

*Les Histoires sacrées de Marc-Antoine Charpentier: Origines, contextes, langage, interprétation; Hommage à Patricia M. Ranum.* Catherine Cessac, ed. Musique: Sources-Recherche-Interprétation. Turnhout: Brepols, 2016. 282 pp. €50.

Scholars of seventeenth-century French music owe much to Patricia Ranum for her research on the life and music of Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1643–1704). This volume of essays celebrates Ranum's extensive contribution to the field while presenting new research on Charpentier's *histoires sacrées*, dramatic and religious musical works related to the Roman oratorio. The collection includes fourteen contributions in French, Italian, and English authored by an international roster of seventeenth-century French and Italian sacred music experts. The essays reconsider the musical aesthetics of Charpentier's *histoires sacrées* while advancing our understanding of the musical practices and cultures that the composer absorbed during his studies in Italy and his career in France. The essays follow a generally thematic trajectory, discussing the ambiguities of the *histoire sacrée* as a genre; the debts that the genre owes to the Roman oratorio and to opera; the place of the *histoire sacrée* within the devotional culture of late seventeenth-century France; the genre's relationship between music and text; and matters of performance practice.

Until now, the dissertations of Hugh Wiley Hitchcock (1954) and Annick Fiaschi (1991) were the only large-scale studies to have addressed the *histoire sacrée* in depth. Both studies emphasize how the *histoire sacrée* resists an easy definition as a genre. In its Latin language, religious subjects, and musical aesthetics, the *histoire sacrée* is indebted to the Roman oratorio, but its dramatic libretti also mark an aesthetic relationship with opera. Catherine Cessac and Xavier Bisaro open the volume with essays wrestling with questions of genre. Cessac emphasizes the expressive and theatrical quality of the *histoire sacrée* as key to the genre's identity, while Bisaro argues that the genre was shaped as much by late seventeenth-century French devotional practices and mentalities as it was by the Roman oratorio. He expands upon this thesis in a second essay, which considers how the devotional practices of the Guise princesses for whom Charpentier worked influenced the composer's repertoire. Later in the volume, Graham Sadler and Laurence Decobert return to the notion of genre. Sadler argues that Charpentier adapted versification techniques from Venetian opera when composing his *histoires sacrées*. Turning to French musical traditions, Decobert compares Charpentier's compositions with Henri du Mont's *dialogues sacrées*, arguing that, despite some shared musical aesthetics, Charpentier exercised more diverse compositional approaches that responded to the interests of varying intended audiences.

A second cluster of essays explores the musical environment that Charpentier likely encountered in late 1660s Italy. Galliano Ciliberti brings the recently discovered *I Dialoghi* of Vincenzo Ugolini (1580–1638) to light as antecedents of the Roman oratorio. Gianluca Capuano explores oratorio performances at the Oratorio del Santissimo

Crocifisso in Rome, while Luca Della Libera mines neglected archival sources from the Vatican Library, the Vatican Secret Archives, and the Biblioteca Corsiniana to paint a vivid picture of musical life in mid-seventeenth-century Rome. Using an experiential approach to understand how Italian music influenced Charpentier, Huub van der Linden considers performances that Charpentier may have witnessed en route as he traveled from France to Rome.

Several authors focus on Charpentier's treatment of text and music. Shirley Thompson investigates how the composer set identical or near-identical texts with similar or contrasting musical settings, proposing possible motivations for the settings based on intended audiences or first performers. C. Jane Gosine compares the textual and musical structures of the Nativity *histoires sacrées* to consider how these works constructed vivid dramatic experiences for listeners. Ana Stefanovic delineates musical topoi that Charpentier employed for enhancing textual narrative, while Lucie Girard's analysis of the modification of source texts in two *histoires sacrées* demonstrates how librettists deliberately altered sources to enhance drama. Finally, Sébastien Daucé draws on his own expertise in performing *histoires sacrées*, as well as Charpentier's autograph manuscripts, to consider how the genre was performed during the composer's lifetime.

An appendix reproducing Ranum's curriculum vitae is valuable for consulting further avenues of study on Charpentier. Since the authors discuss many of Charpentier's *histoires sacrées* in detail, a companion CD or online playlist would have been welcome in addition to the appendix. The collection will be nevertheless richly useful to experienced researchers of seventeenth-century French sacred music, as well as those curious to understand the *histoire sacrée* in the context of seventeenth-century French society.

Natasha M. Roule, *Harvard University*

*The Sixteenth-Century Trombone: Dimensions, Materials and Techniques.*

Hannes Vereecke.

Épitome musical. Turnhout: Brepols, 2016. 254 pp. €75.

---

*The Sixteenth-Century Trombone* brings the practical experiences and observations of a brass-instrument maker together with a scientific study of historic trombones by way of acoustical, geometrical, and metallurgical analysis of extant sixteenth-century trombones. The author aims to provide a practical and relevant theoretical framework within the context of the historically informed manufacturing of sixteenth-century trombones.

The volume is organized into eight chapters. The first four provide context and background in the areas of brass-instrument acoustics and engineering, and the properties of common types of brass. The author draws the reader's attention to the gaps in knowledge between scientific study and the experience of makers and performers. He is con-