of these choirs that if I had to drop out, any number of the sopranos could step forward and sing my solos with no trouble. But they also know how to blend and make an exciting choral sound.

LK Are they waiting to become soloists, then?

EK Some are. Some think of themselves as choral singers of a high standard and are quite happy to be so. The good thing that happens is that they get to know each other and then get together in consorts and do smaller stuff. That's something that interests *me* intensely. I still spend 60% of my time singing consort music, and I'm very concerned to make the point that this isn't something you grow out of. Why should a good singer want to grow out of consort music any more than a violinist want to grow out of string quartet repertoire? It's exactly the same level of composition that you're dealing with, and the demands on the participants are similar as well; you've got to be really in control of your instrument to give a good, free but disciplined account of some of the finest madrigals. It's still a great challenge for us in the Consort of Musicke, and we're really enjoying it. It's nice that in London there are more groups of voices springing up, because it's a great enjoyment, and now that consort music is being done to a high standard it's worth people devoting their time to it.

LK Is there still a lot to discover in that repertoire?

EK Yes; the Italian repertoire in particular is enormous. The English repertoire is a lot bigger than people realise, but it has been published for many years, and has just sat unnoticed on the shelf, waiting to be enjoyed. The Italian repertoire is not even published; Tony Rooley says he often turns up not just new pieces, but also new composers at the rate of about one a week, and some of them are very good. We did a project recently of about twenty settings of the same madrigal by Guarini – *Cor mio* – and we discovered one particular composer who wrote this piece which was absolute heaven, the most beautiful piece of polyphony. We were all knocked out by it and rushed to find out what else he had written, and as far as we could tell there was nothing at all – just the one madrigal! Then there are other people like Antonio il Verso in Sicily; we sing an amazingly dissonant piece of his which is the last madrigal in something like his nineteenth book, so there's plenty to go at there.

LK How does singing in consort differ from the other things you enjoy – lute-song for instance?

EK Obviously that's slightly different from consort music. When you're on your own you've got total freedom, especially with a really good accompanist. It's very much a duet, but somehow neither side thinks in terms of having to make room for the other

– it's a medium that feels very free. I enjoy also duetting with instruments; I love obbligato arias for that reason – it's fascinating singing with a flute one moment, an oboe the next, and then perhaps a violin. I love singing the Bach Passions and cantatas, partly because you spend the majority of your time as a member of the audience, absolutely carried away by the beauty of the other pieces. I'm prepared to bet that if you asked the average singer what their favourite Passion aria is, it will be an aria for a voice other than theirs, because although they're all beautiful, you can't completely turn yourself to jelly enjoying your own arias, because part of you has got to stay in charge. I love that side of oratorio, especially as I'm very lucky that I so often end up singing with people I know and love, and sharing something (perhaps it's incestuous!) with a very friendly circle of people.

LK How is our understanding of all this music changing?

EK It's getting better all the time. I think singing itself is getting better in some ways. If you hear an opera now being done by the new generation of opera singing, especially in England, you can hear the words – you really can hear what they're singing about, and this simply wasn't true twelve to fifteen years ago. That's exciting; there's a new sort of awareness, a new standard, even in what we think of as the well-trodden, mainstream repertoire. I think the early music movement did do something to rescue singing a bit; there are a lot of people who say 'I never thought I liked singing until I heard this sort of thing', because they were actually antagonised by very over-developed, vibrato-laden loud sounds. That's a special thing on its own, a taste you acquire, like caviar, but I've never met a small child who likes a wobbly voice; it's something you either grow into or don't. Some people never grow into it, but it's nice that there is now a good standard of music being sung by voices that they can still relate to, alongside the other stuff, which is being done as well as ever, I suppose.

LK Your own voice has become a very familiar one over the last fifteen years or so; is it changing?

EK Oh yes. Voices change as they get older – it would be a bit unnatural if they didn't. But I'm enjoying it, because things I used to find difficult I now find easier. I might have lost something, I suppose – there's probably some sort of pristine, boyish quality that has gone. I still get accused of being boyish, but that's by people who really want to hear a big, pitch-varying vibrato on every note. On the whole that's where that adjective comes from, from people who feel undernourished by my sound. But that's fair enough – there are plenty of other people they can listen to. It's a bit rounder, but it will never be a deep voice – it will always be shallow, and it's always going to have it's area that it works in. It'll never really sound like a central-European or Mediterranean gutsy voice. It's definitely a northern, rather white voice – even when I round it off as much as I can – and it's always going to sound on the cool side; that's just the way it is. In another life, perhaps I'll have a big fat one!

LK Do you make conscious decisions about how to adapt your voice to particular areas of the repertoire?

EK No, not a lot. I just react, on the whole. I think I'm reasonably good at observing what's going on, but that's generally all I do. I may discover that in something like Couperin I'll possibly be using slightly more vibrato – not the thick, pitch-varying kind, but more of a tremolo. It's hard to describe. Different languages draw different things out of you; I can't put on a French voice or an Italian voice or a German voice – I feel I've only got the one – but I do love languages and I try to keep them alive as I sing and see what comes out of that. French draws something different from German, and English different again. As for Italian, I think I'll spend all my life trying to sound Italian; I speak it really quite well, and I can make the words very clear so that Italians like it, but I listen back and still feel it isn't very Italian, despite all my efforts. As I said before, I haven't got a Mediterranean voice!

LK Can you tell me something about Jessica Cash, your teacher?

EK She's the sort of teacher who will take someone over, and help them to bring out in themselves all they need. Essentially one teaches oneself of course, but someone like Jessica can give you so much inspiration in such a short time – she can say in about five minutes what takes me half an hour to get across. She's brilliant, without a doubt, and has herself developed over the years and found more and more interesting ways of doing things. I felt very happy with her, and I've been with her at least fifteen years. I don't have time to go very often now, but I wish I did! I still think of myself as her pupil.

LK Was she your first teacher?

EK Almost. I spent one year with a very sensible and imaginative lady in Oxford who teaches priests how to intone. Her name is Kathleen Fyson, and she was delightful. But I was frustrating for her because I wasn't really practicing at that time – I was busy doing my teaching qualification after my degree and rushing about. I learnt quite a lot from her – more about how to speak than anything, and that was important – but I couldn't really make enough use of what she was offering. It was about five years later that I started with Jessie, and I've been very happy with her ever since.

LK You have often said that you've learnt a lot from your colleagues and friends.

EK I think singers always do. It's not that we can't read books, but we're often rather lazy about it. A book is

interesting, but if it's describing singing it's going to be using metaphors all the time anyway, and you can interpret the terms 'white', 'shrill', or even 'loud', in different ways; but when you're surrounded by particular sounds – you hear a really wonderful Baroque violinist or oboist, or you sing with a continuo player who has a fantastic sense of style – it seems to seep in through the pores, and you can't really avoid it. I think if singers are comfortable with their voices they should be able to listen and change without realising they're doing it. But yes, I'm very lucky that I've worked with Andrew Parrott, who is immensely knowledgeable, and Christopher Hogwood and Anthony Rooley – those are the main influences. Also chamber groups like London Baroque, where each of the players offers me something. As for knowledge about performance-practice and repertoire and all those things, it's very nice now that on the whole you can just ask someone like Michael Talbot, Neal Zaslaw, Anthony Hicks or Winton Dean for help, and they'll say 'why don't you try so-and-so?'. There's no point in my trying to sit in libraries and absorb what those people have spent all their lives becoming experts in. I'm just very glad to be told what to do by such people when it comes to choice of repertoire and circumstances. But when it actually comes to interpretation, I think a singer has to be convinced by the immediate moment. There's no doubt that the directors who tell you quite a lot and then give you your head are much the nicest to work for.

LK It's easier for the new generation of performers – those who have grown up with the early music movement – to concentrate on a musical response, isn't it? You don't have to be a scholar as well.

EK There's a new accepted style which you don't have to apologise for. A lot of academics were doing the studying before, but it hadn't really crossed their minds that what they were working on would make such a difference to the sound. I think some of them had to be jolted into it by hearing good performances. I'll never forget going to a musicological seminar in America not so long ago and listening to a fascinating lecture. It was an unbelievably subtle analysis of chord shapes or something, but the tape which was used to illustrate the lecture was just unspeakable – they were laughably bad performances! Some of them were made in the lecturer's home university town by willing amateurs and some of them were sung live, but what was interesting was not really the low standard of the examples but the fact that nobody in the room seemed to be the least bit worried by this. That's one of the things that has changed – that your average musicologist now knows that he can hear a good performance of Josquin, and doesn't have to play it on the piano any more. It doesn't sound the same on the piano, and that fact changes peoples' judgements, even of the worth of the composers. There are books written within the last twenty years that have made extremely dismissive remarks about composers, where the musicologists in question tried to play the music on the piano, but it didn't work. It's nice that we're working together now, because the musicologists are providing the repertoire and the performers are really bringing it to life, and the musicologists are beginning to see just how good some of the stuff they've been making judgements on all these years really is. But their work was essential, getting this music to the state where we could use it, and it's a very nice partnership.

