

REVIEWS



BOOKS

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SVEN HIEMKE

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: MISSA SOLEMNIS

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Beethoven's decision to compose a grand mass in 1819 was not only a matter of the heart, argues Sven Hiemke, but also a calculated attempt to secure a court position from his patron, student and friend Archduke Rudolph, who would soon take up his duties as Archbishop of Olmütz, where the position of Kapellmeister was vacant. He did not receive the position (which went to the cathedral organist Joseph Czerwenka), and he believed that Rudolph failed to appoint him because he did not complete the mass in time for the inaugural ceremony in March 1820. Despite this bitter disappointment, Beethoven dedicated the mass to the Archduke, but without the very personal (and in recent years thoroughly deconstructed) message, 'von Herzen möge es zu Herzen gehen'. Was this perhaps an expression of the composer's act of distancing himself from Rudolph – their relationship became strained from this time – rather than of tactful restraint about a very personal relationship? It is not unreasonable to assume that Beethoven sought the position, though it contradicts the myth of the free, unfettered, composer disdainful of aristocratic institutions: his financial situation was anything but secure, his health was not good and the guardianship of his nephew Karl presented both an additional financial burden and worries about the young man's future, which a formal relationship to the Habsburgs could possibly have advanced. All of these worries might also explain Beethoven's attempt to secure the position of *Hofkomponist* at the imperial court left open by the death of Anton Tayler in 1822 and his plan to write another mass for the Emperor in this pursuit, which he gave up after the decision was announced that the position would not be filled.

Hiemke's theory that Beethoven tried to secure employment with a mass (it is clear that Schubert tried exactly this and failed in Vienna in the 1820s) is the most original thesis of the book, which he supports primarily through his interpretation of letters and other documents from around the time of composition. This twist on the origin of the mass cannot be found in the standard literature, even in more recent work that does not shy away from demystifying the composer and his work, and acknowledges Beethoven as a professional artist who could dispassionately regard his music as vehicle and commodity. Perhaps the aura that still surrounds the *Missa solennis* has discouraged this kind of scrutiny until now; I can well imagine biographers from an earlier age who had incontrovertible evidence of Beethoven's plans with the mass withholding it – it smells too much of commerce and personal ambition.

In most of the book, however, Hiemke cites and refers to secondary literature so often that one sometimes gets the impression of over-reliance on received interpretation – but this is far less troubling than a lack of acknowledgments and documentation would have been. (Hiemke depends most heavily on and refers most frequently to Birgit Lodes's recent book on the Gloria and her articles on the mass. But recent studies and



commentaries in English, such as William Drabkin's Cambridge Handbook on the mass and life-and-works volumes by Barry Cooper, William Kinderman and Maynard Solomon, are not so well represented.) And he seems occasionally to be less than sufficiently critical in his reception of his sources, for example in the discussion of the *Christe* (73–75), in which he presents the idea of an aristocratic sarabande character in keeping with the ceremony for which the mass was conceived, with a reference to Andreas Friesenhagen, but almost immediately thereafter cites Willi Hess on the folk character of the same music and makes no attempt to reconcile the diametrically opposed readings. (See Friesenhagen, *Die Messen Ludwig van Beethovens. Studien zur Vertonung des liturgischen Textes zwischen Rhetorik und Dramatisierung* (Cologne: Christoph Dohr, 1996), 343ff, and Willi Hess, 'Beethovens *Missa solemnis* op. 123', in *Beethoven-Studien*, ed. Hess (Bonn: Beethoven Haus, 1972), 241ff.)

This extreme case, however, is an isolated one; for the most part Hiemke skilfully interweaves such commentaries into his analytically detailed and very engagingly written account of the work, which includes theological-liturgical considerations, mass-writing traditions and occasional mention of sketch and autograph content. (The treatment of the sources is based in large part on published material, and there is no chapter on the work's genesis; a reader will have to turn elsewhere to get a sense of the tremendous amount of work that went into the composition.) Despite its mass of descriptive detail – matters of orchestration enrich the discussion of formal and harmonic structure, thematic content and process, and text-music relationships – the narrative moves along smoothly, always sustaining interest, which is by no means necessarily the case in this type of study. Much of what Hiemke presents will be familiar to a *Missa solemnis* initiate, for example the opposition between heavenly and earthly spheres, the dramatic, programmatic and symbolic aspects of the setting, the synthesis of archaisms and the most advanced and modern style of its time, all of which are primary topics framing the discussion. But he is hardly to be blamed for this: it is difficult to imagine how it can be otherwise, in light of recent attention given to the work, which has compensated for the often acknowledged lack of true analytical engagement that marked the greater part of its reception history. And the presentation is refined and full of finesse; Hiemke is a fine stylist who loves to write descriptively. The *Pleni sunt coeli* is a 'labrynthischer Raum, in dem der Mensch von absoluter Schwärze in blenden-geißelndes Licht taumelt: So vielleicht mag sich Beethoven die Begegnung mit Gott vorgestellt haben' (labyrinth, in which man staggers from absolute darkness into blinding-paralyzing light. Perhaps this is how Beethoven imagined meeting God) (109). Shades of E. T. A. Hoffmann! Not every reader will be receptive to this kind of language, which by no means dominates the discussion of the work, but I think it is perfectly appropriate in view of the generally acknowledged programmatic quality of much of the mass; the speculation about Beethoven's cast of mind is also legitimate against the backdrop of his highly personal engagement with the text and with religion. Moreover, the breadth of discussion compares favourably to that found in the study most similar in scope and purpose, Drabkin's Cambridge University Handbook, which, in its treatment of the work, emphasizes formal considerations and abstract analysis to the relative neglect of other crucial matters. (Drabkin's work is indispensable reading, but I would advise a reader to begin with Hiemke and then turn to Drabkin.)

The description of the work constitutes a long third chapter of Hiemke's book. It is prepared by two preliminary chapters that set forth 'Positions' and 'Premises'. The first contains the argument about Beethoven's job search as well as a rather abstruse attempt ('Painted According to Nature') to link a now famous portrait of the composer by Joseph Karl Stieler to Beethoven's views about nature and divinity, which leads neatly to a more convincing discussion of his 'Search for God'. 'Premises' contains a discourse on nature and the meaning of 'His Greatest Work' – as Beethoven himself apostrophized the mass – which can be not unfairly reduced to the conclusion that the mass is very long and very big. More fruitful are sections ('Tradition and Transcendence' and 'A Sermon in the Theatre') that survey Beethoven's knowledge of and engagement with the stylistic-generic traditions of mass writing and his religious agenda for the mass – including its uncertain destination (its performance occasion and venue) in the broad arena of the conventional liturgy, the extraordinary religious ceremony and the sacred concert. These skilfully executed chapters establish parameters for the description of the work that are faithfully pursued. The two closing



chapters follow the work's destiny. 'Marketing' traces its immediate future: first performances and editions, abandoned plans for a German text (which might increase its appeal), the composition of the proper (which would limit its usefulness – there are only a few sketches for the Offertory) and the outrageous suggestion to Karl Friedrich Zelter that he could perform it a cappella with the Singakademie in Berlin. The final chapter is a sketch of different phases in its reception, beginning with the relative neglect of the piece and the incomprehension that it aroused, which led to both negative and positive conclusions, and moving to a discussion of interpretations of its aesthetic content and confessional character, and its nature as an expression of personal faith overriding a particular confession. A handbook of this kind – it is part of the Bärenreiter series *Werkeinführungen* – must include a reception chapter, but the space limitations imposed by the series seriously compromise any attempt to do justice to the complexities of reception history. The problem is only exacerbated by the curious inclusion of a short section on interpretations that concludes the description of the work. I cannot understand what difference in subject matter the author perceived between reception and interpretation: why does his earlier chapter include a brief and rather superficial discussion of Adorno's important and controversial essay, 'Verfremdetes Hauptwerk', while the final one contains, among many others, Paul Bekker? The fusion of the two sections would have strengthened both!

Notwithstanding its limitations, Hiemke provides a fine introduction to a great work which seems to be in the healthy process of losing at least some of its mystique, thanks to Hiemke and his recent predecessors. Perhaps I am guilty of a certain naiveté about a piece of music that poses great challenges to the listener and exegete, but I have never quite understood all the clamour about its insurmountably problematic nature, which seems grounded in confessional-liturgical perspectives on the one hand and analytical preconceptions about how Beethoven's music must (or should?) be structured and what constitutes Beethoven's 'true' late style on the other. Notwithstanding his evident interest in making use of traditional liturgical and classical-style movement types and procedures, it seems that Beethoven was even more preoccupied with dynamic musical processes conceived with respect to the text, especially after the more formal and invocatory nature of the Kyrie. He did not simply compose line-by-line, but much of the mass seems to unfold in this way, and this seems to have motivated the recent emphasis on local expressive and symbolic gestures and dramatic and programmatic qualities. Perhaps the *Missa solemnis* is not quite as mysterious as it has been made out to be – its length and weight project the greatness that its creator claimed for it and its uncompromising intensity articulates the depth of feeling that the composer himself experienced and which he wished to instil in his immediate listeners and all of mankind. (The greater mystery might well be that he had the energy and strength of purpose at this late stage of his life to take up these tasks.) Hiemke does not seem overawed by the *Missa solemnis*, and that is a good thing, as is his recognition and celebration of the qualities that have contributed to its mystification. And awe remains, as it should. I hope the book will soon be translated into English.

GLENN STANLEY



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JOEL SPEERSTRA

BACH AND THE PEDAL CLAVICHORD: AN ORGANIST'S GUIDE

Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004

pp. xiii + 205, ISBN 1 58046 135 2

This is a fascinating study about playing Bach's organ music on the pedal clavichord. The author, Joel Speerstra, is an organist and clavichord player and a Senior Researcher at the Göteborg Organ Art Center,



Göteborg University, Sweden. Pedal clavichords, according to Speerstra, ‘were exactly like manual clavichords, but fitted with pedal keyboards like those of an organ. They appear in two forms historically: those with pedalboard attached to an independent clavichord and those with a pull-down mechanism attached to the keys of a manual clavichord’ (3).

Unfortunately, very few historic pedal clavichords survive, and all date from after Bach’s death in 1750. Perhaps the best example is the double clavichord mounted above an independent pedal clavichord made by Johann David Gerstenberg of Geringswalde (Saxony) in 1760 (or 1766), which is today preserved in the musical instrument collection of the University of Leipzig. This instrument and a copy made in 1995 by Speerstra himself serve as the cornerstones of his study of playing technique and the applicability of the pedal clavichord to Bach’s organ music.

The book is essentially divided into two sections: part one, entitled Source Studies, deals with the historical pedal clavichord, Bach’s trio sonatas, the debate over whether these were originally intended for the pedal clavichord, Speerstra’s reconstruction of the Gerstenberg pedal clavichord and historical references to Bach and the clavichord. Part two discusses performance practice at the pedal harpsichord, ‘musica poetica’ and figural notation, the playing of Bach’s Passacaglia in C minor on the pedal clavichord and the pedal clavichord’s value in the performance of organ literature. There is an appendix devoted to a transcription and translation of Friederich Conrad Griepenkerl’s preface to the 1819 edition of Bach’s Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue as well as a bibliography. The foreword is written by Hans Davidsson, founder of the Göteborg Organ Art Center, which sponsored the author’s research.

Speerstra notes that ‘the practical nature of the pedal clavichord is obvious: the convenience of having a practice instrument at home at a time when churches were colder and darker than they are today and where the organist needed a trained (and normally paid) bellows pumper in order to practice’ (3). That the inimitable qualities of the clavichord and harpsichord might lend a new dimension to the interpretation of organ music is beyond dispute, but whether these instruments were the intended or specified vehicle for pieces such as Bach’s trio sonatas and the Passacaglia in C minor is highly debatable, and Speerstra addresses this point in his comprehensive review of late eighteenth-century writings by Jakob Adlung and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, nineteenth-century biographies of Bach by Johann Nikolaus Forkel and Philipp Spitta and twentieth-century commentaries by Albert Schweitzer, Georg Kinsky, Wolfgang Schmieder, George Bernard Shaw, Walter Emery, Lady Susi Jeans, Peter Williams, Robert Marshall and Stephen Clark.

Most of the confusion over the issue derives from the ambiguity of the German term ‘Clavier’, which strictly speaking means ‘keyboard’, but which has also been used to denote the harpsichord, clavichord and organ. The manuscript of Bach’s trio sonatas indicates that they require ‘Zwey Claviere und Pedal’, which has led some to speculate that these works were not intended for organ but rather for pedal harpsichord or clavichord – but ‘two keyboards and pedal’ could well refer to an organ’s specifications (many portable, positive and chamber organs were equipped with just a single keyboard). Trio sonatas written for solo keyboard have three voices, and thus two independent keyboards and a pedalboard with contrasting registrations represent a minimum requirement to render them clearly. Of the writings cited by Speerstra, Forkel’s *Ueber Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke* (1802) is the earliest to suggest that the trio sonatas were intended as practice pieces to assist Wilhelm Friedemann in becoming an accomplished organist (the implication being that, according to Speerstra, these works were to be played on some other type of instrument until Wilhelm Friedemann gained enough proficiency to approach the organ and its true literature). Regarding the Passacaglia, Forkel states outright that it was ‘mehr für zwey Claviere und Pedal als für die Orgel’ (more for two keyboards and pedal than for the organ), which would indicate that he was using the word *Claviere* to denote the keyboards of either a pedal harpsichord or clavichord. In the final analysis, however, Forkel was not a contemporary of J. S. Bach, but rather of his son Carl Philipp Emanuel, and both Forkel and Carl Philipp Emanuel were representatives of a later stylistic period that relied upon the dynamically expressive clavichord and increasingly upon the newly invented pianoforte. Speerstra is not unaware of the danger of assigning to Johann Sebastian the keyboard playing techniques, interpretive practices and predilection for the clavichord espoused by Carl Philipp Emanuel in his *Versuch über die wahre*



Art das Clavier zu spielen (1753); yet C. P. E. Bach remains central to Speerstra's promotion of the pedal clavichord as a vehicle for performing his father's organ works, and in particular, the trio sonatas and the Passacaglia.

The second part of Speerstra's book, which is devoted to performance practice, begins with a Prelude somewhat pretentiously entitled 'Tacit Knowledge and Dialectical Process' that promises to 'explore new ways of generating knowledge about how the [pedal clavichord] was played by setting it in four different dialogues'. These so-called 'dialogues' are presented in the four succeeding chapters (five to eight): 'the instrument in direct dialogue with beginning clavichord students'; 'dialogue between the instrument and the theory of rhetorical playing from Bach's own time'; 'a dialogue between the instrument and a specific piece, using the Passacaglia to test what happens when learning a large *pedaliter* work at the pedal clavichord' and finally 'a dialogue between the pedal clavichord and the organ that explores the historical pedal clavichord in preparing music for the organ in general' (92).

Chapter five begins with an account of the arrival in Göteborg of the author's copy of the Gerstenberg pedal clavichord and its use as a teaching tool to instruct a group of volunteer students. Speerstra provides some practical pedagogical techniques, employing such mundane objects as golf balls and computer mouse pads to assist the novice clavichordist in achieving the correct hand and arm positions, weight and motion. The next chapter includes an introduction to the Baroque concept of rhetoric and music, the doctrine of musical figures, figural notation and the notion of *Affekt*. These important topics are rarely explored in modern 'early instrument' tutors, and the interested reader can follow up primary sources mentioned in the text and bibliography. Chapter seven considers for which instrument the Passacaglia was intended and then provides a running account of the musical-rhetorical figures found in the piece. Speerstra demonstrates how the pedal clavichord's dynamic range and *Bebung* (tremolo) can be used to express the rhetorical figures, while also providing some suggestions for making the transition to the organ, which not only lacks dynamic flexibility but requires a different touch. All told, he makes such a good case for the pedal clavichord as a unique interpretive tool that the reader comes away yearning to have such an instrument at his or her disposal.

The reviewer, however, entered into a dialogue of his own with a colleague who had heard the original Gerstenberg pedal clavichord played on numerous occasions. This witness reported that its sound was confusing and virtually unintelligible, no doubt owing to the similar timbre of all three divisions. An instrument such as the pedal harpsichord, with an array of contrasting stops like an organ, would seem to be more appropriate for works such as the Passacaglia and the trio sonatas. In fact, the key touch of the harpsichord more closely matches that of a tracker action organ, making it a better practice instrument. Anthony Newman's recently released recording of Bach's Passacaglia and Fugue and the trio sonatas played on the Metropolitan Museum's John Challis pedal harpsichord alternating with a pipe organ demonstrates the suitability of the pedal harpsichord for performing these works (Anthony Newman, *J. S. Bach: Works for Pedal Harpsichord and Organ* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004)).

