

anyone who wants to understand the English Revolution and the radical Puritans who shaped its course.

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Signs and wonders in Britain's age of revolution. A sourcebook. Edited by Timothy G. Fehler and Abigail J. Hartman. Pp. viii + 314 incl. 27 ills. London–New York: Routledge, 2019. £110. 978 1 138 49205 9
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In this useful volume Timothy G. Fehler and Abigail J. Hartman reproduce a selection of thirty-five pamphlets with supernatural themes which were originally printed in England during the years between 1626 and 1659 and provide them with introductions and explanatory footnotes in order, as the editors nicely put it, to afford the twenty-first-century reader ‘an opportunity to get a sense of, if not to fully enter into, worldviews that are often jarring to a modern mind-set’. The book consists of seven thematically divided chapters. The first provides a general introduction to the way in which ‘perspectives on the supernatural were woven into the lives of those participating in ... the tumultuous political and religious events of the mid-seventeenth century’. The second reproduces a series of pamphlets reporting on mysterious phenomena which had, allegedly, been observed in England, Ireland and Germany between 1626 and 1642: phenomena which many contemporaries interpreted as warnings of imminent disaster. The third and fourth chapters reproduce a series of pamphlets reporting on ‘signs and wonders’ which were published during the English Civil War – and devote particular attention to the complex ways in which Royalist and Parliamentarian polemicists sought to denigrate and undermine their enemies through the manipulation of supernatural motifs. The fifth chapter reproduces a series of post-war pamphlets relating to astrology and prophecy, while the sixth reproduces a set of publications which tell of the bizarre fates which had, apparently, befallen individuals of whose religious views the pamphlets’ authors disapproved. One of the most vivid of these includes the story of a religious conservative in pre-Civil War London who – after having cursed ‘the godly’ and defended the recent judicial mutilation of the Puritan agitators Prynne, Burton and Bastwick – found, to his horror and amazement, that his own ears had spontaneously begun to bleed. The final chapter reproduces a selection of miscellaneous post-war pamphlets which comment, *inter alia*, on the political prophecies uttered by a precocious infant found wrapped in swaddling clothes in a field in Herefordshire; on ‘a mayd’ suffering from the disease known as ‘the Kings Evill’ in Deptford whose health had been restored through the application of a handkerchief soaked in Charles I’s blood; and on various strange apparitions which had been glimpsed in the night skies over Bolton in February 1650. As the editors rightly observe, the most difficult task, when pulling together a compilation such as this, is to decide which texts to include and which to leave out – and some students of the period will doubtless be a trifle disappointed to see that their own particular favourites have been excluded. The selection which appears here is a representative and a well-judged one, however, while the editors’ comments on the texts themselves are extremely helpful: their point that ‘each pamphlet existed not as an isolated text but in dialogue with its immediate

competitors, and with a wider literary tradition that included works both learned and popular' is an especially important one to bear in mind.

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Bach and the counterpoint of religion. Edited by Robin A. Leaver. (Bach Perspectives, 12.) Pp. x + 164 incl. 3 tables and 4 music examples. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2018. £41. 978 0 252 04198 3

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Meticulously edited by Robin Leaver, a veteran historian of Lutheran music, this stimulating work takes a closer look at the faith communities working alongside and around Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). From the mystical theology of Bernard of Clairvaux to early Methodism, and the musical and devotional life of the Saxon Catholic Court to the emerging Jewish enlightenment, this book portrays the rich diversity of the cultural and confessional landscape within which the German Baroque composer wrote his devotional music. A standout article is Jan Stockigt's detailed analysis of whether the precursor of Bach's B-minor Mass (BWV 232/1) might have been performed at the accession ceremony in Leipzig of the Saxon elector and king of Poland Friedrich August II. Like his father, Friedrich August was a Catholic monarch set to rule a Catholic majority kingdom in Poland and a Lutheran majority electorate in Saxony. Might the Lutheran composer Bach have written music for a specifically Catholic devotional setting, at the Catholic Chapel Royal in Leipzig? The thought is not at all unlikely, Stockigt concludes. While Stockigt's conclusion does not resolve without any further doubt the issue of whether Bach's 'great Catholic mass' was performed throughout the composer's lifetime, she does offer fascinating insights into how the devoutly Catholic Friedrich August straddled the confessional demands of his role as a Catholic king and Protestant elector, and how the arts were able to help bridge this apparent divide. Other highlights in the volume include Markus Rathey's analysis of the structure and theology of the Christmas Oratorio (BWV 248), and his deduction that in his music Bach, following the Lutheran theologian Johann Arndt (and many other Lutheran spiritual writers), deliberately represents Bernard's *triplex adventus* of Christ (the notion that Christ first came into the world at his Incarnation, then comes again when he enters human hearts at each believer's conversion, and finally will come again at the eschaton). The work ends with a scintillating article by Rebecca Cypress on the Jewish enlightenment (Haskalah) and, in particular, the influence of Sarah Levy in promoting and 'reframing' the music of J. S. Bach and his sons, thereby 'forging a common musical heritage that would be accessible to both Christians and Jews' (p. 150). This fascinating, beautifully produced, volume will be a delight to Bach scholars with an interest in the confessional world that Bach inhabited and the challenges that faith-filled living brought. For those who are new to the field, it will open a window into the beguiling religious diversity of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Germany and its relationship to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

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