



NEWSLETTER

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Conference Report

'Whither analysis, or, a new Creation?'

Caryl Clark

Society for Music Analysis Study Day, Faculty of Music,
University of Oxford, February 10, 2007

Britain's Society for Music Analysis (SMA) held its 'Spring Study Day at the Faculty of Music, Oxford University during a blast of snowy winter weather, as if to remind participants not to be too complacent about the work under discussion: Haydn's *Creation*. (Had *The Seasons* been the focus work, might the case for divine intervention be stronger?) After a day of papers and discussion, some might well have wondered if analysis itself had vanished along with spring, since considerations of technical aspects of the work or its structure were in short supply. History, aesthetics, philosophical discourse, and reception issues were in great supply, however, leading me to conclude that the critical-theoretical crossover is alive and well.

In his opening remarks, conference organizer Jonathan Cross (Christ Church College, Oxford) spoke of the relative dearth of analytical writing on *The Creation* in the Society's journal, suggesting that the piece was ripe for further analytical study. While the day's proceedings did not measurably alter this situation, the six papers and two keynote addresses did probe this canonic work from a variety of perspectives, provoking lively discussion. With only one British speaker on the program, members of the SMA might well have wondered if its organization was being hijacked (perhaps by present or past Cornellians, who constituted four of the eight speakers). How fitting that a world-class institution such as Oxford, under the auspices of the SMA, should host an international symposium devoted to a bilingual work whose themes and appeal are universal.

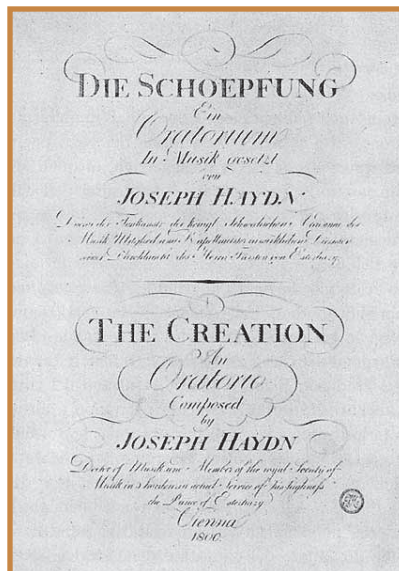
The morning session began with an entertaining paper by Emily Dolan (University of Pennsylvania) entitled 'Against Philosophical Listening: Haydn's *Creation* and the Discourse of Effect.' She demonstrated how Haydn's use of representation and mimesis, when allied to special sonorities and orchestral 'effects,' participated in the developing conceptualization of orchestration, thereby increasing listener comprehension. The 'encyclopedia of sonic gestures' presented to listeners of *The Creation* permitted ready engagement with the work. Precisely how these instrumental sonorities were perceived as interacting with the text remains a subject for future exploration. The possibility of purely instru-

mental performance was pursued by Wiebke Thormählen (Cornell University) in 'La Creation à Cinq Instruments: Towards an Aesthetics of Arrangements in late-eighteenth-century Vienna.' Following an introduction to the importance of the arts in education and *Bildung*, as espoused by Van Swieten in his theoretical writings and Sunday salons, Thormählen turned to a discussion of the role of chamber music in the development of moral sentiment in the Viennese domestic sphere, for which there could be no more apt example than Anton Wranitzky's string quintet arrangement of *The Creation*. Here two violinists, two violists and violoncellist enter into an intimate relationship with the possible meanings of the work through enactment. In his reconsideration of 'Haydn's worst joke,' the young Hungarian scholar Balázs Mikusi (Cornell University) countered prevailing negative criticism about the composer's quotation of the popular melody 'The Dew-Dropping Morn' in the Gloria of his *Schöpfungsmesse*. He placed the quotation in the context of other self-borrowings in the *Heiligmesse* and *The Seasons*, and suggested that the self-quotation introduced a personal aside into the penitential 'Miserere' moment of the mass, permitting the composer to confess his own personal failings and indiscretions.

The first speaker to broach 'analysis' as the ostensible subject of the study day was the first keynote speaker, Ludwig Holtmeier (Freiburg Hochschule für Musik). His presentation 'Analyzing Haydn; or, how historical should music theory be?' created an inspirational music theory classroom setting in which he instructed the assembled audience of some forty faculty and graduate students in the theory and practice of mid-eighteenth Neapolitan vocal composition as presented in the 'partimento' exercises of Fedele Fenaroli. During his apprenticeship to Nicola Porpora in Vienna in the early 1750s, had the young Haydn

perhaps been introduced to this method of constructing a melodic edifice upon a given bass line? Certainly Holtmeier suggested as much during his demonstration of how the skeletal melodic line of Gabriel's aria 'With verdure clad'/'Nun beut die Flur' might emerge from the bass line by employing this particular technique of part writing. Ultimately he argued for the employment of appropriate philology and historically informed analytical practices for eighteenth century music.

The afternoon session began with Michael Spitzer (University of Durham) exploring aspects of cyclical structure and embedded fifth key cycles in 'Three Acts of Haydn's *Creation*: Lateness, Parataxis, and the English Enlightenment.' His employment of theoretical-analytical models developed in the twentieth century



Title page of first edition of
Haydn's *Creation*

continued on page 12

From the Editor

The SECM Newsletter is published twice yearly, in October and April. Submissions in the following categories are encouraged:

- News of recent accomplishments from members of the society (publications, presentations, awards, performances, promotions, etc.);
- Reviews of performances of eighteenth-century music;
- Reviews of books, editions, or recordings of eighteenth-century music;
- Conference reports;
- Dissertations in progress on eighteenth-century music;
- Upcoming conferences and meetings;
- Calls for papers and manuscripts;
- Research reports and research resources;
- Grant opportunities.

Contributions should be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail message (preferably in Microsoft Word format) to Nancy November, SECM Newsletter editor, at n.november@auckland.ac.nz. Submissions must be received by July 1 for the October issue and by January 1 for the April issue. Claims for missing issues of the Newsletter must be requested within six months of publication. Annotated discographies (in the format given in the inaugural issue, October 2002) will also be accepted and will be posted on the SECM web site. Discographies should be sent to mknoll@steglein.com.



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Acknowledgments

The Society wishes to thank Robert T. Stroker, Dean, Boyer College of Music and Dance of Temple University for his generous financial support of the SECM Newsletter.

Joint Conference of the Society for Eighteenth-Century Music and the Haydn Society of North America

The Society for Eighteenth-Century Music will hold its third biennial conference jointly with the Haydn Society of North America at Scripps College in Claremont, California from Friday, 29 February to Sunday, 2 March 2008. More information is available at www.secm.org



Members' News

Markus Rathey, Associate Professor of Music History at Yale University, published an edition of music theoretical writings by the composer Johann Georg Ahle (1651–1706), who was Johann Sebastian Bach's predecessor as organist at Divi Blasii in Mühlhausen: *Schriften zur Musik* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2007). The texts are an important source for the relationship between music and rhetoric, and for the performance practice of the early works by J. S. Bach.

Douglas A. Lee, a contributing editor to *Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works* (Packard Humanities Institute), recently completed a second volume of keyboard concertos, which has been published this year. This volume is a companion to his volume of six concertos for keyboard and orchestra (2005), and comprises seven concertos for solo (unaccompanied) keyboard, based on an autograph score and on original prints from 1772. A third volume of keyboard concertos, to be based on autograph scores in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, is forthcoming.

Vanessa Rogers recently completed her Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, under the direction of Bruce Alan Brown: 'Writing Plays "in the Sing Song Way": Henry Fielding's Ballad Operas and Early Musical Theater in Eighteenth-Century London.' She has received a three-month short-term Fellowship from the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC. for a project on ballad opera.



Book Review

Todd Decker

Pagano, Robert. *Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti: Two Lives in One*. Trans. Frederick Hammond (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2006). xxvii + 381 pp. ISBN: 1-57647-108-x.

