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REVIEWS

BOOKS

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ELSIE ARNOLD AND JANE BALDAUF-BERDES
MADDALENA LOMBARDINI SIRMEN: EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COMPOSER, VIOLINIST, AND BUSINESSWOMAN
Lanham, MD, and London: Scarecrow, 2002
pp. xvi + 170, ISBN: 0 8108 4107 X

Even in an age when the concept of celebrity was as devalued as it is in our own time, the 'celebrated' performer Maddalena Laura Lombardini Sirmen certainly deserved the accolade. What so astonished audiences in Paris and London was not that she was a woman musician, a high-profile performer with published compositions to her credit, but that she was a professional violinist, a rare exception to the convention that bowed string playing on the concert platform was an exclusively male preserve. The shock of seeing her was all the greater because even in the privacy of the home violin-playing was rare among women in polite society throughout the eighteenth century. This gender stereotype proved an extremely durable one, and the only other woman violinist of comparable stature at this period in London was Madame Gautherot, a refugee from the French revolution, who pursued her career there in the early 1790s.

This short biography is a collaboration between Jane Baldauf-Berdes, who did much of the original archival research, and Elsie Arnold, who brought the project to fruition following the untimely death of her co-author. It is written in a lively, direct manner, with telling use of contextual detail. We follow the development of Sirmen's career from her childhood years in the *Ospedale dei Mendicanti*, where she came to prominence as a member of its orchestra (regarded by visitors as something of an exotic Venetian tourist attraction), through to her marriage and an international career which peaked during the early 1770s with concerts in Paris and London. One disappointment for the authors is that none of Sirmen's personal correspondence appears to have survived, and as a result their subject's personality remains rather elusive. Her professional career, however, is plentifully documented in newspaper reports and reviews, and accordingly the bulk of this study is devoted to her activities on the concert platform.

In 1773 Sirmen made a brief and rather unsuccessful attempt to enter the lucrative world of Italian opera in London as a 'second' singer. She was perhaps offered this position at the King's Theatre by the novelist and manager Frances Brooke, herself a woman making her way in a man's world. It was not a successful move, and it could have ended her career as a violinist when, ascending to the heights as Venus, she fell six feet from an unsteady machine and had to be carted off stage, badly shaken, by an attendant lamplighter. Sirmen's attempt to establish herself as an opera singer is perhaps a sign that she was aware that her status as the latest celebrity violinist was on the wane. It was exceptionally difficult, even for top players like Cramer and Salomon, to sustain a career in London for any length of time, and Sirmen had the added disadvantage that tastes in violin playing were changing. A fascinating report in the

Mercure de France on 7 May 1785 argued that she needed to change her playing style to win back the formerly enthusiastic Parisian audience:

> For some time now, violinists have placed more importance on speed of playing instead of tonal quality and on feats of skill instead of in imitating the singing voice. Unfortunately Mme Sirmen may have been able then [fourteen years previously] to astonish her listeners' ears, but she can do so no longer. [p.99]

The more lyrical style of violin playing had gone out of fashion in favour of an emphasis on brilliant (and to some critics unthinking) virtuosity. By this time Sirmen's career had become rather episodic and there are few reviews of her activities, for example as an opera singer in Dresden in the 1777 season.

Two short chapters provide an assessment of the compositions, notably a contribution to a very new genre, the string quartet. In fact it is not always easy to distinguish Maddalena's works from those of her husband Lodovico, and there must be a possibility that on occasion the two of them agreed to use her name to gain maximum commercial advantage from her celebrity status. No great claims are made for Sirmen's status as a composer. The violin concertos are neither the best nor even 'among the best' of their period.

In the subtitle of this biography, Sirmen is described as a businesswoman, although no evidence of commercial activity as such is presented. Like all professional musicians, she knew that she would have to provide for herself in old age, and it was far from certain that she would be able to rely on her partner, as after a few years husband Lodovico apparently left to follow his own career. Yet if her will and its various codicils provide an accurate reflection of her circumstances in later life, she appears to have managed her personal finances very effectively. Long before her death in 1818, Sirmen's career as a violinist and her compositions were forgotten, but her name never disappeared from view entirely. As a pupil of Tartini, she was the recipient of a famous 'letter' on violin playing. Sirmen may not have been a major figure, but, as the authors of this very readable biography show, she at least deserves to be remembered for her own achievements.

IAN WOODFIELD

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KARL HOCHREITHER

PERFORMANCE PRACTICE OF THE INSTRUMENTAL-VOCAL WORKS OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH
TRANS. MELVIN UNGER
Lanham, MD, and London: Scarecrow, 2002
pp. xiii + 217, ISBN 0 8108 4258 0

It is not uncommon these days to encounter discussions of the performance of Bach's vocal works that focus on how Bach performed them or how we should perform them. But it is only in the last decade that this has become a hot topic, beginning with Joshua Rifkin's now legendary paper presented at the annual conference of the American Musicological Society in 1981 and recently discussed in Andrew Parrott's *The Essential Bach Choir* (Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), published as part of the celebrations surrounding the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the composer's death. There are many other scholars working in search of this lost tradition, of course, quite independently of the movement that Rifkin initiated. One of them is Karl Hochreither, whose interest is in fact much broader than the performing forces of Bach's choir.

The book under review was originally published in German in 1983 as *Zur Aufführungspraxis der Vokal-Instrumentalwerke Johann Sebastian Bachs* and has been widely regarded as the only monograph discussing systematically and at the same time concisely from a performer's perspective many issues relating to the performance practice of Bach's vocal and instrumental music. Nearly twenty years have passed, and this English translation is the first revised and expanded edition, incorporating recent developments in thinking and research.

Unlike Andrew Parrott, Hochreither approaches the subject from a broad perspective, covering everything from continuo practice, instruments, scoring, dynamics, tempo, ornamentation, articulation and vibrato to the interpretation of affect and the handling of fermatas in chorale movements. These topics are systematically laid out in the form of a study guide, so that readers can find answers to what they are looking for or hints for their own further study. The book is full of useful references, both to historical documents and to editions, often giving the facsimile images as examples. Hochreither's table of contents is very detailed, which is particularly helpful when the book is being used for reference purposes.

As expected from the nature of the topics covered, Hochreither resorts to a host of eighteenth-century sources, including those by Kuhnau, Heinichen, Telemann, Walther, Quantz, Agricola, Emanuel Bach, Johann Samuel Petri and Christoph Gottlieb Schröter. In addition, he provides ample secondary source references, including the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe* and the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition. His discussion is neat and scholarly and, instead of indulging in speculation, he sticks to the evidence and argues cautiously. I find this approach not only pleasant to read but also stimulating and reassuring; Hochreither often makes connections between fact and evidence that previously were overlooked.

Having read Hochreither's original German edition and this new English edition, I am pleased to report improvements in both the physical layout and the actual content of the book. Much credit should be given to the translator, Melvin Unger, for the clarity of the English text. With the clearer chapter structure and headers now appearing on each page, we can navigate the book with relative comfort. The index is now split into two – 'name and subject' and 'Bach's works' – and there is also a separate bibliography (lacking in the original German edition). However, the modification made to the referencing style – turning the continuous numbering of footnotes into endnotes where the numerical sequence is reset for every chapter – regrettably introduced some minor glitches in numbering: on page 67, reference to notes 18 and 19 should read 'notes 1 and 2'; on page 72, reference to note 8 should read 'note 8 of Introduction'; and on page 74, note 112 should read 'see note 108' (instead of 125).

As for the information contained in the book, it receives a much desired update, which is particularly evident in notes (although this has to be understood in the context of a modest-sized monograph tackling a huge subject area). While many of the references to the *Bach-Gesellschaft* edition are replaced with references to the *Neue Bach-Ausgabe*, it is in the notes themselves that the author expands his arguments based on more recent literature. Exceptions to this are the areas of continuo practice (10) and Bach's choir (120–121), for which the author expands his arguments in the main text.

In many respects, Hochreither's book can be seen as a convenient guide for performers looking for ideas for 'authentic' interpretation and for this reason represents essential reading for everyone seriously engaged in the performance of Bach's works as well as those of his contemporaries. However, if a reader is looking for information on specific works, he or she will be disappointed. It is not a guide in which model interpretations of individual works are found, and it discusses only a handful of works in fairly extensive detail (for example Cantatas 21, 23, 60 and 172, the B minor Mass, St Matthew Passion, St John Passion, Christmas Oratorio and Easter Oratorio).

YO TOMITA

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JOHN WARRACK
GERMAN OPERA: FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO WAGNER
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001
pp. xvi + 447, ISBN 0 521 23532 4

Writing a history of an important and complex operatic repertory spanning three dynamic centuries is a daunting task, one that is perhaps better suited to several specialists than a single author. While an individual rarely possesses the scholarly breadth to write with expertise and authority on so much music, he or she can impart a unifying perspective and a consistent set of goals. But this advantage can also prove to be a limitation.

John Warrack, a skilled critic and able scholar of German romantic opera, has written the first comprehensive history of German opera. His ambitious book is divided into eighteen chapters, the last ten treating the nineteenth century to Wagner. This division reflects the author's own scholarly interests, and it is understandable that the strongest chapters would be devoted to later repertory while the material in the first eight chapters, treating the development of German opera through the eighteenth century, is mostly derived from secondary sources. Thus the strength of this book resides in its discussion of nineteenth-century German opera and its influences. The author has accomplished this in an impressive manner. Most of the chapters also include useful discussions of the ideas that informed the aesthetic issues of the repertory in question.

One might have expected a discussion of method, approach or goals, but all that appears in this regard is a statement opposite the flyleaf giving an idea of the scope of the work: the trajectory of German opera from its 'primitive origins up to Wagner'. This most grandiose of composers would be pleased with the locution; indeed, he himself advanced a similar view, as if music history logically led to him. But the drawbacks of this approach extend beyond the unfortunate characterization of earlier repertory as 'primitive'. An overriding teleological theme permeates the narrative, interpreting phenomena by final causes and making aesthetic judgments accordingly. Early works are said to 'anticipate' later works (180); Mozart is praised for his 'developing Romantic awareness' and 'chromatically advanced harmony' (160). This is perhaps understandable given the book's emphasis on the romantic era, but the pitfalls of this approach require that it should have been discussed and defended.

In treating the eighteenth century the author provides a competent rendition of the 'received wisdom' on this repertory, that is to say, traditional scholarly opinion. This is also understandable, given Warrack's expertise in nineteenth-century music. But the secondary literature cannot offer an accurate picture of the repertory. With a few exceptions, such as Thomas Bauman's *North German Opera in the Age of Goethe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), the state of research on German eighteenth-century opera remains preliminary at best. For example, scholars have left the important Viennese repertory largely unexplored and new insights will come only after basic research on primary sources. (This is also true for opera in Germany in the late eighteenth century.) Because the secondary literature cannot yet provide a comprehensive account of eighteenth-century German opera, the conventional approach has been to select a few exemplary 'masterpieces' (and perhaps a 'non-masterpiece' to affirm that we do not need to study the work of hacks) that illustrate the trajectory of music history. So it is not surprising that the examples in this book are the usual suspects, reflecting modern taste in repertory (particularly Mozart) more than that of the eras in question.

The short statement at the beginning of the book also notes that the author 'traces the growth of the humble Singspiel into a vehicle for the genius of Mozart and Beethoven'. The unexamined notion of 'genius' enters the discussion of music in several chapters. Eighteenth-century composers other than Mozart are mentioned briefly and their music is often left unexplored. I would have hoped for more on skilled composers such as Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Johann Baptist Henneberg, Franz Anton Hoffmeister,

Johann Baptist Lasser, Johann Georg Lickl, Wenzel Müller, Franz Xaver Süssmayr, Franz Teyber, Ignaz Walter, Peter von Winter, Joseph Wölfl and Paul Wranitzky, all of whom enjoyed considerable success throughout Europe. Some of the music in their operas is splendid and deserves to be included (and appreciated) in a basic history of German opera. Many influential operas that dominated the repertory in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are not even mentioned in the book, for example Wenzel Müller's *Das Sonnenfest der Brahminen* (1790) and Schikaneder's collaborative opera *Die zween Anton* (1789). Often only the plots are discussed, for example that of Ignaz Umlauf's *Das Irrlicht* (1782). In those instances when music is the topic, Warrack's measure of virtue is 'originality', a preference for the progressive and the novel. This aesthetic dominated the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but it did not have primacy in the earlier periods. Originality is also difficult to prove: when the author observes that an aria by Süssmayr has roots in 'Mozartean practice' and includes 'an effective Mozartean modulation' (179), one wonders how he knows that these elements in fact originated with Mozart and were not the common currency of the time.

