



Kapellknabenordnung – are also included in the Appendix. Ideally, both should have been quoted in full in the relevant chapter.

This brings me to several quibbles with this effective, if narrowly defined, study. Koska's Introduction would have benefitted from placing the court of Gera within a much larger historical context, and his methodology section lacks a transition to the 'Directors of the Court *Kapelle*' chapter that follows. The timelines offered in chapter 3 were often difficult to follow, and I would have appreciated more attention to the illustrations – they feel very much like afterthoughts. Figure 2 (a portrait of Heinrich XVIII of Reuß-Gera), for example, clearly belongs in chapter 1, and references to Figures 1, 2 and 3 appear nowhere in the respective chapters. Particularly frustrating is Figure 9, Emanuel Kegel's original – and highly significant – *Musicalieninventar*. Koska provides no transcription; instead, he asks the reader (in a footnote!) to consult Michael Maul's article on the primary source ('Johann Sebastian Bachs Besuche in der Residenzstadt Gera', *Bach-Jahrbuch* 90 (2004), 101–119). Numbering the helpful tables and overviews presented in chapter 5 would also have been advantageous, as would have been the provision of summaries at the ends of chapters, and of more and smoother transitions between them.

Despite these minor criticisms, and particularly given the plethora of archival sources examined for *Die Geraer Hofkapelle zu Beginn des 18. Jahrhunderts*, we must thank Bernd Koska for expanding our knowledge of musical life at the minor court of Gera in central Germany. A logical next step would be to focus more on Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel – a PhD dissertation or monograph on his impact as composer and Kapellmeister is long overdue.

BARBARA M. REUL

<barbara.reul@uregina.ca>



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DEBORAH W. ROOKE

HANDEL'S ISRAELITE ORATORIO LIBRETTI: SACRED DRAMA AND BIBLICAL EXEGESIS

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The interdisciplinary study of Johann Sebastian Bach's music, and in particular his sacred works, has become a firmly established area of research, reaching back at least to the middle of the twentieth century. By comparison, Handel scholars have shown far less interest in how intellectual, political and religious contexts have shaped the composer's oeuvre. A seminal publication in this field was Ruth Smith's *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), which, for the first time, offered a comprehensive account of the contemporary aesthetic, ideological and theological debates that left their marks on Handel's oratorio librettos. In doing so, it paved the way for analyses of specific oratorios such as this reviewer's *Händels Messiah: Text, Musik, Theologie* (Bad Reichenhall: Comes, 2007) or Michael Marissen's *Tainted Glory in Handel's Messiah: The Unsettling History of the World's Most Beloved Choral Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). Another noteworthy recent contribution to contextual research into Handel's oratorios is Deborah Rooke's *Handel's Israelite Oratorio Libretti: Sacred Drama and Biblical Exegesis*. In addition to being a keen amateur musician, Rooke is Research Fellow in Bible and Music at the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture, and has research interests in cult and ritual in the Old Testament as well as feminist and gendered readings of the Old Testament. Primarily a biblical exegete, the author circumnavigates the musical aspects of Handel's oratorios, focusing instead on the message of the librettos in their own right. The two main questions that are put to these texts are



'how do the libretti differ from the biblical text, and what is there in the libretti's cultural, political, or theological *Zeitgeist* that might account for those differences?' (vii). Both the author and the publisher merit praise for such much-needed attention to the librettos, which are frequently neglected in favour of Handel's music.

Nonetheless, the input of a Handel scholar may have ironed out occasional inaccuracies such as the characterization of Handel's Italian oratorios as 'liturgical works' or the claim that 'oratorio as a genre had a history that was associated with liturgical usage' (xx), and filled some notable lacunas in the book's bibliography, ranging from standard literature on Handel's oratorios such as Percy Young's *The Oratorios of Handel* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1949) or Hans Joachim Marx's *Händels Oratorien, Oden und Serenaten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998) to more specialized, but no less relevant, publications such as Donald Burrows and Rosemary Dunhill's edited compendium of references to *Music and Theatre in the Papers of James Harris and His Family, 1732–1780* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) or Ruth Smith's article 'Why Does Jephtha Misinterpret His Own Vow?' in *Handel Studies: A Gedenkschrift for Howard Serwer*, ed. Richard G. King (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2009).

Unlike Smith's monograph, which explores specific themes across the work of Handel and his librettists, Rooke's book offers self-contained studies of ten of Handel's 'Israelite' oratorio librettos. Unfortunately, no rationale is given for this selection or for the omission of *Alexander Balus*, *Belshazzar* or *Joshua*, or indeed the oratorio that treats the most crucial moments in the history of Israel, *Israel in Egypt*. These works are not mentioned in the list of 'Handel's Israelite oratorio libretti' (245) either. Oddly, however, the list does include *Theodora* – the story of the martyrdom of a Christian saint in fourth-century Antioch.