Over twenty years after its original publication in Italian, Roberto Pagano's *Scarlatti, Alessandro e Domenico: due vite in una* (Milan: Mondadori, 1985) has been published by Pendragon in an English translation by Frederick Hammond. The book is an exception among biographies of eighteenth-century musicians: Pagano combines historical-biographical studies of this important musical father and son in a single narrative, while also painting a larger picture of musical patronage and politics across the Italian and Iberian peninsulas. Taking the Scarlattis as a pair—an unconventional approach—yields mixed results. Numerous scholarly questions about Alessandro and Domenico are addressed, and their com-

mon patrons are considered, often in detail; yet Pagano's linkage of father and son by way of psychology and Sicilian culture proves unconvincing.

Of necessity, the book addresses readers from two rather disparate groups: scholars of Alessandro, principally interested in the evolution of musical style and how structures of patronage played out in sacred and secular vocal genres in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Italy; and scholars of Domenico, primarily concerned with an idiosyncratic corpus of mid-century keyboard music that defies easy categorization on formal, stylistic, and even the most basic historical grounds. Pagano covers both public vocal music and private keyboard music but does not dwell on musical style or analyze any work by either Scarlatti in detail. Pagano describes the book as an 'historico-biographical volume' (333) and is explicit about his intent: '[M]y book may be considered a southern 'reply' to the positivistic rigor of the biography [of Domenico] masterfully worked out by [Ralph] Kirkpatrick and to which, in all humility, I refer the reader who desires a more "correct" approach to the data' (xii). Pagano thus lays out his rather personal project from the beginning, claiming 'direct knowledge of the conditioned mentality' (xvi) of both men based on his own Sicilian identity. He notes in his 2006 preface: 'I can read the human experience of [Domenico] in a new key, one dictated by my intimate knowledge of his father's life and of a southern mentality that may have controlled, and in any case conditioned, the behavior of the Sicilian clan into which Domenico Scarlatti was born' (xi).

Alessandro and Domenico have spawned sizeable, complex, and largely separate bodies of scholarship. In general, *Two Lives in One* assumes a reader with a solid background in both areas. Pagano's earlier work on the father is helpful here, in particular the biographical portion of the latest *New Grove* article on Alessandro. (Unfortunately, a longer version for the 1972 Italian compendium *Alessandro Scarlatti* [Turin: ERI, with works list by Giancarlo Rostirolla and an essay on the oratorios by Lino Bianchi] has never been translated.) As noted above, Pagano directs the reader to Kirkpatrick's study of Domenico (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953). Malcolm Boyd's biography of the son (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 1986) appeared one year after *Due vite*. Pagano's abundant references to post-1985 scholarship suggest that he greatly revised *Due vite* before Hammond made his translation. Readers of the Italian original will doubtless find much that is new in the translation. For example, a lively debate has ensued about the possibility that Domenico spent time in Sicily, Paris, and London; Pagano highlights this 'much more mobile Domenico' (192). Yet no conclusive chronology for Domenico's movements has been advanced, nor is it likely that it will be for these years. Pagano's revision of his 1985 text does not so much synthesize recent work as respond to it, under the assumption that the reader is already familiar with it. While this brings *Two Lives in One* up to date, it makes the book difficult to recommend as an introduction to either Alessandro's life or that of Domenico.

Two Lives in One includes many lengthy excerpts from period sources, which appear in English for the first time to support this wide-ranging study. A contract describing Alessandro's duties at Santa Maria Maggiore from 1707 provides a compelling summary

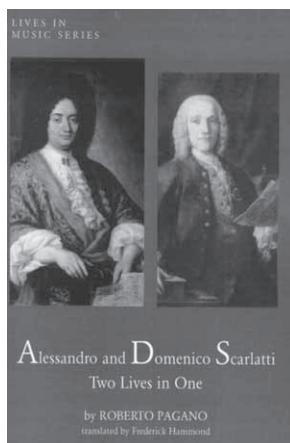
of the duties of a Roman Maestro di Cappella, as well as a taste of the more human interactions between composers, musicians, and institutions. Numerous excerpts from *relazioni* and *avvisi* illuminate musical practices of the time; these include accounts of cash-strapped patrons sponsoring serenata performances on bridges over Roman streets to avoid the expense of feeding listeners' stomachs after pleasing their ears. Pagano spends much time on Alessandro's patrons. Lengthy sections on Maria Casimira, patron to father and son alike, and Ferdinando de' Medici offer valuable information, situating these figures, and by analogy the Scarlattis, in the local and international politics of the period. This sensitivity to subtle changes in the musical climate—in Rome, conditioned by an aesthetic ideology that is grounded in papal concerns over public morality—is tremendously important. Pagano's narrative is more or less chronological and departs at length from the lives of the Scarlattis themselves; this departure allows him to demonstrate, for example, how the conditions of possibility for performing any kind of secular vocal music changed on a year-to-year, even month-to-month basis, with a direct impact on the professional lives of musicians.

The elder Scarlatti's vast output is best understood by way of the patrons who gave him permanent posts or occasional commissions, and the specific contexts and occasions for which he composed. In

this way, he is an exemplary but by no means unusual figure. Domenico's keyboard music, composed for the Portuguese princess and Spanish queen Maria Barbara of Braganza, would seem to be similar: a body of music composed for a specific patron. Pagano consistently highlights the importance of Maria Barbara's spouse Ferdinando VI of Spain, an altogether amateur musician who, Pagano suggests, had to be dealt with gently in the high-powered musical context driven by his wife's virtuosity and refined taste. It is clear for whom Domenico worked, but there remain little more than tantalizing hints and conjectures about when the sonatas were

composed, the circumstances surrounding their transmission, and even who played them and under which conditions. Pagano imagines the Portuguese and Spanish royal courts in a different manner to that of Kirkpatrick in his classic study. Pagano's descriptions of the relationship between Domenico and Maria Barbara, like those of Kirkpatrick, are conjectures only. As in the case of Domenico's shadowy travels, there is simply not enough data to paint a more human portrait of the composer and patron.

A final difficulty with *Two Lives in One* is the slim evidence for Pagano's framing discourse, for the theory that is his ultimate rationale for combining the two Scarlattis in a single volume. He argues that a particular type of Sicilian patriarchy holds the key to understanding both Alessandro's treatment of Domenico and the latter's creative output. In particular, Pagano seeks to explain why the sonatas appear to have been written so late in Domenico's life ('appear' is the key word here), and seeks to link the sonatas back to Alessandro more or less directly. Pagano states that Sicilian family relations have remained virtually unchanged in the three centuries since the Scarlattis, and uses this supposed continuity to dissect Alessandro's household. However, existing documents, which are relatively few in number and nothing like the Mozart family



letters, afford only the most conventional and often quite opaque views of the personal lives of the Scarlatti clan.

Leaving aside psychology, and using what is known of how eighteenth-century musicians worked in a professional world defined by the musical tastes and demands of their patrons, it is more likely that it was only late in life that Domenico found a patron and position that matched his particular gifts. Having a Sicilian father, or overcoming his father's influence, had little to do with the phenomenon of Domenico and his mountain of sonatas. There was no opportunity to compose keyboard sonatas in Italy, where Domenico's opportunities were largely the same as his father. Vocal music was virtually the only game in town, and father and son alike displayed the necessary compositional flexibility in terms of genre and context to have successful careers. That the son had no distinctive voice in theatre or sacred music, while the father did, is not evidence for creative tension between the two. Domenico was originally hired to lead the Portuguese royal chapel. The transformation of this position to that of private music master to a royal couple enamored of keyboard sonatas must be read as a happy accident, which put Domenico in the right place at the right time and provided an excellent means (if one somewhat frustrating for today's scholar) for the transmission of the sonatas in manuscript.

There was no other job in Europe like Domenico's at the Portuguese and Spanish courts. His keyboard output reflects the fortunate alignment of a strongly individual keyboard 'star' in a unique part of the musical 'firmament.' (His patron must have been a truly extraordinary player: sadly, no ear witness reports of Maria Barbara's playing have survived.) Alessandro would seem to have played a very small role within the guarded rooms of the Iberian palaces, where Domenico went about his work, work that was, in its own way, rather typical for a court-employed composer of the time. Musical life on the ground changed quickly across the lives of this father and son, as much of Pagano's text shows, and cultural or psychological theories about how their relationship may have influenced their art remain difficult to support in a world where professional composers were expected, above all, to serve their patrons.

Book Review

Vanessa Rogers

Atkins, Madeline Smith. *The Beggar's 'Children': How John Gay Changed the Course of England's Musical Theatre* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2006). ix + 149 pp. ISBN: 1-90430-396-x.

