

accommodate syllables with lots of letters. However, the text does help to identify notes of the chorale, and shows how Praetorius has developed the original chorale melodies, phrase by phrase, into two-part counterpoint for equal voices. The first of the *Puer natus* settings is somewhat prosaic, mainly one note for each syllable, with a few extra notes for the words 'Bethlehem' and 'Alleluia'; the second setting is much longer, with extended melismas for those two words, so that 'Alleluia' lasts for half the length of the piece. All the music is relatively straightforward to play on the bass viol, with no high positions, and bass clef for both instruments throughout. Two separate scores, each with two-stave systems, are provided for the players, and mercifully there are no page-turns. There is a brief introduction by the editors, which is mostly concerned with Güntersberg editions.

I would have liked to have had the chorale melodies to compare with the bicinia, and information on their origins. For example, *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* was composed by a Lutheran priest, Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608), and first appears in his *Frewdenspiegel deß ewigen Lebens* (Frankfurt, 1599). A facsimile of Nicolai's original chorale melody may be found on the IMSLP website. Praetorius' bicinium on *Wachet auf* appeared soon after, and the present edition contains a facsimile of Praetorius' original bicinium from *Musae Sioniae* (1605-10). These chorales would have been very familiar to Lutherans, who sang them regularly in church at Christmas, but they are still familiar to us now as Christmas carols, some in harmonisations by J S Bach (1685-1750). There is certainly much festive cheer to be had from these not-too-demanding bicinia.

Stewart McCoy

Michael Praetorius

Weihnachtliche Bicinien für zwei tiefe Instrumente,
Ed. Günter and Leonore von Zadow,
Edition Güntersberg G324

The music of this collection of nine bicinia by Michael Praetorius (1571-1621) has already been published by Edition Güntersberg in volumes 1 and 12 of their series *Puer natus in Bethlehem* (G151 and G187). In the present edition, the music has been transposed down an octave or a fifth to suit the range of bass instruments such as the bass viol or cello. The bicinia are based on well-known Christmas chorales: *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*; *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*; *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ*; *Vom Himmel hoch da komm ich her*; *Puer natus in Bethlehem* (two settings); *In dulci jubilo*; *Ein Kinderlein so löblich*; and *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*.

Both parts are provided with a text, so the music may be sung as well as played on instruments. The downside of text is having unbeamed quavers for separate syllables, and irregular spacing to