



(thanks to the wedding of Isabella, daughter of Louise Élisabeth and Philippe de Bourbon), Venice and Turin (thanks to the new director, Jacopo Antonio Sanvitale) are reviewed. Detailed discussion of Caterina Gabrielli's signature aria, 'Respiri ormai contento', which migrated from Traetta's *Armida* for Vienna (1761) to his *Enea e Lavinia* in Parma (1761), takes the study in a different direction again, but Butler aims to unite these elements by suggesting they all point to 'future directions' for Parma and its 'broadening of the possibilities of French model adaptation' (126).

In *Musical Theater in Eighteenth-Century Parma* Butler has capitalized on the breadth of understanding developed in her previous work on Turin. Attendant on her trademark focus on theatre archives is an understanding that the history of opera encompasses relationships amongst theatres, cities and performers as much as it does those between composers and works. It is the combination of close attention to archival resources, care in piecing together different elements of the documentary trail to reveal previously unnoticed connections, and imaginative willingness to speculate about what these connections might mean for the larger musical and cultural picture that together will render this work valuable to other scholars of opera, enriching our understanding, in particular, of the vexed issue of 'reform' in this period.

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REBECCA CYPRESS AND NANCY SINKOFF, EDS

*SARA LEVY'S WORLD: GENDER, JUDAISM AND THE BACH TRADITION IN ENLIGHTENMENT BERLIN*

Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2018

pp. x + 292, ISBN 978 1 580 46921 0

As a rare early collector, performer and connoisseur of music of the Bach family, Sara Levy is unquestionably a most worthy subject. Her artistic predilections, once unusual, are now foundational. What is more, she lived in interesting times: Enlightenment-era Berlin was the site of great social, intellectual and cultural exchange. The present book, developed following a 2014 conference on the subject at Rutgers University, aims to expand our current view of Levy and the complexity of her historical moment by way of an interdisciplinary approach. The result is, as the title promises, a study primarily focused on matters relating to Jewish identity, gender roles and Berlin's Bach tradition, arguably in that order. Whether this volume as a whole contributes productively or even entirely responsibly to these important narratives is at times equivocal.

Co-editor Nancy Sinkoff's Introduction provides useful orientation to the terms *Haskalah* (Hebrew for Jewish Enlightenment) and *maskilim* (enlightened Jews), both of which describe fundamental cultural influences on Sara Levy's world that are usually discussed only in specialized music-historical literature. Sinkoff also promises that the book's readers will be rewarded with new insights into Levy's historical, musical and philosophical moment (8) – a vital antecedent to the nineteenth-century 'Bach revival' so frequently credited to her great-nephew Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (who, however, was not baptized at birth along with his siblings, contrary to what is stated on page 5). Chapters contributed by specialists in German and Jewish studies, religious studies, women's studies, aesthetics and musicology form the book's three main sections: 'Portrait of a Jewish Female Artist: Music, Identity, Image'; 'Music, Aesthetics, and Philosophy: Jews and Christians in Sara Levy's World'; and 'Studies in Sara Levy's Collection'. An Appendix containing four previously unavailable letters written by Sara Levy with commentary by Barbara Hahn rounds out the collection, and a companion recording (*In Sara Levy's Salon*, The Raritan Players and Rebecca Cypess, Acis Productions Bo6ZYP8SRN) features two of the volume's authors, Steven Zohn and co-editor Rebecca Cypess. The



multifaceted contributions are meant to support the book's main contentions that music and aesthetics were unique cultural spaces productively shared by German Jews and non-Jewish society, and that Sara Levy 'stands out among other Berlin *salonnières* for her resolute commitment to Jewish life' (6). Establishing her religious identity as not just Jewish but manifestly Jewish, therefore, is of paramount importance to the book's thesis.

The main contours of salon life are outlined by Marjanne E. Goozé (chapter 1: 'What Was the Berlin Jewish Salon around 1800?'), who offers a useful overview of the most relevant primary sources related to salon culture (diaries, memoirs, letters) and an explanation of what was and was not a salon. She defines the Berlin variety as 'a gathering of family, friends, acquaintances, and visitors on a regular basis at the home of a Jewish woman. Among the guests were people of varying professions and classes, men and women, Jews and Christians' (24). Her information is distilled from accounts by and of three of Berlin's most famous *salonnières*, Henriette Herz, Dorothea Mendelssohn-Veit and Rahel Varnhagen, whose focus was almost exclusively literary. Though these 'literary salons' (22) are certainly interesting, some effort at relating them to Sara Levy's *musical* one would have been welcome. Fortunately, we get something of this from Steven Zohn in chapter 9, 'The Sociability of Salon Culture and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's Quartets'. Zohn offers a 'sociable' (and plausible) analysis of the disposition of instrumental voices in C. P. E. Bach's Quartet in D major, Wq94, commissioned by Levy, and thereby joins the ongoing discussion of how chamber music might be seen (and heard) to reflect the manner of polite conversation one might have encountered in her salon. He also touches on what the listening culture might have been like in such overtly social settings. Intriguingly, Zohn relies on French models for his depiction of salon culture; it would therefore have been interesting to hear exchanges on this point between Zohn and Goozé, who warns against equating Berlin's salons with French ones (25). The accompanying CD brings Zohn's argument to life and discussion back to the practical.