The author reserves the most detailed discussions of eighteenth-century music for the original and progressive elements of three German operas by Mozart – *Zaide* (1779–1780), *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782) and *Die Zauberflöte* (1791). (The small masterwork *Der Schauspieldirektor* from 1786 receives a one-sentence description.) The disadvantages of this approach are best illustrated when the author attempts to explain why *Die Zauberflöte* is so noteworthy. Warrack asserts that it is because of Mozart's original 'genius', basing his judgment on outdated opinion: Mozart's 'elevating of Viennese magic opera to greatness rests no less upon the expansion of musical means. There is nothing of the day that is comparable.' Warrack was apparently unaware of research on Schikaneder's collaborative operas, *Der Stein der Weisen* (1790) and *Der wohltätige Derwisch* (1791), which are indeed comparable in some of the very aspects singled out by him. Mozart is said to have given 'recitative and the role of the orchestra new importance' (160), but both elements are present in *Der Stein der Weisen*. Sarastro's 'grave pronouncements' were not an original contribution by Mozart but a convention already in evidence in the music for the title character of *Der wohltätige Derwisch*. (Mozart even quotes one important musical passage of the Dervish when Sarastro sings 'Ein Mann muss eure Herzen leiten'.) Thus one will naturally question the other assertions of Mozart's originality, such as the expressive 'fluency' of *Die Zauberflöte*'s Act 1 finale. How do we know that other composers were not also exploring expressive fluency at this time? Perhaps Mozart's 'genius' is found more in the skill of his craftsmanship and consistent high standard than in his progressive originality and anticipation of Romantic style. The statement about Schikaneder's 'heroic-comic operas of varying quality' (162) raises yet another question: how can the author make value judgments about the quality of operas that either do not survive or have never been studied?

The structures of eighteenth-century German operas were more varied than Warrack suggests, and his book offers little recognition of the generic distinctions of the time. Schikaneder produced a number of very successful operas that did not follow the model of *Die Zauberflöte*, for example *Die Waldmänner* (1793) and *Konrad Langbart* (1799), both with scores by his music director, the unjustly neglected J. B. Henneberg. A preliminary discussion of terminology also would have been helpful. A singspiel in the eighteenth century could signify virtually any theatrical presentation that included music, from full-length German operas with continuous music (such as Dittersdorf's *Ugolino* of 1796) to spoken dramas with incidental vocal music.

I would have preferred that Warrack cite the sources of the eighteenth-century music he discusses, especially the unpublished operas such as Emanuel Schikaneder and Peter von Winter's *Das Labyrinth* (the sequel to *Die Zauberflöte*). Until about two years ago scholars could not distinguish the original 1798 version from later revisions, which involved significant alterations, new numbers and substitute arias. (The score of Winter's original was only recently restored.) Warrack seems unaware of this situation. Another example is Schikaneder and Jacob Haibel's *Der Tyroler Wastel* (1796). I suspect that Warrack's discussion is referring to Joseph Strobl's heavily rearranged piano-vocal score of 1969 (the primary sources for this opera are particularly problematic).

Warrack offers a sympathetic view of Süssmayr's excellent but neglected *Der Spiegel von Arkadien* (1794), though, once again, its virtue is found only in elements that are deemed novel. When he claims that Gigania's aria 'lacks the originality to add any real brilliance to the sparkle' (179), his judgment obscures the fact that the aria enjoyed tremendous success for good reason. In my view it is wonderfully inventive and entertaining. In any case, Warrack is to be commended for pointing out effective and inspired moments in the opera. Many more instances of remarkable and influential music may be found in forgotten operas composed by the 'non-geniuses' of the period. Gifted composers like Süssmayr have been unjustly regarded as hacks for too long.

For all these reservations, the book contains many insights. But readers seeking a reliable history of German opera in the eighteenth century will have to wait for scholars to conduct the basic research. For this we should not reproach Warrack but rather empathize with the difficulty of his task.

DAVID BUCH

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RICHARD WILL
THE CHARACTERISTIC SYMPHONY IN THE AGE OF HAYDN AND BEETHOVEN
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One of the most distinctive achievements of historical musicology in the USA in the last fifty years has been the exploration of the symphony from its beginnings to *c*1800, providing a context for the output of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. In what might be termed the Jan LaRue phase, several scholars (many of them pupils of LaRue) provided much needed bibliographical control of the repertoire and drew attention to its salient musical characteristics, but without straying too much into social context or broader aesthetic concerns. The Garland series *The Symphony 1720–1840* (New York, 1979–1986) marked a natural culmination of this phase and – as Richard Will's book shows – will always provide a bedrock of source material and a stimulus to further study. There are other valuable modern editions of symphonies, but Will's 'Note to the Reader' draws attention also to the increasing number of commercial recordings of the repertoire, recordings that have opened 'our ears to the range of compositional voices in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries'.

As well as scholarly source material and the sound of the music in performance, Richard Will is anxious to take on board broader cultural issues, philosophical, social and political, in a quest to establish what this repertoire might have signified to its audience. With great courage, but no hubris, he has moved discussion of the Classical symphony into a new phase. His positivist credentials are readily displayed and acknowledged but this is a book that refuses to become bogged down in lists and antiseptic analysis. As it embraces a wider agenda, it certainly lays itself open to criticism and dissent, yet it is never less than challenging and, at its best, is dazzlingly virtuosic.

The book is an outgrowth of the author's doctoral thesis, 'Programmatic Symphonies of the Classical Period' (Cornell University, 1994). For the book, 'programmatic' is changed to 'characteristic', a term that the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would have recognized. In a rather compressed discussion in the Introduction Will reveals the context in which the term is used and what, in a broad sense, it suggests, but does not state the obvious point that composers themselves hardly ever used it; of over 200 titles given in Appendix 1, 'Index of Characteristic Symphonies', only Paul Wranitzky's *Grande Sinfonie caractéristique pour la paix avec la République françoise* (1797) uses it; to this one could add Beethoven's use of the term in sketches for the 'Pastoral' Symphony. To qualify for inclusion in Will's index a subject – the author

sometimes uses the unhelpful word 'text' – has to be specified, either for the work as a whole or for a constituent movement. The author does not systematically pursue the issue as to whether these titles are original ones applied by the composer or whether they are nicknames applied by others (and thereby indicating an understanding as 'characteristic'). Thus, Haydn's 'Military' symphony is given the status of a 'characteristic' symphony even though none of the movements carries a title; on the other hand a work like Symphony No. 30, which gained the nickname 'Alleluja' in the eighteenth century because of its use, for 'characteristic' purposes one assumes, of Gregorian plainsong, is not included. For many composers of the period, surviving evidence simply does not allow the authenticity of titles to be determined, but apart from a brief discussion in the case of the Hummel print of symphonies by Pichl these bibliographical issues are put to one side.

A frank discussion, too, of the pervasiveness of the 'character' in individual works would be welcome and would not have undermined the integrity of the book as a whole. Many storm and hunt movements, in particular, occur as finales to works that otherwise do not have titles. Are such movements different in some way from the earlier movements? And what about 6/8 finales that use the hunt as a musical topic but do not identify it verbally; are they somehow different? Clearly there is an interface here (although interface is perhaps too rigid a word) between symphonies with titles and symphonies with topics.

While readers are accustomed to an elastic definition of symphony in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, some will be surprised that the author wishes to retain that elasticity to the end of the century, when terminology becomes more standardized. A central chapter in the book is devoted to Haydn's *Seven Last Words*, which, with eight slow movements and a presto finale, seems a long way from the four-movement symphony that is associated with this composer in the 1780s. But the work is listed in Haydn's *Entwurf Katalog* as a symphony, sandwiched between No. 87 and No. 4, and there is no reason why it should be excluded because it is not in the canonic 104, determined at the beginning of the twentieth century. The author is not as all-embracing in other directions, however, omitting overtures from the discussion and only briefly acknowledging 'character' movements in non-orchestral music.

Definitions and boundaries are not Will's concern, but expression in orchestral music with denoted titles certainly is, and by page 29 the reader is immersed in an enthralling account of Dittersdorf's 'Ovid' symphonies. This was a bold choice, of a minor figure rather than a major one and from a period of composition, the mid-1780s, that is conventionally viewed as the apogee of the classical style. But Will's boldness pays off, allowing him to present Dittersdorf as a central figure in the aesthetic of the period and, given this new centrality, encouraging him to question traditional critical values that privilege drama and conflict in orchestral sonata form. Will gives Dittersdorf (and other minor figures) a respect that is never patronizing and this is coupled with a sure-footed understanding of the syntax and grammar of the musical style. Dittersdorf's symphonies are related to Ovid's narrative and to their reception in a classically educated, aristocratic society. Appropriately, Will's own prose has a 6/8, *alla caccia* energy about it that leads to some notably aphoristic statements, such as 'the Golden Age offers paradise as aristocratic promenade'. Along the journey from musical grammar to hermeneutic exegesis individual readers may well want to pause and to demur but it is impossible not to be fascinated.

Will's second main work, Haydn's *Seven Last Words*, also dates from the 1780s and, for different reasons, is another composition that does not figure in the customary historical narrative of the period. For the author, it is a work that simultaneously draws on the rich contemplative tradition of Catholicism and mirrors the new emphasis on preaching the gospel that characterized Joseph II's reforms in the 1780s, a provocative interpretation that displaces traditional interpretations that give primacy to Haydn's conservative Catholicism and that of the Spanish church that commissioned the work.

Behind the open-mindedness of the book there lurks a hidden agenda, to explore Beethoven's two 'characteristic' symphonies, the 'Pastoral' and the 'Eroica'. (Will, like other modern scholars, is reluctant to use 'Heroic Symphony'.) As well as Dittersdorf and Haydn, extended accounts are given of appropriate works or movements by Kraus, Neubauer, Rosetti, Stamitz, Anton Wranitzky and Paul Wranitzky that deal with pastoral or war images. The result, in the case of the 'Pastoral' Symphony, is an account that cleverly

integrates inheritance and individuality. The discussion of the 'Eroica' is not as comprehensive, focusing mainly on the first movement and the slow movement.

Mozart is hardly mentioned in the book. Is his name absent from the title because the 'age' was dominated by Haydn and Beethoven and not by Mozart, or because he did not, apparently, compose a characteristic symphony? None of the canonic 41 has a title and, oddly, only one, the 'Jupiter', has acquired a sobriquet that in any way links into the tradition expounded in the book. Before reaching the tentative conclusion that Mozart in some way stood apart from contemporary practice, one should remember that a definition of the symphony that allows the *Seven Last Words* to be incorporated should also embrace the *Galimathias musicum* (K32) as well as a work that is briefly mentioned, the Masonic Funeral Music (K477). Further, the Symphony in E flat (K132), like K32, quotes a Gregorian melody and the Christmas carol 'Joseph, lieber Joseph mein' and the finales of K81 in D and K201 in A are 'hunting' finales, though not identified as such; all these have a claim to be regarded as 'characteristic'. Perhaps the most important conclusion to emerge from this book is an unstated one: that a good deal of music from the period is, to a greater or lesser extent, 'characteristic' and that always to embark from the opposite standpoint, absolute music, is hopelessly inappropriate.

DAVID WYN JONES

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IAN WOODFIELD
OPERA AND DRAMA IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LONDON: THE KING'S THEATRE, GARRICK AND THE BUSINESS OF PERFORMANCE
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Interest in operatic production in the eighteenth century has grown considerably in recent years. Examining the manner in which operatic institutions functioned may illuminate the context in which operas were produced, and can shed light on the works themselves. Ian Woodfield's recent book is a valuable contribution to the literature in this area. He investigates operatic production at the King's Theatre in London with an institutional study that focuses on the period 1769–1778. These years, which, as the author notes, have received little scholarly attention, immediately precede those treated by Curtis Price, Judith Milhous and Robert Hume in their seminal *Italian Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London*, *Volume 1: The King's Theatre, Haymarket, 1778–1791* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Woodfield's book thus serves as a 'prequel' to the larger, more expansive work.

A central issue for the scholar of eighteenth-century Italian opera is the dearth of surviving musical materials, since opera scores were seldom published. We are therefore encouraged to look elsewhere, to find, evaluate and interpret other kinds of source material. Woodfield thrives in the role of detective – he has uncovered wide-ranging sources that provide important, varied information. Throughout the text and in the book's ten appendices, he presents previously unexplored collections of correspondence, newspaper reports, contents of a diary and a periodical, and holdings from archives of three commercial banks. He combines findings from this material with anecdotal evidence from published writings of opera-goers regarding performance and published satires. The main value of the book is Woodfield's eclectic mix of sources and his insightful interpretations of them. He presents the sources in such a way that they illuminate each other, as well as reinforcing his many fascinating points. Furthermore, he proposes a new interpretation of certain issues that are central to Price, Milhous and Hume's study based upon new findings from these documents.

Woodfield sets out his main themes in the introduction: theatre politics, opera management, opera criticism, careers of singers, music, the role of Charles Burney, and a woman in management. The book is a roughly chronological narrative of events, with one or more of these themes emerging at any given point as the narrative unfolds.

Italian opera in London was drawn into the tangled web of machinations typical of eighteenth-century theatre politics. The two recognized theatres for spoken drama – Covent Garden and Drury Lane – held a government-sanctioned monopoly that ensured their profitability, with their managers enjoying great artistic power. When David Garrick, the major figure of the English stage and manager at Drury Lane, rejected the plays of Frances Brooke, the ambitious novelist and aspiring dramatist, she countered by forming a consortium (with Mary Ann and Richard Yates, two prominent actors) and purchasing the King's Theatre in 1773, intending to produce her own plays there alongside operas. The theatre was at this time on the verge of ruin, George Hobart (manager since 1769) having been unable to turn a profit. Brooke was a formidable personality, and her role in revitalizing the King's Theatre lies at the heart of Woodfield's study. During the years of her management, while her repeated applications for permission to stage plays there were denied, she brought the theatre to international prominence as a centre for opera. Richard Sheridan and Thomas Harris, the next managers of Drury Lane and Covent Garden, purchased the theatre in 1778 to retain their hold on their monopoly for theatrical production.

