



have pushed his penetrating reading of period concerns with performance even further by delving into two texts attributed to the poet and secretary François-Antoine Chevrier: *La constitution de l'Opéra* (1736) and the *Constitution du patriarche de l'Opéra, qui condamne cent une Propositions extraites de deux Ecrits intitulés: Reflexions sur les vrais principes de l'Harmonie, & Lettre sur l'origine & les progrès de l'Académie Royale de Musique* (1754), the latter also associated with the abbé Pellegrin.

Opera in the Age of Rousseau shines not only in its insightful tour through familiar polemics but also in its awareness of generic and stylistic trends that figure all too infrequently in scholarship on French staged works from this period. Comedy and the comic have their place in Charlton's numerous analytical discussions, all illustrated with elegantly set musical examples. He speaks to evidence of cross-pollination between theatres, describing comedy at the Opéra as an incorporation of features associated with *opéra-comique*, including the practice of closing plays and lighter lyric works with *vaudevilles* (286). This is a trend that Jean-Joseph Mouret exploited in *Les amours de Ragonde* (1714) and that Rousseau parlayed into the strophic song 'L'art à l'Amour est favorable' in the eighth scene of *Le devin du village*. Charlton also claims that we might make sense of Rameau's *Platée* (1745), the *ballet buffon* later styled as a *comédie lyrique*, as a fully composed poetic and musical debate about French language (346). This reading of one aspect of the comic subtlety of Rameau's work expands on research by Downing Thomas in 'Rameau's *Platée* Returns: A Case of Double Identity in the *Querelle des bouffons*' (*Cambridge Opera Journal* 18/1 (2006), 1–19). Where Thomas calls attention to repetitive, even incongruous use of pitches and timbres in *Platée*, Charlton elaborates on the work's phatic exclamations and its poetic emphasis on mute French vowels. In meditations on *Platée* as well as in accounts of how performers including Denis-François Tribou, François Poirier, Marie Fel and Pierre Jélyotte used operatic comedy to break free from heroic or sentimental roles, Charlton himself breaks free from a more traditional account of the changes that swept through French staged works in the eighteenth century (273). His study highlights the vigour and realism with which Rousseau and his colleagues turned to opera; it also emphasizes the rewards awaiting any modern musicologist who confronts these repertoires alongside their volatile reception histories.

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MARK DARLOW

STAGING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: CULTURAL POLITICS AND THE PARIS OPÉRA, 1789–1794

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In *Staging the French Revolution: Cultural Politics and the Paris Opéra 1789–1794* Mark Darlow offers a cultural history of the Paris Opéra as an institution, interrogating the external forces that affected the Opéra, its internal policies and politics, and its repertory decisions over the course of three seasons during the French Revolution up to and including the Terror of 1793–1794. By identifying the Opéra, both institutionally and aesthetically, as a site of negotiation in a changing, politically charged historical and cultural context, this monograph effectively eradicates the unproductive label of 'propaganda' commonly attached to musical works of the Revolution. Darlow's approach and conclusions open up a plethora of research avenues not only for opera scholars and music historians of the French Revolution, but also for scholars of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music in general.



Darlow's meticulous archival work offers a new lens through which to examine musical works that were previously too often presumed to have been performed under the iron fist of a terroristic government. Music historians will appreciate the extensive care taken with citations of documents from the Archives Nationales, providing document and folio numbers when possible, and the detailed footnotes carefully tracing evidence that for years remained obscured behind platitudes and generalizations. In addition, Darlow usefully highlights promising archival sources that remain to be studied.

Staging the French Revolution begins by examining external forces on governance and management of the Opéra from 1789 until the coup of 9 Thermidor (27 July 1794), after which the execution of Robespierre brought the Reign of Terror to an end; it then focuses on internal politics and policies concerning repertory, specifically the negotiation of financing, production, reception and revision of works. Darlow highlights the common, simplistic approach to theatre institutions in revolutionary historiography, which assumes centralized, top-down control by the state, particularly during the Terror. As a corrective, he interrogates the overlap and communication among various organs of control over the Opéra, as well as its level of compliance with these bodies and the relationships between these authorities, the Opéra repertory and reception. Beginning in Chapter 1 with the Opéra's administrative situation on the eve of Revolution, Darlow establishes that while it would be convenient to attribute the Opéra's administrative changes to the Revolution, the question of whether the Opéra should be run publicly or privately and at whose risk had been an increasingly pressing issue since the late 1770s. Although almost everyone agreed that the Opéra represented a type of national monument, how this monument should be supported and sustained remained under debate. In the next two chapters Darlow demonstrates that the ideological concern of who should run a 'national' theatre became urgent as revolutionary discourses escalated, and ultimately the king's household passed authority over the Opéra to the municipal government by April 1790.

