

13 | The Development of Opera in the German Countries

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Statistical Analysis

The beginnings of German-language opera can only be sketched loosely based on available sources. Our knowledge of its early history depends on ‘dates without visual aids’¹ and ‘words without songs’, that is, mentions of performances and dates in more-or-less reliable archives, chronicles, and bibliographies,² as well as mute libretti, which ultimately only hint at how the first opera-like works in German sounded and were performed onstage. The musical losses must be considerable. According to cautious estimates, in the twenty-four known sites of operatic performance in Protestant-Lutheran regions in northern, central, and southern Germany, about 230 works were performed in the seventeenth century alone.³

When reconstructing the beginnings of German-language opera, we must turn to speculation since the pieces that survive only as libretti raise at least as many questions as they seem to answer. Often, it cannot even be determined with certainty whether a certain multi-act libretto was actually intended as a ‘stage action entirely to be sung’ – Werner Braun’s definition for ‘German Baroque Opera’⁴ – or simply as a spoken play interspersed with songs.

Early History

Early efforts towards *Singspiele* occurred in Protestant regions. Here, in the wake of Luther’s Bible translation, new worship practices, educational curricula, and ultimately the flourishing language societies – especially ‘The Fruitbearing Society’ (*Die fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*) founded by Prince Ludwig of Anhalt-Köthen – the mother tongue was musically elevated to an art form. In contrast, in German Catholic lands, the language of early opera was Italian (just as Latin remained the language of church music), and the leading composers were ‘imported’ from Italy at great expense.

The earliest documentation for performances of Italian opera in German-speaking areas is comparatively precise, though fraught with some uncertainties. These performances significantly predated German opera, and took place close to the birth of the genre and in Catholic regions, especially the Court of Marcus Sitticus, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. Here, during carnival in 1614, an anonymous *Orfeo* was performed in a newly constructed theatre. Two years earlier, the singer Francesco Rasi (1574–1621), who premièred Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (Mantua, 1607), had given the prince-archbishop a number of musical items, possibly including a score of Monteverdi's work; the conjecture arises that this setting may actually have been performed in Salzburg.⁵ Additional (Catholic) German courts that had become centres of Italian opera by 1680 include the Imperial Court in Vienna, Regensburg (in connection with the *Reichstag*), Innsbruck, and Munich.⁶ These stages were almost exclusively supplied with Italian composers. An exception was the Electoral Court of Munich. Here, the Saxon-born Hofkapellmeister Johann Caspar Kerll (1627–1693) – educated in Vienna with Froberger and with Carissimi in Rome – wrote at least nine Italian operas between 1657 and 1672; the music has been lost.

The Torgau *Dafne*, 1627

The printed libretto for the 'Tragicomoedia von der *Dafne*' is generally counted as the oldest surviving document related to German-language opera. According to information provided by the title page, Martin Opitz's libretto (based on Ottavio Rinuccini's *Dafne*, 1598) is said to have been brought 'musically to the stage' in 1627 in Torgau by the Dresden Hofkapellmeister Heinrich Schütz in honour of the marriage of the Saxon elector's eldest daughter to the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel. However, Wolfram Steude has plausibly argued that the scanty contemporary statements on *Dafne*'s structure (from court diaries and other archival documents) point rather to the form of a *Singspiel* or spoken play, and therefore a work containing limited individual musical scenes.⁷ This is especially plausible because the characterisation of the piece as the first German opera apparently stems from the Leipzig professor of philosophy Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–1766). Gottsched, who had access only to the libretto, may have concluded from the collaboration between the 'Father of German poetry' (Opitz) and the 'Father of modern German music' (Schütz) that an epoch-making piece of theatre must have been performed in Torgau

at that time. Admittedly, *Dafne* did not take the most prominent position among the stage works performed in conjunction with the wedding. And the libretto seems decidedly untheatrical. In any case, there is hardly room for the expressive recitative-like style that Schütz himself would later call 'style oratorio' in the title of his *Kleinen Geistlichen Konzert* 'Eile mich, Gott, zu erretten' SWV282 (Leipzig, 1636). As late as 1633, Schütz noted in a letter that the Italian manner in which 'a spoken comedy of many voices could be translated and brought to the stage to be sung . . . to my knowledge (in the way I conceive it) is still completely unknown in Germany', and thus established a relatively lagging state of development.⁸

It is possible that Schütz initiated a type of opera project that was 'still completely unknown' in Germany when he composed music 'in an Italian manner' for the ballet *Orpheus und Eurydice* (libretto by August Buchner) in 1638 on the occasion of another electoral wedding.⁹

The Nuremberg *Seelewig*, 1644

The earliest preserved music for an entirely sung German-language theatrical piece is for the *Geistliche Waldgedicht* [German counterpart to *Favola boscareccia*] oder *Freudenspiel, genant Seelewig* by the well-travelled Nuremberg patrician Georg Philipp Harsdörffer (libretto; 1607–1658) and the local organist and town piper Sigmund Theophil Staden (1607–1655).¹⁰ In 1644, Harsdörffer founded the 'Order of the Commendable Shepherds and Flowers on the Pegnitz' (*Löblichen Hirten- und Blumenorden an der Pegnitz*: in short, the 'Pegnitz Flower Order') on the model of the Italian academies. The stated purpose for founding this language society was the cultivation and improvement of German language and poetry. This was reason enough for Harsdörffer to publish eight volumes of so-called 'Spoken Plays for Women' (*Frauen-Zimmer Gespräch-Spiele*) during the 1640s. At the end of the fourth volume of the anthology (publ. 1644) is the music for the *Geistlichen Waldgedicht* that Staden – according to the title – had 'set' to Music 'in the Italian way of singing'. The plot and form of *Seelewig* point to much older Italian models, especially Emilio de' Cavalieri's *La Rappresentazione di Anima, et di Corpo* (Rome, 1600), although Harsdörffer's nymph, who must decide between heavenly and earthly joys, is called *Seelewig* rather than *Anima*. Her adversary is *Trügewaldt* (*trügen*: 'to deceive'), a cloven-hoofed satyr, who over the course of three acts tries in vain to lure her to ruin, with all kinds of cunning and some outside assistance. Only the prologue, in which

'Music or Singing' enters the scene, is reminiscent of Monteverdi and his *Orfeo*. Otherwise, *Seelewig* is far from Monteverdi's principles of *seconda pratica*, especially in its musical language. Staden's music and Harsdörffers's text follow a rather pedagogical, instructive approach, even in the instrumentation: strings and flutes for the nymph, shawms for the shepherd; Trügewald supported by trombones and bassoons; and a theorbo playing continuo. Italian recitative seems foreign to these Nuremberg authors. Protagonists speak almost exclusively in strophic form, whether in solo songs or in strophic dialogue. In both genres, the music remains much closer to the contemporary German lied (as practiced by Heinrich Albert and Andreas Hammerschmidt) than to Schütz's 'style oratorio'; phrases in true recitative are the exception, and grand laments are entirely absent. What is operatic is that the print of Harsdörffer's 'Liederspiel' contains eleven stage engravings. The 'Art of Painting' (*Mahlkunst*) even appears onstage in the epilogue, and, in the accompanying conversation, the ideal stage is described as an 'often-changing scene' in the form of a 'round disc', which is 'painted with perspective' and 'can be rotated'.¹¹

Whether, by whom, and how *Seelewig* may have been performed in Nürnberg remains unknown. In any case, in 1654 in Wolfenbüttel, a good 300 kilometres away, a performance of *Seelewig* has been documented in honor of the seventy-fifth birthday of Duke August, brought about by his music-loving wife Sophie Elisabeth von Braunschweig-Lüneburg, who was a composer herself.

The Newly Discovered *Pastorello musicale* in Königsberg, 1663

The oldest surviving German-language opera manuscript dates from 1663: the *Pastorello musicale* (title on the partial autograph score) or the *Verliebte Schäffer-Spiel*¹² (title on the printed text) by Königsberg Hofkapellmeister Johann Sebastiani (1622–1683),¹³ which was performed in the presence of the Great Elector to mark the wedding of Count Gerhard von Dönhoff with the step-daughter of the influential Prussian Oberregimentsrat and Landeshofmeister Johann Ernst von Wallenrodt, Anna Beata von Goldstein (1644–1675).

