

Early Music Review

BOOKS

TROUBADOUR POEMS FROM THE SOUTH OF FRANCE
Translated by William D. Paden and Frances Freeman
Paden.
D. S. Brewer 2014 . xiii + 278pp pb.
ISBN 978 1 84384 408 2

This contains 126 poems from the 10th century to Petrarch. I had a book some years ago which gave the music and first verse in Occitan and English, but I cannot now find it. As a musician, I regret that the syllables do not match those of the original, though I sympathise that any attempt to match the rhymes will disrupt the meaning. My days of learning the language started in 1960-61 at Magdalene College, just at the time John Stevens was doing the same thing, though I spent more time then and later on Latin poetry of the period. The publication of Occitan texts is sensible if the poems have a variety of sources, but otherwise at least two aspects should be covered (Occitan with vernacular or Occitan with music). It is unusual to print only English versions except in anthologies. The poems read very well, though characteristics of the Occitan world are modernised, so the relationship with the meanings of the text moves it rather far from the Troubadour period. Some of them stand by themselves extremely well. There are excellent introductions to each piece and you can get much of the background through it. Recommended!

Clifford Bartlett

KATHERINE BUTLER: MUSIC IN ELIZABETHAN COURT POLITICS
The Boydell Press, 2105
x + 260pp, £60
ISBN 978 1 84383 981 1

In this book Katherine Butler sets out to answer a seemingly straightforward question: 'how and why was music useful within Elizabethan court politics?' (p. 6). The evidence for 'how' – or maybe rather 'when' and 'where' – music was used, though multi-faceted, is

relatively concrete and straightforward to interpret, but the consideration of 'why' music was politically useful rests on less tangible concepts. Butler argues that, for Elizabethans, music had three types of political purpose: the analogy between political and audible harmony; the association of musical knowledge and skill with high levels of education and social status; and its use as a means of persuasion. These themes form consistent threads throughout her study.

As Butler makes clear at the outset, there is virtually no surviving music on which to base her work. There are a few more than a dozen extant musical settings of lyrics from performances associated with the Elizabethan court, and even these settings cannot equivocally be said to have been the versions performed at those events. This is, therefore, not a consideration of how composers used musical techniques to deliver political aims, but rather an investigation into where and when music was used, and its intended effect. Butler's primary source material comes from contemporary accounts of private music-making as well as public performances such as tournaments and progresses, along with song texts preserved in those accounts. Her comprehensive citation of recent research into other aspects of Elizabethan cultural and political life provides a solid and very helpful context for her study.

The book is organised into five main chapters, moving from very intimate uses of music to public performances in which music played a significant role. The first chapter – 'Music, Authority, and the Royal Image' – sets the scene and debates the challenges of the ambivalent sixteenth-century attitude to the acquisition and display of musical knowledge and skills for Elizabeth. The following four chapters deal in turn with the political uses made of intimate performances by Elizabeth and her courtiers; performances within the royal household, including masques and choir-boy plays; tournaments; and finally performances put on by aristocratic households and cities for Elizabeth and the court during her summer progresses. Butler sees the path through chapters two to five as a passage from events in which music delivers value to the monarch through those that benefit the nobility, arriving at performances in which the primary beneficiaries are public bodies and performers. This is true to an extent but one of the striking aspects of her investigation is that, in almost all cases, there is the

potential for more than one party to a musical event to benefit in more than one way.

Who, then, benefitted politically from the use of music? At the intimate end of the scale, access to the Queen's personal performances bestowed exclusivity to the listener, particularly useful for diplomatic purposes. Larger-scale court and public performances helped enhance the image of the monarchy as a significant political player in Europe, or promulgated the idea (or perhaps myth) of a harmonious country at home. For courtiers wishing to enhance their image, petition the Queen, complain about something or dispense advice, there were opportunities ranging from the private performance of a song especially composed for the Queen, through participation in court masques and tournaments, to the large-scale staging at one's country seat of a performance for a royal progress. For civic bodies and individuals such as performers access was more limited but, even so, the opportunities were there to put forward one's cause. Butler argues that the ephemeral nature of the music associated with these events meant that it was a safe medium in which to deliver advice and sometimes critical messages to the Queen.

Given that most types of entertainment could be used to achieve similar ends, there is inevitably some repetition of concepts and, occasionally, examples across Butler's chapters. On the other hand this does mean that the chapters are relatively self-sufficient, so that someone particularly interested in tournaments, for instance, could get a great deal from reading just the relevant chapter.

Given the material available to her, Katherine Butler has largely met the challenge she set herself. We have a clear picture of both how and why music was used by people other than the Queen to further their ends, although in the case of some types of theatrical performance we might debate just how crucial was the inclusion of music. In the case of Elizabeth, the situation is more complex, reflecting her multiple roles in relation to music in court politics. Butler's analysis of the apparent efforts of the Queen and her advisers to manage the tactical use of her own performances, the patronage of others, the employment of music to contribute to the positive image of the state, along with the need to decide how far to go in exploiting the feminine and sensual associations of music, and, crucially, how far to tolerate petitioning, the giving of advice, and chastisement by others through the medium of music, paints a picture of a sophisticated and subtle state machine working in this case through the medium of music.

Tessa Murray

LEX EISENHARDT: ITALIAN GUITAR MUSIC OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

University of Rochester Press

266pp. £60

ISBN 978-1-58046-533-5.

James Tyler's *The Early Guitar* (OUP, 1980) was the groundbreaking work which introduced the baroque guitar and its repertoire to musicologists and guitarists alike. The chapters on the baroque guitar in Tyler's (and Paul Sparks') later work *The Guitar and its Music from the Renaissance to the Classical Era* (OUP, 2002) are largely derived from *The Early Guitar*, and so the present work is the first major one on the subject since 1980 to be widely available. It is in every sense a worthy successor to *The Early Guitar*.

Its main focus is on the Italian repertoire but the author's thorough approach means that earlier Spanish music is discussed (since the guitar came to Italy via Spain) as well as the later French school of guitar composers (initiated by the peripatetic Italian virtuosi of the later 17th century). As well as repertoire and players the book also examines the role of the guitar as a continuo instrument (very common in solo song, very rare in larger ensembles) and the variety of possible tunings in use.

Both of these subjects are contentious, particularly the latter, and all out of proportion to its actual importance – non specialists can get an idea by imagining heated controversy over the use of 4' registration on the harpsichord – but such is Mr. Eisenhardt's mastery of the varied source material that he is able to give all the information available in a very clear and concise manner. Where matters are ambiguous or the sources are contradictory he simply says so and, while his own opinions are always perfectly clear, he is very straightforward about urging players to make their own choices. This approach is as welcome as it is novel.

My only reservation about the book concerns the penultimate chapter which is largely devoted to the unusual harmonies found in the work of Francesco Corbetta, the greatest of the 17th-century guitarists. Particularly in his last two books, Corbetta enjoyed a very free and often dissonant harmonic palette with many chords saturated with 4ths. These are the chords which worry Mr. Eisenhardt and he has evolved a rather tortured explanation of why these notes (engraved in their hundreds, very clearly, in the tablatures) are meant to be fingered but not played. While this can't be disproved, it requires significantly less effort to simply accept that Corbetta liked unusual harmonies

and meant what he wrote. I would suggest that Corbetta himself alluded to the matter in the preface to his last work *La Guitarre Royale* of 1674. This book is dedicated to Louis XIV and Corbetta writes 'I had wanted to conform to the manner [of composition] most pleasing to your Majesty: The most chromatic, the most delicate and the least encumbered [by rules, i.e.. rule bound]'. If we take this at face value then not only are these interesting harmonies (also found in the work of his Italian contemporaries Valdambrini and Kapsperger) explained, but we can also enjoy the refreshing image of Louis XIV as a connoisseur of chromatic harmony. The author's theory may not convince all guitarists but he is, again, very respectful of the reader's intelligence and urges each to make his own choice.

Mr. Eisenhardt has long been known as a skilful and sensitive performer on a wide variety of historical guitars and with the present work he has shown himself to be equally impressive as a scholar and writer. This book is not just valuable to players of the baroque guitar but also well worth the attention of anyone with an interest in the music of the 17th century.

William Carter

ARCOMELO 2013 *Studi nel terzo centenario della morte di Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)*

ed. Guido Olivieri and Marc Vanscheeuwijck
(LIM, 2015) In Italian and English.

xxviii+538pp. €50

ISBN 9788870967975

Of the 16 papers delivered at the 7th Corelli convention held in Fusignano, 'Arcomelo 2013' in honour of the 300th anniversary of Corelli death, six are in English, as are all 16 abstracts. One aim of the congress was to connect musicians and musicologists, applying the latest research to questions of musical analysis and performance. The volume places the papers in five areas of study, though they can be read in any order. I decided to begin with one paper from each group, making the rounds successively, in order to let the historical, musical, technical, and documentary contributions relate to each other. The considerable size of this volume (566 pages counting the preface by Enrico Gatti and the introduction by Guido Olivieri and Marc Vanscheeuwijck) should insure its value to many readers.

CORELLI AND THE BOLOGNESE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TRADITION

The opening 'prosopographical' essay by SANDRO PASQUAL is on violinists, violins, and violin teachers in Bologna in Corelli's time, along with the rise of music publishing houses and violin makers there. Pasqual, a cellist, historian, and economist, sets the stage for Corelli – whom his contribution doesn't include. His aim is to show to what extent the violin created a revolution in Bologna in the mid-1600s, what activities and sectors offered work to violinists, what repertoire emerged, and therefore why one can speak of the Bolognese 'violin school' between 1660 and 1720. The violinists were street musicians, part-time well-trained free-lance players, professionals, and teachers of several generations of pupils. Their prestige grew in the 18th century as Bologna became the fertile centre reflected in the seminal influence of Corelli himself.

ANDREAS PFISTERER'S contribution on *Corelli and Vitali: On the Reworking of Dance Movements* compares the former's Op. II, no. 9/1 of 1685 with the latter's Op. 8 no. 8 *Balletto Largo* of 1683. He considers *Allemande* and *Balletti* here as identical, and I imagine that at the Convention he must have commented on the *Balletti* and *Allemande* in the Assisi manuscript attributed to Corelli. His analysis is enlightening, in that Corelli apparently adopted the Vitali piece as a model, but reworked it in significant, idiosyncratic ways, all illustrated well by his musical examples.

GUIDO OLIVIERI introduced Enrico Gatti's edition of 12 'sonatas' from a manuscript of 1748, I-Af MS 177, in which they are attributed to Corelli. (See the review of their edition below for more about these brief suites.) At the convention, Olivieri's longer paper *Le Sonate da camera di Assisi: una nuova fonte corelliana?* investigates the plausibility of the attribution. He compares the form, harmony, cadences and melodic characteristics of these *Preludi* and dances to examples from Corelli's op. I-IV, and to works of other composers active near Bologna in the 1660s, 70s and 80s. As 'Devil's Advocate' he makes hypotheses about conceivable motives for a deliberately spurious attribution, but these are not convincing; instead, as hoped, the existence of a complete set of sonatas that could have been composed by Corelli for violin and cello in the 1670s, formally dissimilar to the mature solo sonatas of Op. V, makes the case all the more interesting.

The complete Assisi manuscript is in two hands and was made in Bologna. One copyist wrote out these sonatas, as well as Corelli's 12 sonatas of Op. 5, Albinoni's sonata op. 2 no.10 and part of no. 6, a sonata attributed to Torelli,

and the parchment cover, dated 1748. The other scribe inserted arias and minuets for trumpet. It belonged to a Franciscan lay brother in Assisi, who was praised as a cello player and bass singer, Giuseppe Maria Galli (ca. 1720-1781). He must have personally used the music; he may have been the main copyist.

ASPECTS OF COMPOSITION AND PERFORMANCE

GREGORY BARNETT, in *Tempo, Meter, and Rhythmic Notation in Sonatas of the Corellian Era*, begins with three cases requiring interpretation in performance, supported by indisputably clear examples: (1) mensural proportions, which only occur marginally in music as late as Corelli's; (2) successive meters devised so that the same pulse in one section could be indicated by different note-values in the next; and (3) verbal tempo indications altering the durations of the same note-values. It is the second case that interests me the most, because it requires the intuition of performers: infrequently if ever mentioned in writing, this occurs over and over again in vocal music (I'm thinking of Monteverdi, Purcell, Tenaglia, Steffani, and many others), enabling smooth transitions from one section to another which the other sets of early notational rules cannot define. The author also touches on the unsolved problem of Gigs. The article contains 28 musical examples, 4 tables of tempo indications (those in combinations, those projecting affects, those implying articulated bowing, and those implying sustained bowings), and a long bibliographical list of the compositions referred to.

The title of ALBERTO SANNA'S *Between Composition and Performance: Generic Norms and Poetic Choices in The Work of Arcangelo Corelli* would have been more inviting had it referred to Corelli's compositional priorities or the protracted debate over 'The Affair of the Fifths' that raged from 1685 into the early 1700s, and which still gets treated polemically today, most recently as a confrontation between the musical circles of Rome and Bologna. Even though Sanna devotes half of his paper to the disputed parallel intervals, with redundant examples and explanations of how suspensions save the fifths, he only cites one sentence of Corelli's defensive arguments, which allegedly were long and detailed. So the impression I was left with, besides appreciation of my responsibility as a continuo player to bring out the harmonic complexity that Corelli had in mind, was that Sanna's conclusions about how Corelli's practical experience informed his aesthetics were too generalized to be supported by what he actually showed. His discussion of Corelli's *Allemandes* ties in nicely with

Pfisterer's contribution.

PIERRE-ALAIN BRAYE-WEPPE, a composer and teacher of basso continuo, discusses in the most organized and well-illustrated manner the various roles and sonorities Corelli used the viola for. *The Viola Part in the Concerti Op. VI* is long but quickly read, and parts tie in beautifully with Salvatore Carchiolo's treatise-supported recommendations for passing-note contaminations of simpler harmonies. Like Sanna, Braye-Weppe attributes Corelli's compositional *bravura* to his innovative 'thinking outside the box', as well as to his experience as a violinist and conductor. But he doesn't just say so: the strength of this paper is the analytical grouping of musical examples.