Chapter eight returns to the nuts and bolts of the clavichord and organ mechanisms and describes research that Speerstra has done on the physics of clavichord and organ key actions. Graphs of force and motion demonstrate the considerable differences between the two mechanisms, but this unfortunately undermines the argument that the pedal clavichord makes an ideal practice instrument for the organist.

A weakness of the book is Chapter five, which is devoted to the author's reconstruction of the Gerstenberg pedal clavichord. While there are good plan-view photographs and numerous schematic drawings, even the most rudimentary case or string measurements are not given. This was a missed opportunity to provide a straightforward documentation of the instrument. Instead, Speerstra pays obeisance to a number of trendy theories of early instrument design: historical metrology, geometric analysis and the Edinburgh high-tension stringing doctrine. He also describes a rather questionable method of analysing the resonant frequencies of clavichord soundboards by simply rubbing them with a fingertip to gauge their resonant frequencies. For the hard facts on the Gerstenberg pedal clavichord the best source remains Hubert Henkel's *Clavichorde: Musikinstrumenten-Museum der Karl-Marx-Universität*, volume 4 (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher



Verlag für Musik, 1981). All in all, however, Joel Speerstra's book is a wide-ranging study of the pedal clavichord's role in the interpretation of Bach's organ music. Whether one accepts the author's premise or not, organists and clavichordists without access to such a rare instrument may discover new insights into baroque performance practice that can be applied to more readily available instruments.

STEWART POLLENS



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W. DEAN SUTCLIFFE

THE KEYBOARD SONATAS OF DOMENICO SCARLATTI AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MUSICAL STYLE

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003

pp. xi + 400, ISBN 0 521 48140 6

W. Dean Sutcliffe has produced an important study, I believe, embedded in a shaggy, anxious, dauntingly verbose book. It is very much a product of its time, which I take to be a time when musicology has started to recoup from its turn to the postmodern – some will say retreat – even while much uncertainty remains as to what the turn meant, what we learned from it and what we may have lost or gained. Sutcliffe has thought hard about our common situation, but, on the evidence of this book, without fully coming to terms with it. 'Domenico Scarlatti does not belong' (1), he observes at the start – does not belong to, particularly, musicology, served here with a comprehensive critique. The Scarlatti sonatas resist all (all but two) of musicology's standard ploys. We lack biographical data, bibliographical control, a canon, a chronology, even an ontology (are the sonatas singletons or pairs?). Even the engine behind so much musicology, nationalism, does not click in, since Domenico cannot rely on wholehearted support from either Spain or Italy – let alone Germany, a lack which certainly has to do with his marginalization, though the sonatas mainly circulated in editions by Czerny, Bülow and Tausig and were smiled upon by Schenker. England embraced Scarlatti early on. The sonatas also resist the sorts of contextualization demanded by postmodern musicology, according to Sutcliffe. Indeed, Scarlatti presents 'a unique test case for the nature of musicology as it has been practised in the last few generations, offering us a chance to reflect on its methodologies and priorities' (2). (A formidable test. Will musicology pass?)

Its practitioners today are nothing if not self-conscious, and this one's meditation on methodologies, ideologies, criteria of judgment and so on spills over from the introductory chapter one – masochistically entitled 'Scarlatti the Interesting Historical Figure', after Tovey – into every one of the others. Authorial disclosure is a good thing, but getting it right is not easy. If you do it aphoristically (my own preference) you may well seem perfunctory, and if you spin it out, pretentious; Sutcliffe must write as he must, but I soon found myself wishing he would lighten up about his project and just get on with what he does best. After all the caveats and the contingencies, after all the deconstruction and disenchantment, Sutcliffe does find ways to recoup and still practise musicology. His two 'basic lines of thought', as he puts it, are reception history and close reading. What he does best is close reading.

And he plays from strength at once, in chapter one, where after eight pages exploring methodological anxieties, twelve pages are devoted to exemplary close readings of just a few sonatas, illustrated by four more pages of music (the whole of K277, the first half of K193, and a few lines from K254). The analysis of the Sonata in D major K277 (♩, Cantabile andantino) certainly makes an impressive launch. Perhaps as many as eighty more readings come later, though exactly how many is hard to tell on account of an unhelpful index. What makes them so interesting and suggestive?



Sutcliffe could not and certainly does not claim to be introducing new analytical methods or new tools, and his work presents none of the difficulty encountered with many contemporary analysts. Here is his take on the Sonata in C major K271 (3/8, *Vivo*), a piece that manifests Scarlatti's 'pronounced taste for discrepancy' so mildly, so slyly, that the eccentricity is very easily missed. After the music moves uneventfully to the dominant and we expect dominant confirmation, we are handed a repeated treble line in semiquavers –



– with a 'wonderfully dippy' bass in quavers below. Longo, Gilbert and Fadini all emend the text to make it less eccentric. Sutcliffe wonders if it isn't more interesting to take the sources seriously. 'G major has been reached almost too easily, "on" then "in", with no oversharpening. If the final cadential flourish is to have any force, then some change of colour will be required' (273) – and, looking ahead, he sees this change actually delaying full dominant confirmation until after the double bar, when another repeated treble line, similar in contour if not parallel to the first one –



– compensates for the anomaly. When the tonic comes round again, the line



compensates further. 'Without the sting provided by the F#s the whole sonata would change character: it would become a rather dry, if dashing study' (275).

Several things are characteristic in this minimal example, chosen here for ease in presentation: the focus on an *aporia* or 'irritant' (in the language of this book); the reluctance to follow received opinion, in this case concerning editorial emendation; the appeal to the composition as a whole; the high sensitivity to detail and some nice language. With the sonata K271 the appeal goes still further, to its neighbour K270, despite the scepticism that is expressed elsewhere about Kirkpatrick's grouping of the sonatas into pairs. This analysis appears in a section of the book dealing with sources and problems of editing, but obviously it stands on its own without that context, or pretext.

The majority of the analyses, some of them full-scale and others partial, are distributed among several large topical chapters. From forty to seventy pages each are devoted to 'Heteroglossia' (the term used here for Scarlatti's negotiations of contemporary styles), 'Syntax', 'Irritations', 'Una genuina música de tecla' (keyboard texture) and 'Formal Dynamic'. This chapter organization seems to promise a conspectus of the composer's style put together from analyses of 'the music itself' – hardly the sort of thing tolerated by postmodern musicology – but Sutcliffe seems at best only half-committed to any such vision. There is a disconnection between the diffuse, over-documented and typically inconclusive discussions of the categories and the close readings offered by way of exemplification. Only a reviewer with unusually firm resolve and unlimited space at his disposal could be asked to cover all of these readings, but those I have learned from seem, again, to be quite as valuable as insight into particular works as evidence for anything general.

Sutcliffe's other 'basic line of thought', reception history, comes through less well than his close reading. It is concentrated in, but by no means restricted to, chapter two, called 'Panorama', though this might just as well be called 'Omnigatherum' – Sutcliffe has read a very great deal about Scarlatti and appears to conceive of reception history as the registering of maximum data not without comment but with minimal appraisal of its relevance. Thus while there are many references to experts such as Giorgio Pestelli, Joel Sheveloff and Malcolm Boyd, there is no comprehensive assessment of the role of any of them in the history of Scarlatti reception. As with writers, so with artists: while Sutcliffe cites recordings by this one or that for some detail in some sonata, he never identifies the key figures. Landowska, Horowitz, Scott Ross, Andreas Staier and Mikhail Pletnev all occupy the same hazy middleground. Lyotard, Beckett, Adorno and Bakhtin are quoted, along with a host of mostly obscure musicologists, writers of CD booklets, and the novelists E. F. Benson,



José Saramago and Barbara Trapido. TMI, as my grandchildren cry (too much information), and not enough selection or appraisal.

Sutcliffe writes more confidently about music than about ideas. In his discussions of music judgment operates more freely, and sometimes briskly; κ296, for example, lacks dynamism, its only-too-characteristic multiple repetitions do not achieve a cumulative effect, the music hovers rather than unfolding and so on. Who is to say? Have we recouped all the way back to Tovey (whose essay in *The Classics of Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) pairing Scarlatti with Debussy did not make it into Sutcliffe's bibliography, incidentally)? κ296 has its admirers. Yet anyone who believes in close reading has to believe in the musical instinct underlying judgments of this kind. It makes for a greater authenticity than whatever it is that leads to the avoidance of judgment in areas of this book that fall under the rubric of reception history.

An exceptional amount of work and much insight has gone into *The Keyboard Sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti* – a plea that's hard to resist for a fresh engagement with this dazzling yet marginalized repertoire. However we may conceive of the history of Scarlatti reception, this book is clearly a landmark in it. Another landmark that I'd like to see would be a new, high-profile edition of selected sonatas interleaved – as in Tovey's edition of the Beethoven sonatas – with Sutcliffe's close readings. ABRSM puts out several Scarlatti collections, but a larger, richly annotated edition would fall squarely within their mission.

JOSEPH KERMAN



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NICHOLAS TEMPERLEY

BOUND FOR AMERICA: THREE BRITISH COMPOSERS

Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003

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Nicholas Temperley follows the careers of three British composers who emigrated to the United States in the late eighteenth century, William Selby, Rayner Taylor and George K. Jackson. In doing so he has purposely avoided several other musicians who fit his criteria and who were better known, such as Benjamin Carr and James Hewitt. He selected Selby, Taylor and Jackson because all three emigrated later in life, only after having established careers in England, inviting comparison not only of their respective fates on either side of the Atlantic but also of the musical culture in Great Britain and the United States.

Temperley traces the career of each composer in detail, a not inconsiderable feat, as the records of the time are sparse and demand that information be teased out of them, which Temperley does with considerable imagination. He is careful, however, not to read too much into the records, and he always lets the reader know where matters lie regarding hard evidence and inference. Overall his arguments are inductive, restrained and beautifully crafted.

Each of the three composers had a different profile, in England and America. Selby, whose musical talent was probably the most limited of the three, was primarily a church organist on both sides of the Atlantic, though once in America he participated in a variety of activities, such as concerts, teaching several instruments, composition and publishing. A jack-of-all trades approach was a necessity for virtually all musicians in Federal America. Taylor was the most accomplished performer of the three, on the organ, harpsichord and piano. He was also more closely connected with the theatre in both England and America than either Selby or Jackson, at one point holding the position of composer and director of music at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. As he also held various church posts, he left a body of both sacred and secular music. Jackson, widely respected as an organist in the United States, apparently made little impression in



England, where competition was more intense. Especially adept at polyphony, he was noted for learned, at times complex, but often accessible pieces, particularly church music.

Temperley addresses a central puzzle with each composer: why did he emigrate? Their London records suggest that it was not for lack of success, and, while a mystery shrouds each, apparently it was mostly for personal reasons – a scandal involving females (Selby and Taylor), possibly mixed with politics (Taylor), or, in the case of Jackson, having alienated too many people with a somewhat overbearing, pompous personality. Temperley is careful to point out that any answer involves some speculation, particularly in Jackson's case.

A significant percentage of the book is devoted to an examination of the works of these composers and Temperley's discussions are masterly, his analyses penetrating to the heart of the piece. Only a handful of compositions have survived by each composer, and this limits the possibility of obtaining a fully rounded picture of their compositional ability. Yet the question remains: is the music worth the detailed analysis that Temperley gives it? Probably not, in the sense that little of it will attract large numbers of potential performers. But Temperley provides numerous insights into the broader musical culture through the discussion of individual pieces. If Temperley writes rather less about this broader culture of late colonial and Federal America, there is, in fairness, not a lot of information about it. In the constantly evolving world of musicology Temperley brings a composer/composition-centric approach to bear on his subject.

What we can glean from these studies is that success was at best relative and highly dependent on circumstances that were not always favourable. None of these musicians prospered in any significant way, even the magisterial Dr Jackson. America was not yet ready for a viable musical culture, though these musicians contributed towards bringing one about. While Selby's limitations seemed personal – modest talent, for example – Taylor's were more circumstantial. When the situation allowed, Taylor could write reasonably sophisticated music, and some of his pieces, such as the anthem 'Hear, O Lord, and consider my complaint', suggest an imaginative and talented composer. In both the theatre and the church in America, however, the public wanted only straightforward, easily comprehensible music. As an organist Taylor was unfortunate enough to find himself working under pastors who believed in plain unadorned music, even chant, and who disdained displays of virtuosity, believing such self-display to be in bad taste and detrimental to the type of service they envisaged. The theatre of early Federal America was a rough and rowdy place where the crowd, mostly male, wanted to be entertained, not uplifted or challenged. Louis Ostinelli of Boston discovered this as late as 1830, when he was fired from the Tremont Theatre as conductor of the largest permanent orchestra in America at that time because he played to the musical dilettantes rather than the general public. (See Michael Broyles, *Music of the Highest Class: Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 178.) Taylor had no illusions about the precariousness of the position of a professional musician in America, and he thus restrained himself, attempting to meet the public where the public wanted to be.

What Temperley does not mention is just how sparsely populated these cities were at this time. When Jackson arrived in Boston, for instance, it had a population of about 25,000, compared to the one million that lived in the London that he left. New York at that time had 60,000 and Philadelphia, the largest city in America, 70,000. Even if Americans were more musically sophisticated than they seemed, there weren't that many of them. And, before the railroad, travel was difficult enough to preclude any sort of concert circuit of touring virtuosos, even had the demand been there.

Temperley, noting the absence of a significant body of high art music from these composers, assumes that they wrote such music but that it is now lost. His conclusion is based on the reasonable assumption that these were talented musicians who were forced to cater to the public and therefore to write what they thought would sell. According to Temperley, they surely had more ambitious efforts buried in their unpublished manuscripts. This may well be the case, but, again, these men had to hustle constantly to earn any sort of living. Their job was to provide music that would enjoy some success, and if it was simple, easily accessible music, then so be it. Did these men feel the need to express themselves beyond what they considered viable within the framework of their culture? More importantly, are we to dismiss them as hacks even if they did



not? Temperley makes a convincing case that they were not hacks, but his assertion of lost treasures rests on a different foundation: how they conceived the act of composition. It is possible that, like many in the eighteenth century, they conceived composition as a craft, that their job was to provide what their culture demanded, and they saw no reason to venture any further.

Temperley's study demonstrates what can be accomplished when traditional scholarly methods are applied with creativity, restraint and elegance. None of these composers will likely assume a prominent position in the history of Western music, but Temperley's careful analysis of their careers and their music tells us much about a relatively unexplored time in the history of American music.

MICHAEL BROYLES



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PETER WALLS

HISTORY, IMAGINATION AND THE PERFORMANCE OF MUSIC

Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: Boydell, 2003

pp. xiv + 184, ISBN 1 84383 005 1

The core of this book is essentially a transcription of the six Waynflete Lectures given by Peter Walls at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 2000. The lectures were apparently subjected to little revision in the transcription process other than adjustments to compensate for the lack of aural illustration. How they relate to the book's nine-chapter format is thus unclear and the volume appears superficially to be something of a mixed bag, dealing with a wide range of topics, theory and repertory. Nevertheless, common threads do emerge. The principal focus is on the value of performance practice research in the preparation of musical performances in general, not least because 'historical sounds enrich our understanding of the music and stimulate the imagination' (167), thereby widening, rather than narrowing, the choices open to the informed performer. Walls rightly claims that too many executants disregard historical evidence on the grounds of achieving contemporary expressivity or taste, and 'all too often the lines between historical research and its application have become blurred in ways which diminish the value of the research without adding compensating value to the performance' (9).

Some of the ground Walls traverses seems well trodden and already explored in some detail, notably the discomfort of the musical establishment with the term 'authentic' for historical performance. In his Introduction he traces the origins of the 'scare quotes' around this adjective and engages with various writers on the authenticity debate, from performers such as Nikolaus Harnoncourt, John Eliot Gardiner and Roger Norrington to philosophers such as Peter Kivy, Lydia Goehr and Roger Scruton, and to seminal texts by Nicholas Kenyon and Richard Taruskin. He gives a clear and considered account of the arguments against the term 'authentic' as well as the objections, notably from Taruskin, to alternatives such as the acronym HIP (historically informed performance). His own preference for a descriptor is 'period-instrument', though, of course, this term comes with its own problems, and he objects to the 'perversely misleading' rhetoric that all too frequently accompanies period-instrument recordings for commercial ends. Significantly, he picks up the gauntlet thrown down by Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist in *Rethinking Music* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), proving beyond doubt that the subject of HIP as an intellectual concept is far from exhausted.