During the remainder of 1790 conflation of 'moral improvements with economic deregulation' (109) resulted in the deregulation of theatres through the Le Chapelier Bill of January 1791. Tension remained between the compulsion to sustain a national theatre that served the people and the desire to deregulate, forcing the Opéra to deal with demand in a free market. Because Le Chapelier ostensibly liberated theatres from municipal meddling and subordination to the Opéra, Darlow shows, its continuing financial viability depended upon 'encouragement' in the form of money from the municipality (124). By November 1791 the municipality had transferred the Opéra to private enterprise in the hands of Louis Joseph Francœur and Jacques Cellier, a move that Darlow describes as the 'worst of both worlds' (138) in which sporadic financial support from the municipality obliged the Opéra to present hastily written, ideologically wrought works. Indeed, Francœur's and Cellier's reluctance to stage an anti-clerical work entitled *La passion du Christ* resulted in the incarceration of Francœur and the passing of authority from the two entrepreneurs to a committee of Opéra artists at the very moment when the Committee of Public Safety declared Terror the order of the day.

A major intervention into revolutionary historiography manifests itself in Darlow's careful attention to the Opéra as an institution during the Terror and the struggle for authority between the Commune (municipal powers) and the Committee (executive powers) that characterized almost the entire period. As he rightly puts it, 'in such a confused cultural context, where conflicting demands were placed on theaters, and where the Opéra's directors were arrested for refusing to perform the type of work that was later to be banned by the [Comité de salut public], the notion of state propaganda so often used to explain away the Opéra's repertory in 1793–94, mentioned by [Jean] Mongrédien, [Adélaïde de] Place, and [Emmet] Kennedy, is nonsense. On the contrary, the state had, at this moment, lost the initiative' (159). The Commune, in fact, turned out to be most culturally repressive. It was not until the end of June 1794 that the executive powers required theatres to submit repertory for examination before production. Previous scholarship has assumed such positive executive intervention throughout the Terror, but here Darlow proves that such state censorship was temporary and had little lasting impact. He effectively demonstrates that this struggle for authority actually stemmed from a real aesthetic debate among competing factions: the Convention, essentially Jacobin, and the Hébertists, seen as radical atheists. While the Convention



aimed for a more ‘aesthetically challenging form of art’ (178), the Hébertists promoted topical works that would ignite audience enthusiasm. In past scholarship these distinct groups have been conflated to represent a homogeneous, repressive whole, but Darlow points out that ‘to talk of propaganda is to ignore this complex negotiation and the differences of policy espoused by the different institutions, even at the very height of the Terror’ (178). By the end of the Terror, public utility and moral regeneration became the primary aim and theatres returned to their role as venues of instruction, rather than stifling ‘Hébertism’, allowing freedom for genius to cultivate these two main goals.

After identifying this contestation and competition, which radically revises the history of revolutionary theatre, Darlow then looks to the repertory for clues about these struggles. Although there are some discernible patterns to be found, in the conclusion he hesitates to confirm any kind of coherent, overarching policy. Instead, Darlow uses Opéra gate receipts to dispel two misconceptions about the company’s internal policy during the Revolution. He shows first that the Opéra was equally as likely as other Parisian venues to present new works, and second that apolitical works were no more popular than those offering other themes, thereby disproving Emmet Kennedy’s previous conclusions (Kennedy, *Theatre, Opera, and Audiences in Revolutionary Paris: Analysis and Repertory* (Westport: Greenwood, 1996)). While the disproving of past assumptions based on precise statistical evidence is certainly useful, the chapter may appear slightly out of place methodologically when compared with the rest of the monograph. Nonetheless, its implications remain pertinent to the overall study despite Darlow’s characterization of his statistical conclusions as ‘tentative’ (212).

In the final chapters, divided according to genre and season, Darlow chooses to focus on works that succeeded, as these would logically have more cultural and political relevance (213). His approach seeks shared structures revealed through repertory content as well as critical silence on the topic. One of his most significant revelations is the increased ‘conflation of author’s personality [and] fictional ideology’ (297) and the mixture of popular genres such as festivals and songs on the operatic stage, which emphasized the importance of the arts – and therefore of the Opéra itself – in forging the nation. Darlow deduces a formula in the ‘Republican Repertory (1792–1794)’, which typically consisted of works that read or interpreted contemporary issues and history with an ultimate goal of re-establishing a moral order within the diegesis. Despite their formulaic nature, a consensus did not exist on how to judge or receive such works aesthetically. Ultimately, Darlow establishes that even during the Terror the Opéra’s works were not appropriated in order to sway beliefs, but rather to fashion individual creators’ identities. This assertion drastically changes how musicologists should approach revolutionary music in the future.