BASS INSTRUMENTS AND BASSO CONTINUO REALIZATION IN ROME AT THE TIME OF CORELLI

In the 17th and early 18th centuries the violin family included a variety of instruments larger than the viola. They differed in size, tuning, playing technique, and especially in nomenclature. MARC VANSCHEEWIJCK has reviewed the specific situation in *Bowed Basses in Corelli's Rome*. Corelli used the designation *violoncello del concertino* only once, in his *Concerti Grossi, Op. VI*, generally calling the instrument that plays the bassline – in sonatas and trios – a *violone*. The article adds other data to be considered, without claiming to solve the confusing regional and organological distinctions. Although the study is in English, I think Vanscheewijck assumes that we all know that the Italian diminutive suffix '-cello' is not a common one. More usual ones are *-ino*, *-etto*, *-cino*, *-ello*, some of which express affection or suggest 'cuteness'; but '-cello', also a quantitative modifier, means 'slight'. It qualifies the suffix already present in *violone* (i.e. a large viola) to distinguish the various slightly smaller large violas from each other, and from the *contrabbasso*, before standardization, when some players could play different sizes of instruments in more than one tuning. One other thing leaves me not quite appreciative of this dilemma: why not examine the basslines themselves, their ranges, and the techniques they require, in order to conclude definitively what the *violone* in question had to be?

Previously enigmatic archlute tablatures, which seemed to produce senseless or bad voice-leading, are solved by restringing the 4th, 5th and 6th stopped double courses in octaves instead of unisons. MARCO PESCI in *Larciliuto e il basso continuo nella Roma di Corelli: osservazioni sull'uso di ottave e acciacatura*, thus confirms these tablature readings, which are shown to produce the type of full (and

harmonically contaminated) accompaniment specifically called for in Corelli's time. The stringing required is an older, 16th century one. Therefore the Roman 17th-century "earlier music" practitioners reinstated it in order to have three extra voices for adding and resolving dissonances, thanks to three octave doublings, and also for playing higher melodies at the same time. All the examples are given in notation as well as tablature, and the article should be read together with the following ones of Salvatore Carchiolo and Giovanni Togni. It is too bad for English readers that all three of these articles are in Italian, but they do have a great number of musical examples, and their abstracts are in English.

SALVATORE CARCHIOLO, as expected from the highest authority on Italian continuo practice as a performer and researcher, takes a group of related anonymous treatises, establishes their appropriateness to Corelli's music by their date and Roman origin, and applies their very particular recommendations to passages from Corelli's opera I, II, III and V. *La prassi esecutiva del basso continuo al clavicembalo nella musica di Arcangelo Corelli alla luce delle 'Regole per accompagnar sopra la parte' della Biblioteca Corsiniana di Roma* therefore is not only detail-specific for those wanting to accompany Corelli better, but explains 'Rules' which are still little known, or, when known, often conflated with every other style of accompaniment. His illustrative realizations may speak for themselves, but for those who read Italian, the distinctions he draws about them are most illuminating. Harmonic contamination has its rhyme and reason, its means and place, in short... its rules.

GIOVANNI TOGNI also analyzes the various uses of extemporized and almost ubiquitous dissonances in full accompaniments of Corelli's time – those discussed in the above study by Carchiolo and referred to as 'false' in the writings of Gasparini (1708), Marcello (1705), and the anonymous tract *Regole per accompagnare sopra la part d'autore incerto* (circa 1700). His contribution is titled *Le 'false' che diletano* (The 'inharmonic notes that delight'), a phrase from the tract, which included an illustrative arietta written and realized by the 'uncertain' author, showing chords with five to ten notes (some held, some released). Carchiolo applied the technique to music of Corelli. Togni instead compares these various writings, adding illustrations from still other printed pieces and manuscripts (one from 1680-90), noting differences in their usage of the terms. His examples enable him to specify where they can be employed, which is the main value of his study.

His statistical analysis might raise some eyebrows (e. g. 16 *acciaccature* in 89 bars of a set of *Passagagli*, or 5.8%, versus 51.66% in the first 23 bars of the anonymous *arietta*), but he admits that this serves to measure the huge discrepancy between actual pieces and theoretical examples, which ought to warn us not to overdo techniques recommended for wherever appropriate, not for wherever possible.

HISTORY CONTEXT DOCUMENTS

The title of TERESA CHIRICO'S *'Et iusti intrabunt in eam'. Committenza ottoboniana, macchine e musiche per la festa delle Quaranta ore (1690–1713)* is a challenge, but in fact the study is concretely descriptive of the theatrical machinery, the elaborate staging and the exact musical forces used in the Church (of San Lorenzo in Damaso) in Cardinal Ottoboni's residence for an annual marathon of solemn celebrations in the presence of the pope. Corelli's contribution (composing, directing and playing) was essential, and after his death this so-called Roman 'Carnival' continued until 1740 in a reduced form.

More than 30 of the 49 documents that constitute the second and main part of LUCA DELLA LIBERA'S *Nuove fonti corelliane: il Fondo Bolognetti nell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano e i documenti nell'Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* contain references to Corelli's work as a performer or conductor in Rome. They are single journalistic paragraphs from 1691-1703 describing occasions, the music performed, by whom; or lists of payments from 1676 to 1692 for sacred music performed in Sant'Andrea al Quirinale (renovated by Bernini with funds from G. B. Pamphilj). Musicians are named (e.g. Carlo Mannelli, Bernardo Pasquini), or listed by first name and function or provenance (e. g. Violino Archangelo; Perugino della Chiesa Nuova) or by surname (e. g. Organista De Sanctis), or function (e. g. *Alza mantici* or Bellows pumpers). The journal entries are selected from over 200 published by Della Libera and J. M. Domínguez in 2012. The payment lists from the Bolognetti family and Ottoboni court are published here for the first time, and in their entirety.

CONSTANCE FREI *I tipografi romani e bolognesi di Corelli. Stampa e ristampa*. In the 17th century Corelli's works were printed by various typographers. In Rome, Op. I and II by G. A. Mutij, Op. II and IV by G. G. Komarek, and Op. V by G. Pietrasanta. All these were reissued in Bologna numerous times during the composer's lifetime by the printing houses of G. and P. M. Monti and M. Silvani. This essay asks whether these prints and reprints were identical, whether movable-type prints could reproduce

the complex bowings, articulations and innovative ideas of the composer, or rather what limitations movable type imposed, and what was the relationship of the typographers to the musical text. It compares the Roman and Bolognese editions, underlines aspects of Corelli's style, defines the characteristics of each typographer, and enables players to better interpret the passage-work as presented by these prints. Appreciating the decisions the printers made is actually fundamental to reading printed music, and even the small number of examples given to support her answers will perhaps generate other questions in interested readers. I would like to ask her why groups of four semiquavers were so rarely spatially separated, and which printing houses had, or didn't have, demisemiquaver characters.

AGNESE PAVANELLO, in her study *Corelli 'inedito': composizioni dubbie o senza numero d'opera. Percorsi tra fonti, attribuzioni e fortuna della trasmissione*, while acknowledging with appreciation the immense cataloguing work of H. J. Marx, a pioneer of Corelli studies, shows how the works without opus numbers (WoO #) and the works catalogued as dubious or even spurious (indicated Anh. #), were not so deemed according to sufficiently clear criteria. Many of the latter are now turning out to be good attributions, and this involves over a hundred 'dubious' violin sonatas, and other works. Therefore her study underlines how important the situation is. A very large number of so-called dubious works are from English sources: Anh. 16–18 from the 1680s contain Op. I, II and III and WoO5. James II married Maria Beatrice d'Este, and Christina of Sweden used her influence in Rome to sustain the Catholic king of England, organizing large spectacles led by, played by, or composed by Corelli. This was but one channel for the spread of Roman music (not only Corelli's). It is an example of how dating, transmission and style must all be considered, as well as concordances with other sources, an example of which ties in with the article by Guido Olivieri. And perhaps some of the dubious works, which we have thanks to the foreign channel of diffusion, simply did not enjoy the ultimate care that Corelli devoted to his published works (especially Anh. 62–64). This study is, by the way, a good read, even though and indeed because (!) it points out what a staggering amount of research remains to be done on Corelli as a composer.

INFLUENCES

LOWELL LINDGREN'S *Fugga, Fugga, or the Italian Rant, which Supplied Corelli, Cosimi and Haym with 'the Sense of Sound'* does well to show that Corelli's pupils, in their flight

from the Roman musical scene after the pope closed opera houses and banned secular music in 1697, carried away to England the excited, passionate, eloquent, even ranting (really?) style of their master in their performances and compositions. But the knot of cross-references Lindgren tries to knit, identifying Corelli's 'Non udite lo parlare?' (Do you not hear speaking?) or R. Frost's 'the sound of sense' (sic) with the joyful-wistful Renaissance tune called 'The Italian Rant' by Playford (1652) – a traditional melody that reappears in many guises (he mentions Smetana's *The Moldau*, which in turn summons up *HaTikvah*) – only takes away from the evident influence of Corelli's music on Geminian, Nicola Cosimi and Nicola Haym. It is hard not to lose the tenuous thread, but various movements of Cosimi and Haym, which Lindgren considers 'rants', are described in detail.

No need to fear for the robust mental health of Veracini from the complicated title of the paper by ANTONELLA D'OVIDIO, *Corelli e «l'angoscia dell'influenza»: declinazioni corelliane nelle sonate di Francesco Maria Veracini*. The subject is influence, one which was profoundly retrospective, innovative, voluntary and hardly anguished. This is a very observant and useful account of Veracini's lifelong, conscious debt to Corelli, not to mention his passionate aesthetics of music. D'Ovidio compares Veracini's three collections of violin sonatas, 1716, 1721, 1744, quotes from his preface to Op. 2 (1744) and his treatise *Il trionfo della pratica musicale* (1760), and underlines the importance of his *Dissertazioni sopra l'opera quinta di Corelli* in which, at the end of his life, he rewrote Corelli's Op. V in his new style, which was not at all the one in fashion, as he extended their contrapuntal potential and the role of both the solo violin and the basso continuo, making the sonatas closer to concertos.

Barbara Sachs

DAVID HUNTER: THE LIVES OF GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

The Boydell Press, 2015. xvii + 515pp, £30.00.
ISBN: 9781783270613.

I wasn't too impressed at the start of this volume, but it grew on me. I started making notes, but realised that I couldn't write in any great detail, and anyway it wasn't easy to make notes while reading on a ship in the Caribbean. Each chapter has an individual subject, which includes a large amount of information that is not just

checking all the details of what is known about Handel or how he fitted into England. Handel's position there was very much of the upper circle: he was attached to royalty (who paid him £200 a year) before he was famous. He had written a few operas and also spent some time with James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, producing 11 anthems before 1720 and two works not called oratorios – *Acis & Galatea* and *Esther*. His first London opera was *Rinaldo*, though it isn't as important as most Handelian have thought: much of it is adapted from previous sources, but *Agrippina* (1706 perhaps) is a more impressive opera in a very different style. He was strongly involved in the Academy planned in 1719 with the first performance of *Radamisto* in 1720. For 21 years, he maintained his activity in the theatre, though his financial "success" was dubious. The clientele was a small element of the top members of society. In the early 1720s, however, Handel had significant respect, and *Orlando* and *Alcina* of the mid 1730s are now particularly popular – at least, to my taste!

His health deteriorated in the latter part of the 1730s. There are various reasons, one being his excess of food and drink, the other the ubiquitous danger of lead, whether drinking water or wine. Whatever his earlier health (which probably wasn't particularly good), in 1737 he was struck by saturnine gout, and used spas at Tunbridge Wells and Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen); he also suffered with a palsy in Dublin in 1741-42. His final weakness was blindness, one eye being weak in 1751 and lost in 1752; the other eye failing (or ruined by his oculist) in 1758.

Handel probably didn't have much of a different clientele for the oratorios. Finances were low, since he only performed in Lent. However, from 1723 till his death he received £600 per annum. (He wasn't renowned for spending more than the normal fees for performers, but the charity for the Foundling Hospital *Messiah* from 1754 was not connected with Handel.) He had invested in finances abroad, and despite problems, on his death he left around £20,000. Hunter assumed that Handel held responsibility for slavery in 1720, but I wonder whether he just offered money for income without considering whether slavery was mentioned when experts laid out a good scheme – more information is needed.

I wasn't too happy about Chapter 1 –The Audience: Three Broad Categories, Three Gross Errors. The rest are mostly fine, though some are longer than necessary:

2. The Audience: Partner and Problem
3. Musicians and Other Occupational Hazards

4. Patrons and Pensions
5. Musical Genres and Compositional Practices
6. Self and Health
7. Self and Friends
8. Nations and Stories
9. Biographers' Stories
- Conclusion

Here are just a few comments:

Hunter hasn't realised (pp. 215-6) that *The Ways of Zion do Mourn* (subsequently Act I of *Israel in Egypt*) isn't just taken direct from Handl/Gallus, published in the 1580s. In fact, *Ecce quam modo* was familiar in Germany, and no doubt elsewhere, for funerals. Queen Caroline was German but came to London at almost the same time as Handel. The funeral was in Westminster Abbey on 17 December 1737 with a large number of performers (around 130) but not for the public. It is rarely performed, but there was an excellent day's rehearsal and run-through in Cambridge in October last year, with Peter Holman at his best.

