



Finally, it is impossible to leave the volume without noting Jacopo Franzoni's description, all duly referenced and illustrated, of Frank Zappa's eccentric synthesized tribute to his unrelated namesake – a connection discovered when Frank's team found only the eighteenth-century composer in the 1980 *New Grove*. Needless to say, the omission has been rectified in subsequent editions.

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BENOÎT DRATWICKI

ANTOINE DAUVERGNE (1713–1797): UNE CARRIÈRE TOURMENTÉE DANS LA FRANCE DES LUMIÈRES

Wavre: Mardaga, 2011

pp. 480, ISBN 978 2 8047 0082 9

During a life of varied services to music, Antoine Dauvergne was involved with the Paris Opéra for forty-six years: as violinist, composer, conductor and lastly as *directeur*. Aged seventy-five, still in charge, he saved it from the threat of destruction: 'I arranged for enough firemen, a dozen soldiers and numerous workers to spend the night inside the building' (letter of 12 July 1789). Dauvergne was no stranger to the consequences of fire: tired and unwell, he had got the Opéra up and running after the second Palais-Royal theatre was destroyed on 8 June 1781. Hubert Robert's fine oil-painting of that catastrophe is the cover illustration for an account that in equal measure forms a tale of disappointment and one of evolution, perhaps fulfilment. Accounts of art history often use the triumph of neoclassicism to pivot gracefully into the Revolution, its iconography and politics. French music and opera history await a methodology for dealing with the late ancien régime.

Helping the reader through this new biography of Dauvergne is the generous provision of eighty-three illustrations, including music facsimiles, many in colour, containing striking, useful and often unfamiliar iconography. Dauvergne's likeness, a bust, was exhibited at the Salon of 1773 (305); no further reference to this report is made, but a suppositious pastel portrait is discussed and reproduced (421). There are some thirty-five music examples, some extended, and appendices listing almost all premieres at the Opéra (but not revivals), divided into the periods of its administration.

Dratwicki has material enough for three stories: of the man's career, of his creative achievement in opera and of the institutions which framed and absorbed his life's work. However, since Dauvergne's activities (at court, at the Concert Spirituel, at the Opéra) are explained contextually, they move in and out of focus. Is this a book about him, or about them? About how a musician serves French bureaucracy, or about the whole mess of rules, egos and opinions? Dauvergne first co-directed the Opéra between 1769 and 1776, then was pushed from office when the advent of Gluck made the rewriting of old tragedies unnecessary. He again co-directed it with the artists' committee from 1780 to 1782, when even he could no longer cooperate with them, and (again with the artists) from 1785 to 1790.

In orthodox fashion, Dauvergne composed music as well as performing and administering it. (This book might equally have belonged to Pierre-Montan Berton, for example, whose life's work was similarly subdivided.) His biographer must describe a creative trajectory, then try and relate it to the administrative one. Rather than offering thematic areas of discussion, Dratwicki groups the contents as follows: biography and early career to the comic opera *Les troqueurs* of 1753, the Concert Spirituel, court music, the Opéra to 1780 and the Opéra after 1780. Much depends on the arrangement of huge quantities of surviving source material: given a book of such large dimensions (over 220,000 words by my reckoning), including routine quotations of about five hundred words in length, the quality of the index is critical. Unfortunately, how-



ever, the indexes contain only proper names (but not ‘Antoine Dauvergne’) and titles of works, mainly operas. Entries are not subdivided; no concepts are listed, no places, no theatres. Not helpful if we wish to investigate, for example, the Fontainebleau theatre or the three theatre spaces which come into the Versailles story. The near-absence of cross-references too is no minor matter, because the divisions of the book described above often override chronology.

Since Dauvergne wrote music for the Concert Spirituel, the court and the Opéra, discussions of his output are divided among the relevant sections. More useful would have been to give the operas their own section and, arguably, omit the Concert Spirituel – covering pages 49 to 74 – altogether, because none of Dauvergne’s motets have been recovered. (Has anyone looked for these twelve lost scores, performed 129 times between 1763 and 1772, the composer’s period of administration?) On the other hand, Dratwicki has found many manuscripts at the Opéra, encompassing both full-scale tragedies and (sometimes) wholly unpublished works, whether original ones or, enticingly, old operas that Dauvergne helped to update for consumption once the plain ‘Lully style’ had become too old-fashioned. Even so, the book does not permit a clear overview of his creativity, seen against such a complex period of change. The same goes for general questions: even when a clearly defined aesthetic topic comes into focus, such as the *merveilleux* in the late ancien régime (337), its existence is obscured by the bland heading ‘Direction Dauvergne et le Comité (1780–1782)’.