Walls stresses the value of research driven by curiosity rather than by the desire to justify a particular approach. His own specialities and enthusiasms naturally come to the surface in the volume's main chapters, particularly those involving seventeenth- and eighteenth-century string playing. Chapter two is primarily historiographical, focusing principally on the reception of different interpretations of the opening Adagio of



Bach's first sonata for solo violin and dealing with issues such as playing chords (involving the violin, its setup and its fittings, as well as various bow designs), vibrato and flexibility of rhythm. He demonstrates not only how wide the latitude is for the performer, even within accepted baroque practices, contrasting the interpretations and playing techniques of Rachel Podger and Sigiswald Kuijken, but also how personal preferences, even of respected academics such as David Boyden, Robert Donington and Frederick Neumann, can sometimes mislead or even conflict with historical evidence, as well as how historical performance practice is susceptible to being coloured by current assumptions. The third chapter explores further the issue of selection in the application of historical evidence. It comprises case studies dealing with appropriate resources for selected works, notably the role of the continuo in Corelli's Op. 5 violin sonatas and the constitution of the chorus in selected choral works by Vivaldi and Bach. Walls adds his own experiences as a conductor to the arguments raised by Joshua Rifkin, Andrew Parrott and others and admits that the Bach debate provides a classic example of musicology producing 'uncomfortable' results that do not fit with most performing establishments of the current century. The subsequent chapter discusses further an issue aired in chapter three and examines early printed editions of sonatas for solo violin and basso continuo, considering the variety of formats used before and shortly after 1700 and using examples from a wide range of composers such as Fontana, Uccellini, Degli Antonii, Corelli, Veracini, Rebel and Francoeur.

In his fifth chapter Walls discusses defunct musical or concert practices resulting from social conditions that no longer exist (such as the castrato phenomenon), have changed or have been abandoned (such as audible conducting). Following discussion of relevant historical attitudes to the work concept (taking in the work of James Johnson, Lydia Goehr, Reinhard Strohm and others) and the idea of honouring composer intention, he uses a semiotic model that presents knowledge of historical awareness as a matter of musical literacy, particularly as a prerequisite for faithful and accurate interpretation of notation, aspects of which may have fallen into disuse. He contends that a proper understanding of issues such as rhythmic conventions, expectations relating to embellishment and instrumental specifications becomes vital in establishing the meaning of the notation and thus in discovering the communication and enjoyment of a work's aesthetic. Chapter six deals further with composer intention, using printed sources, selected repertory and the evidence of early recordings, and focusing initially on various expressive techniques whose application has changed or fallen out of favour over the years: string portamento (with some interesting extracts from conversations between William Malloch and members of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra), vibrato and flexibility of tempo. He dips into score revision and retouchings before drawing on his experiences as a conductor and testing in some brief case studies the feasibility of composer intention as a performance objective through the rehearsal and production phases of examples from nineteenth- and twentieth-century opera. He concludes that 'particularly in a collaborative venture like opera, it can be quite hard to disentangle the relationship between original conception and final result' (112).

In Chapter seven Walls examines the concept of 'early music' and the perception of historical performance practice, basing his arguments principally on those of Carl Dahlhaus, who distinguishes between historicists and conservative traditionalists as a way of contrasting those performers who embrace historical awareness and those who ignore it. Walls recognizes, however, that there is no such divide and that two performers tapping the same sources can produce quite different interpretations. He also considers transcription from a variety of perspectives, using it finally to emphasize the responsibility of those performers who wish to claim fidelity to the composer to take due account of the original instrumental specifications. In the subsequent chapter he returns to the authenticity debate and successfully quashes the inherent contradiction between scholarship and musical expressiveness implied by 'historically alert' performers who put musicianship first and authenticity second. He demonstrates the benefits of studying primary source materials such as instrumental treatises, which can enrich understanding of the music and stimulate the imagination, but recognizes that musicianship, imagination and judgment are essential ingredients in performance and that interpretations cannot be determined solely by rules, as if painting by numbers. He also points out that such rules are sometimes nullified or contradicted in other contemporary publications and that theorists often build significant latitude into their interpretations. He later refutes the often stated



opinion that period-instrument performers undervalue passion, and also addresses the idea of historical listening. In his brief final chapter Walls sums up his various musings on the aesthetic issues surrounding historically informed performance in the light of the six critical positions articulated in his Introduction. Even though he freely admits that complete historical authenticity is ultimately not achievable, he is adamant that striving for such a goal is no futile or unmusical exercise.

My one minor reservation about this volume concerns the transformation from lecture to book, which can often be an uncomfortable process. One wonders, for example, if the inclusion of a compact disc of the original musical illustrations might have brought the original lecture content more vividly to life. Nevertheless, Walls provides sensible and well considered observations about a range of related topics, embracing, amongst others, historical musicology, aesthetics, semiotics, critical theory, organology and reception studies. Errors are few and far between; so, inevitably, are definite conclusions, not least because the concept of authority is an impossibility, performance practice is susceptible to being coloured by current prejudices, and much depends in musical performance on matters of judgment and taste. But this convincing defence of the practical value of attempting to determine how music might have been performed in past times is an invaluable addition to the literature, not least because performance practice research is undoubtedly 'a vital key to our understanding the very incomplete record represented by musical notation' (10). Walls's strong intellectual and musical justification for relating historical research to performance could have significant ramifications in encouraging the majority of musicians within the Western art tradition to introduce greater variety, flexibility and imagination in their interpretations. Clearly, such aspects of performance were as much valued in the past as they are now.

ROBIN STOWELL



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WILLIAM H. YOUNGREN

C. P. E. BACH AND THE REBIRTH OF THE STROPHIC SONG

Lanham, MD, and Oxford: Scarecrow, 2003

pp. xi + 519, ISBN 0 8108 4840 6

When we think of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, all too often the image of the rapt and wordless improviser at the clavichord comes to mind. Yet this is to ignore his great achievements in many other genres, not least the song. For as Youngren reminds us, tackling this repertory as no other scholar has to date, C. P. E. Bach was a prolific composer of songs. Of the nearly three hundred songs he produced, virtually all were published during his lifetime to warm critical acclaim. Spanning his career, they trace the trajectory of Bach's life, his engagement with poets, philosophers and theologians in Berlin and Hamburg, and their lively interest in the relation between words and music. Most of Bach's songs are strophic and are brilliant miniatures whose single musical strophes reward a close and concentrated examination; yet many of the poems have numerous stanzas and yield songs on an unexpectedly large scale which conjure a realm beyond the intimate space of domestic socializing or private meditation. This enormously varied repertory ranges from simple pastoral songs to solo cantatas and complex sacred songs, and explores the gamut of human emotions from agonized confession to glorious celebration. Poets whose texts Bach set include many of the most significant figures of his time, including Gellert, Hagedorn, Hölty, Voss, Gerstenberg, Klopstock and Cramer.

Remarkably, this extraordinary body of works remains virtually unknown, unperformed and unstudied. Even today very few of these songs are available in modern editions, and without access to a good research library it is hard to gain a sense of Bach's achievement in this genre; while various early twentieth-century anthologies have allowed us to admire individual songs, it has been almost impossible to appreciate the scope



and purpose of Bach's collections such as the two remarkable volumes of Gellert Lieder, H686 (1758–1759), or the carefully ordered Cramer Psalms, H733 (1773–1774). Youngren's book is a major step forward in bringing Bach's songs out of the shadows. Not only is this the first comprehensive study of this vital repertory to appear since 1957, but it is the only work to analyse the poetry in depth alongside the music (and in this respect it sets a high standard for scholarship on song of all periods and nationalities). It is voluminous and encyclopedic, providing a detailed account of all of C. P. E. Bach's song collections as well as his individual songs and reading them against contemporary aesthetic and music-theoretical thought; in so doing, it assesses Bach's compositional choices and artistic decisions, as well as his position among the many North German composers who contributed to the great flowering of the lied in the second part of the eighteenth century.

The first two chapters of this book trace the patchy reception of both C. P. E. Bach and the early to mid-eighteenth-century lied, accounting for the neglect of both; a third chapter describes the revival of the lied in Germany around mid-century; four succeeding chapters then explore eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, and especially the influence of Horace's *Ars Poetica* on contemporary thought. At chapter eight we begin a complete survey of Bach's songs, from nine songs composed in Berlin in the 1740s and early 1750s, to the Gellert Lieder; the Cramer Psalms; songs for Voss and for Gerstenberg; the Sturm songs; and finally the posthumous *Neue Lieder-Melodien* of 1789 and the songs Bach contributed to the *Freymäurer Lieder* of 1788. Youngren's coverage is exhaustive. Numerous songs are discussed in intricate detail; correspondence, theoretical accounts, literary contexts are all accounted for and a large amount of primary critical literature is reproduced here in good translations.

The greatest strength of this book is Youngren's analysis of the poetic texts of the songs. Here poetry comes first: the texts themselves, often their background, if possible their genesis, accompanied by close readings that elucidate subtle meanings from the frequently complex poems. Youngren then goes on to show how Bach and his contemporaries responded to the poet's vision, capturing or, in the case of many of Bach's contemporaries, misconstruing the meanings of the poems. Youngren's insistence on reading a poem through to the end rather than focusing simply on the first stanza yields compelling insights into the nature of strophic song. He argues persuasively on this genre's behalf, showing how a fine composer can respond in music for one strophe alone to the imperatives of the whole, and reminds us of Goethe's rejection of the 'false sympathy' demanded and excited by each separate strophe in a through-composed song – a well written and well performed strophic song will allow the 'varying significance' of the different stanzas to shine through, despite the unchanging melody.

Take, for example, Youngren's account of Bach's setting of Hölty's 'Todtengräberlied' H745 (1776, published in 1789). The reader is encouraged first to admire Hölty's poem for its evocation of the 'shrewd, ironic (and necessarily) limited sensibility of the gravedigger' and then, by comparing Bach's song with Schubert's through-composed setting of the same poem, to recognize Bach's 'masterstroke' of having unified the three stanzas with the mazurka-like rhythm that runs through his single strophe of music: 'a strophic song is, of course, necessarily a compromise struck by a composer with a poet and his poem; but it is a compromise by which not only the resulting song but also the original poem can gain concentration, unity, and expressive force' (336). Youngren shows the truth of this statement repeatedly and brilliantly in the course of the book. Perhaps one should mention, though – and Youngren does not – the possibility that the text published with the music of the 'Todtengräberlied' was not the one for which Bach originally wrote his music. Although, as Youngren reports, preparation of the *Neue Lieder-Melodien* (1789) for publication was to a certain extent overseen by Bach shortly before his death, this was the completion of a project begun at least ten years earlier by Carl Friedrich Cramer: Cramer, with Bach's approval, had intended to gather together a collection of Bach songs that had appeared singly in multi-authored collections or in music almanacs, as the third in his series 'Polyhymnia', and had openly declared that he would substitute new texts for some of Bach's more 'outdated' ones. Such substitutions would render problematic the word–text relation so intricately explored by Youngren.



Youngren excels on the sacred songs, especially those of the fine poet Gellert, as well as the psalms in their paraphrases by Johann Andreas Cramer (which Youngren reads against those of Luther). By paying attention to each song of the sets, Youngren presents a fascinating picture of the composer at work: the fifty-three Gellert Lieder are the record of what amounts to an obsession with this poet's vision, often finding highly experimental musical expression in Bach's settings; in the Cramer psalms, by contrast, Bach sets only a selection of Cramer's translations, organizing them in such a way that, as Youngren shows, the collection falls into six sequences of songs, each traversing a range of human emotion, passing through deep despair to emerge at the end of each group in an exultant song of praise to God. The collection is thus 'a sort of selective critical reading of the whole Book of Psalms', and far from constituting another volume of separate songs is, instead, 'a single work of art'. The multiple emotional points of view expressed here suggest the shifting perspectives of Bach's contemporaneous oratorios, most famously the *Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt Jesu*, H777 (1774), and Youngren speculates on the relation between the songs in this book and the oratorio, suggesting that Bach's Cramer Psalms may well have been performed not only at home but also in the divine service. Bach's magnificent setting of Psalm 8 ('Wer ist so würdig'), which in Cramer's version draws strikingly on the kindred imagery of resurrection and the glories of God's creation, is a case in point, for here not only the monumental style of the setting itself, but also its retaining of Cramer's designation of two choirs and a character 'Der Prophet', suggest at least the possibility of an oratorio-like performance.

One could imagine going beyond Youngren's fine analysis of Psalm 8 to point to the musical and poetic resonances between this song and Bach's later setting of Klopstock's *Morgengesang am Schöpfungsfest*, H779 (1784), and while Youngren deals only with the solo song, it should be pointed out that the division between solo and choral song, or even between clavier lied and large-scale cantata in the works of Bach and his contemporaries, was not always so clear. The *Morgengesang*, for example, was published with a keyboard reduction and could be performed both in its full version with an orchestra of strings and wind, chorus and two soloists, and by a single musician at home at the clavichord. Likewise, the inclusion in Kirnberger's *Oden mit Lieder* (1773) of a four-part setting of Psalm 137 or the insertion of two four-part (surely choral) settings ('Das Unendliche' and 'Die Grosse Alleluja') at the beginning of Neefe's revised edition of *Oden und Lieder von Klopstock* (1785) suggests a more fluid boundary between vocal genres. It also tells us something about performance contexts and the social meanings of this music, a topic hardly touched on by Youngren. Similarly, he does not mention the close proximity between the character piece for solo keyboard and song (for example 'La Sophie', H685). The songs, indeed, throw light on many aspects of Bach's work in other genres, and such interrelationships deserve attention in the secondary literature that one hopes will be inspired by this study.

Youngren shows considerable subtlety in dealing with the interrelationship between the conservative and the experimental in Bach's song production. Nevertheless, there is a tendency in his narrative to privilege the complex and unusual over the simple. He has little good to say about the average lied composer of the 1730s and 1740s and is quick to praise songs that are dramatic and expressive (see his treatment of the songs by the obscure de Giovannini in the Gräfe publications (*Sammlung verschiedener . . . Oden*) of 1737–1743). Here, instead of the 'dull', 'generic', 'awkward' music of his North German contemporaries, we have songs that Youngren describes as 'robust, self-assured, theatrical', a 'miniature cabaletta that begs to be sung from the stage' (70); this begs the question, I think, not only of the relationship between high and low culture in the song (and, indeed, an explicit rejection of opera would become a theme repeated in many songs in the succeeding decades), but also of where the dividing line between the simple and the boring, the naive and the banal lay for eighteenth-century listeners.

The questions of genre and performance contexts raises another: that of audience, or, in the case of this book, readership. Is Youngren's book intended for the *Kenner* or the *Liebhaber*? It is perhaps unfair to point out that where economy and condensation are among the principal features of the strophic song, these do not feature highly in this long and perhaps overly full book. Youngren's earlier chapters seem to be directed to the *Liebhaber*, one who will benefit from an explanation of the problematic historiography of eighteenth-century music and the relegation of composers working between 1750 and 1780 to some intermediate status.



While this is an important topic, in the last twenty years German scholars on North German music culture (from Carl Dahlhaus to Laurenz Lütteken, neither of whom figures in the bibliography) have made the case strongly enough for this music to be seen on terms quite separate from those of the Viennese ‘classical’ composers; yet Youngren’s historiographical framework, while explaining to the newcomer some of the issues at stake, seems at times still embedded in this Vienna-centric model. (It comes as a disappointment to read, on page 249, of Bach’s song ‘Das Privilegium’, H693/Wq112/6 (Giseke), published in 1765, that ‘This song is not only witty: it positively sparkles. For the first time we have a Bach song that reminds us of the Viennese Classical composers’.) Youngren insists, quite rightly, that Bach was ‘definitely not a Classical or pre-Classical or proto-classical composer but a composer of quite a different sort’ (178), and goes on with characteristic insight to suggest that ‘Bach’s [songs] . . . tend to turn inward, to concern themselves with the sensitive moment-to-moment inflection of nuance, the fine delineation of ambivalences and ambiguities of feeling’, but the reader need not be so frequently reminded of the alternative model of Viennese classicism.