LK When you were starting out, did you learn anything from the previous generation of singers?

EK There was very little early music on record when I was in my teens – I liked the conventional things done by the conventional people really. I thought Janet Baker's early records were absolutely fabulous – I loved her *Frauenliebe und -Leben* – and I loved Heather Harper singing Monteverdi; now I can see things that perhaps one would do differently, but I loved it and it really spoke to me. Nigel Rogers was already recording by then, so he was an incredibly important influence on the circle that I moved in; and Norma Burrowes was a great pin-up – she had just started then and came into the odd concert in which we formed the Baroque chorus. I heard Ileana Cotrubas singing as well, when we formed part of the chorus for a Mozart *Mass* – it was wonderful to see her – and I loved Elly Ameling; when I heard her *Hirt auf dem Felsen* with a boxwood clarinet and a fortepiano I thought that was absolute heaven. I thought Isobel Baillie was wonderful, and whenever I hear little bits by Galli-Curci and people like that I'm always fascinated; the only thing is that she sang such awful music – she never seemed to sing anything really worth singing, but it's still wonderful to hear that use of the voice. I enjoyed all that, but I'm not an expert on historical recordings, and I only know a little bit about it. It's just odd things that I've heard that have really thrilled me. Every now and then I still come across something that stops me in my tracks – Bobby McFerrin I think is wonderful – I love him.

LK Is there anything you'd like to tackle that you haven't done yet?

EK It's surprising how much standard repertoire I haven't yet done actually – a lot of Handel oratorios for instance. I'm recording *Joshua* this summer, and I don't know the piece! I gather it's absolutely full of wonderful arias, so that's rather exciting. But because my training was so unconventional, there are all sorts of terribly well-known and rather wonderful pieces that I never met; now I'm going to meet them for the first time *in context*, with is rather nice. I think that in some ways I'm lucky to hit them

that way. It's good to discover the well-known things, not via some college edition but actually in something nearer to the context in which they were written. I'm enjoying Mozart very much – I love dipping my toe in there every now and then. I've just heard the edit of a record of concert arias which I made last year, which on the whole I'm very pleased with. Listening to that makes me aware of where I come in the voice-types. There are certain bits of it where I think, 'it would have been easier if my voice had been darker at that point', but I really enjoyed it. There's no evidence that only dark voices did that repertoire, but it's something that one becomes aware of. It's certainly an interesting challenge to render dense passions with my instrument, and it ought to be possible.

LK How do you see the immediate future for the early music movement?

EK I think we're going to have to fight hard to keep the level of experimentation going – to keep the interest in the new, because the accountants are getting ever more powerful in the record companies, and if they can get yet another cycle of Beethoven symphonies they'll do that instead of some of the interesting things people did in the seventies. I think we are going to have to fight hard to remind people of that. Maybe the public will do it in the end – maybe they'll say, 'Not another cycle of Beethoven symphonies! We're going to buy something else'. The small record companies are very important from that point of view. They are the experimenters, and they are doing more interesting things on the whole; they haven't got vast overheads, and bosses in other countries who tell them what to do. I think a combination of the two is a good thing. Not that there shouldn't be cycles of Beethoven symphonies; it's just that once those sales figures come in, I'm afraid it does shut down interest in some of the interesting things that were happening before. That's a shame.

Editing Monteverdi's Vespers

Clifford Bartlett, music publisher, editor and reviewer, discusses some of the difficulties in preparing editions of early music.

Editors have three major tasks: to establish a correct text, to decide what that means, and to present it in such a way as the user of the edition can understand it. There is no shortage of editions of Monteverdi's 1610 *Vespers*: indeed, it would be an ideal example to take for a study of the history of editing. I have been a connoiseur of editions of the work for over thirty years, and for half that time have been involved in the edition of it in some way or other. Having recently produced a new edition, this is an opportune time to write about some of the considerations involved.

I am convinced that Monteverdi expected most, if not all, of the work to be performed by solo singers. On the other hand, I have no wish to deprive choirs of the chance to sing so marvellous a work. Any edition that attempts to satisfy both the needs of the specialist ensemble of soloists and amateur choral society has to make certain compromises. We have reached the stage now when experienced singers (both professional and amateur) need only a scoring up of the original notation with minimal editorial intrusion. Performance from a facsimile would be difficult, since there are inconsistencies and errors in the 1610 edition, and the addition of editorial sharps is more complex than in many other editions of the time (e.g., to take something from the King's Music catalogue, Byrd's *Gradualia*). But as soon as you put something into score, the immediate problem is what to do about bar lines.

The solution of the best older edition of the *Vespers*, that by Gottfried Wolters, is to use *Mensurstrich* – the placing of barlines between rather than through the staves, so that the original notation is unaffected by them and the singer can imagine that he is using an unbarred part. (Curiously, Wolters bars instrumental sections normally, which leads to inconsistency in *Dixit Dominus*.) There are two objections to this. One is that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries scores are always barred, so there is something of a phoney compromise in a bar-less score. The other is that all except those very familiar with early music find it confusing. (Singing from part-books without barlines is an excellent practice for those who can do it, but that is a different issue.) Furthermore, there is never any doubt that the music fits a regular beat, which the performer clocks up in his mind whether or not barlines are present, so there is nothing objectionable about this beat being visible in the score.

Editions of the *Vespers* have tended to have barlines four minims apart, though some have changed to shorter bars when the music gets more active. Personally, I find long bars restful to the eye and mind, but they do cause problems to some singers and players – needlessly, since shorter bars correspond to the rhythmic movement of the music and diminish the notational peculiarity of the visual difference between the same phrases starting in different parts of the bar. When we come to triple time, concern with preserving the original notation vanishes and values are halved (Jurgens) or quartered (Wolters and Stevens). I am extremely sympathetic to those who find bars of six semibreves confusing. But there is no difficulty in reading three semibreves per bar, and preserving the original time-values seems to me more important than worrying about where barlines are placed. However often or few they may be, barlines are editorial additions, and it is they rather than note values which should be adapted for the convenience of the modern reader. Until we are quite sure of the relationship between Monteverdi's duple and triple times, it seems to me confusing to conceal this aspect of his notation. Since triple-time sections must be barred with three semibreves per bar, it seems logical to bar duple time with two semibreves per bar. The relationship is then simple: either bar = bar or triple bar = half a duple bar; the difficulty is deciding which. Needless to say, performers must avoid giving the barlines undue emphasis; but since with longer bars the main stress is sometimes at the beginning of the bar, sometimes in the middle, it is less confusing if the phrasing and emphasis comes from the shape of the music itself, not the placing of barlines.

Editions which use long bars almost invariably are of music which has ¢ as the time signature. The *Vespers*, however, are mostly notated in C, though there are some inconsistencies between the continuo and the other parts. It seems reasonable to transcribe music of this period that is in ¢ with four minims per bar, but music in C with short bars. The *Bassus generalis* sometimes shows other parts on separate staves; then it is barred. The frequency of barlines is not consistent, though they tend to come every four minims. Whether that derives from Monteverdi's manuscript or is the responsibility of the printer is not known. I would argue that the convenience and expectation of the modern reader here outweigh following the source. The published score of *Orfeo* (1609 and 1615), incidentally, mostly has four-minim bars, but the Venice manuscript of *Poppea* (from the late 1640s, mostly copied by Mrs Cavalli) prefers two minims per bar.

There are various places in the *Vespers* where the original edition has mistakes. More worrying, there are also places where the parts and the continuo score differ. My guess, without going into speculation about when and where the work was performed before it was printed (if, indeed, it was ever performed as an entity at all), is that what the composer sent his printer was material from several different performances and that he had not checked that it matched. Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to make a general rule and assume that the continuo version is consistently better or worse, and on each case the editor or performer must make up his own mind. I have found that each time I look at some problems, my mind changes. It

therefore seems wrong to put the one I favour at any particular moment into the main text and hide the other in an impenetrable critical commentary at the end of the score. Therefore, I have footnoted the variants so that they are easy to see: the performer thus may make his own choice.