The libretto is by Johann Röling (1634–1680), who succeeded Simon Dachs as Professor of Poetry at the University of Königsberg in 1660. Even if the piece is dressed in the trappings of a pastoral opera, it is actually a satire of the genre. The plot involves Thyrsis, a foreigner, who has since his youth read and internalised novels, pastoral plays, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Believing all of this literary and mythological material to be true, he decides to go out into the pastoral world in hopes of encountering ‘pastoral desire and transformation’.¹⁴ Immediately after arriving in the supposed pastoral world – a courtly society that takes great pleasure in the confused ‘intruder’ – he falls in love with the beautiful Chrysille. For five acts, the amused company enjoys putting on a series of traditional bucolic scenes, arranged into episodes, for the naïve foreigner. However, these behavioural patterns are used as the basis for parody, in order to take the various models of pastoral literature down exaggerated new paths from the burlesque to the satirical. In the first act, Chrysille becomes a false Echo; in the following act, Thyrsis refuses to fight with a rival suitor bearing a rapier – in his literary pastoral world, the only suitable instrument for a duel is the shepherd’s staff. Eventually, Thyrsis is rejected by Chrysille, flees in tears, falls into a hollow tree stump, and believes himself, like Daphne, to have been transformed into a tree. Goddesses of the forest dance around him, greeting him as one of their own. The absurd story ends with joy all around.

Röling’s text is based on a specific model: Thomas Corneille’s pastoral play *Le Berger Extravagant* (publ. 1653), itself a stage adaptation of the French novel of the same name by Charles Sorel. Here, Don Quixote is ‘translated into the bucolic’. Andreas Gryphius had already engaged with Corneille’s play in 1660, with his ‘satyrical comedy’ *Der Schwärmende Schäfer* (expanded edition Breslau, 1660).

Sebastiani’s score encompasses eighteen scenes in five acts. Recitative predominates in the approximately 2,000 measures, which otherwise include only seven strophic sections: five arias (some with ritornelli), as well as opening and closing choruses. The recitative is formulaic, primarily ‘babbling’ eighth-notes strung together syllabically in even metres. Sebastiani only sparingly uses effects such as melismas to illustrate the text, changes to triple metre, or the repetition of words and phrases. Nevertheless, his recitative follows certain formal principles and is not without charm. It falls into two types – one more songlike and one more freely structured – and one type often leads fluidly into the other; the song-like recitative resembles the style of the arias, which have ritornelli and a tendency towards symmetry and clear divisions akin to Adam Krieger’s contemporary lieder. In addition, clear echoes of Francesco Cavalli’s canzonetta style of the 1640s can be heard, appearing also in many of Sebastiani’s surviving occasional songs¹⁵ – born in Thüringen, Sebastiani is thought to have travelled to Italy before arriving in Königsberg (1650).¹⁶

What the *Pastorello musicale* is missing musically are distinctively dramatic passages and a large number of arias and instrumental sections,

which, if they were present, would make it easier to designate the *Pastorello musicale* an opera. Nevertheless, such reservations are subject to a misunderstanding. The apparent defects of the piece are less a matter of Sebastiani's conception or any potential step backwards in the development of German theatrical music than of the principles of its genre: Sebastiani's *Pastorello* is a pastoral opera, whose charm lies in its humour. Röling did not provide models for expressive monodies, and Corneille even less so. The libretto did not even designate a 'lamento'. Sebastiani created an instrumental one (end of Act II). In any case, Sebastiani convincingly set the conversational text in a natural manner, that is by following speech declamation and avoiding 'dead pauses' in the music. The 'singing recitative' differentiates the piece, sometimes fundamentally, from the later German-language operas of the 1680s and 1690s.¹⁷ Presumably, Sebastiani was not alone in his treatment of recitative, and so the opera could be viewed as representative of all lost German operas from around 1660. At least, this *Pastorello musicale* provides the first proof of Johann Mattheson's claim that German opera was originally – and thus surely before 1680 – sung 'in time, as our Arioso is now'.¹⁸

Königsberg was certainly not a focal point for the development of German-language opera, and neither was Sebastiani an innovator in theatrical music. The value of his *Pastorello musicale* lies in the uniqueness of its transmission. It is hardly possible to estimate the extent to which various courts with mid-century operatic activity may have developed forms that were more clearly aligned (and analogous to developments in Protestant church music) with the truly dramatic examples coming from Venice or Rome.

Italians Compose Operas in Dresden

Among Protestant lands, the Dresden Hofkapelle held an exceptional position, even before the elector converted to Catholicism (1697, in order to become King of Poland). In the middle of the seventeenth century, the court was largely staffed by Italians, a situation that led to the formation of two competing ensembles in 1666: a mostly Italian 'first choir' for official court music, and a 'small German music' (*Kleine deutsche Musik*) primarily for Protestant worship services.¹⁹

Likewise, it was an Italian who opened a new chapter of opera history in Dresden: Giovanni Andrea Bontempi (1625–1705) of Piegara near Perugia, a pupil of Virgilio Mazzocchi, and apparently the first castrato employed in Protestant Germany. After entering into the elector's service as a singer and

composer in 1650, his duties soon expanded in theatrical directions: in 1657 he became Vice-Kapellmeister, and in 1664 the architect, machine-master, and inspector of the new comedy theatre. A correspondingly large number of documents exist for *Singballette* performed under his watch. Bontempi's first opera for Dresden was a first-rate representational product: in honour of the marriage of the daughter of Elector Johann Georg II, Erdmuthe Sophie, to the Margrave of Brandenburg-Bayreuth in 1662, he composed *Il Paride*, the first Italian opera performed in Dresden. It would remain representative for posterity as well, as not only the text but also the score was published, a practically unique occurrence north of the Alps.

The libretto, apparently also by Bontempi, embellishes Paris's famous judgement in the goddesses' contest for the apple and concludes with the arrival of Paris and Helena in Troy. In part, it follows Giacomo Badoaro's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*. In the preface to the print edition, Bontempi designates the piece – appropriately for the occasion – as an 'Erotopaegnion Musicum', that is, a 'play of love, set in music'. Despite a relatively linear narrative style, it demanded a lot of attention from the Dresden *Festgesellschaft*: fourteen singers play thirty-one roles, acting out the story of a love triangle. All of the entertainment that Venetian opera can offer is present here: the stuttering Ancrocco, a constantly quarrelling servant couple, and of course some cross-dressing confusion. In short, 'all these scenes run one to the next like a string of pearls', without, however, 'getting entangled in a knot of intrigue'.²⁰

Bontempi's music offers pronounced declamatory recitatives, with arias mostly in triple time; strophic and cyclical arias stand side-by-side on equal footing. There are also large scenes in which Bontempi artfully combines arioso and recitative sections. What is surprising about the score, however, is that the most dramatic notes are found in the scenes of the comic servant figures – causing, so to speak, 'dramatic' strain on the laughing muscles.

In 1667, the new Komödienhaus am Taschenberg designed by Wolf Caspar von Klengel was dedicated with a performance of the opera *Il Teseo* (music by Pietro Andrea Ziani). In 1671, Bontempi ventured for the first time to write a German-language opera, *Musicalisches Schauspiel von der Dafne*, which was written together with his Kapellmeister colleague, Marco Giuseppe Peranda. It is impossible to differentiate their styles. In comparison with *Paride*, a stronger emphasis on strophic arias with instrumental ritornelli is noticeable, which might come from the large number of scenes involving the peasant world.²¹ The libretto is based on Opitz's earlier text, but in more contemporary clothing: the traditional plot is enriched with additional gods, shepherds, and elements from the world of Venetian

opera. For example, the anonymous librettist freely adapted servant-scenes in distinctively lower-class language and with ribald lines, such as when the peasant Urban asks, 'Did the devil screw us over' ('Hat der Teufel uns beschissen?'), or when conversation turns to the 'damned whore'.

