



behalf of its subject, it must also serve as a monument to the memory of the gifted musicologist who wrote it. May her work never ‘count among the lost’.

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BERND KOSKA

DIE GERAER HOFKAPELLE ZU BEGINN DES 18. JAHRHUNDERTS

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Working with archival sources can be exciting and frustrating at the same time. Bernd Koska admits in the Preface to his study of the Gera court *Kapelle* in the early eighteenth century (c1698–1736) that it evolved from ‘the juxtaposition of a systematic search for, and coincidental discovery of, primary sources’ (‘aus einem Nebeneinander von gezielter Suche und eher zufälligen Quellenfunden’, ‘Vorwort’, no page number). This expanded and revised version of his MA dissertation in musicology (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2011) comprises eight chapters of text, a thirty-page appendix with tables and transcriptions of documents, two bibliographies, a list of figures and two indexes. These shine light on what courtly musical life was like in a region of central Germany that is typically associated with Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690–1749), director of the Gera *Kapelle* in 1718–1719, and Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688–1758), who worked at the court from 1715 to 1720.

The reference to Gera in Fasch’s autobiographical account from 1757 (published in volume 3 of Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg’s *Historisch-Kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik* (Berlin: G. A. Lange, 1757–1758) opens the short Introduction. It could have easily been integrated into the methodology chapter (‘Forschungsansatz’), in which the author explains first how he navigated the at times hopeless archival ‘situation’ and managed to discover new primary sources nonetheless. The directors of the Gera court *Kapelle* are examined next. Emanuel Kegel – born around 1665, not 1655, according to Koska – was appointed *Figuralkantor* and instructor at the local school (*Gymnasium*) in 1693. In 1699 he took over the position of town and court organist and was also given the title ‘Capell Director’. This implies that he was tasked with founding (or at least reorganizing) a bona fide *Kapelle*, albeit with little success. Eventually the court turned to Stölzel, who as a boy had attended the *Gymnasium* in Gera, participated in musical performances and possibly studied with Kegel. Much later, in 1713, Stölzel premiered a *Pastorale* at the court and was apparently offered the (newly created) position of Kapellmeister. He declined in favour of travelling to Italy, but ultimately returned to settle in Gera in March 1718. Curiously, Stölzel did not compose any music for public occasions during his short tenure; it was Kegel who continued to teach the choirboys. Whether or not the organist Johann Abraham Heiler led the *Kapelle* between Stölzel’s departure in November 1719 and Kegel’s reinstatement as *Capell Director* in 1722 could not be confirmed by the author. Nor was he able to determine who was left in charge of music at the court after Kegel died two years later. But Koska proves conclusively that the librettos for Stölzel’s first cantata cycle in Gotha (which were also set to music by Fasch, and in part by J. S. Bach) had been penned by a different brother-in-law of Stölzel, Christian Friedrich Knauer, rather than Johann Oswald Knauer (29–30).

In 1721 and again in 1725, Johann Sebastian Bach visited Gera. Koska speculates that Emanuel Kegel’s daughter Johanna Emilia, soprano at the Weissenfels court and wife of lutenist Adam Falckenhagen, could have helped to facilitate both trips (45–48). More convincing are the arguments that the author presents in



favour of Bach having considered the vacant Gera Kapellmeister position in 1721, and being interested in a 'Kapellmeister by proxy' title in 1725 (48). A year later, Johann Ludwig Kegel (who could have studied with Bach while attending university for a year in Leipzig) evidently took over his father's responsibilities as acting *Capell Director*. In 1732 the court sent him to Gotha take composition lessons with Stölzel.

The very few (and mostly sacred) extant works by the Kegel family are examined in chapter 4. In addition, Koska discusses lost compositions and reminds us that those attributed to 'a' Kegel could have been written by one of Johann Ludwig's musical brothers, Rudolph Christoph and August Heinrich; their sister Johanna Emilia also penned at least two librettos.

The membership of the court *Kapelle* is the focal point of chapter 5 (and the first section of the Appendix). Access to birth registers ('Taufbücher') and two inventories dating from 1712 and 1722 respectively allowed the author to identify previously unknown musicians. Koska also confirms that Johann Heinrich Feetz, not J. F. Fasch, was a member of the Gera *Kapelle* in 1712. The latter comprised three different ensembles (chamber musicians, trumpeters and drummers, and an oboe band) that helped to make musical life at the court of Gera vibrant throughout the second decade of the eighteenth century.

Chapter 6 sheds light on the choirboys or *Kapellknaben* (also 'Schlossschüler', 'Schlossdiskantisten'). From 1696 to 1736 between four and six boys participated regularly in special musical performances. Ranging between eight and eighteen years of age when recruited, they attended the local *Gymnasium*, trained with the *Capell Director* for two and a half years on average and received scholarships and money for their services. Two choirboys joined the adult singers Feetz (bass) and Kiesewetter (alto) during services at the court chapel, while another pair sang at the *Stadtkirche*, alternating locations on a weekly basis.