While I have strong views on how the work should be performed, I am also well aware how these views have changed over the last thirty years. So, while the edition is conceived primarily for performances which accord with them, it is also intended to be as flexible as possible. For a start, it is not an engraved score run off in thousands of copies and unchangeable until the edition sells out. It is accessible on my computer, and any page can be changed and re-run in a few minutes. Copies are run off in small batches (normally in 20s, which is the number our photocopier collates), so changes can be made afresh for each batch. Futhermore, copies can be tailor-made for particular performances. Normally, *Lauda Jerusalem* and *Magnificat* are transposed down a fourth; but we can (though I don't approve) provide them at the originally notated pitch. The first conductor to use our new version wanted *Lauda* down a tone, so his copies were produced thus. We can even cater for those who like long bars. Alas, although the computer will transpose at the touch of a key, it is more complicated to subtract half the barlines; but we are producing another version of the work to the specifications of Paul McCreesh with long bars but reduced triple time.

I thought for a long time over the best way to produce instrumental parts. I'm not a great believer in instrumental doubling of vocal lines; but if you are using a choir rather than solo voices, it is sensible, and the woolier the choir, the more useful sackbuts and cornetts become. Normally, the editor decides which sections are doubled and which instrument doubles which voice – and the conductor invariably disagrees! I therefore decided to devise a way of leaving the choice to the conductor. So, for each of the Psalms, *Audi coelum*, the Hymn and the Magnificat, there is a pack of instrumental parts. Each part is complete, including text (so could be used by a singer), and each middle part is in the alto, tenor and octave-treble clef so can be used by strings or wind. It is up to the conductor to allocate the parts and mark tacets. The sections with obbligato instruments (*Deus in adjutorium, Dixit Dominus*, the Sonata, the ritornello of the Hymn and the Magnificat) are supplied in the normal way, the parts provided in a folder in which the separate sheets of the other movements can be placed as allocated by the conductor.

When playing the organ in the *Vespers*, I have always used an organ part: turning pages during the Psalms is an unnecessary distraction, and use of a score for performance (unless one follows the German tradition of doubling the polyphonic lines) is as remote from the seventeenth century as *mensurstrich*. So I have naturally produced an organ part, figured in a way which I have found usable. I wondered whether the score too should be figured or not. At one stage, I thought that it would be useful just to figure chords that were not obvious from the other parts. But I find that even when playing from a score I am more relaxed if the bass is figured, so it seemed simplest to have the same figures as in the separate part. One still hears wrong chords from players accompanying Monteverdi (minor chords at cadences, for instance), so I am unrepentant about adding even obvious figures.

I have omitted some of the normal trappings of scholarly editions, following what is evolving as the King's Music house style. Since original note values and signatures are preserved, there is no need to indicate them; original clefs, however, are footnoted. Ligatures are basically irrelevant by this date, though those in cantus firmi are preserved. I was less happy about ignoring coloration – a decision going back to a more primitive period of the computer programme when broken brackets were not available. But the only use of the sign for the performer is to suggest hemiola rhythms. This is in itself useful; but not all hemiolas have such notational signposts and it seemed safer to let the user find them for themself (they lurk at the end of most triple-time phrases) rather than notate some and not others. I find the normal conventions of italicising all added underlay unhelpful. Nearly always the interpretation of an *ij* sign is utterly unambiguous, so that implying that text added in accordance with it is editorial (so therefore the performers can change it if they don't like it) is misleading. Underlay needs only to be shown as editorial if there is any doubt. This is, in fact, not a serious problem in the *Vespers*.

There are several insoluble problems of *musica ficta*; the editor can only make clear what the 1610 edition says (sometimes it is contradictory) then add accidentals above the stave. Previous editions, though, have made it difficult to see what the edition states by using modern conventions for accidentals. The policy I have adopted for several years now for music of this period is to preserve all accidentals except for adjacent notes within a phrase. This prevents ambiguity without looking silly. Cautionary accidentals are bracketed on the stave, editorial ones printed above. (In other works, however, where editorial accidentals are uncontroversial, I sometimes put them on the stave in square brackets: it stops them getting entangled with the underlay of the stave above.)

Most readers will know the limerick about the poet who tried to get as many words as he could into the last line. Some users think that I try to get as many notes on a page as I can. There is some truth in this. I find that the more I can see of a piece of music on one opening, the easier it is to grasp the shape of it (another reason, incidentally, for using an organ part!). I also believe that a publisher needs to consider page-turns much more carefully than is usually done. Both reasons contribute to the Baroque orchestral players' liking of facsimiles of eighteenth-century printed parts. Wolters spreads the first and last verses of the Hymn over five pages (with two page-turns), with three more pages for the intervening verses; my new version has a single opening for verses 1 and 7 and another for the rest (with the critical commentary included as well). I think

that the diminution in print size is justifiable. But I do not see why the sizes of other movements should be reduced to match, so I generally print the music as large as will fit an economical number of systems to a page without worrying about the relationship between movements.

This is, inevitably, a puff for my revised, Autumn 1990 edition (completely different from the previous one). It will have been used for several performances before this article is published; if it comes out on time, you could still go to Dartington Summer School and sing it with Alan Hacker in August. (No – he's not using basset clarinets instead of cornetts!) It is available from King's Music for £15 per single copy. If you want to haggle over the most economical way to get performance sets (or discuss more generally matters of performance practice that I haven't put into the edition) do phone me. And look out for the Prom performance; I can't imagine Andrew Parrott merely repeating the version of his recording.

Original instrumentation in a German manuscript of around 1600

Bernard Thomas is well-known as the editor of London Pro Musica *editions.*

MS mus 4° 72 of the Landesbibliothek in Kassel consists of 86 mostly 5-part instrumental pieces, many of which are headed 'M.L.H.' (Moritz Landgraf of Hessen). The great majority of the pieces are pavans, though there are three intradas, and the final section of the manuscript (nos. 69–86) is a collection of pavans and galliards with English titles. The collection survives in a more-or-less contemporary copy in the British Library (Add. MS 33295).

Moritz (1572–1632) became Landgraf of Hessen in 1592, and ruled there until 1627 when, wearied by the traumas of the Thirty Years War, he abdicated in favour of his son Otto. He took his music seriously, studying with his *Kappellmeister* Georg Otto, and during his thirty-five years in power he was an important patron, who was interested in Italian and English music as well as the local product.

The pieces in the main section of the manuscript, many of which are attributed to M.L.H., are in a recognisable turn-of-the-century German style, and have titles written in a kind of Italian. Some of the titles suggest a theatrical context, such as 'Pavana d'alto monte' or 'Pavana di rose e gigli'. Others are named after some individual, with that person's name spelt in an Italian, or should I say pseudo-Italian, manner: there is, for instance, 'Paduana del Signor Guilelmo Kendelio' (William Kendal?); and a 'Paduana del Signor Arrigo di Stockhusia' (Heinrich von Stockhausen?).

But to us today the most interesting aspect of the manuscript is its inclusion of specific instrumentation for six pieces, which is important not just for its rarity value, but also because the scorings given are really quite varied, and give us a lot to think about. The six pieces are:

No. 18: *Intrada per pifferi, tromboni e fagotti* (printed here)
No. 19: *Intrada à 4 cornetti*
No. 21: *Pavana d'Eccelio à 5 stromenti diversi* (printed here)
No. 24: *Pavana del Tomaso di Canoro à 5 tromboni*
No. 25: *Pavana del Ottono Landgravio à 5 stromenti, cive violino et viola soprano, cornetto, cornetto muto, e trombone*
No. 27: *Pavana Francisco Segario à 5 stromenti, cioe fiauto, cornetto muto, trombone, sordone et viola da gamba.*

Of these pieces, nos. 19 and 24 stand out through having the parts closer together than usual, as one would expect from the scoring; the other four pieces are quite run-of-the-mill, which presumably means that the scorings, however strange they might seem, could be applied to other pieces in the collection, and indeed to similar music of the time.

No. 18 is in six parts. Although the individual parts are not specifically labelled, there seems to be only one likely scenario here. Working from the bottom, we find that the only parts that could be played on a *fagotto* (bass dulcian/curtal) are the lowest two. Of the four remaining parts, the third and fourth are the only lines suitable for the *tromboni*, which leaves the *pifferi* on the two top parts. While there is sometimes confusion between 'piffero' (pifaro), meaning shawm, and 'fiffara', meaning transverse flute, I am convinced that shawms are intended here. Of course we have to accept the possibility that the heading refers in a general way to a mixture of shawms, sackbuts and curtals, rather than specifically to pairs of each. But I have the impression that the references to specific instruments in the source are intended to be precise.

