



Lalande and Rameau and many more), were evaluated thoroughly by Florence Gétreau (Centre National de Recherche Scientifique; Institut de Recherche en Musicologie, Paris). In a nutshell, doubt was cast over the attractive anonymous portrait at Versailles (perhaps the sitter is not François Couperin), and new light was shed on extant exemplars of an engraving by Jean-Charles Flippart (1735) after a lost portrait of the composer by André Boys.

Davitt Moroney gave a fascinating fifty-minute lecture-recital entitled 'La Couperinéité de Couperin, or What makes Couperin Couperin?'. He proposed a dozen features that 'catch my attention when I listen and that I find it fruitful to draw attention to while playing'. It was a masterful integration of artistic ideas, observations on compositional style and important issues of performance practice, demonstrated by playing of elegant fluidity.

There were three papers on 'Performance and Posterity'. Chloé Dos Reis (Sorbonne Université) discussed the notation of ornaments in Couperin's published harpsichord pieces, referring to them as 'testimony to a transition between two schools'. She questioned whether or not there was an evolution of aesthetics informing practices of embellishment by French keyboardist players between Chambonnières (whose first book of harpsichord pieces was published in 1670) and Couperin's *Premier livre de pièces de clavecin* of 1713. Dos Reis suggested that Couperin inherited ideas about ornaments from his predecessors (Jean-Henri d'Anglebert, Louis Marchand, Louis-Nicolas Clérambault and others) but also created a personal style. A lecture-recital by harpsichordists Emer Buckley (Dublin) and Jochewed Schwarz (Tel Aviv) presented practical and artistic issues that arise when playing Couperin's chamber sonatas from *Les Nations* (1726) on two harpsichords. Supported by copious performed examples, they proposed that playing chamber music for multiple instruments on two keyboards might have been a practice that Couperin encouraged in domestic and teaching situations. Buckley and Schwarz described how their preparations for recording assorted pieces for two albums (Toccatà Classics) required them to find more flexible and creative solutions than merely playing four parts with four hands. To conclude, Susan Daniels (a PhD student at King's College London) delivered an excellent paper on the Australian émigrée Louise Dyer (later Louise Hanson-Dyer), whose immersion in the cultural boom of Paris in the early 1930s inspired her to launch the publishing company Éditions de L'Oiseau-Lyre that played such a vital part in reviving interest in long-neglected French 'early music'. Dyer sponsored the pioneering *Œuvres complètes de François Couperin*, and even made some personal interventions with the scholars who undertook the musicological work. It was a fitting climax to a symposium that reconfirmed Couperin's stature as a monumental French baroque composer whose music continues to fascinate and inspire scholars, musicians and audiences.

DAVID VICKERS

david.vickers@rncm.ac.uk



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OPERA AS INSTITUTION: NETWORKS AND PROFESSIONS (1700–1914)

UNIVERSITÄT GRAZ, 23–24 NOVEMBER 2018

'Opera as Institution' was an international conference organized jointly by the Universities of Graz and Salzburg, held in Graz. The conference venue – the restored baroque palace of Meerscheinschlössl at Mozartgasse 3 – was an absolutely delightful if acoustically challenged venue. Built, rebuilt and rebuilt again, with the gardens subdivided in 1843 and with a sanatorium on the premises for the mentally ill and morphine addicts, it finally became an educational institution in 1914, only narrowly to escape demolition in the 1960s.



The aim of the conference was to gather a group of musicologists whose research focuses on the role of institutions in the history of European opera from the eighteenth century to the end of the 'long' nineteenth. The emphasis was on the notion of international engagement – that is, to understand these institutions as part of a transnational operatic network, rather than to look at them in isolation. The topic of the conference, skilfully developed by Daniel Brandenburg and Ingeborg Zechner from the University of Salzburg, and Cristina Scuderi and Michael Walter from the University of Graz, had the specific aim of including a wide range of countries and institutions.

The session topics demonstrate the breadth of the contributions: '18th-Century Italian Opera: Mobility and Institutions'; '18th/19th-Century French Opera: Singers and Institutions'; '18th-Century Italian Opera: Networks and Libretti'; '19th-Century Opera Beyond'; and '19th-Century Opera: Aristocratic vs. Private'. Conceptually and theoretically there were few surprises, but by returning to the subjects in the context of a specific consideration of institutions, many new lines of enquiry were thrown up, and this was a great way to take stock of each subject. The heartening thing about the event as a whole was the extent to which studying institutions is now *de rigueur*; the days of reluctant engagement are well and truly over.

For the eighteenth-century scholar there was much to enjoy, with papers on London, Vienna, Paris, Naples and St Petersburg, with themes of cosmopolitanism, sopranos, impresarios, politics and freemasonry, to name but a few of the cities and subjects discussed. Richard Erkens (Deutsches Historisches Institut in Rom) dealt with the complex networks – and performers' conditions – found described in the papers of the Florentine impresario Luca Casimiro degli Albizzi for the booking of singers for Russian opera in the age of Empress Anna Ivanovna. And once those singers were booked, their lives could be far from easy; a paper by Suzanne Aspden (University of Oxford) gave some insights into what 'free movement' actually meant to visitors in a xenophobic Britain. Franco Piperno (Università di Roma La Sapienza) moved the discussion to Italy, and to the 1780s Neapolitan introduction of the 'azione sacra per musica', which he showed was driven by the affiliation of Queen Maria Carolina of Naples to freemasonry. His discussion offered some context for how Masonic ideology might be interpreted. But best of all was the window opened by Daniel Brandenburg (Universität Salzburg) in his paper on the Pirker correspondence, consisting of exchanges between the husband-and-wife team Franz and Marianne; what we heard only scratched the surface of what is a remarkable body of source material. This was a notable piece of archival exploration for which all scholars of eighteenth-century opera should be thankful; the correspondence will, it is hoped, soon be available.