The repertoire of the Gera *Kapelle* is discussed in chapter 7. Given the absence of extant musical scores, Koska focuses first on the contents of a music inventory drawn up by Emanuel Kegel between 1714 and 1716 (86–92). The scoring of the primarily instrumental works listed highlights the early use of clarinets, oboes d'amore and, in particular, hunting horns ('Waldhörner') at the court of Gera. 'Misunderstandings' ('Missverständnisse', 2) found in Erdmann Werner Böhme's book on early German opera in Thuringia (*Die frühdeutsche Oper in Thüringen* (Stadtroda: Richter, 1931)) are clarified next. Koska emphasizes that the courts of Schleiz and Gera led completely separate musical lives, and that performances of 'Schuloper'n' by Gera *Gymnasiasten* did not take place at the court. The author also discovered two new librettos for two previously unknown works (99–101): *Der versöhnte Mars* (The Reconciled Mars, 1714) and the musical drama *Die vergnügte Blumen-[.] Feld- und Wald-Lust der angenehmen Sommer-Zeit* (The Pleasant Summer Time's Merry Flower, Field and Forest Delight[s], 1715). The latter's title page clearly identifies J. F. Fasch as the composer; perhaps he also wrote the 'Operette' that was performed on the occasion of a princely birthday in 1717. Moreover, Fasch was involved in special Easter music presented at the court in 1718.

In the final section of chapter 7 the author proposes a revised chronology for the two years that Fasch, in an effort to improve his performing and composing skills, spent travelling through central, western and southern Germany prior to settling in Gera in 1715. Most intriguing is Koska's suggestion (104–107) that Fasch could have made first contact with Lutheran Pietists as much as a decade before he met Count Zinzendorf in Dresden in 1726 or 1727. After all, the court preacher of Heinrich XXIV of Reuß-Köstritz – one of the rulers in this region of central Germany who aligned himself strongly with August Hermann Francke, the Pietist leader from Halle – married Fasch to a pastor's daughter in Köstritz near Gera in 1717.

The concluding chapter provides a snapshot of Koska's most important findings and discoveries. A substantially expanded version, translated into English, would have been a welcome addition to the volume *Music at German Courts, 1715–1760: Changing Artistic Priorities*, which I co-edited with Samantha Owens and Janice B. Stockigt (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011).

One of the most valuable parts of this study is the Appendix, especially the biographical information it provides for members of the *Kapelle* and the *Kapellknaben*. This emphasizes the need for a dictionary of court musicians active in central Germany during the first half of the eighteenth century. Transcriptions of two interesting primary sources from 1699 – Emanuel Kegel's varied job description and a detailed



Kapellknabenordnung – are also included in the Appendix. Ideally, both should have been quoted in full in the relevant chapter.

This brings me to several quibbles with this effective, if narrowly defined, study. Koska's Introduction would have benefitted from placing the court of Gera within a much larger historical context, and his methodology section lacks a transition to the 'Directors of the Court *Kapelle*' chapter that follows. The timelines offered in chapter 3 were often difficult to follow, and I would have appreciated more attention to the illustrations – they feel very much like afterthoughts. Figure 2 (a portrait of Heinrich XVIII of Reuß-Gera), for example, clearly belongs in chapter 1, and references to Figures 1, 2 and 3 appear nowhere in the respective chapters. Particularly frustrating is Figure 9, Emanuel Kegel's original – and highly significant – *Musicalieninventar*. Koska provides no transcription; instead, he asks the reader (in a footnote!) to consult Michael Maul's article on the primary source ('Johann Sebastian Bachs Besuche in der Residenzstadt Gera', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 90 (2004), 101–119). Numbering the helpful tables and overviews presented in chapter 5 would also have been advantageous, as would have been the provision of summaries at the ends of chapters, and of more and smoother transitions between them.

Despite these minor criticisms, and particularly given the plethora of archival sources examined for *Die Geraer Hofkapelle zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts*, we must thank Bernd Koska for expanding our knowledge of musical life at the minor court of Gera in central Germany. A logical next step would be to focus more on Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel – a PhD dissertation or monograph on his impact as composer and Kapellmeister is long overdue.

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DEBORAH W. ROOKE

HANDEL'S ISRAELITE ORATORIO LIBRETTI: SACRED DRAMA AND BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

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The interdisciplinary study of Johann Sebastian Bach's music, and in particular his sacred works, has become a firmly established area of research, reaching back at least to the middle of the twentieth century. By comparison, Handel scholars have shown far less interest in how intellectual, political and religious contexts have shaped the composer's oeuvre. A seminal publication in this field was Ruth Smith's *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), which, for the first time, offered a comprehensive account of the contemporary aesthetic, ideological and theological debates that left their marks on Handel's oratorio librettos. In doing so, it paved the way for analyses of specific oratorios such as this reviewer's *Händels Messiah: Text, Musik, Theologie* (Bad Reichenhall: Comes, 2007) or Michael Marissen's *Tainted Glory in Handel's Messiah: The Unsettling History of the World's Most Beloved Choral Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). Another noteworthy recent contribution to contextual research into Handel's oratorios is Deborah Rooke's *Handel's Israelite Oratorio Libretti: Sacred Drama and Biblical Exegesis*. In addition to being a keen amateur musician, Rooke is Research Fellow in Bible and Music at the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture, and has research interests in cult and ritual in the Old Testament as well as feminist and gendered readings of the Old Testament. Primarily a biblical exegete, the author circumnavigates the musical aspects of Handel's oratorios, focusing instead on the message of the librettos in their own right. The two main questions that are put to these texts are