Most of the ten case studies follow the same clear pattern, starting with a discussion of the biblical narrative from a modern critical perspective and moving on, where applicable, to intermediate texts that were used by Handel's librettists. The final section of each chapter analyses the treatment of these sources in the oratorio libretto. By identifying modifications such as additions, omissions and conscious shifts in emphasis, Rooke is able to suggest the librettists' intentions and to connect those to contemporary religious or political debates. The most novel aspects of the book are Rooke's astute analyses of gender issues in the adaptations of the biblical accounts. For example, whilst the account of Deborah in Judges 4–5 reads as a satire on feeble men being ruled by a strong woman, Samuel Humphrey's libretto turns the story into a piece of pro-Hanoverian propaganda by rehabilitating the Israelite men, who fight bravely alongside their female leader Deborah (who stands for Queen Caroline). Similarly, Handel's libretto for *Susanna* transforms the main character from a relatively inactive victim of vice into a model defender of wifely virtue and marital values, thereby contributing to a contemporary debate on the merits of arranged, calculated or coerced marriage.

Methodologically sound as the book's scheme may be, it stretches the limits of what can be discussed in the space available. For example, in just twenty-three pages 'Joseph and His Brethren' (chapter 6) attempts to summarize the Old Testament account, to address issues of formal criticism and dating, to discuss Apostolo Zenò's libretto *Giuseppe*, to give an account of the figure of Joseph in eighteenth-century literature and to analyse James Miller's libretto for Handel.

In an attempt to cope with this wide scope, the author often resorts to discussions of peripheral issues and literature in lengthy footnotes, which does not aid general readability. Another inevitable result of the book's ambitious design is that some sections remain superficial whilst others are highly selective. The former is often the case with the introductions to the biblical text. The brief summaries neither do justice to contemporary biblical scholarship nor contribute much to the understanding of Handel's oratorio librettos. For example, the term 'Deuteronomistic history', which is addressed in chapters 4 and 5, was not coined until the mid-twentieth century, and as a concept would have been entirely alien to an eighteenth-century understanding of the Bible. While such discussions usefully illustrate the profound differences between the biblical interpretation of our own time and that of Handel's contemporaries, they take away from the main focus of the book.

Equally, the brevity of the chapters does not allow for comprehensive analyses of the librettos, but enforces a selective approach, usually one which supports the author's main angle. For example, the section on



Newburgh Hamilton's adaptation of Milton's poem *Samson Agonistes* (following page 111) manages to avoid the figure of Samson's wife and 'traitress' Dalila almost entirely, even though her visit to Samson in prison is one of Milton's most significant additions to the biblical account, one indeed that dominates much of the second act of Hamilton's and Handel's oratorio. The reasons for this omission may be twofold. First, Dalila's extended plea for forgiveness is irrelevant to Rooke's main point concerning the remodelling of Samson's image. Secondly, the *femme fatale's* appearance in Milton's poem remained untouched when Hamilton transformed the text. Given Rooke's particular focus on differences between the poem and the libretto, it is not surprising that Dalila's presence did not receive any attention. This instance may serve to illustrate the limitations of the chosen method: whilst changes to the Old Testament accounts or to intermediate texts may provide clear pointers as to a librettist's intentions, surely those elements of a libretto that remained unaltered in the process need to be given equal weight when interpreting the text as a whole. This last step is generally omitted in Rooke's book, leaving the reader to wonder how the findings of each chapter, which often only concern a small portion of the libretto under discussion, relate to the rest of the text.

In sum, the book is original and clearly written, providing useful background information as well as some thought-provoking new insights into eighteenth-century biblical exegesis. The reader should, however, be aware that it merely throws a spotlight on a few specific aspects of selected works rather than being – as one might infer from its title – a comprehensive analysis of or introduction to Handel's Israelite oratorio librettos.

TASSILO ERHARDT

<erhardt@hope.ac.uk>



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ALFONSO DE VICENTE

TOMÁS LUIS DE VICTORIA EN EL SIGLO XVIII: DOS ESTUDIOS DE HISTORIA DE LA FORTUNA PÓSTUMA

Ávila: Miján, 2012

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With the recent quadricentennial of his death, Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611) has garnered much attention from musicologists both in Spain and abroad. Within the past three years numerous articles have been published about the composer as well as two important collections: *Tomás Luis de Victoria y la cultura musical en la España de Felipe III*, edited by Alfonso de Vicente and Pilar Tomás (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2012) and 'Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611): contextos y prácticas musicales', a special edition of *Revista de musicología* (35/1 (2012)). Alfonso de Vicente's contribution *Tomás Luis de Victoria en el siglo XVIII* adopts a slightly different approach, comprising as it does a pair of chapters concerned with the reception and performance history of Victoria's sacred music in eighteenth-century Spain.

The book is designed more along the lines of a journal issue than a traditional monograph: the first chapter is essentially an article and the second was clearly fashioned as a conference paper. However, both chapters do include the copious footnotes and citations which are often lacking in both conference papers and Spanish-language publications in general. The author notes the unusual layout in the Introduction to the book, referring to the large number of eighteenth-century manuscript sources of Victoria's work surviving in Spanish cathedral archives: 'In a way, the studies contained herein . . . are nothing other than the preliminary steps towards a critical edition of these scores' ('En cierta manera, los estudios aquí contenidos