The score was clearly tailored to the capability of the Dresden Hofkapelle, especially regarding the figure of the hunter. The fact that he usually stands alone on the stage and his part is rather more virtuosic than the others points to Johann Jäger, then a singer in the German Kapelle in Dresden. Mattheson reports that Jäger far surpassed the Italian bass whom the elector had engaged for the Hofkapelle, so as to keep up with the emperor in Vienna – 'not only with his voice, but also with his clean manner'; Jäger 'lay in wait for the cadenzas of the castrati, which they stretched out; when these had passed, Jäger came along and sang his wonderful *passagi*, much better than those'.²²

The following year, the same pair of authors brought another German opera to the stage: *Jupiter und Io*, of which only the libretto has survived.

Upon the death of Elector Johann Georg II (22 August 1680), the tender sprout of German-language opera withered at the Dresden court. His successor, Johann Georg III, preferred Italian operas, which he procured, together with staff, directly from the source (Venice), namely the successful opera composer and *maestro di coro* of the Ospedale degli incurabili, Carlo Pallavicino (ca. 1630–1688). After having served as Vice-Kapellmeister (1662–1672) and succeeding Schütz as Kapellmeister (1672) in Dresden, he was called back to the court as Prefect of chamber and court music in 1687 with the goal of establishing Italian court opera. Immediately after his arrival, the opera *Gerusalemme liberata* (Giulio Cesare Corradi, after Tasso) was premièred, in parallel with Venice, based on one of the greatest texts of Italian literature. The opera centres around the pagan sorceress Armida, who converts to Christianity for the love of Rinaldo. In parallel, the duel of Tancredi and Clorinda is told with a kind of happy ending: Clorinda appears to Tancredi in a dream and confesses her love. In comparison with Bontempi's work, Pallavicino's music was a quantum leap ahead: the score is characterised by three-part da capo arias and a marked virtuosity.

Together with his son Stefano (1672–1742), who became Court Poet when he was hardly sixteen, Pallavicino probably began his last opera project in 1687: *Antiopè*. Left incomplete upon Pallavicino's death on 29 January 1688, the work was eventually completed by the newly arrived Vice-Kapellmeister Nikolaus Adam Strungk (1640–1700) and premiered in February 1689. From the surviving copy of the manuscript, it is impossible

to determine who wrote which sections, an indication that Strungk persuasively attempted to imitate Pallavicino's style.

In the years after Pallavicino's death, opera culture in Dresden seems to have lost its lustre at times. This is not least because a main figure, namely Strungk (who had been a pioneer of Baroque opera in Hamburg) regularly brought German-language operas to the stage for the elector elsewhere within the electorate: during the fairs, in the civic opera house on the Brühl in Leipzig.

Opera Tradition in Smaller Central German Courts, 1660–1700: Highlights in Halle and Weißenfels

A rich courtly opera tradition developed in the 1660s and 1670s at smaller courts, especially in central Germany.²³ However, research relies exclusively on silent witnesses: printed libretti and here and there other archival material related to performance. Focal points were the ducal courts of Gotha, Halle, and Weißenfels.

Opera in Halle is tied to Duke Augustus (1614–1680), son of the Saxon Elector Johann Georg I, who lived in this city as Administrator of the Archbishopric of Magdeburg – since the Peace of Westphalia, under the toleration of the House of Brandenburg, to whom the archbishopric was to fall after the duke's death. The artistically minded duke, who became president of the Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft in 1667, invested remarkable resources in the cultural life of the court. He had a comedy theatre built, whose budget was at times on a par with those of Dresden and Gotha. His Hofkapelle had approximately twenty members, including some singers who later achieved fame on the stages of Weißenfels and Hamburg. Printed libretti and archival materials from Halle between 1658 and 1679, often in connection with festivities and honorary days in the ducal house, document productions of well over twenty stage works: libretto titles call them 'Sing-Spiele' with ballets and 'Trauer- und Freudenspiele', although it is often not clear whether the latter were sung through, or were rather plays with individual songs and entr'acte music.²⁴ Subjects run the gamut from the biblical and bucolic to the antique and medieval, with texts that are often remarkably substantial and, in many cases, have a moral undertone. The libretti use various forms. Within one piece, such as the fest-opera in honor of a princely marriage in 1669, *Liebe krönt Eintract, oder erworbene Prinzessin Mösien*, long passages evidently

in recitative style stand alongside closed ensemble scenes (canzonettas, madrigals?) or strophic arias and antiphonal conversations.

The primary librettist for opera in Halle was probably – most printed libretti do not list an author – the local councillor and privy secretary David Elias Heidenreich (1638–1688), who was also the secretary for the Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft. In addition, he made a contribution to church music history: his volume *Geistlichen Oden* (1665), with texts for all Sundays and festival days with a mixture of biblical dicta and freely written strophic arias, represents the birth of the so-called concerto-aria cantata.²⁵ Initially, Philipp Stolle, the director of court music, seems to have been responsible for the music of the operas in Halle, but, from 1660, Schütz's pupil David Pohle (1624–1695, Kapellmeister from 1661) took over. However, Pohle left the court over a dispute in 1679, after the duke had engaged as his deputy a student of Rosenmüller, Johann Philipp Krieger (1649–1725), who had matured as a composer in Venice and Rome. From his new home in Merseburg, Pohle then seems to have supplied the Gotha court with several pieces made in the 'Halle model' in the 1680s: opera apparently flourished here in the 1680s and 1690s under Dukes Friedrich I and II and Kapellmeister Wolfgang Michael Mylius.²⁶

Meanwhile, Krieger was an opera composer primarily in Weißenfels. After the death of Duke August of Halle (1680), his son Johann Adolf I continued the tradition of rich and ambitious opera activity. In the time before his death in 1697, records can be traced for over thirty opera productions in the 'Schau-Platz' in the Neu-Augustusburg, and both of his sons continued the tradition with equal enthusiasm despite the small duchy's precarious economic situation until the 1720s.²⁷ Most of the scores (all of which have been lost) were by Krieger and were performed by what was, considering the size of the duchy, a relatively large and capable Hofkapelle with additional paid guest musicians. The topics vary widely. Some of the mostly anonymous libretti are slavish translations of famous Italian texts and are entirely up-to-date. Identifiable librettists include Paul Thymich (Thiemich or Thiemick; 1656–1694), teacher at the Leipzig Thomasschule and husband of a celebrated opera singer, Anna Catherina, and the young preacher Erdmann Neumeister (1671–1756). Both were deeply influenced by contemporary *opera seria*, and Neumeister soon transferred its basic elements – the alternation of recitative and da capo arias – into other genres. First for Krieger and the court at Weißenfels, and shortly thereafter for the entire generation of young musicians around Telemann and Bach, Neumeister developed the poetic form of the church 'cantata' around 1700, which he conceived of as looking like 'nothing other . . . than a section from an opera,

composed of *stilo recitativo* and arias'.²⁸ Two printed collections include musical material from the early Weißenfels court operas, with 'selected arias' from seven 'Sing-Spiele', published in 1690 and 1692. The approximately 200 pieces remain largely in the tradition of the German strophic lied with primarily syllabic declamation and instrumental ritornelli; traces of his Italian musical education can be found most clearly in the bass ostinato aria 'Einsamkeit, du Qual der Herzen' (from the opera *Die ausgesöhnte Eifersucht oder Cephalus und Procris*, 1689).

Agostino Steffani: Catalyst for German Opera and Political Opera in Catholic Courts in Munich, Hanover, and Düsseldorf

The centres of Italian opera in Catholic Germany in the late seventeenth century were Munich, Hanover, and Düsseldorf.²⁹ Opera in these three courts is inextricably linked with the name of Agostino Steffani, the 'key figure for the establishment of Italian culture in Germany' and a 'clever transmitter of new musical ideas to the next generation'.³⁰ Born in Castelfranco near Venice in 1654, he came to the court of Ferdinand Maria, the Bavarian elector in Munich, at age twelve. Steffani was a choirboy and composition student of Kerll. Under Elector Maximilian Emanuel II (Ferdinand Maria's successor), Steffani began his career as a diplomat and opera composer – and quickly excelled in both fields. Ordained as a priest in 1680, he had written at least six operas for Munich by 1688: *Marco Aurelio*, *Solone*, *Audacia e rispetto*, *Servio Tullio*, *Alarico il Baltha*, and *Niobe, Regina di Tebe*. The last two are based on texts by Luigi Orlandi, while the earlier libretti are by Ventura Terzago. Like his career, Steffani's operas were increasingly political. His Munich operas are all allegories about the elector; they honor the ideal ruler.

