

Emma's surprise

by Nicolas Soames

THE YOUNG clarinetist, Emma Johnson, appears unexpectedly on a new album devoted to virtuosic pieces for the double bass, issued by ASV this month (DCA 563 and on tape).

The record is devoted to the 19th century composer and double bass star Giovanni Bottesini and includes a Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra, a Grand Duo Concertante for Violin and Double Bass — and the Duo for Clarinet and Double Bass.

Thomas Martin is the featured double bass player — this is his

third recording for ASV, and he is joined by Miss Johnson, and the English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Lytton.

A compact disc will be issued in November.

Martin also appears on another collection of lesser-known works issued by ASV this month — Concerti for Bassoon and Orchestra Volume 1 by Vivaldi (DCA 565 and on tape) made by Daniel Smith with the ECO under Philip Ledger. Martin plays the solo double bass part in Concerto No 12.

● Last month saw the release on compact disc of the first four titles

an ASV's early music label Gaudeamus, including the Four Baryton Trios by Haydn played by John Hsu, David Miller and Fortunata Arica (CD GAU 104) and Ockeghem's Missa Pralationum performed by Cappella Nava (CD GAU 103).

This month sees two further additions to the series, both taken from past ASV releases. They are the collection of Violin Concertos by Vivaldi played by Monika Huggett and the Landon Vivaldi Orchestra (CD GAU 105), and Leclair's Sonatas for Violin and Bassa Continuo played by Tria Sannerie (CD GAU 106).

Parrott and EMI talk early music

A FOUR-year recording contract with EMI International has been signed by Andrew Parrott, director of the Taverner Choir, Taverner Consort and the Taverner Players coinciding with the group's appearance at the BBC Proms last month.

A series of successful recordings has already resulted from the collaboration between EMI's Reflexe label and Parrott, including major early choral works such as Mon-

teverdi's Vespers and Bach's B minor Mass which has given the record label a much needed presence in the early music market.

The next four years will see the issue of such recordings as Schutz's Christmas Story, Purcell's Hail, Bright Cecilia; and, most interestingly, a newly edited version (by Hugh Keyte) of Allegri's Miserere, to be contained on an album titled Music from the Sistine Chapel. This will be released in 1987.

R E V I E W S

Miserere, Allegri/Missa Papae Marcelli, Palestrina/Vox Patris Caelestis/Mundy. Gimell CDGIM 339. Distribution: Gamut, PRT, Taylor.

This recording was originally made for CFP and proved one of the finest to be released on the label in the last decade. With the budget label not having access to compact disc production, it seemed unlikely that we would hear it on CD for some years to come. But the label which now brings out most of the Tallis Scholars' work, Gimell, has managed to obtain the CD rights.

Allegri's Miserere, with its perfect tempi, its use of separated chairs, and the electrifying sala from Alison Stamp, remains spine-chilling. In fact it's even more so on CD — despite this being an analogue recording. And Mundy's Vox Patris Caelestis remains the marvellous discovery it appeared when this recording first uncovered the work back in 1980.

It may seem odd that this recording costs under £2.50 on LP or tape, and around £10.99 on CD, but this will not, I predict, prevent it from shooting into the CD classical charts.

L. Subramaniam in Concert. South Indian classical violin music. Ocora, C558656. Distribution: Harmonia Mundi.

The leading Indian carnatic violinist L. Subramaniam has played with a heady cross-section of musicians, from Herbie Hancock and George Harrison to Stephane Grappelli

and Stanley Clarke, and has written concertos for violin and flute and a homage to Bach.

But his principal means of expression is the South Indian classical tradition in which he grew up, first of all in the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, and then in Madras.

He is recorded in concert, playing an extended raga — lasting some 53 minutes — during which he gives ample evidence of his stunning virtuosity, but also his sensitivity to quiet line and shape.

Sudden glimpses of Bach will enter his improvisations, but essentially, this is India.

Symphonies Nos 4, 9 and Toccata, Eduard Tubin. Gathenburg Symphony Orchestra, Neeme Jarvi. BIS CD227. Distribution: Conifer.

The Estonian-born composer Eduard Tubin, who spent the last 40 years of his life (d. 1982) in Stockholm, Sweden, is not well-known in the UK. He inhabits a time world between Vaughan Williams and Walton, and covers the same broad orchestral expanse.

The Symphony No 4 survived a bombing raid by being safely housed in a steel safe while the building was destroyed around it. It is most appealing, well described by its sub-title The Lyrical.

The Symphony No 9 shows more the passage of time but again Tubin's romantic spirit is not to be denied. Unusual but worthwhile repertoire which will interest collectors of late Romantic music.