Woodfield describes the well-ordered system of finances that Brooke implemented (destroyed by her successors) and presents salary lists for the leading singers, dancers and composers in the book's tables. He details the politics of production at the King's Theatre involving all its managers and vividly describes the personalities of his large cast of characters – Hobart, Brooke, the Yates couple, Sheridan and Harris, as well as those introduced later in his story, such as Charles and Fanny Burney, Antonio Sacchini and several leading singers of the era. His animated writing style makes them all come alive; their entanglements, feuds, intrigues, volleys, attacks and counter-attacks are as spectacular as the opera produced at the theatre itself must have been.

The book is also valuable for the contribution it makes to the literature on operatic reform. Portions of the *Journal Étranger* of Antoine Le Texier – newly discovered reviews of King's Theatre productions that constitute a rare manifesto of operatic reform – appear in an appendix. But, more significantly, Woodfield discusses the features of reform as typically manifested in Italian opera seria – integration of ballet and choruses within the opera's action, accompanied recitative and enhanced spectacle. His presentation of these features in Sacchini's works is relevant and skilful. As in most operatic centres, reform did not succeed in London, and while at certain points Woodfield attributes this to the lack of interest on the part of composers, at other points he recognizes what has only recently been appreciated about operatic reform – that without a commitment on the part of a theatre's management, it was doomed from the outset. As the manager of a commercial theatre dependent upon income from her subscribers, who demanded star singers of the highest calibre, Brooke could not have addressed the criticisms of opera seria's 'abuses' voiced by Francesco Algarotti and others during the century.

As was true for other cultural centres that sponsored opera seria, star singers were the main attraction of Italian opera in London; the financial prosperity of the King's Theatre depended on them. Brooke learned that it was necessary to hire singers with great 'personal and musical charisma' to keep audiences coming back. Separate chapters are devoted to two important singers and to the events surrounding their appearances in London: the hiring of Lucrezia Agujari by the Pantheon, a rival theatre, and Brooke's response to this move; and the hiring of Caterina Gabrielli. Other major singers in London during this period appear in the narrative as well.

The musical discussion revolves around Sacchini, the yardstick by which all other composers of opera seria were measured in London. The book covers roughly the period of his tenure as house composer. Brooke did try to attract a few other leading composers of the era as well, such as Traetta and J. C. Bach (London operas by them are not discussed) and Piccinni and Paisiello (negotiations to bring them to

London failed). The seven brief music examples illustrate specific points; Woodfield presents music as one source among many rather than as the focus of his study.

Charles Burney functioned as artistic adviser to the King's Theatre, a role that has not previously been explored. He advised Brooke on recruitment of singers and choice of repertory, and is shown to have had significant influence on the operas produced at her theatre. Brooke's ingenious plan to take over the King's Theatre in order to produce her own dramatic works, and her extraordinary tenacity, made her a significant player in London theatre politics. Moreover, she emerges as an important figure in the history of women in opera in general – few female opera managers during this period are known. Brooke made a success of the opera house, and this was no small achievement. During her management the theatre went from the brink of failure to financial success, her strength of purpose and clarity of vision carrying her through times of crisis.

A welcome addition to the book's appendices would have been a chronology of productions for the period under consideration, in order to give the reader a sense of the King's Theatre repertory as a whole. In addition, citations for the sources of the book's music examples would have been helpful. The introduction briefly draws attention to the lack of scores for Sacchini's operas, and the fact that his London works survive only in published collections of airs; presumably these are the sources for some of the examples, but further information is not given. (The chorus produced in one example comes from 'Bremner's published selection of music from *Il Cid*', but no additional information is provided.) Another helpful, small addition – given the overarching chronological structure of the book – would have been dates in the chapter headings. Finally, one wishes for more information on the operas themselves. Woodfield whets our appetite for a detailed discussion of the actual productions, and it is hoped that further research might address this lacuna.

But these are minor quibbles. Overall, this is a thorough examination of many important issues of operatic production, well organized, superbly written and scrupulously documented. Woodfield's riveting study demonstrates the importance of appreciating the varied forces that shaped opera in London during the eighteenth century. Considering sources of various types, and understanding the personalities and activities of those involved in production, allows us to place opera in a broader context and to create a more nuanced and multifaceted view of its development. In so doing we may appreciate more thoroughly not only the circumstances under which operas were produced but also the works themselves.

MARGARET BUTLER

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DAVID YEARSLEY
BACH AND THE MEANINGS OF COUNTERPOINT
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002
pp. xvi + 257, ISBN 0 521 80346 2

One maxim established by debates of recent decades is that music must be understood in terms of its context(s), because contextualization defends music's value and therefore the discipline of studying music. (And we should have no illusions: in the present political and economic situation such things are in serious need of defence.) Contextual study does this by asserting that music does something: cultural work, to use Lawrence Kramer's term. In passing we might note that 'cultural work' invokes both the idea of good works, the ethical sphere, and also employment, the economic sphere: *ergo* music is a responsible citizen, so naturally must be defended. Thus David Yearsley begins his wonderful monograph by reminding us that Bach's strict contrapuntal music has been described in the abstract. Canon, for example, 'is often seen to create a closed musical system without reference beyond itself; it is an autonomous object uncomplicated – or perhaps untarnished – by "extra musical" assumptions and attitudes'. This is a situation to be bemoaned,

since '"abstract" becomes another way of saying "devoid of broader meaning"' (xiii). This book is polite, but the message is clear: methodologies that only allow music to mean itself, that incarcerate it within a 'closed' self-referential 'system', make music meaningless and are therefore somewhat meaningless as pursuits. As Yearsley writes in the final chapter, where the ethical and political import of the book's contextual orientation is asserted most forcefully: 'Like Bach's bones, any contrapuntal framework is nothing but a set of physical data until it is likened to non-musical things' (237). Without the entelechy of culture, music is just bones; and bones, in and of themselves – as any context-oriented scholar will tell you – cannot sing.

Such assertions appear with calming regularity, particularly at the ends of chapters, so we can settle down to a book that pictures the unexpectedly rich array of contexts that have been available for the creation of meaning for Bach's counterpoint. We start with the role played by counterpoint in Lutheran rituals and ideas of death, and pass on to connections between debates about strict contrapuntal procedures and the practice of alchemy. The book then moves away from more transcendentally oriented topics to a reconsideration of the famous Bach–Scheibe controversy, a chapter that will be of particular interest to those concerned with later debates about counterpoint. In the 1790s Ernst Ludwig Gerber famously wrote of Haydn that

> Every harmonic device is at his command, even those of the gothic age of grey contrapuntalists. But instead of their former stiffness, they assume a pleasing manner as soon as he prepares them for our ears. He has a great gift for making a piece sound familiar. In this way, despite all their contrapuntal artifices, he achieves a popular style and is agreeable to every amateur. [Given in Warren Kirkendale, *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*, trans. Margaret Bent and Warren Kirkendale (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979), 150.]

Nature versus artifice, the learned and the galant; contemporaneity versus the aura of the past; connoisseurs versus amateurs: Yearsley's chapter shows how all of these polarities were already in place in critical discourse by the middle decades of the eighteenth century.

Such overtly Enlightenment-oriented themes remain as the environment for the next chapter, which is concerned with re-examining the relationships between counterpoint and authority as manifest in Frederick the Great's commission (or ordering) of *A Musical Offering*. Here, as in a number of other places, Yearsley illustrates with great success how misconceived are the notions that 'Bach' (man, music and sometimes the two synthesized) remained grouchily indifferent to the ideas of the times, and that Bach's last decade marks 'a retreat into abstraction', the latter being built largely on the erroneous supposition 'that by the middle of the eighteenth century counterpoint had become an antiquarian pursuit that had little commerce with the *galant* style' (138–139). The last chapter to be associated solely with eighteenth-century contexts takes us into the realm of mechanistic philosophy, and the relationships and resistances that can be traced between Bach's music and the Enlightenment fascination with the possibility of the mechanistic replication of the human performance of music – a fascination that played into both the hopes (and fears) that man himself might be a machine.

If things had ended here, we might now have discussed only particulars. For example, the book incorporates an excellent, wide-ranging and sensitive study of Mattheson: it covers much more than just *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* and presents Mattheson as a key point of intersection between writings about music and writings about the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century. The study is also laudable for its interactive combination of broadly conceived issues and detailed, respectable scholarly knowledge of Bach's life and works; in comparison with the sometimes deathly, pedantic quality of Bach scholarship at its most institutionalized, this is a book with spaces for thought, infused with a sense of excitement about the material. It is probably the most important monograph on counterpoint in the eighteenth century to have appeared since Warren Kirkendale's tirelessly detailed *Fugue and Fugato in Rococo and Classical Chamber Music*.

Yearsley's book, however, is not just a piece of musicological work. As stated at the beginning, musicology has to prove that it is relevant in our present situation, that it is more than just musicology. This monograph

is no exception to this tendency, and the final chapter, 'Physiognomies of Bach's Counterpoint', presents a very broadly conceived overview of the (mis)appropriation of Bach's counterpoint by German ideology. It seems that the point to which Yearsley is building is straightforward and commendable. He tells us the tale of Bach's remains – their initially vague whereabouts, how in the later part of the nineteenth century scholars and scientists, inspired by growing nationalist concerns in Germany, set about trying to locate them, then prove irrefutably they were Bach's and from there attempt a reconstruction of Bach's face. It is a good yarn and Yearsley is careful to let the story's grisly *telos* intimate itself subtly. By the time Bach's bones have been cleaned up and laid in a sarcophagus below the altar of the Johanniskirche in Leipzig, though, we are aware that all is not well. We are told that this new sarcophagus appears as an important image in Robert Haas's 1928 book on the Baroque. Then, with sinister understatement: 'Haas was then a professor at the University of Vienna and he would join the Nazi party in 1933, still five years before the *Anschluss*. For him the bones were a sign of past greatness and of a greatness still to come' (222).

The point here seems to be that we must be wary of work with positivistic pretensions of revealing how things were – for example, the attempt to establish irrefutably how Bach *actually* looked. Historically speaking, Yearsley's assumption of a causal connection between late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century positivism and emergent totalitarian politics may not be inappropriate. The concept of an objective realm, independent of moral and metaphysical considerations (a split first approved theoretically by August Comte in the middle decades of the nineteenth century) and allied with the later stages of capitalist society, results – as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer assert in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* – in a politics that objectifies human subjects as means rather than ends. Thus if musicology is to protect itself from what Yearsley later refers to as the 'true ugliness of such essentialisms' (230), we should probably approach our objects of study with a certain hermeneutic ethics in mind: that even within a particular cultural context, meaning, like freedom, must always be open to various paths of becoming, that it should not be scripted ontologically, in other words as an invariant part of something's being. This would make a satisfying conclusion to the book and would correlate with Yearsley's demonstration of how counterpoint slips from context to context in the first five chapters.

Of course, there is a hitch. Having established that even Nazi politics can provide a context for contrapuntal meaning, Yearsley swerves into presenting a pre-history of such political tendencies in writings on counterpoint, starting with Marpurg (225ff.). Here his hermeneutic equations become uncharacteristically glib: if counterpoint is mentioned in any kind of universalizing way, that statement's political implications are negatively nationalistic and possibly even proto-fascist. Let us take one example, a quotation from Marpurg's *Abhandlung von der Fuge*:

> An advantage of counterpoint is that it is not based on the changeable style of the day and its wretched traits, which creates a dubious taste; at the present time there is neither a German, nor a French, nor an Italian counterpoint, while at the same time all nations agree that counterpoint is truth in music. [228]

Yearsley's interpretation is as follows:

> Mastery of and dedication to counterpoint – a particularly German, indeed, a particularly Bachian predilection – had been inscribed as a universal. If counterpoint was a timeless truth, it was the Germans who were largely responsible for attending to its continued cultivation. Above all, it had been Bach who had codified the universal laws of music (i.e., counterpoint), which, as he had admirably shown, were adaptable to wholesale stylistic development and across various national traditions. [228]

One could indeed make such an interpretation, but if, as Yearsley seems to imply, meaning must be fluid – since otherwise we become party to essentialisms and negative political agendas – then this cannot be the only interpretation. The writer has established a set of terms primarily associated with Nazi discourse and proffered them to us as ahistorical and universal signifiers of reprehensible politics; he has essentialized his

anti-essentialism. As a result, the confidence with which words and phrases such as 'chilling', 'true ugliness' and 'terrifying' dominate the language of this portion of the book leaves an unpleasant taste.

