

REVIEWS



BOOKS

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CARYL CLARK

HAYDN'S JEWS: REPRESENTATION AND RECEPTION ON THE OPERATIC STAGE

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The traditional portrait of Joseph Haydn as the skilful, witty developer of symphony and string quartet holds firm in many past and present histories, often with barely a footnote devoted to his twenty-six (or so) theatrical works. Caryl Clark is one of a handful of scholars who have begun to offer a fuller image of the composer through studies of his operatic output, from her 1991 dissertation on Haydn's opera buffa finales to her condensed essay on his Italian operas in *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn* (2005). In the present book, as starkly displayed in its title, she explores one particular aspect of his writing for the stage: the representation of Jews, primarily in the singspiel *Der krumme Teufel* (*The Limping Devil*), Haydn's first stage work, which premiered in Vienna in 1753, and in *Lo speciale* (*The Apothecary*), an opera buffa that inaugurated the opera theatre at Eszterháza in 1768. In considering this representation in dramatic, musical and cultural terms using varied interdisciplinary approaches and shifting contexts and locales – from those in Haydn's world to sites of later revivals – Clark intersects with new lines of critical and cultural inquiry in opera studies and musicology as a whole, as she adds to the growing literature on Jewish representation and identity.

Based on these two early operas, Clark places Haydn's replication of dramatic stereotypes of Jews along a 'fault line' between pre-Enlightenment views of the Jew as alienated Other (though an 'Inside Other') and Enlightenment-inspired considerations of the Jew as a more fully integrated part of society (1). The debates within Europe that surrounded this 'Jewish Question' sometimes led to definitive political action, most remarkably in the granting of civil liberties to French Jews in 1791, or gradual political changes; they also motivated authors of novels and plays to construct more positive images and, increasingly during the nineteenth century, to use the Jew as a political symbol. According to Michael Ragussis, for example, Sir Walter Scott's story of Rebecca and Isaac in *Ivanhoe* (1819) lay at the centre of a pan-national debate about 'the relation between national identity and alien populations' (*Figures of Conversion: 'The Jewish Question' and English National Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 90).

In a text permeated with rhetorical questions, Clark approaches her subject with a true spirit of inquiry and a curiosity for covert, subtextual and sublimated meanings, which she seeks through both circumstantial and documentable historical evidence, as well as semiotic, psychological and sociological assessments. In broaching the composer's knowledge of Jewish theatrical portrayals, she offers detailed background on selected stage Jews that had become dramatic fixtures by the eighteenth century. Clark examines Asmodeus – the lustful, cunning and limping demonic prince found in Alain René Le Sage's novel *Le diable boiteux* (1707) and in many Viennese stage adaptations, including Haydn's *Der krumme Teufel* – as a contrast with the Enlightenment-inspired Nathan of Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* and other noble Jews of the late eighteenth century, but, in his share of negative traits, close to the master character Shylock. Constructed on long-standing associations between the devil and the Jew, Asmodeus as 'limping devil' was coded as 'limping Jew' through his deformed feet and yellowish skin, features commonly assigned to 'the diseased Jew' of



the seventeenth century (19–21). With Asmodeus's demonic power to transfigure objects and people in Haydn's singspiel, Clark links him to the theatrical tradition of *Teufelskomödie*. More generally, she relates much of his characterization to Jewish caricatures and speech commonly found in the highly satiric, lewd, improvisatory 'Hanswurstian' comedy (so named for the foolish servant Hanswurst, a stock character of Viennese and wider popular theatre in the German vernacular). A key intermediary for this theatrical connection, she convincingly argues, was the leading comic actor and singer Bernardon, or Kurz-Bernardon, a master of improvisation and mimicry, including Jewish mime, who created diverse comic types such as the 'Narr', cavalier, gypsy and Jewish rabbi at the Kärntnertortheater and who also appeared as Asmodeus in *Der krumme Teufel* in its first performances, in its Viennese revival as *Der neue krumme Teufel* in 1759 and in touring theatre troupes during the 1760s and 1770s. Backed by archival evidence, Clark shows that such travelling troupes, including those hired by Prince Nicolaus Esterházy, were important disseminators of Jewish comic types.

Before turning to *Lo speciale*, Clark presents clues to Haydn's 'street knowledge' of Jews within his Vienna, Eisenstadt and Eszterháza milieus, through historical and geographical descriptions and maps (though regrettably poorly reproduced) of Jewish ghettos and their proximity to his work, including his employment in the mid-1750s at the Kirche der Barmherzigen Brüder in Vienna's suburb of Leopoldstadt and his continuing musical associations with these religious brothers. This Catholic order serves as an important focal point for Clark's consideration of Haydn's likely interactions with Jewish communities, and the possibility that certain of his masses were composed as part of the order's conversion mission; in a larger frame, she also endeavours to reveal intersections between 'theatrical and religious experiences' in his world, which she gives as the primary subject of chapter 2 (48). Although Clark raises fascinating questions about the function of music in conversion efforts, she strays somewhat too far from the book's theatrical orientation, presenting an extensive, seemingly extraneous section on the history of the mass and suggesting, through the heading 'Conversion Masses', that her ideas about the functions of works such as Haydn's *Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo* are more definitive than speculative. A particularly thought-provoking but eyebrow-raising conjecture regards the use of polytextuality in the Gloria and Credo of the *Missa brevis* to create 'the aural equivalent of garbled Jewish speech' or 'musical *Mauscheln*' to ease the Jewish listener's path to conversion (74–75).