Perhaps the most riveting and entertaining session of all was that labelled slightly cryptically '19th-century Opera Beyond'. Perhaps the title was incomplete, but 'beyond' in this context proved to be 'places beyond the usual countries where opera might be found'. There were three papers: 'Olomouc's "Half-Year" Provincial Theatre and Its Repertoire' (Lenka Křupková and Jiří Kopecký, Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci), which examined the vicissitudes experienced by the autumn-to-Easter season of the opera in Olomouc in the Czech Republic; 'An Opera for Everyone? The Royal Opera in Stockholm during the 19th Century' (Karin Hallgren, Linnéuniversitetet, Växjö), which began with a discussion of the establishment by Gustav III of the Royal Opera in Stockholm in 1771; and 'Operatic Production Systems in Eastern Adriatic Theaters during the Late Habsburg Empire: Impresari and Networks' (Cristina Scuderi, Universität Graz), which took the 'long nineteenth century' to heart with its date span of 1861 to 1918, and presented the results of archival work from the coast of Istria and Dalmatia including Rijeka, Dubrovnik, Zadar, Šibenik and Split. All three addressed material that was familiar in its structure, but which opened up neglected networks and suggested new ideas.

To finish off the programme, the conference was led on a tour of a working institution, the Oper Graz. Like most European cities, Graz has had opera performance since the seventeenth century, originally in a questionable venue: a converted coach house. Opera eventually moved to the 1776 Schauspielhaus Graz, then to the Thalia-Theater, adapted in 1864 from an old circus hall, and then to the current 1899 theatre, which staged Wagner's *Lohengrin* as its first opera. Some years ago the building was sensitively but thoroughly overhauled, a process that modernized all aspects of staging but left the interior almost unchanged; those participants who attended Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* that evening were able to judge the results of



these developments for themselves. The performance was an excellent, sociable end to the conference, but it was also a product of a working institution, the likes of which lay at the heart of the conference.

MICHAEL BURDEN

michael.burden@new.ox.ac.uk



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THE HANDEL INSTITUTE CONFERENCE

THE BRITISH LIBRARY AND THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM, 23–25 NOVEMBER 2018

The Handel Institute has held eleven international conferences since 1990. The choice of theme for the latest – Handel and his music for patrons – was prompted by the tercentenary of Handel's composition of *Acis and Galatea* for one of his most famous patrons: James Brydges, Earl of Carnarvon and later Duke of Chandos. Seventeen speakers explored the subject of patronage from a variety of angles, and their papers were complemented by two concerts held in contrasting venues.

Many of the papers dealt directly with Handel's patrons during his time in England. Five of these focused on individual patrons, and it became apparent that the differences between these patrons and the nature of their patronage were striking. Rather surprisingly, only one paper related to Handel's Cannons period: Graydon Beeks (Pomona College) considered which works James Brydges could have been referring to when he reported to John Arbuthnot on 25 September 1717 that Handel was writing 'some Overtures to be plaid before the first lesson'. Colin Timms (University of Birmingham) spoke about Handel's relationship with another aristocratic patron, shedding light on the performances of *Comus* given in 1745 and 1748 at Exton Hall (Rutland), as well as on the background and patronage of Baptist Noel, Fourth Earl of Gainsborough; and Matthew Gardner (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen) gave us a much-needed insight into the way in which the musical interests of Queen Caroline and her children shaped Handel's royal patronage, charting her musical activities and investigating how the situation changed after her death in 1737. My own paper (Natassa Varka, University of Cambridge) presented new information relating to Handel's relationship with Charles Jennens. Although Jennens is usually thought of as Handel's librettist or collaborator, he must also be considered a patron, not only because he made gifts of his librettos to Handel, but also on account of his commissioning hundreds of copies of Handel's works. I was not the only speaker to use the close study of manuscript copies to gain insights into the creator of a music collection: Andrew V. Jones (University of Cambridge) employed a staggering amount of evidence to convince us that the unidentified copyist of several manuscripts in a private collection in South Germany, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Gerald Coke Handel Collection and the Stiftung Händel-Haus was none other than Elizabeth Legh, creator of what is now the Malmesbury Collection.

Handel's London opera subscribers were the subject of two papers. Graham Cummings (University of Huddersfield) focused on the 1736–1737 season, investigating how Handel's opera company and the Opera of the Nobility fought to attract the same small audience through their choice of works. David Hunter (University of Texas Austin) took a much broader view, asking who exactly formed this small audience that was so vital to Handel's success; examination of evidence that included subscriptions and correspondence revealed that much of this support came from only a limited number of families, making up around four per cent of the aristocracy.

Although the papers mentioned so far painted a fascinating picture of the various guises that patronage could take in Handel's London, the discussion could never have been complete without a consideration of