

between poetic and musical structure; transformation of closed musical forms to a more free-flowing discursive and declamatory style; the influence of *verismo* and decadent literary movements shifting the typical dramatic shock concept of grand opera from the external action to the inner psyche, thereby disrupting the process of audience identification with the on-stage characters that was an aesthetic basis of earlier nineteenth-century opera. Indeed, without doing so in as many words, this erudite article sums up the evolution of European opera during the second half of the century.

Sarah Hibberd's brief attempt to write a history of grand opera in Britain and the Americas deserves mention, although this vast subject remains largely unexplored. That London audiences preferred heavily reworked adaptations of French operas (often consisting of 'Italianate' simplifications of plot and style) over the originals themselves comes as no surprise in a fiercely different social and political climate.

In musicological terms, the range of authors presented in this book is broad and generally satisfying. For a survey of French grand opera, however, one might have hoped for more articles by non-musicologists – specialists in theatre history, stage design, and so on. There should have been more than just one article dedicated solely to libretti, and more than one chapter written by a French person! The book is elegantly illustrated with copious tables and musical examples. Its designed readership is obviously an informed one, but the book is not out of reach of the amateur-connoisseur, and, as Charlton claims, its publication marks a significant landmark in the reconsideration of a historically important genre that has frequently been granted insufficient recognition in the history and canon of operatic works.

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Kristina Marie Guiguet, *The Ideal World of Mrs. Widder's Soirée Musicale: Social Identity and Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, Mercury Series, Cultural Studies Paper 77, 2004). xvi + 154pp. Canadian \$24.95.

This study is strikingly original in systematically studying programmes given in domestic concerts in the middle of the nineteenth century. Kristina Marie Guiguet looks in depth into a soirée musicale given in Toronto in 1844 by Mrs Elizabeth Widder, wife of a leading businessman and political figure, and in addition one given in London in 1849 by a society lady, Mrs Sandeman. Programmes given in homes have been studied even less than those given in major concert halls, but this pithy book asks how the 'programmer's toolkit' served as 'a box of cultural building blocks' by which musicians and patrons went about their business (p. xv). Guiguet examines the programmes within a broadly defined context, showing how they fit within the political and social evolution of Upper Canada and how gender practices defined many aspects. What results aids the progress of an extremely important area of musical study.

The programme given in the Widders' home, Lyndhurst, on 12 March 1844 (the book contains pictures of the Corinthian-columned room where the concert took place) had a carefully designed, highly symmetrical structure. Each of the two halves of ten pieces included five opera solos or ensembles, four songs, and an

opera chorus in the first half and a piano fantasy in the second. Nine pieces were by Italians, six by Britons, and four by Germans or Austrians. Amateurs and professionals alternated as systematically as did genres, nationalities and genders, preventing similar pieces from being performed back-to-back, as was a long-standing convention in both European and American concert programmes. While Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti naturally dominated, Bishop, Glover, Crouch and Barnett brought important reputations to the programme. A canzonet Haydn wrote while in London was included, as was an adaptation, in the form of a glee, of 'Lutzow's wild hunt' from *Der Freischütz* for three male voices and chorus. It was conventional in private concerts to include only one instrumental piece, in this case a piano fantasy by Henri Herz (incorrectly identified as a professor at the Royal Academy of Music), as was rarely done at public events before 1850.

Guiguet leads the reader through the programme insightfully, showing how Mrs Widder, aided by her teacher James Dodley Humphreys, manipulated dramatic contrast and what she calls 'intensity', relative not only to height of emotion but also the professional level of the performers involved in the pieces. Interestingly enough, women sang opera numbers in second place in each half, and male amateurs in the middle, while each half ended with an ensemble number. She sees a consistency in theme within most of the texts, 'altruistic unelected leaders working for the good of the people despite their personal unhappiness', at the very time that representative government was being demanded. Thus in Guiguet's analysis numbers from *Freischütz*, Rossini's *Tancredi*, and Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* served as the 'structural pillars' of the first half. It is remarkable to be shown how closely that theme related to the very crisis within which Frederick Widder served as a key figure, shifting authority from businesses to the state.

