



allegleich', one of the better-known chorale melodies. Curiously, Bach sets the chorale mostly soloistically, presenting an imaginative catalogue of accompaniments, while the full chorus sing the grander 'Lobet' episodes. Even simpler, Part II's final chorus is a strophic song in which scale and instrumentation vary from verse to verse and culminate in a tutti panegyric to 'friendship, love and virtue' and, of course, to music. A double humanistic statement as the praise of God for his creation of bliss on earth is sounded with recourse to attractive, yet easily graspable musical means, thereby empowering the listener.

The work's popular nature is reflected in the editor's choice of sources: both the autograph score and an original set of performing parts have recently come to light, but here preference is given to the performing parts, as Bach revised these carefully, thereby leaving behind an invaluable source close to one actual performance. In more general terms it is a long overdue and laudable decision on the parts of the general editorship of the *Carl Philip Emanuel Bach: The Complete Works* project to give sources other than the extant autographs priority. Here, the parts in a copyist's hand are chosen over Bach's autograph, because they reflect Bach's further thoughts and revisions in light of performance. The critical commentary appended at the end of the musical text – another commendable feature of this collected works edition – goes a long way to answering a host of performance practice questions, or at least to assisting musicians to make their own choices rooted in Bach's own performance material. The preface meets the right popular tone, conveying a host of historical contextualization, without descending into the all too common dryness of such texts.

After an enjoyable score-reading session I am certainly convinced that this music warrants both performance and critical attention. Bach, here, appeals through an intricate, yet popular musical language and presents himself as an entirely different persona in this cantata of secular, public worship. His ultimate testimony to a practice of devotion marked most by its easy accessibility is the insertion of his 'Heilig' chorus (highly popular by 1785). Rooted in a local tradition, this antiphonal double chorus was soon famous amongst Bach's contemporaries; he himself thought of it as his swansong. Bach did not include music for the 'Heilig' chorus in his parts for the *Dank-Hymne*, merely providing cues in its place instead. Following the original sources, this edition does not include the chorus either. Let us hope that the volume comprising the chorus will be edited very soon.

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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF FRANCESCO ANTONIO BONPORTI

ED. MAXWELL SOBEL

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Neither celebrated nor entirely forgotten, Francesco Antonio Bonporti (also spelled Bomporto and Buonporti) is perhaps best remembered for J. S. Bach's having transcribed four of his Op. 10 *invenzioni* for violin and continuo. These were then published as Bach's own compositions in volume 45 of the *Bach Gesellschaft* edition. The misattribution was corrected early in the last century, and Bonporti – the possible originator of the term 'invention' in music – has since received steady if not abundant regard from both performers and scholars. One can now find multiple recordings of his motets and later instrumental works, and, in the more recent *Bonporti Edition* series recordings (Dynamic Italy), most of the surviving earlier instrumental works. Two biographies of the composer have been written (Guglielmo Barblan, *Un musicista trentino, Francesco A. Bonporti (1672–1749): La vita e le opere* (Florence: F. le Monnier, 1940) and Antonio



Carlini, *Francesco Antonio Bonporti 'gentilhuomo di Trento': biografia e catalogo tematico dell'opera* (Padua: Edizioni de 'I Solisti veneti', 2000)), and there are two thematic catalogues of his complete works (Laurence Feininger and Clemente Lunelli, *Francesco Antonio Bonporti catalogus thematicus: operum omnium* (Trent: Societas Universalis Sanctae Ceciliae, 1975) and Carlini, *Bonporti*), a modest commemorative volume published in 1972 for the tercentenary of his birth (*Francesco A. Bonporti nel 30 centenario della nascita: 1672–1972* (Trent: Comitato per le celebrazioni di F.A. Bonporti nel 30 centenario della nascita, 1972)), and a thesis on his trio sonatas (Brian Harris, 'The Published Trio Sonatas of Francesco Antonio Bonporti (1672–1748)' (PhD thesis, University of Washington, 1980)).

This is well-deserved attention; between 1696 and 1712, Bonporti evolved from a distinctive composer of trio sonatas to an innovative creator of striking and diverse compositions for the solo violin that include the highly original recitatives, 'echo' movements, scherzos and *bizarie*. Bonporti, however, has not earned a reputation nearly equal to that now enjoyed by his contemporaries, the composer-violinists Geminiani, Tartini and, above all, Vivaldi. In this context, *The Complete Works of Francesco Antonio Bonporti*, edited by Maxwell Sobel with a biography and analysis of the music by Galliano Ciliberti, aims to bring new attention to the composer, making editions of all the surviving works (including the incomplete Op. 9 dances) together with an assessment of the composer's oeuvre and an updated biography. It is perhaps hyperbole on the part of Ciliberti to describe Bonporti as forgotten, but he and Sobel are to be praised for making his music much more accessible to performers and scholars.