This righteousness is far too easily won; it knows that it will be greeted with nods of concerned agreement. The fact that it presents itself in such a fashion is an indictment of the gestural rather than critical orientation of political discourse within musicology. It could just as easily be asserted that Marpurg is arguing an Enlightened case for counterpoint as the foundation of a musical cosmopolitanism. To castigate him for doing so because he is German, and Germans happen to write a lot of counterpoint, is, as it stands, like arguing that a German member of the European Community who suggests that other Europeans might profit from adopting an administrative procedure used in German hospitals is secretly plotting a Fourth Reich. Even if the Marpurg remark is nationalist in orientation, Yearsley's indictment still does not hold true. After the treatise of Westphalia in 1648 Germany was left as a splattering of principalities of various sizes with essentially no centralized form of political control. In general, this left the vast majority of the German population at the mercy of local princes who were rarely interested in the freedom of their subjects. The move towards the idea of a unified Germany in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was, therefore, motivated by desires for democracy and representation. Marpurg's statement may well be about freedom, and if Yearsley is castigating Germans in the eighteenth century for articulating freedom in terms of nationalism because nearly two hundred years later nationalism would be scripted in terms of totalitarian politics, I can't help feeling he is being rather Marie Antoinette-like about those not fortunate enough to be versed in the liberal discourse of the present-day academic elite. As I say, nationalism got *rescripted*, which is very different from saying that nationalism *developed into* fascism. The latter, in fact, smacks of an organicist view of history – in other words, that which underlies Nazi arguments about racial supremacy.

Why should an excellent historian like Yearsley smudge his argument in such a fashion? A couple of pages later, in a discussion of Forkel, he seems to catch himself out on this point: 'It would, of course, be preposterous to accuse Forkel of fascist tendencies *avant la lettre*' (233). However, he does not let the issue go: 'but it is certainly worth noting, nonetheless, that the antecedents for the chilling Bach hermeneutics of the 1930s can clearly be discerned in his work' (233). This is a contradiction: if it is 'preposterous' to see Forkel as a proto-fascist, then it is 'preposterous' to assert that his work forms an antecedent to the 1930s Nazi appropriation of Bach. Antecedents are in a teleological relationship to consequents; therefore Forkel is causally related to fascism and therefore it is not 'preposterous' to accuse him 'of fascist tendencies *avant la lettre*'.

In terms of this book's main focus – eighteenth-century contexts for counterpoint – there seems little to be gained from insisting on seeing proto-Nazi politics at work before the late nineteenth century. This leads me to assume that the role of this passage is rhetorical. Rather than telling us anything specific about the reception of Bach's counterpoint before the Nazi era – Yearsley's Nazi-era narrative, by contrast, is far more cogent and convincing – this trope trains us to respond in an automatically negative fashion to any kind of essentialism: masculinity, autonomy, abstraction, universality, nationalism and so forth. In doing so, we are made to feel convinced not so much about the subject matter of the book, but the methodological context in which the book has been written. In other words, we are convinced of the validity of contextual studies – which are generally anti-essentialist in nature – and the book's relevance is guaranteed. But why should this even be necessary? The easy, almost *pro forma* manner with which the book's contextual strategy is announced on the first page of the Preface speaks loudly of the almost unquestioned authority that this kind of approach now wields in our discipline. So is Yearsley merely presenting us with a redundant rhetorical gesture?

This is not the case. Rather, I suggest that what we are actually observing is a methodological wound, an over-determined attempt to redress the imbalance caused by some residual lack of faith in the anti-essentialism that contextual studies preach (rather uncritically, I believe). Further, it is a wound that seems to resist the imperative to heal – something that I found most redeeming. On the penultimate page of the book Yearsley writes that counterpoint 'becomes meaningful only when stories are told about it' (237); thus context is all. Yet, in a stunning theoretical *volte face*, the end of the last sentence asks us to cherish

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counterpoint's 'potential for profound beauty' (238). 'Beauty' is not a story told about counterpoint, nor is it just an opinion, an unspoken agreement arrived at by one community of spectators, or a context; the experience of beauty is, to speak in Kantian fashion, an intimate and utterly prescient experience, the worth of which we validate for ourselves through the tacit assumption that it is a universal. (Hence we are horrified by those who do not feel the beauty of a sunset – or Bach's counterpoint.) If 'profound beauty' is not imbued with such universalizing potential, Yearsley's grand conclusion must be that Bach's counterpoint can be pleasing and pleasant to listen to on a personal level, in other words bounded by a relatively limited context. But if Bach's counterpoint is of import for 'us' in the plural, as the book seems to assert, surely this is not the point. In short, if this music can be profoundly beautiful, then context is not all.

The moral of my story is that we must resist a line of postmodern thinking that is starting to speak almost automatically through us: that there is no outside to context. I think Yearsley's book is important in the ways in which (consciously and critically?) its field of vision splits into conflicting claims at the very point where the lines of perspective in its argument should be focusing on one position. This, of course, is not unrelated to its subject matter. The book emphasizes Bach's investment in the contexts available for giving counterpoint meaning, but if we are not reading carefully, we could indirectly conclude that Bach would condone the contextual methodology that is being brought to bear on his own music. By contrast, as I was reading, rather than being convinced by the power of context to administer meaning, I started to see the situation upside down – as the power of counterpoint, in and of itself, to elude full contextual saturation and thereby to attain some degree of autonomy of movement.

Admittedly, this autonomy could itself be historically contextualized. Crudely put, in an age when art had been more an inextricable component of the ritual life of the church and the aristocracy, there could be no room, at least theoretically, for the notion of recontextualizing a piece of music. A piece of music did not just represent its implied function; it both embodied and emanated it. To recontextualize the music would be to dismember and wound an absolute truth (God or absolutism). Yet with the emergence of the public sphere – represented most strongly in the book's discussions of Scheibe and Mattheson – 'the private people for whom the cultural product became available as a commodity', as Habermas writes, 'profaned it inasmuch as they had to determine its meaning on their own'. They had to provide a rational justification for 'what precisely in its implicitness for so long could assert its authority', or invalidate that authority, as Yearsley sometimes shows to be the case (*The Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger with the assistance of Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 37). If music lost its aura of irrefutability, therefore, we might understand the endless spawning of contexts for counterpoint starting in the middle of the eighteenth century and continuing to the present day as an attempt to regain such a comforting stability.

But is it our constant changing that stops us from bringing the proliferation of counterpoint's meaning to rest, or is it that the basic bones of counterpoint do not change? If it is the former, then we can thank the birth of the modern critical sphere in the eighteenth century for liberating us into our potential for constant change and becoming. Thus Yearsley's study is important for giving us a picture from the early stages of our freedom. But if it is the latter, then our freedom to become is engendered from creative acknowledgment that that which does not change can never be fully conceptualized by us. It is our attempts to capture that which does not move that, in a sense, continue to make our culture move. Bach was the technical master of that which does not move (strict contrapuntal procedures), yet, as the book shows, in the middle decades of the eighteenth century this probably gave Bach's music the freedom to appear – benignly, critically, even combatively – in a wider variety of contexts than perhaps that of any other composer. Freedom, we might say, results dialectically from the interactions of stasis and travel. Any book that is able to open up even the possibility of this picture is of vital importance to us.

JAMES CURRIE

EDITIONS

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PIERRE GAVINIÉS, SONATAS FOR VIOLIN AND BASSO CONTINUO, OP. 3

ED. ANTHONY F. GINTER
Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era 64
Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2002
pp. xii + 59, ISBN 0 89579 501 9

In 1764 Pierre Gaviniés, violinist and musical director of the *Concert Spirituel*, published his second set of six sonatas for *violon seul et basse*; these followed a similar set, published in 1760 as Op. 1, as well as his *Receuil d'airs à 3 parties, Premier dessus, Second dessus et alto où violoncelle pour basse* (1763). Under the influence of Corelli, the epigone of the Italian violin school, sonatas had gained a popularity in France that defied Fontenelle's bewildered 'Sonate – que me veux-tu?', an apostrophe that betrayed the genre's perceived incompatibility with French musical aesthetics. Corelli's successors were held in high esteem by French audiences, inspiring French composers to treat the violin as a solo instrument. Pierre Gaviniés, little known today except for his etudes, was a seminal figure in the development of the French violin school. Described by Viotti as the 'French Tartini', his popularity was founded on a brilliant tone and the unparalleled expressiveness of his 'sighing' violin.

Anthony F. Ginter's recent publication of the Op. 3 sonatas is a welcome addition to a musicological world that has only recently acknowledged performers as key figures in the propagation of musical styles. However, Ginter struggles with the persistent difficulty of producing an edition that is aimed equally at performers, teachers and scholars, a problem that is overcome only through positing an idealized recipient who critically engages with both the text and the bibliographical leads provided. Unfortunately, it is in his reference to further reading that Ginter's edition falls short. Secondary sources are reduced to a handful of studies, primarily works that are themselves now in need of historical reassessment given rapidly changing fashions in historical performance research. References to recent research concerning the social relevance of the French sonata repertory is absent altogether.

Because Gaviniés published these sonatas at his own expense, they lack a dedication suggesting an affiliation with a patron drawn from the ranks of the French aristocracy. Still, the Sonatas Opp. 1, 3 and 5, as well as his *Receuil d'airs à 3 parties*, were suitable fodder for Parisian salons and, as a generous and fastidious teacher, Gaviniés might have had pedagogical motives for the composition of the sonatas. Constant Pierre's compilation of programmes from the *Concert Spirituel* shows little sign of Gaviniés's sonatas as public concert repertoire with the exception of a single performance by his pupil Capron in November 1763. Could this have been one of the Op. 3 sonatas, possibly played in public to promote the upcoming self-funded publication?

In his Preface, Ginter deals briefly with the execution of bowing articulation, the area in which Gaviniés was most influential. However, the intricacies of the French ornamental language as conveyed by the use of a wide variety of notational signs are sacrificed to editorial regularization. We are left with only three – the trill, the appoggiatura and the *port de voix* – and the temptation to read these through modern eyes is strong. Although Ginter refers primarily (if summarily) to L'Abbé le Fils's *Principes du violon*, his remarks need to be supplemented and amplified. Compare, for example, L'Abbé's section on 'roulades' and the 'coup d'archet articulé'. Here we read that slurs with dots underneath prescribe an even dynamic execution of all the notes whereas an ascending or descending passage that is either slurred or unmarked implies a dynamic gradation. In fact, L'Abbé's detailed description of ornaments shows that the lack of dynamic markings to which Ginter refers is to a degree compensated for by the association of specific ornaments with specific dynamics or dynamic patterns. In order to understand the complexity of the ornamental language, then, it would be

better to turn to L'Abbé rather than David Boyden's *The History of Violin Playing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965) or Frederick Neumann's *Ornamentation in Baroque and Post-Baroque Music* (third edition with corrections, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). L'Abbé's violin school includes other significant performance instructions, among them the advice that an ornament must always be executed on the same string as its main note and, more importantly, since it corrects a deeply ingrained 'given' of historical performance, that open strings are to be avoided on main notes.

But maybe the most interesting thing about these sonatas is Gaviniés's combination of Italian violin figuration with a French ornamental aesthetic; his music is so dominated by its melodic writing that it foreshadows a new, romantic aesthetic of violin playing. C. R. Brijon's *Réflexions sur la musique, et la vraie maniére de l'exécuter sur le violon* (1763), for example, already demonstrates the infiltration of compositional techniques by new philosophical ideas, ideas that compare music to painting and place all emphasis on melody, which alone is the feature of music that stirs the passions and creates empathetic sentiments. In fact, descriptions of Gaviniés's bowing style maps precisely on to Brijon's explication of designs, colours, hard and soft touches, shadows and nuances in musical painting.

The Janus-like figure of Gaviniés (Ginter's description, accurate if we remember that the *Jani* were originally Roman gateways that stood symbolically for propitious entrances or exits) moulded the new style so convincingly that one can never be sure whether he was its leader or its follower. Constance D. T. Pipelet, one of his many admirers, alludes to this in her epitaph for him:

> As a result of his superior artistry, he successively adopted the fortunate changes that his times brought to music, so that after having wrought so much progress upon his art, he followed it, so to speak, in the progress that it made without him.
>
> Par un suite de son excellent esprit, il adopta successivement les changemens hereux que le temps apporta dans la musique; tellement qu'après avoir fait faire tant de progrès, il le suivait, pour ainsi dire, dans les progrès qu'il faisait sans lui. *Eloge Historique de Pierre Gavinis* (Paris: Gillé Fils, 1802), 15

She described Gaviniés's musical style in a language that betrays old ideals of virtuosity born of dexterity as much as the new sentiment of the romantic hero. The construction of his persona focuses on his enchanting ability to play Adagios to mesmeric effect and it is fuelled by his life's most scandalous moment: following an illicit affair he was sentenced to one year in prison, during which he composed his famous *Romance*. This became so popular that it inspired an entire repertoire of similar works.

Pipelet bears witness to a transformation in musical style that Gaviniés translates on to the violin. Without ever betraying the French style of his predecessors, Gaviniés was seminal in the creation of a new melodic playing style that required an even sound on both up- and downbows to make them indistinguishable. His sonatas show great concern with virtuosity of the bow, alternating sequential patterns with the articulation of ornaments. Ginter rightly supplements the text with slurs on ornamental figures that would undoubtedly have been played under one bow (Sonata 2, Adagio, bar 7). Other editorial bowings, however, show that Ginter has in many places taken on the old-fashioned role of a violinist preparing a performance rather than a text; his decisions are frequently informed by a pre-existing idea of bowing 'the right way round'. While these additions are clearly distinguished in the text, some realizations of Gaviniés's shorthand notations are not – only an incredulous performer will discover that these are Ginter's performance suggestions. Ginter thereby sells as impartial editing what in fact are performance indications. I wonder whether it might have been better to make all editorial alterations immediately recognizable; after all, we need to question what it is that a modern edition offers that a facsimile cannot, particularly with regard to music that was always printed in score. Surely modern editions should open up as many points of discussion as possible. And as with any essay intended to inspire scholarly exchange, the author must take a stance. Ginter certainly does this but he does not always present his bias openly. This not only restricts the performer's ability to engage in debate with the text but also betrays his

apparent belief in a fundamental split between performer and scholar. And yet performers interested in this repertoire are exactly those who are concerned with historical issues. These sonatas provide much scope for research and suggest many areas of inquiry that are as yet unexplored. In this respect, at least, the edition is a welcome turn toward the repertoire of mid-eighteenth-century French instrumental music.