In chapters 3 and 4, on *Lo speciale*, Clark explores cultural meanings even more extensively, with accumulating layers of pre- and post-eighteenth-century references. As with the character of Asmodeus in *Der krumme Teufel*, the principal figure of the apothecary Sempronio in *Lo speciale* is not specified as Jewish, but none the less bears signs of Jewish representation, as well as historical associations with the apothecary's profession. Clark finds Sempronio's ethnicity only 'implicit' in the libretto by Carlo Goldoni (95), adapted for Eszterháza through the omission of three characters, ten scenes and certain *seria* elements; in combination with culturally based and musical encodings of 'difference', however, his Jewishness is made more evident in Haydn's opera. Clark interprets Sempronio's gullibility, his 'perverseness' and his interaction with the 'orientalized Turk', together with his self-absorbed obsession with reading tabloid news and thereby dwelling in fantasy – thus avoiding the duties of preparing and dispensing medicines and potions within the social world of the apothecary shop – as signs of his inability to 'acculturate or integrate into society' (103). The connection with the fabrication of news and the use of a 'lying language' thus anticipate nineteenth-century tropes of Jewish stereotyping (104), along with suggestions of deviancy and extremes of speech. In examining the music (which is not extant for *Der krumme Teufel*), Clark demonstrates that Haydn enhances this characterization through the ironic highlighting of the apothecary's intoning of pseudo-news to accompanied recitative in his first aria, the intensification of Sempronio's oblivious 'misreading' and 'mishearing' (108), the creation of his 'outrageous vocal style' (115) filled with extreme leaps and abruptly shifting gestures, the use of the 'orientalized' raised fourth scale degree and the permeating 'limping', Asmodeus-like rhythm (*alla zoppa*) in the apothecary's Act 2 aria. She also suggests the mocking of noisy Jewish speech through onomatopoeia in the opening aria of the apothecary's apprentice Mengone and the invoking of scatological humour about Jews in his aria of Act 1 Scene 4.



At times Clark defensively surmises that some of her 'Judaizing' traits might simply be viewed as the common language of comic opera and theatre. No doubt some readers may accuse Clark of over-interpreting in her search for implicit, encoded meanings, or in 'over-linking' ideas across centuries. Indeed, while she carefully avoids 'anti-Semitic' or 'anti-Semitism' as anachronistic vocabulary, she freely compares Haydn's characterization and Richard Strauss's depiction of Jews in *Salome*, describing the apothecary in words ('howling', 'screaming', 'hyper-sexualized' (118)) more reflective of later *fin-de-siècle* expression.

In examining a revival of *Lo speciale* in the late 1890s, however, Clark does place the opera fully within the *fin-de-siècle* climate of overt (hyper-)racial politics and in relation to the artistic motivations and Jewish identities of Robert Hirschfeld, the creator of the one-act adaptation *Der Apotheker*, and Gustav Mahler, the conductor for performances in Hamburg and Vienna. Clark notes that this revamping, but especially the opera's twentieth-century deflation into a *Kinderoper*, failed to alter the primary image of Haydn as a politically detached composer of instrumental music and mediocre creator of opera. Although her study never aimed at the discovery of the 'hidden Mozart' in Haydn, Clark makes clear that her search for 'Haydn's Jews' was partially a quest for a more realistically complex composer, one fully engaged in the 'dynamic politics and culture of his day' (212). In this quest she has succeeded, as she has widened the discourse on the 'politics of difference' and demonstrated that eighteenth-century operas, including works of Haydn, hold untapped insights into European views of the 'Inside Other'.

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JOHN IRVING

UNDERSTANDING MOZART'S PIANO SONATAS

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I would claim that we should treat Mozart's scores as provisional, not as definitive. If they objectify anything, that is not an *authorial intention* but a *potential for action*. If we claim that his notation encodes anything, then I would rather it were a *conversation* than an *intention*: a dialogue between the performer and the composer. And a dialogue isn't static, of course: it's not a freeze-frame; it's a living process, and it belongs in the realm of performance. *The Music is not the Score*. I want to develop that idea of performance as creative engagement throughout the following pages. (x)

These sentences, quoted from the author's Preface, sum up the essence of John Irving's second book on Mozart's piano sonatas. The approach is challenging, and the result yields refreshing thoughts.

The book consists of two parts of unequal length: the longer one deals with the visual study of the score (part 1: 'Reading Texts'), the shorter one with the actual playing of the music (part 2: 'Playing Texts'). The second half of part 1 and part 2 as a whole complement each other nicely, as two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, sensible analytical observations and comparisons of autographs and printed editions show remarkable insight into Mozart's workshop; on the other, the ideas and experiences of the practical musician evoke the living organism of the music.

Tackling the book in retrograde order, chapter 7 in part 2, 'Embellishing Mozart's Texts', offers original thoughts on the subject. 'Should We Do It?' sounds the initial question, in response to which the author