

providing any musical explanation. Surely space was at a premium – the book is based on the author's 468-page PhD dissertation – but the consistent presence of note- or chord- names would be a tremendous asset in making several chapters more accessible to its readers. After all, Kopp is at his best (and clearest) when discussing music. (The book would also be helped by an immediate musical example, for it isn't until the middle of Chapter 2 that one begins to figure out with exactly what kinds of musical events Kopp will grapple.) The second problem is that the awkward syntax and sentence construction causes occasional confusion, leading to the minor grammatical errors and typos found throughout the book. While the importance of the content remains unaffected, the syntax makes the reader's job more difficult and often disguises why this first-rate work is vital to the study of chromatic music and nineteenth-century harmonic theories. Nonetheless, this book may well be the most successful example of the historical theory movement. Its fresh, accessible analytical technique allows one to grapple anew with the nascent chromaticism of the early and middle nineteenth century. Scholars interested in this music cannot afford to pass it by.

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Roger Parker, *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revision from Handel to Berio* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006). 179 pp. \$29.95

One of the recent and more thought-provoking publications in the ever-expanding universe of opera scholarship is Roger Parker's collection of essays entitled *Remaking the Song: Operatic Visions and Revisions from Handel to Berio*. As the author informs his readers in the preface, the six chapters that comprise the book are the fruit of a laborious yet enlightening four months spent in residence as Ernest Bloch Lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley in 2002. Parker is equally candid in noting that three of the six chapters represent more recent iterations on prior work and the remaining balance was conceived expressively for the Bloch lecture series.

Although the title itself may suggest a chronological organization to the book, Parker eschews such an approach instead to consider a single essential question, albeit of profound ramifications, applicable to the established canon of operatic compositions. Parker seeks, in his own words, to contemplate the 'definable ways in which ... the operatic repertory changes as it is repeatedly brought into being' (p. 3). Therefore the author would like to offer in the ensuing chapters a 'series of meditations on ... operatic texts in particular ways long known to us have been, and might in the future be, subject to change of one sort or another' (p. 11–12). This methodological view is posited by the author as a 'middle ground' amid the poles of 'objective rules for aesthetic appropriateness' and the 'view that accords everyone the right to an equal hearing in making aesthetic claims'. At the heart of this bold stance, and explicitly announced in the title of the book, is the very question of revision. Thus revision is broadly defined as that which occurred in the act of creation itself or in subsequent transmission, whether by performers or the work of scholars, and it can, moreover, offer us new insight and modes of understanding an opera, even those that form the standard repertory. Parker then offers a compelling taste of what is to come through a brief reconsideration of Donizetti's *Adelia* and how the extant multiple versions of the title character's Act

I cavatina 'Al suo piè cader vogl'io' may dissuade claims of absolute authenticity, yet in turn may provoke further insight about its creation and offer new means for its contemporary transmission.

Identifying the occurrence of revision, not necessarily defining it or its cause *per se*, is central to the unfolding of the chapter regarding Verdi's *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*. Parker prepares the terrain carefully for the ensuing discussion, noting the historical position of these works in the operatic canon and offering a brief précis, albeit one well known, of Verdi's compositional rituals. The object is to underline the fact that the creative stages of these two works overlapped (largely due to the exigencies of the composer's personal life and the mechanism of operatic production) and resulted in rather interesting relationships between seemingly incongruous works. Our understanding of revision is therefore transformed to become that of 'shared creation' as it pertains to *Trovatore* and *Traviata*. Parker's approach is a departure from the traditional epistemological manner of juxtaposition and confirmation of either a set of 'Verdian binaries' represented by these works, or of the *solite forme* contained within them. The discourse is narrowed to a series of reasonably modest shared thematic shapes connecting the operas, whose relationship Parker explores and persuasively associates through analysis. The implications derived are thought-provoking not so much for the relationship they establish between these two works or the specific meaning of such connections, but rather for their illumination of a heretofore unknown 'shared creation', one that is perhaps inexplicable but that forces us to reconsider notions of analysis, interpretation, representation and ultimately revision.