WIEBKE THORMÄHLEN

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JOHN MARSH, SYMPHONIES (PARTS 1 AND 2)

ED. IAN GRAHAM-JONES
Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era 62, 63
Middleton, WI A-R Editions, 2001
pp. xvii + 255, xiv + 213; ISBN 0 89579 486 1, 0 89579 486 X

Most major music publishing firms have paid little attention to English composers active during the latter part of the eighteenth century. It is therefore encouraging to see that one of the industry's major firms, A-R Editions, has added works by John Marsh (1752–1828), amongst the more interesting and skilful of late Georgian composers, to their Recent Researches in the Music of the Classical Era (RRMCE) series.

Marsh was not a musician by profession but trained as a lawyer and for his entire life considered himself no more than a musical dilettante. In addition to his legal studies, however, Marsh was an accomplished composer and performer, teaching himself to play the spinet, violin, viola, cello, oboe and organ. He moved to London in 1773 to finish his legal training as an attorney of the King's Bench (England's highest Common Law Court); he then returned to Romsey (where he began his legal training) in 1774 to establish his own practice. Not content with life in a small town, he moved to Salisbury in 1776 and then to Canterbury in 1783, where he eventually abandoned his law career. In each of these locations Marsh played an active part in musical life in one role or another: as a concert performer (in 1780 he became leader of the Salisbury subscription concert series); as a substitute organist at cathedral services; as a composer (several of his symphonies had their first performances at, and primarily were intended for, subscription concerts or festivals in provincial English towns); and as a concert organizer (in 1783 he took over the directorship of the Canterbury Concerts and revived the subscription concerts at Chichester).

For a self-confessed dabbler who spent most of his life outside the London musical scene, Marsh nevertheless proved himself a capable composer. His symphonies, of which there are thirty-nine listed in the composer's own catalogue of his works, demonstrate well Marsh's skill at catering for the tastes and abilities of the provincial orchestras with which he spent most of his musical life. Marsh's compositions for the most part reflect the galant style of the period, and influences on him are relatively unambiguous: his diaries reveal an early admiration for, and deliberate imitation of, elements of Johann Christian Bach's compositional style (there is no doubt, for example, that Marsh's *A Conversation Symphony for Two Orchestras* (1778) was inspired by J. C. Bach's symphonies for double orchestra from the early 1770s, published later as part of the Op. 18 set in 1781, though Marsh's approach to scoring differs significantly from Bach's); and later in life he admired Haydn, whose influence, such as the use of a single flute, can be seen in Marsh's four-movement *A Favourite Symphony*, No. 6 [27] in D major (1796). (The numbering system for Marsh's symphonies includes the number provided in the original printed editions followed by Marsh's own chronological listing of compositions, in square brackets, as given in his catalogue.) Interestingly, in the post-Handelian English musical culture dominated by imports such as Bach and C. F. Abel, Marsh's *Conversation Symphony* was

initially advertised under the more German-sounding pseudonym 'Sharm'; subsequent reprints of this popular work appeared under Marsh's own name.

Marsh proves himself a dab hand at symphonic writing, creating charming melodies, vibrant tuttis and a wide range of instrumental colours. His wind scoring is both deft and varied, incorporating lilting solos, small wind ensembles and simple doubling of the string parts within the same work, as in the Symphony No. 1 [13] in B flat major (1781). While only the nine symphonies published during Marsh's lifetime have survived, along with three finales (the works in these two volumes date from Marsh's time in Salisbury, Canterbury and Chichester, were composed between 1778 and 1796 and published between 1784 and 1801), Ian Graham-Jones has brought to light these few delightful and largely neglected works and has given John Marsh some long-deserved attention through new modern editions.

The presentation of the musical text is clear and uncluttered, which will gratify those used to poring over the all-too-common opaque and bewildering editions that reproduce every flyspeck and inkspot from the source or sources. That said, there remain some unfortunate pitfalls for unwary readers which might easily have been avoided. For example, editorial expression marks are not consistently applied amongst parts, which may require performers to amend the parts themselves, transferring assorted staccato marks, strokes and dynamic markings from one part to another as appropriate where the editor has not done so. Editorial trills are similarly added in some places where 'Marsh no doubt intended other parts moving in thirds or sixths, for example, to trill at the same time' but not in others, as in the third movement of Symphony No. 5 [16] in E flat major (1783), for example, where an editorial trill appears in the second oboe part in bar 15 but inexplicably not three bars earlier where one might reasonably be expected.

Far more egregious is the editor's exclusion of the ripieno flute, clarinet and string parts, the autographs of which are currently housed alongside the printed parts in Cambridge University Library. In the Critical Notes the reader is presented with the argument that the omitted parts were superfluous and intended only for 'additional woodwind players' and 'extra desks of strings', or else were earlier copies used for specific performances. Even if this were true, the omission of parts created by the composer is puzzling given the stated purpose of the series to publish works 'for their potential interest to scholars and performers'. While the inclusion of the ripieno parts would have increased the size of both volumes significantly, their absence detracts from our understanding of a key aspect of Marsh's technique. Unlike some London-based composers, Marsh's symphonic works incorporate a degree of flexibility necessary to keep them accessible to provincial orchestras, in which specific instrumentalists may not have been available or at least may not have been of a sufficient standard.

Similarly, the editor has chosen not to include in either volume the wind cues that are printed in the string parts in order to accommodate ensembles of reduced forces. These would have been a most attractive feature to include, especially if A-R Editions produced performance parts for use by smaller ensembles (as Marsh or his publisher had anticipated).

As for the written texts accompanying the scores, there is much in the volumes that contributes to our knowledge not only of the symphony in the eighteenth century but also of the world outside professional music making. The combined introductions to both volumes give a well-rounded account of Marsh's activities (musical and non-musical) and orchestral works as well as the historical context for these compositions, and sources are described in detail. Marsh's own comments on the composition and performance of individual works are included, along with useful facsimiles of documents and diagrams from the composer. Graham-Jones's editorial commentary is less robust, however, with some editorial decisions weakly supported, unsupported altogether (as with the decision to omit cues), or simply confusingly presented (for example, 'Figuring has been retained except where obviously incorrect. Figuring which may strictly be incorrect but is obvious . . . has been left.').

These two volumes of symphonies by John Marsh are the first orchestral works by a native English composer that A-R has included in its catalogue, though vocal works by Thomas Linley, Jr (RRMCE 7), and instrumental works by resident foreigners such as Carl Friedrich Abel (RRMCE 3) are also present. There is an excellent recording of Marsh's *A Conversation Symphony for Two Orchestras* that makes use of this edition

and the omitted wind parts (*Eighteenth-Century British Symphonies*, Hanover Band, ASV GAU216, 2001), though neither Graham-Jones nor A-R indicates whether these works are available in parts. If not, it would be a shame if these attractive symphonies were to remain restricted to score form, as this is music well worth performing by amateur and professional ensembles alike.

ANN VAN ALLEN-RUSSELL

RECORDINGS

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ALTBACHISCHES ARCHIV: WORKS BY JOHANN BACH (1604–1673), JOHANN CHRISTOPH BACH (1642–1703), GEORG CHRISTOPH BACH (1642–1697), JOHANN MICHAEL BACH (1648–1694), JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685–1750)

Cantus Cölln / Concerto Paladino / Konrad Junghänel
Harmonia Mundi HMC901783/84, 2003; two discs, 2′33″

The recent rediscovery of the 'Altbachisches Archiv' in Kiev is not as groundbreaking as it might first appear: the collection has been well known – and in print – since the 1930s and much of the music has been recorded by various artists. Most memorable perhaps is the feisty 1986 recording by Reinhard Goebel and Musica Antiqua Köln of 'cantatas' by various Bachs. Moreover, the stunning lament by Johann Christoph Bach, *Ach, daß ich Wassers gnug hätte*, has become virtually a staple of the contemporary countertenor. Nevertheless, the present recording is signally important in presenting the collection in its entirety of around twenty pieces, together with a few more from other sources. Moreover, it benefits directly from the work (and notes) of Peter Wollny, who outlines the significance of the rediscovery of the original sources. For instance, it had hitherto been assumed that J. S. Bach received this collection of manuscripts by his elder family directly from his father, Johann Ambrosius, or indeed from the daughter (who also happened to be Sebastian's first wife) of one of the featured composers, Johann Michael. While one piece is indeed in Ambrosius's hand, the majority of the collection seems to have been copied by a relatively obscure Arnstadt cantor. It may be, then, that the latter gave his Bach-family pieces to Johann Ernst Bach, an organist in Arnstadt (from 1707 to 1739), who could then have passed them on, together with the remainder of the collection, to the Leipzig cantor.

The manuscripts also show that Sebastian took great care of them during the last fifteen years of his life, providing title pages where necessary, corrections and completions of text, and even performing material. The question arises as to why he felt the need to collect, preserve and sometimes perform the music by the brothers Johann Christoph (1642–1703) and Johann Michael (1648–1694), and by the elder Bachs Johann (1604–1673) and Georg Christoph (1642–1697), together with a few anonymous pieces. Certainly, family pride must have played a considerable part, something obvious in Sebastian's obituary (which suggests that its author, Carl Philipp Emanuel, continued the tradition). Together with Sebastian's enormous teaching legacy, there is clearly a sense of him positioning himself within a broader tradition that would not cease on his death. Christoph Wolff has noted that Bach supervised the copying-out of instrumental parts to Christoph's *Lieber Herr Gott, wecke uns auf* in the very last year of his life, suggesting that he may have intended this to be performed at his own funeral.

Yet how could Sebastian have considered these seemingly archaic pieces relevant to his own times? Can they in any sense belong to the eighteenth century? There is no doubt that they lack much of the formal

structuring that had become essential to most vocal writing of the early eighteenth century, namely da capo and binary forms, integrated, modular ritornellos and secco recitative. Indeed, even by the Italian norms of the late seventeenth century these pieces seem to burst beyond whatever forms were at hand, rather like the virtuoso violin writing of the Austro-German school (Biber, Schmelzer, J. J. Walther, J. P. Westhoff), which can often be unpredictable in its expressive devices and sequences of ideas. In short, this repertoire lies at the core of the *stylus phantasticus*, as described in various ways by theorists from Kircher to Mattheson.

Indeed, anarchy is threatened at such points as the opening of Johann Christoph Bach's *Es erhub sich ein Streit*. A little familiarity with Christoph's extraordinary range and technique as a composer renders the vulgar archaism of this opening doubly shocking – he was clearly overthrowing the bounds of sophisticated taste and superlative skill. From the Schütz-like texture and word-setting of the *Nunc Dimittis* ('Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener') through the scrumptious laments, from strophic arias to the larger cantatas (including a witty wedding cantata based on the Song of Songs), Christoph truly earns the admiration that Sebastian Bach so obviously felt (indeed, attributions of the authorship of the motet *Ich lasse dich nicht* have vacillated between Sebastian and Christoph over the last two centuries). Not to be ignored, though, is the achievement of Christoph's younger brother, Michael, who likewise ranges from larger cantatas to strangely moving strophic arias (such as *Auf, laßt uns den Herren loben*). And the works attributed to Johann Bach provide an important link between Sebastian Bach and the Schütz tradition, something that is not otherwise strongly evident in his library.

Viewed from an eighteenth-century perspective, some aspects of these pieces certainly sound old-fashioned, particularly their harmony and the 'quicksilver' word setting that seems to betray the latter vestiges of the *seconda pratica*. But there is also a sense in which these pieces sound strikingly modern. Indeed, they display something of the essence of the mid-eighteenth century in two contrasting ways: in their free, 'fantastic' manner (akin to *Empfindsamkeit*) and in their use of lyrical, simpler, song-like forms (almost the galant style), which may well owe something to the early Lutheran Pietist movement. Christoph Bach's strophic homophonic aria *Es ist nun aus* is so 'modern' that it could almost pass for the work of a German composer living at some juncture between Mendelssohn and Brahms.

Might it be, then, that part of Bach's motivation for reviving many works that he undoubtedly knew in his youth lay in his sense that they were somehow fashionable again? Indeed, given his own comparative failure in galant idioms, perhaps this was a way he felt he could teach his sons something directly relevant to their interests. The question then also arises whether this expressive, proto-Romantic, idiom really went underground during the course of Bach's life, in the wake of the latest Italian formal procedures and the revival of counterpoint. Certainly there were song collections in the 1730s (by Georg Christian Schmelli and Sperontes, both of 1736) in which Bach was closely involved. He must have been well aware of the lighter idioms pursued by Telemann and the renewed operatic tradition of the Dresden court under Hasse. But perhaps Bach maintained the wilder *stylus phantasticus* in his own improvisations (glimpsed in pieces such as the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue, BWV903) while remaining more didactically formal in much of his notated music.