Hunter concentrates on the public rehearsal at the pleasure gardens of the *Music for the Royal Fireworks* at Vauxhall. All the relevant numbers are exaggerations, including the travel from north of the Thames. I remember well a performance at Dartington Summer School, with the Brass Ordnance replaced by the fireworks. Incidentally, there's a nice story of John Byrom, who was sitting under one of the trees on St James's Park on the night of the *Fireworks*, writing a letter to his wife. He saw the fireworks, but didn't mention the music. He was also the writer of *Christians, awake, salute the happy morn...*

A more general point is that the oratorios from the 1730s are based on the Old Testament, except for two exceptions. Handel took *Theodora*, a Christian martyr, from around 304 AD, based on a more recent source that was borrowed from what we would now call a historical novel. It has become popular over the last few decades, and is sometimes staged. The other is *Messiah*, which is mostly Old Testament but has a few direct

quotes from the New and is unlike any normal oratorios.

I leave it to the readers to judge the book for themselves though £30 is certainly very good value for so substantial a book!

Clifford Bartlett

MUSICAL TEXT AS RITUAL OBJECT

Edited by Hendrik Schulze

Brepols (Turnhout), 2015.

220pp, €75.00.

ISBN 978 2 503 54074 0

I find this a rather mixed book, with 16 contributors. The “ritual object” is fine for the non-“conventional” music such as Egyptian papyrus, Hindu initiation, Turkish Alevism, Garhwal Himalayas, etc. But I could not grasp the concept of a ritual object in the context of the composers of music. One might separate performance from academics (at least in the period covered, mostly Italian 17th century). But although a lot of dead music survived, it came alive again several centuries later. I don’t understand this as ritual object: music scores (and parts without scores) are what comes from the thought and notation of composers, while in some cases solo performers can present their music without having it written. Nevertheless, I can’t relate any of the “sources” of music to ritual object. This book would be much more valuable if it was based on the music itself. I’m not happy with the actual volume; it isn’t easy to hold in the hand – a smaller format would be easier to hold. (Personally, when reading, I sit in a comfortable armchair and note comments on the copy.) The printing seemed a bit light compared with the lengthy *Lives of George Frideric Handel*, reviewed elsewhere.

There is a vast quantity of music in the 17th-century items covered in the volume – these can stand without any suggestion of ritual object. Some 16th-century English church music survived or was revived in the 18th, while Corelli has survived to the present. I was puzzled by the various remarks on Luigi Rossi’s exclusively Italian existence, since he visited Paris in 1646-7 and 1648-9 for his opera *Orfeo* (in Italian). I edited the work for Boston & Drottningholm (1997) and an English version in London based on the same edition last autumn. Monteverdi’s activities towards the end of his Mantuan period are primarily concerned with the relationship with his seniors and the people he wants to favour – I don’t think I would

call that a ritual object.

This is a useful book, provided that readers can ignore the title and irrelevant passages.

Clifford Bartlett

RECERCARE XXVI/I-2, 2014

Journal for the study and practice of early music

directed by Arnaldo Morelli

LIM Editrice [2014]

160 pp, €24 (€29 outside of Italy)

ISBN 978 88 7096 8125

The current issue of *Ricerca* is slightly shorter than recent preceding ones and without a book review section. It presents five studies, four with useful summaries in English and in Italian by the authors – at about 10% the length of an article, they aren’t substitutes, but they give more substance than abstracts do.

The issue is dedicated to the memory of Saverio Franchi, a recently deceased scholar whose impressive work (musicological and more) is appreciatively outlined by the chief editor, Arnaldo Morelli, in ‘Una minuta, caleidoscopica visione del mondo’ (‘a detailed, kaleidoscopic vision of the world’). A long article by Franchi – unfinished and completed by his wife and collaborator, Orietta Sartori – follows. On Roman printers of the early 16th century (Andrea Antico, Giacomo Giunta, Valerio Dorico and Antonio Barrè), it was probably too detailed to be summarized, and it got past the editors with ungainly single paragraphs spanning two, three or four pages. Nevertheless, readers should start again if on the first try they get lost in titles, dates and the relationships between printers, composers and patrons. Franchi’s fact-finding was complemented by his intuition, reasoning and speculation. The titles call up the compositions; the reproductions of woodcuts from the prints are interpreted; and his chronological ordering of the information assembled (from 1509 to 1574) adds almost a sense of suspense.

The other papers, two in Italian and two in English, do have bilingual summaries. The first three are in historical order by subject matter, and in order of length, with the third designated a “Communication” and the fourth an “Intervention”.

Paolo Alberto Rismondo presents new documents in ‘“Il genio natio contaminato da conversationi composte da inevitabile fatalità”. Biagio Marini a Brescia, Neuburg e Padova’, about Marini’s life, training, positions (in other cities abroad as well as in the Veneto) and events probably

contributing to the end of his life. The title includes the incipit of a long citation from the composer's anguished plea to the authorities to commute his son's death sentence to imprisonment. It expresses his desolation at having generated an inexcusable son, but so truncated it is totally obscure. Its predicate reads: "has put sour [immature] fruit on my most embittered palate [which] if not tempered by clemency ... will give off juices poisonous to my life".

Nichola Voice is a New Zealand flautist whose doctoral dissertation for the University of Otago (n.b. not 'Otago University' as in the profile of her) is on northern Italian craft guilds in connection with instrument making. In the extract 'Venetian woodwind instrument makers, 1680–1805. Their interaction with the guild', her meticulous examination of documents from Venetian archives reverses some previous conclusions (including work by Federico Sardelli and Careras) about restrictions compromising the development of a wind-instrument industry in Venice, and finds makers named in one multi-media guild, the *Arte de' tornidori* (i.e. 'tornitori', wood and ivory turners and reamers).

The orchestral natural horn was not only called the 'corno da caccia', or hunting horn, in Italy (indeed up to the mid 19th century, I believe), but associated with the Austrian Empire and generally used for that connotation or as a symbol of monarchy in general, from 1714 on. In 1748 all wind instruments were banned in sacred music by papal bull. In 'New findings on the use of the corni da caccia in early eighteenth-century Roman orchestras' Teresa Chirico says where and when horns (sometimes also called 'trombe da caccia') were used elsewhere in Italy (Naples, Venice, Mantua), and then gradually in Rome, especially by various composers (such as Bononcini, Vivaldi, Caldara, Vinci) and patrons who wanted them, and mainly for secular works. Symbolically and systematically standing for Austrian culture, hunting as a sport, and nobility, they were included for occasions celebrating English and French royalty as well. In Roman churches, Girolamo Chiti used them as early as 1720 and until the ban 1748. Thereafter, elsewhere in Italy, they became an accepted 'naturalized' orchestral instrument.

Giuseppe Clericetti's 'La verità e altre bugie' presents an entertaining array of literary, pictorial and musical counterfeits, some of staggering erudition, others playfully strewn with anagrams or other clues to the forgers. Works by figures of the stature of Erasmus and Leopardi, an instrumental hoax craftily perpetrated by Leonhardt and his harpsichord maker Skowronek, a bio of an invented

painter teasingly named Nat Tate for the gullible, brilliant parodies, not to mention the long-accepted authorial pretence of discovered manuscripts by Cervantes, Scott, Manzoni, Eco, etc., which don't really count. One musical fake continued to reappear in print, in English, German, French and Italian, from 1925 until 2000: *The Little Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach* actually by Esther Meynell. The list goes on. Musical hoaxes fooled the likes of eminent scholars (Howard Robbins Landon and Paul Badura-Skoda in 1993 over the 'discovery' of six lost early sonatas by Haydn, published by Winfried Michel, who took their incipits from Haydn's catalogue and then composed 99% of the music). Clericetti arranges these thoughtfully, but doesn't anticipate what the computer-savvy will get up to. He is quite respectful of these endeavours, no indignant class-action suits are urged: rather he points out the fundamental tradition (he says 17th century, but it certainly goes back to before the invention of musical notation) of *constraintes* or compositions with an *obbligo*, new works based on other works, which marked the evolution of all the arts.

Barbara Sachs

IL SAGGIATORE MUSICALE XXII, NO. I

Rivista semestrale di Musicologia, 2015

Florence: Leo S. Olschki

ISSN 1123 8615 €64,00

The first of the two 2015 issues of *Il Saggiatore Musicale* contains, with regard to early music, two studies, both in English, a brief article, and various informative book reviews.

In *Notions of Notation Around 1600*, Anthony Newcomb points out something that performers who play or sing from original prints might not have imagined, namely, that unbarred individual part books were only for performing from, not being very conducive to analysis, and open scores (n.b. the words *partitura* and *spartito* originally meant 'barred') were luxury items printed in order that their contrapuntal complexity could be appreciated by the elite patrons commissioning them, and would elicit admiration for themselves as well as for the composers from anyone acquiring, playing, or reading the music. Naturally musicians today seek comprehension and legibility, and therefore a specific genre of contrapuntal music, which might have almost never been played, deserves first of all analysis.

There are several insights in Newcomb's discussion. One is that the challenging contrapuntal *recercar* genre that developed between 1560 and 1600 in Ferrara, Rome and Naples (Brumel, Luzzaschi, de Macque, Gesualdo, Mayone, Trabaci, Frescobaldi) awarded absolute prescriptive value to every note. The pieces, being the object of study and discussions, were to be played, if at all, exactly as written. This is quite unlike all other contemporary lighter pieces, such as madrigals, canzonette and instrumental works, which could be adapted for performance, accompanied according to prevailing contingencies, simplified, transcribed, improvised upon, ornamented. We tend to consider this latter trend progressive, perhaps because we ourselves want such interpretive prerogatives. But, in fact, musical art proceeded (and still does) along both routes, those Newcomb calls 'performer-centered' and 'composer-centered' musical culture.

The article gives three illustrations from Trabaci's *Secondo libro de ricercate* (1615): the table of contents listing the page numbers and bar numbers of the most 'notable passages and things' (*Tavola de i passi et delle cose più notabile* [sic]); verbal identifications of inversions of the subjects in the score; and in addition, a little hand with index finger pointing out the entry of a subject borrowed from Luzzaschi.

Newcomb's Appendix is a detailed outline of relevant quotations from historic and contemporary sources (with their English translations). An amusing one is a letter of Luigi Zenobi's (1600) comparing *contrapunto buono*, meaning almost the opposite, *alla buona*, to *contrapunto artificioso* that shows *isquisitezza d'arte*: the former 'good' counterpoint is like garlic, for rustic tastes, whereas the latter 'contrived, exquisitely artful' sort pleases those of more delicate, elevated, ingenuity.

Michael Talbot, in *Francesco Barsanti and the Lure of National Song*, goes into one area of Barsanti's work mentioned in the major article by himself and Jasmin Cameron that appeared in *Recercare* XXV (2013). Here he retraces Barsanti's career, this time describing his empathetic production of popular song settings: His eclectic, sensitively arranged 1742 *Collection of* [28] *Old Scots Tunes* (without texts, to be played by violin or flute and continuo) convey the traditional manner of Scottish singing. As one of the scribes compiling keyboard music and songs for a 1743 manuscript possibly destined for Princess Louisa, the youngest daughter of George II, Barsanti anonymously inserted six easy French airs, recognizable by his hand, copied from unknown sources.

Around 1750 he published (Op. 4) *Nove overture a quattro*, in three of which he used popular English tunes or dances as the themes of the fugal sections. His carefully reworking of them, and naming of them, no doubt brought smiles of recognition to listeners.

At the same time he produced a Hebrew motet! His Amsterdam supporters included Sephardic Jews, and the Great Synagogue of Amsterdam wanted contemporary settings of Biblical texts. Barsanti set the first stanza of Psalm 75 for four voices, inserting the piece in an anthology of madrigals and motets which he was hired to copy (for the Academy of Ancient Music, Talbot surmises). Most interesting here is that its unusual modal structure coincides approximately with a simple 19th-century arrangement by Emanuel Aguilar, a British pianist and composer (1824-1904). Talbot does not indicate whether both composers used a traditional Sephardic chant of the psalm as the soprano melody, or whether Barsanti did and his version became regarded as the "ancient melody" surviving a century later, in 1857.

This unpretentious aspect of Barsanti's output adds much to his biography, that of amateur, musician of all trades, a scholar sensitive to what would become ethnomusicology in the following centuries.

Archeologia musicale dei Greci e dei Romani: una breve introduzione by Daniela Castaldo is not really a study. However, it does trace and inspire interest in the emergence in the 17th to the 20th centuries of what is now called 'musical archeology'. She mentions the key scholars, publications, conventions and trends that gradually came to better define its vast scope.

The Book Review section includes reviews of P. Memelsdorff, *The Codex Faenza 117: Instrumental Polyphony in Late Medieval Italy*, an introductory volume and a facsimile (M. Caraci Vela); T. Carter - R. A. Goldthwaite, *Orpheus in the Marketplace. Jacopo Peri & the Economy of Late Renaissance Florence*, the first socio-economic biography of a late 16th to early 17th-century composer and singer (F. Fantappiè).

Critical Summaries are by G. Nuti on G. Sanguinetti, *The Art of Partimenti: History, Theory, and Practice*; M. Giuggioli on St. Rumph: *Mozart and Enlightenment Semiotics*; F. Lazzaro on W. Gibbons: *Building the Operatic Museum: Eighteenth-Century Opera in Fin-de-Siècle Paris*.

Barbara Sachs

EDITIONS OF MUSIC

ARCANGELO CORELLI (?), LE 'SONATE DA CAMERA' DI ASSISI DAL MS. 177 DELLA BIBLIOTECA DEL SACRO CONVENTO

Ed. by Enrico Gatti, Intro. by Guido Olivieri.

Facsimile with editorial notes in English and Italian, plus a modern edition in a separate volume.

LIM, 2015. 105pp. €35

ISBN 9788870968323

These 12 suites, *Sonate da camera à violino e violoncello* in the manuscript source, are edited by Enrico Gatti, who has recorded them for Glossa (GCD 921209). Guido Olivieri describes the source, the hand, and the date, after having written more exhaustively about their attribution to Corelli in *Arcomelo 2013* (See the acts of this convention in the review of *Arcomelo 2013* reviewed above). Violinists and cellists will be curious to see these 'new', presumably early, compositions by Corelli. So I'll try to say what they are and aren't.

