



must-read for everyone who has always enjoyed listening to the many tempestuous minor-key symphonies of the second half of the eighteenth century, but now wants to deepen this enjoyment by learning more about their conventions and the ways in which composers played with these conventions in this enduring repertoire.

MARKUS NEUWIRTH

<markus.neuwirth@arts.kuleuven.be>



Eighteenth-Century Music © Cambridge University Press, 2015
doi:10.1017/S147857061500007X

GRAHAM SADLER

THE RAMEAU COMPENDIUM

Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014

pp. xi + 269, ISBN 978 1 84383 905 7

The publication of *The Rameau Compendium* seems perfectly timed to take advantage of the recent flurry of activity associated with the sestercentennial of Jean-Philippe Rameau's death, but as author Graham Sadler remarks in the Introduction to the volume, the composer has been the focus of much scholarly and performing attention for some time. Consequently, the amount of material now available about this important composer, theorist, organist and aspiring scientist has reached significant levels, and the clear and thoughtful presentation of this quantity of information is one of the great advantages of this volume. Indeed, the brief list of contents – including a biography of the composer, a dictionary of terms relevant to Rameau, a list of works both musical and theoretical and a bibliography of sources – only hints at the wide scope of inquiry found in the *Compendium*.

That all of this is accomplished with grace and finesse is very much attributable to the author of the volume. Those who have met Graham Sadler will certainly hear his voice in every entry, in the gently authoritative writing, the ease with which even the most challenging topics are addressed and the calm assurance and deft handling of the wide variety of materials and concepts required to compile such a volume as this. This expansive approach highlights one of the fundamental strengths of the book: although this volume is ostensibly about Rameau, the breadth of Sadler's approach together with the variety of Rameau's interests will ensure that *The Rameau Compendium* is useful not only to Rameau scholars, but also to anyone interested in the musical culture of the early eighteenth century, in France and indeed throughout Europe.

Dipping into the pages of this book, the reader encounters key intellectual figures of eighteenth-century Europe such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (who wrote a physiognomic eulogy of the composer) and mathematician Louis-Bertrand Castel (with whom Rameau engaged in a long scholarly correspondence). Rameau's musical contemporaries, including composers, instrumentalists, singers and dancers, are widely represented, giving a well-rounded view of French musical life of the period. Sadler also uses the *Compendium* to guide the reader through the development of Rameau scholarship, from the earliest attempts to create a complete works series (led by Camille Saint-Saëns and Vincent D'Indy) to more recent scholarly efforts, such as the *Opera Omnia* directed by Sylvie Bousseau. The welcome inclusion of online resources acknowledges the changing shape of modern scholarship. Each entry situates its topic with reference to Rameau, and provides a short list of relevant sources.

The book is well illustrated, with images ranging from reproductions of original scores to caricatures of Rameau, whose lean physique seems to have held an irresistible allure for artists working in this style of portraiture. In addition, a plethora of musical examples support individual topic entries and explore questions of influence on Rameau, both local (Charpentier) and foreign (the Italian composer Attilio



Ariosti). Sadler takes special care to ensure that readers can easily perceive the relationships between such examples by altering one or another in order to make the relationship more evident. Whenever he does so, he informs the reader about what has been done and why.

Of especial value in this volume is the extensive quantity of entries devoted to specifically French musical practices. As Sadler points out in the Introduction, French music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries followed its own set of rules and conventions, rules that are not always clearly addressed in non-French sources. The *Compendium* makes an invaluable contribution to the scholarly literature by defining many of these unique terms and ideas, covering instruments and instrumentation, performance practices and notational issues. Among the many items of interest, Sadler makes a reasoned argument for the abolition of the term 'livret' in discussion of French opera of the period, noting that although English-speaking musicologists have adopted the term, they have done so on the basis of little contemporary evidence (121).

Apparent throughout the volume is a meticulous level of proofing that makes the book a pleasure to read from cover to cover. Amongst the mass of bibliographic references within each dictionary article, I found only one dead end, in the entry on 'Versification': the siglum (a unique six-letter identifier for each bibliographic item) 'RosHip' used in the article does not appear in the bibliography, though several possible items by the relevant author (Lois Rosow) are included, and thus this siglum may represent an earlier layer of the revision process. As Sadler points out, reading the dictionary section of the *Compendium* from A to Z does have some unexpected joys, such as sliding from 'Girdlestone, Cuthbert' through 'Glissando', landing on 'Goethe' and then passing to 'Madame de Graffigny', whose letters reveal her as a devoted member of the Opéra audience and close acquaintance of Rameau's collaborator, Louis de Cahusac. Yet such reading can also uncover inconsistencies that one hopes can be remedied in the future, as with the entries on three different members of the Argenson family. Dates are provided for two of the group (Antoine-René and René-Louis) but not the third (Marc-Pierre); family relationships are highlighted for René-Louis and Marc-Pierre (they were brothers) but not Antoine-René (he was the son of René-Louis). More clarification here would have been helpful to the reader. Another group of entries where more detail or more referencing would have been helpful is that around Thérèse Deshayes, wife of La Riche de La Pouplinière, Rameau's patron. The article on Deshayes suggests that she may have introduced the composer to his eventual patron, as she was a pupil of Rameau's as well as La Pouplinière's mistress (and later his wife). It is further suggested that the dissolution of the marriage between La Pouplinière and Deshayes in 'bizarre circumstances' (76) may have contributed to the end of La Pouplinière's patronage of Rameau – but the exact nature of the circumstances is not described here. Nor does further discussion appear in the article on La Pouplinière. The mystery is finally solved in the article on the duc de Richelieu, which does include a reference to Deshayes, but a cross-reference to Richelieu in the Deshayes article would better serve the reader – as indeed would a reference there to Rameau's *Les fêtes de Ramire*, where Rameau again benefitted from Deshayes's influence (now over Richelieu), reinforcing more strongly her importance to the composer's career.

These criticisms, detailed though they may seem, represent a very small portion of the volume as a whole and do not diminish its importance in any significant way. *The Rameau Compendium* fittingly represents the diverse interests and fascinating career of one of the most important musicians of the early eighteenth century – one who, in spite of his increasing modern fame, cannot help but benefit from this sympathetic, even-handed and thoughtful exploration of a composer and his past and present world.

ANITA HARDEMAN
<a-hardeman@wiu.edu>