Steffani first met his next employer, Duke Ernst August of Hanover, in 1683 while conducting diplomatic inquiries into the possibility of a marriage between the duke's daughter Sophia Charlotte and the Bavarian elector (she eventually married into the Prussian royal family as the wife of King Frederick I). However, Steffani's primary diplomatic assignment in the Hanover Court was to help Ernst August to become elector, which eventually occurred in 1692. Musical life in the Hanover court had been dominated by Italian forces. Following Duke Johann Friedrich's conversion to Catholicism (r. 1665–1679), Kapellmeister Antonio Sartorio (1630–1680) and eight Italian singers provided Catholic church music during the 1670s. Ernst August, who re-introduced Lutheranism, entirely reshaped his Hofkapelle

along the lines of Lully, dismissing singers and instrumentalists and replacing them with many French musicians. There began an entirely brilliant period in Hanover musical theatre, initially in the castle theatre (1678), and then from 1689 in the new, larger castle theatre built by Tommaso Giusti (stage machinery by Johann Oswald Harms). Contemporaries called it 'the best in all of Europe' due to 'both the painting and the furnishings'.³¹

Steffani composed multiple Italian operas for these stages, beginning with the highly political *Henrico Leone* (Ortensio Mauro, 1689). The piece treats the history of the heroic Hanoverian Duke Heinrich (called Henry the Lion) – Frederick Barbarossa's powerful rival – and thus indirectly supports Ernst August's claim to the throne.³² Steffani's remaining seven operas for Hanover were also used for court propaganda, especially as his work for the Welfs increasingly focused on diplomatic service; in 1695, he moved to Brussels as a Hanoverian envoy.

Finally, in 1703, Steffani arrived in Düsseldorf in the service of Palatine Elector Johann Wilhelm, now as a secret councillor, soon to be President of the Palatinate and rector of the University of Heidelberg. His operas composed for the court of Düsseldorf remained political: with his last opera, *Tassilone* (Stefano Pallavicino, 1709), he celebrated the success of his employer in having taken the Upper Palatinate from the Prince-Elector of Bavaria; the libretto reflects the contemporary political situation rather clearly. Meanwhile, in the same year, Steffani returned to Hanover, now as Vicar Apostolic – a result of his excellent relations with Pope Innocent XI. His main task was the re-catholicisation of Protestant northern Germany; he spent the rest of his life in diplomatic service (d. 1728 in Frankfurt).

Steffani's operas, mostly preserved, are musically varied. His colourful arias offer imaginative da capo and dal segno forms. Their instrumentation is often more French than Italian; he often uses five-part strings, establishes the oboe in the opera orchestra, and composes arias for obbligato bassoon, cello, and even lute. The chalumeau is used in his Düsseldorf operas, even within recitative.

Niobe, Steffani's last Munich opera, is surely his most musically important piece from his time at the Bavarian court. Steffani created some enthralling, vividly composed scenes on the tragic story of the Queen of Thebes: to punish her, the gods kill her children, and in her pain she transforms into a stone. One example is the singing of Niobe's husband, Amphion, in the first act of the opera (Act I scene 13), when he, the inventor of the lyre, stages the harmony of the spheres and transforms them into enchanting sounds. Steffani writes a da capo aria ('Sfere amiche')

over an ostinato bass in running quarter notes, over which viols and flutes unfurl in a colourful and polyphonic manner typical of his style. Thus, the ostinato represents order on the one hand, and, on the other, the everlasting oscillation of the spheres. Unlike the tonally stable A section (in B-flat major), the B section takes a harmonious journey through seven sometimes remote keys (from D minor through C minor, E-flat major, G minor, and A-flat major back to C minor and E-flat major) – surely a reference to the seven planetary orbits.³³

A remarkable fusion of Italian and French elements is to be found in Steffani's works, some of which made the leap from courtly stages to the commercial Hamburg stage. Here, they offered the north German generation of Johann Sigismund Kusser (1660–1727), Georg Caspar Schürmann (1672/3–1751), Reinhard Keiser (1674–1739), Handel, and Telemann both a benchmark and a model, which played a not insignificant role in the shaping of their own operatic styles.

Opera Focal Point: Wolfenbüttel/Braunschweig

French and Italian opera came together in the court of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel starting in the 1680s. Numerous German-language opera-like structures have already been documented between 1657 and 1663.³⁴ Surviving printed libretti are mostly by the artistically minded Prince Anton Ulrich (1633–1714), a life-long author who hardly missed a literary or poetic genre from the historical novel and the opera libretto all the way to the religious song. The composer of these early operas was apparently the Schütz pupil Johann Jakob Löwe of Eisenach (1629–1703), who was Kapellmeister in Wolfenbüttel from 1655 to 1663.

After Anton Ulrich had come to know and appreciate Italian opera in Venice in the early 1680s, operatic activity was renewed in Wolfenbüttel in the mid-1680s, now with a notably European perspective and under the leadership of new Kapellmeister Johann Theile (1646–1724), a pioneer of the Gänsemarkt Opera. For a few years starting in 1685, French operas (mostly Lully) and Italian operas (mostly Venetian) were performed in colourful alternation in the original language in the Wolfenbüttel court theatre (built in 1688) or in the summer palace Salzdahlum.

In 1690 in the neighbouring trade-fair town of Braunschweig, Ulrich renovated the town hall on the Hagenmarkt as an opera house. Operas were performed during trade fairs (during carnival) for members of the Wolfenbüttel court, invited nobles, and also a ticket-buying general public.

Unlike the performances in Wolfenbüttel, the Braunschweig operas were primarily sung in German. The texts were mostly by court poet Friedrich Christian Bressand, with music by the newly arrived Kapellmeister Kusser, and later (from 1695) by Kapellmeisters Keiser and Schürmann; the operas were closely connected with the Hamburg stage, in terms of both content and personnel. The Italian works heard in Wolfenbüttel were generally imports, with the exception of a few by Clemente Monari (c. ? 1660–d. ? after 1728), who was engaged as the court ‘Maestro di Capella di Camera’ in 1692.

Public Opera Houses in Hamburg and Leipzig, and Their Protagonists

In Germany, opera was relatively slow to move from the closed walls of elite courtly society out into the public. It first became ‘public’ and commercial on 2 January 1678, when the first public opera house opened its doors on the Gänsemarkt in Hamburg; it operated for sixty years before ending in bankruptcy. ‘Public’ refers primarily to the form of organisation: a standing opera house unattached to a court, whose performances were open to anyone who could buy a ticket, and led by bourgeois figures who ran the theatre at their own financial risk. This development is also a striking episode in music history because these public opera houses (Braunschweig in 1690 – though that house was *de facto* financed and run by the duke – and Leipzig in 1693) provided the playground for a thoroughly original operatic development in Germany, which was initially entirely in the German language.

However, one should approach very cautiously the tempting conclusion that this situation of opera in a public context was the spark for the development of German national opera. Although the repertoire in the first two decades of ‘public’ and commercial opera in Protestant Germany consisted almost entirely of German-language works written by German composers and poets, the libretti and music were both European, that is, under Italian and French influence. Even in 1677 when seeking permission for the first opera in Hamburg, Theile (who would soon join the opera’s permanent staff) expressly requested permission to ‘present a few musical operas in the Italian style’.