The format of the volumes, dictated by the Facsimile, is horizontal. The modern transcription of each sonata occupies a single two-page opening. Some of the sonatas slightly exceed two pages in the manuscript, requiring page turns. Each begins with a Preludio of from five to 13 bars in duple or triple time, with and without double stops. The second movements are *Alemande* or *Balletti*, the third are *Correnti*, *Gighe*, or *Gavotte*.

Sonata 12 is a special case, with double-stops throughout, as well as chords on three or four strings. Instead of 'Balletto' the manuscript clearly appears to say 'Bassetto', which is rather peculiar, and ignored by Gatti. But I might surmise why. This sonata is inverted: the bass-line in the Preludio is in quavers, under the violin's almost static, harmonic crotchet double-stops; in the 'Bassetto' or *Balletto* it is the driving melody, over which the violin plays rhythmic and melodic imitations and complete chords of three notes. In the *Corrente* bass and violin are rhythmically complimentary, the violin, again, playing complete chords throughout. In fact, the 'melody' line of the violin in the first eight bars of the *Corrente* are all the open e" string, under which the lower voices have some limited stepwise movement. Not much of a solo. Since the violin in effect plays a chordal realization of the melodic bass-line throughout all three movements, not only could this be considered a Cello Sonata, rather than a Violin sonata,

but it is also a contemporary example, attributed no less to Corelli, of a continuo realization.

This is not the only movement in the set where the cello is accompanied by the violin, and another reason to credit Galli, a cellist, as the scribe (1748). Furthermore, the *Lemmario del Lessico della Letteratura Musicale Italiana (1490-1950)* gives only two examples of the expressions *fare il bassetto* and *suonare il bassetto*, in both cases referring to the violin not being the soprano voice, but playing an octave higher than the would-be bass.

The editors believe Corelli could have written this set in the early 1670s as an exercise or test of qualification. Its structural traits are typical of composers of French-inspired suites for guitar active in Bologna at that time.

The facsimile volume is prefaced by Gatti's observations and critical notes (not only in two languages, but under two separate headings, unfortunately, with enough redundancy to be a bit confusing). These must be read in order to be respectfully wary of his revisions. I'll only mention some cases in which there may be more sophisticated solutions in readings he rejected, and more reasons for the attribution to Corelli.

In the Preludio of Sonata II Gatti omits 'an incongruous 6' taking the continuo flat figure to refer to the 3rd. It is common to find continuo figures written horizontally, and the 4 ♭ 6 3 certainly means 4/♯6 followed by 3/[5]. There was no need to specify that the 3rd is minor, whereas the ♯6 is cautionary since the next bass note is a g#. The resulting minor six-four chord is beautiful.

In the Preludio of Sonata III Gatti reproduces the small quaver b" hovering a 7th above the violin's c"#, with the necessary editorial flat. There should be an editorial slur linking them, because this is a vocal-style appoggiatura, falling by a wide diminished-7th leap, exactly like the written-out one in the 5th bar of Sonata X, e"♭ quaver followed by f"#. In the *Balletto* Gatti unfortunately inserted an editorial ♭ in bar 15 not demanded by the sequence. On the contrary, the three ascending semiquavers start with a semitone three times: e f g|a in the continuo, and in both continuo and violin b' c' d"|e". If the violin flattens the first note, it produces an ugly false relation (a tetrachord spanning an augmented 4th).

There are numerous moot points reported in the Critical Notes for Sonata XII. I mention a few of them because the attribution to Corelli and the reliability of the copyist are still open questions, and these are all matters of composition that bear on the quality of the writing, and which I think Gatti may have underestimated:

The Balletto has many suspensions in double-stops for the violin, which the copyist sometimes miswrote. In bar 15, however, his mistake was not in the notes (which Gatti changed, giving a g" instead of the prepared d"#) but in reversing their order to make the 3rds descend: upward resolving 3rds are fine in an 'accompaniment', the figures 9–8 are still appropriate despite the movement of the bass, they fit the top line #fff | #f g in 3rds over #ddd |#d e beautifully, especially as the prepared 9/#7 has already resolved upward in the previous bar.

In bars 17 and 19 an error by the scribe was not corrected by Gatti, and my guess is that Galli (?) copied the bass-line correctly and resolved the 4th too soon in the violin, whereas Gatti, despite the fact that the bass demands remaining on the dominant until beat two, didn't mind the conflict, which just sounds like a mistake played by one of the two instruments. In 22 both Galli (?) and Gatti forgot to indicate e"ḡ.

Two things to Corelli's credit are edited out in the Corrente, because proceeding by analogy is sometimes a trap. 1) Bars 39 and 43 are presumably meant to be identical, but which of the two readings is right? I would rather have a #4/2 chord over an a than a 5/# chord over a b which is coming anyway in the next bar for the cadence; and how can the cello note between two g#s be other than the a found in 43? 2) All of the cadences are echoed, and Gatti makes the echo to the first part in bar 44 conform to bar 40. Here, too (and not in the second part of the dance, where the final bar is a triple stop), the manuscript may be right the second time, or perhaps they are meant to be different. Either way, bar 44 has what in English we call a "Corelli clash". Italian has no such endearing term, but the resolution of 4 #3 under the anticipation of the tonic (here a d#" +e" double stop) has quite a long tradition, and in many other cadences in this set the tonic is indeed anticipated. If Corelli adopted rising suspensions from Frescobaldi and the leading-note/ tonic clash from the likes of Luigi Rossi and others, then finding a couple of such experiments in his early work just might be important to notice.

Luckily in this welcome edition we have the facsimile, which one player can play from, and, separately, Gatti's transcription, not to mention his observations in Italian and English listing almost all of the questionable details to think about critically.

Barbara Sachs

JOHN ECCLES: INCIDENTAL MUSIC, PART I - PLAYS A–F

Edited by Amanda Eubanks Winkler.

A-R Editions: RRMBE 190

xxiv + 320pp. \$225

ISBN 978-0-89579-822-0

This is the third volume in a series devoted to the music of John Eccles and the first of two to concentrate on incidental music for the London stage. In fact, the scope is larger than that may sound, as there is also repertoire by other composers, such as Gottfried Finger and Purcell.

The introduction proper starts on p. xv and is followed by four pages of facsimile (two each of manuscript and printed sources).

The music written for the plays then ensues, preceded by background information about the stage work itself and followed by critical notes on the source(s) used for each. The volume covers 24 productions with instrumental music by Eccles only surviving for one of them (*The Double Distress*), though only three movements exist in their four-part form, the other six only have the melody line. There is also instrumental music by William Corbett and John Lenton. The extent of stage music varies considerably, too; some have only one song, others have three or four. While the vast majority are for voice(s) and continuo only, there are some interesting numbers ("Hark, the trumpets and the drums" and "Sisters, whilst thus I wave my wand" from *Cyrus the Great; or, The Tragedy of Love* are well worth exploring, and the lengthy *scena* for soprano and bass, "Sleep, poor youth" from *The Comical History of Don Quixote, Part 1* with its four recorder parts, should suit those who like to programme such things. These aside, I suspect that, good as it is to make all of this repertoire available in these volumes (even including the texts of songs for which no music is known to have survived), most of it will remain on the library shelves. Although there is clearly an appetite to reclaim the music, there seems little if any parallel development in the stage world, in which context it truly belongs. Even 30 years after the event, I still feel enormously privileged to have had the opportunity to perform in the pit band for a student production (in a professional theatre) of *Amphytrion; or, The Two Sosas* when I was a student in St Andrews. Despite that, all students should clearly have access to these volumes.

Brian Clark

ARIAS FOR STEFANO MANDINI, MOZART'S
FIRST COUNT ALMAVIVA

Edited by Dorothea Link.

A-R Editions: RRMCE 97

xlvi + 128pp. \$154

ISBN 978-0-89579-825-1

Dorothea Link has previously produced volumes of arias for other singers of the Classical period: Nancy Storage (RRMCE 66), Francesco Benucci (72) and Vincenzo Calvesi (84). I have not seen those but imagine that in content and format they are very similar, if not identical; after lengthy preliminaries discussing the singer's career, the works from which the arias are taken and, in this case, the importance (or otherwise) of the fact that some of Mandini's music was written in bass clef and some of it in tenor, each of the arias is presented in turn, then comes a thorough critical report.

In recent years there have been many recording projects similar to these volumes; singers whose voice colour and range matches that of a known "famous voice from the past" have produced CDs of selected arias from operas and oratorios in which they are known to have sung. This volume will be frustrating in many ways for anyone wishing to record some of Mandini's repertoire, because each of the 13 arias is printed in 18th-century (or 18th-century style!) two-stave reductions, which are so simple that even I could play them without much practice.

Another odd aspect of the volume is the lack of a logical order for the arias. The five "tenor" arias could have been grouped together, perhaps. Or the works from which they were extracted ordered chronologically so that any change in the abilities of the voice could be observed. Even alphabetical order would be better than the current random selection.

Lock is especially good at describing the background to each of the operas concerned (by Sarti, Paisiello, Gazzaniga, Guglielmi, Salieri and Martín y Soler), but can be tortuous elsewhere (a paragraph on the range of the arias in the volume is at least three times as long as it need be). There is plenty of room in the score itself to have noted the scoring for each aria, but it seems that the editor is more interested in the musical historical background to the music rather than actually hearing it. I do not imagine anyone will ever perform it using this volume, but it will provide an excellent starting place for anyone wishing to explore the full orchestral versions.

Brian Clark

RECORDINGS

14th century

LLIBRE VERMELL

Canti di pellegrinaggio al Monte Serrato

Micrologus

57:20

Micrologus CDM0002.08.3

Having been beguiled by the *Llibre Vermell* of Montserrat ever since acquiring as a student the famous 1979 CD account by Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XX, I was delighted to be sent this account by Ensemble Micrologus. This group has been releasing a large number of CDs in the UK recently, all of which apply their uniquely spontaneous and dynamic approach to music of the Middle Ages. I was sure their approach would suit the music of the *Llibre Vermell* and I was not disappointed. The manuscript consists largely of a collection of songs for use by the pilgrims to Montserrat, although no doubt many of them are simply written records of pre-existent folk and pilgrim material. The simple and lively music, the football chants of their day, is given a variety of sparkling performances by Micrologus, who call upon their wide range of instruments and vocal permutations to bring the repertoire vividly to life. There is little music from the 14th century which so dramatically brings to life the everyday religious life of the common people, and in these sparkling performances we can easily picture the pilgrims clustered round an open fire or marching cheerfully up the hill to the shrine to the Blessed Virgin. Montserrat was the second most famous shrine in Spain after Santiago de Compostela and a popular focus for local adoration. Fortunately for those compiling CDs based on the contents of the *Llibre*, the forthright, uncomplicated walking and fireside repertoire is complemented by a number of more lyrical and contemplative pieces such as the enigmatic *Mariam matrem virginem*, although it has to be said that Micrologus take a less sympathetic approach with this fragile material than did the late great Montserrat Figueras and the vocal ensemble of Hespèrion XX. The other problem with the Micrologus CD is the lack of an English translation of the notes, which appear only in Italian, with no translations at all of the song texts. This surely ought to have been a priority if the group are hoping seriously to market their recordings in the UK.

D. James Ross

LE JEU DE ROBIN ET DE MARION

& Mottetti & Rondeau polifonici di Adam de la Halle

Ensemble Micrologus

58:22

Baryton CDM0026 (© 2003)

This account of the *Pastourelle* of Robin and Marion by the last of the trouvères, Adam de la Halle, is painted in very bright aural colours indeed! The brash sounds of shawm, bagpipe and trumpet dominate in a spirited rendition of Adam's music, but there are also calmer and beguiling episodes on double flute and harps where the composer's more lyrical side is on display. Adam stands intriguingly at the confluence of the *ars antiqua* and *ars nova* styles, and it is fascinating that although his music inclines mainly towards the former it remained very popular and was copied long after his death, by which time the latter style was firmly in the ascendant. The Ensemble approaches the work with their hallmark naiveté of style, vocal and instrumental, which works very well in this bucolic context. We should perhaps bear in mind that this synthesis of apparently 'country' verse and popular melody existed in a stylized fictional courtly world of shepherds and shepherdesses, created and performed by highly sophisticated 13th-century courtiers and professional musician/poets, so perhaps any rough rural edges to their performances were just as contrived as those cultivated by 21st-century professional musicians! There is in any case no doubt of the 13th-century taste for the bright and (to us) garish, and I have little doubt that the very immediate sounds of shawm and cornamuse and the Ensemble's bright stringed instruments would have delighted the original audiences for this entertaining work. Given that we can be pretty sure that the *Jeu de Robin et de Marion* would have been 'staged' in some sense of the word, I wonder if a case can be made for it being one of the earliest examples of operas. The addition of further lively dances and polyphonic motets by Adam valuably fills out our impression of the versatility of the composer, and of the Ensemble Micrologus. It is a pity in light of the vividness of the recording that the (uncredited) medieval illustrations of the Robin and Marion geste which cover the CD booklet are pixilated almost out of existence and lose much of their original impact. For those of you who like to sample tracks, please note that the track divisions are those denoted by the red Roman numerals rather than the black Arabic ones.

D. James Ross

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UN FIOR GENTILE

Lars nova di magister Antonio Zacara da Teramo

Ensemble Micrologus

68:41

Baryton CDM0023 (© 2008)

Is it possible that the music by up to three shady figures spanning the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th centuries is actually by the same man? The programme notes of the present CD by Goffredo Esposti hedge their bets, but it is amusing to think that the papal singer whose works made it into the Old Hall Manuscript was as also responsible for virtuosic instrumental music in the Faenza Codex as well as frankly erotic Italian ditties. All the more remarkable when we learn that the Zacara 'Doctus in musicis', rather bluntly represented in an initial illustration in the Codex Squarcialupi suffered from serious phocomelia, the deformity of limbs exhibited by Thalidomide victims. In addition to presenting sacred music, similar in style to Machaut, in a wonderfully 'forward' head-voice style, sometimes in conjunction with brass, the Ensemble Micrologus are also in a position to give us some instrumental music, one piece a stunning duet between positive organ and organetto. And then there are the splendid *ballate* and *caccia*, with their evocative verse, possibly also by the composer as he features in many texts either by name or in elaborately coded terms, which are given wonderfully gritty performances by Micrologus. If the intonation just occasionally falls victim to the forthright performance style in a couple of the sacred pieces and the recorded sound is rather immediate and brittle in some tracks, the Ensemble's vision of Zacara's works is compelling, and the interplay of voices and instruments stunningly convincing. So whether the group has conflated the work of up to three contemporary composers, or more likely to my mind introduced a single remarkable eclectic, transcendent and exuberant figure to the musical world, they have done us a great service with this CD.

