



with musicians trained outside Berlin, and the Berlin School had a clean sheet on which to reinvent itself quite self-consciously. O'Loghlin makes his case with the aid of plentiful and well-chosen contemporary quotations, which are given in their original German with an English translation. But his welcome desire for clarity can result in his making a point more than once, for example the assertion on page 11 that 'not one of them [Frederick's musicians] was born or educated in Berlin', which is repeated on page 12 ('None of Frederick's musicians at this time was a Berliner').

It was the *adagio* that became the quintessential emblem of the Berlin School, and O'Loghlin effectively brings together quotations to analyse the school's 'stylistic characteristics'. Johann Friedrich Reichardt believed that to reveal their true beauty, 'Berlin pieces must be performed in the Berlin style' (see page 24), while C. P. E. Bach explains that 'in several foreign places the mistake is very often made, that they play the *adagios* too quickly' (35). In short, the view was that while one might be astonished by a musician's virtuosity, this practical ability was meaningless unless the performer captured the listener's heart in the *adagio*. 'One such as Benda draws me even more to him, who has absolutely no wish to arouse my admiration, but simply aims for my heart, and strikes it so surely that I am quite filled with the feeling that he wished to excite' (Reichardt, quoted on page 36). Was it perhaps this environment which helped to inspire two of the greatest eighteenth-century treatises on music, by C. P. E. Bach and Quantz? Was it their authors' pride in what had been achieved collectively in Berlin that provoked them to disseminate it far beyond their city?

O'Loghlin provides a complete thematic catalogue of the Berlin gamba music with sources and modern editions; however, this does not include Hesse's operatic arrangements, about which I would have enjoyed much more detail. An unusual feature of the school, as he points out, is that it is the largest corpus of works for the instrument not written by viol virtuosos. These viol works may be a minor part of the whole Berlin school's corpus, but they are none the less fascinating and important in the development of the viol, a topic to which this book makes a valuable and carefully researched contribution.

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JOHN A. RICE

*MOZART ON THE STAGE*

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009

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*Mozart on the Stage* is the first book of a new series published by Cambridge University Press, *Composers on the Stage*, which aims to investigate the cultural world in which operas were created and received. In his first sentence, John Rice asks a pertinent question: 'What possible justification can there be, in the aftermath of Mozart's two-hundred-and-fiftieth birthday in 2006, for adding to the large number of books, many of them first rate, that have been written about his operas?' (xi) The study itself provides an unambiguously positive answer. Organized thematically from the commission of operas through to their premieres and beyond, it presents an elegant and convincing picture of the way Mozart went about composing these works.

A particular strength of this book is its emphasis on the theatrical aspects of opera, such as stage designs, sets and scenery. The text is accompanied by a wide range of contemporary prints illustrating the 'look' of opera, much in the manner of the classic study *Mozart's Operas* by Daniel Hertz, the dedicatee of Rice's book (Berkeley and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990; edited, with contributing essays, by Thomas Bauman). Among these are some compelling images, such as the bare-looking stage in Vienna on which Luigi Marchesi and Caterina Cavalieri enacted the climax of Sarti's *Giulio Sabino*. There is some ingenious



reconstruction too, with a superimposition of the famous engraving of Luigi Bassi as Don Giovanni upon a contemporary stage design, both framed by the proscenium of the Nostitz Theatre taken from a third source. Rice emphasizes the importance of the alternation of long and short sets to the smooth staging of eighteenth-century opera and selects a telling example from *Don Giovanni* to illustrate how Da Ponte and Mozart made the best use of the necessity for a short set – one that allowed little depth on stage. By positioning Donna Anna at the front of the stage (on a short set) for her powerfully expressive *rondò* ‘Non mi dir’, they improved the chances of the singer’s being able to communicate effectively with the audience. This was by no means an insignificant consideration, as the attention of the listeners certainly could not be taken for granted. Mozart himself confessed on one occasion to having chattered throughout an entire opera by Paisiello.

Although Rice does not discuss the individual operas as such, a number of aesthetic issues facing the composer as a creative artist were necessarily influenced by practical relationships, and these are considered fully. The responsibilities of the librettist, often misunderstood in past studies, are clearly delineated, including the duty to rehearse singers in their acting roles. While in many respects the working partnership between Da Ponte and Mozart remains frustratingly elusive through the lack of detailed evidence, Rice’s admirable summation of the librettist’s overall contribution provides a good example of the clarity and concision of his style: ‘*Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Così* are not only full of purely musical beauties, but they crackle with theatrical intelligence, energy, and wit in a way that differentiates their librettos even from those that Da Ponte wrote for Salieri, Martín y Soler and his other Viennese collaborators’ (90).