John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* took London by storm in the late 1720s, changing the course of England's musical theater forever. Madeline Smith Atkins succinctly states this important point in the title of her book, recently published by Cambridge Scholars.

Ballad opera was in fashion for only a short period, from roughly 1728, the year *The Beggar's Opera* appeared, until 1737, when the playhouse Licensing Act was passed by Parliament. This creative era was rife with musical and theatrical experimentation of all kinds: new playhouses were built, new troupes were formed, and—more importantly—all sorts of new plays and musical entertainments were being written and performed for the first time. Gay's highly original depiction of London's colorful underworld, his satiric jabs at government figures and Italian opera singers, as well as his decision to intersperse popular music and dances throughout the action, all contributed to the piece's tremendous success with the English public. The enormous profits that this first ballad opera provided for Gay, and the enterprising theater manager John Rich, became legendary, and this undoubtedly contributed to the flood of similar entertainments staged after the appearance of *The Beggar's Opera*.

Ballad opera was a highly distinctive type of English musical theater. Not quite an opera (English audiences generally disliked recitatives), and more musical than Restoration-era plays (full-length ballad operas like *The Beggar's Opera* contained over sixty songs), the genre was uniquely crafted to appeal to patriotic English spectators familiar with current trends and events. Demonstrating the wide-ranging musical tastes of the sophisticated audience, music of all kinds abounded in ballad operas, including traditional, popular, and 'high art' music (in a recent article Berta Joncus demonstrates the large number of Handel's tunes that were conscripted for use in the ballad operas: 'Handel at Drury Lane: Ballad Opera and the Production of Kitty Clive,' *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 131/2 [2006], 179–226). Ballad operas contained spoken dialogue unlike their sometime rivals Italian *opera serie*, and were therefore relegated to the playhouses. As the theatrical industry was generally unregulated during this era, there were profits to be made in these smaller theaters if authors complied with the taste of the town; accordingly, the most popular ballad operas are excellent indicators of eighteenth-century musical preferences. Unfortunately, the 1737 Licensing Act severely restricted the number of theaters that were permitted to operate, which affected the number of new works that were written and performed in the playhouses. Ballad opera, the primary genre of native opera staged during this period, was dealt a powerful blow; later, however, English comic operas and pasticcios—many of which had similar topics and music to their earlier counterparts—found favor with audiences in their stead.

Atkins approaches the development of ballad opera and its influence on its musical descendents in four chapters of roughly equal size. She opens with a discussion of the history of theater and opera in England before the rise of the ballad opera. In Chap-



ter 2, she analyzes the dramatic and musical content of three of the most popular ballad operas: *The Beggar's Opera*, Charles Coffey's *The Beggar's Wedding*, and Coffey and John Mottley's *The Devil to Pay*. The remaining two sections of the volume are concerned with analyses of three English comic operas and pasticcios dating from the 1760s (Isaac Bickerstaffe and Thomas Augustine Arne's *Thomas and Sally* and *Love in a Village*, and Bickerstaffe's *The Maid of the Mill*). This is followed in Chapter 4 by three burlettas from the last part of the century: Kane O'Hara's *Midas* and *The Golden Pippin*, and George Colman's *The Portrait*. All of the works are generally considered to be some of the 'greatest hits' of eighteenth-century English opera. Quite a large portion of this book's fairly short text—over one hundred of its one hundred and forty-nine pages—is dedicated to Atkins's analysis of the nine operas. Her examinations are often insightful, and reveal a great deal of interesting subject matter for further exploration. One topic particularly worthy of investigation is Coffey's proficiency at selecting music and setting texts; these skills undoubtedly contributed to the success of both *The Beggar's Wedding* and *The Devil to Pay*.

Given its small scale, *The Beggar's Children* cannot easily accommodate the riches of an entire musical genre. Ballad operas other than the three that Atkins examines are given short shrift, if mentioned at all. Henry Fielding, who wrote more ballad operas than any other author, and who proved to be one of the most influential writers of the genre, receives one sentence in the book (and, coincidentally, he is not considered as a ballad opera author but instead as a 'warrior' for the freedom of the stage). The threads binding the nine operas that she selects are tenuous and are not examined in detail at all, and problems in differentiating between the later genres tend to be glossed over. There are several conspicuous errors in the book, such as when Atkins tells us that Johann Christoph Pepusch selected the music for *The Beggar's Opera* (26). Since we have contemporary accounts reporting that the work was already in rehearsal (the airs to be sung without accompaniment, in the French style) when Pepusch was called in to arrange the music, we must remain skeptical about the extent of the composer's musical influence on this first ballad opera.

It is not entirely clear which audience Atkins has in mind for this book. Colloquial language is pervasive, standing out starkly against detailed musical analyses that are undoubtedly written for a serious student of this genre. On the other hand, it is Atkins's inviting tone that makes this volume so readable. She is a clear writer and her text is extremely engaging. Furthermore, Atkins's enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and the premise of the book is a good one: ballad opera is a genre full of fascinating, unexplored music of interest to musicologists, historians, and performers alike. She also emphasizes that the genre is inextricably linked to other eighteenth-century theatrical and musical genres. There is a natural progression between the low-life and satirical subjects of ballad operas, with their emphatically British song-and-dance tunes and topics, and the later English burlettas, comic operas, and pasticcios found in the theaters.

Considering the large quantity of music contained in the book, it is regrettable that the musical examples are so inadequately set. Cambridge Scholars would have done well to put the music into a software program so that the texts underneath the lines could have been read more easily. The handwritten examples with typed, not-quite-fitted lyrics sometimes obscure the clever texts and musical points that Atkins strives to highlight with her analyses.

My chief complaint about the book, however, is that Atkins apparently has not taken into account the pertinent literature: this is indicated by the brevity of her bibliography. Although it is apparent that Atkins is quite well acquainted with the genre of ballad opera, it is disappointing that she does not make use of recent scholarship on the subject. The bibliography has many omissions, including most of the recent work on the subject of John Gay (for example, Calhoun Winton's *John Gay and the London Theatre* [Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1993], Dianne Dugaw's *Deep Play—John Gay and the Invention of Modernity* [Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Association of University Presses, 2001], and Daniel Heartz's article 'The Beggar's Opera and Opéra-Comique en Vaudevilles,' *Early Music* 27/1 [1999], 42-53), and on eighteenth-century English opera and burletta (for instance, Suzanne Aspden's numerous articles on English opera, and Phyllis Dirks's *The Eighteenth-Century English Burletta* [Canada: University of Victoria, 1999]). And one wonders why she references the 1980 *New Grove*, given the more recent edition.

Atkins's discussion of the available recordings and filmed performances of *The Beggar's Opera* is a useful addition. She also describes to readers how they might obtain the 'scores' of the ballad operas; however, this is misleading, since aside from *The Beggar's Opera* and a few other overtures, no other ballad opera currently exists in score. One notable omission in this regard is the excellent scholarly edition of *The Beggar's Opera* prepared by Jeremy Barlow for Oxford University Press (1990). Atkins also omits mention of *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (ECCO), an electronic resource that is widely available to academics, which includes many of the ballad opera texts.

Edmond Gagey's ballad opera study of 1937 left much to be desired. A thorough re-examination of this genre, with its wealth of music and clever, satirical subjects, is long overdue. Atkins's book, although enjoyable to read, does not represent the serious musicological work that is needed to carry out this reappraisal. However, its publication is an important step in opening up discourse and garnering interest in this very significant period of English opera and musical theater.



Publication Announcement

Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy, by Jeremy Day-O'Connell. This is a generously illustrated examination of pentatonic ('black-key scale') techniques in the context of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western art-music. *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy* explores the increasing use of pentatonic techniques in nineteenth-century Western art-music. It introduces several distinct categories of pentatonic practice: pastoral, primitive, exotic, religious, and coloristic. It shows how each of these categories derives from musical, aesthetic, and ideological developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Finally, the book examines pentatonicism in relationship to changes in the melodic and harmonic sensibility of the time. Place orders through University of Rochester Press, 668 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester, NY 14620 USA; Tel: 585-275-0419; fax: 585-271-8778; www.urpress.com; boydell@boydellusa.net Orders can also be placed securely online at <http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/sous.htm>

Edition Review: *Monuments of Tuscan Music*

Daniel E. Freeman

Monuments of Tuscan Music. Robert Lamar Weaver, General Editor. Louisville, KY: Musica Toscana, 2003–.