Hyperion activity rules all round

TWO RECORDINGS of early choral music, a debut album of a young English string quartet and a varied selection of back catalogue coming on a CD for the first time marks the September activity of the English independent label Hyperion.

The Castle of Fair Welcome is another well-titled release in the series by the Gothic Voices directed by Christopher Page which began with the best-seller Hildegard of Bingen. This new release is devoted to courtly songs of the later 15th century (A66194 and on tape) and is a sequel to The Garden of Zephrus issued last year.

The William Byrd Chair under Gavin Turner turns its interest to Masterpieces of Portuguese Polyphony (A66218 and on tape) marking with wondrous abstruseness the 600th anniversary of the oldest surviving international treaty in the world, the still surviving Treaty of Windsor between England and Portugal, signed on May 9 1386.

Four women, Ruther Ehrlich, violin, Jennifer Godsan, violin, Catherine Marwood, viola and Julia Desbrulais, cello, who formed the Fairfield Quartet as long ago as 1979, make their debut recording with the string quartets by Debussy and Ravel (A66207 and on tape).

Among the seven back catalogue CDs now available are Vivaldi's Complete Music for Lute and Mandolin played by Paul O'Dette and the Parley of Instruments (CDA 66160), Faure's Piano Quartets in the widely acclaimed performance by Dams (CDA 66166), and Mozart's Piano Trios K254/K548, the first in the complete series played by the London Fortepiano Quartet (CDA 66141).



Store is a tourist mega-hit

VIRGIN MEGASTORE's role as a "major tourist attraction" has been recognised by the British Tourist Authority which has awarded it a Certificate of Distinction.

The presentation was made by Lord Young, Secretary of State for Employment at a ceremony to mark the success of the BTA's

Come To Britain campaign. Pictured left to right are, Lord Young, Donald Bluck, chairman of the British Tourist Authority and Tom Smith, manager of the Virgin Megastore. ● The Megastore, in London's Oxford Street, has recently installed 12 listening booths, available to all customers wanting to listen before they buy. Each of the booths is equipped to play back any type of product from records and tapes to CDs.

Old age rights

by Ewan Mitchell

I AM a manager of a music shop and am approaching my 65th birthday. The firm are prepared to keep me on while I remain fit, but I have heard that if I do stay on I will have no legal rights. Is this correct?

Once you reach your normal retirement age — in your case 65 — you will lose the following rights:

- Written particulars of your main terms of service, within 13 weeks of the start of employment or four weeks of any change;
- Protection against "unfair dismissal" — after (in general) 2 years' continuous service (1 year for those employed before 1st

June, 1985) in firms where more than 20 people have been employed at same time during the employee's employment;

- Statutory minimum redundancy pay — reaching (at current rates) maximum of £4,650, after 20 years' service at appropriate age and salary;
- Guaranteed pay for "workless days".

You will retain, however, your right to proper notice — which will be the period agreed and in any event not less than the statutory minimum — in most cases one week for each completed year of service to a maximum of 12. You will also, of course, be protected by the rules of health and safety.

BOOK REVIEWS

ALTHOUGH HE may occupy the position with some discomfort, Elvis Costello has long been enconced in the throne entitled, "the best we've got". That said, is it not extraordinary that nobody has attempted a biography of the man? Mick St Michael's *Elvis Costello: An Illustrated Biography*, goes some way to explaining why.

The sheer logistics of publishing prevent an up-to-the-minute appraisal of any artist, and perhaps with one as volatile as Costello, this problem has deterred the potential biographer. Although St Michael succeeds in predicting something of the total revival/reversal of Declan/Elvis in King Of America, this most crucial of episodes has had to be omitted. However, if your concern is what has passed, then this book is for you.

St Michael achieves what few biographers can: reactivating an interest in the damn records them-

selves. Through his competent appraisals he succeeds in identifying a few lost classics, helps the re-evaluation of misunderstood works (Trust, Almost Blue) and infuriates with a strange disregard for Imperial Bedroom, to some, Costello's most complete work, to St Michael, cluttered and ill-conceived.

The book's unbeatable on the early Stiff/Flip City days, pretty hot on the live side and says not a little about the difficult growth of Costello. The book annoys in its attempt to link spurious events, as if the Career: Costello was a finely tuned, carefully planned exercise, but delights with background stories and half-remembered rumours. With yet another Costello LP on the way, a timely and enjoyable publication. Everyday I write the book? Only Costello could do that one. *Elvis Costello: An Illustrated Biography*, by Mick St Michael, Omnibus Press. **DH**