No. 21 is the only piece to have the individual parts separately labelled, though unfortunately nothing is given the top part. I am working under the assumption that 'fiffaro' means flute, not shawm; a transverse flute was an almost *de rigueur* constituent of a mixed ensemble at this time. We are left with two questions. The first is, what instrument could have been intended for the top part? Here the most likely candidates would be recorder (specified as 'fiauto' in no. 27) or violin; either would balance satisfactory with the remaining instruments. The second uncertainty is that of the exact meaning of 'dolzano': this could mean either a gedackt dulcian (curtal), or possibly one of those irritatingly mysterious cylindrical reed instruments that some of us have wasted chunks of our lives worrying about. My instinct is that the former was intended. I am not convinced that the curtal was exclusively referred to as 'fagotto'; there is a sonata by Buonamente of 1626 for violin and 'dolzaina', the range of which corresponds to that of the normal *Choristfagott*.

The other two pieces for mixed scoring are problematic. I have suggested some possible solutions in the introduction to my forthcoming edition of the collection.

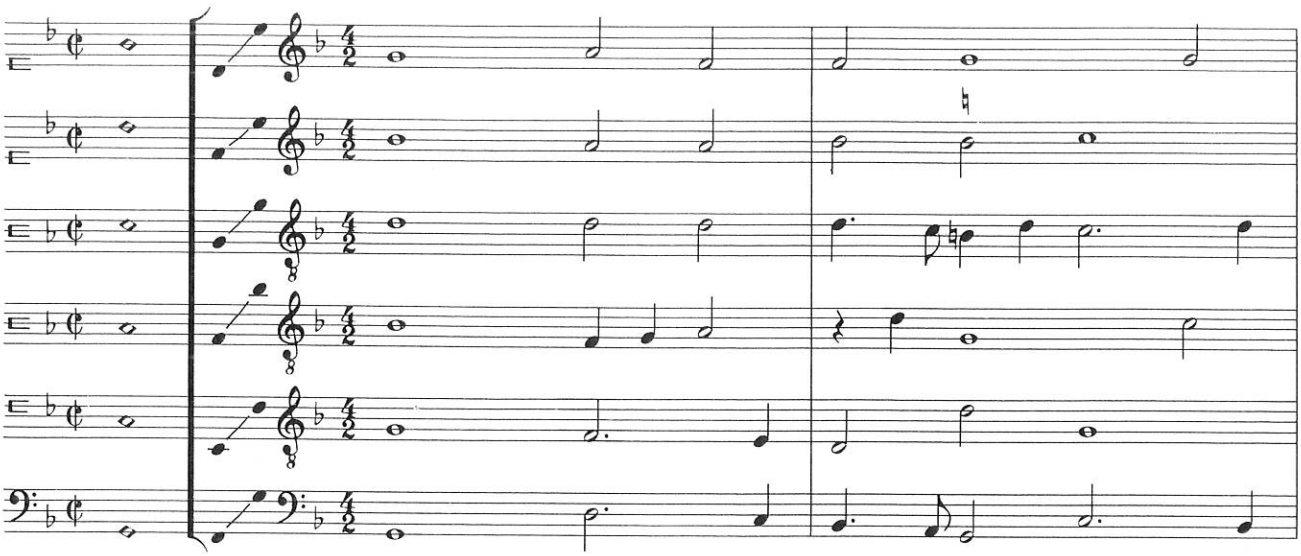
A practical problem in attempting these mixed scorings today relates to the trombone (sackbut). The limited extent to which an authentic sackbut sound has been achieved today is not apparent when sackbuts play only with cornetts, because a good blend can be achieved. But as soon as a sackbut is combined with a reed instrument such as the 'sordone' called for in no. 27, or indeed with a renaissance violin, the sackbut tends to sound fat, or at least make the other instruments sound thin. This phenomenon cannot be unrelated to the fact that modern sackbut players, both professional and amateur, do not normally use particularly authentic mouthpieces, for quite understandable reasons. The sackbut is not alone in this respect in the early music world; the baroque bassoon is a similar case – here most modern practitioners, including the very best players, are reluctant to use authentic reeds for fear of producing a sound that their colleagues will find unpleasantly thin and reedy.

The other feature that emerges from the Moritz pieces is the use of low cornetts, almost certainly instruments a tone below the normal *Chorzink*; the lowest part of the intrada for 4 cornetts not only goes down to *f*, but also has the character of a real bass part, strongly suggesting a lower instrument than the three upper parts. So-called alto cornetts are rarely played today, even though there are a large number of parts that suit them very well. Perhaps they should be used more.

