



REVIEW: BOOK

Telemann Studies

Wolfgang Hirschmann and Steven Zohn, eds
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022
pp. xxxii + 344, ISBN 978 1 108 49383 3

Barbara M. Reul

Luther College, University of Regina, Regina, Canada
barbara.reul@uregina.ca

When Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767) applied for, and subsequently turned down, the vacant post of Thomaskantor in Leipzig, in 1722, he probably did not expect a major English-language publication bearing his last name to grace (real and virtual) bookshelves three centuries later. *Telemann Studies* is a ground-breaking work that comprises important contributions by sixteen scholars based in Germany, the USA and Japan. They met at Temple University in October 2017 to mark the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Telemann's death and ponder the topic 'Georg Philipp Telemann: Enlightenment and Postmodern Perspectives'.

That it took almost five years for these exemplary conference proceedings to appear in print was no surprise to this reviewer. After all, its editors, Wolfgang Hirschmann (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg) and Steven Zohn (Temple University), are not only the two leading Telemann scholars in their respective native languages, but are also known for their high scholarly standards. For them to collaborate is a stroke of luck as far as global Telemann research is concerned.

According to its back cover, this book – which is divided into five parts – attempts to remedy the limited availability of English-language literature on Telemann by examining specific aspects of his life, music and legacy. To that end, the editors provide an unusually lengthy Preface. It begins with a superb overview of how (German) Telemann scholarship developed over the course of the twentieth century; this part of the preface would have made a wonderful separate introductory chapter. Comprehensive summaries of each chapter follow, with the editors taking great pains to explain the authors' methodological approaches and highlight research findings.

This 'representative cross-section of Telemann studies in the early twenty-first century' (xxii) is a must-read for anyone who wants to know more about the most influential German composer of the first half of the eighteenth century. To that end, Zohn has skillfully translated chapters written by German scholars Carsten Lange, Nina Eichholz and Ralph-Jürgen Reipsch into English.

'Enlightenment perspectives' are explored in part 1. First, Zohn outlines the different ways in which Telemann handled the musical past in two of his Frankfurt cantatas, *Sehet an die Exempel der Alten* (TWV1:1259) and *Erhöre mich, wenn ich rufe* (TWV1:459). Hirschmann then shifts to the composer's French pastoral dramas and scrutinizes his little-known (and uncatalogued) *Pastorelle en musique* from 1714. Telemann's commentary on the 'Augenorgel', or 'harpsichord for the eye', is the focus of Joyce Z. Lindorff's chapter; she draws attention to the eight translations that appeared between 1739 and 1757 in French, Latin and German.

In part 2, 'Urban and Courtly Contexts', Carsten Lange painstakingly examines Telemann's connection to the city of Lüneburg, specifically to the local pastor and theologian Roger Brown, who copied some of Telemann's works. Attention to detail also shines through in Daniel R. Melamed's informative essay that follows. He contextualizes Lutheran Passion settings that were in use prior to Telemann's arrival in Hamburg, in 1721, and includes no fewer than eleven

tables that illustrate an almost static Passion tradition in the late seventeenth century. The next chapter – Andrew Talle’s ‘The Testament of Prince Johann Ernst of Saxe-Weimar’ – is outstanding. This biographical account of a musically gifted aristocrat who died a miserable death at age eighteen indeed ‘reads like a crime novel’ (xv). Who would have known that a plethora of archival documents that help to clarify the role Telemann and his *Six Sonates à Violon seul* played during the Prince’s final years could be so entertaining? Talle includes, for example, a hilarious conversation between a *Cammerdiener* and the court secretary: the Prince’s (evidently missing) last will had been safely stowed at the bottom of the court secretary’s own laundry case all along (150).

In part 3, ‘Nature (and) Theology in the Late Vocal Works’, the theological and aesthetic contexts of Telemann’s vocal music from the 1750s and 1760s are investigated expertly by Joyce L. Irwin (*Die Donner-Ode*, TVWV6:3), Markus Rathey (*Die Hirten bei der Krippe zu Bethlehem*, TVWV1:797) and Andreas Waczkat (*Der May*, TVWV20:40) respectively. While each author uses a slightly different methodology, all of them increase our understanding of why and how a mature Telemann approached various types of literary text in his later years.

