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RICHARD KRAMER
CHERUBINO'S LEAP: IN SEARCH OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT MOMENT
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016
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We write quite differently at different stages of our careers. Graduate students, inhibited by the overbearing gaze of the parental advisor, easily migrate towards self-conscious arguments over-accessorized with footnotes. Once the PhD is in hand, the anxieties that drive towards middle-period maturity are expressed by an assertive rhetoric to convince us that mastery has been secured, and so full bibliographical contextualization shrinks to accommodate the developing musculature. Mid-career either sustains momentum or crushes authors in post-tenure bathos. But for those who manage to survive the cull, various late-style options present themselves: there is the gritted-teeth determination of those that spurn mortal myths regarding waning powers; there is the wish to put one's house in order by collecting together the fruits of one's long labours in textbooks, general histories and various other kinds of *summe*; and finally, there is the possibility of a withdrawal from the grandeur of the monograph into a more lyrical world of fragments and essays, strange and productively uneven tapestries, captivating islands of colourful *aperçus* poetically abandoned in seas of a sometimes baffling, threadbare weave.

Richard Kramer's exquisite book, on levels both figurative and biographical, is a late-style endeavour (he is, after all, an emeritus professor at the CUNY Graduate Center), and one unapologetically in the fragmentary vein. Since Kramer is, as *Cherubino's Leap* once more makes abundantly clear, an extraordinarily fine linguist and sensitive reader of textual nuance, there is therefore nothing innocent in his choice of subtitle (*In Search of the Enlightenment Moment*). We are dealing here with essays, and so enjoying precisely the process of being in search of things (as in the German *Versuch*), wandering around amidst the details rather than driving ourselves with those crass, legal injunctions of the article, which demand that we must hunt things down and bring them to rest with a bullet to the chest. Since most of us now realize that it comes across a little provincial if we cannot espouse the necessity of alternative modes of writing, Kramer's gentle late-style manner ought not to warrant comment. But even if we can stomach admitting that *maybe*, for example, a Walter Benjamin actually *does* need to sound like a Walter Benjamin sounds, many still have to stifle a mild sense of affront when confronted with a musicologist who has taken his own stylistic initiatives. Indeed, my choice of Benjamin is not innocent, for not only has he been a regular, if subtle and productively undertheorized, presence across the board in Kramer's *oeuvre*, but Benjamin's ethos, as I will suggest, also shines through in what is most exemplary in *Cherubino's Leap*. Irrespective, we musicologists remain rather Victorian in the rectitude we display in relationship to the professional etiquette of disciplinary stylistic norms, and Kramer's work therefore poses a challenge for the reviewer that has, in fact, accompanied the reception of late style at least since Beethoven: of how to make sure one's encomium doesn't start to read like an embarrassed form of respectful silence (for example, see K. M. Knittel, 'Wagner, Deafness, and the Reception of Beethoven's Late Style', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51/1 (1998), 49–82).

One best negotiates this tight corner by avoiding obsequious hedging and confessing: if one didn't know that this was a book by a scholar of such unquestioned import as Kramer, one could be excused for finding things, if never bad or questionable, then sometimes mildly odd. For example, although the subtitle suggests the genre of the essay, epic notes are also intimated, and expectations simmer for a confrontation of titanic historical forces and grand proclamations, not only concerning the Enlightenment, whose ideals and *aporias* Western intellectual discourse has never properly put to rest, but the temporal conundrum of the moment too, which has haunted Western philosophical discourse at least since St Augustine. Further, since musicological discourse on Western music has often made 'the moment' out to be the natural province of Romanticism and the long nineteenth century – as the early work of Berthold Hoeckner, which is oddly never mentioned in *Cherubino's Leap*, attests – there is the slightly racy suggestion of a romantic eighteenth century, or a romantic

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Enlightenment (Berthold Hoeckner, *Programming the Absolute: Nineteenth-Century German Music and the Hermeneutics of the Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002)). And even if we take into account the increased sophistication and openness to the refractory with which musicologists from James Webster through to Annette Richards have challenged how we narrate the slip and slide of musical cultures from the 1700s into the 1800s, such potentialities in Kramer's title are still significant enough to give pause.