Many of the figures on, behind, and in front of the stage who influenced developments beginning in 1693 at the Gänsemarkt Opera in Hamburg and the Leipzig Opera moved in courtly circles. A contemporary witness at the dedication of the Hamburg Opera remarked sceptically: ‘It seemed that

Hamburg, with so many merchants and intermediaries, [was] unsuited to opera.³⁵ And it was no coincidence that Mattheson emphasised in 1728: ‘The performance of opera contradicts the disposition of the residents; to sum it up, operas are more for kings and princes than for merchants and traders.’³⁶

The impulse to found an opera house in Hamburg began with a regent: Christian Albrecht of Schleswig-Gottorf, a deposed duke who had ceded his small state to the Danish king in 1675 and lived in exile in Hamburg. It was the jurist Gerhard Schott (1641–1702), an artistically minded patrician and member of the Hamburg Council beginning in 1693, who put these plans into action; at first he partnered with financiers Johann Adam Reincken (1643–1722; organist at St Catherine’s Church) and Hamburg Mayor Peter Lütkens (der Jüngere), and then served as sole owner and director from 1685, solving several staff and economic crises during this time, and leading the operation until his death.³⁷ Such crises arose, not least because the house and the genre faced a great deal of public criticism early on, especially from religious figures. The initial attempt to establish the cathedral refectory as a performance site was denied by religious authorities. Thus, Schott and his backers had to commission the Italian master-builder Girolamo Sartorio to build a new freestanding house on the Gänsemarkt: a wooden building with a twenty-eight-foot-deep stage, four stories of loges (for the well-off public), as well as a gallery and a parterre; the house accommodated about 2,000 spectators.³⁸ The completed house evidently offered performances three or even sometimes four times per week, with a variable repertory. By 1700, ninety-five different pieces had been staged.³⁹

The house opened in January 1678 with Theile’s *Orontes* (librettist unknown). It seems as if the singers first performed *Der erschaffene, gefallene und aufgerichtete Mensch* (libretto by Christian Richter, music likely by Theile), an opera about Adam and Eve.⁴⁰ Against the background of fermenting hostility on the part of the clergy, this was probably a conciliatory gesture. The prophylactic effect failed, however, because, although the subjects of the Hamburg operas in the following years were often of biblical origin, the critics did not hold back. Many pastors preached against opera and the opera house from the pulpit, as well as in polemical pamphlets, calling opera a hotbed of sin – the so-called ‘theological dispute’ (*Theologenstreit*) on the suitability of the genre produced all sorts of printed texts over the next three decades and quickly grew beyond Hamburg itself, as supporters and opponents attacked each other in heated debates.⁴¹ Certainly, there were a few theologians who sided with the

supporters of opera, above all Heinrich Elmenhorst (1632–1704), deacon at St Catherine's Church in Hamburg. He offered his opponents the written defence titled 'Dramatologia . . . Report on Operas' in 1688. Elmenhorst knew what he was talking about: he was one of the central librettists in the first phase of the Gänsemarkt Opera.

In Leipzig, the situation was different. In 1692, the Elector of Saxony in Dresden granted the request of his Kapellmeister Strungk for a privilege allowing him the exclusive right to perform operas (at his own cost) in the trade city of Leipzig during the three annual trade fairs; for each of the three-week fairs, fifteen performances were envisioned.⁴² The granting of the privilege was also self-serving, in a double sense. On the one hand, the regent and the illustrious fair attendees no longer wanted to be entertained nightly by traveling theatrical troupes alone but also by the increasingly popular genre of opera. On the other hand, Strungk's opera enterprise was also meant to be a kind of training centre for aspiring musical elites. The privilege has a visionary scope: 'His Electoral Highness has graciously considered how the study of music would be increasingly cultivated, attracting foreign lovers of this science, and He would have a seminary in His lands, and would be able to fill the empty chapel- and chamber-musician posts.'

The purpose did not overreach: all subsequently famous musicians who studied at the Leipzig University during the twenty-seven-year run of the public opera (until the opera company's bankruptcy in 1720) were involved with the opera house and acquired their first recognition there, among them Telemann, Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688–1758), Johann Georg Pisendel, and Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690–1740). However, the house received this youthful/student character only after Strungk's death (d. 1700), when his five daughters (singers themselves, one even a librettist) took over the direction of the opera company and soon fell into chronic financial need due to internal family disputes.

Strungk's initial plan to renovate the old St Peter's Church (Alte Peterskirche; which had not been used as a house of God since the Reformation) as an opera house was evidently challenged by the supreme consistory. In the end, Strungk had to lease a back courtyard on the northeast end of the Brühl. Here, Girolamo Sartorio (who had already built the stage at the Gänsemarkt in Hamburg and who soon became a co-partner in the Leipzig stage because of Strungk's financial problems) built a large wooden opera house, with 125 loges on five levels. The building held its own in comparison with others. The Uffenbach brothers from Frankfurt commented after a visit to the Hamburg Opera House in 1710 that it was

'like the one in Braunschweig but somewhat bigger, though a good deal smaller and much more humble than the one in Leipzig, which surpasses both in daintiness, but the [other] theatres in both places are probably much larger than that in Leipzig'.⁴³

Strungk brought most of his artists with him from Dresden or engaged them from other courts. During each fair, there was one new production, apparently always written by Strungk himself, although only the printed libretti to his works survive. The opening performance on 8 May 1693 was Strungk's *Alceste*, with a text by Thymich (based on Aurelio Aureli's *L'Antigona delusa*; Venice, 1660); Thymich's wife performed the role of Alcestis.

The subjects of Hamburg operas at the end of the seventeenth century were of various origins: often biblical at first, and then based on material from antique and medieval times. Occasionally, there were *Fortsetzungsoptern* (sequels), such as *Cara Mustapha* (Johann Wolfgang Franck, 1686), *Die Verstöhrung Jerusalem* (Conradi, 1692), and *Störtebecker* (Keiser, 1701), each of which had two parts. A number of adapted Italian and French libretti have been documented, and even performances of German versions of Italian and French works: Lully's *Achille et Polyxène* (Paris 1687) was performed as *Die unglückliche Liebe des Achilles und der Polixena* in 1692 (rhymed translation by Christian Heinrich Postel, 1658–1705); and Agostino Steffani's *Orlando generoso* (Hanover 1691) ran as *Der grossmütige Roland* (German version by Gottlieb Fiedler) on several occasions between 1695 and 1735(!). The practice of mixing languages within a libretto that would become typical of German opera, especially the juxtaposition of German and Italian operas, first became established in Hamburg in 1703 (in *Claudius* by Barthold Feind and Keiser),⁴⁴ and was then taken up in Leipzig and Braunschweig.

Under Strungk, the first decade of opera in Leipzig was shaped by antique and mythological subjects. Dependence on Italian operas was even stronger than in Hamburg: of the twenty-nine operas performed between 1693 and 1702, at least half were based on Italian models, especially ones from Venice in the 1670s–1680s. The Italian libretti were often translated directly into German, with what might be called 'slavish fidelity' to the original.⁴⁵ The aria forms are correspondingly modern. Characteristic figures from *commedia dell'arte*, such as Hanswurst figures, were also eagerly adopted in Hamburg and Leipzig, providing humorous moments even in the most dramatic stories, and using parables and more-or-less slanted metaphors to bring philosophical wisdom and sometimes highly politically charged messages to the people. The political meaning and dimension of opera became especially evident in Hamburg under the

direction of soon-to-be-councilman Schott. His stages were continually used for performances of so-called festival operas (*Festopern*) marking important political events or notable days related to important rulers.⁴⁶ To be sure, the subjects appearing onstage were primarily drawn from antiquity, and it was left to the viewer to make connections with present times. On one occasion, however, three years after the 1683 victory of the Imperial Army against the Turkish besiegers of Vienna, this practice was notably broken. The jurist and later major Lucas von Bostel wrote the libretto to *Cara Mustapha*, which was set by Franck (b. 1644) and performed in 1686. The opera tells the story of the siege of Vienna and the victory of the emperor over the Ottoman army; 'the false prophet of the Turks' Mohammed sings during the prologue. The foreword justifies the temporal proximity to the historical core of the plot. It claims it is entirely 'respectable' to perform a story in which 'many [of those who participated] are still alive', and refers to Jean Racine: the territorial distance from the original setting (a few hundred miles) would adequately mitigate the problem of temporal proximity. Naturally, in this opera there is a Hanswurst figure. He is the 'amusing servant' of the Grand Vizier, who sings in low German (*Plattdeutsch*) dialect, a popular method in Hamburg of symbolising low status.