Another topic on which Rice himself has made major contributions in the past is the creative relationship that existed between Mozart and his singers. The composer’s avowed ideal was to suit each aria to its singer, avoiding the performer’s weaknesses and exploiting his or her strengths. The success of this strategy can be assessed by examining other roles known to have been taken by the performer in question. As a case study, Rice reviews the career of Antonio Baglioni and presents significant new information about his movements, notably the fact that he had engagements in Italy in the summer of 1787 and so could not have joined the Prague troupe until shortly before the premiere of *Don Giovanni*. Rice tackles head-on a seeming paradox: the fact that Mozart composed two very fine roles (Don Ottavio and Tito) for a performer whose contemporary reception was far from uniformly enthusiastic. Through analysis of the many roles that Baglioni is likely to have sung, Rice is able to demonstrate that he was a performer of real substance, and, as luck would have it, a new source that has come to light since the publication of *Mozart on the Stage* has confirmed most of these attributions (I plan to discuss this discovery in a future publication). All this goes to show how easy it is for a single negative reaction (in this case that of Franz Xaver Niemetschek) to influence unduly the broader assessment of a singer’s achievement.

One of the most striking things to emerge from Rice’s study is the unevenness of the historical record, and the number of occasions on which conclusions about important questions are dependent upon a single source. A wealth of fascinating detail about the composition of Italian opera is to be found in the early Mozart correspondence. As a young man, he learnt his craft in the relatively well-regulated Italian system, so much more predictable than the idiosyncratic one he came to know in Vienna. Rice makes much more effective use of this material than has been done hitherto. From the period of Mozart’s early maturity, there are the wonderful letters written during the preparations for *Idomeneo* and *Die Entführung*, which are full of his worries and frustrations, but which also express his enthusiasm and the pride that he took in his work. Unfortunately, though, Mozart never again had occasion to reveal his thoughts about opera in such detail, and for the Da Ponte operas the paucity of direct evidence is disappointing. Many of the most significant statements are distant in time from the events they describe: Niemetschek’s myth-making about the composer’s ‘special relationship’ with Prague; Constanze’s recollections in old age about her husband’s favourite pieces; Luigi Bassi’s reported comments on the role of free improvisation in early *Don Giovanni* performances; and Da Ponte’s claim (reported second-hand) that he had urged upon the serious-minded Mozart the importance of comedy. Rice takes this category of evidence from the hinterland between myth and reality seriously – indeed, there is little choice but to do so.



For all its emphasis on the operatic systems in which Mozart worked, this study never loses sight of the human dimension. Theatrical experiences shaped the composer from his earliest childhood. He remained an avid play-goer, mixed with performers of all kinds – actors as well as musicians – and constantly talked about performance. There can be little doubt that the success of his operas mattered intensely to Mozart, perhaps more so than the reception accorded to his other music. Rice conveys vividly the emotions he must have felt, such as the sense of anxiety as a premiere drew near and the excitement once the performance was underway. Admittedly, we do not hear from the adult composer on such matters, but Salieri, who could be very eloquent about his feelings, is allowed to speak on his behalf. Imaginative touches of this kind are seen throughout the book and make for a very satisfying narrative. With its expert handling of evidence of all kinds, Rice's study must count as the best portrait yet of Mozart as a man of the theatre, sharply and convincingly drawn.

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*MOZART'S COSÌ FAN TUTTE: A COMPOSITIONAL HISTORY*

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With his elegant and stimulating book *Mozart's Così fan tutte: A Compositional History*, Ian Woodfield has built on and drawn together two kinds of English-language Mozart scholarship that have thrived, simultaneously but for the most part separately, during the last quarter of a century: the study of the manuscripts that record Mozart's music, and the study of his operas.

Alan Tyson's *Mozart: Studies of the Autograph Scores* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1987) comprises an important series of his own articles from the 1970s and 1980s on Mozart's autographs and the paper on which they are written. Tyson's catalogue of the watermarks in the paper that Mozart used (*Wasserzeichen-Katalog*, 2 volumes (Kassel and London: Bärenreiter, 1992)) constituted another monumental contribution to our knowledge of the autograph scores. Dexter Edge's brilliant doctoral dissertation 'Mozart's Viennese Copyists' (University of Southern California, 2001) did for manuscript copies (that is, the work of professional copyists) what Tyson had done for the autographs. It made available vast amounts of new information and important methodological insights whose influence will undoubtedly be felt for a long time – and not only by Mozart scholars.

While Tyson and Edge subjected Mozart's manuscripts to meticulous examination, other scholars participated in an equally fruitful study of his operas. Wye Allanbrook, Bruce Alan Brown, David Buch, Sergio Durante, Edmund Goehring, Daniel Heartz, Mary Hunter, Dorothea Link, John Platoff, Michael Robinson, Julian Rushton, Andrew Steptoe, Jessica Waldoff and James Webster are among many writers who have contributed to an astonishing efflorescence of scholarship on Mozart's operas and their place in the theatrical culture of their time, in the form of monographs, articles and collections of articles and conference papers.

Taking full advantage of the new material that these two schools of Mozart research have made available, and energized by the intellectual excitement stirred up by them, Woodfield has done something entirely new. He has written a book about one of the most fascinating and enigmatic of Mozart's operas, based on an exhaustive and scrupulous study of the autograph score and the manuscript copies in which it circulated during the first two decades after its premiere.