D. James Ross

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15th century

OCKEGHEM: MISSA L'HOMME ARMÉ

Ensemble Nusmmido

69:19

Rondeau Productions ROP6106

+Agricola: *Cecus non iudicat de coloribus**

Busnoys: *In hydraulis**

Morton: *Il sera pour vous – L'homme armé*

Ockeghem: *Ut heremita salus**

*=instrumental

Ensemble Nusmido is a group of four young musicians 'specialising in the performance of medieval and renaissance music'; as well as singers, they are also accomplished instrumentalists. They bring their considerable talents here to some exceptionally complex 15th-century music, interspersing an all-vocal performance of Ockeghem's magnificent *L'homme Armé* mass with all-instrumental performances of pieces by Ockeghem and his contemporaries Busnois and Agricola.

One of the most satisfying features of the mass (and indeed of much of the instrumental music) is its resourceful use of the *cantus firmus*, both as a melodic basis for counterpoint and also as the essential isorhythmic underpinning of extended movements such as the Gloria or Credo.

In these performances, the overall sound is exceptionally smooth and luscious, but often at the expense of words (in the mass) and rhythmic characterisation (in the motets), so that especially in the longer movements, the structure is less evident and the music sometimes loses its direction. The *cantus firmus* in the magnificent instrumental *In Hydraulis* repeats its three notes at three different pitches (as in Josquin's *Hercules Dux Ferrariæ* mass, for example), but the use of the bell here, because of its complex overtones, rather confuses this, to my ears.

No caveats about the actual *L'homme armé* chansons which conclude this disc, however- these are beautifully done, both vocally and instrumentally.

The sleeve notes give interesting slants on the music from each of the performers – one would perhaps have liked a little more detail about the actual pieces, particularly their structure, to aid one's aural navigation.

Alastair Harper

GLORIA ET MALUM: MUSICA E DANZA DEL QUATTROCENTO NELLE CORTI ITALIANE

Ensemble Micrologus

72:20

Micrologus CDM00022/10/1

Ambrosio, Dufay, van Ghiseghem, da Pesaro, da Piacenza, de la Torre & anon

This collection of courtly dances, chiefly from Umbria, is interspersed with a handful of songs sung with the ensemble by Patrizia Bovi. As frequently with Micrologus the singing, recorded in a very forward brittle tone, sounds a little precarious, whereas the acoustic works better for the brash dance music. Developed as a project with a dance ensemble, the wide variety of dances from a range of appropriate sources and Micrologus's varied instrumentation keeps up the interest, although I found myself occasionally yearning for the visual stimulation of the dancers themselves. In the end I found that the balance for a CD erred slightly in the direction of the by necessity rather formulaic dance music, and I could have done with a few more songs to leaven the mixture. On the positive side, it seemed to me that the CD offered sufficient repeats of each dance section that it could be used for actual dancing, when its rather forward tone would be an advantage.

D. James Ross

LUCREZIA: LA FIGLIA DEL PAPA BORGIA 1480–1519

Medusa, Patrizia Bovi

56:14

Micrologus CDM0025.13.1

This CD by a spin-off group from the Ensemble Micrologus uses the colourful life of the notorious Lucrezia Borgia, daughter of the Borgia Pope and twin sister of the bloodthirsty Cesare as a peg on which to hang a selection of appropriate 15th- and 16th-century repertoire. Lucrezia's short life was packed with incident, and as the daughter of one of Italy's foremost families she had direct contact with many of the musicians whose music features here. Her family intrigues also meant that she moved constantly throughout Italy, experiencing the great centres of culture such as Rome and Mantua. Patrizia Bovi, who sings and plays the bray harp, and Medusa, who play a variety of stringed instruments take the same the same forthright approach to the repertoire as does Ensemble Micrologus, and there is a pleasing sparkle and energy about this CD. Lucrezia's biography is a compelling one,

and the carefully selected music evokes this very effectively. The concluding group of devotional songs is particularly affecting, bearing in mind that Lucrezia spent her last few years frequently visiting the convent of Corpus Christi and died in childbirth at the age of just 39 – emblematically Ms Bozi is left singing on her own at the very end. If as a vocalist she doesn't always sound entirely comfortable in the upper register demanded by some of the pieces, her singing is always characterful and convincing, and I found I got used to the rather 'room-next-door' acoustic of the recording. And yes, the small fly in the notes next to number 11 is a printer's trick – at least I hope it is.

D. James Ross

16th century

ENSEMBLE MICROLOGUS: CARNIVALESQUE

Sex, lies and... musical tales in 16th-century Venice

67:41

Baryton CDM0027 (© 2014)

This Venetian Carnival repertoire seems ideally suited to the versatility and forthright presentational style of Ensemble Micrologus, and indeed most of it is highly engaging and irresistibly evocative of the seamier side of Renaissance Venice. Only a couple of times in the more decorous part-music are there moments of uncomfortable intonation – it is hard to imagine that even in their unguardedly raucous moments the citizens of the Pearl of the Adriatic would have sung out of tune! Elsewhere an engagingly organic treatment of these popular tunes, with a galaxy of unusual instruments including bray harp, sordellina and buttafoco, merging in and out of the ensemble sound brings them vividly to life. Various sound effects, vocal interpolations and 'informal percussion' further enhance the 'live' and lively impression of this CD. The pieces are arranged into themed groups such as a Lanzo/Scaramella collection and a sequence celebrating the 'rolling pin and the bread loaf' in both of which the Ensemble lets its hair down to enjoy in full the obvious *doubles entendres* of the texts. This is a joyous recording in which the performers manage to capture the risqué playfulness and folksy virtuosity of this repertoire on CD, providing a useful antidote to any overdose of San Marco-based polychorality. This is the sort of music the Venetians enjoyed in the streets during Carnival time, and in many ways it provides a usefully scurrilous counterbalance to the more serious aspects of this multi-faceted and remarkable

city state – also colourfully invoked on the accompanying visual material which is based on Canaletto's representation of the magnificent Bucintoro.

D. James Ross

17th century

PURCELL: FANTAZIAS & IN NOMINES

Sit Fast viol consort

66:46

Eloquentia EL1549

Unfinished Fantazia, three Fantazias a3, nine Fantazias a4, Fantazie Upon one note, In Nomines I & II

There are many recordings of these pieces from which one can choose. All six of those that I have heard to date are excellent in their own way: techniques more than adequate to the demands on the players, well-thought out renditions, lovingly played. What sets this one apart is the intensity generated by restraint – every choice dictated by the music itself.

Sit Fast play with exquisite poise, no exaggerated mannerisms, few added ornaments and only a very occasional use of vibrato. They vary the tempo within sections, following Purcell's directions ('Quick', 'Drag') despite his writing the tempo changes into the note values. This is particularly effective in Fantazia 6 with its very chromatic 'Slow' which they take very slowly but with beautifully controlled soft playing, as, within the space of 17 bars, it migrates from C major through B flat minor to a cadence in F major, rapidly building an intensity of melancholy for which the poignant sound of the consort of viols is so appropriate.

The balance favours the bass viol, perhaps because the player, Josh Cheetham, is a strong player anyway, but not to the extent of masking the tenors in the 4-part pieces. The treble viol (Atushi Sakai) displays controlled restraint, which lets the intensity of the inner parts through the texture, always unexpected, making you sit up and pay attention. Purcell's youthful imagination seems to respond to an inner 'dare' – to question what might be possible, then pushes boundaries of chromaticism and dissonance as far as he can and then further. No wonder Handel found his music so striking.

The disc opens with a completion of the unfinished 4-part fantazia no 13, and then plays the rest in the order in which they occur in the autograph manuscript – the sole surviving source for these amazing works. The last

of the 4-part fantazias, composed on 31st August 1680, despite, presumably, the heat of the summer, is on the surface, the most restrained. Its stately opening, the parts enter in normal polyphonic succession, no abrupt changes of tempo, just cunningly disguised morphing from flat to sharp keys and back again, no macho youthful showing off, just a subtle and sublimely expressive taming of the harmonic questions he had been asking all along.

Then we come to the *coup de grace* – the *Fantazie Upon one note* – did he have someone in mind for this, an incompetent but eager Royal perhaps? Or is it another ‘dare?’ Whatever the impetus, a masterpiece resulted. That leaves the two In Nomine settings, in six and seven parts respectively, leaving this listener at a loss for words – an advantage in a reviewer, no doubt. Highly recommended, even if you already have Fretwork and Phantasm and all.

Robert Oliver

SCHEIDT: LUDI MUSICI

L'Achéron, François Joubert-Caillet

68:09

Ricercar RIC360

Scheidt published these dances in two volumes in 1621, and in the title to one of the volumes recommends that they be played with viols and continuo. They are in four and five parts, resembling the collection from about the same time of J. H. Schein, also in four or five parts, and also suitable for viols, published a few years earlier. Polyphonic textures, dance rhythms, the opening *Canzon super Cationem Gallicam* Italianate in style, reminiscent of the expatriate Englishman William Brade, whose volume of dances was also published in Germany at this time.

The playing is sonorous and articulate, expressive, the texture enriched by the continuo team of harp, theorboe (who also doubles on lute and cittern) and two keyboard players who play organ, virginals and ottavino. The viols, copies of Jaye, are beautifully matched. Their consort bass imparts a richness and depth to the sound. I think it has a bottom GG string, which would imply quite a big instrument.

Scheidt's music is brilliantly inventive, the four-part pavan which follows the opening canzon treats its themes sequentially, building to an impressive climactic dotted rhythm in the final section. They vary the instrumental texture from time to time, introducing the Courant just for treble viol and lute, repeated by the full four-part consort. Each dance type is characterised in the music, and

supported by the playing, particularly in the a minor pavan, in the second 'suite', a gorgeous piece with lovely melodies, some sections in triple time, sequential with dialogue-like interchanges between tenor and treble. The Galliard of this suite is particularly attractive, brief but quite dense in its ideas. Contrasting sections call for very smooth, lineal playing followed by vigorous dotted figures, beautifully expressed by the consort. The suite concludes with a *Canzon ad imitationem Bergamasca Anglica à 5*, virtuoso exchanges between equal instruments, contrasting sections, an enchanting piece, brilliantly played. I'm mystified by the title – I found it more Italian than English.

I would have liked a bit more information about the instruments – particularly about the 'consort bass', its string length and tuning, maybe pictures would have been enough. The booklet notes however are excellent, and the illustrations from Praetorius give an appropriate context, being exactly contemporaneous with the music. This is a minor point, the recording is very enjoyable, the music continuously gripping, often moving, and the playing is terrific. Highly recommended.

Robert Oliver

Baroque

ABOS: A MALTESE CHRISTMAS

[Mailys de Villoutreys, Zoë Brown, Myriam Arbouz, George Pooley, Mauro Borgioni SSATB], Kölner Akademie, Michael Alexander Willens

67:53

cpo 777 978-2

Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel, Magnificat, Messa a due cori

Almost enjoyable issue, if a slightly misleading title – Girolamo Abos (1715-1760) was indeed Maltese born, but he was educated, and spent most of his life, in Naples, as *Maestro* to several of the great religious institutions there. The three pieces assembled here (a grand double-choir *Missa Brevis*, a four-voice *Magnificat* and a five-voice *Benedictus*) are all in the mature Neapolitan mid 18th-century style, with graceful galant solos and richly sonorous choruses (performed one-voice-to-a-part), fully orchestrally accompanied.

The music is consistently splendid, with every textual image felicitously caught – I especially liked the cavernous and richly harmonic 'humilitatem' in the *Magnificat* (track 10) and the rushing scales as the Superbos are Dispersed and the Potentes are Deposited (track 12). There is

some particularly grand counterpoint in the Mass; try the last movement (track 22), with its two fugal subjects combining with the well-known 'romanesca' bass theme, used here as a melodic countersubject in both diminution and augmentation...

Soloists Maillys de Villoutreys and Zoe Brown (sop), Myriam Arbouz (alt), George Pooley (ten) and Mauro Borgioni (bass) are uniformly superb, but also blend effortlessly and beautifully in Abos' complex concertato writing. They are seamlessly joined, in the Mass, by Charmian Bedford and Christiane Rittner (sop), Dominique Bilitza (alt), Vladimir Tarasov (ten) and Jonathan Brown (bass).

Kölner Akademie provide luscious orchestral support and Michael Alexander Willens is a secure and sensitive conductor. The excellent sleeve notes are by the Malta-based musicologist Frederick Aquilina.

Highly recommended!

Alastair Harper

ARIOSTI: LONDON ARIAS FOR ALTO

Filippo Mineccia *countertenor*, Ensemble Odyssee, Andrea Friggi

74:49

Glossa GCD 923506

Until very recently, Attilio Ariosti (1666-1729) was musically almost unknown. It was not always so – Hawkins, in his 1776 *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* thought that the great prison scene from *Coriolano* recorded here (tracks 8-9) was "wrought up to the highest degree of perfection that music is capable of". Now (amazingly, for the second time in the past year) we are able to judge for ourselves.

Andrea Friggi has assembled a fine selection of Ariosti's opera arias and sinfonias, not only from his mature Royal Academy of Music seasons in London, but also from earlier in his career, when he was an Imperial agent to the Viennese court and found time in between his ambassadorial duties to compose an opera or two.