Christoph Wolff's contribution (chapter 2: 'Sara Levy's Musical Salon and Her Bach Collection'), previously published elsewhere, orients readers to Sara Levy's position in Berlin's musical history and how her music library, recovered as part of the Sing-Akademie music archive in 1999, has helped to further our knowledge of early Bach reception. Cultivating Bach's music, ubiquitous now, was a signal of elite musical status in eighteenth-century Berlin, and Sara Levy was among its first practitioners. Wolff's opening pages offer a context for how and why this came to be so. He also explains the irreplaceable role of Levy and her extended family (particularly the Mendelssohns) in the preservation, performance and dissemination of Bach's music, and devotes space to Levy as performer and commissioner of Bach-family works. Wolff makes two errors worth correcting, however. The essay's opening quotation ('now in Berlin a musical epoch has begun') is attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach, but these are the words of his relative Johann Elias Bach (see 50, note 1; the letter is No. 83, found on pages 180–182 of the cited source). The second error is likely to fly under the radar, just as it does in the Introduction to the present volume (4). Wolff's statement that Bach's student Johann Philipp Kirnberger was hired by Daniel Itzig to teach his daughters Hanna and Bella (Sara's sisters) is conjecture for which we currently have no documentary support. Here we seem to have a case of musicological telephone. The original idea that Kirnberger was teacher to *Lea* Salomon (not her mother Bella or aunt Hanna) can be traced back through Peter Wollny ('*Ein förmlicher Sebastian und Philipp Emanuel Bach-Kultus: Sara Levy und ihr musikalisches Wirken, mit einer Dokumentensammlung zur musikalischen Familiengeschichte der Vorfahren von Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy*' (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2010), 22) to Eric Werner's problematic *Mendelssohn: Leben und Werk in neuer Sicht* (Zürich: Atlantis, c1980), 26). In this book, Werner states that *Lea* was Kirnberger's student but fails to cite his source. Wollny (private communication) considered the suggestion plausible but rather unlikely, since *Lea* Salomon was only six years old when Kirnberger died. Wollny therefore decided that Werner must have meant *Bella*, and he made the substitution without comment. However, there is no evidence that Kirnberger taught either of them.

A chapter by another eminent Bach scholar, George Stauffer (chapter 4, 'Women's Voices in Bach's Musical World: Christiane Mariane von Ziegler and Faustina Bordoni'), argues that the poet Ziegler and



the prima donna Bordoni were among the women in Bach's life who had a 'not unimportant influence on his music and music making, especially during the Leipzig years' (75). While it is not entirely clear what this essay contributes to discussion of Sara Levy, Stauffer does focus on two other fascinating and famous women contemporary with Bach. The artistic connections Stauffer describes are perhaps more fanciful than demonstrable. For example, it might well be true that Bach worked directly with Ziegler on the cantata texts she wrote for him, and that they were indeed on friendly terms, as Stauffer suggests, but the surviving historical record does not permit us to come to any firm conclusions. Similarly, we have no indications of whether Bordoni exerted any direct influence on Bach's creative life. Stauffer posits that the composer wrote the 'Laudamus te' from the Dresden *Missa* specifically for her. But we cannot document a Dresden performance of the *Missa* (see 95, note 47), and in any case, women were not allowed to sing in the court's Catholic church.

Speculation takes the upper hand over evidence elsewhere in the book, as with the centrally important matter of whether Levy's personal religious identification was pointedly Jewish. Did Sara Levy actively and with intention align herself and her salon with the *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment) and Moses Mendelssohn's programme to modernize Jewish life, or did she cultivate a private identity disengaged from the religious politics of the day? This book would have us believe that Levy was demonstrative in her faith. A lack of evidence, though, renders the verdict a matter of opinion. It is surprising to discover, for example, that we actually have very little to go on regarding how observant Levy was. (Whether observant equates with 'resolute' (Sinkoff's term, 6) is another matter.) One of the letters in the Appendix (Document Three, 248–249) might even complicate the idea that Levy was staunchly committed to Jewish practice because it reveals that she was inviting a non-Jewish friend to dinner on what should have been a Friday night Sabbath meal. This and the Appendix's other letters might well have informed the main text's conversation. That they did not represents a missed opportunity to form a more cohesive picture of Levy, and it raises the question of how much some essays have to do with her in the first place.