In many ways this is not really a book for the *Liebhaber* at all. It demands (and rewards) expert knowledge. While critical texts are translated into English, the poems are not. They are explained in great detail in the commentaries, but in a book that places so much emphasis on the particular relation of word and music, it seems surprising that the poems are not at least given prose translations. Youngren suggests in his foreword that readers coming to this subject will most likely have some knowledge of German, but these poems require a good handle on the language. The music examples, too, tend to be frustrating. For the most part reproductions of copies of the original prints, they are very small and often of quite poor quality; while the notes are quasi-legible (and the *Liebhaber* should be aware of the soprano clefs), the underlaid texts are often impossible to make out. Many of Bach’s songs are available here, but not as easily accessible as they perhaps might have been.

It seems churlish to complain of lacunae or infelicities in a book that contains so much. This volume is in some ways an odd mixture, and is, indeed, rather too long, but it is an extraordinary achievement. Any reader interested in C. P. E. Bach, the eighteenth-century lied or indeed music and literary culture more generally in eighteenth-century North Germany will learn a good deal from it. Youngren’s book goes a long way towards restoring Bach’s work to its central position in the history of eighteenth-century song.

ANNETTE RICHARDS



EDITIONS

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LUIGI BOCCHERINI, SIX STRING QUARTETS, OP. 32

ED. MARK W. KNOLL

The Early String Quartet, volume 2

Ann Arbor: Steglein, 2003

pp. xv + 119, ISBN 0 9719854 1 3

This handsome edition is the second in a new series from Steglein entitled ‘The Early String Quartet’. Steglein’s website (<<http://www.steglein.com>>), which is still in the test stage, informs us that the company is dedicated to ‘exploring Western classical music of the 18th and early 19th centuries’, and promises to offer some nice features, including a database with ‘information about primary and secondary sources for works composed during the 18th and early 19th centuries’. This new series, which began with the publication of six quartets by Giovanni Battista Viotti, takes as its temporal field the period 1760–1830, promising to include



string quartets from all parts of Europe and the Americas and stating that the editors will not confine themselves to the 'standard' instrumentation but may include works composed for some of the other configurations that answer to the description 'string quartet'.

The series announces its philosophy in a Series Preface by the General Editor, Cliff Eisen:

The Early String Quartet . . . adheres to present-day scholarly and editorial standards while at the same time recognizing that music is written primarily to be performed . . . As such, the scores and parts . . . reflect not only modern concerns for historical awareness but also the obligation on players to create individual interpretations, whether historically informed or not.[vi]

This is a commendable philosophy, but I cannot resist pointing out the curious way in which Eisen's statement dances round certain loaded issues. He seems to be referring to the minimizing of interventions such as phrase marks, fingerings and egregious 'normalizations', with a view to throwing responsibility for such decisions on to the player. I have to wonder whether and how the player is supposed to recognize the gauntlet being thrown down here. A group of musicians already concerned with interpretation, and possibly also concerned with the way in which historical practices inflect and complicate it, will appreciate this edition very much indeed. But there is no sure way in which it, or any other edition for that matter, can foster that concern, nor enforce the 'obligation' Eisen mentions, in those who do not already have it as a result of prior musical experience (and to some extent temperament). Mechanical, unthinking, playing can come about regardless of how much information does or doesn't end up on the page.

The Preface to this edition, by its editor (and the head of Steglein), Mark Knoll, opens with a biographical sketch of Boccherini which is concise, up to date and well put together – a not insignificant accomplishment given the fraught state of Boccherini biographical scholarship. While I might disagree with the interpretation of a few matters, by and large he has his facts as straight as is possible in so brief a format; I would only mention that the isolated palace at which Boccherini resided from 1771 to 1785 with his first royal patron, Don Luis the Infante of Spain, is in Arenas de San Pedro (not Las Arenas, an inexplicable adornment of the name invented and perpetuated by a series of biographers).

Knoll's information on Boccherini's string quartets is excellent, both scholarly and concise, giving a much needed overview of an important genre in Boccherini's work. He composed ninety, all told, over a forty-three-year period which comprises the entire first flowering of the string quartet in Europe; but his contributions to the genre have tended to be overshadowed by his even more magnificent production of string quintets (125 in all).

Op. 32 is an interesting publication choice. The composition date was 1780, at a time when Boccherini had consolidated certain features of his style, established a steady rhythm of productivity in Arenas and had a relationship with Parisian publishers to go with it. However, the first edition of Op. 32 appeared not in Paris, but in Vienna, with the redoubtable Artaria. Although we now lack the correspondence that would tell us how this transition was effected, it clearly represents yet another canny business decision on Boccherini's part, putting his works cheek by jowl with Artaria's considerable list of works by Haydn and Mozart.

Op. 32 was the second opus of Boccherini's music published by Artaria; the first was his Op. 26, also string quartets, composed in 1778 (and, confusingly, released by Artaria in 1781 as 'Op. 32'). In view of this fact, I would have liked an explanation from Knoll as to why he chose Op. 32 over Op. 26 for this first essay in republishing Boccherini's quartets, even if his reason was simply one of personal preference. (My own opinion is that Op. 32 is on the whole more engaging than its predecessor. There is also a wonderful 1976 period-instrument recording of the entire opus by the old Eszterházy Quartet, not to be confused with the more recent ensemble of that name.)

Knoll's excursus on 'Sources and Editorial Method' is a genuine pleasure to read for the way it integrates the pragmatic and experiential into editorial policy, bearing out the announced intention of this series with both common sense and uncommon sensibility. I would wager that Knoll has spent considerable time playing these pieces from manuscript with his friends or colleagues; it is hard to believe that anything else could lead him to a statement such as the following:



Since Boccherini's style relies to such an extent on small details and the repetition of brief gestures, it seems to me that what might otherwise be considered inconsistencies or sloppy copying may in fact be deliberate attempts to inject variety at the gestural level, with perhaps less concern for absolute consistency at the structural level. I have thus tended not to normalize parallel passages or strive for vertical consistency to the same extent as might be appropriate for another composer, especially with respect to slurring and articulation, selection and placement of dynamics and ornamentation. [x]

Here, in a nicely understated nutshell, is an essential aspect of this composer, better expressed than almost anywhere else. I only hope that the quartet players who buy this edition and play from it will take Knoll at his word and actually try to execute these 'inconsistencies'. With patience and a willingness to hear things anew, they will find themselves entering a unique sonic world, peculiar to Boccherini, where exquisitely fine distinctions of timbre and articulation assume singular importance. I would go so far as to suggest that these distinctions themselves become structural (rather than supplanting musical 'structure' as we are accustomed to think about it) – but the viability of such a claim will ultimately have to rest on the consensus of those who play this music and play it with close attention to how Boccherini notated it and how Knoll has transmitted it. It hardly seems possible to draw many interesting conclusions about Boccherini's music without some reference to the hands-on experience of making it.

Having made this radical claim, I have to admit that it was not possible for me to road-test the parts for this edition before writing this review. They do not seem to present any significant problem, however, as they are spacious on the page, with welcome room between staves for the performers to insert their own notations. Especially commendable care has been taken so that the players need not interrupt themselves to turn a page – or get a colleague to do it, or slice the page in half, or attach an unwieldy and unsightly photocopied appendage – solutions with which users of expensive scholarly editions are far too familiar and which are irritating not only for their tendency to go wrong in performance, but for the implicit way they reinforce the divide between 'being scholarly' and 'being practical'. In the first violin part of Op. 32 no. 5 the text of the second half of the last movement is actually reprinted after a page turn, in order, as the editor says, 'to eliminate a page turn when taking the second half repeat' – a courtesy I cannot recall ever having encountered before.

It is expensive to be generous with paper, but this edition is reasonably priced at \$80 US for the score and another \$80 for the parts; I hope that it will sell well, as it is an excellent presentation of some fascinating music.

ELISABETH LEGUIN



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MUZIO CLEMENTI, *OPERA OMNIA*

VOLUME 1: SIX SONATAS FOR HARPSICHORD OR PIANO, OP. 1

ED. ANDREA COEN

Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2000

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LIBITUM, OP. 32

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VOLUME 37: TWO SONATAS AND TWO CAPRICCIOS FOR PIANO, OP. 34

ED. ANDREA COEN

Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2002

pp. x + 81, ISMN M 2153 0782 7

The power of anniversaries! Among the many activities prompted by the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Clementi in 1752, none has been of such fundamental importance as this first modern collected edition. Eventually to encompass sixty volumes, it has been planned by five scholars, comprising the 'scientific committee', who are all represented among the editions under review here. While much of Clementi's keyboard music has long been widely available, this has mostly consisted of selections from the solo sonatas, a patchy representation that has frustrated many. This edition not only includes other, relatively unfamiliar, keyboard works, it also gives us various forms of chamber music, the symphonic output, treatises, and even a volume of arias and canzonettas. However, those expecting the full monumental apparatus of a collected edition are going to be disappointed. Indeed, the very division into so many separate volumes, bound in soft covers, and the inclusion of parts where relevant points towards the real identity of this *opera omnia*: it is a performing edition. The Series Preface states the aim of catering 'to the needs of both performers, who wish to play this music in keeping with period practice, and scholars with a musicological approach' (iv). However, if the aim were to be met one would expect fuller information about sources, more comprehensive critical reports and greater guidance on performance practice. On the latter count, each edition under review (except volume 1) includes a *tavola degli abbellimenti*, taken from the composer's *Introduction to the Art of Playing on the Piano Forte* (London, 1801), but, while helpful, this clearly needs to be glossed. Apart from anything else, a commentary would need to point out that such a table could hardly be binding, both because of the general variability of such performance matters and because such instructions



may not bear straightforwardly on pieces written much earlier, before Clementi had entered his more pedagogical phase. More broadly, there is more to ‘period practice’ than the execution of ornaments. This minimal coverage is exposed by comparison with Nicholas Temperley’s detailed discussion of issues in the General Introduction to his *The London Pianoforte School 1766–1860*, volume 1 (New York: Garland, 1987).

With regard to sources, the editorial committee have quite reasonably opted for a best-text approach where relevant. Clementi was, or became, a habitual reviser of his own music, and this edition could quite easily have swelled to many times its projected size were all such revisions to have been included. The Series Preface points out that the composer was able to supervise most editions of his music directly (especially of course in later years, with Clementi’s extensive publishing activities), and so what has been presented is ‘the *Urtext* edition of the text present in that which was judged as the most reliable source’ (iv). The use of the loaded term ‘*Urtext*’, also proclaimed on the covers, not only sets alarm bells ringing these days but seems an odd choice given the prevalent source situation. Strangely, the equivalent Italian wording is the less worrying ‘edizioni diplomatico-interpretative’. The sense of not quite squaring up to the issues is furthered in the individual volume prefaces. These outline the circumstances of each opus and list corrections to the text, but rather briefly. Yet this might have been an opportunity to deal extensively with variants found in other editions, to say nothing of the (incomplete) *Oeuvres Complètes* published in Leipzig between 1803 and 1819, reprinted in 1973 by the Da Capo Press (New York). This is mentioned in most prefaces, but only one of the current volumes (on Op. 15) notes any different readings found there.

Further, each preface might have been tailored so as to place each opus in a fuller historical context and offer some critical-aesthetic commentary. Many of these works are little known, and such material could have formed another scholarly resource for future work. More broadly, while Clementi’s name and his important position in music history are securely enough established, his music has long lacked true advocates. Even the recent *Muzio Clementi: Studies and Prospects*, published in 2002 as volume 61 of the current series, a sort of discursive pendant to the *opera omnia*, is barely concerned with critical advocacy at all and so fails to advance the case about why we should care for this music as art. Admittedly, the new volumes do not set out to fulfil such briefs, but one feels that a great opportunity has not been fully grasped. That the individual prefaces are given in Italian only furthers the sense that more thought altogether was needed on the scope and presentation of each volume in the series.

When one turns to the musical texts, there is much to enjoy. For instance – something which is after all relevant to most of the volumes – the layouts preserve the original distribution of music between the staves. All original dynamic and agogic signs are retained, though in modernized form (this is only referred to, together with details of the alterations, in volume 37). But such markings are not added in by analogy in parallel passages, leaving performers free to consider their responses without editorial ‘guidance’ and making for an uncluttered page. The desire to present a clean edition is also apparent in an area where the editors depart from a diplomatic transcription: the use of accidentals. Each individual preface (with the exception of those for volumes 1 and 12) notes that accidentals have been added or, more commonly, removed in order to conform to ‘modern notational practice’. In order to avoid ‘superfluous indications’ these are not indicated editorially, either in the musical text or in the prefatory notes (though once more practice is inconsistent, with some volumes providing quite substantial lists of corrections). This also breathes the spirit of a practical performing edition; we shall see later on that such indications are by no means always so mechanical or superfluous.

A further joy of this series is the chance, at last, for many of us to make acquaintance with so much unfamiliar Clementi. Certainly the various types of ‘chamber music’ qualify here, and while we might imagine that nothing of great moment might emerge under the rubric of music for piano with accompanying instruments, we would be mistaken. The three trios (sonatas) of Op. 27 (published 1791) are not only a distinctive, often exhilarating, achievement in their own right, they point to one of the dominant stylistic assumptions for these chamber genres in particular – the role of the pastoral.

But things don’t seem to get off to a promising start. The opening of the Allegro in Sonata No. 1 presents the sort of melody that leaves a bad taste in the mouth nowadays. It is not so much the blithe tunefulness that



offends (this, after all, is fundamental to the musical art of the time) as its effect in association with a rattling (quasi-)Alberti accompaniment. Yet before a parallel phrase can begin, we hear a passage that plays most disconcertingly with the triplet figure that formed part of the tune. It is subjected to cross-rhythmic treatment (3/8 in the right hand, with accompanying chords in 2/8 or 2/4 in the left, although in neither case is the individual rhythmic scansion clear) that seems to taunt both listener and player. In light of this, the preceding tune emerges as a deliberately crude form of rustic style. Such parody is always a possibility within the realm of the pastoral, and this may extend to the following passage too, as if the players are unable to keep within the prescribed metre. Alternatively, the cross-rhythms may signal a conspicuously more arty treatment of material, but ultimately with the same effect of alienating us from the opening tune. A similar spirit informs Haydn's treatment of rustic material of hectic character in the first movement of his Trio in C major, HXV:21 (1795). Clementi never stops playing with his triplet figure, now correcting it and making it scan, now varying it to create still greater confusion. Although the string parts are largely subordinate here and elsewhere, they are still essential to the whole, either because they play relatively independent material or simply because the variety of mass and emphasis they bring to the succession of material is clearly part of the rhetoric and meaning of the music. Examples may be found from bar 144 in the sweep of both string parts, with their independent accents, or in the cello's sly comments from bars 161 to 165. The movement as a whole, as if taking its cue from the play of the triplet figure, has great exuberance and rhythmic energy, a feature of the whole opus.

The following deliciously judged *siciliano* (*Andante innocente*) gives us the more commonly cultivated pastoral flavour – fresh and innocent (as the tempo designation suggests), yet also artful and sophisticated. While the amateur circumstances of the accompanied sonata genre may have prompted a particularly intensive engagement with this fundamental expressive mode, here it often takes on a subtly strange flavour. For instance, while the finale – effectively a *moto perpetuo*, possibly in late-century *allemande* style – is broadly popular, such touches as the change of harmony from G minor to C major chords at 120–124 convey a definite modal tinge.

Trio (Sonata) No. 2 mostly embodies a more refined type of pastoral. The very elusive rhythms of the middle movement, a *Polonaise*, help to create a gentle, undemonstrative, strangeness of affect. While here the exoticism rises overtly to the surface and is acknowledged in the dance title, it would be facile to read the movement only in these terms. There is a real sense of wonder here, accentuated by the concise dimensions – in this respect the movement is related to those brief, chiselled, slow movements that are such a trademark of the composer's sonatas. The third movement, again prevalently gentle, is full of subtle twists in rhythm, for all the apparent regularity of syntax – a real theme of this work, and another of the outstanding traits of the set.