The single wire-bound volume handily opens flat (and stays open) to any of its more than 700 pages. Navigating the musical contents without always having to refer back to the table of contents is facilitated by headings at the top of every page that lists the piece, its opus number and place within the opus (for example *Angelicae Mentis Opus 3 No. 3* or *Concertino in A Major Opus 12 No. 4*). The volume is useful to music historians for its comprehensiveness, but performers will also find it an attractive edition from which to perform: the layout of most of the violin solos and trio sonatas keeps movements to a single page (or two facing pages). In addition to the music, the beginning portion of the volume comprises a short preface by Eleanor Selfridge-Field, Sobel's editorial overview, Ciliberti's biography and analysis, a transcription of the Op. 3 motet texts with English translations, and a listing of sources with RISM numbers.

Although he was dealing with printed originals in all but a few pieces, Sobel's task as editor was fraught with challenges in the form of notational inconsistencies of rhythm, dynamics, accidentals, metre, articulations (mainly the placement of slurs) and tempo markings. In a few instances, he simply notes at the beginning of a movement, as for example on page 528, 'slurs in this movement are very inconsistent in the source', wisely leaving it to the performer to come up with a solution rather than imposing his own. In most cases where Sobel has made a change of pitch or rhythm, I agree with both the change and the need for it, but would have preferred to have some explanation of his reasoning, especially because there are a few interventions that strike me as unjustifiable and betray a troubling lack of restraint. In one passage, from the giga in Op. 4 No. 8, Sobel changes a c¹-sharp to c¹-natural in the second violin in each of the three parallel passages in which it occurs (bars 63, 76 and 79). This is problematic for several reasons: first, errors of omission are far more typical than errors of commission with respect to accidentals and, as Sobel mentions, both sources for the Op. 4 trios include a sharp for that pitch; second, the passage is consistent in all three iterations (the sharp occurs each time); and third, the pitch as notated in the original sources creates no obvious problem, neither clashes nor parallels. In another case, Sobel introduces a contrapuntal error by changing a pitch in the original source. In bars 52 and 57 of the corrente from Op. 2 No. 6, he has altered a notated e² in the second violin to c² in identical passages, and in making this change has created parallel octaves with the bass line. Again, there is no contrapuntal problem with the passage as originally notated, and the fact that the sources agree on the original e² and that it occurs in both iterations of the passage should dissuade an editor from making a change, but one searches in vain for an explanation.

Sobel's alteration of original key signatures furnishes another example of his intrusive style of editing. Throughout, he has identified and modernized what he calls 'incomplete' key signatures. The general problem lies in the attitude that Bonporti's manner of notating them is wrong and needs, as Sobel writes in



his remarks (5), to be 'corrected'. To the contrary, Bonporti was simply following a different practice than our own, in which key signatures reflect transpositions of tonalities in common use from the late sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries. But one could not know this by looking at the music of this edition. And, altered as they are with no clear indication of what they originally were, Sobel's modernized key signatures mislead even his collaborator: on page 35, Ciliberti asserts in his analytical remarks that 'the [Op. 10] inventions in minor always augment by one flat the key of the preceding major' and that 'in the inventions with sharps in the key signature, the minor tonalities have one sharp less than that of the preceding major'. *Pace* Ciliberti, neither one of these patterns occurs in the inventions as composed and published by Bonporti. I would also argue that little is gained from modernizing the key signatures. There is no shortage of critical editions that leave original key signatures in place, and this in no way hinders the intelligibility of the music.

The damaging lack of restraint on Sobel's part is unfortunately coupled with a lack of careful proofing and some problems in the production of this volume. The most glaring defects are the repetition of music from pages 418–419 on pages 420–421, the repetition of pages 415–467 (meaning that the music occurring on pp. 418–419 is printed a total of four times), the repetition of music from page 176 on page 177 and consequent omission of the next sixteen bars of Op. 4 No. 6 (that is, the first strain of the giga), the repetition of music from page 193 on page 194 and the consequent omission of the next thirty-four bars of Op. 4 No. 10, and the absence of the text from the second recitative of 'Vos Cheles' (Op. 3 No. 5) on page 302, leaving only the horizontal lines of word-extensions beneath the music. The first two of these amount to a mere redundancy of music, but the others result in the loss of music or text. Less serious but also detracting from the quality of the edition is the less-than-professional finish of the music notation. I hasten to stress that it is easily legible throughout, but nonetheless contains often awkward or distorted-looking slurs, sometimes inelegantly spaced notes, and solid-line word extensions in the motet texts where dashed-line syllable extensions are called for. Another quirk of the edition is its sometimes faulty numbering of bars: in binary form movements with an anacrusis, both the anacrusis and the bar that completes it are counted as a complete bar so that the total number counted in these movements is exaggerated by two.