As has become increasingly apparent in recent years, the programmes given in the old and new worlds were quite similar in structure, even though Mrs Sandeman presented a much more high-level professional array of singers than Mrs Widder. Guiguet demonstrates how the hostess mixed genres much as her Canadian counterpart did, and likewise seems to have established a theme of travel in pieces by such composers as Weber, Mercadante and a popular songwriter named Masini. That music by Bishop ended the first half indicates how significant his music, indeed that of numerous other British musicians, was in the ears of many people in that time. (The Centre for Performance History at the Royal College of Music includes a large collection of programmes given in London homes at just this time, from performances by Mme. Giacinta Puzzi, née Toso.)

Guiguet interprets the role of the musical hostess through ideas principally from Gerda Lerner and Lenore Davidoff. She argues that Mrs Widder's role formed part of an 'imaginative pattern' by which the woman helped make the turbulent society of the time seem 'natural, stable, and harmonious' (p. 26). Davidoff portrays music as one means by which women provided 'a haven of stability', seen metaphorically as Adam's rib; Guiguet then argues that 'a good woman was very like a good rib' (p. 20). In such a fashion was the gender role of the musical hostess, serving not simply as a chaperone but rather as a respected social leader, thought to bring the upper class to a higher level in that troubled time.

The performers at such a soirée musicale were primarily rich amateurs, and it was at such an occasion where upper-class women could go the furthest towards performing in public. Guiguet suggests that the soirée was a 'unique vehicle for the display of the highly-skilled Lady Amateur' that stretched the limits imposed by Victorian social principles (p. 73), all of which reinforces the growing sense of

the elasticity of these codes. I would argue that the same was true for men. While British social convention spoke against gentlemen becoming professional musicians or even investing themselves in musical life, the centrality of glee-singing demonstrated in this book indicates that what advice books preached was often far from reality. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries men from the British landed classes assumed extensive leadership not only as patrons but also as directors of concert societies (especially the Concert of Ancient Music), often in close relationship with musicians. It is important that we do not exaggerate the importance that the ban on professional musicianship imposed upon men's roles within musical culture.

The book concludes with a chapter discussing how Miss Mary Jane Hagerman, the main singer in Mrs Widder's concerts, worked out an unusual compromise between the identities of family and profession. By singing regularly at many important soirées musicales, she 'negotiated a special public space' that served as a 'protective cloak' for her respectability (p. 84). In 1848 she sang in a charity concert in a church, and in 1852 she went on a tour with a professional troupe under an assumed name, assisting the extremely famous singer and composer William Vincent Wallace. But she pulled back from that to the soirées, avoiding the erotic arias for which professionals were noted, and she was eventually called 'the Canadian Jenny Lind' for her maternal femininity (p. 89). Her career was remarkable since her husband, John Beverley Robinson, Jr, was a leading lawyer who became Mayor of Toronto. Interestingly enough, she was invited to sing at the soirées of Lady Dufferin, wife of the Governor General of Ontario and composer of ballads often performed at the trend-setting Boosey Ballad Concerts in St James's Hall.

Performances of songs from this period by Derek Scott, Allan Atlas and their colleagues (notably at the Durham Nineteenth-Century Music Conference in 2004) has opened critical scrutiny of music such as was performed at the Toronto soirées. This music was coming into disrepute among the musical intelligentsia in the 1850s, as the authority of the newly established classical repertory became consolidated. As I argued in *Music and the Middle Class*, the institutionalization of a classical-music world limited the influence of women in musical life significantly, since there was no parallel to the soirée hostess in the Philharmonic Society or the Monday Popular Concerts as there was in the (now increasingly separate) world of ballads and opera galas.¹ Music historians need to dig through memoirs and letters to gain a deeper understanding of this major, and regrettable, change.

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Julian Horton, *Bruckner's Symphonies. Analysis, Reception and Cultural Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). x + 280pp. £45

Since the 1990s, Bruckner scholarship in the Anglo-Saxon world has experienced a remarkable expansion. Apart from numerous articles in scholarly journals, five book-length publications – three collections of essays, a voluminous biography and a more modestly-scaled monograph on one specific composition – have

¹ William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna, 1830–48* (Aldershot, 2003).