In Trio (Sonata) No. 3 in G major another trait of the set rises to particular prominence – the use of horn calls. Their frequency is not remarkable in itself, especially not in association with the pastoral, but their realization certainly is. Try, for example, the notably fresh and rhythmically inventive take on the topic from bar 32 of the first movement, but note too the musing *pianissimo* version that unexpectedly extends the first period at bars 8–10. The development section makes beautiful use of a plainly archaic baroque sequence, and this leads to more ruminative *pianissimo* horn-call material in an apparently remote B major. Both the prevailing treatment of horn calls and this use of sequence entail a sensibility that delights in suggesting remoteness of style or manner (as indeed we might also surmise from all the canons found in the sonatas). Almost inevitably, this version of the horn call returns at the end to prompt yet another of the many soft closes in this opus. The finale of this work – long, ambitious, brilliant, with well sustained momentum and again informed by a popular style that often shades into more overt rustic tones – sums up the unexpected delights of Op. 27. The fact is, we don't really associate Clementi with the pastoral or folk-like. His image, as determined by the solo sonata output, issues more from the use of learned devices and by various sorts of emotional and executive extravagance.

On the other hand, the Op. 32 trios do fulfil expectations – they are pedestrian. The title page of the 1793 edition includes the phrase 'for the Piano-Forte with Accompaniments for a Flute and Violoncello ad



Libitum', and there is a distinct textural difference between these works and the Op. 27 trios. The flute and cello are far less artfully realized than the 'accompanying' parts of Op. 27, and a relatively less accomplished pianist is needed. That these are two-movement works, all with rondo finales, gives a further indication of their more modest scope. Horn calls are to the fore again, but soft endings are notably less prominent (although the finale of Sonata No. 1 contains a very amusing example); perhaps the lower-level performers wanted the thrill of the grand endings that duly ensue. For the first movement of Sonata No. 2, some editorial advice is needed on the performance of dotted rhythms when set against accompanying triplets – an example of where these editions do not meet their avowed brief to help the conscientious modern performer.

The excitement of discovery returns with the Op. 15 sonatas for piano and violin, first published in 1786. In his Preface, more comprehensive than most, Luca Sala remarks that the violin part, described as 'Acompanymment Obligato' on title page, is no longer subsidiary but 'converses with the piano as an equal' (vii). One way that the composer creates a tight duo texture as well as avoiding straying too far from a medium level of difficulty is through keeping the writing compact in all senses – registrally, motivically and expressively. One might well remark on the limited tessitura allowed to the violin, but this is also quite true of the piano part. Equally, thematic presentation is very tightly controlled – most movements are effectively monothematic. The expressive tightness then follows from these two attributes, thus avoiding the intrusion of fantasia-type elements that would bring a more expansive rhetoric into play. Further exemplifying this mentality is the presence of a subdominant reprise in all three first movements. In each case it strays off course quite quickly, as if a false reprise, and what follows could initially be taken either as further development or as the secondary development section characteristic of a reprise. In any case, this is a luxury of ambiguity that Clementi can afford. Since the first movement of Sonata No. 1, for example, is monothematic in the traditional sense too, with first subject doing duty also as second subject, the latter's return in the tonic from bar 128 means we do get a tonic reprise of the opening material.

In the Andantino of this first sonata Clementi's naturally contrapuntal and therefore often unobtrusively thematic thought works to particular textural advantage, as we hear a constant dialogue of short units in a gracious reciprocal spirit. The ensuing middle section is full of arresting gestures; poised on B flat minor, it never cadences there. It arises entirely in fact from the further manipulation of material upon which the first section was based, but, as with Haydn, the difference of affect is so pronounced that it takes some time to notice this at all. At one point in the playful finale, from bar 122, the common process of imitation between the two players comes closer to a full-blown canon. It is hardly surprising that Clementi of all people should create a few canonic passages in this medium; but it is significant that they rarely take on any of the archaic patina they often do in the solo sonatas. They are more likely to be invested with comic energy, another great example of this being found in the finale of Sonata No. 2 from bar 193. As a further testament to the textural freshness of Op. 15 we might note the rarity of straightforward parallel thirds between violin and piano right hand, such a standard device in this medium. In Sonata No. 1/iii, for instance, they occur only as a block from bar 175, so that, like the mini-canon, they are strategically placed to act as a climax. Shortly thereafter this movement ends simply by melting away, *piano*, without any of the usual rhythmic or chordal signals. As in Op. 27, this device signals the intimacy of 'chamber music', and it even flatters the players, suggesting a refinement that can do without conspicuous farewells.

There are passages in these sonatas where the violin part suffers, for example some rather blank low pedal notes for the violin where something more distinctive might easily have been achieved (see bars 124–125 and 217–220 in the finale of Sonata No. 2). Yet the general level of textural inventiveness extends even to playing with the most common types of alternation. The Larghetto sostenuto of No. 2 begins with a broad dignified piano theme, but just before the expected cadence it swerves towards V/V for the violin's reply, thus dramatizing the expected textural event. Clementi is a master of gaining expressive depth through surprising harmonic inversions and other 'poised' harmonies at moments of expected formal and harmonic stability, and this is a wonderful instance. There is also a swerve in expressive character, suddenly rhapsodic.

On a different level, the Allegro assai finale of Sonata No. 3 is based on a single witticism, a chromatic neighbour note paired off the beat with its note of resolution. This movement is effectively without real



thematic or melodic material in the larger sense; instead, the neat turning-round of a limited number of small units enhances the sense of dialogue. The dialogue in Op. 15 is really found more in such techniques than in the actual disposition of texture on the larger scale – the basic unit of thought is motivic rather than thematic. A constant flexibility and attention to detail nurtures a true conversational and discursive aesthetic, the most distinctive achievement of this opus.

Further memorable duetting awaits us in volume 10, containing the sonatas Op. 1a and Op. 12 for two pianos. The earlier duet formed a part of what is known as *Oeuvre 1* or Op. 1a or Op. 1bis, published in Paris in 1780 or 1781. This was a revisiting of the Op. 1 that appeared in London around 1771, but that publication did not contain the duet. The current edition is based on the Bailleux Paris text of 1780–1781, but, as Roberto Illiano informs us in the Preface, the duet also exists in a nearly complete autograph held in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. In line with earlier comments, one wonders why this is not discussed in any detail here. The Op. 12 duet was published by Preston in London in 1784 alongside four solo sonatas. A revised version ‘with corrections and annotations by the Author’ was then published by the composer himself in 1801–1802. Although a second piano part has not survived, one feels again that a real opportunity to prompt further research has been lost. This is especially so given Clementi’s relatively frequent revisions of his works, exceptional for his time, and all the conclusions that might be drawn about changes of musical style through a comparison of the ‘corrections and annotations’. Until Clementi is dealt with more consistently at such a level, he will surely remain a rather remote figure from our current sensibilities, the creative figure overwhelmed by his other roles (as agent, pedagogue, performer and businessman).

The predominant tone in these duets is one of enchantment. There is a conversational ease that one encounters less regularly in the solo keyboard works, which typically have a stronger rhetorical cutting edge to them. Even the expected brilliance is relatively muted next to the sense of idyllic exchange of material. Especially noteworthy in this respect is the minuet finale of Op. 1a, which embodies that quality of mellow reflection one often finds in this movement type. This flavour may also be strongly felt in the way all but one of the movements close, as they seem to drift into reverie rather than finish with a full stop. So, like the other chamber works already reviewed, these duets extend our perception of Clementi’s range as a composer.

With the volume containing the Op. 7 solo sonatas we enter more clearly contestable territory. There are two early editions to choose from, published by Artaria in Vienna in 1782 (V) and by the composer himself in London in about 1784 (L). In his Preface Costantino Mastroprimiano details the tempo indications given by the two editions for the eight individual movements; they coincide in just one case. Mastroprimiano then states that he has based his edition on the London reading, since it is richer in performance markings. Thereafter this shortest of prefaces stops, without even stating the usual editorial policy on accidentals.


The differences between V and L versions are of great interest. Pitch and duration are hardly changed, but everything concerning the delivery – dynamics and articulation above all – varies very considerably. It is instructive to read how Sonja Gerlach and Alan Tyson put this in the Preface to their edition of Op. 7 No. 3, based in fact on V (Munich: Henle, 1978). They note that Clementi’s revised editions ‘contain divergent tempo and performance indications, additional and written-out ornamentation, added arpeggio signs and similar minor variants, but have very few significant changes in the music’ (vi). Revealingly, ‘the music’ is equated with the primary parameters of pitch and rhythm; perhaps a similar attitude underlies the reluctance of this edition as a whole, and certainly this volume in particular, to dwell on ‘incidental’ features. It would have been a fascinating exercise had the current volume detailed such variants in a proper editorial commentary, even if it takes the quite reasonable best-text route and presents a very faithful rendition of L. (And it does, as it claims, keep the original layout exactly, with a few small exceptions concerning stemming and beaming.) Especially fascinating would be to see whether differences of articulation correspond at all to the prevailing trend towards ever more sustained legato playing. We are now sensitized to this in light of Bernard Harrison’s wonderful study of the various revised versions of Op. 2 in *Studies and Prospects* (‘The Revision of Clementi’s Opus 2 and the Transformation of Piano Performance Style’, 303–321). Then there are more specific differences of which the edition should be duty-bound to inform us. Most outstandingly here, in the finale of Sonata No. 3 V has a third repetition of a two-bar unit in the section beginning at bar 22 (both



editions agree on three iterations of it when the material returns subsequently in the tonic). Not including this in the later L edition might have been a copying error, but it might also have simply been the sort of tightening that can happen with any revision.

In any case, the basic comparison between the two editions is not as straightforward as Mastroprimiano suggests. In the case of No. 3, for example, it is certainly true that the London version of the first movement contains the more detailed markings, which are also more ‘rhetorical’ and volatile (the change in movement heading from V’s ‘Allegro con spirito’ to ‘Allegro espressivo’ is telling in this respect). But in the second movement it is V that is much more detailed, especially in its dynamic markings. These fundamentally affect our possible interpretations of the movement – and they clearly are part of ‘the music’ rather than an optional extra. In the L version the lack of the many *piano* markings that in V rein in and contrast with the full-textured *fortissimo* outbursts suggests a movement that is more uninhibited, closer to the vehemence of the finale.

Detailed comparison of this volume with L, as reproduced in Temperley’s *London Pianoforte School*, volume 1, reveals a number of issues. There are some unexpected additions (the triplet indications in the second subject of No. 2/i, not found in the source at this point and only once subsequently in the movement) and omissions (for instance of articulation), and some clear errors (a missing *ab* in the right-hand chord of bar 65 of No. 1/ii; an *e^b2* as note 4 of bar 68 of No. 1/iii instead of the correct *d²*; a stroke given instead of a dot on note 1 in the right hand of bar 60 in No. 1/i, though this last might represent a correction – since the editor gives not even a minimal list of corrections, we can’t know). There are also the usual difficulties regarding the precise compass of slurs, generally a no-win situation for an editor, but some here do appear to be too literal (as with the slur reaching into bar 6 of No. 2/i). A more constant irritant arises from the edition’s policy with respect to cautionary accidentals, which is the ‘modern’ practice of accidentals being valid only for the bar concerned. Confusion often arises in this volume in particular when the policy seems too strictly pursued and ungenerous to the player and score-reader. The L source is generally very careful with its cautionary accidentals, and it seems odd to remove so many of these when they are well justified in context. The lack of a natural sign before note 1 (F) of the left hand in bar 28 of No. 3/ii seems very hard to understand when the previous 3/4 bar has contained three repeated F# crotchets. The policy leads to a real abrogation of editorial responsibility in a repeated passage towards the end of No. 3/i featuring a descending minor scale in parallel tenths between the two hands (see bars 197 and 203). As it stands, the right hand appears to use G harmonic minor and the left hand G melodic minor, which is possible, but here is a case that cries out for editorial acknowledgement and guidance. At any rate, a cautionary natural ought to be added to the left hand’s F, as the F#s in the right hand occur within the same bar. Interestingly, in the V version (at least the second time round) the right-hand line switches scale forms halfway through from F# to F \natural , and in their edition Gerlach and Tyson adjust the reading of the first passage to match this.

There are further examples of editorial ducking of issues, not all constrained by the series policy. In the very original and charming finale to Sonata No. 2 the third bar faithfully reproduces L’s ambiguous placement of a *sforzando* mark that could apply either to the uppermost part or to the melodically leading inner voices. Subsequent appearances of the feature in L tend to clarify that the latter is meant, reflecting the common contemporary practice of placing dynamic markings before the note or notes to which they apply, a feature which is naturally modernized in this new edition – except here, with the ambiguous placement being reproduced exactly on all subsequent appearances of the passage! Similarly, a word is clearly needed on the rhythm  that occurs sporadically throughout the first movement of No. 1. As Temperley points out in his General Introduction, this is susceptible of three readings (xxvi), and he places his preferred interpretation immediately above the staff in his annotated facsimile edition. But we find no such help here.

Musically, Op. 7 is hugely rewarding. The two-movement Sonata No. 2, much less fine-grained than its companions, is somewhat out of its depth, for all the fascination of its finale. The superb middle movements of Nos. 1 and 3 exemplify that Clementian trademark mentioned above – the noble, concise slow movement. They have a gravity, even a pretentiousness by contemporary standards, that Beethoven among others clearly picked up on.



The G minor Sonata of Op. 34 (1795), contained in volume 37 of the series, is well known and much vaunted by commentators, since the composer does all the right things – minor key, serious tone, lots of thematic development, not too much ‘empty virtuosity’ – but the rest of the opus is just as memorable. The C major Sonata, Op. 34 No. 1, loses little by comparison. Its not-so-slow movement, *Un poco Andante*, quasi *Allegretto*, is a rewarding specimen of an unacknowledged expressive subtype among slow movements of this time, generally taking just this tempo designation as the starting-point for the evocation of a processional quality. (Other examples are the second movements of Haydn’s quartets Op. 50 No. 3 and Op. 77 No. 2.) But the real find here are the two capriccios. The first, in A major, has the greater sweep and power, but that in F major mixes the typically passionate fantasia-style gestures with a wit that is less common in the form. Especially noticeable in this regard is the material that first appears in bar 87, marked by dotted rhythms in triple time. This has a diffident and whimsical character, portrayed on a larger scale too by the music’s inability actually to get anywhere (it keeps on returning to its opening gesture). It is a sort of desultory yet absorbing playing-around with not very much at all, perhaps only possible in this genre, but it forms a real contrast with Clementi’s customary energy and efficiency in the usual forms (there is something of this also in the C major Capriccio of Op. 47). Temperley, though, with the tepid tone of most Clementi appreciation, writes that the capriccios ‘belong to a class of composition whose charms have faded, but if played with conviction they can still be exciting and dramatic’ (*The London Pianoforte School*, volume 3, xiii).

As with other volumes, it is a delight to read and play from a more or less diplomatic transcription, retaining not only the original layout but also the distinction between dots and strokes (it is a separate matter whether these are always clearly differentiated and understood as implying different attacks). Further, Andrea Coen softens the series policy regarding accidentals and sometimes keeps the composer’s ‘redundant’ ones, to make reading easier (vii). Yet at certain points some fairly essential cautionary accidentals have been missed out while some of the source’s less essential ones are retained. And there is inconsistency – why, for instance, in bar 131 of Capriccio No. 1, is a natural given for b, when it is omitted at the other octaves B and b? Surely it’s all or nothing.

Indeed, the edition as a whole is too untidy to be regarded as satisfactory. Alongside errors or omissions, and some unaccountable changes or additions, there are questionable details that suggest a misunderstanding or misreading of some typical notational practices of the time. Often the approach seems too literal, especially with slurs. For instance, in bars 25–26 of Sonata No. 2/iii the left-hand part is broken into two separate slurs. In the source these bars occupy the outer edges of two consecutive systems, and the slur is clearly supposed to continue beyond the line break. Further literalism is found in the reading of the left hand of bars 60–63. What must be understood as a single slur is separated into four connected slurs, present in the original because the left-hand part is written in the treble clef and, as it faces downwards, a single arc under the entire passage would cross ungratefully into the empty stave below. The source is full of such single slurs subdivided for just this reason, to avoid visual clutter. The literal reproduction of this device may not induce an incorrect performance, but it looks odd and therefore does not promote ‘easy reading’.

Another kind of literal reproduction that misleads was also found in association with the version of Op. 7 No. 2/ii, the result of a failure to grasp that dynamics often preceded the notes to which they apply. In this edition, in bar 30 of Sonata No. 2/ii, an *ff* marking is placed directly beneath a single right-hand note when it could only apply to the following four-part diminished seventh chord, the *subito* dynamic naturally reinforcing the harmonic and textural surprise. Among the more serious errors and omissions, the editor has overlooked the *f* found in bar 368 of the source for Capriccio No. 2, occurring just bars before the end of the piece. Its absence hugely affects the rhetorical effect of the close. Perhaps the biggest mistake is found in Sonata No. 1/ii: the imperfectly formed downward crotchet stem of the right-hand dyad in bar 132 is misread as a stroke applying to the sole left-hand note – surely unlikely given the tenuto markings applied to all the parts, including the left hand, on this beat. Again, it is not so much these uncertainties in themselves that give cause for disquiet, but the effect they have in combination with the lack of acknowledgment and discussion of such matters in a fuller prefatory section.