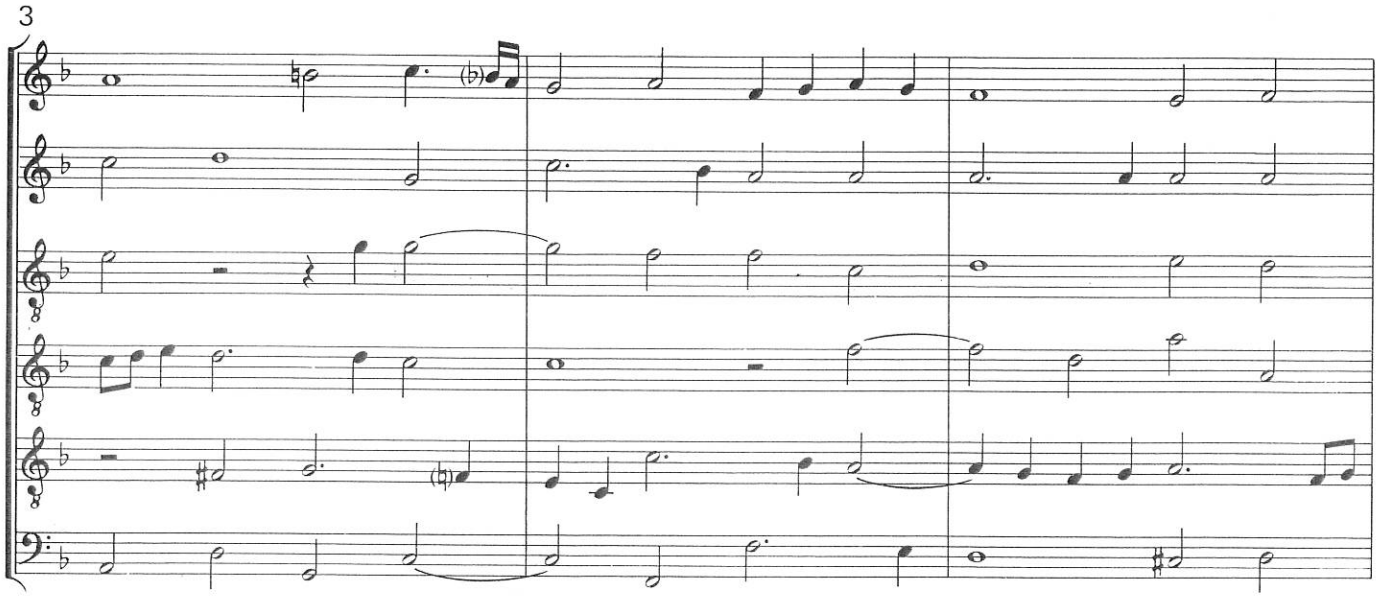
18. INTRADA a 6

per pifferi tromboni et fagotti

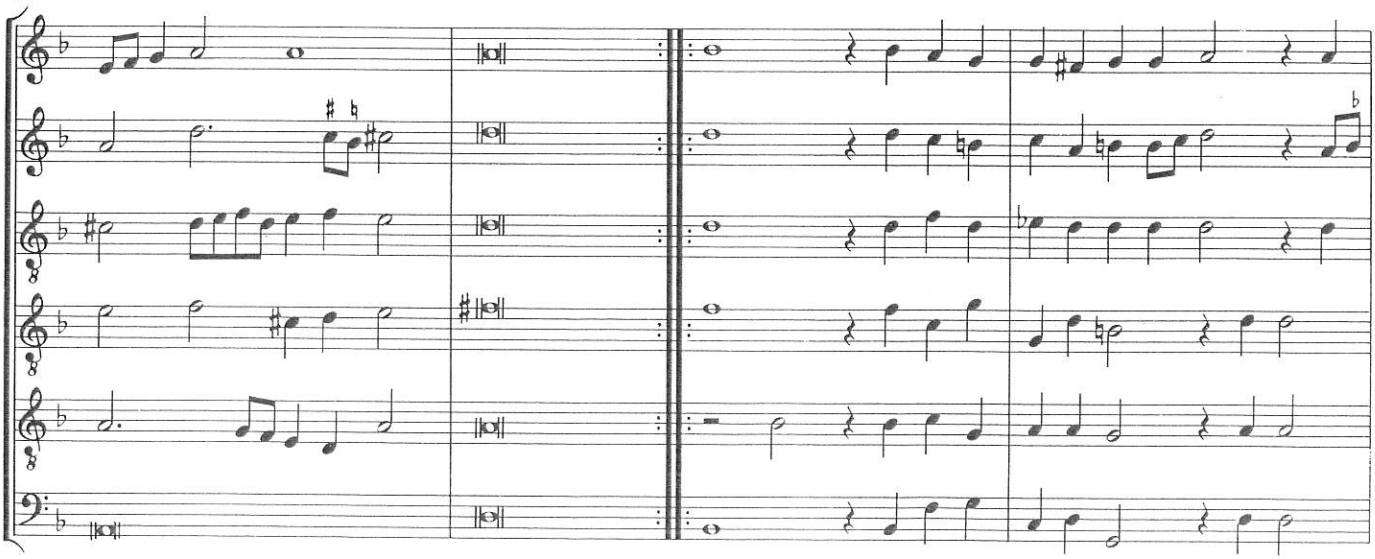
M[oritz] L[andgraf of] H[essen]