Natalie Naimark-Goldberg (chapter 3, 'Remaining within the Fold: The Cultural and Social World of Sara Levy') attempts to identify Levy among the reform-minded Jews (*maskilim*) who were driving the *Haskalah*. Unusually for a woman, Levy's name appears on a subscription list for Moses Mendelssohn's *Zemiroth Yisra'el*, which contains his discussion of biblical music and musical instruments as well as his side-by-side Hebrew/German translation of the psalms (a topic taken up by Elias Sacks in chapter 6). However, an extraordinary number of women's names are also on the list, as Naimark-Goldberg points out (thirty in total), and both psalms and music were subjects deemed acceptable for women of the time. So Levy's interest in the book is not all that remarkable and therefore tells us relatively little about her faith. It is absolutely certain that Levy chose not to convert to Christianity (53) and that she generously supported Jewish causes throughout her life (65–67). In fact, one thing that emerges from these pages is how kind and generous a person she appears to have been. But whether her stance regarding Judaism was activist or habitual is impossible to know based on what is presented in this essay collection.

Philosophy and literature loom large in the book's second half. Martha B. Helfer's essay (chapter 5, 'Lessing and the Limits of the Enlightenment') is essentially a reprint of earlier work. Here she offers a rare critique of Lessing, who is usually celebrated as an outspoken advocate for tolerance of Jewish people in Germany. Instead, Helfer views his arguments for tolerance as having been unhelpful, because they contain the seeds of anti-Semitic rhetoric. She claims the problem is evident especially when Lessing's texts are read in light of the Holocaust, rather than in the context of the eighteenth century: 'Our post-Holocaust eyes perform read the anti-Jewish moments in these texts more critically, and perhaps with an ineluctable implied teleology' (115). This argument might be more emotional than scholarly, but it is also understandable. Presumably, this essay was reprinted in the present volume because it provides some sort of essential information. Whatever the case, readers are left yet again in the unsatisfying position of inferring for themselves what any of this meant for Sara Levy.

If there is a secondary hero of this volume, it is certainly Moses Mendelssohn (grandfather of Felix), whose thoughts on religion and aesthetics permeate its pages. Most of the individual essays introduce aspects of his



philosophy; some engage with it in great detail. Those by Sacks, Yael Sela and Cypess (chapters 6–8) all feature him centrally, and here again it would have been fascinating to explore more closely the common ground these essays share among themselves and with the other essays. One thing is for certain: this volume makes unequivocally clear how important Mendelssohn's work was to Berlin's musical culture, and with good reason. Sela (chapter 7: 'Longing for the Sublime: Jewish Self-Consciousness and the *St. Matthew Passion*') demonstrates this point particularly well by seeking Mendelssohn's concept of the sublime in Jewish reception of Felix Mendelssohn's 1829 performance of the work. She detects it, for example, in the writings of Rahel Varnhagen. Varnhagen found Bach's music boring, objected to the poor quality of the Sing-Akademie choir and considered the work's libretto distasteful ('Then . . . the most bizarre, frugal text. Christ's last days and death, purely out of the Bible'; 106). Sela attributes Varnhagen's negative response to the inability of Bach's *Passion* to compete with the sublimity of instrumental music, as Moses Mendelssohn then defined it and Varnhagen understood it. One might also consider a more practical explanation: the *Passion* text Varnhagen was used to hearing in concert was Karl Wilhelm Ramler's *Der Tod Jesu*, as set by C. H. Graun, which was not biblical text, but poetic reflection. Regardless, her comments are certainly revealing of contemporary attitudes, and they bring something fresh to this long-standing discussion. Sela's larger contribution is to introduce the voices of Jewish women into the work's reception history, a most welcome addition, and suggestive of what Sara Levy might have thought of such a transformational moment.

Mendelssohn also features prominently in Sacks's chapter, which is a study of the importance of music to Mendelssohn's understanding of belief by way of the psalms ('Poetry, Music, and the Limits of Harmony: Mendelssohn's Aesthetic Critique of Christianity'). Sacks complicates the volume's thesis that shared aesthetic appreciation was a catalyst for Jews and Christians to come together in eighteenth-century Berlin. His twist is to suggest that because the psalms were shared property, they could also be used to level specific religious critique (124). According to Sacks, Mendelssohn's belief in the power of the psalms was actually more damning to Christianity than it would first appear. Mendelssohn placed vital importance on psalmodic practice in Jewish tradition, which united tone with text: 'The end desired in [biblical poetry is] that the words enter not only the listener's ear, but also his heart. They should remain engraved on the tablets [of his heart] . . . firmly establishing within him the virtues and excellent dispositions' (133). In the absence of that practice, Sacks's argument goes, Christians would be 'unable to embed the Bible's words in their memories or properly contemplate the God they describe' (135). Anyone familiar with Lutheran theology might be led by Sacks's essay to wonder what Mendelssohn would have made of the doctrines of *Inhabitatio* and *unio mystica*, wherein the heart is also considered the dwelling place of divine faith and the union of music and text is considered a perfect vehicle for the direct delivery to it of God's word. Sacks insists that in Mendelssohn's view, Christianity had rejected this 'tool for moral formation' (135). Certain Christian sects were indeed deeply mistrustful of music's power (Calvinists, for example). Others, such as Lutherans, embraced it. Sacks makes no distinction among denominations, labelling the entire discourse as pertaining to Christianity as a whole, and does not clarify whether that was Mendelssohn's point of view as well.