These performances directed by Konrad Junghänel show the tremendous growth in expression and technique achieved over the last few decades. If some passages (such as the opening of *Es erhub sich ein Streit*) lack the blood-curdling aggression of Reinhard Goebel's Musica Antiqua performances, there is a growth in expressivity and subtlety that is unquestionably beneficial. Much also comes from the variegated diction of the singers that builds on the rhetorical, speech-like delivery of earlier stages in the historical performance movement, with a sense of vocal lyricism that is extremely striking. No vocalist is especially notable alone, but when they sing together as a group, or even as soloists with the instruments, the effect is extremely gratifying. The playing too shows the maturity of current historical performance, gripping the spirit of each figure and capable of instantaneous changes of affect; the snipped string staccatos of many earlier performances are replaced by a much wider range of accentual devices. Particularly enjoyable are the sizzling violin obbligatos that Christoph Bach has a habit of providing for the final

chorales of his larger cantatas. It is well known that the singers in Bach's own cantatas often doubled as players in other weeks (and vice versa), and there is certainly a sense of such versatility here: the homogeneity of this group is not one of bland acquiescence but born of an intense interaction between all its component members.

JOHN BUTT

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ANDRÉ-ERNEST-MODESTE GRÉTRY (1741–1813)

RICHARD CŒUR DE LION AND *DENYS LE TYRAN*

Peter Edelmann (Blondel), Hubert Zingele (Richard), Marinella Pennicchi (Laurette), Flavia Bernardi (Antonio), Barbara Pichler (Marguerite), Mattia Nicolini (Williams), Bruno de Simone (Denys), Claudio di Segni (Timoleon), Romano Franceschetto (Chrysostome), Stefania Donzelli (La femme de Chrysostome) / Coro Lirico Gréty di Bolzano / Orchestra dei Giovanni del Conservatorio 'Claudio Monteverdi' di Bolzano / Fabio Neri; Coro Ars Pulcherrima Artium / Orchestra Internazionale d'Italia / Francesco Vizioli
Nuova Era 7327/28, 1999; two discs, 2′03″

It is good to be able to hear these two Grétry operas, if only to confirm the verdict of history, which has been that *Richard cœur de lion* is one of his most important, and *Denys le tyran* one of his least. And of course one must welcome Italian interest in a composer who learned so much in that country, and a world premiere recording. This is of *Denys*, one of Grétry's later works, which was composed for the Paris Opéra rather than an opéra comique theatre and thus has recitatives rather than spoken dialogue. It is tempting to blame the libretto for the work's initial failure, and its unconvincing quality in revival, but the music cannot entirely be exempted from blame. The libretto is admittedly as silly a piece of propaganda as one could ever hope to hear, and moreover a cruel one: Denys, the deposed Dionysios of Syracuse, is employed as a schoolteacher in Corinth, a duty he performs ineptly and unkindly; at odd moments he draws out a diadem and contemplates it lovingly; when unmasked, through getting drunk, he is driven away without ceremony and with a good deal of self-congratulatory republican rhetoric, culminating with the inevitable rendering of the Marseillaise. The tyrant remains the only personality who is remotely interesting; the inhumanity of the republicans duly matches that of the tyrant, but nobody notices. No doubt in this respect the piece reflects the mood of its time.

It is not that the music is untypical of Grétry; as David Charlton observes, 'not even the "republican" *pièces d'occasion* of 1794 lack his stamp' ('Grétry', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), volume 2, 537). Jolly musical numbers involving school-teaching, drinking and so forth, which were bread and butter to the composer, flesh out the feeble dramatic material, but the serious political issues are more or less ignored. It would all work better with spoken dialogue, through which the *dramatis personae* might seem for a time like real people, rather than singers awkwardly handling unfamiliar music. The recitative seems, in context, heavy-handed, whereas the serious elements in *Richard cœur de lion* do not suffer through the use of spoken dialogue; the opéra comique genre admits recitative at high dramatic points, such as the prison scene, which anticipates another popular, and musically more productive, dramatic trope of the Revolutionary decade and beyond (*Fidelio*, *Il trovatore*). Opinions differ on whether spoken dialogue should be retained in recordings of singspiel and opéra comique; here it is included in part (a more complete text is printed, with no indication of the numerous cuts, in the accompanying booklet). Presumably the stage action of this live performance clarified any lacunae in the detail of the plot.

The success of *Richard* owes something to the libretto, but much more to the music. The plot is a kind of rescue opera, in which a character of lowly status puts himself in danger for the sake of his monarch (compare *Les deux journées* and *A Life for the Tsar*, which succeeded better than Grétry's work in Revolutionary times). Where *Denys* has only cardboard cut-out characters, *Richard* at least has types, if not, with one exception, three-dimensional human beings. The dominant personality of the opera, the minstrel Blondel, has a single aim in view (rescuing his imprisoned king), but his personality is fleshed out by scenes set to music of remarkable variety and consummate art. His historic role is the minstrel who plays the violin and sings the pseudo-antique melody 'Une fièvre brillante' outside the castle, to attract the attention of the imprisoned king; the uniting of their voices is one of the great moments of opéra comique, infallibly moving. Within the drama Blondel acts out the fiction of being blind. Left alone, he expresses himself fully in the aria 'O Richard! O mon roi'; in company he engages in a fleeting, but touching, relationship with Antonio, his guide (a trouser role), is a sympathetic counsellor to the lovelorn Laurette (in order to manipulate her into trapping the prison governor) and acts the hearty in a drinking song of agreeable political incorrectness ('Que le sultan Saladin'). Only in the thick of the rescue action is he musically inarticulate and improbably dashing.

Antonio has little to sing, but others have even less. His girlfriend sings in the first chorus along with a couple of opéra comique oldies, but never again; one assumes, however, that she and Antonio finally get together, for an ending uniformly happy, if one forgets the deaths of a couple of soldiers. Richard is reunited with Marguerite, whose forces, alerted by Blondel, have rescued him; and the prison governor, ironically (in view of *Fidelio*) called Florestan, is handed back his sword and united with Laurette. The latter, a soubrette role, is developed rather more than Marguerite, Countess of Flanders and d'Artois. Laurette's solo is one of the most engaging numbers, delicately expressive of naive love ('Je crains de lui parler la nuit'), and it seduced the English composer Pinto into writing piano variations (more celebrated, of course, are Beethoven's on 'Une fièvre brillante'). She echoes Blondel's maxims in a duet ('Un bandeau couvre les yeux / Du dieu qui nous rend amoureux'); and she is first heard in the middle of the quartet which launches the action by bringing Blondel into contact with her father Williams, a fellow-soldier with Richard in Palestine. The variable lengths of roles and the wealth of minor characters, untidy as they might appear on paper, are part of the work's realism and charm. Grétry and Sedaine manage both to recall the historic origins of the genre in *comédie mêlée d'ariettes*, in which many numbers are designed to charm and be whistled in the street, and to anticipate dramatic forms of the following century. In truth the result is no more mixed than *Fidelio* and perhaps less stylistically diverse than *Die Zauberflöte*; and, despite having three acts, it is considerably shorter than either. Only the scenic demands of a split-level set, and storming the castle, can excuse the comparative neglect of *Richard* on the modern stage.

David Charlton remarks of this opera that 'the number of singing parts is remarkable' (*Grétry and the Growth of Opéra-Comique* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 232). Just as well, for the entry of a new voice is at least a novelty when none of them is very good. One should not be too hard on what is evidently a less than fully professional team. Peter Edelmann's forceful and committed Blondel is praiseworthy, and the conductor, Fabio Neri, may be blamed for languid tempos. The youthful orchestra overaccentuates dance and military rhythms, though some lighter textures (notably the delicious end to Act 1) come off well. They can play slower music with feeling, which may explain, but cannot excuse, the sluggish tempo of Laurette's aria; as for 'Une fièvre brillante', it is usual to praise Grétry's use of thematic recurrence, but at this turgid tempo, and modern pitch (high relative to the ability of the singers), one might wish for less of it. The entirely different forces in *Denys le tyran* hardly do better, and in both performances the French pronunciation is at best variable, at worst atrocious; while with some exceptions (Edelmann, the Antonio and Laurette) delivery of the dialogue is comically wooden. The final reason for dismissing both performances with no more than one star out of five derives from technical incompetence in continuity. Presumably more than one performance was used, but that does not excuse the cutting-short of final chords, still less leaving the tail end of a chord (and in one case applause) at the beginning of a track in which the dialogue nevertheless resumes only in a dilatory fashion. Remarkably enough, the engineering has managed

to preserve all the disadvantages of live recording (including monotonous dynamics possibly acceptable to a live audience capable of such ecstatic applause) without any of its advantages.

JULIAN RUSHTON

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WILLIAM HERSCHEL (1738–1822)

SYMPHONIES NOS 2 IN D MAJOR, 8 IN C MINOR, 12 IN D MAJOR, 13 IN D MAJOR, 14 IN D MAJOR, 17 IN C MAJOR
London Mozart Players / Matthias Bamert
Chandos CHAN 10048, 2003, one disc, 1′08″

Would William Herschel's symphonies have received the attention of one of Britain's leading chamber orchestras – and a 'modern-instrument' orchestra at that – had he not achieved fame as an astronomer after discovering Uranus in 1781? Probably the symphonies themselves would never have survived. Yet this CD is more than a curiosity, for while inspiration flows somewhat patchily, there are moments here, even whole movements, that linger in the memory – moments of quirky eccentricity and a surprisingly passionate expression, touches of vivid orchestration, some fine melodic turns of phrase. Like many 'minor' composers Herschel is often experimental rather than derivative, and the selection recorded here is certainly unlike any other British repertoire of the time.

Herschel was no musical amateur. Oboist and violinist in the band of the Hanover Guards, he was briefly posted to Britain in 1756 and returned the following year as a freelance musician. Though Britain was particularly receptive to German musicians at this time, four years in London failed to establish him there. His name appears in London newspapers only twice: playing a viola solo at a benefit for Charles Barbandt on 15 February 1760 and leading a concert for Heyl and Gaignevaudoux on 17 March, with solos on the violin and oboe (alongside the future Madame Mara in her London debut on the violin).

In 1760 Herschel abandoned London to take over a small Durham militia band, initiating an oft-described career as instrumentalist and concert director in Newcastle, Leeds and Bath. It is indeed a revealing story of early oversupply in London and of the diversity required of most musicians of the time: Herschel appeared as oboist, harpsichordist, organist and viola player as well as violinist, the latter evidently the passport to a higher profile as concert director. At the same time, his personal skills led to many upper-crust invitations and lucrative teaching engagements. Clearly Herschel spotted a market opportunity for an energetic European musician in the provinces, for even once he had reached the heights of acceptance in Bath, he never attempted a renewed assault on London.

Yet if this is a story of modest success, it leaves open the question of Herschel's career as a composer. On leaving London, Herschel evidently made a conscious decision to go beyond being a mere instrumentalist, seeking recognition as a symphonist, symbol of a progressive concert musician. This ambition was furthered by his engagements in northern England, especially as director of the Leeds concerts from 1762. The period 1760–1764 resulted in twenty-four symphonies, the first eleven being chamber symphonies for strings with bassoon, the remainder mostly on a larger scale with winds, reflecting the greater resources in Leeds. The flamboyant No. 14 (which opens this disc) was perhaps intended for a benefit concert in York, requiring simultaneous pairs of flutes and oboes, as well as horns and timpani. Yet after 1764 Herschel apparently chose not to pursue these symphonic ambitions, even as director of concerts in Bath.

Indeed, the surviving repertoire (acquired by the British Library in 1967) has an air of completeness about it. The first eighteen symphonies in autograph fair copies were carefully bound in three volumes, apparently by the composer (Add. 49624–6), alongside sets of parts partly in the composer's hand. Three symphonies (Nos 2, 5 and 13) appear in facsimile in Series E, volume 3 of *The Symphony 1720–1840*, edited by Sterling E.

Murray (New York: Garland, 1983). As Murray has pointed out, these symphonies embody on a remarkably short time-scale a fascinating process of stylistic change. The early symphonies (as well as concertos now in Berkeley) reflect the north German *empfindsamer Stil*, with emotional contrasts of dynamics and texture, intense diminished seventh chords and some contrapuntal writing in the north German manner. In the English context this must have been perceived as highly unusual. It is possible to posit a connection with the aesthetic aims of Charles Avison, with whom Herschel was associated in Newcastle, but the works of C. P. E. Bach or the Grauns were largely unknown in Britain. Certainly there is a gulf from the buoyant diatonicism of Boyce's symphonies, as from the post-Corellian counterpoint of other British music of the period. At any rate, in 1762 Herschel changed style radically as he assembled a symphonic repertoire for Leeds. The new idiom of the Italian sinfonia was already much more familiar in Britain, and in its German version in the symphonies of J. C. Bach and Abel it was to become the norm.

This self-contained repertory thus accomplishes a complete stylistic development in microcosm, vividly illustrating available styles during this volatile period and the adaptability of an ambitious young composer. Yet though comparatively unpolished, Herschel's early works are the more characterful. The later symphonies are undoubtedly more accomplished, but overall they show less individuality. Perhaps in 1764 Herschel recognized that he could not achieve that most demanding requirement of the new style – the suave ease and control of pace J. C. Bach achieved at his best.