In the case of Coen's edition of the Op. 1 sonatas (1771), for once the volume preface contains extensive lists, but, for the first three sonatas at least, these largely record variants in the autographs held in the Bibliothèque Nationale. (The edition used is the London one published by John Welcker.) Yet many editorial corrections, especially concerning accidentals, are not noted in the listing. Further, some accidentals from the source are kept that do not qualify for retention on the basis of the edition's general policy (notably those occurring in the typical post-cadential formula that flattens the seventh scale degree before sharpening it again). There are again some unaccountable additions; for instance in Sonata No. 6/i, bar 36, there are no slurs in the source. And the Preface includes several wrong numerical designations (in one case misidentifying a whole sonata) that suggest simply that further proofreading was required.

Altogether, on the evidence of these editions, one can only offer a muted welcome to this important enterprise. While the desideratum of a complete modern edition of the works of this fascinating figure will now be met, and much of the apparatus merits praise, one would have wished for greater consistency and discernment in editorial practice, more information and above all a bigger vision of what such a monumental undertaking could have accomplished.

W. DEAN SUTCLIFFE



RECORDINGS AND PERFORMANCES

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BBC RADIO 3 'COMPOSER OF THE WEEK' (5–9 JULY 2004): OPERA SERIA EXTRACTS FROM JOHANN ADOLPH HASSE (1699–1783), *CLEOFIDE* (CAPRICCIO 10193/96); CARL HEINRICH GRAUN, *CESARE E CLEOPATRA* (HARMONIA MUNDI HMC 901 561) AND *MONTEZUMA* (DECCA 448 979); NICCOLO JOMMELLI (1714–1774), *DIDONE ABBANDONATA* (ORFEO C381 953F) AND *VOLOGESO* (ORFEO C420 983F); TOMMASO TRAETTA (1727–1779), *IPPOLITO ED ARICIA* (DYNAMIC CDS 257/4) AND *ANTIGONA* (DECCA 460 205).

Introduced by Donald Macleod.

BBC Radio 3's 'Composer of the Week' normally celebrates a single composer, but the greatly enriched catalogue of recorded music permits the inclusion of composers hitherto neglected, or in some cases coherent groups of composers. In this case the concept introduces a neglected genre by means of extracts from works any two of which would exceed the five hours available. The material has reached your reviewer in the form of CDs, each labelled 'Jommelli', and each containing three tracks; but the entire programme is on track one. Track two is silent, and track three emits a loud whistle, calculated to wake one up (if necessary). The music, by its considerable energy, reflected in the performances sampled, is enough to keep one awake, and it comes in short bursts, separated by gobbets of information. For catalogue numbers I had recourse to the Radio 3 website, which names conductors, choruses and orchestras but not, in a reversal of expectation in this genre, solo singers.

The presentation recalls educational programmes of a type increasingly rare on British television, which enliven information with entertainment. If this attracts listeners to explore this vast repertory, I have no objection, even though the commentary flits between politics, architecture and gossip without perceptible logic, as if to stimulate listeners with a short attention span. Each programme pretended to begin with a live broadcast of an eighteenth-century premiere: 'It's very much gala night here at Ludwigsburg. It's the Duke's actual birthday . . . Signor Jommelli himself is already at the harpsichord'. Mercifully, this idea was abandoned after the overture.



Handel and early Mozart aside, opera seria is likely to remain a rarity in our theatres. But preference for shorter, and comic, works is not necessarily a deficiency in modern culture. We are told that Frederick II compelled silence from audiences during Graun's operas; long as they are, the masterpieces of opera seria were not played before audiences which, lacking their ruler's example, paid equal attention throughout a performance. Opera seria embodies cultural expectations of its own time, and its musical and dramatic conventions may seem at a further remove from our own than the flexibly designed operas of Monteverdi. The commentary draws attention to the *lieto fine* in most works sampled, an element left essentially untouched by Gluck's reform. But it is less Gluck than Mozart's comedies, lushly orchestrated and with ensembles creating the illusion of naturalism, which have made the stylization of opera seria difficult to swallow. In my experience, students today may find even a short work like Mozart's *Il re pastore* tedious because it consists almost entirely of arias.

A drawback of the BBC's enterprise is to anticipate this reaction by privileging elements in opera seria that are not typical of most of the repertory. In each one-hour broadcast, about ten minutes elapse before we hear any singing; this time is mainly occupied by a complete sinfonia, which thus bulks rather larger than it would in a complete performance. Whoever devised the programmes lost few opportunities to include features like the battle symphony during which the Spaniards overcome Montezuma's forces in Graun's opera. This only takes a minute, but it still requires introduction and comment. Most choral and orchestral extracts are longer than this. In the commentary, at least, concentrating on the lives of the composers is no anachronism; Hasse and Jommelli were famous men in their time, and the brevity of their posthumous reputation is a telling comment on the impermanence of celebrity. Now, however, we have a few complete recordings which demonstrate the aesthetic value of presenting their works as wholes, in their original forms – or rather one of their original forms, for the more successful an eighteenth-century opera was, the less likely it is to have come down to us in a single definitive text.

The series begins with the pretended broadcast of the first night, in 1731, of *Cleofide*, directed by the celebrity composer who is newly arrived in Dresden with his soprano wife Faustina. We are told that the audience includes J. S. and W. F. Bach from Leipzig, information which would certainly be of no interest to an eighteenth-century listener; it may, however, have seduced me into hearing two distinct thematic relations to the B minor Mass, the first parts of which were presented to the same patron, Friedrich August II of Saxony, in 1733. Applause over, we start a concise account of the composer's long career which, however, omits his humiliation by the Mozarts in 1771. The opera seria formula is accurately described, but tempered when, in *Cleofide*, we hear only three arias, but one duet, one coro (sung by a chorus rather than the principals) and three orchestral passages. The soloists are supported by fine orchestral playing under William Christie, especially from the horns in Alexander's aria, contrasting nicely with one of the chillier countertenors.

In an examination script about Handel operas I read many years ago, an earnest student (name and sex fortunately forgotten) wrote: 'The problem of the castrati is what to do with their parts.' In these selections, the male and female options are both attempted and show that, despite magnificent efforts from the women, men singing male roles adds greatly to dramatic verisimilitude: few females capable of singing this kind of music can also contrive to sound even sexless, never mind virile, and if they did, they would probably of necessity deprive their roles of passion. (Dare I suggest that some are inclined to do that, even in female roles? No names of course: this applies equally to countertenors, and I recognize that a more dispassionate style appeals to some modern tastes.) Most performances use thoroughly modern, which is to say period-instrument, ensembles, but in the programme on Graun, parts of *Cesare e Cleopatra* (1742) were interposed between extracts from an older recording of *Montezuma* (1755) directed by Richard Bonyngue. The acrobatics of Cleopatra suggest that Frederick (librettist and opera queen as well as patron) had a taste for showy singing even in tragedies. Since, regrettably, the BBC engineers were not in Berlin at the time, it is impossible to be sure about matters of performing practice; but to me, at least, the cadenzas offered by the remarkably agile Janet Williams in this role are ludicrous, and the fiercely whip-like string chords doubtless encouraged by the conductor (René Jacobs) could be used to support Richard Taruskin's well known thesis that 'authentic'



performances are essentially a modernist phenomenon. But the showy elements of Graun's operas include some particularly attractive orchestral music featuring – no surprise here – flutes.

Jommelli is favoured with two programmes, devoted to *Didone abbandonata* (the Stuttgart version, 1763), and one of his last operas for Carl Eugen's court, *Vologeso* (Ludwigsburg, 1766). In the latter especially one can hear the advance Jommelli had made with the orchestra; this *sinfonia* deserves a place in modern concert programmes (perhaps to give early Mozart a rest). The quartet from *Vologeso* and that opera's last twenty minutes demonstrate Jommelli's expressive and formal innovations, and confirm his status as a reformer of the genre.

The BBC website entitles the programmes 'Neapolitan Opera Seria'. But apart from the fact that two of the composers were German, only one of the works represented was composed for an Italian theatre (Parma) and only two did not originate in Germany. Thus while one must applaud the idea behind the programmes, their singling-out of atypical or minority elements – ensembles, fanfares, overtures – at the expense of arias could be represented, not as a defence of the genre, but as a justification for the manifesto of Calzabigi and Gluck, which has proved so successful a weapon against traditional opera seria ever since it appeared in 1769. Devoting the fifth programme to Traetta, whom historians have long included among the reformers under direct French influence, underlines this tendency. The extracts from *Ippolito ed Aricia* (Parma, 1759) include orchestral music which is actually by Rameau, a fact not acknowledged in the commentary; and the extracts from the splendid recording of the St Petersburg masterpiece of 1772, *Antigona*, directed by Christophe Rousset, serve to show how much the later Traetta owed to Gluck. Thus, Handel aside, the core repertory of aria-dominated operas still awaits reassessment – including those that really belong to Naples.

JULIAN RUSHTON

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ANTONIO LITERES (1673–1747)

JUPITER Y SEMELE O EL ESTRAGO EN LA FINEZA

Marta Almajano (Jupiter), Virginia Ardid (Semele), Lola Dasariego (Cupid), Soledad Cardoso (Juno), Marina Pardo (Enarreta), Jordi Ricart (Cadmo, Sático), José Hernández (Ydaspes) / Al Ayre Español / Eduardo López Banzo
Harmonia Mundi Iberica HMI 987036.37, 2003; two discs, 99 minutes

Antonio Literes Carrión (Majorca 1673 – Madrid 1747) was the most outstanding stage composer in Madrid between the exile of Sebastián Durón in 1706 and the 1720s, when other significant musicians such as Giacomo Facco and José de Nebra began to gain the favour of the court and the public. The *zarzuela* – a play in two acts which combines spoken dialogue and music – *Jupiter y Semele*, premiered in the Teatro de la Cruz in Madrid in May 1718, was one of his most successful works, enjoying eleven performances, plus fourteen more in November. More than 17,000 spectators attended the play that year, while revivals in 1720, 1722, 1725, 1726 and 1728 increased the total number of spectators to more than 40,000, equivalent to one third of the total population of Madrid. Comparing it to *Acis y Galatea*, which enjoyed six revivals after its premiere in 1708, and a total of 24,000 spectators – excluding those of the premiere at court, for which there are no figures – demonstrates that this was one of the most popular musical plays by Antonio de Literes.

Jupiter y Semele was also performed in the palace of the Spanish ambassador in Lisbon in August 1723 to celebrate the name-day of the Prince of Asturias, as well as in Barcelona in 1731; the surviving sources may be related to these performances. The only known music manuscript in two volumes – Acts 1 and 2 – is preserved in Évora (Portugal), as part of a significant collection of scores of Spanish plays with music from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries – including that of *Celos aún del aire matan* by Calderón/Hidalgo – whose survival in Évora is probably connected to Spanish touring companies which made their way to Lisbon through that city during the early decades of the eighteenth century, when Spanish theatre was very popular in Portugal. The only surviving libretto was printed with a new *Loa* (a sort of



theatrical prologue which usually makes reference to the performance circumstances: location, patrons and so forth) for the performance in Barcelona in 1731 and contains few, but nevertheless significant, variants with respect to the music manuscript.

The text of the *zarzuela* was written by the most distinguished playwright of the time, José de Cañizares, a prolific dramatist who collaborated with all the theatre composers active in Madrid in the first half of the century, including Sebastián Durón, Giacomo Facco, Francesco Corradini and José de Nebra. Cañizares's libretto expands the Ovidian story with a few new characters, such as Ydaspes, Semele's suitor, and Astrea, her best friend, together with the comic couple Enarreta and a Satyr. The structure of the play is common to Spanish *zarzuela* of the time: the two acts contain some 1,500 lines, one third of which were sung. Music is reserved for certain characters in the play: the three gods (Jove, Juno and Cupid), the comic couple (Enarreta and the Satyr) and the choir. On the other side, human characters, including the title role, Semele, as well as her father, Cadmos, do not have any music. The absence of music for Semele derives from the conventions established in the mid-seventeenth century in the *comedias* and *zarzuelas* by Calderón de la Barca and Juan Hidalgo, but transformed and adapted to the new century. In Calderón plays, recitative was reserved for the gods, while humans performed songs in the Spanish style on stage, yet in this *zarzuela* the palette of musical resources used by the gods is much broader, as we shall see.

The weight of spoken dialogue and the fact that some characters do not have any music represent the most difficult challenge for a modern reconstruction and recording of this *zarzuela*. On the one hand, partial suppression of spoken text cannot be avoided in order to adapt the recording to the expectations of both potential buyers and recording companies; on the other, spoken text is essential to understanding the play, particularly because three major characters, including the title role, Semele, only have spoken parts. Eduardo López Banzo has opted to make drastic cuts to the poetry, leaving only the minimum amount of text to allow the plot to be grasped. Although the result works quite well from a musical point of view, as a theatrical text it is completely disappointing. The problem lies not only in the cutting-out of substantial parts – and the absence of any summary, making it very difficult to follow the story-line – but also with the way these cuts are made. Most spoken parts are written in verses of *romance*, this is to say, octosyllabic lines with alternate assonant rhyme, sometimes divided among several characters, as occurs in Metastasio's librettos. However, the editor of the text shows little concern for poetic rhythm, as neither length nor rhyme is preserved properly. For example, the second scene in the recording has forty-five lines, which correspond to 325 lines in the libretto. The first ten lines in the reconstruction (see below) are actually a juxtaposition of a selection made from seventy poetic lines. The result is that length and rhyme are altered, and the textual coherence is lost. In the following extract three dots in square brackets represent cuts, which are not reflected in the booklet, while italics represent words absent in the source.

SEMELE	Valedme, Cielos	5	a
YDASPES	Si valdrán	4	
	[...]		
	Libre estás, Semele hermosa	8	
SEMELE	Mucho, extranjero, te debo.	8	a
	[...]		
CADMO	¿Semele?		
SEMELE	Padre y Señor	8	
CADMO	Solemnizan mi contento	8	a
	tus brazos, <i>Semele mía</i>	8	
	[...]		
	venid a ver si podemos	8	a
	salvar algunas reliquias	8	
	que nos sirvan de consuelo	8	a

Taking into account that this *zarzuela* is nothing more – and nothing less – than a theatrical play with music, altering the spoken text in this way is not a good solution. Much better would have been to provide the



complete spoken lines in the CD libretto while recording only those parts with music. On the other hand, there seems to be a certain contradiction between the slight concern for the spoken poetry and the apparent respect shown towards the original spelling, which is retained in the booklet, even though this policy is not altogether consistent, particularly when there are variants between the sources. It would seem that archaic spelling is retained just to provide the façade of rigorous scholarship.

As regards the music, the palette of resources used by Literes is quite extensive and creative. For the main part, gods sing da capo arias, always preceded by a recitative, whose poetic texts follow Italian conventions: free lines of seven and eleven syllables for the recitative and two short strophes for the aria. There are, however, several examples of recitative in eight-syllable lines that are very unusual, even in Spanish music, and may imply that Literes composed passages in recitative style which the librettist Cañozares intended to be spoken. This is true at least for Jove's recitative 'Mas o se abulta el deseo', which is indicated as 'Repr[esenta]' in the libretto, implying spoken dialogue, as opposed to 'Recit[ado]', implying recitative style. On the other hand, the *recitado afectuoso* 'No he de enmudecer, llorar', also written in octosyllabic verse and sung by Jupiter, bears the indication 'Canta Iup[iter]', most likely calling for some sort of estribillo-like style. Gods also sing a number of passages labelled as *estribillo* and *coplas*, whose musical style is for the most part no less Italianate than the arias, to the extent that the recording mistakenly calls arias certain sections that are labelled *estribillo* in the manuscript. The most significant difference is that the sections labelled *estribillo* are always through-composed, while the arias are always da capo. The same style is found in the *coplas* sung by the gods.