Ariosti comes across as a composer of much imagination and dramatic strength; try the splendid Overture to *Coriolano* (tracks 5-6), with its extended and lively fugal and quirkily obsessive Presto, or the eerie 'Premera soglio di morte' from *Vespasiano*, (track 4) with *unisoni* bassoons wandering through the band's chordal accompaniment. The great *Coriolano* *accompagnato* (again with bassoon obbligato) and extended aria, with *concitato* B-section, is

fully as moving as Hawkins says. There is a similar dramatic contrast in tempi in the final 'Io spero che in quei guardi', also from *Coriolano*.

Filippo Mineccia sings with much richness of tone and enviable accuracy in his runs; perhaps a little more light and shade could have been brought to the interpretations, but the music comes across strongly enough.

Ensemble Odyssee give stylish and extremely lively orchestral support – they have made a particular effort to reproduce the Haymarket Theatre orchestra's strong treble and bass sound described by contemporary operagoers such as the French diplomat Fougeroux.

Andrea Friggi is a persuasive director, as well as providing the fine sleeve notes.

One wonders what a complete Ariosti opera (*Coriolano* perhaps?) would be like...

Alastair Harper

BACH: MARKUS-PASSION

Gudrun Sidonie Otto, Terry Wey, Daniel Johannsen, Stephen MacLeod, Hanno Müller-Brachmann *ScTTBB*, Knabekantorei Basel, Capriccio Barockorchester, Markus Teutschbein director

114:00 (2 CDs in a cardboard wallet)

Rondeau ROP609091

This is the first recording of a new edition of the Bach St. Mark Passion, created by Alexander Grychtolik, who also made the reconstructions of BWV 36a and 66a, the probable birthday cantata originals from which Cantatas 36 and 66 were parodied (Reviewed in EMR for August 2013).

There seems to be a good deal of consensus about what arias, chorales and choruses Bach's lost Markus-Passion contained. A Picander libretto dating from 1732 survives, giving the date of the first performance as Good Friday 1731. As long ago as the 1873, Wilhelm Rust realised that five movements of the *Trauer-Ode* (BWV 198) had the same metric scheme as numbers in the Markus-Passion, which probably parodied them. Friedrich Smend spotted a connection to BWV 54, for one aria and suggested C. P. E. Bach's chorale collection as a source for the (large number of) chorales.

But even if we can reconstruct the concerted music of this lost Passion, how should we treat the framework – the Biblical narrative with its Evangelist, dramatis personae and turba or crowd interjections?

Hitherto, recordings of the St. Mark Passion have

been divided into three basic kinds, depending largely on what solution has been adopted for these lost recitatives and turba choruses. The most recorded version, edited by Hellman in the 1950s/60s and revised by Glöckner for Carus, makes no attempt at re-composition and has all these parts spoken: as in the otherwise fine 2009 recording made under Michael Alexander Willens. Some (Andor Gomme, for Bärenreiter, recorded in 1998 and Simon Heighes, recorded by Roy Goodman first in 1996) adapt music from Reinhard Keiser's Markus-Passion that Bach is known to have performed himself, though Keiser's style is very different from Bach's. A third strand was initiated by Ton Koopman, who made a version that uses some recomposed arias and other music from a wide range of Bachian sources, but doesn't use any of the material from the *Trauer-Ode*.

For this edition, as in those birthday cantatas, Grychtolik has 'composed' the Evangelist's recitative and the turba choruses. And because the Mark and Matthew passion narratives are very similar, listeners will recognise a good deal of material borrowed pretty directly from the St. Matthew Passion, and as in the birthday cantatas, it seems pretty plausible if you go the way of pastiche.

But what chiefly informs Grychtolik's new edition, now published by Peters, is the discovery in a library in St Petersburg in 2009 of a libretto/text of the Markus-Passion that not only documents a further performance under Bach in 1744 – the 'St Thomae' and '1744' on the title page appear to be in Bach's hand – but reveals substantial re-workings and re-positioning of the material. This provides two more arias, adds some words to the narrative, and repositions a few numbers. An extensive article by Grychtolik in the accompanying booklet discusses the possibilities for reconstruction and provides a justification for his method, but it disappointingly fails to include the details of just which the sources are for each individual movement parodied in this version of the Markus-Passion. The numbers with their scoring are laid out at the start of the booklet, and the text is given in both German and English, and is illustrated by a number of woodcuts from Lucas Cranach the elder. All this is helpful but the key details are missing.

So what of the performance? First, the soloists sing well: specially Daniel Johannsen, the engaging evangelist. All used to the current conventions of HIP, and each has some good moments among the arias, even if not all the performances are equally memorable. The same goes for the band, where there is committed ensemble and some

fine solo playing, with only a few rough edges. The choir is the Knabenkantorei Basel, whose conductor is the director of this performance. But the choir is the part of the performance I have most issues with. The plus is that the sound is young and enthusiastic – especially in the *turba* interjections – and small vocal parts are taken expertly by members of the choir, but the downside is the size – some 72 voices – so not always wholly unanimous, and with a sense of performing on a different scale from the others. There are two partial pictures of the choir in the booklet, and while there are a couple of pre-adolescent girls visible in one picture, the choir is essentially a boys choir with an age-range of eight or nine to eighteen, like the Thomanerchor in Leipzig. With a choir that size – 30.14.9.19 – the edges are bound to be a bit fuzzy, and although the sound is clean and homogenous – no voices stick out –, it seems to have been recorded a bit reticently in the generous acoustic of the Martinskirche. Perhaps this is partly so as not to overpower the 4.4.3.2.2 string band, with the pairs of flutes and oboes and the bassoon, to which are added pairs of gambas and lutes as in BWV 198. An organ is audible in the background, and the recits are accompanied by Grychtolik on the harpsichord and strings with Jesus.

My slightly modified enthusiasm should not put you off hearing these CDs. For the first time, I am almost persuaded by this version that I might perform the Markus-Passion one day. I once performed the *Trauer-Ode* with a couple of other cantatas in Passiontide, but that is as near I have come to forsaking my annual habit of doing either a John or Matthew. So I hope you will give this version a go, and not be put off, as I have been previously, by other versions in the public domain. This reconstruction, though a pastiche, is of a different order, even if I have a number of reservations – illustrated most vividly in number 39, the passage that describes the crucifixion (CD2, track 18) – about the coherence of this particular performance.

David Stancliffe

BACH: LUTHERAN MASSES II

Bach Collegium Japan, Masaaki Suzuki

71:30

BIS-2121 SACD

BWV 233, 234 + Peranda: Missa in A minor

This is the second volume of the Lutheran Masses produced by Suzuki's forces (the first volume was reviewed in the EMR for June 2015) and here

the additional material is the Missa in A minor by Marco Gioseppe Peranda (1625-75), for which a substantially different group of singers leads the vocal team.

In the A major Mass, Suzuki's performance seems at its usual alpha peak, and his liner-notes chronicle the sources from which the opening of the Gloria and other movements were parodied, without getting drawn into a discussion of whether the work (which dates from 1738/9) was created for a Christmas celebration, as suggested by A Mann: *Bach's A major Mass: A Nativity Mass?* in 1981, which would make sense of the scoring and the remarkable way that the unison Flutes add a fifth voice on top of the four vocal lines in the meditative recitativo-like *Christe*, which always seems to me to be one of Bach's most graphic representations of the Incarnation. The flutes are fluent, the singers taut, and the shift between single voices and tutti in the Gloria managed so naturally that you hardly recognize the difference.

In the F major Mass, the Kyrie seems to have come from a pre-Leipzig period while the final cheerful movement with the horns is based on the opening chorus of Cantata 40, for the day after Christmas in 1726. Suzuki's forces give energized and fluent performances of this mass too. works

The Peranda Mass is new to me, and is full of *stile antico* contrapuntal writing, which may well have appealed to Bach. Peranda spent his mature years as one of three (with Schütz and Bontempi) to hold the title of Court Kapellmeister at Dresden. Bach acquired a copy of a Kyrie in C minor c 1710 and during the Weimar period made a set of parts of at least the Kyrie of Peranda's A minor mass, though a later version seems to have included wind parts as well. On many occasions Bach must have used other composers material either straight or adapted in some way in his regular presentation of Sunday music.

As in Vol. I of Suzuki's Lutheran Masses, these performances are natural and will repay repeated listening. You will never be irritated by quirky moments or tempi shouting out for attention. This is Bach that is recognizably Bach.

I am developing a penchant for any form of packaging other than that of the plastic, hinged boxes that snap so easily, hence only four stars: perhaps if these two CDs of Lutheran Masses are reissued together, we can have a hinged cardboard box, with room for a more substantial booklet that discusses performance practice and details the instruments and the tuning/temperament issues as well as the parody ones?

David Stancliffe

BACH: DIALOGKANTATEN FÜR SOPRAN UND BASS

Johanna Winkel *soprano*, Thomas E. Bauer *bass*, Chorus Musicus Köln, Das Neue Orchester, Christoph Spering
51:16

Oehms Classics OC 1815
BWV32, 57 & 58

The three cantatas on this CD are all dialogues between the soul (soprano) and Jesus (bass). They do not follow the strict pattern of the larger-scale choral cantatas, and are presented here by a compact instrumental ensemble of 3.3.1.1.1 strings, with 2 oboes and a *taille* (but no bassoon), and a chamber organ (of which we are given – like the other instruments – no details) 'approximately corresponding to the dimensions of the *Brustwerk* of the organ during Bach's time at St Thomas's Church, Leipzig.' The strength of the organ is a major feature of this recording, and is very welcome. The choir is a clean-limbed 3.3.3.3, and the organ is clearly audible with developed upperwork in the chorales and an essentially principal tone in the arias. The recits are accompanied by more sustained chords than often.

Welcome too is the robust string playing. There is no doubt that the instruments are equal partners in the numbers of these cantatas, and in some movements – like the opening of cantata 32, for example – the quality of the oboe playing seems to have a good effect on the timbre and quality of the soprano's singing. Here she abandons her singer's habit of pushing on cadences and allowing rather too much vibrato to creep into the ends of long phrases. Her fall-back style may well have been agreed as properly emotive for these rather intense cantatas, but I prefer it when she produces a sound more in keeping with her instrumental partners. That she is capable of a clean and musical line is not in doubt – listen to tracks 6 and 7, and 18 – so it must be a conscious decision.

The same is true of Thomas Bauer. He can be robust – as in track 5, when the storming strings threaten to engulf him, like St Stephen seeing beyond the immediate woes that surround him to glimpse the radiant heavens opening – but sometimes he sounds almost cloyingly ingratiating, as when he comforting the soul in tracks 15 and 16: you can hear him singing with a smile, like a certain kind of Radio 3 presenter.

There are interesting liner notes on the cantatas, mostly stemming very properly from their theological content, and showing how Bach – and the performers – understand their role in presenting their meaning. The texts are given

in full, but although the notes are given an English version, no translation of the texts is provided.

This is an interesting, if shortish, CD, with some strong points in its favour; and I am glad to have heard it. It is well produced and recorded, and whether you like it will depend substantially on whether you like the singers, and think that they have the right voices for these cantatas. The interpretive skills of the players and director are of a high order.

David Stancliffe

BACH: SEI SUONATE À CEMBALO CERTATO È VIOLINO SOLO

Leila Schayegh *violin*, Jörg Halubek *harpsichord*

94:54 (2 CDs in a wallet)

Glossa GCD 923507

BWV1014–19

In search of a 'different' approach when offering yet another period instrument recording of such well-known repertoire, ensembles often go that extra mile to make their recording stand out from the rest. Certainly the psychedelic design of both the CD box and the strobe-effect coloured circles on the discs themselves immediately does this! Reading through the notes, the players' aim was to go in search of a wide range of colours in the music. I did at first wonder whether the listening experience might match the colour splodges on the box and go 'over the top'. However, these two performers give us an exciting yet sensitive and generally tasteful interpretation of the sonatas. Yes, there is much added ornamentation but (except in the case of the opening *Adagio* of the C minor sonata) only those who know the works intimately will be aware of it – which is as it should be. The addition of the 4' harpsichord stop and the muted violin (in which Schayegh uses two different types of mute) gives another acceptable touch of colour to a couple of movements, but in no way gets in the way of what is an outstanding performance of these sonatas. Halubek plays a copy of a Taskin instrument, which gives a pleasurable warmth to the sound that perhaps would not have been so evident on a German instrument. My only gripe is the use of the 4' register on its own in the *Adagio* of the F minor sonata, which gives a weird and to my mind outlandish effect. I suspect the 18th-century theorists, if not the composer himself, would have a field day criticising the false second inversion chords created where the true bass note sounds an octave higher! The bonus on the disc is the addition of the two alternative earlier movements

of Sonata VI. On balance, this is a recording that is well worth the investment.

Ian Graham-Jones

BACH: SONATAS AND PARTITAS, BWV 1001–1006

Markku Luolajan-Mikkola cello

157:00 (2 CDs in a plastic case)

Linn Records CKD548

Performing (let alone recording!) Bach's music for unaccompanied violin on cello may seem rather a bizarre thing to do, but the viola has already requisitioned the solo music from both of those instruments, and there seems no reason why Luolajan-Mikkola should not extend the repertoire for his instrument in this way.

As a violinist, I have always had the utmost respect for anyone who has the ability to make this music sound anything other than the huge technical challenge that it is, so it is humbling beyond belief to hear it played on an instrument that is surely too large to allow the difficulties not to get the better of anyone who dares to attempt it. That the end results are not only persuasive but revelatory is simply astonishing. OK, so he takes the fugal movements slightly slower than most violinists, but, when it comes to the string-crossing passages, his viol-playing pedigree comes to the fore and they seem absolutely effortless.

The pieces are transposed down a twelfth and re-ordered to fit the two CDs (P2, S2, P3 on disc 1, P1, S1, P3 on disc 2), which means both begin with two works in minor keys and end with one in a major key.