This CD comprises premiere recordings of Nos 2 and 8 from the earlier group, Nos 12–14 and 17 from the later. It is a pity that the selection includes only one symphony in the minor mode, since it is here that Herschel is at his most searching (in fact six of the first eleven symphonies are in minor). The highlight of this release is assuredly the C minor No. 8, with its strong Allegro developing from a portentous soft opening, a haunting G minor Andante with an unexpectedly passionate coda and a tempestuously dramatic finale. The disc has four symphonies in D major, including two in a row: it is surely anachronistic enough to listen to six symphonies in succession, let alone two in the same key.

Indeed, Herschel's blustering D major tuttis are the least interesting side of his writing. He is at his best in more reflective moods, not only in central Andantes and trio sections but also in subsidiary passages that are often tinged with minor-mode inflections. It is here too that Herschel displays a certain harmonic idiosyncracy. Sometimes this must be put down to inexperience, but such a strange progression as D minor $\frac{6}{3}$ to C minor in No. 2/ii is peculiarly affecting in this age of harmonic uniformity. Herschel is especially partial towards static melodies over a mobile bass, whether the pathos of the *minore* solo in No. 14/i or the aggressive C minor arpeggios which hold firm at the close of No. 8 against shifting harmonies.

Similarly unorthodox is Herschel's attitude towards formal and tonal procedures, even given the contemporary variety of approaches towards binary form. Thus No. 2/i diverts to the submediant for much of the 'second group', while the G major charm of No. 14/ii is dispelled by the poignant B minor close to the first half. The C minor No. 8/i first establishes the relative major but then turns back to G minor to retain the severe tone of the opening – a recall of dance-movement practice that already sounds anachronistic here. Frequently the second half develops novel forms of organization. Thus in No. 12/i the double bar is followed by a long section in the dominant, introducing a catchy new melody which itself returns in the tonic later. Recapitulation procedures are, as usual, far from standardized, but Herschel is clearly wrestling with the issue. In No. 8/iii the tonic–mediant blocks of the opening are reprised in subdominant–tonic; and twice he transforms the original character by recapitulating motives in the bass: a secondary idea in this same movement and the opening 'Mannheim rocket' of No. 2/i.

Like many British composers of the period, Herschel is clearly interested in colourful orchestral textures and rescorings. The later symphonies exploit wind instruments in full orchestral sonorities, with intricate inner oboe textures and rich horn writing, maintaining the continental alto–basso distinction. Thus the first horn is entrusted with a full diatonic scale in the top octave, while the second often reinforces the bass, with such unusual notes as a written b (the stopped effect of course not evident on the modern instrument). Winds are also frequently used in a soloistic capacity, ranging from oboes and horns in militia-band mode

to flutes in a more affecting manner; and in No. 17, exceptionally, the horns appear in the slow movement, giving the opportunity for a particularly beautiful closing horn melody. Herschel's string writing is similarly adventurous, albeit more ambitious than his technique allows. Some complex imitative sequences are successfully carried off, but at other times the parts simply crowd in on each other in strange concatenations and overlaps. No. 2/iii, for example, is infiltrated by a semiquaver appoggiatura figuration, resulting in highly unorthodox part-writing, especially when transferred to the second violin in the middle of the texture.

The London Mozart Players give performances as fleet as one might have anticipated from a period-instrument band: indeed, tempos verge on the fast side in some movements, such as the Adagio ma non molto in No. 2 or the minuet finale of No. 14. Textures inevitably sound rather thicker than Herschel would have experienced in Newcastle or Leeds: no doubt the string section is larger (the surviving parts are consistently 2–2–1–1–1 in number), and the harpsichord is rarely audible. The exaggerated 'authentic' bow-swells in No. 12/i are in fact indicated by dynamic markings in the score, but elsewhere there are some strenuous additional attempts to make the music more interesting – as in the operatic fp effects in No. 17/iii or the variable slurring across the beat in the ebullient first movement. Like the music itself, then, these performances are not entirely in the currently approved mould. Yet this is highly creative music-making, with a spontaneous energy and expressive urgency that one can certainly imagine in the musical societies of the 1760s.

SIMON McVEIGH

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CHRISTOPHE MOYREAU

PIÈCES DE CLAVECIN 1753 (EXTRACTS FROM BOOKS 1–6)
Douglas Hollick (Harpsichord/Organ)
Riverrun RVRCD 60, 2002; one disc, 1′12″

Douglas Hollick is one of the admirable few who can not only make fine instruments but also play them beautifully. Here he plays his own copy of the two-manual Pierre Donzelague (Lyons, 1711). I suppose that ultimately we shall have recordings of everybody in Minkoff's *Clavecinistes français du XVIIIe siècle*. Not that that will add much to the sum of human happiness, but Moyreau is certainly well worth doing. His throne is a touch below those of Duphly and Balbastre, but quite a lot above many of the others. The music is well crafted, with the traditional French fastidiousness in notating performance detail, and at its best can be a vehicle for sharp character projection. (For details of exemplars and facsimiles, see Bruce Gustafson and David Fuller, *A Catalogue of French Harpsichord Music 1699–1780* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 183–190. A quasi-facsimile, scanned in from the print with the clefs computer-adjusted to modern convention, edited by J. H. van Krevelen (Utrecht: Musica Repartita, 1989) was used for this recording).

Most of what can be said about Christophe Moyreau is well summed up by Graham Sadler in his booklet notes (see also the article by Pierre Guillot, 'Les livres de clavecin de Christophe Moyreau', *Recherches sur la musique française classique* 11 (1971), 179–220). He seems to have been born in Orléans around 1690, perhaps younger brother of the painter Jean Moyreau. Guesswork suggests that he was a choir-boy in the *maîtrise* of the cathedral of Ste-Croix (the archives were blown up as a result of German government policy between 1939 and 1945), where he would have studied with the organist Colesse, whom he succeeded around 1732. He died in 1772 or 1774. In a single year (1753) he published no fewer than six *Livres de pièces de clavecin*, all his known works other than a (lost) musical catechism for children. Books 2–5 contain only one extended suite

each, Book 1 has two, and Book 6 has six three-movement *simphonies*. All are dedicated to Louis-Philippe, Duke of Orléans, whose family traditionally supported the Italian faction, firmly in the saddle by 1750. One can tick off the pieces by Rameau and from Domenico Scarlatti's *Essercizi* that Moyreau must have admired. 'L'azem-Beba Carmagniole' from Book 5 is a wonderful conflation of these two styles. The character pieces are full of hand-crossing and repeated-note *batteries*, though without the long arpeggios in one hand or the reversed-hand technique; the harmonic style is less extravagant and luscious, and orchestral sonorities less directly imitated than by, say, Duphly at this time.

This recording gives a seventy-two-minute selection covering all six books, the pieces sensitively chosen to provide a varied sequence rather than a mindless *intégrale*. The playing is very good and the recorded harpsichord sound is listener-friendly. The Book 1 *Ouverture* is a superb amalgamation of French overture with Rameau-esque *batteries*, and is given a suitably grand performance. Douglas Hollick throughout the disc is impeccable in style and intentions. I suppose ultimately one has to say that this is British school, and it will be perfect for many as that. I personally prefer more made of silence and rubato in the projection of character, particularly at the extremes, where Moyreau has so much to offer. 'La Baccante', with its stretches of left-hand broken octaves and eccentric chromatic scales, surely needs to be more driven. 'L'Euridice' needs the ultimate in seductiveness. 'L'Orphée', on the other hand (marked 'Gay' – is there a pink market for this disc?) is just the thing. In the furious mood-swings of 'Le Pandoure', from big rhythmic chords to chromatic slidings, Moyreau cedes nothing to his Parisian contemporaries. At the other extreme, small lyrical pieces have a purity of French style that is in itself metropolitan and would be welcome in any collection.

Two organ pieces ('Le Purgatoire' and 'Les Cloches d'Orléans') are recorded on the Metzler in Trinity College, Cambridge. They are descriptive, and make one long to hear one of Balbastre's zanier improvisations on the *Te Deum*, where he represented the Last Judgment by pulling out all the stops and standing on a plank he had put over the pedals.

DAVID LEDBETTER

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DIVAS OF MOZART'S DAY: OPERATIC ARIAS BY DOMENICO CIMAROSA (1749–1801), VICENTE MARTÍN Y SOLER (1754–1806), WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791), VINCENZO RIGHINI (1756–1812), ANTONIO SALIERI (1750–1825), STEPHEN STORACE (1762–1796)

Patrice Michaels (soprano), Peter van de Graaff (bass-baritone) / Classical Arts Orchestra / Stephen Alltop (conductor and fortepiano)
Cedrille CDR 90000 064, 2002; one disc, 1′16″

Mozart was what Germans would call an *Opernnarr*: an opera nut. He could not get enough of the theatre and the singers on its stage. He loved to spend time with them, write about them, perform with them and most importantly compose for them. Those who have read the portions of Mozart's correspondence on the subject of musical theatre know about his critical ear: there was no special quality of voice for which he did not imagine he could craft the most fitting music. So this CD, an ambitious attempt to fashion a musical portrait of five of the most prominent prima donnas of Mozart's Vienna – Catarina Cavalieri, Anna Selina (Nancy) Storace, Adriana Ferrarese del Bene, Louisa Laschi Mombelli and Louise Villeneuve, all of whom created major roles in his operas – comes as a welcome contribution. The study of opera remains apropos in

these days of musicological multidisciplinarity: it combines the social history of institutions, music analysis, performance history and performance practice. Indeed, opera's own collaborative nature blurs the distinction between author and performer. The history of opera, one could argue, is less the history of lonely musical heroes and more the history of groups: composers and performers in dialogue with one another and with the conventions of the genre. A recording such as this one, constructed around a group of composers who collaborated with a group of singers in 1780s Vienna, is both the natural and appropriate answer to the questions opera can raise.

The project is based in large part on the research of Dorothea Link, whose work on opera culture in Mozart's Vienna, particularly on its primary sources, has contributed significantly to the discipline. (See especially her book, *The National Court Theatre in Mozart's Vienna: Sources and Documents, 1783–1792* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).) The idea of grouping the music on the recording by singer rather than composer proves felicitous: it is a new way to think about the links between Mozart and the composers with whom he worked and shared singers. Instead of coming off as *Kleinmeister*, as well they might in a written account, composers like Antonio Salieri, Vincenzo Righini, Stephen Storace and Vicente Martín y Soler come into better focus here as distinct individuals: it is easier for them to rise above the thankless role music historiography has assigned them as perennial players of character roles in the Mozartean narrative. Storace's delightful 'How Mistaken is the Lover' is a good example. Written for his sister Nancy as an insertion aria with the Italian text 'Care donne che bramante' for the London premiere of Paisiello's *Il re Teodoro in Venezia* and then reworked for Storace's own adaptation of an English translation of Dittersdorf's *Doktor und Apotheker* – typical complications in the topsy-turvy world of eighteenth-century opera – this deceptively simple treatment shows that Storace was more than just a good imitator of Mozart: echoes of Johann Christian Bach reveal a specifically English sensibility with a Viennese–Italianate touch. Salieri is represented by three selections whose breadth of dramatic tone, from haughty coloratura for Cavalieri (the first Konstanze) to fleet-footed humour for Nancy Storace (the original Susanna) to elevated virtuosity for Ferrarese (who created Fiordiligi), proves what a fine and sensitive composer he was, worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as his friend and colleague Mozart. Finally, Vincenzo Righini's aria 'Per pietà, deh, ricercate' from his 1785 *L'incontro inaspettato* is a real find; a finely-wrought coloratura set piece with obbligato clarinet that leaves me curious to hear more of his work. Indeed, when we hear the music of these composers, we are reminded that the lines of influence did not run only from Mozart to the lesser lights around him. Mozart was one part – albeit an outstanding one – in a web of creative musical influences, an ongoing conversation with his contemporaries about writing for the musical stage.

The liner notes tell us that all of these arias are performed from editions prepared by Link; one presumes that the Mozart arias were performed from something like the *Neue Mozart-Ausgabe*. Two of them, however, are not in the *NMA*: the recitative 'No caro, fa coraggio', written for insertion into Domenico Cimarosa's *La quakera spiritosa*, and the accompagnato 'Ahí cosa veggio', a substitution for Louise Villeneuve in Martín y Soler's *Il burbero di buon cuore* that may or may not be by Mozart. (The question of the authorship of the latter recently sparked considerable controversy in the *Cambridge Opera Journal*.) This is the first recording of both and as such makes a valuable contribution to Mozart studies. A recording alone, however, can hardly contribute much to the solution of a problem of attribution, unless the interpretations on it are unusually convincing. Unfortunately, those on this CD are not.

Philology and performance can be hard to reconcile. Performances conceived as part of academic projects often sound like urtext looks – clean, utilitarian, with plenty of space around the margins. The best edition does not guarantee that those who play from it do so with sufficient taste and feeling, as Mozart would have put it. The performances here are often wanting in this regard. The Chicago-based Classical Arts Orchestra plays with style and security on period instruments under the direction of Stephen Alltop, but with a certain reticence: their music-making has a cautious, even clinical feel. The soloists – the soprano Patrice Michaels, who portrays the divas of the title, and the bass-baritone Peter Van de Graaff – sing admirably but with little imagination. Da capos are dutifully ornamented and appoggiaturas added where

appropriate, and there is an occasional tasteful *messa di voce*. But after half a century of historical performance practice we have heard all of this before. In other words, there is plenty of conscientious execution, but not much expression.

