



The final section, concerning myth, tackles a subject on which Didier has already published: several of her published works contain discussion of what she names a ‘transfert du sacré’ (a transferral of sacrality) in the eighteenth century. *Le merveilleux* was of course constitutive of the genre of opera in all contemporary theoretical pronouncements, by contradistinction with spoken classical tragedy, but Didier is making a wider point, centred upon the ways in which opera was intrinsically concerned to ‘déréaliser’ (de-realize) characters (216), which I take to mean abstracting them from a realistic reading, and thereby keeping the material in a realm of fantasy. Music is seen as adding an ‘aura’ to words and allowing for multiple possible significations (223), and allowing opera, via myth, to attain metaphysical ‘vérités’ (truths; 232). Discussion of symbolism, abstraction, personification and allegory allows Didier to sketch a conception of opera which brings out the less restrained, fantasy elements of the form. It seems to me that this approach is in tune with various developments in cultural history, from the well-known ‘cat massacre’ discussed by Robert Darnton (‘Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Séverin’, in Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (London: Penguin, 2001), 75–104, cited by Didier on page 224) to those recent studies interested in the less rationalistic sides of the Enlightenment. Among the latter, for instance, is Dan Edelstein’s recent volume in the series *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Dan Edelstein (ed.), *The Super-Enlightenment: Daring to Know Too Much* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010)), which Didier does not cite, but which I take to be interested in a similar set of problems: bluntly, that the eighteenth century, far from exiling fantasy, magic or the occult in the name of some monolithic rationality, was actually traversed by precisely those more marginal but still present cultural and epistemological structures. For me, this final section is one of the more original and thereby rewarding passages of the book as a whole.

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BERTIL VAN BOER
HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF MUSIC OF THE CLASSICAL PERIOD
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‘His music has been little studied’. This sentence and phrases like it (‘almost unknown’ or ‘little explored’) appear on nearly every page of Bertil van Boer’s *Historical Dictionary of Music of the Classical Period*. Indeed, one might do well to hand the volume to students looking for an eighteenth-century dissertation topic: unknown names abound. As I was browsing through the entries, I was struck once again by just how much our narrative of eighteenth-century music history rests on a small handful of composers, decades of research notwithstanding. Even without expecting to find an undiscovered genius lurking amidst the thicket of names, it is hard not to wonder how much richer and deeper our understanding of the period would be if we paid more attention to these ‘little studied’ musicians.

This *Historical Dictionary* is one of a series from Scarecrow Press relating to literature and the arts – currently fifty-nine of them, on art and architecture (7), cinema (19), literature and theatre (21), radio and television (5) and music (7). The music volumes cover choral music, sacred music, Broadway musicals, English music from 1400 to 1958, Russian music, modern and contemporary classical music and the current volume on the classical period. In the Preface, van Boer admits that attempting to compile a dictionary for this period is a ‘madman’s folly’ for a number of reasons, ranging from its ill-defined chronological



boundaries to its geographical scope and multifaceted nature. He sets his boundaries as c1730 to c1800, a decision that he justifies in his introductory chapter, and one that strikes me as entirely reasonable (although if you were to ask ten musicologists to specify dates for the period, you would probably get ten different answers, along with a few grumblings about calling it 'classical' or 'classic' at all). He also maintains the distinction between 'baroque' and 'classical' by excluding composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach and Antonio Vivaldi from consideration. Even though recent scholarship has tended to erase the dividing-line between the two periods (witness the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music and this journal), in the minds of the general public the distinction remains. Thus, van Boer's decision to follow the traditional division also seems entirely reasonable.

The volume includes entries for terms (such as Alberti bass, *Empfindsamkeit*, galant, *Sturm und Drang*), musical institutions and genres found during the period. Nearly of all of the major genres have an entry: oratorio, cantata, the various national incarnations of opera, the sonata, symphony and quartet (though, oddly, not the concerto), as well as relatively obscure ones such as the *jugetas* (part-songs in the vernacular, popular in New Spain) and *tappā* (a classical Punjabi Indian style of music). Most of the entries, however, are biographical and are heavily weighted toward composers, with a smattering of prominent performers (who usually composed as well), librettists and patrons. For anyone whose music history comes mostly from a traditional music-appreciation or music-history survey course, the number and variety of names will be eye-opening. I began at a random page (429) and found a number of obscure names – *Vasily Alexeyevich Pashkevich (Russia), Georg Robert von Pasterwitz (Bavaria/Austria), Pater Eugene Pausch (Germany), Jakub Pałowski (Poland), Salvatore Pazzaglia (Italy), *Mademoiselle Pellecier (France), *Jakobos Peloponnesios (Turkey), *Petros Peloponnesios (Turkey), *Davide Perez (Italy/Portugal), Diego Pérez Camrino (Spain), *Mateo Antonio Pérez de Albéniz (Spain), Francisco Pérez Gaya (Spain) and Bernardo Pérez Gutiérrez (Spain) – before a familiar name hove into view on page 435 (Giovanni Battista Pergolesi). Out of these thirteen unfamiliar names, only six (those marked here with an asterisk) have an entry in *Grove Music Online*. Moreover, in the immediately surrounding pages, you can find entries for mostly unknown musicians from Sweden, Brazil, Cuba, Scotland and various places in North America. As van Boer says in his Preface (xiii), he was able to plug some of the gaps in major dictionaries such as *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* and *New Grove* (especially for monastic composers, who, as a group, have received little attention), making his dictionary a useful tool for students and scholars alike.