As both scholar and writer, Kramer has always been in possession of an unusually fine ear, and so I would suggest that it is as much for aesthetic reasons as for ones of intellectual consistency that these intimations regarding a romantic Enlightenment are not dropped after the title-page, but continue to constitute a subtle thread that repeatedly becomes visible in the ongoing weave. Talking of 'the music of the Enlightenment', Kramer states that he intends to draw our attention 'to those moments when the composer's ear turns inward, beneath the elegant surface of the music to some less comfortable recess, beyond convention, and very nearly inscrutable, beyond our ability to seize the moment, to grasp its significance' (10). In a similar vein, within 'a world circumscribed within Enlightenment aesthetics, there are works now and then that press toward the borders of the cognitive, beyond the conventions that would define their language, and that drive the critical ear to new explanatory models' (42). Or, in a discussion of a bar of silence in the Andante of C. P. E. Bach's Sonata in F minor (Wq57/6), that 'there might be some music lurking beneath the silence – unsounded, and yet heard in the mind', and that although the Enlightenment was undoubtedly concerned with 'the conventions of good grammar', it would have savoured 'the intrusion into this perfect world of an element of the unexpected, of the irrational, of some inscrutable originality that means to undo the decorum of the moment' (48–49). Admittedly, much of the material in the first two thirds of *Cherubino's Leap* is concerned with moments in the work of figures such as C. P. E. Bach and, notably, the poet Klopstock, who Kramer presents to us without an ounce of spurious special pleading. (Indeed, the chapters on Klopstock alone are reason enough to read the book.) And since such figures have often been associated with *Empfindsamkeit* and *Sturm und Drang*, movements that, for better or worse, have often been scripted historically as somehow prefiguring Romanticism, the polemical charge in these passages rarely seems to ignite.

However, as the book proceeds, the focus is steadily redirected towards Gluck, Beethoven and finally Mozart, and the aperture simultaneously expands to take account of a wider historical panorama, a trajectory that culminates in the collection's title essay, 'Cherubino's Leap', which, true to form, leaps about – from the 1780s to Mahler's Vienna, Bruno Walter's Salzburg back to Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* – as it follows the trail of a single moment of a G flat from Mozart's *Figaro*. As a result, such statements gain an incendiary potential that finally glows with its greatest warmth in the concluding lines of the book, at the end of a tiny jewel of an essay on weeping women in Mozart:

> In its tropes of suffering and tears, Mozart's music sings across the boundaries of genre. *Singspiel*, *dramma per musica*, *opera seria*, *buffa*, ballad: each seeks to envelop its characters in a music delimited by convention. Mozart's women resist. When they sing, deep within themselves, the protocols of convention dissolve. Tinged in *Trauerspiel,* each conjures a world figured in tears. Mozart takes us with them, their music probing beyond a linguistic *Gefühlsleben,* beyond pathos to some inner moment of self-awareness, to the root of being. (198)

In the mid-late 1980s, modern Mozart scholarship on the Anglo-American scene was brought into being by luminaries such as Neal Zaslaw and Wye Jamison Allanbrook, who sought to wrest Mozart's music from the web of romantic tropes in which it had been caught since the early nineteenth century and so redress the imbalance that had been institutionalized in the accepted historical narratives. Nearly two centuries of historical injustice were supposedly overturned, and convention and its various affiliates (such as topic, style, expression and mimesis) once more appeared as the bearers of laudable values. Indeed, one might argue that the crusade was so successful that Allanbrook, with the not inconsiderable support of Richard Taruskin, became part of a process of institutionalizing this revolt against the institutionalization of romantic values. Allanbrook comes first to the University of California Berkeley in 1994 as the visiting Ernest Bloch Professor and then is hired in 1995 as a member of staff. In 1997, in his wonderful 'Chaikovsky and the Human: A

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Centennial Essay' (in *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 239–307) Taruskin gives a ringing endorsement of Allanbrook's work, not only as having been a profound influence on his understanding of Chaikovsky, but also as a model for defining the human, per se; two years later Allanbrook then returns the compliment as a means of validating the ethical stance she is propounding ('A Millenial Mozart?', *Mozart Society of America Newsletter* 3 (1999), 2–4). From that point, being in praise of convention became, and has remained, a predominant party line in the Department of Music at Berkeley (for example, Mary Ann Smart, 'In Praise of Convention: Formula and Experiment in Bellini's Self-Borrowings', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 53/1 (2000), 25–68), and similarly, slaps on the wrists to those who might deign to suggest otherwise continue to be one of this institution's identifiable exports (for example, Nicholas Mathew, review of James R. Currie, *Music and the Politics of Negation*, *Journal of the American Musicological Society,* 67/3 (2014), 828–833). So Kramer is wandering into potentially dangerous territory by concluding that maybe convention doesn't constitute what is most important in every instance. And since, as Smart and Taruskin's Foreword to their edited version of Allanbrook's posthumously published *The Secular Commedia: Comic Mimesis in Late Eighteenth-Century Music* (Berkeley: University of Califormia Press, 2014) makes abundantly clear, Allanbrook's work is as much prescription for an ethical life as it is musicological elucidation, Kramer's book is thereby – and only ever by implication and example, since he is rarely so gauche as directly to instruct or define – a proposal for a different kind of happiness. Indeed, this possibility already floats in on the first page of the book when Kramer approaches the notion of the moment by means of the Enlightenment philosopher Moses Mendelssohn's notion of surprise: 'Our happiness depends upon enjoyment and enjoyment depends upon the swift sentiment with which each beauty surprises our senses. Unhappy are those whom reason has hardened against the onset of such a surprise' (3–4).

