

here superbly sung by Miriam Meyer, is thoroughly enjoyable. *Herr, wenn ich nur dich hab*, BuxWV38, is a setting of the same psalm, but for soprano and two violins above a simple ground bass which is closely related to the common descending tetrachord. The second work on a—this time more complex—ground bass is *Jesu, dulcis memoria*, BuxWV57, the only Latin-texted work on the CD. The text, a 50-strophe hymn by St Bernard of Clairvaux expressing the profound relationship between Christ and the believer, was a favourite amongst Catholic and Lutheran composers alike. Tunder, Weckmann, Förster and Stübendorff were among the north German composers to set sections of the hymn text to music. Buxtehude also used portions of it in BuxWV56 and 88. In BuxWV57 he sets seven strophes in a way quite unlike his treatment of comparable medieval poetry in *Membra Jesu nostri*. The composition is entirely dominated by the relentless plodding of the ground bass, obscuring the strophic form and, with its irregular phrase lengths, the meter of the poetry. Two works on the CD represent the strophic aria: *Bedenke, Mensch, das Ende*, BuxWV9, is a call for daily reflection on one's (perhaps unexpected) death and the possibility of eternal damnation. Koopman's recording is surprisingly merry considering this subject matter, and his cheerful improvisation during the otherwise astringent instrumental introduction also seems to lessen the intended effect. It may have been more appropriate for the other strophic aria, *Jesu, komm, mein Trost und Lachen*, BuxWV58, which celebrates joy, comfort and hope in Jesus. Finally, the CD features two vocal concertos for bass on biblical texts, and Klaus Mertens succeeds in capturing their different characters: *Ich bin eine Blume zu Saron*, BuxWV45, is a mellifluous and joyful setting of the lovely imagery from the Song of Songs. *Ich bin die Auferstehung und das Leben*, BuxWV44, is a relative short, but magnificent composition on an Easter text with a sumptuous scoring of two violins, two violas, fagotto, two cornetts, two trumpets and continuo. Taking the listener through the contrasting notions of death and resurrection in under six minutes, it is an emotional roller-coaster and a demanding work for the ensemble which plays exquisitely on this recording (enhanced by an improvised part for kettledrum). The CD shows once again the value of venturing into *terra incognita* where, certainly in the case of Buxtehude, much is still to be discovered.

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Gary Boye

New recordings of early guitar

The eight CDs reviewed here represent a complete survey of period guitars, from the four-course guitar used in the 16th century to the five-course guitar with its enormous (though, today, largely unknown) repertory heard throughout the Baroque period. Also featured in this batch is the rarely heard six-course guitar, which led directly to the six-string guitar identical to the modern instrument in all but the details of bracing, string tension and volume. (For those unfamiliar with guitar terminology, a 'course' refers to a pair of strings tuned either in unisons or octaves, in contrast to the modern single-strung instrument.) In sum, these recordings represent the varied uses of the guitar from the 1550s to the early 1800s and reflect how the instrument was adapted to changing musical tastes and survived—even thrived—at a time when related instruments (such as the lute and theorbo) were disappearing.

One of the most common uses of the guitar in the early period was as an accompaniment to the voice. Throughout the 17th century, a large amount of vocal music was published with guitar chords in the shorthand *alfabeto* notation peculiar to the five-course guitar. In many cases, only the lyrics and *alfabeto* chords are given, with the assumption being that vocalists already knew the melodies. In other situations, such as in *Arie a voce sola, libro terzo* (Venice, 1626) by Alessandro Grandi (1586–1630) we have 23 songs with melodies in standard notation and guitar accompaniment in *alfabeto*. Yet, prior to Bud Roach's recent recording of **Alessandro Grandi: Sospiro: Complete arias, 1626** (Musica Omnia MO0506, issued 2013, 70') the possibility of guitar accompaniment had been all but ignored in favour of accompaniments more germane to later music, such as bowed bass and harpsichord. The unique aspect of this recording is that not only is the guitar restored to its original importance in the music, but it is played by the vocalist himself. This is entirely in keeping with early 17th-century performance practice; we know that, whether on the stage or *in camera*, it was common for vocalists to accompany themselves with only a guitar during the early monodic period. Obviously, many modern guitarists would shy away from the prohibitive vocal prowess required by this music, yet a simple strummed accompaniment on the five-course guitar is within the reach of many vocalists and results in an integrated performance not possible with multiple performers. The voice clearly takes precedence here, and

rightfully so. This is a sound too often missing from the early music concert hall: singers accompanying themselves with simple strummed guitar chords. Mr Roach is to be applauded for taking the time to learn the instrument and to perform this music as it would have been commonly performed when it was new; vocalists and guitarists alike can learn much from performances such as this.