J. S. Bach’s Weimar period (1708–1717) is the focal point of part 4, ‘Bach Family Connections’, and for good reason. In his compelling essay on ‘Telemann as General “Kapellmeister” to the Bach Family’, David Schulenberg concludes that, despite being a godparent to C. P. E. Bach, Telemann nevertheless ‘held a position of implicit authority’ (233) over the future Thomaskantor of Leipzig. The baptism of Bach’s second-oldest son, in 1714, frames Ellen Exner’s investigation of what and who – in this case the Weissenfels court musician Adam Immanuel Weldig – may have influenced the different types of eighteenth-century reception accorded to Bach and Telemann. Jason B. Grant’s intricate chapter on ‘Telemann’s Chorales in C. P. E. Bach’s Hamburg Church Music’ ends with a cliffhanger of sorts. The author wonders whether ‘any chorale (indeed, any type of movement), in a vocal work attributed to [Emanuel] Bach[,] is in fact by him – even if it is written in his hand in an autograph score’ (269).

Part 5, ‘Cantata Cycles in Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Beyond’ foregrounds Telemann’s enduring popularity as a composer of church music during his lifetime. To that end, Koata Sato examines Telemann’s changing approach to setting recitative before drawing attention to how other composers, including the composer’s grandson Georg Michael, adapted Telemann’s recitatives to fit their own needs. Nina Eichholz’s chapter offers a fascinating musicological profile of Telemann’s ‘Stolberg’ cycle from the years 1737–1738. It culminates in a plausible description of how Telemann would have gone about conceiving a general framework for a cantata cycle while simultaneously ensuring that he could creatively diverge from it. Such an opus project of sorts could have been the incomplete *Jahrgang* for the 1733–1734 church year in Hamburg. Formal and stylistic similarities between poems or between musical settings prompt Ralph-Jürgen Reipsch to argue in favour of Telemann as its composer. Finally, the extent to which Telemann’s cantata cycles were performed in Hirschberg (Jelenia Góra), Breslau (Wrocław) and Augsburg, by local cantors who had personal contact with Johann Sebastian Bach, surprises Michael Maul. He posits that ‘Telemann might therefore be considered the unofficial church music director of Protestant Germany as a whole’ (335).

As far as quibbles on my part are concerned, they are far and few between. In the chapter by Reipsch, the *de tempore* designations given in Table 15.1 (306) are confusing, if correct. Specifically, the ‘Low Sunday’ is a decidedly non-Lutheran (as in Catholic) label, while *Quasimodogeniti* is, in fact, the Second Sunday of Easter, *Misericordias Domini* the Third and *Jubilate* the Fourth Sunday after Easter respectively. Let me also warn readers who were hoping for translations of every single German word that appears over the course of 344 pages. They will be disappointed at times – as can be seen, for example, with Table 16.1 (328–329), an overview of Gottfried Sauer’s estate in Breslau from 1757. Of the thirty-six inventoried items, only those eight that refer specifically to Telemann are subsequently given in English. Overall, however, there is no doubt that this impressive volume will please ‘Telemann’s many Anglophone devotees [who] have

long been underserved by scholarship in English', as well as Bach scholars, for after all, as the editors put it in the Preface, 'in order to understand Bach, one must understand Telemann' (xxii).

For the record, I read this book on the Cambridge Core platform after Cambridge University Press insisted that I install additional software to access my complimentary copy. Readers who opted for a hard copy instead may be surprised to learn that many of the musical examples are only available online. I enjoyed clicking my way through the latter as well as figures, tables, appendices to three individual chapters, abbreviations of commonly used secondary sources and library sigla, and information on the contributors. Of course, the hyperlinked page numbers in 'Telemann's Index of Works' in this volume and the excellent 'General Index' turned out to be real time-savers.

I would, however, advise against relying exclusively on the hyperlinks given under 'Book Contents', as they are incomplete. A better option is the main 'Contents' screen: this is also where short synopses of each scholarly contribution can be found, written for the benefit of online audiences. Some astute readers may be bothered by the fact that titles of journals and books in the online footnotes are not given in italics. Rest assured that they are formatted perfectly in the PDF files available for download.

In closing, I have high hopes that 'the German–American collaboration underlying this *Telemann Studies* project, which has proven friendly and fruitful in equal measure, will not remain an isolated case' (x). Given how much there is still to explore as far as Telemann's biography, oeuvre and impact are concerned, a sequel would be most welcome, and the sooner the better.

Barbara M. Reul is a Full Professor of Musicology at Luther College University of Regina, and is passionate about archival research. Her publications, in both English and German, focus on eighteenth-century German court music, with an emphasis on Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688–1758) and musical life at the court of Anhalt-Zerbst. To date, she has also co-edited, with Ruth Tatlow and others, five issues of the Bach Network's multimedia web-based journal *Discussing Bach*.