I don't think I want this to be the start of a new fashion, for as much as I have enjoyed this interpretation of works with which I am especially familiar, and even though I think violinists could learn something from it,

Brian Clark

BACH: INTÉGRALE DES PARTITAS POUR CLAVECIN

Jean-Luc Ho

(3CDs in a box)

NoMadMusic NMM016

It is such a shame when artists are let down by their packaging. Here the booklet essay, while strong on the music's compositional context, says virtually nothing about its content and the graphic designer who thought that italic white print on grey (box) and italic black print on varying shades of green (booklet) were a good idea needs a

refresher course. However, I did manage to divine the USP of this release – six different harpsichords (all modern but after German originals, at least in spirit) each tuned to a different temperament. For me, this second point is a mistake – I rather enjoy the subtle differences of harmonic character that colour the keys when the temperament stays the same – but it is enjoyable to hear the instruments' own individual colours. Jean-Luc Ho plays with fine technique, love and understanding though from time to time there is a lack of forward impetus – more bluntly, it feels a bit slow (and it is sometimes substantially slower than other performers) almost to the point of discomfort. So this wouldn't be my first choice in this repertoire though it does offer a valuable complementary view of infinitely engaging music.

David Hansell

HANDEL: ACIS AND GALATEA

Aaron Sheehan *Acis*, Teresa Wakim *Galatea*, Douglas Williams *Polyphemus*, Jason McStoots *Damon*, Zachary Wilder *Coridon*, Boston Early Music Festival Vocal & Chamber Ensembles, Paul O'Dette & Stephen Stubbs
107:18 (2 CDs)
cpo 777 877-2

A *Acis and Galatea* established an early reputation as one of Handel's most endearing and enduring dramatic works. The straightforward and touching simplicity of the plot (drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), the modest performing forces required and - for native listeners at least - the very Englishness of the piece, with its clear debt to Purcell (an important feature only lightly touched on in Ellen T. Harris' note) have all gone to ensure it has rarely been long out of the repertoire. The present performance emanates from a production given at the Boston Early Music Festival in 2009, although the recording was made by Radio Bremen four years later.

Judging from the photographs in the booklet, the production lived up to Boston's reputation for stylish staging, with lavish early Georgian costumes and little in the way of sets (the original was given in the gardens of Cannons, the home of Handel's patron, the Duke of Chandos). Performing forces, too, are – with one important exception I'll come to in a moment – in keeping with the original, with just a couple of violins, cello and bass for the string parts. The choruses are quite properly sung one-to-a-part by the soloists, who display good ensemble and balance. The opening *sinfonia* bodes well,

with nicely pointed playing and the contrapuntal textures clearly delineated, but already here one of the abiding flaws of so many Boston Festival recordings is revealed. That the festival has two directors of the stature of lutenists Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs has without doubt been greatly to its benefit; that both have felt it necessary to make an overly intrusive contribution to the continuo of every production has most certainly not. With such small performing forces the constant and largely superfluous plucking of the pair rapidly becomes intensely irritating, not least, I would guess, to the poor harpsichordist, who might just as well have been left at home for all the impression his contribution is allowed to make.

With the exception of bass Douglas Williams' strongly characterised and well-focussed *Polyphemus*, the solo vocal roles are taken capably rather than exceptionally. Teresa Wakim has a pleasingly clean, bright soprano, but for this listener at least her singing brings little character to the role in the way Norma Burrows did so alluringly and touchingly to the 1978 John Eliot Gardiner Archiv recording. And like all her colleagues Wakim has no trill or other essential assets of a Baroque singer. Ornaments are largely unimaginative or unstylish (sometimes both), while the sustained opening note of 'Heart, the seat of soft Delight', for example, surely positively screams for *messa di voce*. Such caveats largely apply equally to the remaining singers. Aaron Sheehan is the possessor of a pleasingly mellifluous, well-produced light tenor that he uses well, but like Wakim he shows little real identification with the role of the lovelorn *Acis*, his arias agreeable enough but essentially featureless. The same can be said for the pallid singing of tenors of Jason McStoots (*Damon*) and Zachary Wilder (*Coridon*), the former inclined to bleat ornaments (pun not intended). The overall direction is capable enough, though there might be rather more rhythmic 'lift' at times, while I found 'Mourn all ye muses' overly sentimental in a very 21st century way, a musical equivalent to the piles of dead flowers that mark the locations of tragic death.

The set is completed by a performance of the brief chamber cantata 'Sarei troppo felice', HWV 157 (1707) by Amanda Forsythe (who sings 2nd soprano in the chorus of *Acis*). Her singing is certainly more characterful than anything in the pastoral, but at times marred by excessive vibrato. Notwithstanding its age, the Gardiner has far more to offer, in addition to Burrows fielding the splendid *Acis* of Anthony Rolfe Johnson. There is also a more recent and highly regarded set by John Butt and his Dunedin forces

that I've not heard.

Brian Robins

HANDEL: IMENEO

Magnus Staveland *Imeneo*, Ann Hallenberg *Tirinto*, Monica Piccinini *Rosmene*, Fabrizio Beggi *Argenio*, Cristiana Arcari *Clomiri*, Europa Galante, Fabio Biondi

114:51 (2 CDs in a wallet)

Glossa GCD 923405

A most interesting issue. *Hymen*' 'a new Serenata,' was one of the works which Handel took with him on his famous visit to Dublin in 1742. It is a rewriting of his penultimate opera *Imeneo*, which had received its (unsuccessful) London premiere in November 1740, following an unusually long (for Handel) gestation, having been begun originally in September 1738. For Dublin, Handel shortened the opera, omitting one character almost entirely, and rewrote the parts of Imeneo (bass) and Tirinto (alto castrato) for tenor and female contralto respectively. Two duets, both for Rosmene with Tirinto, were added. The plot concerns Rosmene's choice between two suitors – Imeneo, who has saved her life, and Tirinto, whom she loves, and who loves her in return. After some prevarication (including an impressive and emotionally equivocal mad scene) she dutifully chooses Imeneo; remarkably, however, Handel stresses her doomed love with Tirinto, and the moralising final chorus, which follows their prolonged farewell duet, is in the minor key.

The music is consistently charming, and often much more. Alert Handelians will notice echoes from *Saul* and *Messiah*, both of which were composed while *Imeneo* was in gestation.

The principal part, despite the title, is that of Tirinto, which was sung (*in travesti*) by Mrs Cibber, who was clearly a favourite of Handel's. The ever-reliable Anne Hallenberg does it full justice, with warm tone and unshakeable technique. Try her Act 1 'Se potessero' (CD 1 track 5), and prepare to be charmed. Rosmene, probably originally sung by Cristina Avoglio, is Monica Piccinini; her bright soprano blends well with Hallenberg in their two duets (the last, originally from *Sosarme*, is particularly beautiful) and she brings considerable dramatic flair to her splendid Act 3 *accompagnato*.

Imeneo is sung by tenor Magnus Staveland – his 'Sorge nell'alma mia', with its echoes of 'Why do the Nations', is suitably exciting, and he blends well with Rosmene and Tirinto in the marvellous trio which concludes Act 2.

Fabrizio Beggi's rich bass makes an excellent Argenio, and the few remaining bars left to Clomiri are ably sung by Cristiana Arcari.

Europa Galante are one of Europe's top 'original instrument' ensembles, and are on cracking form, responding with great panache to Fabio Biondi's lively direction. The edition used has clearly been given much thought; in his excellent sleeve-note Biondi reasonably suggests, for example, (by analogy with the first *Messiah* performances) that Handel did not have woodwind players in Dublin, and omits them here.

Hymen was probably the last Handel opera to be conducted by the composer himself (on 31st March 1742); it is admirably recreated here!

Alastair Harper

HANDEL: ARIE PER LA CUZZONI

Hasnaa Bennani, Les Muffatti, Peter Van Heyghen
69:27

Ramée RAM1501

Francesca Cuzzoni was one of Handel's greatest singers during the period of the Royal Academy of Music in the mid-to-late 1720's and was (amongst other roles) his formidable first Cleopatra and Rodelinda. Hasnaa Bennani and Peter van Heyghen have assembled a fine collection of her 'finest airs', including lesser-known jewels from *Ottone*, *Admeto*, *Siroe* and *Tolomeo* along with more usual favourites from *Giulio Cesare* and *Rodelinda*.

Bennani proves a most persuasive Cuzzoni. She has the agility to throw off all the tricky coloratura with much aplomb (try the dazzling 'Scoglio d'immota fronde' (track 5) for example) but also the beauty of tone and dramatic expression to bring the slower arias to vivid life, 'Se pietà' (track 4) and 'Se'l mio dolor' (track 17), being particularly well done.

In some ways, however, it is the band who have unearthed the real treasure here. There is a wealth of characteristically characterful orchestral music hidden away in Handel's operas, both in the overtures, but more particularly in the myriad sinfonias and dance movements which accompany or amplify the stage action.

Van Heyghen has taken the imaginative step of combining movements to create satisfying larger orchestral units – I especially enjoyed the sequence of *Tolomeo* overture followed by sinfonias from *Admeto* and *Scipione*, with ringing horns fore and aft. Les Muffatti revel in Handel's rich scorings, with fine bassoon and recorder

obbligati as well as the aforementioned brass.

Well done, all concerned!

Alastair Harper

HEINICHEN: ITALIAN CANTATAS & CONCERTOS

Terry Wey *alto*, Marie Friederike Schöder *soprano*

Batzdorfer Hofkapelle

71:16

Accent ACC 24309

Largely thanks for Reinhard Goebel, Heinichen's instrumental and orchestral music is fairly well known; similarly, Carus-Verlag's series devoted to his masses has brought that repertoire to wider notice. The present disc sets out to explore yet another facet of the composer's extensive output, his chamber cantatas. As well as one piece for alto obbligato theorbo and continuo dating from the composer's time in Venice, the vocal works (one each for soprano and alto, plus a duet cantata) feature pairs of oboes and recorders (never simultaneously), strings (once without violas) and continuo.

The singers could not really be more different. Terry Wey is secure throughout his range, with some stylish ornamentation; Marie Friederike Schöder on the other hand, though she has a genuinely lovely voice, really struggles with some of Heinichen's writing – in some places she even introduces what one of my friends used to call “notes of indeterminate pitch and duration” as she is tries her best to negotiate the leaps and bounds demanded of her.

The instrument contribution is delightful. Batzdorfer Hofkapelle (33211 strings with the winds, threorbo and harpsichord) play very nicely, and the two soloists (oboe *suprema* Xenia Löffler and Daniel Deuter on violin) have style in buckets; two “Vivaldian” three-movement concertos by the Dresden-based composer are perfect vehicles for their talents. Interestingly both survive only in sources at Darmstadt, showing how close the links between the two exceedingly musical courts (and their Leipzig-educated employees!) were at that time.

One grey mark for Accent – the texts are only translated from Italian into German, without so much as an internet link to French or English versions. Otherwise, with the one caveat touched on above, this is an enjoyable recital of music that definitely deserves to be better known.

Brian Clark

D. SCARLATTI: VOCAL WORKS

Key2Singing, Margot Kalse

66:16

Aliud ACD BL 084-2

Laetatus sum, Stabat mater, Arias from Tolomeo e Alessandro

Looking back on it, the lack of quality control evident from the cover of the programme booklet advertising the ‘aria’s’ within should have been the first warning. The note inside the cover introducing this as a special CD featuring ‘an enthusiastic group of advanced amateur singers’ should have been the second warning. The third hint was the way in which after declaring that the label is ‘immensely proud’ of this release (protesting too much, methinks) Margot Kalse’s programme note goes on, like a schoolboy’s essay, to refer to Scarlatti as ‘Domenico’ throughout, as if she had known him personally. As it was, I read none of this, and so put on the CD without prejudice and was appalled by what I heard. I don’t think I have ever heard worse singing on CD. Placing the massed voices at a distance in a generous acoustic was a blessing, but the inaccuracy of pitch, rhythm, precision and general bad taste was sadly still apparent. The overall standard of the singing is that of a bad amateur church choir with a pervading ‘little old lady’ vibrato and equivalent failings in the male voices. Some of the solo items are not quite as bad, but are still not good, and the instrumental playing, though clearly professional and generally good, is lost in the general malaise. I am horrified at the thought of this being on general release, available to be bought by enterprising listeners keen to hear the vocal music of Domenico Scarlatti. Not only will they not get any reasonable impression of what I know to be fine and imaginative repertoire, but probably like me they will have to go away and lie down in a darkened room to recover from this digital horror – which is exactly what I did! Do not buy this CD and please warn all your friends not 2 2 – I have suffered enough 4 all of you...

D. James Ross

TELEMANN: RECORDER SONATAS AND FANTASIAS

Pamela Thorby, Peter Whelan *basoon*, Alison McGillivray *cello*, Elizabeth Kenny *archlute/guitar*, Marcin Świątkiewicz *harpsichord/organ*
111:00 (2 CDs)

Linn Records CKD476

TWV 40:2-13, 41:C2, C5, d4, F1, F2, B3, TWV 42: B4

Telemann published the recorder sonatas on disc 1 in two major publications, the *Essercizii musici* and *Der getreue Music-Meister*. The latter appeared in fortnightly instalments in 1728-29 and the former is now thought after study of the printing to have been published a year or so earlier. In the *Essercizii musici* each of the six instruments involved (recorder, flute, oboe, violin, gamba and harpsichord) is given two solos and two trio sonatas in combination with one of the other instruments. In addition to the two solo sonatas for recorder, this disc also has the trio sonata for recorder and obbligato harpsichord from the same publication, possibly the first place where sonatas with obbligato keyboard appeared in print. The other four solo recorder sonatas are from *Der getreue Music-Meister*, where the sonata in F minor is for bassoon and continuo, with each movement published in a separate issue and the possibility of playing it on the recorder added as an afterthought only at the end of the final movement.