Sacred Vocal Music, Series I: Non-liturgical Music. Sacred Drama, Vol. 1: *Debora e Sisara*, music by Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi, libretto by Carlo Sernicola. Edited by Anthony DelDonna and Eleonora Negri. Louisville, KY: Musica Toscana, 2003.

Sacred Vocal Music, Series IV: Liturgical Music. *Motets*, Vol. 1: *Selected Sacred Works by Eighteenth-Century Florentine Composers*. Edited by John P. Karr. Louisville, KY: Musica Toscana, 2003. [A selection of compositions by Bartolomeo Felici, Luigi Pelleschi, Ferdinando Rutini, Gasparo Sborgi, and Niccolò Valenti.]

Instrumental Music, Series I: Orchestral Music. *Concertos for Keyboards*, Vol. 1. Edited by Scott Roberts and Anna Kasket. Louisville, KY: Musica Toscana, 2005. [A selection of keyboard concertos by Carlo Antonio Campioni, Andrea Luchesi, and Jan Kr̥titel Vaňhal.]

Instrumental Music, Series II: Chamber Music for Solo Instruments. *Sonatas for Wind (Flute) Instruments with Keyboard Accompaniment: No. 8. Sonate per cembalo, e flauto di Niccolò Dothel*. Edited by Nicklaus Delius. Louisville, KY: Musica Toscana, 2006.

Ever since the great period of the German and Austrian *Denkmäler* of the last century, style critics of Italian music of the mid- and late-eighteenth century have been at a disadvantage. Thus a fresh series of modern editions that helps to draw attention to the importance of Tuscan musical culture of the eighteenth century must be considered a welcome addition to the musicological literature. The editions listed above offer an introductory sample of *Monuments of Tuscan Music*, whose editors' mission is to make available to musicians and musicologists a large selection of forgotten compositions by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century composers either native to Tuscany or active in the region. A specialty of the series is repertory drawn from manuscripts once in the possession of the Ricasoli family of Florence that were purchased by the University of Louisville between 1984 and 1987. Three of the four volumes released so far provide convincing demonstrations of the richness of the Ricasoli collection. Unintentionally, each of the same volumes also provides fresh documentation of the little-known pianistic art that flourished in Tuscany for decades after the invention of the pianoforte in Florence by Bartolomeo Cristofori. The most surprising manifestation is found in the volume of sacred music, which includes a motet of Ferdinando Rutini scored for vocal ensemble with accompaniment of a single pianoforte. The sources for Guglielmi's oratorio *Debora e Sisara*, first performed in Naples in 1788, have no connection to Tuscan holdings, but as the product of a composer of Tuscan origins the work was deemed appropriate for inclusion in the series. Forthcoming volumes confirm the series' potential to illuminate the brilliance of Tuscan musical life of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries within a comprehensive array of musical genres.

Not surprisingly, given that these are the earliest volumes of a major new series, there are minor problems in editing and presentation. However, the volumes devoted to keyboard concertos and the Guglielmi oratorio exhibit an incomplete mastery of the capabilities of *Finale* notation software. It does appear that format-

ting problems are being addressed by the general editor, since their numbers lessen with each subsequent volume. The scope of the introductory materials contained in each of the volumes naturally varies widely due to the diverse offering of musical genres. Those devoted to instrumental music are much to be praised for the large amount of information that they contain concerning performance practice, editing procedures, the circumstances of modern premieres, and the history and contents of the Ricasoli collection. Considering the international audience for which the editions are intended, it is gratifying to see that the Latin texts of the sacred works and the Italian text of the oratorio *Debora e Sisara* are fully translated into English. Nonetheless, a number of the essays exhibit disappointing shortcomings over and above the problems with text editing. In the case of the Dothel sonatas, Nicklaus Delius provides an excellent introduction to the composer's biography, the sources and style of his music, and the significance of the compositions as early examples of flute sonatas with a fully-realized keyboard accompaniment whose bass line cannot be doubled by additional instruments. However, there is not so much as a guess as to their date of composition (which, based on their style, was probably in the 1770s).

Problems with dating also arise in the volume of keyboard concertos. The most substantial work included in this volume is the keyboard concerto in C major by Carlo Antonio Campioni, an amazing artifact of keyboard composition from eighteenth-century Italy whose very existence was unknown until the purchase of the Ricasoli collection by the University of Louisville. Indeed, its beauty and stylistic richness contribute much to an understanding of Thomas Jefferson's extravagant admiration for Campioni's music. A date in the 1750s would be probable for the composition of the concerto; however, the editors specify ca. 1780, a date that could only be entertained on the assumption that Campioni was stubbornly resistant to stylistic developments of the 1770s. In his introductory essay for the Vaňhal concerto, Paul R. Bryan's asserts that this work dates from the late 1770s or early 1780s; this must be questioned on the grounds that it does not contain a rondo finale; in general, its stylistic profile would be quite compatible with the early or mid-1770s.

The edition of a concerto in F major by Andrea Luchesi is accompanied by a highly polemical essay by the amateur Italian musicologist Giorgio Taboga. Taboga goes too far in trying to draw attention to Luchesi's importance as a stylistic model for Mozart and as a teacher of the composers Ludwig van Beethoven and Antonín Reicha, both of whom he came to know after 1771, when he was a musician in the employ of the ecclesiastical court at Bonn. Taboga is correct to emphasize the importance of this modern edition of a keyboard concerto that was studied and performed for years in the Mozart household. Yet his claims about Luchesi's place as a 'builder' of late classic style and enormous 'influence' on Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven are never documented or described.

It is much to be regretted that the introductory notes attached to the edition of Guglielmi's magnificent oratorio *Debora e Sisara* are problematic in terms of historical criticism and style analysis. An example of the former is the assertion by the editors that the choice of the story of the Hebrew judge Deborah for oratorio productions at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples during Lent of 1788 and 1789 was made by Maria Carolina, queen of Naples, to promote a 'desired message' that women were capable of managing affairs of state. In fact, no documentation has ever been uncovered

to support the contention that Maria Carolina intervened with the management of the Teatro San Carlo in the selection of subject matter for dramatic productions. It must be considered that the production of an oratorio with a secular political message during Lent would expose Maria Carolina as presuming not only to deflect proper attention away from her husband's position within his own kingdom, but also from worship of God, a political miscalculation of enormous magnitude. As queen consort (not regent, and not queen regnant), the success of Maria Carolina's political influence in the kingdom of Naples depended solely on her husband's trust in her. Whatever influence she possessed derived from his pleasure and could be withdrawn at any time (in the early nineteenth century, it was). The Neapolitan royal couple in the late 1780s formed a true political and personal partnership that worked to the advantage of both the king and the queen. The public acknowledgment of a consort's usurpation of authority could only have served to undermine this partnership and divide public opinion.

The choice of subject matter for the libretto for *Debora e Sisara* can easily be related to trends in operatic culture of the day. Typically, oratorios followed fashions current in Italian serious opera. Oratorio librettists usually found suitable material from the Old Testament, which was full of stories that approximated the plots favored in serious opera concerning ruling families and their personal struggles. In the 1770s and 1780s, there was a trend to revive certain themes that had been in disfavor during the period of Metastasio's dominance. Metastasio tended to purge violence and unconventional sex roles from his librettos, but by the 1780s, warrior females such as Deborah were fashionable again, and so was the exploration of violence such as is found in Sernicola's libretto for *Debora e Sisara* (see Daniel E. Freeman, 'La guerriera amante: Representations of Amazons and Warrior Queens in Venetian Baroque Opera,' *The Musical Quarterly* 80 [1996], 431–60). It is difficult to see how the audiences at the San Carlo would automatically identify Deborah with Queen Maria Carolina, since the latter was neither a ruler nor a warrior female. In order to make this point, the editors would have had to document the use of stories about female rulers in Naples far in excess of what was seen in other Italian cities. There is no evidence that Maria Carolina tried to dictate the selection of dramatic librettos, no evidence that audiences would have identified her with Deborah, and no reason to believe that she viewed the public humiliation of her husband as an effective tool to enhance her political position.