Why should we be interested in Dauvergne? The Introduction claims that ‘a great majority of the public’ liked operatic tragedy in the old mould, ‘which Dauvergne, with real genius [un réel génie], glorified more than anyone else’ (12). The mistake here is to construct history in terms of absolute oppositions, old against new: this is not how Enlightened opera worked. One could argue it was a dialectical process. For one thing, Dauvergne’s best opera was a comedy, whereas his adoptive institution encouraged him to tragedy; only one of his four *tragédies* was revived, whereas *Les troqueurs* lived for thirty years. In what sense are we to say, then, that Dauvergne did more for traditional tragedy than others did? That would require at least some kind of survey of operatic offerings as a whole. Instead, for his purposes, Dratwicki relies on Baron Grimm to articulate the anomalous conservatism of Dauvergne’s tragedies; but Grimm was an extremist and did not seek to represent most people. The world ‘between the Quarrels’ (1752–1774), and after, preferred gradual development: the appeal of opéra comique enforced various compromises.

Above all, it was in the many updatings of old tragedy (Lully, Destouches) that an accommodation with modernity was achieved. The passage from 1754 (Rameau’s revision of *Castor*) to the advent of Gluck in 1774 was smoothed by processes that Lois Rosow has been revealing for many years now: early adjustments to the dance music led to tinkering with the orchestration, then from 1759 to a more ambitious replacement policy that saw whole arias, choruses, dances and overtures being substituted (see for example Lois Rosow, ‘From Destouches to Berton: Editorial Responsibility at the Paris Opéra’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 40/2 (1987), 285–309). Dauvergne, Rebel, Francoeur, Berton and others were involved. Dratwicki knows about this, though he never refers to Rosow. And this practice of rewriting itself becomes a victim of the book’s organization. It is not explained at first mention and only belatedly receives valuable discussion (278–279). Thus an interesting case-study of the revision of Lully’s *Persée* at court in 1770 (122) loses the force it should have, because the ground has not been prepared for the unwary.

Dauvergne entered opera history with *Les troqueurs* (1753), the first successful response to the visit of the Bouffons between 1752 and 1754. Jean-Joseph Vadé’s text and Dauvergne’s verve gave an astonishing array of intermezzo qualities to La Fontaine’s tale, which then held the stage for thirty years. It is covered on pages 35 to 47. The earlier *ballet-héroïque*, *Les amours de Tempé*, is not discussed until page 161 and *La coquette trompée*, a twin of *Les troqueurs* written for the court, is delayed until page 105. Its premiere came three and a half months after *Les troqueurs*. And in being allotted only 568 words of commentary, *La coquette trompée* is all but passed over. The plot is not discussed; an alternative manuscript source in the Music Department of the Bibliothèque Nationale is not mentioned.

The author can be apt to forget the genius of *Les troqueurs*: Dratwicki does not follow through the evidence we have (and which he quotes) that Dauvergne was mortified and depressed when the opera was



officially withdrawn in 1754. As an Opéra employee he was (somehow) not allowed to pursue a career in both milieus, Académie Royale de Musique and Opéra Comique, seria and buffa, as so many Italians did. Unlike some others, he had command of sonata style, not merely a taste for interesting orchestration and a talent that responded well to choral composition. Yet sonata style was laid to one side in his *tragédies*, where rather little melodic distinction is found, or much irony in solo numbers, while *Les troqueurs* is full of ironic force.

‘The facts without their historian are dead and meaningless’, as E. H. Carr famously observed (*What is History?* (London: Penguin, 1961), 35). History is brought to life and given meaning not just through the selection of salient data, but also in their appropriate contextualization; unfortunately, this is frequently lacking in the present study. Although Dratwicki quotes from innumerable reviews and archival documents, the wider historical context is virtually ignored until the dramatic advent of revolutionary forces vivifies the closing pages. Diderot is almost absent; Rousseau plays a passing role, the death of Louis XV passes almost unremarked, likewise the Seven Years War, the Austrian Alliance and so on, though the ever-increasing economies which the government had to try and make, affecting both court and Opéra, do feature repeatedly. It is a shock that no use was made of Solveig Serre’s pioneering economic analyses of the Opéra’s budget between 1749 and 1789: her 2005 and 2006 dissertations (both for Paris) have recently been published as *L’Opéra de Paris (1749–1790): Politique culturelle au temps des Lumières* (Paris: CNRS, 2011). No serious consideration is made of those avenues of opera history opened up by, for example, William Weber and Robert Fajon (repertory analysis), Laura Naudeix (genre analysis) or Victoria Johnson (sociological analysis). Such lacunas are all the more disappointing given that when use is made of other recent contributions, Dratwicki’s discussion profits greatly (a good example being Mark Darlow’s article ‘Repertory Reforms at the Paris Opéra on the Eve of the Revolution’, *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32/4 (2009), 563–576). The names Graham Sadler, Paul F. Rice, Barry S. Brook and Andrea Fabiano are absent. Such disregard for non-French-language literature would recall the insularities of the past, were David Hennebelle, Laura Naudeix (as mentioned above) and Jérôme de La Gorce not also missing from the bibliography; the online *Chronopera* database (<<http://chronopera.free.fr>>) similarly fails to merit a mention. It is embarrassing to be told that that the one-act comic opera *Il maestro di musica* (deriving from Pietro Auletta’s *Orazio*, 1737) was by Alessandro Scarlatti, who died in 1725.

