



EDITIONS

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KARL DITTERS VON DITTERSDORF (1739–1799), FERDINANDO PAER (1771–1839), JOHANN PANEK (fl. c1789), (VACLAV?) PRASCHAK (fl. c1800), PAUL WRANITZKY (1756–1808), ED. DAVID J. BUCH *REPRESENTATIONS OF JEWS IN THE MUSICAL THEATER OF THE HAPSBURG EMPIRE (1788–1807)* Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jewish Music Research Centre, 2012
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It is difficult to lament too strongly the loss of works like Ignaz Umlauf's *Welche ist die beste Nation* (1782), the 'wretched piece' Mozart described to his father as 'so terrible that I do not know whether the poet or the composer should bear the burden of this misery' (16). Yet if it seems that history's memory is, occasionally, discerning, David J. Buch's new edition shows that a revisionist approach can renew our interest even in those musical works that provoke the most ambivalence. Rescuing several late eighteenth-century operatic pieces from the ignominy they might otherwise merit for their (mostly) derisive depictions of Jewish characters on stage, Buch successfully persuades his readers of the documentary value of some of the eighteenth century's least-known musical theatre. The ease and clarity of Buch's presentation belie the extensive sourcework underlying his double thesis to 'offer the earliest identifiable musical depictions of Jews in European theater' and to highlight specific passages 'intended to replicate synagogue music' (7).

Buch's volume presents edited scores for six relatively unknown pieces: two arias from Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf's *Das rote Käppchen*, produced in Vienna in 1788; another from Johann Baptist Panek's 1789 *Die christliche Judenbraut*, an episode entitled 'Gli Ebrei di Praga' from Ferdinando Paer's comic cantata *La lanterna magica* of 1806; and two excerpts from smaller-scale works by Praschak (*Die Juden Schull*) and Paul Wranitzky (*Die Juden*). The informative Introduction contextualizes each work geographically and in socio-political terms within the Habsburg Empire and in relation to German spoken theatre of the period. Beginning with Lessing's *Die Juden* (1749) and *Nathan der Weise* (1779), Buch describes an increasingly sympathetic curiosity toward the Jew as exotic 'other'. The end of the century, he concludes, saw 'two different representations of the Jew, noble and ignoble, exist[ing] side-by-side' (11). Although he carefully avoids developing a straightforward narrative in which tolerance and cultural exchange gradually replace bigotry and isolation, Buch argues convincingly that dramatic representations of Jews underwent an important transformation under Habsburg rule. His edition not only introduces new repertoire but also animates each work by situating it among the clichés, contradictions and progress of the broader cultural milieu.

Buch clearly intends his study to complement the scholarly literature on spoken dramas in the Habsburg period, yet the specific points of influence between the two forms of theatre – operatic and literary – remain rather undefined. Buch stresses that by the eighteenth century, the Jew was an established character type that comic actors might list as a specialty alongside such base roles as 'schemers, pedants' and 'simpletons' (10). One point of intersection between spoken theatre and opera, then, seems to be that opera buffa, with its *commedia dell'arte* scenarios and stock comic types, easily assimilated the Jew as a farcical figure. Indeed, Buch notes that in Panek's *Die christliche Judenbraut*, the composer frequently reverts to a standard *buffo* patter in the Jewish characters' parts. In some works, then, Buch's analysis shows that composers adopted a ubiquitous comic style over a more specific exoticism. For example, in spite of its many Jewish characters, Karl Friedrich Hensler's 1791 *Das Judenmädchen aus Prag* features more Bohemian phrases than Yiddish ones. The representation of Jews in Habsburg opera is inextricably bound up with the comic genre, but beginning with Dittersdorf's *Das rote Käppchen*, Buch finds that operatic references to Judaic culture extended beyond conventional *buffo* style to include prominent and recognizable parodies of Jewish music.