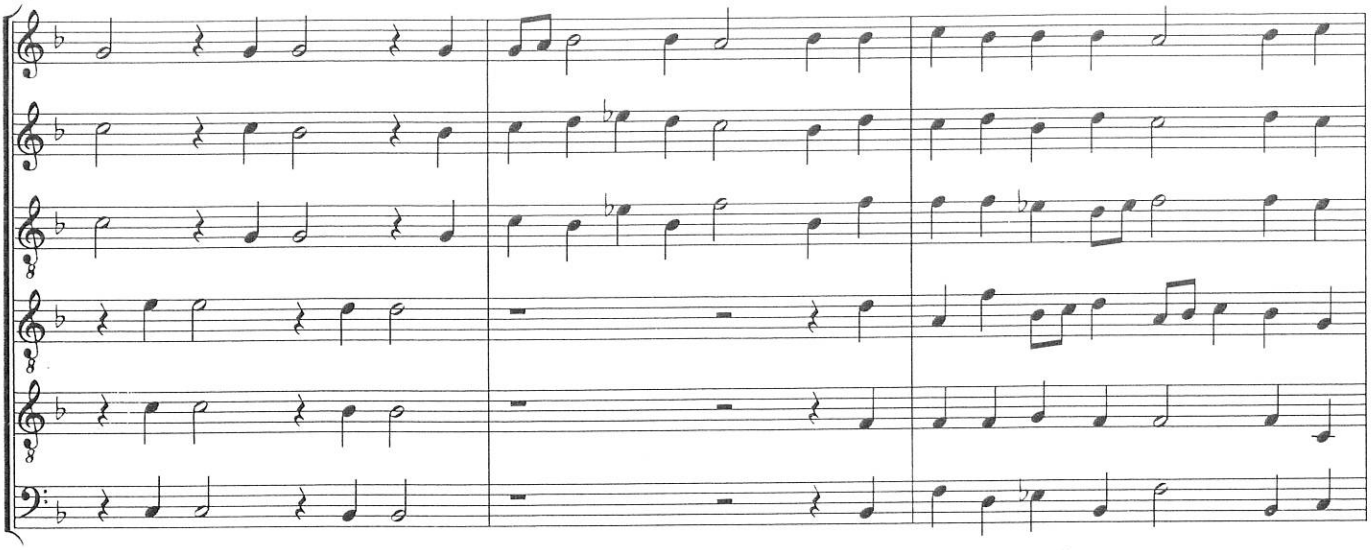
3



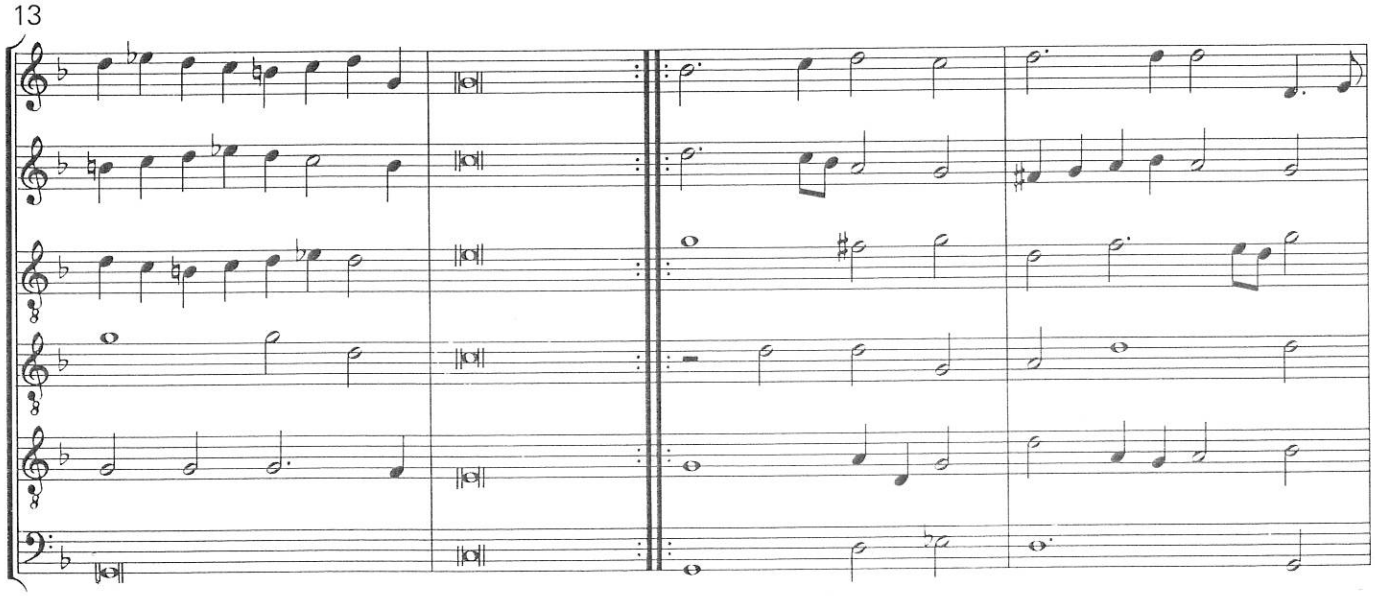
6



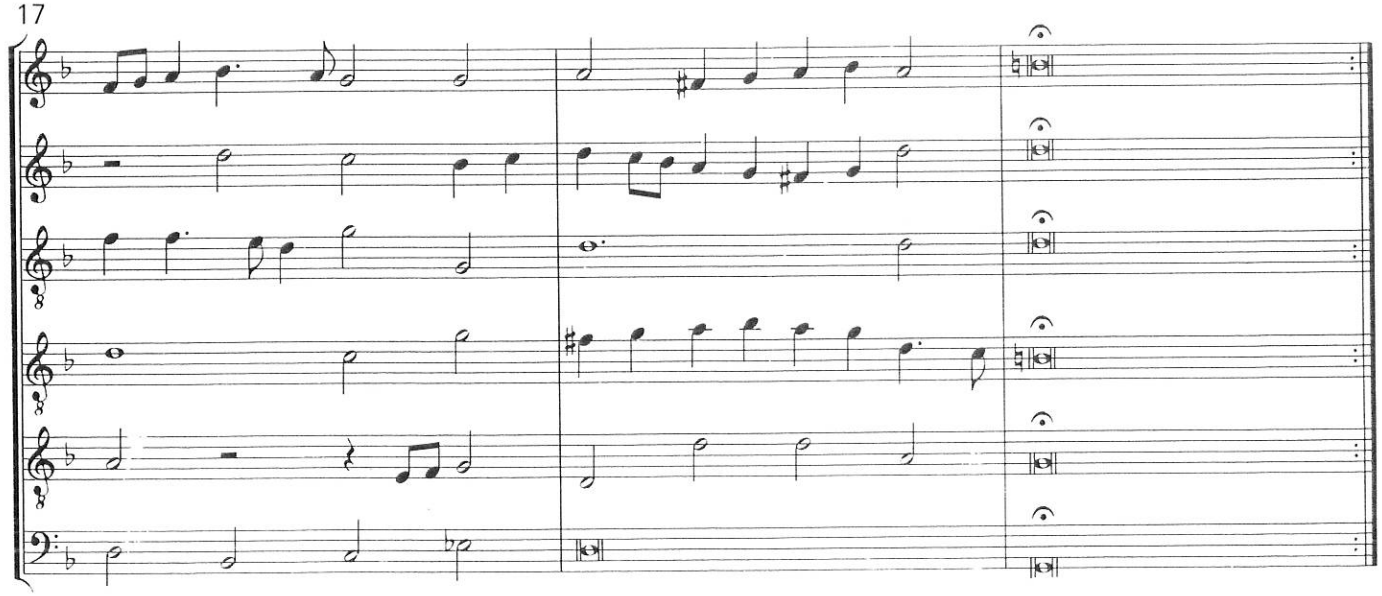
10



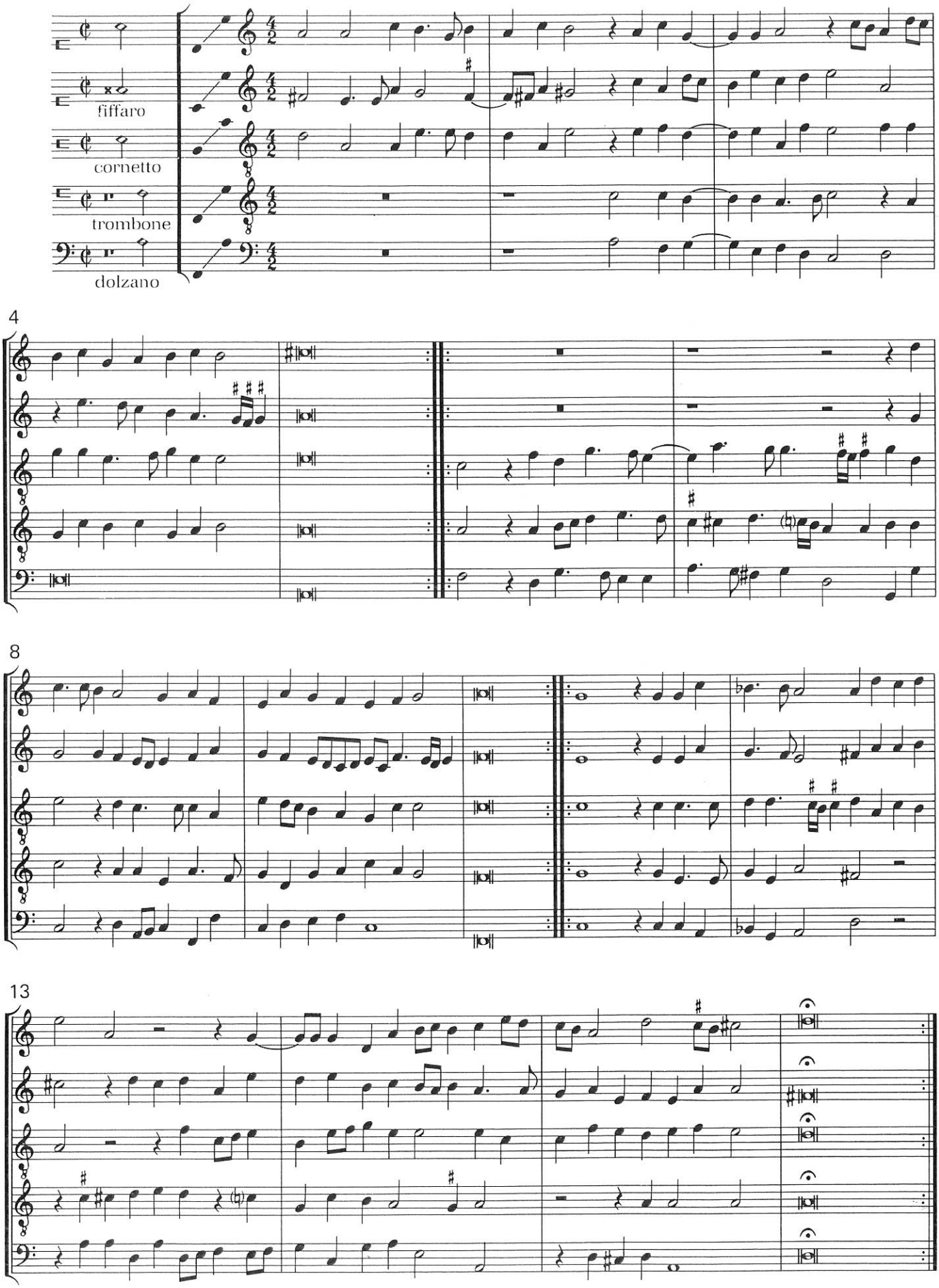
13



17



21. PAVANA D'ECCELIO a 5 stromenti diversi



Early music on the air

Anthony Burton, a former Radio 3 producer and administrator, and now a free-lance writer and broadcaster on music, adds a contribution to the debate opened in our first issue.

Clifford Bartlett's thoughtful article 'Early music on the air' in the first *Leading Notes* identifies many of the problems, past and present, connected with the broadcasting of early music; but it perhaps needs a few footnotes. Although it is true that Radio 3 was slow to respond to developments in early music in the 1970s, I think there was more going on in this field than Clifford implies. For example, as a recently-arrived producer in the mid-1970s, I was responsible for what must have been the first two Radio 3 series of Baroque music played on appropriate instruments: *French Baroque Cantatas* (six programmes introduced by David Tunley); and *The Trio Sonata* (fifteen programmes devised with, and introduced by, Christopher Hogwood). I also remember recordings with artists like the Kuijken brothers; and I can take some of the credit for having, on behalf of the BBC, induced the English Bach Festival to bring over the Vienna Concentus Musicus for a sadly rare couple of London appearances.

Nevertheless, it is true that at that time the pace in Renaissance and Baroque performance was being set by the record companies – and by some of the German radio stations – rather than by the BBC. One by-product of this was that, probably for the first time, there was a group of artists working in BBC recording studios who had already started making commercial records: a reversal of the conventional career progression. This in turn – coupled with the inescapable fact that in those early days not all of the specialist players were masters of their instruments – led to a way of working which was far from the norm in BBC studios at the time: there were often multiple retakes to cover slips, and sometimes complete rethinkings of interpretations in the studio. Clifford is thus mistaken in suggesting that radio recordings were, or are, treated in the studio like concerts, with leeway for 'the odd fluff'.

As standards have improved, though, radio has performed an increasingly useful function in broadcasting actual public concerts, live or recorded – and this has proved a useful strand in Radio 3's coverage of early music since the 1970s. Again, I think Clifford underestimates the BBC's own contribution in this area. The first public presentation of the Florentine Intermedii, although part of the EBU season, was devised and mounted by the BBC, as was the first modern revival of Leclair's *Scylla et Glaucus*. And some of the BBC's own Proms have, I think, proved especially valuable as part of the gradual process of bringing early music to a wider audience. Landmarks which come to mind include the Early Music Consort's Florentine 'set' in 1970, the Academy of Ancient Music in the *Water Music* in 1978, the Early Opera Project *Orfeo* in 1986, and the London Classical Players' Beethoven Ninth in 1988.

But, while these and other events (including a handful on television) have done a great deal to win acceptance of the 'early music' approach among the general musical audience, a central problem remains – certainly for Radio 3. This has a loyal audience, but one which remains suspicious of anything outside its established tastes and habits, and one which would be fiercely resistant to the daily burst of liturgical chant which Clifford suggests! Meanwhile, there must be a large number of early music enthusiasts who, because of Radio 3's slow 'conversion' to early music, have become accustomed to getting their musical diet from discs rather than from the radio. The latter group might well turn out to be a useful marketing 'target' for any future record-based commercial station. But how can Radio 3 attract them – and in the current climate, outside and inside the BBC, it cannot ignore the ratings game – without alienating its existing audience?

The shape of programmes, on which Clifford largely concentrates in the latter part of his article, is not, it seems to me, a central issue. The biggest obstacle to the creation of programmes involving mixed forces was removed some years ago, when the two departments producing respectively programmes with live musicians and programmes of records were merged. Since then, the growth in the number of long-sequence programmes, lasting most of a morning or an afternoon, has also encouraged creative mixtures of media, as well as periods. If this is not done more often, and if the speech element of programmes does not always enhance the music as it might, then the answer probably lies not in the details of contracts or in a 'concert' mentality among producers, but in a perennial problem also mentioned by Clifford: the shortage of time to make imaginative, rather than routine, programmes.