In the ensuing discussion on Mozart's creation of two substitute arias expressively for the singer Adriana Ferrarese, who assumed the role of Susanna in the 1789 Viennese production of *Le nozze di Figaro*, Parker seeks, as he candidly acknowledges, to gently chide (or 'chip away', in the author's parlance) at the long-held and often dogmatic views of these additions and the historical importance of the operatic *diva* by both critics and scholars. Parker's intent is neither to repudiate the venerated 'work concept' espoused by musicologists (notably Lydia Goehr) or to question the tradition of eighteenth-century substitution arias, but rather to recontextualize each contribution with the intent to consider, at the least, a fresh view of these often maligned accretions. The weight of the chapter is placed upon the famous (or infamous depending on the company you keep) Act IV rondo 'Al desio', and Parker posits the interpretation of it as a musical *travestimento*, in which the painfully hackneyed theatrical *topos* of exchanged identities is only a point of departure for the profound and largely ignored musical rhetoric of the soliloquy. The latter qualities are illustrated through analysis, however; the substantive points focus on Susanna's assumption of the Countess's identity, with all of its constituent traits, which is translated into music that presents a person of elevated social standing. The very qualities that define the 'serio' personage and hence establish the exchange of characters, in the words of the author, are the same features that lead critics to dismiss the aria as inappropriate to not only Mozart's intentions, but also the very dramatic framework of its presentation.

Parker's interpretation of this aria is significant to the central premise of the book given that Ferrarese would also create the role of Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*. The particular affinities, moreover, connecting 'Al desio' to 'Per pietà, ben mio, perdona' from Act II of *Così* suggest the act of 'shared creation' (as outlined in the chapter on Verdi) between the two operas. This knowledge not only allows insight

into how Mozart approached the shared themes of jealousy and ambivalence in diverging manners (thus correlated to 'revision'), but also promotes a broader interpretation of each work, and even the constituent traits of the voices that perform them, the latter of which has been of great concern to critics past and present. Mozart after all, as the authors concludes, 'wrote music, not words, not characters, not libretto. The influence of a singular voice and individual is not a matter of approach, but something positive for the formation of his *work*' (p. 66).

After the momentary digression into the world of eighteenth-century Vienna, Parker returns to familiar territory: Verdi and the arduous genesis of Act III, Scene 1 from *Falstaff*. The discourse, though, diverges slightly from earlier chapters, albeit approached through a balance of analysis and historical narrative, focusing on the 'dislocation of elements' (notably the experimental harmonic content) in this scene and its relationship to Wagner's *Parsifal*. The value of the argument is not one of revelation about *Falstaff*, but rather how the 'destabilization' of this scene compels us to reconsider the opera itself, its position within the Verdi canon (a topic of unending interest to Verdi scholars) and its relationship to the contemporary artistic climate both in Italy and Europe.

A return to an earlier, primary theme of the book (rethinking the actual musical content of an opera) is the basis for the examination of Luciano Berio's recent completion of the unfinished finale to Puccini's *Turandot*. The chapter unfolds according to the established format, articulated through a careful balance of analysis and historical context and the prose is decidedly taut and focused on the juxtaposition of Franco Alfano's finale with that completed by Berio. Parker concentrates his discussion to three essential moments within the finale that have proven to be problematic, given the uncertainty of Puccini's intentions regarding surviving sketches and annotations made to the libretto approved for the premiere of the opera. While Parker does not advocate one version over the other, as one may be tempted to offer a value judgement, he does suggest that the 're-thinking' of this music can engender further experimentation with other 'difficult' Puccini scenes such as Act IV of *Manon Lescaut* and the final scene in *Madama Butterfly*. The caveat here and throughout all of the works examined in the course of the book is the condition of 'instability' or in practical terms the existence of multiple approaches by the composer and varied material sources.

