

REVIEWS



BOOKS

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DAVIDE DAOLMI AND CESARE FERTONANI, EDS
ANTONIO BRIOSCHI E IL NUOVO STILE MUSICALE DEL SETTECENTO LOMBARDO: ATTI DEL CONVEGNO INTERNAZIONALE, ALESSANDRIA, 20–21 SETTEMBRE 2008
Milan: LED, 2010
pp. 448, ISBN 978 88 7916 469 6

It is always easier to come up with a grand title for a conference than to realize it in the volume of resulting papers, and, as so often in such circumstances, the result here makes little attempt at any overarching conceptual framework. Nevertheless, this collection of articles (mostly in Italian, with a handful in English) adds a good deal to our knowledge of north Italian music and its dissemination during the middle third of the eighteenth century.

Taken as read, and a constant background to the volume, are the extensive source studies, editions and analytical work pertaining to Giovanni Battista Sammartini (Bathia Churgin) and Antonio Brioschi (Sarah Mandel-Yehuda). Both composers flit in and out of focus throughout the volume, and among a number of useful source studies Mandel-Yehuda herself investigates issues of authenticity across the entire Brioschi symphonic corpus. Yet in terms of new documentary information the emphasis is more on the supporting cast, with biographical accounts of Gaetano Piazza, Francesco Zappa, Andrea Zani, Giuseppe Ferdinando Brivio, Ferdinando Galimberti and Giuseppe Paladini, enhanced by substantial thematic catalogues in each case except for the first. From my own research I can add the information that the cellist Zappa was in London in 1766, promoting a benefit concert on 1 May directed by Giardini (the advertisement confirming that he taught the Duke of York in both Milan and London). The Zani catalogue overlaps to some extent, though to a different purpose, with that in my book *The Italian Solo Concerto, 1700–1760: Rhetorical Strategies and Style History* (co-authored with Jehoash Hirshberg; Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), although the important collection of cello concertos in Wiesentheid is omitted in the current case.

Moving more towards the analytical are a number of comparative studies. Churgin contributes a fascinating study of a reworking of a Sammartini movement by Brioschi, transposed and re-proportioned in places, but nonetheless indisputably linked, while Davide Daolmi provides an interesting analysis of a variant of a Brioschi symphony in Brno, attributed in the source to the Prague composer Antonín Laube. Such concrete examples hint at some very real connections across Europe, as well as suggesting how composers regarded existing symphonic works not only as fair game but also as a laboratory for creative rethinking.

Where the volume struggles to live up to its aspirations is in the broader historical and critical perspectives. The conference organizers were clearly well aware of the difficulty of establishing a coherent argument around Brioschi and his broader musical environment. A thoughtful and provocative essay by Cesare Fertonani wrestles in particular with the question of regional style: whether common features can be identified in a 'Milanese school' even within the 1730s, let alone across the century (a discussion further complicated when extended to Lombardy and politically linked Austria). These are issues that Hirshberg and I explored in the context of the concerto, where a statistical approach to Lombardy works certainly did reveal



distinctive characteristics of concertos by Zani, Scaccia, Zuccari and the Sammartini brothers; but this could only be attempted by asking precise formal and stylistic questions across a sizeable repertoire.

Fertonani makes a particular plea for consideration of Italian theory, albeit citing familiar sources from the 1790s (Bella Brover-Lubovsky's work on earlier Italian theorists, as she explored in *Tonal Space in the Music of Antonio Vivaldi* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), could beneficially be brought to bear here). Other authors also implicitly or explicitly make a claim for this repertoire to be heard and analysed against aesthetic backgrounds departing from the mainstream course of German symphonic development. This is by now a familiar enough argument – that there are many tributaries in this delta – and it is explored in much more detail and with much more rigour in Mary Sue Morrow and Bathia Churgin's recent edited book, *The Symphonic Repertoire, Volume I: The Eighteenth-Century Symphony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), to which Mandel-Yehuda is herself a contributors.

A few authors do offer deeper analysis. An interesting close reading by Matteo Giuggioli engages with selected symphonies of Sammartini and Brioschi, referring to Mark Evan Bonds's rhetorical typologies in *Wordless Rhetoric: Musical Form and the Metaphor of the Oration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991) and the more empirical national distinctions drawn by Marie Louise Göllner, who stresses the tendency of Italian music towards an unfolding chain of relatively undifferentiated motives ('The Concept of Form in the Early 18th[-]Century Symphony', *Mozart Studien* 1 (1992), 121). Giuggioli discusses continuity and contrast in a way that goes beyond the superficial identification of thematic recurrences, seeking to identify distinctive characteristics that differentiate the rhetorical strategies of the two composers.

An alternative comparative approach emerges helpfully from the stress on dissemination that is implied in the conference rationale. Thus Rudolf Rasch cunningly fixes on the instrumental music at the 1738 centenary celebrations of the Amsterdam City Theatre (once thought mistakenly to have been attended by Vivaldi himself). A symphony by Sammartini jostled with music by the Florentine composer Chinzer, as well as Agrell, de Fesch and others. It is a small and not necessarily representative sample, but at least there is the opportunity to identify shared and distinctive features at the intersection of concerto and sinfonia. More ambitious is Bertil van Boer's discussion of the 'radical change' in the symphonies of Johan Helmich Roman, which argues in some detail and reasonably convincingly for the direct influence of Milan composers, Brioschi and 'Sartini' (Sammartini?) in particular, with whom Roman may have come into contact in 1737. The popularity of Brioschi's symphonies in Stockholm, even above those of Sammartini, is indeed striking.

But to populate this line of inquiry, to substantiate the claim for international influence as well as dissemination, would require a much wider research project. The well-established prominence of Lombardy composers in the Fonds Blancheton of the Paris Conservatoire library is mentioned several times, for example, but not followed up here; an essay on the London connection (Giuseppe Sammartini, Giardini, J. C. Bach) barely gets beyond reiteration of the most commonly cited sources (and misses the fact that Giardini did promote the music of Giovanni Battista Sammartini in London).

There is much else in this beautifully produced volume worthy of brief comment. Two symphonies by Carlo Monza are reproduced in their entirety, for reasons not immediately apparent – the composer lauded by Davide Verga in characteristically flowery terms as 'un Prospero davvero sopraffino' on account of a *Sinfonia detta La tempesta di mare*, here somewhat tendentiously linked with the Mannheim symphonic idiom. Francesco Riva draws attention to the periodical *Milano sacro*, essentially an almanac of Milan's ecclesiastical life from 1761 onwards, and to the author's useful online database. And hidden away are nuggets of information of broader significance. A wide-ranging essay on instruments and instrumentalists by Renato Meucci includes an informative section on virtuoso horn players, arguing persuasively that the soloist in the famously chromatic 'Lungi da te' in Mozart's *Mitridate* (Milan, 1770) was the little-known Parma musician Giulio Paer.



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-