There are examples of original treatment of standard forms. The aria 'Haciendo que pidas' is a da capo aria assigned in both the score and the libretto to Juno, yet in the libretto it is followed by a second aria with the same metrics sung by Cupid, for which there is no extra music in the manuscript. The solution adopted by López Banzo seems quite convincing, even though it alters the da capo structure: Cupid's aria is sung to the same music as Juno's, after which only the beginning of the opening ritornello is heard, so that the resulting form is ABA'B'+ ritornello instead of the classic ABA'.

The role of the comic couple is more or less independent of the central plot, as happens in Venetian librettos from the seventeenth century. Their interventions are scattered throughout the play, but in the reconstruction only the two scenes with music have been retained, one in each act. In Act 1 they sing *coplas* with an *estribillo*, accompanied by violins and continuo – castanets and guitars are added in the recording – while in the second they sing two series of *coplas*. The poetic form of the second *coplas* is that of the *seguidillas* but, interestingly, Literes's musical setting differs from conventional *seguidillas* in that in the elaboration of some of the poetic lines he uses repetitions and vocal melismas. Nevertheless, the music in the comic scenes is closer to the traditional Spanish style – syllabic song, ternary metre, abundant hemiolas – than other parts of the *zarzuela*.

Fortunately, the music manuscript is quite precise, particularly in regard to scoring – two violins, viola, oboe, flutes and continuo – and dynamics, and Banzo's recording respectfully follows the use of instruments prescribed by Literes. The use of guitars for the continuo is well supported by contemporary evidence, but there is not enough foundation for the use of castanets. Obviously castanets were used in popular music of the time, but assuming that they were also used in the theatre may be a transposition of a romantic view of Spanish music, which, although well accepted by modern audiences, may not be accurate. The recording seems less concerned with dynamics, perhaps because it is taken from a live performance. The succession of passages in *piano* ('quedo') and *forte* ('fuerte') in the manuscript, which are among the earliest examples of dynamic notation in Spain, are only occasionally reflected in a performance which is, on the whole, very lively but not sufficiently concerned with expressive details.

The singers are exceptional, both in solo and ensemble performance, and the roles of the three gods should be singled out. Marta Almajano – the prima donna of Spanish baroque music – performs Jupiter with an excellent combination of virtuoso singing and warm expression, as can be noted in the aria after the death of Semele, one of the most moving compositions ever written by Literes. Lola Casariego and Soledad Cardoso playing Cupid and Juno also deserve a mention, particularly on account of the perfect blending of



their voices in a number of passages *a duo*, such as the difficult ‘El cielo, la tierra’ in Act 1, where they sing with a trumpet-like sound, or softer passages such as the recitatives at the beginning of Act 2. Marina Prado and Jordi Ricart are outstanding as the comic couple. The clear and expressive performance of spoken dialogues by all the singers, who are not professional actresses or actors, demonstrates that they are ready to undertake a full reconstruction of the *zarzuela* with all its dialogues, something that would be very welcome.

Cristina Diego Pacheco’s notes are unsatisfactory for a professional recording. Not only does she make Literes master of the Royal Chapel after the exile of Durón – he never filled this role – but she also overlooks the existence of the *comedia* among stage genres with music in eighteenth-century Spain. Her notes suggest unfamiliarity with academic scholarship of the last twenty years, including the works of Bussey, Stein, Carreras and Leza.

Al Ayre Español’s recording is an excellent opportunity to become familiar with the music of one of the most interesting composers of the early eighteenth century, when Spanish music was undergoing a major transformation through the imitation of Italian models. The variety of resources used by Literes in *Jupiter y Semele* shows great creativity. The result is neither Spanish nor Italian, but a *mélange* of traits of both nationalities characteristic of the early eighteenth century in Spain.

I would like to thank Manuel Morais for his help in obtaining a copy of the music manuscript of this zarzuela preserved in Évora.

ÁLVARO TORRENTE



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WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

MASS IN C MINOR, K427

Completed by Robert D. Levin

St Luke’s Orchestra/Helmut Rilling

New York City, Carnegie Hall, 15 January 2005

Although several attempts have been made to complete Mozart’s Mass in C minor, K427, the work is usually performed and recorded more or less as Mozart left it, as a magnificent torso. Now, more than 220 years after it was begun, Robert Levin has completed the work as well as Mozart himself might have done. This is meant as high praise, and if the reception of the premiere at Carnegie Hall on 15 January 2005 is any indication, it is not undeserved. Lest objections be raised to someone else completing a composer’s work, we should remember that Mozart himself was happy to write a few movements for a *Miserere* by Ignaz Holzbauer in 1778, and he arranged and updated oratorios by Handel a decade later. Levin already has experience writing in Mozart’s style, notably in his edition of the Requiem, K626 (Stuttgart: Hänssler, 1994). (The score was published earlier this year by Carus-Verlag in Stuttgart, with Levin’s critical report.)

We should begin where Mozart left things, at the end of October 1783, with a fully completed Kyrie and Gloria, the first two movements of a Credo drafted with the complete vocal music and partly orchestrated, and a completed Sanctus with Osanna and Benedictus, though only the wind parts survive. (The surviving autograph score has been published in a facsimile edition, with commentary by Monika Holl and Karl-Heinz Köhler (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1983).) Nothing survives for an Agnus Dei except a couple of sketches for a ‘Dona nobis pacem’ notated at the end of a draft of Mozart’s unfinished opera, *L’oca del Cairo*, K422. In Lent 1785 Mozart used the Kyrie and Gloria as the basis for his cantata *Davide penitente*, K469, for which he composed two additional arias and a cadenza for the solo sopranos and tenor near the end of the ‘Cum Sancto Spiritum’ fugue.



Some time before 1808 Pater Matthäus Fischer prepared a copy of the score, based on the Salzburg performing parts that then belonged to the Church of the Holy Cross in Augsburg, where he was choir-master. This imperfect score, now in Vienna at the Austrian National Library, along with the autograph score, served as the basis for Johann André's first edition of the work in 1840. Unfortunately, most of the parts are no longer in Augsburg, and they contain none of the music for the Credo or Agnus Dei. (Presumably, Mozart substituted movements from one of his other Salzburg masses for the first performance in 1783.) Fischer's score conflates the double choir of the Sanctus to four lines, without labelling the two choirs sufficiently to reconstruct the *Vorlage*. Although Mozart's autograph does not contain the vocal and string parts at present, he surely must have completed these before writing the additional winds, which are written entirely on ten-stave paper, most likely in Salzburg.

Completing the mass poses a variety of problems and Levin has found a good solution for each of these. There is nothing new in the Kyrie and Gloria, except that he incorporated the vocal cadenza from *Davide penitente*, with Latin text, in the place where Mozart had introduced it. (It made a nice effect in performance, though strictly speaking it is anachronistic and must be treated as optional.) In the Credo, Levin added trumpets and timpani to the first movement (on the dum-datta-dum motif) and filled in gaps in the wind and strings. His violin accompaniment in the 'Et incarnatus est' is more subtle than other versions. He also did a superb job untangling the double-choir parts in the Sanctus and in the Osanna fugue.

Mozart tended to divide his Credos into seven sections, as he did even in his early *Missa solemnis*, K66. Although not all the divisions are as striking in K337, there are seven distinct sections in that mass:

- Credo (Allegro vivace, tutti, bars 1–56)
- Et incarnatus est (Andante, soprano solo, bars 57–64)
- Crucifixus (SATB, bars 65–80)
- Et resurrexit (Allegro vivace, tutti, bars 80–112)
- Et in Spiritum Sanctum (SATB soloists, bars 113–135)
- Et unam sanctam (tutti, bars 136–159)
- Et vitam venturi (tutti, bars 160–176)

Thus Levin had to write or adapt five new movements in order to complete the Credo in a way that would be comparable to the scale of the surviving movements in K427. Wherever possible he relied on Mozart's own musical material, but for the most part he avoided simply taking an existing movement and fitting the Latin text to it. The 'Crucifixus' is an eight-part fugue based on a 1783 sketch, expanded to more than a hundred bars. The 'Et resurrexit' is a four-part chorus based on a 1783 sketch and a four-note motive in the Credo, developed into a movement of 120 bars. The 'Et in Spiritum Sanctum' is transcribed from the main section of the soprano aria 'Tra l'oscure ombre funeste' but transposed for tenor to fit the key scheme. The 'Et unam sanctam' is based on a 1783 sketch, and the 'Et vitam venturi' is a four-part fugue based on the countersubject of the Kyrie, transposed to C major and extended to 120 bars. (The score is to be published by Carus-Verlag later this year, with Levin's critical report.)

In writing his Mass in C minor Mozart was going head to head with the learned style of J. S. Bach and Handel that Baron van Swieten had introduced to him in 1782–1783. In listening to the fugues Levin wrote based on Mozart's short sketches, it occurred to me that Mozart would have had a hard time writing such music. I do not want to suggest that he could not do it, rather that such writing caused him more time and effort, as we know from his work on the 'Haydn' Quartets. Perhaps he moved on to the Sanctus to avoid writing fugues in the Credo.

The Agnus Dei was adapted from the introduction to 'Tra l'oscure ombre funeste' from *Davide penitente*, followed by Levin's development of a 1783 sketch for a 'Dona nobis pacem'. The optimistic, joyful mood was a nearly perfect way to conclude the mass. Levin has clearly done his homework, seeking and finding appropriate material in contemporaneous sketches and compositions. Almost everything in the Credo sounded convincing and mostly as good as the genuine, completed movements.



So good in fact that it made me wonder how scholars would have reacted to the new movements if they had been presented as ‘newly discovered’ from a ‘lost’ eighteenth-century manuscript. It is a very different aesthetic experience if there is even a shadow of a doubt regarding a work’s authenticity. Fortunately for us, Levin has provided detailed documentation of his work. One could quibble about the new sections being a little too academic, but what impressed me most was how seamless everything was. (I thought the *Agnus Dei* at times sounded more like Süssmayr or an early nineteenth-century composer than Mozart in 1783.) Of course, it would have been easier for one of Mozart’s pupils to complete the work than someone today. After all, we have Beethoven and Stravinsky and more Bach and Handel in our ears than Mozart ever knew.

The performance itself was astonishing, like hearing the work for the first time. Helmut Rilling conducted with fire and intensity, and the Festival Chorus and St Luke’s Orchestra responded to all his nuances of dynamics and phrasing. The two sopranos (Julian Banse and Marlis Petersen) were well matched. In Levin’s completion, the tenor has an aria in the ‘*Et in spiritum sanctam*’, but the bass still has only a small part in the ‘*Benedictus*’ quartet. It seems odd that the bass soloist participates in only one ensemble in the mass, and at least in this performance I would have preferred the bass (Nathan Berg) to have a solo instead of the tenor (James Taylor).

Why not leave the mass as Mozart left it? Some will object to completion on principle: any note not in the autograph score falsifies or distorts Mozart’s work. Since Mozart himself reworked the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* as a coherent whole, why not ignore the unfinished movements and simply perform *Davide penitente* instead? The obvious answer is that the surviving music of the *Credo* and the *Sanctus* is extremely attractive. We have grown used to K427 as a concert piece, but this denies the genesis of the work and Mozart’s intentions.

Of course we will never know how Mozart would have completed the *Credo* and *Agnus Dei*. Perhaps if he had lived a few years longer, he would have returned to it as *Kapellmeister* at St Stephen’s. Is Robert Levin’s completion the ‘definitive’ version of K427? The answer must be a tentative yes, at least until more of Mozart’s autograph turns up, which is not likely. We can bemoan our loss, or we can be grateful to Levin for filling this gaping hole in a major cultural artefact, and for doing it with such devotion and skill.

PAUL CORNEILSON



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ALESSANDRO SCARLATTI (1660–1725)

LA GRISELDA: DRAMMA PER MUSICA

Dorothea Röschmann (Griselda), Lawrence Zazzo (Gualtiero), Veronica Cangemi (Costanza), Bernarda Fink (Roberto), Silvia Tro Santafé (Ottone), Kobie van Rensburg (Corrado)/Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin/René Jacobs
Harmonia Mundi, HMC 801805.07, 2004; 3 discs, 182 minutes

La Griselda (Rome, 1721) was Alessandro Scarlatti’s last and, for many, greatest opera in a long, celebrated career spanning forty years that garnered such honours for the composer as his election to the Arcadian Academy of Rome in 1706 and his knighthood from Pope Clement XI in 1715. Apostolo Zeno, the librettist, was equally celebrated. He was instrumental in establishing the early eighteenth-century ‘reform’ libretto and was honoured with the position of *poeta cesareo* to the Austrian emperor in 1718. His librettos were set and reset throughout the century. His *La Griselda*, an extract from Boccaccio, was set by thirteen different composers, including Vivaldi, between 1701 and 1751. Even though Zeno changed Boccaccio’s tale to suit an eighteenth-century audience, it is still problematic. In Zeno’s version, the King of Sicily (Gualtiero) falls in love with a peasant woman (Griselda) and marries her, despite the objections of his subjects. Nevertheless,



he is still forced to prove her worthy of being queen and mother to the future king. To this end he subjects her to a number of cruel tests. He tells her he has had their daughter killed. He renounces her, takes their son from her, pretends to place him in harm's way and banishes her from the palace. He then imports a new bride-to-be (actually their daughter Costanza, who is in love with Roberto, younger brother of her guardian Corrado) and Griselda returns to the palace as her servant. At last when she is ordered to marry Ottone, Gualtiero's rival and her unwanted suitor, she begs for death instead. Having passed this final test, she is joyfully welcomed as queen and restored to her family. The plot, though repugnant today for the cruel and abject humiliation of its heroine, teaches a 'lesson' born of the Enlightenment – that the true proof of royalty is virtue and steadfastness rather than lineage.

On account of the original stellar cast of 1721, there were no clear first and second couples. Roberto had eight arias, Griselda, seven, Gualtiero, Ottone and Costanza six each, and the third-ranking Corrado, three. In the current production nine arias were cut, resulting in a more conventional tiering of roles. With six arias each, Griselda and Gualtiero become the clear principals, and Ottone is their near equal with five. Costanza and Roberto with four become secondary roles, and Corrado with two is still in the third rank. Since women were banned from the stage in Rome, all roles, male and female, were sung by castrati except for a mature role for a tenor. Today a decision must be made as to whether men or women will sing the castrato roles. In this production, the soprano roles of Griselda, Costanza and Roberto are sung by women, the mezzo soprano role of Gualtiero by a man, and the contralto role of Ottone by a woman. Corrado is the tenor role.

The Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin, under the direction of René Jacobs, is primarily the small string orchestra Scarlatti depended upon. Pairs of horns, oboes, flutes or trumpets were used only for specific purposes – to lend colour, characterization or excitement. Jacobs added an optional bassoon, lute and kettledrums as well. Interpretative decisions such as alternating harpsichord and lute during dialogue and playing in sustained style during especially dramatic moments in the recitative enhance and enliven the production.

La Griselda is basically an 'aria' opera. It begins with an Italian *sinfonia* in three movements, followed by three acts. The plot unfolds during a succession of dramatic episodes sung in recitative style with a simple continuo accompaniment, articulated at junctures in the plot with orchestrally accompanied exit arias. Scarlatti's score also has a number of 'extra' items. There are four ensembles: a duet for mother and daughter and a duet for the secret lovers, Costanza and Roberto; a trio for Gualtiero, Griselda and Costanza; and a quartet for the two couples. In addition the orchestra has two *sinfonie*, both featuring hunting horns.

Scarlatti has long been credited with originating the galant or early classical style that swept the following gifted generation of young Naples-trained composers through Europe. Lazarevich maintains that Scarlatti's music is more a refinement of the past than a harbinger of the future. Although this is true in some respects, *Griselda* certainly has many characteristics of classical style: short phrases, frequent cadences, basic harmonies generated by the melody and an accompaniment that fills a basic, slow harmonic rhythm with short, decorative motives moving through the texture, frequently changing in contour, rhythm and style in response to equally frequent changes in mood and style in the melody. There is also a far greater exploitation of major/minor contrast, both as expressive inflection and tonal centre, than becomes common later in the century. It is precisely this kaleidoscope of styles and tonal colour that lends this opera so much of its charm and profundity, and also makes it seem so modern.

The often criticized tangle of plots and subplots in a typical eighteenth-century libretto had one very important function. The resulting complications prompted the variety of emotional states expected in the arias for each character. What is often forgotten in performing these arias is that the virtuosic musical style was not an end in itself, but was expected to move the audience 'to terror or to tears'. Those composers and performers who received the greatest critical acclaim were always praised for their emotional depth. Scarlatti's music was greatly admired for this quality, though late in his career he, like Mozart, is said to have lost his audiences because of his musical complexity.