What is odd, however, and what returns me to my initial thoughts about scholarly late style, is that Kramer seemingly registers nothing of this broader scholarly context. There are powerful historical claims striding onto the stage in this book – about the Enlightenment and its relationship to Romanticism, convention, the way in which composers hear and so much more – and yet it is as if these grand performances can't quite capture the attention of this unique scholar. Rather, the impression I get from reading is that Kramer is perfectly happy simply to be able to travel where the lines of enquiry take him. And since he needs to be free to wander, he has to travel light, so footnotes are mostly constituted only by what is needed or at hand, and the unwieldy maps that are produced by disciplinary polemic are not packed for the journey. This may well be the scholarly wisdom of late maturity, and I'm sure I'm not the only musicologist who has sometimes wondered whether the energies squandered on scholarly invective might not have been used in life to better end. But this is not Kramer's late style, because those of us who have always read him know that this is how Kramer has always been: always late, 'untimely', in the Nietzschean sense that Edward Said employs in his own posthumously published, and therefore late, essays on lateness (Edward Said, *On Late Style: Music and Literature Against the Grain* (New York: Vintage, 2007)).

Famously, Benjamin once wrote:

> Not to find one's way around a city does not mean much. But to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires some schooling. Street names must speak to the urban wanderer like the snapping of dry twigs, and little streets in the heart of the city must reflect the times of day, for him, as clearly as a mountain valley. This art I acquired rather late in life; it fulfilled a dream, of which the first traces were labyrinths on the blotting papers in my school notebooks (Walter Benjamin, *Berlin Childhood Around 1900*, trans. Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 53–54).

I would suggest that there is something of this in the Kramer who will follow Mozart 'into the subconscious matrix of the work in search of some marked moment' (xvi), for whom the 'purpose is more modest' and the desire 'simply to root around' (13), who 'emphatically' does not 'mean to argue for a "solution" to an analytic

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problem' (50), who is happy to be 'obsessively attentive to the nuances of a single moment' (91), or to spend time with a project that 'never quite formulated itself into something adequately coherent, into a music that *could* be written down' (95), or to be stopped not by a composer's imposing projects, but by a 'Beethoven distracting himself, finding a volume of Klopstock's odes, leafing through' (116). If *Cherubino's Leap* has such a wealth to offer to our historical understanding of the various ends of the long eighteenth century, it has even more to offer us in terms of the pleasures of the scholarly act itself. For in following Kramer 'in search', we get to be with someone being happy to be doing what they do. And in our present predicaments, where the difficult boom and violence of the world around us makes it tempting to make hysterical claims about our work, this subtle testament to the fact that we devote such efforts to being academics because at one time it made us happy seems, to this reviewer at least, incredibly touching.

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CATHERINE MASSIP, DENIS HERLIN AND VALÉRIE DE WISPELAERE, EDS
COLLECTIONNER LA MUSIQUE: ÉRUDITS COLLECTIONNEURS
Turnhout: Brepols, 2015
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The series Collectionner la musique is founded on the idea that a collection is more than the sum of its parts, and that the act of collecting gives additional social and intellectual meaning to the components. The first book in the series addressed the history of collecting music, while the second dealt with collecting as part of musical interpretation and performance. The third and current volume, based on papers from the 2013 conference at Royaumont, concerns itself with the collections of scholars. Catherine Massip's Introduction defines a collection as something 'formed through thoughtful choices and made up of rare materials not intended for immediate practical use' ('un choix rationnel de matériaux rares non destinés à un usage pratique immédiat', 10). This definition obviously leaves room for negotiation: what is a 'thoughtful' choice, what counts as 'rare', and what are 'practical' uses? These questions are not addressed directly; rather, the variety of collections examined in the volume exemplifies the definition's flexibility.

While the book contains material spanning the seventeenth to twenty-first centuries, I will focus on eighteenth-century subjects, including the twenty-first-century collector Patrick Florentin, who specializes in materials relating to Rameau. Chapters of special interest for the scholar of the eighteenth century deal with Charles Burney, Sébastien de Brossard and Gaspare Selvaggi. This brief list of names gives a sense of the international scope of the volume; though Frenchmen make up the majority of the personages, Italian, English and even Japanese men also appear. (Women are incidental, at best, to the narratives of these erudite men, as are most non-Western musics.)

Like a collection, this group of essays is best when considered as a whole. Most chapters take a granular perspective, offering a biographical sketch of a collector, exploring his social and scholarly context, and then establishing what we can know about the contents of his library. Yet the chapters' proximity to each other encourages reflection on broader questions: what does knowing the contents of a library tell us about the owner? How does the ownership of material objects relate to the lived experience of a scholar, performer or audience member? Rarely do the individual chapters seek to address these or related questions.

This is partly due to the type of materials available. Administrative records such as catalogues of sale and receipts for books reveal the contents of the library, but, unless pressed, do little more. In the case of

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