He makes a special point of including entries for composers and genres from India, Greece and Turkey, thereby making 'at least a start in a more global outlook for the period' (xiii). He has also done due diligence in including women, though his concentration on composers means that few of the century's female singers make an appearance. Faustina Bordoni has her own entry – no doubt because of her husband, Johann Adolph Hasse – but her famous rival, Francesca Cuzzoni, does not. Of the *circa* sixty women included, three have the surname 'della Pièta', indicating that they were foundlings left at the Ospedale della Pièta who remained there after their studies ended, serving as performers, teachers and composers. Regina Strinasacchi, also a student at the Pièta, but one who had a public career as a violinist (most famously playing with Mozart), is not included, probably because she left no compositions. Maddalena Lombardini Sirmen, on the other hand, a student at the Ospedale dei Mendicanti, made the cut with her published sonatas, trios, quartets and concertos.

This breadth of coverage is also reflected in the chronology of events van Boer provides on pages xix–xxiv. He begins in 1728 with the London premiere of *The Beggar's Opera* and ends with the Paris premiere of Boieldieu's *Le calife de Bagdad* in 1800. He seems to have chosen the events to emphasize the wide spectrum of music and music-making found throughout the century, creating a welcome and refreshing potpourri that includes the founding of concert series, publications of treatises, premieres and performances of works, deaths (no births), political events and so on. Here are some representative entries:



1756: The Seven Years' War begins. Leopold Mozart publishes his *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*. Charles Simon Favart imports exotic costumes for his pasticcio *Soliman II* for Paris. [xx]

1792: Gustav III of Sweden is assassinated at a masked ball, and Gustavian opera declines. Ludwig van Beethoven moves to Vienna as a student of Joseph Haydn. The premiere of Domenico Cimarosa's *Il matrimonio segreto* takes place in Vienna. The Singakademie in Berlin is founded by Carl F. Fasch. The Teatro La Fenice is reborn in Venice, while the Théâtre de la rue St. Pierre is founded in New Orleans, Louisiana. [xxiii–xxiv]

1796: Joseph Haydn recalled as *Kapellmeister* to Eisenstadt and writes the *Missa in angustiis*. William Shield's opera *The Poor Soldier* is performed in Botany Bay, Australia. [xxiv]

Though the quirky juxtaposition of such diverse events is both entertaining and illuminating, the information does not always check out, at least according to the relevant entries in *Grove Music Online*. Favart's *Soliman second, ou Les trois sultanes* premiered in 1761 (not 1756), and was described as a *Comédie mêlée d'ariettes* (though he did indeed present a pastiche in 1756, *Les chinois*). Fasch founded the Singakademie in 1791 (not 1792), and La Fenice was born, not reborn, when it opened in 1792. Finally, Joseph Haydn (who continued to live in Vienna and was recalled to Eisenstadt only to write masses for the Princess Esterházy's name day) actually composed the *Missa in angustiis* in 1798.

Similar inaccuracies bedevil the biographical entries as well (the entries for terms and genres have fewer problems). For example, van Boer gives Andrea Adolphati's date of birth as c1721, instead of the 1711 found in both the *Enciclopedia della musica* (Milan: Ricordi, 1963–1964) and *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, and says he wrote thirteen operas while the other two sources list only ten. In his entry for Carl Christian Agthe, he informs us that Agthe was the son of the cantor Johann Michael Agthe and joined the court of Prince Friedrich Albrecht of Anhalt-Bernburg in 1782 as *Kapellmeister*. Both *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* and *Grove Music Online* say that he was in fact the grandson of the cantor Johann Michael Agthe, and that in 1782 he was appointed as a *Kammermusik* and court organist, not as *Kapellmeister*.

Such discrepancies with the information found in standard reference works are not infrequent: my spot-check of names beginning with 'A' uncovered seventeen other entries with such conflicting information. Some (like the 1721 for 1711) are probably typographical errors, but others are harder to explain: do they correct or complete previous information, or are they simply errors? The reader has little way of knowing, for aside from disavowing the use of Wikipedia and alluding to consultation of RISM to identify numbers and types of works by various composers, van Boer doesn't explain where or how he got his information. Of course, one does not expect to find precise documentation about sources in a dictionary, so it is incumbent upon the reader to evaluate the reliability of the information. Here, readers should be advised to use the volume to explore all the dusty yet fascinating and richly rewarding corners of the classical period, but also to double-check the details. In fact, they should follow the advice that van Boer himself gives about internet sources on page xiii, where he cites the Russian proverb (made famous by Ronald Reagan in relation to the Soviet Union): 'trust, but verify'.

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