This recording makes it possible to understand why opera seria endured for a century. It is a gem – a treasure. It more than gives Scarlatti his due. It sparkles and glitters, but is also profoundly moving, thanks to the extraordinarily sensitive and sympathetic approach of Jacobs's direction, the gifted performers he has assembled, and the superb quality of the Direct Stream Digital (DSD) recording.

The company is exceptionally well cast. The voices are beautiful and well suited to the roles. The well matched voices really pay off in the many stunning ensembles. Everyone takes advantage of the opportunities that Scarlatti offers in each aria to scintillate, to charm, to inspire empathy or otherwise impress, and great attention is paid to musical characterization and expressive nuance in both recitative and arias. Furthermore, arias are still short in the 1720s, enabling us to remember the original melodic lines and admire the tasteful embellishments added in the *da capos*.

Distinguishing characteristics of each role were determined, of course, by the original cast members. Curiously, neither Silke Leopold's excellent essay on the opera nor the insightful interview with René Jacobs mentions them. The role of Griselda was a showcase for Giacinto Fontana, 'Farfallino', a favourite castrato in Rome specializing in female roles. Scarcely the shrinking violet one might expect, Griselda is clearly never anything but queen. Dorothea Röschmann is a perfect Griselda. She has exquisite control over an extended range and a broad palate of vocal colour and nuance that allows her to exploit to the maximum the role's technically challenging music and roller-coaster of emotional expression, from heart-wrenching pathos to towering rage. By contrast, Antonio Bernacchi (Gualtiero), who was under contract to the electoral court at Munich, was half-way through an illustrious international career of forty years. The role demands a beautiful, flexible mezzo soprano voice as Gualtiero moves from one charming aria or love song to the next. He loses control only once in a rage aria near the end. Lawrence Zazzo's (Gualtiero) voice is silken, bright, clear, agile, full, strong, and without strain no matter what demands are made.

Andrea Pacini, 'il Lucchesino' (Ottone), contralto and Bernacchi's contemporary, was about twenty years into a thirty-year international career. As Gualtiero's rival, the role demands strength and endurance as well as the flexibility to deliver with clarity the coloraturas and ornamentation characteristic of Scarlatti's musical style. Silvia Tro Santafé's strong contralto voice is totally convincing in this role. Bartolomeo Bartoli (Roberto), yet another international singer, was attached to the electoral court at Munich for much of his short career. His eight arias clearly placed him in a higher rank than his somewhat more experienced colleagues. Bernarda Fink captures Roberto's youthfulness with her sparkling agility, his despair with her rich middle and low range, and his jealousy and rage with her unfailing virtuosity. The great Giovanni Carestini (Costanza) was just at the beginning of a thirty-five year career that would take him to London, Germany and finally St Petersburg. He sang both female and male roles to about 1726, and male roles thereafter. Veronica Cangemi's arias as Costanza are charming, often playful, and deliciously ornamented, but she also shows a more melancholy side with sighs and beautiful long crescendos inspired by thoughts of her beloved Roberto. Matteo Lucchini (Corrado), tenor, was in the early years of a twenty-year career centred in Northern Italy and later in Prague and Breslau. His modern counterpart, Kobie van Rensburg, plays an excellent supporting role. His two contrasting arias are both masterfully done and contribute to the *chiaroscuro* of the opera.

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JOHANN STAMITZ (1717–1757) AND FRANZ XAVER RICHTER (1709–1789)
EARLY STRING SYMPHONIES

VOLUME 1: RICHTER, SINFONIA A QUATTRO IN B FLAT MAJOR (RIEMANN NO. 59) AND C MINOR (RIEMANN NO. 15); STAMITZ, SINFONIA A QUATTRO IN A MAJOR (WOLF A₃), D MAJOR (WOLF D₂₁), AND D MAJOR, OP. 11 NO. 1 (WOLF D₂) (ANDANTE NON ADAGIO ONLY)

VOLUME 2: RICHTER: SINFONIA A QUATTRO IN C MAJOR 'LA MELODIA GERMANICA' (RIEMANN NO. 1), E FLAT MAJOR (RIEMANN NO. 77) AND G MAJOR (RIEMANN NO. 19); STAMITZ: SINFONIA A QUATTRO IN F MAJOR (WOLF F₅)

The Chamber Orchestra of The New Dutch Academy/Simon Murphy

Pentatone Classics PTC 5186 028, 2003, and PTC 5186 029, 2003; 2 discs, 123 minutes

The early history of the classical concert symphony for four-part strings with continuo has been reasonably well documented, with various Mannheim composers in particular noted for their participation in the genre. Whilst the three-movement Italian operatic *sinfonia* generally included wind instruments from a relatively early stage, the majority of concert symphonies added at least one pair of these (most commonly horns) from around 1730 onwards, with a second pair (normally oboes or flutes) from around 1740 and one or two bassoons usually doubling the bass line for reasons of balance. Ceremonial-style symphonies in C or D major frequently also added a pair of trumpets and timpani. Most progressive composers must surely have regarded such string symphonies as heard here – all of which were composed between c1740 and c1755 – as an anachronism. Such works nevertheless continued to be composed, sporadically at least, right through to the nineteenth century, often with smaller-sized ensembles in mind or for occasions when wind instruments may not have been available, thus overlapping with other string music genres. C. P. E. Bach's six string symphonies (Wq182/H657–662) of 1773, for example, were specifically commissioned as such by Baron Gottfried van Swieten, whilst Mendelssohn's earliest symphonic experiments, written partly under the influence of C. P. E. Bach, resulted in thirteen such works between 1821 and 1823. The importance of the string symphony as one of the precursors of the string quartet, in style and spirit at least, has also been noted, with Richter often cited as a pioneer in both genres. The inclusion here of no fewer than five string symphonies by him, as opposed to only three (plus an isolated movement) by Johann Stamitz, offers listeners the opportunity to assess this aspect of his compositional output.

It is important to note at the outset that neither CD identifies the individual works being played other than by key, with the sole exceptions of Richter's 'La Melodia Germanica' and the single movement extracted for some unexplained reason from Stamitz's late Symphony in D major dated by Eugene K. Wolf to c1754–1755 and published in 1758 by Venier in Paris as his Op. 11 No. 1 (a symphony, incidentally, that involves wind instruments in the other movements and is therefore clearly far from being an 'Early String Symphony'). Equally curious is a debt of gratitude expressed in the sleeve notes to, amongst others, Hugo Riemann, Wolf and Bertil van Boer, since clearly this does not extend to the common courtesy of utilizing Riemann's numbering system in the identification of Richter's symphonies, van Boer's catalogue of the same (included in *The Symphony 1720–1840*, ed. Barry S. Brook (New York and London: Garland, 1986), Reference volume, 458–469) or Wolf's catalogue of Stamitz's symphonies (in his book *The Symphonies of Johann Stamitz* (Utrecht: Bohn, Scheltema and Holkema, 1981)). Given that Richter composed nine symphonies in B flat major, for example, eight of them scored as here, and that Stamitz wrote no fewer than twenty-two symphonies in D major, three of them for strings, listeners already possessing string symphony recordings by either composer would naturally feel aggrieved if their purchase of these CDs led to accidental duplication. This issue aside, any recordings that openly purport to a scholarly basis, as these indeed do, should supply such basic details as a matter of course.

According to the sleeve notes, the New Dutch Academy 'is a unique initiative created by the leading members of the new generation of early music performance specialists in the Netherlands' in 2002. It 'aims



to stimulate the combination of research and performance . . . to provide a platform for the exploration of eighteenth-century aesthetics and the exchange of ideas thereof'. The recordings took place at a pitch level of $A = 415.3\text{Hz}$ using 'authentic instruments', whatever this means, since it is not made clear whether original period instruments or reproductions were in fact used. The names of the performers are given, with a total of ten violins (how they were divided is not stated) and two each of the other stringed instruments for volume 1, but eleven violins, three each of violas and cellos and two double basses for volume 2. A theorbo player and two harpsichordists are also listed for each CD. Herein lies another problem, since both CDs were recorded at concerts and 'sessions', presumably for patching-up purposes and to remove any extraneous audience noise, on six successive days in January 2003. Unlike most other period-instrument recordings, though, it is not stated whether all the musicians listed on the two CDs actually took part in each of the symphonies or even in all of the recording sessions for a particular symphony. Does this matter? Well, yes, it should, when these recordings claim to be concerned with 'the Creation of Style – The New Dutch Academy Mannheim Project'. Much is made of the Mannheim performance style in the sleeve notes, but how can that style be recreated without informing the listener as to the precise balance used in these recordings, whether the intention was to replicate the original performing forces available at Mannheim (if not, why not?), whether two harpsichords were actually used simultaneously (highly unlikely, but, if so, why?), and why a theorbo was used at all. Various secondary sources, including Wolf's 'On the Composition of the Mannheim Orchestra, ca. 1740–1778' (*Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis* 17 (1993), 113–138), make no mention whatsoever of a theorbo ever having been used for symphony performances at Mannheim. Its presence in these recordings is highly audible (it sounds artificially balanced against the string orchestra), with at times explosive strumming effects quite alien to what has become stylistically acceptable in early classical-period orchestral continuo performance. Also, Richter's Riemann No. 59 should strictly speaking have been excluded, as it was composed c1740 and published in Paris in 1744 alongside eleven other symphonies by him, at least two and possibly as many as five years before he actually went to Mannheim!

In a section of the sleeve notes headed 'Library and Research Credits' it is stated that an unspecified number of the symphonies were 'prepared' for performance from sources at Darmstadt (only volume 2 names Richter's Riemann Nos 1 and 77) and Stockholm, but there is no mention of shelf marks or of the editions and editors involved, other than a credit to Eline Snoek, one of the viola players on volume 2, 'for her technical help in preparing the scores'. (If similar recordings from the budget label Naxos generally supply such information, why can't Pentatone?) Comparison with the available published scores indicates on more than one occasion a cavalier approach to the composer's basic text. The first movement of Richter's Riemann No. 15, for example, consists of some 111 bars of music with no internal repeats, but in this performance bars 11–111 are repeated in full (bars 1–10 comprise the opening thematic material), completely unbalancing the structure as a result. (The published score from 1972 is based on the same Stockholm source as the recording.) A smaller but equally unsanctioned repeat of the final six bars is also added, on the da capo, to the already repeated final section of the minuet and trio finale of Richter's Riemann No. 1, whilst the slow movement of Stamitz's Wolf F5 is performed with both sections repeated, despite the fact that no repeats are indicated in the score. Otherwise full repeats are observed as indicated.

The sleeve notes give no information whatsoever about the individual works recorded, being completely concerned instead with the Mannheim performance and compositional styles. The latter is problematic in that all the major Mannheim-based composers were stylistically highly individualistic, with only relatively common clichés such as the Mannheim 'rocket', 'steamroller', 'melodic sigh' and various small-scale contrasted dynamic effects occurring in many compositions. Richter's eighty-three authentic symphonies are regarded as highly conservative in comparison with Johann Stamitz's fifty-eight: no fewer than thirty-five are scored for four-part strings (as opposed to nineteen of Stamitz's), all of them in three movements (only three of his symphonies have four movements, whereas just over half of Stamitz's have four). Some fourteen are in a minor key, including Riemann No. 15, which is a relatively high proportion, given that over ninety per cent of classical symphonies are in a major key. Even in his own lifetime Richter was criticized for his continued use of baroque sequences – both rising and falling ones, often combined with suspensions, are



particularly common in the earlier symphonies here – and outdated fugal practices, as in the finale of Riemann No. 77. Unison writing for the violins is also relatively commonplace, as throughout the slow movement of Riemann No. 15 and the trio section of the finale of No. 1. Richter's five symphonies recorded here date from between c1740 and c1755, the earliest being Riemann No. 59 of c1740, with No. 15 predating 1750, No. 1 c1750, No. 77 1754 and No. 19 c1755. Some of Richter's musical ideas are very attractive, as in the first movement of No. 19, but elsewhere early promise frequently fizzles out or is succeeded by sequences, as if his creative muse had deserted him.

Of Stamitz's nineteen string symphonies, only one (Wolf C₃) consists of four movements, and it is more of an orchestral trio in that the violas double the bass line at the octave throughout. Wolf has dated A₃ to Stamitz's early period (c1741–1746 or possibly earlier), D₂₁ and F₅ to his middle period (c1745–1750 and c1749–1752 respectively), with only the four-movement D₂ symphony (the other three movements are scored for strings with two clarinets and/or oboes or flutes and two horns) stemming from his late period (c1754–1755). Wolf, incidentally, also speculates that D₂₁ may have originally included wind instruments. In c1765 the London publisher Bremner labelled the original parts of F₅ 'Quartetto', and it is perhaps the best work recorded here to give an idea of the relationship between the string symphony and the emerging string quartet, in that its music approaches a chamber style without quite bridging the gap between the two genres. In comparison to Richter, Stamitz's musical ideas are generally more inventive, with a mixture of melodic and motivic musical material that never becomes repetitious or predictable. Wolf D₂₁, for example, is an excellent example of a 'tremolo symphony' with the repeated semiquaver-based material of its first movement, in contrast to the two-bar unison descending scale 'call to attention' with which Wolf A₃ opens. Dance-like finales are heard in all three works, with Wolf F₅ being marked 'Tempo di Menuetto' and the other two featuring jig rhythms in 3/8 time. Only the gently expressive slow movements perhaps at times outstay their welcome, generally taking longer to perform than the first movements (not least when the performers add repeats not indicated in the original scores).

These recordings appear to be aimed as much at the general music lover as the market of well informed listeners. The sleeve notes include a number of crass phrases such as 'cool, young, hip and modern' in describing the eighteen-year-old Elector Carl Theodor, while elsewhere the Mannheim style is described as including 'energetic and exciting Italianate string figurations with driving bass lines, and soothing cantabile Italian opera style melody writing. For our younger audience, these are a kind of 18th century equivalent of "block-rockin'" beats and chill-out/ambient'. One has to respect the optimism expressed here in seeking to attract a younger crossover audience for these recordings, though such listeners may very well be dissuaded from purchasing two CDs of string symphonies that lack the wider palette of colourful sounds that wind instruments brought to the orchestral timbre and texture of the mainstream symphony from c1730 onwards. One may even ask whether Richter and Stamitz themselves would have contemplated the inclusion of more than one string symphony on a single performing occasion. (I much prefer the Naxos approach in their first volume of Stamitz symphonies (8.553194), which contains a mixture of string and string-and-wind symphonies, including Wolf A₃.)

When it comes to a critique of the performances on a purely musical level, disregarding not only the variance of some of the movements as performed with the published editions apparently based on the same sources but also the anachronistic sound and performance practice of the theorbo, criticism usually turns to enthusiastic praise. The fast movements are full of exuberance and rhythmic drive, with generally excellent tempos, crisp articulation (the rapid repeated semiquavers at the beginning of Stamitz's Wolf D₂₁ are played with complete clarity and unanimity of attack) and a reasonably good balance between sections. Violin 2 music that rises above the violin 1 line is not always as audible as it surely should be and accents are intrusive in some movements, but these are minor criticisms. The only major quibble with tempo is in the first movement of Richter Riemann No. 1, which in the modern score published in 1956 is indicated as a cut/common time Allegro. Van Boer's catalogue incipit replicates this tempo indication (the CD states it to be 'without tempo indication') but has a common time signature. The sheer performing length at a four-in-a-bar pulse (nine minutes thirteen seconds here) results in by far the longest first movement on these



two CDs, whereas the generally slow harmonic rhythm and gradually rising secondary material in semi-breves suggest a cut/common approach.

The slow movements flow along nicely with excellent phrasing, avoiding the practice – encountered in some period-instrument recordings – of performing the music at too rapid a pace. The upper-string timbre may sound rather bright to some listeners, but the ear soon adjusts to this. Full credit must be given to the orchestra's artistic director, the Australian viola player Simon Murphy, who, from the evidence of a photograph in volume 2, conducts these energetic performances rather than leading them instrumentally, another anachronism but one that clearly pays dividends here. There is no insipidity even in the weakest of Richter's all-too-predictable sequential passages, and all the music is conveyed in a persuasively fresh and fully committed manner by these predominantly young musicians. One final note to technical enthusiasts: these recordings are in fact SACDs and therefore cost more than normal CDs, but this should not deter anyone eager to explore the sound world of the string symphonies of Richter and Johann Stamitz.

DAVID J. RHODES