If composers and librettists consciously created works among competing aesthetic discourses in order to rebrand their own images, much music that until now has been dismissed as government ‘propaganda’ deserves more careful consideration in French musical aesthetics. Previous scholarship that employs ‘thematic mapping’ (388) proves insufficient to parse out the complicated discourses that circulated via the Opéra and its works. Much in line with Laura Mason’s explanation of the heterogeneous song culture that developed under the Revolution, Darlow shows that Opéra oversight was not homogeneous, but a collection of conflicting factions that renegotiated its principles in relation both to the ancien régime and to new revolutionary discourses (see Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787–1799* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996)).

Staging the French Revolution proves more useful to scholars of music than Victoria Johnson’s *Backstage at the Revolution: How the Royal Paris Opera Survived the End of the Old Regime* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), which because of its roots in sociology focuses more on institutional than musical issues. Darlow’s innovative work combines and continues the pioneering methodologies of Alessandro Di Profio in *La révolution des bouffons: l’opéra italien au Théâtre de Monsieur 1789–1792* (Paris: CNRS, 2003) and M. Elizabeth C. Bartlet in *Étienne-Nicolas Méhul and Opera: Source and Archival Studies of Lyric Theatre during the French Revolution, Consulate, and Empire* (Heilbronn: Galland, 1999). While Darlow’s study was made possible by the previous work of André Tissier (see *Les spectacles à Paris pendant la Révolution: répertoire analytique, chronologique et bibliographique*, volumes 1–2 (Geneva: Droz, 1992–2002)) and Kennedy,



his careful attention to details outside of statistics has corrected the flawed paradigms through which revolutionary theatre has been studied until now. With this monograph, Darlow has changed the landscape of musical scholarship on the French Revolution, and as such his work has serious implications for scholars who study French music.

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BÉATRICE DIDIER

LE LIVRET D'OPÉRA EN FRANCE AU XVIII^E SIÈCLE

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Ever since the pioneering work of René Guiet, Patrick Smith and Cuthbert Girdlestone, the libretto has been recognized in eighteenth-century French opera scholarship as an important object of study in its own right. Béatrice Didier, author of *La musique des lumières* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), returns to opera in this, her first book-length study on music since that pioneering publication. The book is divided into various loosely defined areas. First is 'Les librettistes', which comprises some synthetic discussion of the cultural and social place of librettists in general, then an examination of the two major names – Quinault and Metastasio – before finally a study of four eighteenth-century writers who were also librettists (Fontenelle, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau). This is then followed by a study of the libretto itself, with chapters covering 'justifications' (by which Didier means both prefaces to operas and their literary sources), the different genres (the fifth of these, curiously, being entitled 'La période révolutionnaire'), languages and staging. Finally the question of myth is considered, with chapters covering the *merveilleux*, Rameau and 'Le premier romantisme'.

As this summary will hopefully have made clear, the book is structured as a survey of the genre of opera considered in its widest sense. Whilst 'though-composed' *tragédie en musique* is, of course, prominent, Didier does not neglect dialogue opera, ballet or other genres, and her chronological parameters allow for discussion of Revolutionary opera as well as revealing continuities across the whole century and into the nineteenth. This kind of broad-brush survey is increasingly rare in academic publishing, and here it does not prevent the author from giving close attention to under-represented examples, rather than remaining bound by the canonical works (which, however, also receive interesting comment, if not systematic readings). By grouping her material under these large headings, Didier is able to trace patterns across the period, for instance by looking into the dominant classical sources relied on by librettists: Ovid, naturally, but also Virgil and (to a lesser extent) Plutarch. Such patterns provide lines of enquiry for future research: that of a growing trend for Plutarchian texts after Rousseau, or a greater reliance on novelistic sources after mid-century, as compared with theatrical in the earlier period. French opera's long-standing but ambiguous relationship with Italian music is also considered here, with a sub-chapter on Metastasio and some more diffuse comments on the various quarrels which traversed the century. This Didier achieves without plodding over what, for specialists, is now very well-trodden territory. In this respect the book is a rare achievement: a wide survey that can also interest the expert. Indeed, on several occasions (pages 28, 36, 104) Didier reminds the reader that her aim is to illustrate certain tendencies rather than to offer a systematic analysis; the documents used to do so are often under-studied and bring fresh insights to the question, and the specialist will often notice connections that may previously have been overlooked. The first section,