Cypess's essay also places an aspect of Mendelssohn's religious philosophy front and centre ('Duets in the Collection of Sara Levy and the Ideal of "Unity in Multiplicity"'). She claims that Mendelssohn's concept of unity and tolerance in religious diversity ('Einheit in der Mannigfaltigkeit') can be applied metaphorically to the unusually large number of duets for the same instrument preserved in Sara Levy's collection: 'the equality between the two parts in a musical duet represented a model for the socialization of individuals within an enlightened society' (182). This is a lot with which to freight sets of flute duets. It seems particularly difficult, too, to argue that music for two of the same instruments could plausibly express unity in multiplicity, as the voices are not contrasting. Rather, duets for two of the same instruments seem more representative of *Einheit in Einerleiheit* (sameness and unity – to borrow another of Mendelssohn's terms invoked by Cypess), which is actually a development against which he warned, because unity through religious sameness would have meant the end of Judaism. The imagination Cypess brings to this essay is indeed remarkable but, as she admits, we have no idea whether Sara Levy even subscribed to Moses Mendelssohn's aesthetic theories.



In making a case for the overall contribution of this book to scholarship, Sinkoff claims that Levy has been deprived of her rightful place in discussions of Enlightenment-era history primarily on religious grounds – owing to her failure to assimilate on the one hand and, on the other, by association with converted *salonnières* who were viewed as traitors to the Jewish faith (5–6). While religion might have played a role in determining Levy's earlier absence from the historical dialogue, she was evidently not a tempting subject until her astonishing collection of Bach-family manuscripts came to light. Since then, Peter Wollny has published several articles and a book-length study on Levy and her music collection, so she has hardly been ignored. The fact is, the largest body of information we have about Sara Levy is her music library. Were it not for the Bach manuscripts it contains, one wonders whether she would be studied at all, for unlike other famous *salonnières* (such as Herz and Varnhagen), she did not leave memoirs or diaries and only a fraction of her significant correspondence survives. I have already lamented the fact that the four letters provided in the book's appendix have informed none of the preceding chapters. But it is also worth mentioning here that the English translations are in places misleading. To offer just one example, 'Ich weiß es wohl daß die Ehe mit meiner Schwester Recha Ihnen unmöglich genügen kann' (251) is rendered as 'I know well that your marriage with my sister Recha is impossible to surpass' (250). Yet it means the exact opposite: 'I know well that marriage to my sister Recha could not possibly satisfy you.' Barbara Hahn's brief accompanying commentary engages only superficially with the letters' content, leaving non-German-speaking readers at a significant disadvantage.

There are a number of things about this book that are commendable, including its interdisciplinary approach to important and traditionally underrepresented topics, the new contributions of individual authors and the companion CD, all of which do indeed lend a new dimension to existing knowledge of Sara Levy's life and library. The less satisfying aspects of the book are that a third of its nine essays are substantially reprints, several chapters relate to Sara Levy only tangentially, there is no discernible attempt to harmonize the many voices represented here, and that there is an unfortunate tendency to blur the line between fact and fiction. Like her beloved J. S. Bach, Sara Levy left us very little from her own hand, causing treatment of her biography often to reflect the needs of the interpreter. Thus if the contents of this volume as a whole reveal little about Levy's own interests and priorities, they speak volumes about ours.

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CLIFF EISEN AND ALAN DAVISON, EDS

*LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC AND VISUAL CULTURE*

Turnhout: Brepols, 2017

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The first volume from Brepols's Music and Visual Culture series brings together an impressive group of scholars in a collection of essays exploring an array of inter-media relationships that span well beyond composition and imagery. For those keeping up with recent scholarship on music and visual art, many of the authors published herein will be familiar from their monographs – Simon Shaw-Miller's *Eye hEar the Visual in Music* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), Annette Richards's *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Thomas Tolley's *Painting the Cannon's Roar* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2001). As editors Eisen and Davison note in their concise Introduction, the number of studies that focus specifically on the intersections between music history and art history is small.