While the guitar has definite Spanish origins, a significant portion of the early repertory for the instrument actually comes from Italy. Few realize today that the earliest examples of such typically 'Baroque' genres as the ciaccona, passacaglia, sarabanda and folia (there are many variant spellings) originated as guitar repertory. As with Grandi's accompaniments discussed above, most of this early music contains only strummed chords in *alfabeto* notation. But by the 1630s, a combination of the strummed guitar style and the individually plucked notes of the lute style was being explored in Italy by composers such as Giovannin Paolo Foscarini (*fl.*1629–47). On **Il labarinto della chitarra** (Accent ACC24239, *rec* 2010, 59'), guitarists Hugh Sandilands and Pierre Pitzl explore this 17th-century Italian repertory together with the Austrian ensemble Private Musicke. The recording features works by relatively well-known guitarists such as Francesco Corbetta (*c.*1615–1681) and Nicola Matteis (*fl.*1670–1707)—both of whom worked mainly north of the Alps—and some lesser-known (but nonetheless important) composers such as Domenico Pellegrini (*fl.*1650s), Giovanni Battista Granata (*c.*1620–1687) and the rarely-heard Ferdinando Valdambrini (*fl.*1646–7). The Spaniard Gaspar Sanz (*fl.*1674–early 18th century) is included since he worked in southern Italy throughout most of his career. Pitzl adds theorbo, violoncello and percussion from fellow members of Private Musicke, alleviating and varying the sound of solo guitar, which might otherwise have proven a bit overindulgent for those not thoroughly attuned to that instrument. Some might quibble that the percussion threatens to overwhelm the ensemble in places and that its presence might be difficult to defend from a stylistic perspective, yet the performances are lively and energetic and serve as a good introduction to some all too rarely heard music.

Moving north of the Alps, Gordon Ferries's **La Royales: Music for kings and courtiers** (Delphian DCD34111, *rec* 2012, 73') focuses on the French repertory, including some earlier 16th-century works for the four-course (or 'Renaissance') guitar. This instrument was particularly favoured in Paris in the 1550s and Ferries includes

works from contemporaneous composers, including Adrian Le Roy (*c.*1520–1598), Guillaume Morlaye (*fl.*1550s) and Gregor Brayssing (*fl.*1547–60). These are some of the earliest surviving works for the guitar and constitute an important repertory within the corpus of 16th-century French music, but the core of French guitar music actually begins with an Italian—Francesco Corbetta—who brought the guitar to the court of Louis XIV at Versailles. While Corbetta is known to have played only the guitar, his French successor Robert de Visée (*c.*1655–*c.*1732) left some of the finest music for this instrument, as well as for the theorbo. Many guitarists of the day also would have played theorbo and lute, switching easily between instruments as needed. Ferries uses a theorbo for works by de Visée and Charles Hurel (*fl.*1665–92) and an eight-course lute for those by Le Roy and Attaingnant's Sermisy arrangements, while the earlier four-course guitar is used for the fantasies by Gregor Brayssing, the shorter arrangements by Morlaye and the *Almande tournée* by Le Roy. The bulk of the recording features the five-course instrument, with works by Corbetta and de Visée. It makes an excellent companion to the Italian music featured on Pitzl's recording, demonstrating the stylistic changes taking place in the north.

The next two CDs in our sequence—**Don Santiago de Murcia: Cifras selectas de guitarra (1722)** (Carpe Diem CD-16299, *issued* 2013, 63'), performed by Cristian Gutiérrez, and **Colores del sur** (Glossa GCD P33301, *rec* 2013, 54') from Enrike Solinis—call for a rather more open-minded approach from the listener. While the guitar has origins in Iberia, actual concert-level music for the instrument from Spain appears somewhat later than in other countries. The manuscript for *Cifras selectas de guitarra* by Santiago de Murcia (*c.*1682–*c.*1740) was discovered in an antiquarian bookshop in Santiago, Chile in 2003 by Alejandro Vera, who has contributed the liner notes to this CD. Gutiérrez and Vera have wisely focused on the Spanish pieces from the manuscript—some of Murcia's other works are clouded in controversy and appear to have been taken from others without ascription. What remains is a collection of 14 pieces including lively *danzas* and *bailes* as well as complex *pasacalles* and *folias*. Comparison with the original tablature shows that Gutiérrez has taken liberties with the original notation, reflecting the improvisational spirit of the original. Slightly more jarring is the performer's penchant for percussive effects and crisp staccato chords on such pieces as *Cumbe por la A* and *Zarambeques por la C*—effects that might be more at home in modern popular music, or which might just be an acquired taste. Gutiérrez's choice