Through comparative analyses of several arias and ensembles, Buch unearths common musical features that not only speak to growing Jewish 'acculturation' (8) in the last decades of the century but also offer tantalizing glimpses of contemporaneous musical culture in the synagogues. Buch's musical commentary



in many instances corroborates observations by other scholars, most notably Caryl Clark in her book *Haydn's Jews: Representation and Reception on the Operatic Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009; reviewed by Diana R. Hallman in *Eighteenth-Century Music* 9/1 (2012), 121–123). As well as bringing a rich array of relatively unknown works into the discussion, however, Buch's musical analysis also distinguishes itself with its ambitious agenda: to sift through comic stereotypes in order to access the vestiges of an 'authentic' eighteenth-century Jewish performance practice.

Buch largely avoids either condemning individual works or recommending them for rehabilitation and instead unearths common musical features across each composer's setting of Jewish characters' arias. The synagogue scene in Paer's *La lanterna magica* incorporates several of the musical techniques Buch identifies, including 'quasi-modal' harmonies, unusual modulations, syncopation, 'meandering melodic figures ... with wide leaps', ornamentation and unexpected rhythmic fluctuations (38). In the librettos of several arias, Buch points out texts peppered with Yiddish and Hebrew words and directions to the performer to sing in accented German. Beyond stock comic characterizations, there is thus a strong stylistic consistency among the musical depictions of Jews on the stage.

Significantly, Buch does not specifically unpack his musical analysis within the framework of Leonard Ratner's 'topic theory', though the techniques he identifies undoubtedly function as a type of stylistic acronym that gets embedded into the *buffa* genre. Of course, for Buch, such characteristic musical passages represent far more than crude aural approximations of Jewish culture derived from fanciful imaginings and caricature, and it is perhaps for this reason that he avoids aligning himself too decisively with topical analysis. In spite of the often unpalatable political resonances of this 'Jewish-style' of music, Buch makes a case for its value as a substitute archive of musical practice in the synagogues; good parody, he reasons, pays close heed to its model, and composers like Paer 'certainly had access to authentic Jewish music' (39). The 'plaintive melody' that Lieutenant von Felsenberg sings in *Das rote Käppchen* is marked 'Wie man singt in der Synagog' in the manuscript (21), and according to Buch the tune resembles actual synagogue melodies of the period. Even if Felsenberg's aria does not quote any identifiable synagogue piece, Dittersdorf departs substantially from the opera's overall style and introduces phrases that are 'less periodic and continuous' and 'more effusive' (21). Buch persuades us that these melodies give at least an impression of music in the synagogues of the eighteenth century. However, he offers a less convincing interpretation of the aria's second unusual feature – the nonsense syllables that constitute the text. Comparing Felsenberg's aria to the 'niggun', or 'humming tune [used] either for communal singing or lamentation prayers in the synagogue' (21), Buch suggests that Dittersdorf's 'use of nonsense syllables lends an authentic touch' by getting 'around the restriction against using the Lord's name and liturgy in vain, an absolute biblical prohibition for Jews' (21). While it would be nice to credit Dittersdorf with such a subtly thoughtful gesture, it seems a bit unlikely given the opera's plot: Felsenberg is in fact a Christian character masquerading as a Jew, and the entire scene is an elaborate ruse.

Buch reiterates this argument in his analysis of Praschak's undated *Die Juden Schull*, which is also set to a 'gibberish' text 'made to sound like Hebrew' (40). Here again, Buch offers two contradictory readings of the Jewish music in the work: 'This false Hebrew may be an intentional avoidance of singing the liturgy in the theater and invoking the name of the Lord in vain. Perhaps the text [was] written by someone unfamiliar with real Hebrew, who created a piece for an audience that would not know the difference' (40). Even given the scarcity of available manuscript sources and, in Praschak's case, basic biographical details, Buch might delve deeper into the operas' scenarios and musical detail to decide more conclusively between two such contradictory readings.