But a more important issue, it seems to me, is that 'early music' is still far from integrated into Radio 3's output as a whole. Early music programmes are created, as Clifford says, by a group of producers who know what they are doing, and do it very well; but perhaps for this very reason they seem to stand apart from the mainstream of music broadcasting. Meanwhile, early music does not often find what ought to be its rightful place in regular 'mainstream' programmes, either of music or of discussion, and during the daytime as well as in the evenings. This is perhaps not so true now of Baroque music – although uninformed interpretations and unsympathetic arrangements of Baroque works still get onto the air from time to time. But Renaissance and Medieval music seems to me to get a raw deal – a point of particular significance because in this repertoire a great deal of important music remains unavailable on disc, or only available in grossly unsatisfactory performances. For this reason, the recent appearance by Gothic Voices in the regular St John's, Smith Square, lunchtime series was especially welcome; but it did stand out as something quite exceptional in that context.

So what is to be done? We certainly need a continuing flow of specialised programmes, presented in as attractive a way as possible (or rather in as many different attractive ways as possible). But we also need imaginative mixed programmes in which music of earlier periods finds a natural place alongside 'mainstream' repertoire. This is something which David Munrow and Christopher Hogwood, with their specialist backgrounds, both achieved in the 1960s and 70s in series aimed in the first instance at younger listeners. In my own small way, I now try to do something similar as an occasional presenter of the early-evening *Mainly for Pleasure*. And if that means leading listeners to discover and enjoy a Renaissance piece by an expedient such as including it in a sequence of pieces with 'blue' in their title (thank you, Clifford, for that idea – I'll work on it!), I don't see what harm that does.

But in the long run (if Radio 3 *gets* a long run), what we must hope for is a situation in which early music is no longer regarded by anyone concerned – producers, planners, or indeed listeners – as a matter of specialist interest. And that depends in turn on an educational curriculum and a general climate of opinion in which the music of before 1600 (or 1700, or wherever the line seems to be drawn at the moment) is treated as having as much intrinsic importance and value as that of later periods. Radio 3 can do much – perhaps more than it does at the moment – to bring this about. But it doesn't by itself create a climate of opinion; it reflects one as well.

A matter of chants

Bruno Turner

Bruno Turner is well known as an editor, writer and broadcaster as well as for his performances and recordings as director of Pro Cantione Antiqua.

'Mathematicians tell us...that of the notes of each octave, one may make 40,320 different tunes or songs.'
Grammer of Gregorian or Plain Chant Music
Rev. William Kelly, London, *c.* 1847

Several things combined one weekend to trigger an awful pun and some brief observations upon two aspects of liturgical chant that may be relevant to our early music scene.

In this journal's first issue, Clifford Bartlett rightly drew attention to plainchant's pervasive dominance of music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. It remained the staple church music in the Catholic world until the middle of our own century. To lament its passing from a living liturgy into the domain of early music revival is one thing; it is another to allow it then to be the toy of those with more imagination than any certain knowledge who would have us believe in their hypothetical reincarnations of twelfth-century performance practice.

What is clearly less self-indulgent, more artistically useful and even urgent, is the much more accessible, more securely informed process of reconstructing the multifarious manners of performance of liturgical chant in the periods we call Renaissance, Baroque and later...the early modern and the recent past. In that process we can make use of the overwhelmingly plentiful survivals of musical notation and liturgical practice, our knowledge of musical and religious context, of people and resources, to put together and revive a whole body of fine musical heritage now largely neglected, the chant itself maligned as merely corrupt.

Most choirs, amateur and professional, devote their concerts and recordings to masses and motets when choosing from sixteenth-century repertoire. It is only the good work of our own British scholars that has kept some semblance of balance in publishing and performing the great repertoire of liturgical music in which the plainchant and polyphony (itself chant-based) is wedded in alternation – the great hymns and responsories of the early Tudor period, notably the works of Sheppard and Tallis.

Yet, for all the admiration bestowed upon Palestrina, Victoria and Lassus, their wealth of hymns (and most of their Magnificats, etc.) lies locked away. Some of the fault is in the editions – many, but not all – that simply omit the chant verses, others that give but a hint, an *incipit* of chant, and some that give just one verse, others nothing, not even the texts of the verses, obsolete or obscure, that are not to be found in the modern Roman books.

Clifford Bartlett's remark about the all-pervasiveness of chant was in front of me when I heard broadcast a recording of Titelouze's organ *versets* for the *Pange lingua* ('Roman' melody). Quite apart from propriety and sense, it seemed so strange to hear the variations without the theme. Much of the organ music of the Spaniards Cabezon and Aguilera de Heredia requires the alternation of chant just as with our 'Tudors', Redford, Preston and Avery Burton. It is so very effective, not simply correct. Thirty-five years later, I recall with pleasure putting on Nicolas de Grigny's *A solis ortus cardine* with its chant verses sung to the measured notation of a French book of 1701.

On the very day when, by chance, I heard the chant-starved Titelouze, I read through a plainchant tutor, a pamphlet almost, by one Father William Kelly, published in London about 1847, which was very clear and direct in demonstrating how the chant was sung by the new burgeoning Catholic churches in England. A day later there arrived a microfilm to add to my ever-expanding collection of Hispanic curiosities, a pair of massive tomes (1799 and 1800) revealing the continuity of notation and practice of chant in Spain.

Glancing back and forth over nearly four hundred years of so-called corrupt chant and its association with polyphony is a salutary experience even at the superficial level. Suspicions aroused, I went to the wonderful collection of Roman hymn verses set by Constanzo Festa. The otherwise excellent editor, the late Glen Haydon, had completely obscured in his rendition of the first hymn *Conditor alme siderum*, the very precise long-short triple time of the chant melody that he had himself noted in his introduction. But great numbers of 'opera omnia' editions omit chant verses altogether from hymns, psalms, Magnificats and even from *Salve Regina* settings, creating a nonsense that inevitably alienates every potential performer.

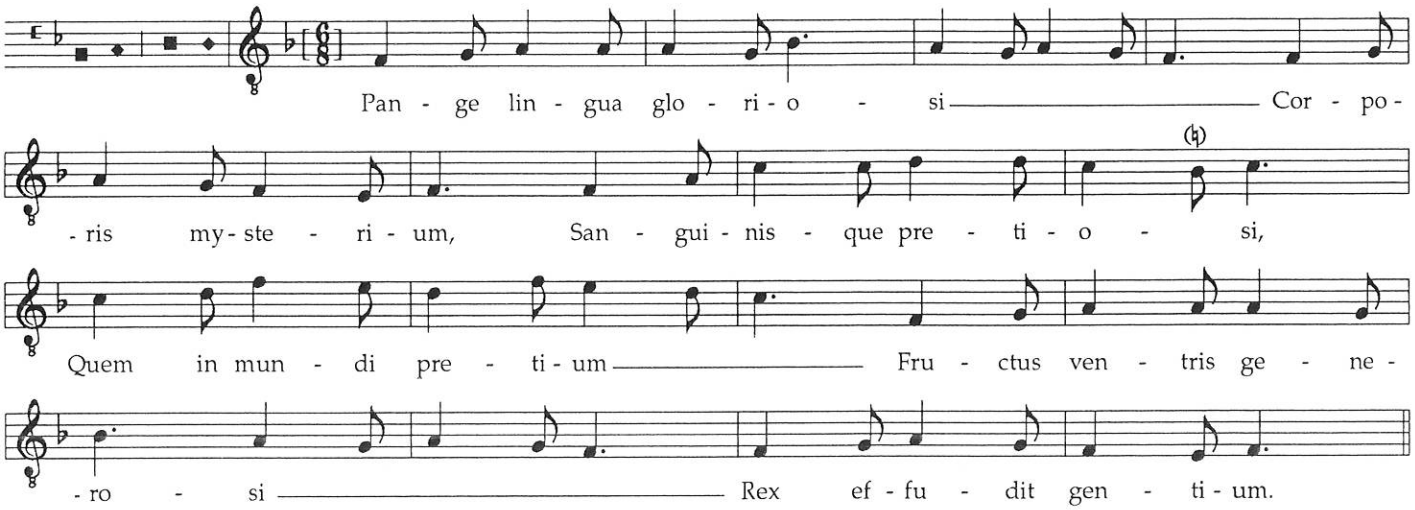
So my plea to the performing fraternity is to get at the untapped riches of the hymns of Palestrina, Victoria and Lassus (the latter's 'new' edition is notably good), the hymns and vespers music of Navarro (a find-your-own-chants edition!) and Guerrero (mostly unpublished yet). And what about Giaches de Wert's hymns? What about German and Spanish ones from around 1500? What about more of us performing Dufay's?