While no musical sources have been preserved from the first decade of Leipzig Baroque opera (1693–1702), at least excerpts of pieces have survived from the beginnings of opera in Hamburg. Unfortunately, entire scores are hardly available from prior to 1700. Extant sources are often in the form of adaptations – mostly strophic arias in reduced versions – edited for use in the home or perhaps changed and modified for the public in printed collections.⁴⁷ Therefore, it is difficult to reconstruct and evaluate the musical structure of the first Hamburg operas from the early 1680s by composers Theile, Strungk (director of the Hamburg town band, 1679–1682) and Johann Philipp Förtsch (initially a tenor in Hamburg, and then from 1680 Kapellmeister in the court of the Duke of Gottorf). The printed arias from the operas *Orontes* (Theile, 1678) and *Die liebreiche, durch Tugend und Schönheit erhöhte Esther* (Strungk, 1680) are almost all strophic. They have predominantly songlike, dancelike characteristics and only occasionally contain melismas, coloratura, word repetition, or concertante passages.

A better evaluation is offered by the surviving material for the operas of Franck, the fourth and perhaps most important composer of the first decade at the Gänsemarkt Opera. Born in middle Franconia, Franck studied in Italy from 1668 to 1672, thereafter becoming 'Director of

comedy' at the court of the Margrave of Ansbach, until he was forced to flee to Hamburg after committing a murder. Here, he created about fifteen operas through 1686 for the Gänsemarkt, and others for Ansbach.⁴⁸ His works were performed in Hamburg far into the 1690s, and several of his arias appeared in print. The score for his opera *Die drey Töchter Cecrops* has survived in Ansbach (premièred in Ansbach, evidently in spring 1686, followed by a shortened version in Hamburg).

In his score to *Cecrops*, Franck provides da capo arias as they were being developed in Italy just then by Legrenzi and Sartorio. In general, Franck's music shows that he had internalised the means and techniques of Venetian opera and musical drama during his stay in Italy and had incorporated them into his personal style; elements of French opera hardly appear in his music. Franck's recitative is fluid and interspersed with cantabile elements, and is reminiscent of Cavalli. His arias have contrasting middle sections. The use of tonality is also based on contrast – a well-planned harmonic structure is evident in *Cecrops*; the spectrum of Franck's arias ranges from B major to B-flat minor. During a break in performances in 1686/7 he left Hamburg; he is known to have been in London from 1790 and is said to have been murdered in Spain in 1710, allegedly because of his favour with the king.

Up until the arrival of Keiser, who in a sense opened the door to the eighteenth century in 1697 with *Adonis*, the 1690s were characterised by two artistic figures: Kusser and Johann Georg Conradi (d. 1699). Their works, along with Franck's, dominated the repertoire. In addition, the alto Jakob Kremberg (c. 1650–1715), who had come temporarily from Dresden as the commercial director appointed by Schott, also influenced the house's fortune at times; five years had been planned, but this episode ended after a year of fierce quarrels between Kusser, Kremberg, and Schott – and Schott returned to the helm.

Born in Preßburg and initially active at the courts of Baden-Baden and Ansbach, Kusser studied with Lully in Paris in the 1670s–1680s, where he internalised French styles of composition and playing. In 1690, he was given leadership of the newly founded Wolfenbüttel Opera. Here and in the public opera house in Braunschweig (which was financed by the duke), he wrote several works that raised his profile as he sparred with Italian music. Disputes with his librettist Friedrich Christian Bressand seem to have been the catalyst for his eventual move to Hamburg. Starting in 1694, his operas received great acclaim on the Gänsemarkt stage, though they were also associated with some internal disputes. Conradi, born in Oettingen in Bavaria, was Kapellmeister in Ansbach for a few years and can be

documented as having held the same position at the Gänsemarkt Opera from 1690 to 1694. Kusser ascribed to him a 'hot temper'; at the same time, he is said to have been a superb orchestra leader and, according to Mattheson, introduced the modern Italian manner of singing in Hamburg. However, he left Hamburg soon, moving through the country with a travelling opera troupe. He was at the Stuttgart Court from 1698; in London in 1704; and, from 1707 until his death in 1727, 'Chappel-Master of Trinity College' in Dublin.⁴⁹ Several arias have survived from his Hamburg operas, including authorised prints with excerpts from *Erindo* (1694) and *Ariadne* (Braunschweig, 1692), as well as the recently discovered original performance materials for his Stuttgart opera *Adonis* (1700?).⁵⁰ Conradi's score to *Die schöne und getreue Ariadne* (1691) has been preserved.

Both works show that opera in Hamburg in the 1690s, and probably for the first time, offered a musically notable synthesis of French and Italian styles, and with forms that were rich in variation. Conradi's *Ariadne* contains charming arias modelled on French styles, which are not at all mere direct copies: for example, Ariadne's fantastic aria 'Auf, auf, erbostes Glücke' in the form of a large chaconne at the beginning of the second act, which consists of 201 measures supported by a 20-bar ground bass pattern. Conradi takes a similar approach in a large-scale ensemble near the end of the opera: a passacaille based on the familiar Italian bass line, in which the seven following arias seen in the printed text (for Venus, two Graces, and Bacchus) are linked together into a 313-bar through-composed structure, interspersed with ritornelli that include dancing. Conradi may have learned the idea from comparable models in contemporary French opera; however, one must look through many choruses and ballets from the Paris Court in order to find a comparable structure (also artfully shaped by librettist Postel), in which the boundaries between aria, chorus, and ballet blur to such an extent. Conradi's *Ariadne* must have become a box-office hit in its day; it was performed as late as the 1720s in a shortened version by Keiser, now enriched with a few Italian arias. In retrospect, Mattheson claimed that *Ariadne* had 'paid off very well, and received much applause'.⁵¹ Also, Conradi's score must have been an important model for him: the great ciaccona at the end of Mattheson's *Boris Goudenow* (Hamburg 1710) proves itself to be, in many respects, an imitation of Conradi's abovementioned passacaglia.

Italian and French aria types also appear on equal footing in Kusser's operas, and he arranged these in unusually colourful fashion. *Erindo* includes arias with obbligato parts for recorder, oboe, flute, 'tromba overo hautbois', long-necked lute ('colachono'), and violin, as well as pairs of

oboes, bassoons, and flutes – this sort of variety was to be found in contemporary Italian opera. Arias without melody instruments often follow French dance types: bourrée, bransle de village, galliard, gavotte, menuet, and passepied. There are also arias patterned on Italian models, such as those with virtuoso basso continuo.

This plurality of styles is also a characteristic of the only surviving opera score from middle-German lands in the 1690s: Christian Ludwig Boxberg's *Sardanapalus*. To be sure, the piece came into being in 1698 on the occasion of a guest visit to the Ansbach Court, but its roots lie within the orbit of opera in Leipzig. Boxberg (1670–1729) had been a pupil, overlapping with Keiser, at the Thomasschule under Kantor Johann Schelle, and when the Leipzig Opera House opened, he sang in the performance of Strungk's *Alceste*. Boxberg learned the trade of the opera composer and librettist as a 'pupil of the famous Kapellmeister Strungk', for whom he provided a few libretti in subsequent years.⁵² He first became noticed as a composer in Leipzig around 1700, before becoming the organist in Görlitz, a post he would hold for the rest of his life. It is very possible that his surviving score in Ansbach gives an idea of how the lost works by his teacher Strungk might have looked. The piece is written in three acts; after the French overture, continuo arias (often da capo) with string ritornelli predominate; arias with obbligato instruments are rather the exception. Contemporary Italian aria types provided models, which Boxberg adapted perfectly, just as he did the French dance types: for example, in the glittering ostinato aria 'Keine Qual soll mich erschrecken' (Act I scene 5), in which Belochus unfurls an extensive virtuoso da capo aria atop a rhythmically striking bass. His free-flowing singing could undoubtedly measure up to works by Giuseppe Torelli and Francesco Antonio Pistocchi, whom the young, artistically inclined Margrave Georg Friedrich of Ansbach had enticed, along with other Italian virtuosos, to his court by offering terrific salaries.⁵³

What the few surviving scores and arias from Hamburg and Leipzig (respectively Ansbach) from the 1690s show is that, already before Keiser, Handel, and Telemann brought their music to the stage around the turn of the century, a remarkable synthesis of different European national styles had developed in German-language opera. In addition to features of German tradition, there are unmistakable echoes, imitations, and fusions of elements of French and Italian opera. It is quite possible that the genre of opera was one of the decisive gateways for the way German composers reacted to leading European national styles. At any rate, extant scores already paradigmatically reveal what Johann Joachim Quantz would, one

generation later, call 'mixed taste', which he described as being characteristic of the German style.