Key signatures aside, Ciliberti's contribution to this edition represents more solid work. He sets forth the known events of Bonporti's life in detail and manages to touch on significant or representative features of each work in Bonporti's oeuvre. Particularly fine, for instance, is his discussion of the imitative allegro movements in the Op. 1 sonatas, providing lucid summaries of Bonporti's diverse approaches and acquainting the reader with Italianate fugato technique and style. At times, Ciliberti's comprehensiveness becomes mired in bar-by-bar descriptions of each piece, such as the analyses of the Op. 11 concertos, which are nonetheless reliable and informative. By means of his careful examination of the whole of Bonporti's oeuvre, Ciliberti is able to furnish a concise and convincing overview of the composer's style as inspired by Corellian formal models but with, in Ciliberti's words, 'an innovative attempt to recover the *probatio* and *inventio* of an earlier time, still present in the Veneto' (47). While some of the other stylistic affinities set forth in Ciliberti's summary strike me as a little far-fetched or too easily claimed (for example the points of similarity he describes on page 48 between Bonporti and Handel), he is nevertheless to be commended for a well-contextualized assessment of the music.

A minor imperfection of Ciliberti's essay is that its bibliography was slightly out of date when this volume was published in 2004. The most recent items cited in the biographical portion date to the 1980s, and the bibliography that follows the analyses lists sources only up to 1990. Thus omitted are two of Ciliberti's own articles on Bonporti's music, both published in 2002, and Carlino's biography and thematic catalogue of the composer, published in 2000, that might have altered Ciliberti's assessment of previous scholarship on Bonporti as 'unbalanced and contradictory'.

In sum, I must stress my appreciation for having all of Bonporti's music at my fingertips within a single volume that is useful to both performers and scholars. A remarkable amount of work must have gone into this project, particularly the collecting and transcribing of all of Bonporti's surviving music in the original prints and reprints. The composer's talents and unique profile indeed merit this recognition, and I am



confident that we will hear more of his music on account of Sobel and Ciliberti's efforts. My gratitude for their contribution, however, is tinged with regret over the serious flaws that compromise its reliability. Those wishing to use it must cast a sharp and critical eye over the editorial interventions and accept that some of the surviving music is missing.

GREGORY BARNETT



RECORDINGS AND PERFORMANCES

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GEORG BENDA (1722–1795)

ROMEO AND JULIET

Bampton Classical Opera, London, St John's Smith Square, 13 September 2007

Long before Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* captured the imagination of composers such as Bellini, Gounod and Tchaikovsky, Mozart's Bohemian contemporary Georg Benda composed an operatic setting of the play, in 1776; this was chosen by Bampton Classical Opera as its main production of 2007. During its fourteen-year history, the company has gained a deservedly high reputation for presenting a range of eighteenth-century operas that are either by almost completely unknown composers or are neglected in the output of famous composers (Haydn and Mozart are specialities). The company performs at a number of venues around England, including the Buxton Festival, the Bampton Deanery in Oxfordshire (where the company gave its first performance, hence the name) and St John's Smith Square; it is financed by the generosity of donors and counts on an entirely voluntary administrative staff. Bearing that in mind, the company does extraordinary work exploring a repertory that still contains many riches to be uncovered, always performing in English in an attempt to relate to the audience. Nevertheless, Benda's *Romeo and Juliet* is no masterpiece. Even in an ideal performance the work would probably not stand up to even efficient second-rate operas of the same period. As it was, the mixed quality of Bampton's performance meant that it was difficult to feel inspired by the piece.

Benda was clearly interested in writing various types of opera. After his appointment as Kapellmeister at the Thuringian town of Gotha, he wrote an opera seria, *Xindo riconosciuto*, and two Italian intermezzi. His most significant stage works, however, are the three one-act pieces he wrote for the famed Seyler troupe in 1775: the farce *Der Jahrmarkt* and the melodramas *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Medea*. These melodramas so inspired Mozart that he said he carried them about with him; their impact on his work is generally agreed to show clearly in *Zaide* and the incidental music to *Thamos, König in Ägypten*. Having written melodramas – where text is declaimed against an orchestral accompaniment – Benda must have relished the chance to write a Singspiel, again allowing a combination of spoken and sung passages. Together with his librettist Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter, with whom he had already written *Der Jahrmarkt* and *Medea*, Benda turned Shakespeare's complicated five-act tragedy into a three-act 'ernsthafte Opera', *Romeo und Julie*. The theatre at Gotha played host to a number of other English plays, both by Shakespeare and some of the Restoration playwrights, so the new opera was written in the context of the dissemination of English texts in the area rather than branching out in a different direction.

However, not only were the plays translated, they were also severely adapted and modified, so much so that they sometimes barely resemble their original form. This is the case with Benda's *Romeo and Juliet*. The highly populated Shakespearean version (which was itself freely adapted from Arthur Brooke's poem *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*) is pared down to six soloists, two of whom have little to sing. Romeo