The final chapter addresses Handel's well-known and endlessly parodied aria 'Dove sei amato bene?' from the opera *Rodelinda* (1725), which itself has received increasing attention in the past few years. Parker's expressed intent is not necessarily to evaluate prior scholarship, which has often focused on the issue of authorial revision, but rather to underline reception and subsequent transformation. The aria in question proves to be particularly fertile as it was widely circulated in multiple readings, ranging from an English-language hymn ('Art Thou Troubled?') to a later choral rendering. The point of Parker's study is wholly consistent to the earlier chapters, in spite of what seems to be on the surface a discordant method: that is, such seemingly disparate relationships to the 'officially sanctioned' version (whether imposed by musicologists or performers) can offer a broader contextualization and hence understanding of the object(s) under scrutiny. They allow in this case, moreover, a perspective into multiple worlds of change, progress and possibility, which can bring into sharper focus our own contemporary relationship with the historical operatic text.

As noted at the outset of this review, Roger Parker's book is a valuable contribution to contemporary scholarship about opera. Although on occasion prolix, the author establishes a firm voice from the prefatory chapter and

consistently examines the notion of revision within the shifting contexts – whether historical, cultural or musical – of the works themselves. Each of the six chapters is scrupulously researched (the bibliography is refreshingly current) and carefully conceived, with an equitable division of musical analysis and historical context, accessible not only to scholars, but also to serious music students. The length of the book is also judiciously concise (perhaps also given its genesis as individual lectures) yet the author does not sacrifice the depth or force of his arguments. The ultimate significance of Parker's contribution is, in his own words, that of 'destabilization'; that is, it implores the reader to cast aside the long-held notion that revision is only a singular act on the road to perfection. Rather, we must be willing to set aside traditional ideas about the existence of a single *Urtext* and/or definitive authorial transmission truly to view any opera in an informed light.

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Simon Williams, *Wagner and the Romantic Hero* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). 193 pp. \$85

Bertolt Brecht is one of the most pronounced opponents of Wagner's aesthetics. For him, *Gesamtkunstwerk* is 'witchcraft', which allures the audience into an 'emotional infection': that is, a total empathy with the emotions of the on-stage characters.¹ In terms of heroism, too, Brecht is radically separated from Wagner in that Bayreuth is inhabited by a host of apotheosized heroes, while for Brecht, 'Unhappy the land where heroes are needed'.² Heroism is the thematic focus of Simon Williams's book, which explores Wagner's *oeuvre* from the first completed opera *Die Feen* to the last music-drama *Parsifal*.

Before he analyses individual works of Wagner, Williams provides a typology of the heroes in the first chapter: the romantic, epic and messianic hero. The romantic hero 'has a deep reverence for nature, a tendency to respond to the world through feeling rather than rational cogitation, and the instance that the world can only be understood when viewed from a subjective viewpoint' (p. 8). Williams traces the origin of the romantic hero to Rousseau's 'natural man' ('l'homme sauvage'). He also characterizes a common romantic hero by an intense isolation from society, the most celebrated example of which is Goethe's Werther, and a ceaseless wandering for an unattainable goal, as Byron's hero in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. In Williams's typology, the epic hero is endowed with an 'immense strength and courage' and is distinguished by 'the degree to which he corporealizes the most admirable of human traits', not by thought but by action (p. 15). Yet like the romantic hero, the epic hero remains alienated from society, for his heroic action is exerted 'only to the degree that he can stand outside social life', which Williams describes as a 'paradox' (p. 16). In contrast, the messianic hero is an active part of society and makes a tangible impact upon it. Williams's concept of the messianic hero is heavily borrowed from that of Thomas Carlyle, who envisioned the hero as a union of 'heroic charisma and energy with the material forces of society' who will lead society to utopia (p. 18).

¹ Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964): 38 and 94.

² Bertolt Brecht, *Life of Galileo*, trans. John Willett (New York: Arcade, 1994): 98.