Translated from the German by Kirsten Santos-Rutschman

Notes

- 1 Werner Braun, *Die Musik des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1981) 91.
- 2 See supporting documents in the following publications: Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Nöthiger Vorrath zur Geschichte der deutschen Dramatischen Dichtkunst*. . . 2 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1757–1765; rpt. Hildesheim, New York: Olms, 1970); Renate Brockpähler, *Handbuch zur Geschichte der Barockoper in Deutschland* (Emsdetten: Lechte [1964]); Reinhart Meyer, *Bibliographia dramatica et dramaticorum: kommentierte Bibliographie der im ehemaligen Reichsgebiet gedruckten und gespielten Dramen des 18. Jahrhunderts nebst deren Bearbeitungen und Übersetzungen und ihrer Rezeption bis in die Gegenwart. Abteilung 2. Einzeltitel*, 4 vols. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1993–1994), vol. 1.
- 3 Werner Braun, *Vom Remter zum Gänsemarkt: aus der Frühgeschichte der alten Hamburger Oper (1677–1697)* (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, 1987), 94.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 93–4.
- 5 See Warren Kirkendale, 'Zur Biographie des ersten Orfeo, Francesco Rasi', in Ludwig Finscher (ed.), *Claudio Monteverdi. Festschrift Reinhold Hammerstein zum 70. Geburtstag* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1986), 297–335, especially 312.
- 6 See the corresponding summaries in Brockpähler, *Handbuch*.
- 7 Wolfram Steude, 'Heinrich Schütz und die erste deutsche Oper', in Frank Heidelberger, Wolfgang Osthoff, and Reinhard Wiesend (eds.), *Von Isaac bis Bach. Studien zur älteren deutschen Musikgeschichte. Festschrift Martin Just zum 60. Geburtstag* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1991), 169–79. For further discussion, see Irmgard Scheitler, 'Martin Opitz und Heinrich Schütz: Dafne – ein Schauspiel', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 68/3 (2011), 205–26.
- 8 Letter from Heinrich Schütz to the Elector of Saxony's office, Friedrich Lebzelter, dated 6 February 1633, quoted in Erich H. Müller, *Heinrich Schütz. Gesammelte Briefe und Schriften* (Regensburg: G. Bosse, 1931), 125ff.
- 9 See Silke Leopold, *Geschichte der Oper*, vol. 1: *Die Oper im 17. Jahrhundert* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2006), 276.
- 10 For more on *Seelewig* see Rolf Hasselbrink, 'Harsdörfer, Georg Philipp', in *MGG1*, vol. 5 (1956), col. 1737, and, with additional references, Andreas Waczkat, 'Simon Dachs Liederspiele und die Anfänge der deutschen Oper', in Axel E. Walter (ed.), *Simon Dach (1605–1659). Werk und Nachwirken* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2008), 321–36, especially 322ff.; see also

- Irmgard Scheitler, 'Harsdörffer und die Musik', in Stefan Keppler-Tasaki and Ursula Kocher (eds.), *Georg Philipp Harsdörffers Universalität* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 213–36, especially 228, and Judith P. Aikin, 'Narcissus and Echo: A Mythological Subtext in Harsdörffer's Operatic Allegory *Seelewig* (1644)', *ML* 72/3 (1991), 359–71.
- 11 See Leopold, *Die Oper im 17. Jahrhundert*, 278–88.
 - 12 Johann Sebastiani, *Pastorello musicale oder Verliebtes Schäferspiel*, ed. Michael Maul (Beeskow: Ortus Musikverlag, 2005). For more on the piece, see the introduction to Maul's volume, as well as Werner Braun, "'Preußisches" im Pastorello musicale von 1663', in Günther Walter (ed.), *Jahrbuch des Staatlichen Instituts für Musikforschung Preußischer Kulturbesitz. 2005* (Mainz: Schott Music, 2009), 115–23.
 - 13 For biographical information on Sebastiani, see Michael Maul, 'Sebastiani, Johann', in *MGG2*, Personenteil, vol. 15 (2006), col. 492–4.
 - 14 Synopsis in printed text for Act I scene 2.
 - 15 See, for example, the aria 'Quel bel fior di giovinezza' from *Gli Amori d'Apollone e di Dafne* (1640, rpt. in Braun, *Die Musik des 17. Jahrhunderts*, 99ff).
 - 16 Georg Christoph Pisanski, *Entwurf der preußischen Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 2: *Mittlere Geschichte von der Ausbreitung gelehrter Kenntnisse in Preussen bis zum Anfange des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Adolf Meckelburg (Königsberg: Hartung, 1853), 266.
 - 17 See Meder, Franck, and Löhner's characterisation of recitative in Werner Braun, 'Johann Valentin Meders Opernexperiment in Reval 1680', in Uwe Haensel (ed.), *Beiträge zur Musikgeschichte Nordeuropas. Kurt Gudewill zum 65. Geburtstag* (Wolfenbüttel, Zürich: Mösele, 1978), 69–78, especially 75ff.
 - 18 Johann Mattheson, *Der Vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg: Christian Herold, 1739; rpt. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1954), 78.
 - 19 On the Dresden Hofkapelle and its opera performances, see Moritz Fürstenau, *Zur Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters am Hofe zu Dresden*, 2 vols. (Dresden: Kuntze, 1861–1862; rpt. Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1971), vol. 1: *Zur Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters am Hofe der Kurfürsten von Sachsen, Johann Georg II., Johann Georg III. und Johann Georg IV.*; Brockpähler, *Handbuch*, 130–7, and the article 'Dresden' by Wolfram Steude in *MGG2*, Sachteil, vol. 2 (1995), col. 1531–1534; see also Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *Court Culture in Dresden: From Renaissance to Baroque* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 34–6 and 189–92.
 - 20 Leopold, *Die Oper im 17. Jahrhundert*, 296.
 - 21 On the opera, see the summary in *ibid.*, 294–8.
 - 22 Johann Mattheson, *Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte* (Hamburg: in Verlegung des Verfassers, 1740); rpt. Berlin: im Kommissionsverlag von Leo Liebmanssohn, 1910), 18.
 - 23 See Erdmann Werner Böhme, *Die frühdeutsche Oper in Thüringen* (Stadtroda: Richter, 1931).