However, notwithstanding the residual ambiguity surrounding some of Buch's interpretations, he finds both moments of sympathy toward the 'noble Jew' in the librettos of these operas and vestiges of Jewish musical culture amid the many unimaginative representations of the Jew on the Habsburg stage. Without denying the cultural ambivalence reflected in the uneasy operatic settings he presents, Buch argues that the prominence of Jewish figures on the stage 'prepared the scene for the acceptance of Jewish musicians and composers of the nineteenth century' (44), including Mendelssohn and Mahler. The Wiednertheater poster from 1797 is certainly compelling evidence for a real shift in the position – staged and real – of the Jew



under Habsburg rule. The poster, advertising ‘a Jewish music troupe ... with their natural voices and entirely original presentation’ (35), typifies the trajectory Buch traces from the Jew as figure of derisive humour and animosity, to object of curiosity, and finally as bearer of a valued cultural difference. In a way, Buch has himself replicated this process in his approach to an operatic repertoire whose aesthetics of representation is both layered and self-contradictory. As Edwin Seroussi writes in his Preface to the volume, Buch strips away ‘layers of contempt towards the ethnic and religious other’ (5) in order that these musical pieces might begin to recapture their documentary value as cultural participants in the pivotal final years of the Enlightenment.

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THOMAS ARNE (1710–1778), THOMAS CHILCOT (c1707–1766), BENJAMIN COOKE (1734–1793), WILLIAM CROTCH (1775–1847), WILLIAM FELTON (1715–1769), PHILIP HAYES (c1738–1797), WILLIAM HAYES (c1708–1777), JAMES HOOK (1746–1827), GEORGE RUSH (fl. 1760–1780), JOHN STANLEY (1712–1786), CHARLES WESLEY (1757–1834), SAMUEL WESLEY (1766–1837), WILLIAM RUSSELL (1777–1813), ED. PETER LYNAN

ENGLISH KEYBOARD CONCERTOS, 1740–1815

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The reasons for writing keyboard concertos in late eighteenth-century England were several. However, the origins of the genre in England lie specifically with the obbligato keyboard performances given in London theatres, and in concerts, by Handel and William Babel, which took place as early as the second decade of the century. Concert notices suggest that the solo parts of *concerti grossi* were adapted to form the earliest English keyboard concertos, as when Johann Christoph Bach (born 1676) performed ‘A Concerto Grosso, by Dr. Pepus[c]h, with Solo Parts for the Harpsicord’ at a benefit concert for the oboist Jean Christian Kytch on 16 April 1729 (see Introduction, xxiv–xxv). Organists who wrote *concerti grossi* also adapted and published them as organ concertos, including Handel, whose ‘Second Set’ (without opus number) consists predominantly of adaptations from his Twelve Grand Concertos, Op. 6. The precedent of publishing keyboard concertos was established by Handel, whose Op. 4 appeared in 1738. Since the genre in its earliest phase was inherently suited to the professional concert sphere, the publication of such works might well have had a limited market. In Handel’s case at least, the composer also had to invest time to ensure that each concerto’s notation was complete in all essential details: those that were not prepared in such a way were published posthumously as the ‘Third Set’, Op. 7, which contains numerous solo passages and slow movements, without any musical notation, marked ‘Organo ad libitum’. However, other composers, such as Charles Avison and John Stanley, were shortly to follow Handel’s lead and publish sets of concertos of their own. The genre was thus established as one that would be taken up by many composers in England thereafter.

One factor that contributed to the popularity of Handel’s organ concertos was the fact that the organ part contained all the musical material, making solo performance without accompaniment possible. Handel therefore set an important precedent for how published sets were best presented to the public, but his standards of virtuosity and quality were not going to be easily matched. As Peter Lynan observes in his Introduction, ‘Handel’s concertos were an inevitable and considerable influence on British composers, many of whom attempted to replicate his style’, but most composers following him naturally sought alternative models and developed their own approach (xxv–xxvi). The generous selection of thirteen concertos in this edition, spanning a seventy-five-year period, amply demonstrates this fact.