

Monteverdi

Monteverdi's last and greatest publication, the *Selva morale e spirituale* (1640), in an edition by Liveryman Professor Denis Stevens, was recently published in Cremona by the Fondazione Claudio Monteverdi. Its two weighty volumes, running to 700 pages of full score with a Preface and Critical Notes of 100 pages, will materially assist performers in realizing these early baroque masterpieces of church music in a more accurate and lively manner.

This edition concerns the Company in several ways. It requires eminent vocal soloists, a large choir, a full complement of strings and brass instruments, several organs and above all a sensitive and knowledgeable conductor. The editor hopes that this type of scoring will soon be firmly established, setting aside unauthentic accompaniments for lute, theorbo, and viol-like violins which had no place in the composer's conception. Much depends on how carefully one reads the Preface (in five languages), which is buoyed up by a background of the composer's correspondence and a largely unpublished account of his musical life in Venice.

Stevens began work on the *Selva* in 1961, when he joined the Company and founded the Academia Monteverdiana, introducing early music to the Proms and performing similar repertoire in European and American music festivals. His involvement in music-making, university teaching and literary publications delayed the completion of these volumes until recently. In his list of acknowledgments Professor Stevens mentions the inspiration he derived from the Musicians' Company and the constant support of friends and colleagues from many parts of the world.

A further recent book is a collection of all the texts of Monteverdi's Songs and Madrigals, in parallel translation from Italian to English. This is available on direct order from Long Barn Books, Ebrington, Gloucestershire, GL55 6NW.

Pastmaster Richard Crewdson's new History of the Company is on schedule for completion within the next six months, ready for publication in the Quincentenary Year. The book will be illustrated, the number of illustrations depending partly on cost and partly on quality, variety and special interest. If any member of the Company has, or knows of, portraits, pictures, engravings or documents which might be suitable for inclusion in the book, please will be or she get in touch with Pastmaster Crewdson (address in Livery List, telephone 01963 440963). In general there is a greater need for pre-1900 material than 20th Century photographs &c, but there may be exceptions.

Fanfare For Noel

I am sure that the Master, himself a distinguished organ builder, would be the first to applaud the career of his colleague, Liveryman Noel Mander, who has been honoured with the publication of a beautifully presented volume of essays by friends and admirers. (Fanfare for an organ-builder, Postif Press, 130 Southfield Road, Oxford OX4 1PA, 15HN 506894 247; 169pp.).

The Musicians' Company has many connections with the world of organists and organ-builders. Only last year, following Liveryman John Scott's superb W T Best Memorial Recital in St Paul's Cathedral, our Livery Club played host, at a reception in the Chapter House, to a gathering which included not only John Scott and his predecessor as organist of St Paul's, Liveryman Christopher Dearnley, but also both Noel Mander and his son John (who has been running the family firm since Noel's retirement in 1983).

Dr Dearnley, in his affectionate foreword to the new volume, remembers Noel sitting under the dome of St Paul's after completing the rebuilding of the vast cathedral organ, "happily surrounded by the sound of his masterpiece – just as Christopher Wren had done nearly three centuries before in the centre, of the building his genius had created."

The core of the book is provided by a meticulous account by the Reverend Dr Nicholas Thistlethwaite, one of this country's leading organ experts, of Mander's work in the context of the thinking of its period. He writes about trends in organ building from the 1930s, and compliments Mander for his high standards of workmanship and his important role in the revival of tracker action. He points to the influence on generations of organ scholars of pioneering instruments in Cambridge college Chapels; and he refers to Noel's affection for the City of London, where he will be remembered for his far-sighted and sensitive efforts to save and restore historic organs and cases following war damage.

In similar vein, Stephen Bicknell, in a delightfully irreverent yet scholarly piece, agrees that "Mander seemed to have an instinctive understanding of the different threads of organ history". Michael Gillingham who, as a member of the London Diocesan Advisory Committee since 1965, and chairman of the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches, worked with Noel on many projects, points out that he was responsible for rescuing not only organs but also other church furnishings which might otherwise have disappeared following bombing. He writes of Noel's "Encyclopaedic knowledge of London's history, churches, organs (and) ecclesiastical sandals".

There are supporting essays on subjects related to Mander's work, rather than to Mander himself. Pictures are numerous, but a bit lifeless (plenty of pipes, not many people). Still, this is a fine and well deserved tribute to somebody who fell in love with the City and its churches when his grandfather brought him see the Lord Mayor's Procession in 1919. At the age of 86, his enthusiasm does not seem to have dimmed.

J.R.