Our choice of repertoire is lop-sided without these chant-based, chant-alternating works. Don't think they are an artistic sub-class. Let me turn briefly to my second aspect of this topic, not the repertoire but the unplain-ness of some kinds of chant. I do not refer to the conflict of theories about the deciphering of early notation. I refer to specific, totally clear, late notation.

Buy or borrow the (performing) edition *Das Chorwerk* volume 60, 'Spanisches Hymnar', edited by R. Gerber. It's a collection of separate hymn verses in four-part polyphony by composers like Escobar, Peñalosa and

Alonso de Alva. Every one of these can be musically reconstituted by looking at their contemporaneous chant books and by reference to the Breviaries of Toledo and other dioceses in order to get the texts right.

Among the Spanish gems in CW 60 is the single verse of *Pange lingua* by the mysterious Jo. Wrede/Juan Urrede, Fleming or Spaniard, whose fame rests on this piece in several versions, copied and recopied for two hundred years throughout Iberia and Spanish America. In its tenor voice is embedded the Spanish *Pange lingua – More hispano*, quite different from the Roman melodies. This, together with *Salve Regina* and *Ave maris stella*, was quite the most popular religious tune in Spanish history. Used by countless musicians for choral or keyboard versions, it lasted in this form until the 1870s. It is (almost always) notated in a distinct triple time, like dozens of other so-called plainchant hymns in Spain. With few variants, occasionally without the flat, and with some early versions cadencing from the tone above instead of the semitone below, it is found in this form from the fifteenth century to late in the nineteenth, in hundreds of manuscript and printed sources. Here it is, in my transcription of what is usually shown in black longs and breves or in breves and semibreves (all black). You can safely use the modern Roman books for the words of the other verses (even the Jesuits refrained from altering St Thomas Aquinas).



Letter to the Editor

Congratulations on the first issue of *Leading Notes*, which I am sure will serve a very useful purpose. I appreciated Clifford Bartlett's comments about the broadcasting of early music, and learned much from Christopher Page's article, including the fact that I must now spell 'troubadours' differently, and why.

The copy dropped on my desk just before I went to Birmingham to speak to university students about tempo and tempo relationship in French baroque music, and thus I was able to cite Jennie Cassidy's report of the NEMA AGM. Would that I had been at the latter, for the report of 'a rather nebulous discussion' on tempo, and the feeble, dog-eared assertions about composers not being consistent, and concert halls having different characteristics – all glorious letouts for avoiding studying the subject – only adds to my dismay at the determined refusal of many of the most eminent early musicians (there seems to have been some on the panel at that occasion) to consider the evidence on such questions. Indeed, after recent sessions in the recording studio with three of Europe's leading Baroque recording ensembles, I have come to the conclusion that they are all either (a) too busy, (b) too proud to admit they still have something to learn, or (c) think they will demean themselves if they admit they might have been wrong on their latest CD – or a combination of all three factors. Of course, the recording companies couldn't give a fig for authenticity or accuracy; their only concern is sales, and they and the public won't entertain the notion that their idols may have something to learn.

Roger Bowers gave a graphic illustration at the last RMA Easter conference at Cambridge of how even a nodding acquaintance with mensural notation and the 1610 edition of Monteverdi's *Vespers* could save conductors from embarrassments like the J.E. Gardiner TV interpretation from Venice, and I have been amazed and dismayed how the evidence for timings and tempo relationships in my field, published in 1984, is studiously ignored by recording artists even when one sends them photocopies; mind you they quote them (without acknowledgement) in the sleeve notes, but do their own thing on the recordings. Nick Kenyon has been at me for a long time to tackle the question in *Early Music*, and I'm still hoping to find the time before long, just in case some of them may eventually listen. But do the Parrotts, Herreweghes, Christies, and Gardiners of this world have the time to do so as they rush from one CD to the next? Ironically, the most informed performances of the French Baroque sacred repertory I have ever heard were also in Birmingham recently, by the splendid *Ex Cathedra*, whose conductor, Jeffrey Skidmore, went to infinite trouble over every aspect of performance (including Gallic Latin, orchestral layout, and tempo and tempo relationships). In a substantial programme of Lully and Lalande, they outshone all performances at Versailles last September, and those now appearing on CDs from Erato and Harmonia Mundi. If only the BBC would take note (ah, but *Ex Cathedra* commit the unpardonable sin of having some amateur singers in their ranks). Excuse my cynicism, but perhaps these thoughts may give you some ideas for future issues! For your 'introduction to the repertory' series, perhaps French Baroque church music could get an airing some time?

Lionel Sawkins

Events

Oxford Voice Symposium, 27–8 April 1991

The aim of this weekend, devised by Andrew Parrott and David Mason, was to bring together singers, teachers and scholars to discuss singing technique and performance practice. The emphasis was on medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Europe, but there was also a sprinkling of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century performance practice, and ethnomusicology.

The half-hour talks covered a variety of topics from vocalisation in fourteenth-century France to the extraordinary sounds produced by singers from the further-flung corners of the world. The list of lecturers was impressive and attracted a large number of accomplished singers and performers who came to seek advice, ideas and guidance on their own repertoire. The overall standard of discussion was therefore high, without becoming too involved and 'scholarly' for the less learned students to follow.

Robert Spencer opened the proceedings with a talk about performing Dowland lute songs in as dramatic a fashion as possible, using modern English pronunciation, and arguing the case by quoting numerous passages from Shakespeare plays. Much debate ensued, and the half-hour was thus overstretched, setting a trend for the rest of the weekend. Indeed, if I have a major criticism, it is that the chairmanship of Parrott and Mason was weak, resulting in a somewhat loose adherence to the schedule, and therefore putting pressure on following speakers to shorten their own talks.

There were many other highlights. Edward Higginbottom, speaking about the history of the treble voice, revealed a pathological dislike of the soprano sound, which amused some and raised the hackles of others (myself included). David Mason's wandering (and vastly over-long) talk about the Italian vocal tradition and how it has not really changed at all over the centuries, left me with the impression that we were all supposed to sing Monteverdi like Puccini. Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson gave a well-rehearsed double act on Purcell's theatre singers, and Christopher Page gave an amusing paper on fourteenth-century vocalisation in France. David Thomas spoke about the extended range of the bass voice, demonstrating his own extraordinary instrument in a Caccini aria, accompanied on the theorbo by Robert Spencer.

The first day ended with a workshop for those singers who were not desperate to find an evening meal. There was another opportunity for singing on Sunday afternoon, but I think both sessions would have benefited from a more focused idea of what they were trying to achieve. In the end, the workshops were little more than singing lessons, when really they should have been master classes.

Sunday morning's gathering for coffee produced much more animated conversation than the previous day. Graham Dixon demonstrated his research into sixteenth-century Roman church choirs with plenty of evidence to suggest that one singer to a part was not always the norm. Rogers Covey-Crump described the various tuning systems used in medieval singing, which was far too fascinating and complex a subject to condense into half an hour. Neil Sorrell played recordings of various vocal techniques from around the work, including an hypnotic example of overtone singing from Mongolia. Martin Best showed how he thinks troubadours sounded, analysing the poem of his chosen song as if performing surgery.

The only serious attention paid to the rôle of women was by Candace Smith in her astounding revelation of what nuns got up to during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Italy. Those myths at which we have all giggled from time to time are apparently true, and musical instruments in the nunneries were regarded as a sign of debauchery. The musical interest of her paper lay in her explanation of how the women adapted their anthems for performance without men. This really was the only (token?) gesture towards female singers in this symposium, which I think was a little unbalanced, particularly as it proved such a fascinating subject.

All those to whom I have spoken say that they would go to another such symposium, should Andrew Parrott and David Mason care to arrange it. The variety of topics was a virtue rather than a failing; we all aim to be versatile, one hopes, in our performance and repertoire. Perhaps on another such occasion the timetable should not be so full, allowing scope for more discussion, and with a stricter control on keeping to a pre-determined schedule. However, these are minor points and should not detract from the overall opinion that the weekend was a success, and sent us all off buzzing with new ideas and renewed enthusiasm.

Helen Garrison