The introductory essay for Guglielmi's *Debora e Sisara* also exhibits a weakness in style analysis that detracts from a true understanding of the interest of the work. An example is the misinterpretation of the finale of Part 1 of the score as a ternary structure 'roughly equivalent to sonata form.' The editors failed to recognize that the finale to Part 1 of the oratorio is actually a clever adaptation of the 'buffo finale' of comic opera style transferred to the genre of oratorio. Sonata form events are not present in any way. The basis of the finale is a confrontation between two opposing camps of characters (one headed by Debora, the other by Sisara), just as it would be in comic opera, including the stereotypical invectives hurled back and forth. The final section, in a quickened tempo, is related erroneously by the editors to the coda of sonata form. It is actually the final expression of intense anger between the two opposing groups of characters, which Lorenzo Da Ponte refers to as 'strepitosissimo' in the description of the buffo finale that appears in his *Extract from the Life of Lorenzo Da Ponte* of 1819.

Any introduction to a critical edition is likely to incur the criticism of at least some scholars; the value of the contribution always lies primarily in the fresh availability of the music, which can speak eloquently for itself. The editions of the *Monuments of Tuscan Music* will surely be useful to many students, scholars, and performers: it provides valuable evidence of stylistic practice, sources of performance repertory, and demonstrations of the rich musical traditions of the Tuscan region of Italy.



Research Report

La Musique du Diable (1711)

An obscure specimen of fantastic literature throws light on the elusive opera diva Marie-Louise Desmatins (fl. 1682–1708)

Ilias Chrissochoidis

Music's inroads into Hell go back as far as Orpheus. His piercing of the veil that keeps our world apart from its unknown other has earned him popularity throughout the ages. So it is that the resurrection of ancient drama ca. 1600 was placed in his magical hands. In opera after 1700, however, practitioners of Orphean drama were often regarded as agents of the underworld: their descents into Hades appeared more like repatriation than reenactments of Orpheus' Mission Impossible. Thus can we account for the following statement:

De mettre une fameuse Actrice de l'Opera de Paris, [...] Libertine connuë, dans les Enfers; quel tort lui peut-on faire! [what harm can be done by placing a famous actress of the Parisian opera [...] known debauchee, in hell!]

The passage concerns Marie-Louise Desmatins, an historically elusive star of the *Académie Royale de Musique*, and appears in the obscure novel *La Musique du Diable* from 1711. Very little is known about Desmatins, apart from the basic documentation of her career (1682–1708; her short entry in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* lacks a bibliography). The novel itself (LA | MUSIQUE | DU | DIABLE | OU | Le Mercure Galant devalisé. | [the zodiac] | A PARIS, | Chez Robert le Turc, ruë d'Enfer. | M. DCC. XI.) survives in only a few copies and is practically unknown in the musicological literature (although it is available as part of the microform series *Eighteenth Century French Fiction*). It merits attention not only for its references to Desmatins and Jean-Baptiste Lully, but also for the unusual light that it casts on French operatic culture at the dawn of *le siècle des Lumières*.

La Musique du Diable is a narrative of episodic structure, featuring sundry historical figures and their interactions with the underworld. Desmatins is the first such character, which suggests proximity between her death and the novel's writing, or at least the strong impact of her loss on Parisian society:

La mort de la belle *Desmatins* [...] chagrina entierement toute cette célèbre Academie de Musique, *Francine* [its director] en pensa mourir de douleur, [Jean] *D'un*, [Gabriel Vincent] *Thevenart*, & * * * * * s'en arracherent quelques cheveux, de desespoir; *Grouin* Garde du Tresor Roial, qui l'avoit si tendrement aimée durant plusieurs années, fut touché si vivement de la perte de cette belle fille, qu'il protesta devant un assemblée nombreuse, qu'il eut sacrifié tout son

bien & sa grosse fortune, pour racheter la vie à cette chere Amante, si ses Pistoles & sa Monnoie eussent étez de recette dans l'autre monde. (1–2)

[The death of the beautiful Desmatins [...] grieved entirely this famous Academy of Music, Francine thinking of dying of sorrow; D'un, Thevenart, & **** pulling out their hair in desperation; the Royal treasurer Grouin, who had loved her so tenderly for many years, was so deeply touched by the loss of this beautiful girl, that he protested before a numerous assembly, he would have sacrificed all his goods and his great wealth to buy back the life of this dear lover, had his pistols and money had any currency in the other world.]

Later in the book, we learn from Pluto himself that she died 'à la fleur de son âge, & dans un tems où elle plaisoit plus que jamais à toute la terre' (243) [at the bloom of her age and at a time when she would have pleased more than ever in the entire world]. Given her debut in 1682, this would make her around forty years old. Jérôme de La Gorce dates her birth to 1670 (La Gorce [ed.], Louis Ladvoat, *Lettres sur l'Opéra à l'abbé Dubos suivies de [']Description de la Vie et Moeurs, de l'Exercice et l'État des Filles de l'Opéra[']* [Paris: Cicerò, 1993], 13). How exactly did she perish? Readers outside Los Angeles may not believe what follows, but who dares to counter Pluto's word? Trying to cope with her weight problem, Desmatins had her excess fat removed by operation by a local butcher:

elle se fit tirer huit à dix livres de graisse, ce qui fut fait fort dextrement par un des plus habils Chirurgiens de Paris; mais le malheur voulut pour elle que six semaines après elle mourut de cette belle équipée, & voilà ce qui nous la conduit ici. (245)

[she had eight to ten pounds of fat removed, performed most dexterously by one of the best surgeons of Paris; but misfortune decreed that six weeks later she would die of this beautiful figure, & has directed her to us here.]

If this passage is true, Desmatins qualifies as the earliest martyr of liposuction in operatic history. But there is more, and things now turn macabre (parental discretion advised):

peu de jours après avoir été dégraisée, croiant être hors de danger, elle voulut un peu se divertir aux depens de ses meilleurs amis, elle fit faire de bons Cervelas, des Boudins, des Saucisses, & des Andouilles, dans lesquels, elle y dit mêler de sa graisse, & aiant employé un chaircutier à cette belle commission, elle en fit present à tous ceux à qui la fantaisie lui prit d'en envoyer, elle n'épargna pas même son cher Garde du Trésor Roial, non plus que ses plus fidels Amans, en un mot tous ceux qui en mangerent, demeurèrent d'accord tous d'une voix que de leurs vies, il ne leur étoit tombé de si frians morceaux. (245–46)

[a few days after she had her fat removed, thinking she was out of danger, she wanted to divert herself at the expense of her best friends; she had prepared fine saveloys, puddings, sausages, and andouilles wherein she said to mix her fat, & having employed a butcher for this noble commission, presented them to anyone that her fancy picked, not sparing even her dear Royal treasurer nor her most devoted lovers, in one word to anyone who upon eating them would unanimously agree that they had never come across pieces so tasty in their lives.]

Mixing our bodily fat into other people's food may not be the highest mark of friendship. Alas, Desmatins had little time to savor her prank:

dans le moment qu'elle commençoit à se promener dans sa chambre, que les Couturieres & les Tailleurs travailloient jour & nuit à lui faire des corps, & des nouveaux habits conformes à la beauté, & à la delicatesse de sa nouvelle taille, la mort impitoyablement nous l'envoia dans ces lieux, où elle jouit à present d'un bonheur, auquel elle ne s'attendoit pas, & qu'elle n'avoit pas lieu d'esperer. (246–47)

[at the moment she would begin to walk in her chamber, and dressmakers and tailors would work day and night to make models and new garments appropriate for the beauty & delicacy of her new body, death ruthlessly sent her to these grounds, where she presently enjoys a happiness, which she had not experienced and had not hoped for.]