Those hoping for some hint of Dauvergne’s role in the period before Gluck’s arrival will be disappointed. In the absence of new documents, Dratwicki reproduces the 1,700-word *Mercure* letter (1772) from Du Rouillet with which we are already familiar. But if the analysis of commissioning patterns plays no significant part in the text, at least we get useful insights into the organization of court music (75–155); except, that is, for the Queen’s Concerts (operas in concert form), which receive just half a page. Dratwicki’s other published work on these is not summarized.

To estimate the balance of public operatic taste requires some summary of revival patterns and performance runs. ‘The successes of Gluck’ may have sounded ‘the death-knell of Dauvergne’s twenty-year career’ as a composer, when the final revival of his setting of *Alphée et Aréthuse* ended (305). But this is merely rhetorical: Dauvergne’s four tragedies had been premiered over a decade before, with only modest success; in fact, given the organization of the book, the unique revival of *Enée et Lavinie* should have been discussed in relation to 1768 (the revival date), not 1758 (the premiere). Changing practices of listening arose in the 1760s, for example in the appreciation of Philidor’s *Ernelinde* (more than fifty performances during a twelve-year period) and especially Monsigny’s *Aline, reine de Golconde* (seventy-six performances over a seventeen-year period), alongside the perennial support for *Castor et Pollux* and *Dardanus*. All except the last-named work survived Gluck. Rameau can be summarily treated, though he had let it be known that Dauvergne was his favoured successor in tragedy. Among other discrepancies, *Platée* is dated ‘1746’ (261).

What the many pages of description suggest is that Dauvergne sought to modernize tragedy through orchestration, harmonic erudition (highly praised) and choral writing. He did not explore the psychology of main characters by means of extending the forms and styles of arias. This puzzle is not discussed; since



Dratwicky has raised elsewhere the problem of vocal inadequacy in (some) soloists, we assume he has discounted this factor for the moment.

The book comes to focus on administrative history, and Dratwicky's collection of documents deserves its own project, fit to tackle the Opéra in the round. The plethora of texts hopes to promote (to borrow Carr's words) 'some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom [the historian] is writing' (*What is History?*, 24). Dauvergne worked long years in underpaid assistant functions; after resigning in 1782 he lived nine months of the year outside Paris for want of funds. His financial reward, even at the top of the Opéra, came late. A startling account (250) shows that the Opéra performers attempted an administrative take-over as early as 1767. When they finally succeeded, without Dauvergne (1782–1785), they ran up a large debt and were decried as inefficient, yet 1783 was a bumper year for successes and 1784 saw five major new operas: this during a decade marked by extraordinary expansions of ambition. Was Dauvergne influential in this respect? Obviously, anecdotal history is not enough to explain these phenomena. The Opéra management is accused of 'la décadence et la corruption' (316) yet these are paraphrases, not authorial conclusions. As administrator, Dauvergne sometimes 'seemed niggling', his jealousy even comical, causing animosity from the artistic and public community (305), which even suspected him of vengefulness towards a young composer, Étienne Floquet. We are left to imagine the true picture. Happily, the texture tightens towards the end; the later 1780s become Dauvergne's finest moment as *directeur*, judged by quality, quantity and diversity of productions at the Opéra.

Signs of haste are various. The wrong illustration from *Hercule mourant* appears (223), the engraving of the Little Theatre at Versailles (95) gets separated from its discussion (91–92), which in turn neglects to point the reader to it. The music examples are not usually captioned with their act and scene designations: they rely on their placement in the main text for such identification, but this system is haphazard more than useful. The French symphony is declared to have taken off 'from the start of the 1760s', ten years later than the time this actually occurred at the Concert Spirituel (256); the myth is perpetuated that earlier programming remained traditional (51). 'Picpus' (a Paris street) replaces 'Picus', a character in *Canente* (207). We have 'Saint-Mard' for 'Saint-Marc' (363), and 'three' Grétry comedies instead of four (368), because *Colinette* has been forgotten (see page 350). Indeed, *Colinette* might have been a Dauvergne commission: such questions remain to be resolved. Notwithstanding its length and generous ambition, then, Dratwicky's book constitutes only a first step in giving Paris the kind of treatment it deserves, and which others have already applied to Vienna's musical life during the same decades. In truth, there is material here for two books. Paris lacked a Mozart, and in any case it is good to seek alternative ways of tackling opera history. Single-composer studies will continue to be needed, but probably do not constitute the best way of understanding the complexities of French musical life before the Revolution.

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PETER HOLMAN

*LIFE AFTER DEATH: THE VIOLA DA GAMBA IN BRITAIN FROM PURCELL TO DOLMETSCH*

Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010

pp. xxii + 394, ISBN 978 1 84383 574 5

When I first received Peter Holman's book about the history of the viol in Britain, I questioned the premise of a study that covers such a wide span: what did Purcell's viol fantasias have to do with the Dolmetsch family? It turns out that the viol has always had some kind of association with Britain, allowing the author to trace the development of the instrument from one generation to the next. The result is an elegant and