- 24 A good summary of opera activity in Halle is available in Brockpähler, *Handbuch*, 188–92. See also Walter Serauky, *Musikgeschichte der Stadt Halle*, 2 vols. (Halle: 1939; Hildesheim and New York: Olms, 1971), vol. 2, 1. Halbband: *Von Samuel Scheidt bis in die Zeit Georg Friedrich Händels und Johann Sebastian Bachs*.
- 25 David Elias Heidenreich, *Geistliche Oden auf die fürnehmsten Feste und alle Sonntage des gantzen Jahres (Halle in Sachsen: Christoph Salfeld, 1665)*.
- 26 See Brockpähler, *Handbuch*, 170–7.
- 27 See *ibid.*, 369–79, and Torsten Fuchs, *Studien zur Musikpflege in der Stadt Weißenfels und am Hofe der Herzöge von Sachsen-Weißenfels* (Lucca: Libreria Musicale Italiana, 1997).
- 28 Quotation from the preface to his collection, initially printed anonymously: *Geistliche Cantaten Über alle Sonn-Fest- und Apostel-Tage, Zu einer, denen Herren Musicis sehr bequemen Kirchen-Music in ungezwungenen Teutschen Versen ausgefertigt. Anno 1702* (s.l. [Weißenfels?]: s.n., 1702). On this first cycle of cantatas by Neumeister see Ute Poetzsch-Seban, *Die Kirchenmusik von Georg Philipp Telemann und Erdmann Neumeister. Zur Geschichte der protestantischen Kirchenkantate in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Beeskow: Ortus Musikverlag, 2006).
- 29 On the opera performances, see Brockpähler, *Handbuch*, 138–46, 212–23 and 274–82. On Steffani, see Leopold, *Die Oper im 17. Jahrhundert*, 301–11, and the essays in Claudia Kaufold, Nicole K. Strohm, and Colin Timms (eds.), *Agostino Steffani: europäischer Komponist, hannoverscher Diplomat und Bischof der Leibniz-Zeit / Hanoverian Diplomat and Bishop in the Age of Leibniz* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2017).
- 30 Leopold, *Die Oper im 17. Jahrhundert*, 301ff.
- 31 Quoted in Axel Fischer's article 'Hannover' in *MGG2*, Sachteil, vol. 4 (1996), col. 28.
- 32 On Steffani's works for Hanover, see Candace Marles, 'Opera in Hannover: The German Synthesis of National Styles', in Corinna Herr, Herbert Seifert, Andreas Sommer-Mathis, and Reinhard Strohm (eds.), *Italian Opera in Central Europe 1614–1780*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2006–2008), vol. 2: *Italianità: Image and Practice*, 141–62.
- 33 See Leopold, *Die Oper im 17. Jahrhundert*, 303–5 (with musical examples).
- 34 Overview in Brockpähler, *Handbuch*, 88–9. For an extensive early history of opera in Wolfenbüttel/Braunschweig, see Gustav Friedrich Schmidt, *Neue Beiträge zur Geschichte der Musik und des Theaters am Herzoglichen Hofe zu Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel. Ergänzungen und Berichtigungen zu Chryсандers Abhandlung . . . Erste Folge. Chronologisches Verzeichnis der in Wolfenbüttel, Braunschweig, Salzthal, Bevern und Blankenburg aufgeführten Opern, Ballette und Schauspiele (Komödien) mit Musik bis zur Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Wilhelm Berntheisel, 1929), and Schmidt, *Die frühdeutsche Oper*

- und die musikdramatische Kunst Georg Caspar Schürmanns, 2 vols. (Regensburg: Verlag Gustav Bosse, 1933–1934).
- 35 Quoted in Braun, *Vom Remter zum Gänsemarkt*, 17.
- 36 Johann Mattheson, *Der musicalische Patriot* (Hamburg: s.n., 1728; rpt. Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der DDR; Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1975), 199.
- 37 See Joachim R. M. Wendt, *Materialien zur Geschichte der frühen Hamburger Oper*, vol. 1: *Eigentümer und Pächter* (Aurich: Wendt, 2002).
- 38 Specifications from Hans Joachim Marx, 'Geschichte der Hamburger Barockoper. Ein Forschungsbericht', in Constantin Floros, Hans Joachim Marx, and Peter Petersen (eds.), *Studien zur Barock Oper. Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft*, vol. 3 (Hamburg: Verlag der Musikalienhandlung, 1978), 7–34.
- 39 See the surveys of repertoire in Mattheson, *Der musicalische Patriot*, 177–200, and in Hans Joachim Marx and Dorothea Schröder (eds.), *Die Hamburger Gänsemarkt-Oper. Katalog der Textbücher (1678–1748)* (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 1995); also Michael Maul, 'Die Gebrüder Uffenbach zu Besuch in der Gänsemarktoper – Bemerkungen zu einem altbekannten Reisebericht', in Hans Joachim Marx and Wolfgang Sandberger (eds.), *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, vol. 12 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 183–95.
- 40 For a thorough discussion on dating, performance location, and authorship, see Braun *Vom Remter zum Gänsemarkt*, 15–47.
- 41 See Marx, 'Geschichte der Hamburger Barockoper', 10–13. On the dispute in central Germany, see Gudrun Busch, 'Die Beer-Vockerodt-Kontroverse im Kontext der frühen mitteldeutschen Oper. Oder: Pietistische Opern-Kritik als Zeitzeichen', in Rainer Lächele (ed.), *Das Echo Halles: kulturelle Wirkungen des Pietismus* (Tübingen: Bibliotheca-Academica Verlag, 2001), 131–70.
- 42 On the Leipzig opera, see Michael Maul, *Barockoper in Leipzig (1693–1720)*, 2 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2009).
- 43 Quotation from the travel diary, printed in *ibid.*, vol. 1, 19.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 786.
- 45 Norbert Dubowy characterises it as such in his comparison of the Leipzig opera *Agrippina* (1699, libretto by C. L. Boxberg) with its model by Matteo Noris (*Nerone fatto Cesare*, Venice, 1693); see Norbert Dubowy, 'Italienische Opern im mitteldeutschen Theater am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts: Dresden und Leipzig', in Friedhelm Brusniak (ed.), *Barockes Musiktheater im mitteldeutschen Raum im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert. Arolser Beiträge zur Musikforschung 2* (Cologne: Studio, 1994), 23–48.
- 46 See Dorothea Schröder, *Zeitgeschichte auf der Opernbühne: barockes Musiktheater in Hamburg im Dienst von Politik und Diplomatie (1690–1745)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), and Schröder, 'Baroque Opera, Politics and Ceremony in Hamburg', in Herr, Seifert, Sommer-Mathis, and Strohm, *Italian Opera in Central Europe*, vol. 1: *Institutions and Ceremonies*, ed. Melania Bucciarelli, Norbert Dubowy, and Reinhard Strohm, 193–202.

- 47 An overview of surviving sources that is largely still current is Walter Schulze, *Die Quellen der Hamburger Oper (1678–1738). Eine bibliographisch-statistische Studie zur Geschichte der ersten stehenden deutschen Oper* (Hamburg-Oldenburg: G. Stalling, 1938); see also Jürgen Neubacher, 'Drei wieder zugängliche Ariensammelbände als Quellen für das Repertoire der Hamburger Gänsemarkt-Oper', in Hans Joachim Marx (ed.), *Beiträge zur Musikgeschichte Hamburgs vom Mittelalter bis in die Neuzeit. Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft*, vol. 18 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 195–206.
- 48 For an extensive look at his work, see Braun, *Vom Remter zum Gänsemarkt*, and Johann Wolfgang Franck, *Hamburger Opernarien im szenischen Kontext: (Aeneas, 1680; Vespasian, 1681; Diocletian, 1682; Cara Mustapha, 1686)*, ed. Werner Braun (Saarbrücken: Saarbrücken Druckerei und Verlag, 1988). See also George J. Buelow, 'Hamburg Opera during Buxtehude's Lifetime: The Works of Johann Wolfgang Franck', in Paul Walker (ed.), *Church, Stage, Studio: Music and Its Contexts in Seventeenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990), 127–41.
- 49 On Kusser, see Samantha Owens, 'The Rise and Decline of Opera at the Württemberg Court, 1698–1733' in Herr, Seifert, Sommer-Mathis, and Strohm, *Italian Opera in Central Europe*, vol. 1, 103–7.
- 50 Johann Sigismund Kusser, *Adonis*, ed. Samantha Owens (Middleton: A-R Editions, 2009).
- 51 Mattheson, *Der musicalische Patriot*, 180.
- 52 See Maul, *Barockoper in Leipzig (1693–1720)*, vol. 1, 209.
- 53 See Brockpähler, *Handbuch*, 30–40, and Günther Schmidt, *Die Musik am Hofe der Markgrafen von Brandenburg-Ansbach* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1956).