What kind of creature was Desmatins? Hardly sympathetic, if we believe the charges she faces at the gates of Hell. She is accused of prostituting herself for financial gain, spoiling marriages, leading respectable merchants to bankruptcy, transmitting venereal disease to politicians, having acid thrown on a woman's face, contemplating the assassination of the director of the Academy, and the poisoning of two prelates and many fellow actresses (Moreau, Renaut, Deschares, Florence, Rochois, and Lemaire). In addition, she is charged with megalomania to the point of wearing her theatre costumes at home, and behaving like a princess; of neglecting confession for twenty-two years; and having abortions no less than four times (26–31). Unmoved by the gravity of accusations, Desmatins concedes that some are true, but protests 'je n'ai rien fait, que tout ce qu'une Fille de l'Opera passablement jolie comme moi, ai deù faire' (31) [I have done nothing that an opera girl as tolerably pretty as I should not have done]. Nay, she becomes bolder, claiming that responsibility for her actions should be placed on the devil who had possessed her: 'interoges le, & le punissez, car pour moy, je suis la douceur même, & la plus innocente créature qu'il y ait eu sur terre' (32) [interrogate and punish him, because as far as I am concerned, I am sweetness itself & and the most innocent creature that has existed on earth]. Condemned to be thrown into the Tartar, Desmatins is saved by a decree from Pluto himself. Calling her 'nôtre bien-aimée la *Desmatins*,' [our beloved Desmatins] the King affirms 'toute sa conduite n'a été réglée que par nos ordres, & que tant qu'elle a resté sur la terre, ce n'a été que pour la gloire & la propagation de notre Empire' (34) [all her behavior was regulated only by our orders, & so long as she stayed on earth, it was only for the glory and spread of our empire]; he orders her immediate transfer to his palace. There, Pluto receives her with the highest honors. The moral is hard to miss: the 'hell-of-a-life' that Desmatins had enjoyed as an opera diva earned her a 'glorious' life in Hell.

Bibliographic records describe *La Musique du Diable* as the 'Supposed adventures of Mlle. Desmâtins, of the Opéra, in the Inferno.' Actually, only a small percentage of the novel's three hundred and eighty-one pages focus on Desmatins and other musicians. Of these last, Jean-Baptiste Lully receives the most attention. No reason is given for his presence in Hell (he had been dead for some twenty years), but his song lures Desmatins to cross the gates ('voici [...] *Lulli* qui chante [...] est-il ici? [...] est-il possible que je retrouve ici mon cher ami *Lulli*, ha! que je suis hereuse,' 13,

Graduate Student Representative Report: A Student's Perspective on Opera in New York City

Karen Hiles

14–15) [here is [...] Lully sings [...] is he here? [...] is it possible that I find here my dear Lully, ah! how happy I am]. In a subsequent episode, Pluto describes how Lully, himself waiting at the same place as Desmatins, taught Cerberus to sing in three parts (295–305). The most memorable scene, however, puts Lully at the center of a sadistic concert (curiously anticipating Monty Python's 'Musical Mice'). Pluto commands Lully to entertain his company, Desmatins included, with 'un petit air diabolique' performed by 'tous des plus fameux Maîtres à chanter de la Musique du Roy' [all the most famous singing masters of the King's Music] now transformed into sea lions. Lully asks for a quarter of an hour to adjust his music for the ensemble, but is embarrassed to find that they cannot sing. To solve the problem, Pluto orders him to tune their voices by pulling on strings attached to their ears by fishhooks (53–58). This episode alone seems to justify the novel's title and is depicted in the engraving opposite the title page.

How seriously can we take *La Musique du Diable*? Fictional accounts, especially those dealing with the underworld, have limited factual weight. However, given the paucity of documentary evidence on Desmatins, we should not be too hasty in dismissing the novel. While no one expects her infernal adventures to be true, the details of her earthly life are sufficient to intrigue the historian. Actually, the author himself describes his method as 'les fixions mêlées agréablement avec le vrai-semblance' (Preface) [fictions pleasantly mixed with likelihood]. The claim that Desmatins was mistress of the Royal Treasurer Grouin ('vous faisoit douze mille livres de Rente, sans parler des présens perpetuels que vous receviez de sa part tous les jours, dont il vous accabloit,' 18 [you would make twelve thousand livres, without speaking of the continuous presents you would receive from him any day you would meet him]) is too specific for the historian to ignore. Indeed, a contemporary satire recovered by La Gorce describes opera stars as prostitutes ('Desmatins [le fait] pour de l'argent', 93) [Desmatins [does it] for money].

Even if Desmatins' crimes are fictional or wildly exaggerated, there still remains a core fact, which the author acknowledges:

tout ce qu'ils vont voir au sujet de cette fameuse Actrice si connue, n'est qu'une leçon qu'on donne à ceux, qui soit par leur tempérament naturel, le penchant qu'ils ont pour les femmes de Théâtre, le peu de comparaison qu'ils font du vice avec la vertu, & les enchainemens malheureux dans lesquels le commerce avec ces sortes de créatures les entraînent, les écartent furieusement du chemin du Ciel. (Preface)

[all that they are going to see about this so well-known, famous actress is only a lesson we give to those who by their natural constitution, the inclination they have towards women of the stage, the little comparison they make between vice and virtue & the unhappy chains that their conduct with this kind of creatures leads them, stray furiously from the divine path.]

This, then, is a cautionary tale against the perils of attachment to theatre: Marie-Louise Desmatins, the recently deceased priestess of French opera, became an ideal target for moral and social criticism against the institution and its culture. In oblique yet discernible ways, *La Musique du Diable* exposes the degeneration of the Orphean project that we call music drama, and aligns itself to contemporary criticism of opera in France and England (Boileau-Despréaux, Dennis, Steele, and Addison).

One of the unique advantages of being a graduate student in musicology in New York City is having direct access to the wealth of opera that the city has to offer. The Metropolitan Opera (www.metopera.org) and New York City Opera (www.nycopera.com) both present fairly flexible student ticket programs, and with Peter Gelb's arrival at the Met this past season, the two houses have nearly outdone each other in their attempts to attract younger audiences and to make opera a stronger presence in the city.

Yet New York's opera life is not confined to the performances themselves. An extensive network of opera blogs has sprung up over the past few years. These online communities, provocative and entertaining in their own right, might also serve as models for the kinds of communities that Emily Green called for in her final column for this Newsletter (Issue 10). She noted the scarcity of opportunities for students to meet each other, discuss their work, and commiserate about graduate school—pointing out that although conferences present possibilities for this kind of peer engagement, a mode of contact that is at once more frequent, more casual, and which does not require any travel, would be ideal. The Internet meets these conditions, and the New York opera blogs can provide a model for such a forum.

The recent changes in marketing and programming for the two main opera companies in New York are palpable: in recent seasons, City Opera has extended its repertory both further back into the past and closer to the present. In addition to the eleven Handel operas in their repertory, a centerpiece of the coming season will be Purcell's *King Arthur* in a new production by Mark Morris with costumes by Isaac Mizrahi. (The two also teamed up for Rameau's *Platée* at City Opera in 2000.) City Opera's programming of lesser-known contemporary works will continue in the upcoming season with Barber's *Vanessa* and a new production of Richard Danielpour's *Margaret Garner* (libretto by Toni Morrison) of 2005.

Next door at the Lincoln Center, the Met has completely revamped its image by marketing its singers as Hollywood celebrities (see especially the advance photos advertising next season's new productions) and by positioning itself as a vibrant part of city life. Met advertisements appear on city buses and in the subway, and last season's opening night performance was simulcast in Times Square.

However, developments at the Met are not restricted to publicity. Seven new productions will take to the stage next season—the most since 1966–67 when the Met first arrived at the Lincoln Center. These new productions likewise broaden the Met's repertory, bringing cutting-edge designers and long-neglected composers into the fold, and extending the repertory following City Opera's lead. Recent new productions of eighteenth-century works include Handel's *Rodelinda* (in a production by Stephan Wandsworth); Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* (the 1762 Vienna version, in a production by Mark Morris); and Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (in Julie Taymor's production). These sit beside a new commission: Tan Dun's *The First Emperor*. The upcoming season at the Met will include much-anticipated new productions of Britten's *Peter Grimes* (directed by Tony award winner John Doyle) and Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* (in a new production by Wandsworth that will mark the first performance of this opera at the Met since 1917).

For those of us specializing in the eighteenth century, then, there has been no shortage of lively performances and new productions of eighteenth-century opera in New York. Between Handel at City Opera, the Met's recent embrace of Gluck, and of course all of the Mozart operas at both houses (not to mention productions in the city's other performance venues, such as Brooklyn Academy of Music), New York City has confirmed its status as a world leader in opera in general, and eighteenth-century opera in particular.