of a tuning sometimes associated with Corbetta and/or French music (with a bourdon on the fourth but not the fifth course) is also a bit of a modern (rather than a period) solution. With *Colores del sur* by Enrike Solinis and Euskal Barrokensemble, we drift further into a realm of performance that lies somewhere between the historical and the anachronistic. One fears that the modern embellishments present in these performances obscure the originality of the sources; it begins to be difficult to distinguish what would have been novel in the 18th century and what is a modern accretion, and thus entirely out of place in any national style of early music. Certainly there are liberties that can be taken with Solinis's arrangements of keyboard works by Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757), but other works by Sanz and Giovanni Girolamo Kapsberger (c.1580–1651) are all but overwhelmed by the ensemble. It would perhaps be safest to regard these interpretations as experimental; modern music that takes, as its point of departure, early music without attempting fidelity to any historically informed performance style—again, an acquired taste.

The next two CDs call for an instrument even rarer today than the five-course guitar and with a much narrower original history: the six-course guitar, the immediate predecessor to the modern six-string instrument. Thomas Schmitt brings us to a sound-world that is largely familiar to modern listeners, yet still somewhat distant and foreign. Guitars with six pairs of gut strings enjoyed brief popularity at the end of the 18th century and three of their most important composers are represented on **De Gusto Muy Delicado** (La mà de Guido LMG2108, rec 2010, 71'): Federico Moretti (c.1765–1838), Fernando Ferandiere (c.1740–c.1816) and Juan Antonio de Vargas y Guzmán (fl. c.1770). This is music that deserves to be better known and more widely played on the appropriate instrument; it links the world of the five-course guitar (which was still very much in vogue in France into the 1790s) and the six-string instrument of the 19th century. The works of Vargas y Guzmán are particularly effective. Also by Thomas Schmitt is the recording of **Spanish music for 6-course guitar around 1800** (Centaur CRC3277, rec 2012, 66'), with a slightly later repertory for the same instrument. Composers on this collection include Salvador Castro de Gistau (1770–after 1831), Isidro de Laporta (fl. c.1790), Antonio Abreu (fl. 1788), Dionisio Aguado (1784–1849) and more from Federico Moretti. The *Fandango* by Castro de Gistau is a particular revelation and, overall, the music on this disc is a bit more exciting and appealing than that of Schmitt's first CD.

Even with the most 'modern' of the music covered here—that for the six-string, 19th-century guitar—we are still at some distance from the modern classical guitar. These differences are subtle, however, and will be most discernible to guitarists: the early 19th-century guitar has six single strings, but typically of gut or silk with metal windings, as well as far less string tension than on modern instruments. As might be guessed, the overall volume is quieter than that of the classical guitar, but the colours are more varied and subtle. This is the era of guitar music that modern performers can play in virtually unaltered form on the modern instrument, but the repertory is well worth listening to and performing on period instruments as well. **The birth of the classical guitar: Wulfin Lieske plays Fernando Sor and Mauro Giuliani** (Oehms Classics OC872, rec 2011, 67') contains works by two of the most well-known and frequently played early 19th-century guitarists. The career paths followed by Sor (1778–1839) and Giuliani (1781–1829) mirrored those of their 17th-century precursors with the Baroque instrument: emigrating from Spain and Italy respectively to the north—in this case, to Paris and Vienna. And while this instrument and these musicians are known today primarily for their solo compositions (many of which are challenging even to modern performers), the guitar once again made its way into a variety of levels of society, whether as a simple accompaniment for the voice or for extemporaneous dancing, from the cultured drawing rooms of Paris and Vienna to the streets of Spain and Italy. Lieske focuses with some intention on works now commonly performed on modern instruments, thereby yielding fresh insights into the way in which the period guitar impacts the interpretation and performance—much like hearing a well-known sonata by Mozart or Beethoven played on a period fortepiano.

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