The decision to have Michaels sing the roles of all five divas is particularly problematic. She has a powerful voice, with a pleasing darkness of timbre and impressive coloratura; an impresario would probably overlook a few irksome habits like unnecessary scooping and too-thick vibrato and gladly engage her as a Konstanze. But she would make a rather unwieldy Susanna; here she sings both, and the result is a middle-of-the-road, one-size-fits-all approach that seems to fly in the face of the very ethos of the recording's project. Mozart and his colleagues knew that every voice had its own unique qualities and worked hard to write music to fit them, in Mozart's words, 'like a well-made suit of clothes'. Here and there I could hear Michaels trying to give the music for each singer its own profile. But often her approach seems a bit mechanical, as if 'neutral' renditions from a conscientiously prepared score are somehow enough to get the music across. The idea that 'correct' presentation using scholarly performing material is enough to guarantee a convincing performance is like a short circuit between the notes on the page, which clearly differ in style and substance from singer to singer, and a performance that conveys these differences adequately. The results on this CD are too modest if the point is to explore the broad range of voice types available to Mozart and his colleagues. In short: these singers are more than just 'their' musical texts.

This lack of musical engagement hampers the better known Mozart arias most of all: as milestones in a beloved repertory they are, after all, subject to high critical standards. *Ch'io mi scordi di te . . . Non temer, amato bene*, K505, written for Nancy Storace's final academy at the Burgtheater in 1787, is particularly disappointing. Mozart's casting of himself as the traditional obbligato soloist in this *rondò* – in his *Verzeichnüss* we read 'für Mlle. Storace und mich' – makes it an extremely personal piece, the enactment of his relationship to a close collaborator and friend, a moving gesture of farewell. At the keyboard, Stephen Alltop plays with competence but only in two dimensions: scales run up and down with ease, all of the 'notes' are there. But interaction with his interlocutor, Michaels, is minimal. There is very little play with musical time and space: both figures remain static, separated from each other. Their collaboration conveys little of the 'multivalence', in James Webster's sense of the term, that helps to make this music such a source of continuing fascination. An entire world of communication, indeed a sense of authorship shared by Mozart and Nancy Storace, remains hidden. Alltop leaves us with very little sense that in this case he is really *playing* Mozart, in both senses of the word. Alfred Einstein wrote of K505: 'Few works of art combine such personal expression with such mastery – the intimacy of a letter with the highest grandeur of form. Such a combination may perhaps be found in Goethe.' (See Einstein, *Mozart. His Character, His Work*, trans. Arthur Mendel and Nathan Broder (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 371.) Say what you want about Einstein's 'romantic' tone: these lines in a book now more than half a century old tell us more about K505, in my opinion, than this performance does, for all that it represents the very latest in Mozart scholarship.

Neal Zaslaw suggests that one of the pleasures of musicological research in collaboration with performers is what one might call the 'toy soldier' effect. 'It is as if a historian trying to study, let us say, the Battle of Waterloo were able to restage it to see what the effect of changing the commands, or of adding cavalry here or removing artillery there, would have had on the progress and the outcome of the battle.' (*Mozart's Symphonies. Context, Performance Practice, Reception* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), xii.) The toy opera house erected for this CD is a functional place, solidly built. But playing in it is not much fun, and we learn too little from the experience. In the end we want, and deserve, much more.

THOMAS IRVINE

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JAN DISMAS ZELENKA (1679–1745)

Sacred Music (Bach's Contemporaries 4)
Litaniæ de Venerabili Sacramento (ZWV147), *Regina cœli lætare* (ZWV134), *Salve regina, mater misericordiæ* (ZWV135), Lectiones and Invitatorium from *Officium defunctorum* (ZWV47)
Carolyn Sampson (soprano), Rebecca Outram (soprano), Robin Blaze (countertenor), James Gilchrist (tenor), Michael George (bass), Peter Harvey (bass) / Choir of the King's Consort / The King's Consort / Robert King
Hyperion CDA 67350, 2003; one disc, 1′13″

> In his last years [Bach] esteemed highly: Fux, Caldara, Händel, Kayser, Hasse, both Grauns, Telemann, Zelenka, Benda and in general everything that was worthy of esteem in Berlin and Dresden. Except for the first four, he knew the rest personally.

When relating to Forkel what his father esteemed in later years, Philipp Emanuel Bach presented a constellation of composers and centres to be borne in mind (Bach-Dokumente, volume 3, No. 803, 289; trans. Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, in *The Bach Reader* (New York: Norton, 1966), 297). *Sacred Music by Jan Dismas Zelenka* offers unpublished and previously unrecorded liturgical works that expand upon existing recorded repertoire and places its composer within the circle of Bach's contemporaries – the title of the series. It is indispensable listening for the ever-expanding body of Zelenka enthusiasts, and listeners will be delighted by the marvellous performances given by the vocal soloists, the choir and the instrumentalists of The King's Consort, directed by Robert King.

Such a selection of Zelenka's music raises this question: why did the liturgical output of this Dresden-based, Bohemian-born composer lie dormant for so long? Despite occasional enthusiasm from figures such as Friedrich Rochlitz (referred to by Peter Wollny in the sleeve notes), Zelenka's music had few performances until the second half of the twentieth century, and then it was his instrumental music that was first published and recorded. I have always suspected that sectarian issues played a part in working against an earlier revival of Zelenka's highly focused liturgical music. To understand these, it is necessary to consider eighteenth-century reports which describe the antagonism of Saxon Lutherans to the conversion to Catholicism of their Elector, Friedrich August I, and of his son and heir, Friedrich August II. Hostilities were expressed publicly in Dresden (and in Leipzig too) and these were noted in the writings of the Jesuits from the Province of Bohemia who served the Dresden Hofkirche, a royal chapel open to the public.

Undoubtedly, the music performed in that church was used for proselytizing purposes. On high feast days members of the celebrated Dresden Hofkapelle and the Italian-trained singers (including the castratos) could be heard by those entering the church, where members of the Royal Polish and Saxon Electoral family might be seen at public worship. The 'ordinary' music of this church was performed by a splendid group of young choristers and instrumentalists recruited in Bohemia. (Franz Benda, another composer admired by Bach in his final years, had been a *Kapellknabe* of the Dresden Hofkirche.) Zelenka's music must have served the purposes of persuasion well. And the power of his music continued in the decade after his demise. Consider the reaction of Karl Friedrich Christian Fasch, who, in the early 1750s, was taken by his Pietistic father, Johann Friedrich, into the newly built, much larger Dresden Hofkirche during performance of a mass by Zelenka:

> When the Mass was completed the father asked his son how he liked the music and service. Upon receiving no answer he realised that the young man was covered in tears, and so moved he could not speak a word. He asked his father to let him attend Mass every day, but this was not permitted. The father, a resolutely devout Lutheran, realised that his son was more pleased with the Catholic service than he himself would have wished. [Karl Friedrich Zelter, *Karl Friedrich Christian Fasch* (Berlin, 1801; reprinted Blankenburg: Michaelstein, 1983), 11–12.]

The Cantor of Leipzig was certainly far less impressionable, and considerably more pragmatic, than the young Fasch. What did Bach admire in the music of his colleague Jan Dismas Zelenka? (And colleagues they were: from 1738 they were listed together in the *Königl. Polnischer und Churfürstl. Sächsischer Hof- und Staats-Calender* as 'Kirchenkompositeur', with 'Tit.' added to Bach's name.) Each composed for the church and, although denominationally opposed, each wrote music that had the function of exegesis. Moreover, each had a preoccupation with learned aspects of their art. Indeed, this is how Bach and Zelenka must have been perceived by their contemporaries, as exemplified by Telemann's representation of each musician by a canon in his fortnightly publication *Der getreue Music-Meister* (1728–1729).

The selections presented in this recording are from Zelenka's middle years – *c*1726 to 1733 – a period now ripe for exploration by performers (and publishers). The *Litaniae de Venerabili Sacramento* (ZWV147), composed for performance during the Octave of Corpus Christi in 1727, was just one of at least six settings resulting from the desire expressed in 1721 by the Saxon Electoral Princess, the Austrian Archduchess Maria Josepha, to have Litanies of the Sacrament sung daily throughout the Octave (named *Theophoria* in the Dresden Jesuit sources). In 1723 she requested that these also be sung during the Vigil of the feast. Court composers Johann David Heinichen, Giovanni Alberto Ristori and Zelenka responded during the following years with at least two settings each. Throughout the 1720s the Jesuits reported these Litanies were performed during the Octave either by the royal musicians or by the *Kapellknaben*, often in the presence of Maria Josepha and her court, usually after Vespers or at four o'clock in the afternoon (not, as the accompanying notes suggest, during the Corpus Christi procession within the church). These performances seem to have become a tradition in the Dresden Hofkirche and they continued into the nineteenth century, when Zelenka's *Litaniae de Venerabili Sacramento* were heard again in 1789, 1814 and twice in 1820 – each performance between the Vigil of Trinity Sunday and the conclusion of the Octave of Corpus Christi.

The results of Robert King's direction are exquisite. The essence of Zelenka's musical style in his middle years – before the arrival in Dresden of the powerful influences of the Italian-trained singers and the appointment of Hasse as *Oberkapellmeister* – has been captured. The tempo of each of the eleven movements of the setting is finely judged, especially that of the quasi-*Szene* in which the panegyric text 'Praecelsum et admirabile' is set. Not every conductor pays homage to the rhetorical aspects of these sections of Zelenka's liturgical works – those short musical-dramatic episodes comprising pauses, silences, tempo alterations, changes of metre, use of the *stile concitato*, short fugal expositions, fantastic harmonic conglomerations, all employed to depict highly dramatic texts (which usually deal with human sin, pleas for mercy or fear of divine power, judgment and retribution). In this case, the text glorifies the Blessed Sacrament, drawing from Zelenka a response of great emotional intensity.

Two Marian antiphons follow: Zelenka's short setting of *Regina coeli*, composed between 1726 and 1727, and a *Salve Regina* of 1730. The brief *Regina cœli* for two solo sopranos and alto opens with a simple version of the antiphon chant notated for vocal soloists over a walking bass line. This setting has a special radiance, gloriously realized by Carolyn Sampson, Rebecca Outram and Robin Blaze. The work was almost certainly composed for the choristers of the Dresden Hofkirche, and it was probably first performed on an Easter Monday in the mid-1720s, when Zelenka was usually responsible for the music.

Of special interest is the *Salve Regina* setting dated '17 d'Settembre 1730'. It is an adaptation of an earlier setting (ZWV204), now classified with Zelenka's doubtful works. The original manuscript (in Zelenka's hand) comes from *c*1719, the year he returned to Dresden from Vienna. Revisions undertaken in 1730 suggest that it was intended for one of the recently arrived Italian-trained castrato sopranos – Ventura Rochetti or Giovanni Bindi. Alterations to the original version include the addition of a 'Traversa' in the first movement, an expanded dynamic range (with the added instruction 'Sordini' for violins), a raised tessitura (the flute part is notated an octave above the original version), greater variety of melodic rhythm (including Lombardic rhythms), extended approaches to principal cadential points and ornamentation of the vocal solo (with an 'ad libitum' instruction at the point where the singer enters). Moreover, the change of the opening tempo – Adagio to Andante – possibly influenced the continuo realization, resulting in a slower harmonic

rhythm. These reworkings provide an important example of Zelenka's attempts to grasp the essence of the galant style.

The great revelations of the CD, however, are the *Lectiones* and *Invitatorium* (presented in that order) composed for Matins held on 15 April 1733, the day preceding the three-day exequies held in the Dresden Hofkirche for Friedrich August I. The annual letter of 1733 from the Dresden Jesuits to Rome provides the context for the first performance of these beautiful settings:

> on the morning of 15 April [within the second week of Eastertide] the citizens swore a public oath, and only in the afternoon did Matins begin, [followed by] Lauds from the Office of the Dead. The mitred Martin Graf, prelate of the Cistercian order in Neuzelle, with four priests and eight servers, was seated on a faldstool in the upper part of the baptistery. Matins were sung in the choir, the priests giving the responses lower down in the stalls. The Italian musicians [the Dresden Jesuits specified 'castratis' in their Diarium] mournfully sang the lessons of the first Nocturne *in tono Lamentationum Jeremiae* [possibly meaning that Zelenka's Lessons were composed, and performed, in the style of his *Lamentationes pro hebdomada sancta*], and the other readings were continued by the sub-deacon, deacon, and priest. (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu Fondo Vecchia Compagnia, Provinciæ Bohemiæ = ARSI, Boh 159, 29-30)

Whilst it is difficult to praise any one performance above others, the beauty of Colin Lawson's chalumeau playing draws attention to the appropriate sense of occasion that certain now-obsolete instruments are capable of producing. Each performance on this recording recreates an aspect of the aural splendour associated with one of Europe's most important musical establishments of the first half of the eighteenth century. Those who admire Zelenka's music, as well as wider audiences who are fascinated with the music of this brilliant age in Dresden's history, will welcome this new release. Previously unexplored genres of Zelenka's music are revealed, and each item is treated with great musical sympathy and understanding. Philipp Emanuel Bach's report of his father's esteem for Zelenka is illuminated.

JANICE B. STOCKIGT

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