In another column for the Newsletter, Emily drew a parallel between the explosion of music on the Internet in recent years and the boom in music publishing in the mid-to-late eighteenth century. We might broaden these historical parallels to compare the rapid spread of a democratizing print culture in the eighteenth century to the transformation of the public sphere (once again) with the development of the Internet in the past fifteen years or so. The proliferation of specialized groups and organizations on the Internet attests to the technology's potential to link people with common interests and to allow them to actively participate in those communities, no matter how far apart members may be. The opera blogs are one example here: with all of the changes at the Met and City Opera, audiences have had plenty to think about in terms of opera's place in society, radical *vs.* traditional production styles, the make-up of the operatic canon, and so forth. The debates on these topics have figured largely in opera blog discussions (which have often been heated). The formation of an eighteenth-century musicology web site or blog specifically for graduate students is something that we might consider in answer to Emily's call, perhaps following the opera bloggers as models. For now, however, let's take a closer look at the best of the opera blogs.

In the political realm, blogs have opened the door to a powerful alternative to mainstream media as a source of information and opinion. To some extent, this is true for the opera blogs, too: the bloggers are usually not academics, nor are they usually traditional print-journalism critics. There are a few notable exceptions, however: Alex Ross is one example of a cross-over figure, sometimes citing bloggers' comments in his reviews for *The New Yorker*; one blog with a decidedly academic approach (although not restricted to the topic of opera) is 'Dial "M" for Musicology' (www.musicology.typepad.com/dialm).

The best of the opera bloggers are riotously funny, sometimes irreverent, but consistently thoughtful. Among the many, my favorites include: The Wellsungs (www.wellsung.blogspot.com), Maury D'Annato (www.maurydannato.blogspot.com), Alex Ross (www.therestisnoise.com), Night after Night (www.nightafternight.blogs.com), and La Cieca (www.parterre.com). James Jorden represented La Cieca (the first opera blog) on a panel discussion about opera and technology, which brought together critics, singers, directors, scholars, and administrators as part of the 'Technologies of the Diva' Conference at Columbia University in March 2007 (www.italianacademy.columbia.edu/divas/).

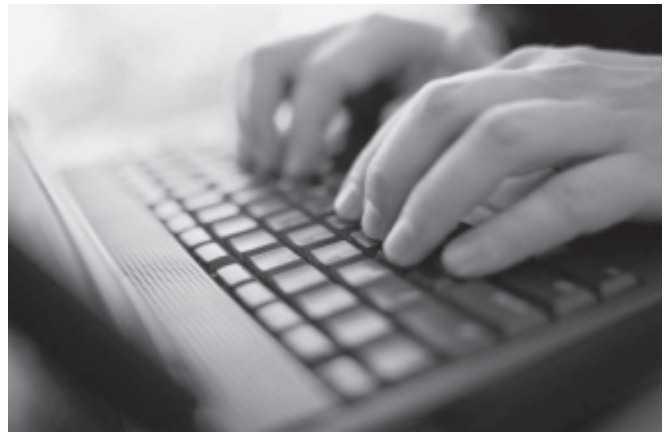
The sense of community among the bloggers is evident. A year ago, when Renée Fleming appeared in the title role of *Rodelinda* at the Met, a debate ensued in the blogosphere over whether Fleming was right for the role, or even right for Handel. The divisions were fairly clear: the mainstream print critics showered the performance with praise, as that of a star, while the bloggers scrambled to understand how those critics could have come away with positive impressions from the same performances that they had heard. The bloggers' posts ultimately explored a range of topics including divadom,

Handel, performance practice, and our expectations today for early opera amidst the realities of twenty-first century arts funding and programming. Admittedly, the bloggers are often more concerned with today's performances and performers than with music history. But that concern keeps the discussions dynamic.

Those musicologists who worry about the continually predicted 'death of classical music' will find in the blogs a thriving conversation about today's opera world and thoughtful statements about opera's future. In a post from 31 January 2006 (accessed 17 July 2007) about Taymor's production of *Die Zauberflöte*, Alex from Wellsung wrote:

Taymor's stagecraft [is] perfectly pitched to allow the opera's whimsy and seriousness equal footing. . . . This is spectacle at a human scale, and thus a very different, and refreshing, experience from the cinematic lens through which we are used to viewing musical theatre. In that sense, it is worth noting that last night actually made me less stoked about the hypothetical of a Taymor Ring. For all the *spectacular, spectacular* of Wagner's tetralogy, I think it [would] suffer from the performative and self-reflexive trademarks which make Taymor's staging so enjoyable. The "Ring" is meant to *exist* less than it is meant to be performed. While this has no bearing on whether a staging is literal to rocky outcroppings, etc., it does mean the fourth wall is supposed to be firmly in place, and the circle of suspended belief kept whole throughout. In this way, Wagner's conception of the stage really does anticipate film, whereas Taymor's strengths flow in the opposite direction. On a related note, it's funny how I had planned to get sick of Mozart after last week, but all I wanted to do when I got home last night was put on *Don Giovanni*.

This 'drastic' preoccupation with productions, performances, performers, and the spectator's experience of all kinds of musical theater is also a good point of contact for musicologists, especially those who would like to see more concentration on live performance (whether musical, spoken, or danced), recording culture, and larger questions of listening and technology. As musicologists struggle on the AMS email lists to define our changing relationship to 'the public' through debates about the usefulness of Wikipedia and how that site may challenge our position as 'experts'



amidst the new communication possibilities and systems of authority created by the Internet, we might take a closer look at the opera blogs. They present a diverse community of informed music lovers, eager to discuss their favorite music with anyone who will join them. To me, this is the sign of a thriving music culture—one that is not separate from an ivory tower, just larger than it.

In his recent account of Mozart Year for this Newsletter, Cliff Eisen observed: 'traditional ways of assessing the health of classical music are slanted not only to traditional markets, but also to ways of thinking about the world community that are outmoded in this age of the Internet and communication technology generally.' The opera blogs are a prime example of a new mode of communication that is practically trumpeting the health of at least one part of the world of classical music performance today. We can be optimistic and excited about the changing face of opera in New York City, the blogosphere that has embraced it, and the opportunities that the entire scene offers to anyone—whether that person is young or old, a fan or an academic, a New Yorker or someone far away sitting at her computer.



Conference Report

Gloria Eive

East-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Meeting,
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, October 26–29, 2006.

South-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Meeting,
Tulsa, Oklahoma, February 22–24, 2007.

The recent annual meetings of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) and three regional societies, Southeastern Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SEASECS), South-Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SCSECS), and East-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (EC-ASECS), reaffirmed the broad, inter-disciplinary perspective on which these societies are founded. This perspective also informed the scholarship and breadth of the individual papers, which addressed an increasingly broad range of disciplines and sub-disciplines.

The regional societies' annual meetings are always well-attended and very lively affairs. In addition to their local members, the regional conferences, like the ASECS meetings, include participating scholars from Canada, Great Britain, a variety of European countries, and cities and institutions throughout the United States. The smaller size of these meetings fosters the special conviviality that characterizes the regional meetings. As in previous years, the SEASECS annual meeting was held in conjunction with the ASECS conference (and the regional society's activities and twelve very diverse panels were incorporated into the general ASECS schedule reviewed in the next issue of this Newsletter). Conference panels at these meetings are limited to three or four papers each, thus providing ample time for well-paced readings and discussion. However, the parallel scheduling of the conference panels at both the regional meetings and the much larger ASECS meeting produced the inevitable conflicts for those who wished to attend two or more sessions that were meeting simultaneously.

Historically, the ASECS and regional meetings have offered relatively few panels or individual papers specifically devoted to music topics. Happily, this pattern has been changing in recent years, with both an increasing number of papers on musical subjects and special musical performances. Theatre and visual arts are also somewhat better represented in panel and paper topics, but the general focus is on literature in all its forms and genres, and, within this, the roles of gender, sex, and women's activities. The chronological framework is the 'long' eighteenth century, which extends from *circa* 1650 to *circa* 1850, although most of the papers are located within the eighteenth century itself.