The bassoon isn't neglected on this recording, sharing the continuo in the fast movements of some of the sonatas where it can best bring out the composer's lively contrapuntal style. Recorder and gamba without continuo is one of several suggestions by Telemann for performance of the canonic sonata in D minor; recorder and bassoon isn't but it works well. Although the recorder is the soloist on this disc, all the performers play with a great sense of style and enjoyment.

Pamela Thorby's playing is by turns expressive and breathtaking, and anyone who has played the well-known Sonata in F major for a grade exam will be amazed by her ornamented repeats. She writes that the disc was recorded during two happy days together, and it shows.

The second disc, Telemann's *Fantasias* for solo flute transposed for a variety of sizes of recorder, is just as good. Pamela Thorby defends her transpositions with reference to Heinichen and Mattheson who both wrote that keys could represent opposing affects. Her performances beautifully illuminate the extraordinary variety in these miniature works which contain fugues, dances, improvisatory movements, a chaconne and even a French overture, and her brilliant but effortless-sounding playing brings out the

counterpoint hidden in the single melody line.

Highly recommended.

Victoria Helby

ZELENKA: ITALIAN ARIAS

Hana Blažíková, Markéta Cukrová, Tomáš Šelc *SAB*, Ensemble Tourbillon, Petr Wagner

69:11

Accent ACC 24306

Zelenka may have written these eight arias as part of a strategy to be appointed Hassé's assistant in the Dresden opera house. He was surely a victim of fashion because fans of his music will recognise all the trademarks of his style – an easy facility with melody and harmonic sleight of hand; but times were changing and simplicity had replaced erudition as the measure of good taste. No-one had the appetite for listening to arias of such great length and while musically beautiful there is no denying a certain lack of drama or excitement.

The three singers are – without exception – outstanding: Hana Blažíková has the lion's share with five arias and she uses the broad palette of her radiant voice to excellent effect throughout; alto Markéta Cukrová has two, in which she demonstrates not only amazing technique but also an impressive range of colour; it is the upper reaches of Tomáš Šelc's bass-baritone voice that most impresses in his single offering (the last on the disc), with ringing clarity and impeccable tuning.

When it comes to the instrumental contribution, I have to say there are one reservation; Zelenka would never have conceived of this music being played by single strings – surviving performing sets from Dresden often have three copies of violins and basses, sometimes even more. That is not a criticism of the players – indeed, their contribution is very fine, but for all their impassioned playing, they cannot make up for a lack of depth to the instrumental sound, especially when the cover illustration of the booklet is of a full-bodied opera production! I also found some of the continuo playing a little distracting, with running quaver runs competing with the singing for my ears' attention, which can never be a good thing.

But these are minor quibbles about such a fine recording which I heartily recommend to Zelenka fans!

Brian Clark

EN SOL - MUSIQUE POUR LE ROI-SOLEIL

Rebecca Maurer *harpsichord*

70:30

Genuin GEN 15352

d'Anglebert, François & Louis Couperin, de la Guerre, Lully, Le Roux & Royer

I must say that I think Ms Maurer is pushing her luck when she suggests that the use of G (sol) major and minor by French composers at the court of *Le Roi-Soleil* was a subtle tribute to the boss – they're just incredibly common keys in the period (lots of Bach cantatas in G minor, for instance). And she doesn't quite have the courage of her convictions: I wouldn't have minded a complete programme 'in G' but we get visits from C, F and B flat too. Still, it would be a shame not to have Couperin's *Les Baricades Mistérieuses* on this sumptuous instrument (the Neuchâtel 1632/1745 Ruckers). What we have in effect, therefore, is a rather well played recital of French harpsichord music ranging from the almost tentative musings of the opening d'Anglebert *Prélude* to the lunacy that is Royer's *Le Vertigo* and that is surely no bad thing. The supporting essay, apart from the optimistic special pleading, is very good.

David Hansell

LES ÉLÉMENTS: TEMPÊTES, ORAGES & FÊTES MARINES 1674–1764

Le Concert des Nations, Jordi Savall

98:44 (2 CDs in a wallet)

Alia Vox AVSA9914

Music by Locke, Marais, Rameau, Rebel, Telemann & Vivaldi

This is a live recording of an excellent programme with the theme of musical 'tone painting'. We begin with Rebel's *Les Éléments* and end with a collection of Rameau's meteorological invocations via Locke's *Tempest*, Marais, Telemann and Vivaldi. The downside is that this kind of mixed list is inclined to evoke the school of 'one size fits all' performance practice so the recorder in *La Tempesta di Mare* (Vivaldi's op. 10 no. 1) has to battle with the full strings when surely solo players would have been both more suitable and more likely. But apart from this and Savall's penchant for adding unnecessary and sometimes silly percussion I enjoyed the discs very much. The supporting material is not quite as lavish as it appears. Of the 114 pages in the booklet, 32 are advertising the ensemble's back catalogue and just eight contain information about the music – though that is eight

pages per language (six). And there are lots of nice pictures.

David Hansell

UN SALON DE MUSIQUE

Marias, Hotteterre, Dornel, Philidor, De Visée

Ensemble Résonances

77:01

NoMadMusic NMM011

This singularly uninformative title conceals a rather lovely programme of a rather old-fashioned type: no clever theme, no 'complete' this or that, just a mixed recital of fine pieces that showcase the taste and skill of both the overall ensemble and its component parts. Even the note is rather quaint though in a good way – a concise and methodical *vade mecum* to the music. For me the discovery was Dornel's *Sonate en quatuor* in which the basic trio sonata ensemble is joined by a third recorder player and, as always, the combination of theorbo and viol is ravishing in Marais. However, to my ear the continuo combination of theorbo and harpsichord remains too much of a good thing, especially when the instrumentation keeps changing within the same work. Is there evidence to suggest that this actually happened with anything like the frequency that modern performers would have us believe? Buy this for yourself and anyone you know who would instinctively run away from a programme of recorder music.

David Hansell

Classical

HAYDN: SYMPHONIES 7 & 83 VIOLIN CONCERTO IN C
Aisslinn Nosky *violin*, Handel and Haydn Society, Harry Christophers

74:24

Coro 16139

The unusual programming here can be explained by the disc being a live concert given as part of a series at Boston's Symphony Hall, each featuring one of the 'Matin', 'Midi', 'Soir' trilogy, a violin concerto and one of the 'Paris' symphonies. Curiously Christophers takes no account of the greatly differing forces Haydn would have had at his disposal for these works, employing the same number of strings for works written for the small Esterházy band and the large Concert de la Loge

Olympique orchestra. Incidentally, it is worth noting that Robbins Landon's claim (stated without a source and followed by Lindsay Kemp's notes) that the Paris orchestra employed 40 violins and 10 double basses, is contradicted by a contemporary account that quotes figures of 17 and 4 respectively for 1786, the year before the 'Paris' symphonies were first performed.

The large string complement may at least in part account for the somewhat portentous Adagio introduction of 'Le midi', composed in 1761 and along with its companions probably one of the first works Haydn wrote for his new employer, Prince Paul Anton Esterházy. All three are concertante works that incorporate numerous solos that enable both he and his new orchestral colleagues to show off their paces to their employer. But I'm not entirely convinced that Christophers has quite caught the spirit of the piece, since although the Allegro bubbles along zestfully, the *tremolandi* energetically bowed, there is throughout a tendency to be over serious. Here, as elsewhere in appropriate movements, Christophers takes the second half repeat. The highly original slow movement, an *accompagnato* followed by a soulful aria in which the solo violin takes the role of the singer, might have been given a greater sense of momentum.

The C-major Violin Concerto also dates from 1760s, having been written for the Esterházy leader Luigi Tomasini. While hardly a virtuoso work, it was written to exploit Tomasini's facility to play in a high register (some of the string quartets do the same) and also includes a fair amount of double-stopping. None of this holds any problems for the Handel and Haydn's concertmaster Aisslinn Nosky, who plays the work with verve in the outer movements – the Presto finale has a particularly agreeable spring in its step - and spins out the cantabile of the central Andante with secure intonation and unfailingly musical line. My one quarrel would be with the overblown first movement cadenza.

With the Symphony No 83 we move onto a different plain, the main dish after a two-course *hors d'oeuvres*. This is probably the Haydn symphony to have suffered most from a 19th century nickname, 'La poule' (The hen), which stems from the clucking motif heard in the second group of the opening Allegro spiritoso. It is in fact, especially in this movement, a highly dramatic G-minor symphony. The apparent contradiction leads Kemp to describe the work as 'oddly schizophrenic', yet I believe this to be a misreading. The motif is surely a joke that has been overlooked, as if the composer is saying: 'yes, indeed, this is indeed a stormy

minor-key movement, but, hey, I've done all that the Sturm und Drang stuff, so lighten up a bit' (some early sources actually head the movement 'Con garbo' – 'with elegance'). Whatever the intention, Christophers gives the work a compelling performance, encouraging his strings to dig deeply into the intensity of the turbulent opening section, while exposing the counterpoint of the development with the practised hand of the experienced Handelian he is. The serene slow movement also goes well, with warmly affectionate playing, though there are one or two moments where romantic self-indulgence creeps in. The Minuet moves at a good pace, while the irrepressibly bucolic Vivace conveys a sturdy masculinity that reminds us that its composer was born a son of the soil.

Brian Robins

TRIOS FOR FORTEPIANO & VIOLA DA GAMBA

C P E Bach, Graun, Hesse

Lucie Boulanger *viola da gamba*, Arnaud de Pasquale & Laurent Stewart *fortepiano*

71:52

Alpha 202

The recording opens with a trio by Graun. The sound is strikingly classical, overwhelming in its energy. The allegro theme introduced by the fortepiano, a lovely crystalline sound, with the viol playing an obbligato cantilena, with a second fortepiano providing continuo bass. A slower movement follows, a dialogue between the viol playing thirds, and the fortepiano. The style is that of the Berlin school, limpid melodies, floating beguilingly, concluding with a cadenza from the piano. The final movement, allegro, is again introduced by the fortepiano, the viol entering with its own theme, demanding great virtuosity from both players.

Two sonatas by C. P. E. Bach follow. The first is a transcription for viola da gamba of a violin sonata in D major. It's a very attractive work, opening with a lovely cantilena Adagio, very much in the style of the older Bach.

She plays a copy of a Tielke, with seven strings, and a full, rich sound, beautifully balanced with the keyboards, one of which is copied from a Silbermann dated 1749, the other from a Cristofori dated 1722. The latter is used in the Sinfonia in A minor, by C. P. E. Bach, a transcription of a trio sonata. It has a very clear, harpsichord-like sound, but rounded and bell-like in its treble register. The music is wonderfully playful, sudden changes of register and

key, interspersed with cantilena passages, played with compelling eloquence.

A sonata attributed to Ludwig Christian Hesse follows, suitably virtuosic, more chordal, as one might expect from someone who had lessons from both Marais and Forqueray. The Silbermann copy used in this piece has a slightly more astringent sound in the treble, but with a beautiful resonance. Again the texture is that of a trio sonata with the viol and piano in partnership, the instruments in constant dialogue.

The final piece by C. P. E. Bach has a marvellous first movement, contrasting the humours Sanguine and Melancholic, exploiting to great effect the extremes of contrasting moods.

The fairly brief booklet notes give little information about the artists, perhaps implying that their playing speaks for itself, which it certainly does. They play brilliantly, giving the music the wide range of colour and dynamics it demands, and with absolute technical assurance. Highly recommended.

Robert Oliver

Romantic

RIES: SONATAS FOR VIOLIN & FORTEPIANO

Ariadne Daskalakis *violin*, Wolfgang Brunner *fortepiano*
61:34

cpo 777 676-2
opp. 8/1, 16/2 & 71

Recently I reviewed Ariadne Daskalakis's performances of violin concertos by Kalliwoda, also on cpo, which impressed me hugely, especially the differing colours she is able to extract from her instrument. The same is true of the present set in which, in the company of brilliant accompanist Wolfgang Brunner, she mines another rich vein of repertoire, this time some violin sonatas by Beethoven's friend and pupil, Ferdinand Ries. Although they span less than eight years, the three chosen works show how Ries's musical language changed; the op. 71 sonata in C sharp minor (his last, written in St Petersburg during a concert tour he undertook in the north of Europe around 1812) is (as the key choice might suggest) a dark, brooding work, while the other two are lighter in character, with more of the dance about them. That is not to say that they are slight – a criticism too often (and, in my opinion, most unfairly) levelled at the composer; the facility with which Ries moves from one key

centre to another is frequently surprising! Daskalakis and Brunner are perfect partners, never vying for the limelight, always listening to one another. This is just the latest in a stream of Ries recordings from cpo and I certainly hope they continue to explore his output.

Brian Clark

Various

A SONG OF FAREWELL: MUSIC OF MOURNING & CONSOLATION

Gabrieli Consort, Paul McCreech
75:56

SIGCD 281

Jonathan Dove *Into thy hands* Elgar *They are at rest* Gibbons *Drop, drop, slow tears* Howells *Requiem* MacMillan *A Child's Prayer* Morley *Funeral sentences* Parry *Lord, let me know mine end* (from *Songs of Farewell*) Sheppard *In manus tuas* Walton *A Litany* White *Christe qui lux es et dies* [1]

This is all good music, but I'm a little worried about the vocal styles. In particular, the Morley is just one step above chant, and I reckon that the performance is too expressive for a funeral. One obvious point is the unnecessary pause for each section. The edition I have (*EECM* 38) is based on Boycé's *Cathedral Music*, but the version performed here is probably based on older sources and has pauses at the end of each section; these pauses are presumably marked in the performing version, but the ending of each section is drawn on, rather than treating the pause as singing the exact length with the pause as silent. Parry's *Songs of Farewell* date from 1916: it doesn't sound appropriate compared with the style of 2016! The more modern pieces sometimes fail to express the words adequately. However, the CD as a whole is well worth hearing; I hadn't heard the Howells *Requiem* before. The mixing of periods and styles mostly match – perhaps over-match! But it is well worth buying.

Clifford Bartlett