While the conference themes of the EC-ASECS and SCSECS annual meetings are intended as guidelines rather than obligatory subjects, they frequently have a salutary effect on the range and focus of panel themes and paper topics. This was the case at the EC-ASECS meeting held at Gettysburg College. The conference theme, 'Civil Conflict,' was clearly conceived with reference to the setting, and inspired an array of papers on military, political, and religious conflicts, and on musical, artistic, and psychological strife. It was also a particularly felicitous theme for the two interdisciplinary panels on 'Dramatic Conflict in Literature and the Performing Arts.' The papers addressed a variety of artistic conflicts and their representations in spoken drama, satire, and opera, French opera in particular.

In one of these panels, James M. McGlathery (Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) explored psychological conflict in music in 'Warring with Oneself in Gluck's *Armide*.' Focusing on Grétry and amorous sentimentalism, Janet Leavens (University of Iowa) examined the aesthetic ideals and underlying culture of worldliness in *opéra comique* ('Beyond Sentimentalism: Grétry's *Zémire et Azor* and the Culture of Worldliness'). Adding another perspective, JoAnn Udovich (Fairfield, Pennsylvania) considered the French interpretation of American Indian culture, distilled through Rameau's dramatic *opéra-ballet* *Les Indes Galantes* ('Native Americans and the 'Dance of Peace': the Reception of Rameau's Opera-Ballet, *Les Indes Galantes*'). In my (Saint Mary's College of California) 'Shades of Meaning in Beethoven's *Fidelio*,' I examined the internal conflicts and musical nuances that underlie the opera's noble political rhetoric. Expanding on these dramatic conflicts, Linda Reesman's (CUNY/Hofstra University) paper on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's play *Osorio* (1797), 'The Drapery of Revolutionary Life: Tyranny Clothed as Liberty,' identified the poet's dramatic language as the rhetorical consequence of the French Revolution and a growing concern for bourgeois welfare. Addressing another type of conflict, Kelly Malone (Sewanee: The University of the South) offered a wryly humorous commentary on the amorous dramas at court and the contemporary satires inspired by the rivalry between the mistresses of Charles II (Nell Gwyn, Mary 'Moll' Davis, and Louise de Kéroualle) and the dual nature of the monarch himself ('Charles II and Bodies Politic: Popular Representations of Amorous Conflicts and Intrigues at Court').

Two recitals framed the conference, complementing the historical and cultural implications of the Gettysburg setting, and illustrating the colonists' imported European musical traditions. Tom Jolin, performing on hammered dulcimer, opened the conference with traditional and popular tunes popular in the Colonies during and shortly after the Revolutionary period, and Gettysburg College's Sunderman Woodwind Quintet provided a chamber

music recital from the contemporary European musical repertoire. The program included works by Quantz, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, and Milhaud's retrospective, *Suite d'après Corrette*, and provided a particularly appropriate culmination to a stimulating and very enjoyable conference.

The SCSECS annual meeting, held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, offered an expansive theme—'Across and Between Eighteenth Centuries'—as an encouragement to participants to address interdisciplinary connections of all degrees. The results were evident in the extensive array of panel and paper topics. The two panels on performing arts, 'Music, Drama, Art, and Literature: Parts of a Whole in Eighteenth-Century Thought,' focused on opera and theatrical concerns, creating a cohesive unit with the six conference panels devoted to drama and dramatic literature. In 'Seducer and Seduced in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*,' James M. McGlathery (Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) explored the inner motivations and implications of Giovanni's behaviour, and the musical-textual evidence for his role not as a rapist, but as a seducer. This writer examined the shift in musical and dramatic characterization of 'innocence' in opera buffa from Galuppi's and Goldoni's *Il Mondo della Luna* (1750) to Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* (1786) and Paisiello's *Nina, sia la pazza per amore* (1789) ('Goldoni, Galuppi, and "Dramma Giocoso": Musical illusions of innocence').

Colby H. Kullman (University of Mississippi) and Linda Resman (CUNY/Hofstra University) explored dramatic treatment from contrasting perspectives. Kullman's 'Oliver Goldsmith's Tony Lumpkin: A Man for All Seasons' discussed the ways in which Goldsmith's efforts to banish sentimental comedy, and the madcap antics of Tony Lumpkin, restore mirthful comedy to its rightful place on the stage. Addressing darkest tragedy (comedy's 'other face'), Resman considered 'The Theatrical as [a] Suicidal Agency.' She identified Madame de Staël's heroine *Corinne* (1806), and actress Sarah Siddons's dramatic performances, as exemplary models of the romantic theatricality that is associated with feminine suicides.

Kelly Malone (Sewanee) and Frieda Koeninger (Sam Houston State University) provided new insights on the cultural and social implications of two popular eighteenth-century entertainments. Malone explored the extra-textual and social presumptions in English chapbook and ballad texts ('Baffled Knights and Clever Maids: Gender, Class, and Conflict in English Chapbooks and Ballads') while Koeninger examined the political and cultural significance in the implied theatricality of the gambling salons, which served as popular entertainment venues in Colonial Mexico ('Gambling Salons in Late Colonial Mexico'). I presented two papers on the practical aspects of musicology in interdisciplinary panels: 'Recreating the Aural Dimension of a Musical Score' (in a round table discussion on 'Researching and Teaching Material Culture'); and 'Archives, Tax Records, and Account Books: Chasing Hidden Treasures' (reflections on researching musical material in non-musical archives). Trio Tulsa's recital of piano trios by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven provided a conclusion to this very diverse conference.

A further report, on the American and Southeastern Societies for Eighteenth Century Studies Annual Meetings (Atlanta, Georgia, March 22–25, 2007), will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

continued from page 1

sparked controversy among audience members who were newly sensitized to historically informed approaches; nevertheless, his advocacy for generative and additive processes resonate with the work's imagery. In "'Paintings for the English": Haydn's *Creation* and a Mimetic Taboo in Eighteenth-Century Music Aesthetics,' the young German scholar Felix Diergarten (Dresden Hochschule für Musik) accounted for differences in German and English reception of *The Creation* with regard to musical pictorialisms, suggesting that the English were more predisposed to the work because of earlier Handelien employment of similar procedures. In my own (University of Toronto) paper, 'Revolution, Rebirth and the Sublime in Haydn's *L'anima del filosofo* and *The Creation*,' I suggested that these two contrasting yet complementary works articulate a change in world view—from fear, darkness, and chaos to light, love, and rejoicing—during the turbulent final decade of the eighteenth century. The creation myth recounted within Haydn's Orpheus opera—the hero's failed enlightenment journey, the opera's aborted birth, and the composer's choral style—achieve closure in *The Creation*, thereby permitting a fuller appreciation of 'the sublime.'

Larry Kramer (Fordham University) concluded the proceedings with the second keynote address of day, 'Recalling the Sublime: The Logic of the Creation in *The Creation*.' Many of us are familiar with Kramer's mesmerizing and far-ranging presentation style, if not his early contentious publications on this work. And this particular performance did not disappoint. For *The Creation* to be utopian, he argued, it must rescind the Fall and re-create a prelapsarian world through a withdrawal of the sublime. The sublime obliterates itself in the act of creation; indeed, only by dismantling the sublime can the world can be created anew. His *tour de force* in deconstruction annihilated both *The Creation* and the analytical process, leaving many to ponder what the future of analysis ought to be. Might this be a topic for a future study day?



Call for Papers/Seminars

The Sixtieth Anniversary International Conference: 'The Georgian Playhouse and its Continental Counterparts 1750–1850,' will be held from September 12–15, 2008 at the Georgian Theatre Royal, Richmond, Yorkshire, UK. This Call for Papers encourages theatre historians, academics and practitioners to submit proposals for papers to be given at the conference. Topics on many different aspects of Georgian Theatrical life and practice are most welcome. Selected papers will be published after the conference in a commemorative volume. Prospective participants should send an abstract of no more than 250 words for consideration to: richmond@theatresearch.co.uk no later than October 31, 2007.



Up-coming Conference

The international symposium 'Understanding Bach's B Minor Mass' will be held from November 2–4, 2007 at the School of Music & Sonic Arts, Queen's University Belfast. For further information contact Yo Tomita, Email: y.tomita@qub.ac.uk and see <http://www.music.qub.ac.uk/tomita/bachbib/conferences/Belfast-Nov2007/>