



generally always hazardous for editors of virtuoso piano works, these have been sensibly considered, minimizing the impossible. An Introduction in Czech, German and English sets the scene nicely for this important addition to the literature, and a concise and informative Critical Commentary is provided at the end. Bärenreiter has set the standard for urtext editions of repertory from Rösler's era, and we must be thankful to them and to Alena Hönigová for making such an enjoyable and well-crafted work available once more. Tantalizingly, Rösler's *Repertorio* lists a third piano concerto; let us hope that, one day, it too may be found and published.

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Eighteenth-Century Music © The Author(s), 2021. Published by Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S1478570620000573

AGOSTINO STEFFANI (1654–1728), ED. WALTRAUT ANNA LACH
DIE OPERNEINAKTER LA LOTTA D'HERCOLE CON ACHELOO UND BACCANALI VON AGOSTINO STEFFANI MIT EINER EINFÜHRUNG ZUR FORM DES OPERNEINAKTERS IM ZEITGENÖSSISCHEN KONTEXT UND EINER HISTORISCH-KRITISCHEN EDITION VON BACCANALI
Vienna: Hollitzer, 2020
pp. 336, ISBN 978 3 990 12599 1

This volume contains a study of Steffani's two one-act operas, *La lotta d'Hercole con Acheloo* and *Baccanali*, and an edition of the latter. The authenticity of these works has occasionally been questioned, because, unlike his full-length operas for Hanover, they do not survive in autograph. Such doubts are dispelled by a glance at the librettos and scores. Contrasted in subject, mood and casting, they would make a wonderful three-hour double bill.

The first half of the publication discusses the drama and music of both works and relates them to Steffani's full-length Hanover operas and to one-act opera in general. Synopses of both pieces are followed by an account of the sources of the librettos and their historical background. *La lotta* was first performed in the summer of 1689, probably during the visit to Hanover of the English diplomat William Dutton Colt. Dorothea Schröder saw Hercules' contest with Achelöus for the hand of Dejanira as an allegory of the rivalry between Ernst August of Hanover and Anton Ulrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel for the elevation of his duchy to an electorate. Lach espouses this interpretation and proposes that *La lotta* was the unidentified 'pastorale' of which, as Riva informed Steffani in 1721, a performance for George I was organized in London by Bononcini, with Senesino and Berselli in the cast. *Baccanali* was the second of the two Steffani operas first presented at Hanover during carnival in 1695. Superficially a light-hearted glance at the joys and sufferings of nymphs and shepherds, it begins with a prologue-like scene for the world-weary Atlas and ends with a finale in praise of Bacchus. Not being tied to a specific event, the work was easily adapted as *Doppia festa d'Himeneo* to celebrate a birthday and a wedding at Salztal in 1718 and further revised as *La festa di Minerva* for a name day at Wolfenbüttel in the following year. The relationships between these works and *Baccanali* are thoroughly explored.

The discussion of the music takes both operas together, each kind of movement – overtures, dances, arias, recitative, ensembles – being treated in turn. Each work inhabits a narrow range of keys and possesses a tonal identity (maybe perceptible in a one-act piece), but description of C major as 'more steely' and D minor as 'dark' strikes a false note (69). Although both operas finish with dancing, *Baccanali* also includes four other ballets that are integral to the piece; the relation of this music to actual dancing is not considered. The distribution of ballet music in the manuscripts of Steffani's Hanover operas is shown by a table which, strangely, omits *La lotta* and *Baccanali* and refers to the sources not by library and shelfmark but by copyists (not yet discussed in the text). The author rightly mentions the influence of Lully on Steffani's orchestration and instrumental movements but not that of Charpentier on his vocal writing. The arias, which are diverse in



structure, scoring and method of accompaniment, receive most attention. In some the singer first enters with a theme already announced by the bass. Lach suggests that Steffani picked up this technique from Legrenzi, but he could have acquired it just as easily from Stradella; moreover, such a theme is likely to have been conceived for the voice before being put into the bass. When an aria is repeated to new words by a different character, the author uses the term 'identical arias' ('*musikalisch identische Arien*'; 68–69). This is misleading: the two statements are part of a single strophic aria in which each strophe is sung by a different person – what Francesco Caffi called an aria 'in duetto'.

Drama and music are brought together in a section entitled 'Dramaturgie' that makes an eloquent case for both works to be considered as operas. This is an important point, because when Steffani wrote them, the concept of one-act opera hardly existed. To place them in context Lach supplies an Appendix listing over two hundred small-scale musico-dramatic entertainments, in all major European languages, ranging from *Dafne* (Rinuccini–Peri, 1597) to *La rispettosa tenerezza* (Metastasio–Reutter the younger, 1750). The list includes works with such designations as 'azione teatrale', 'ballad opera', 'comédie', 'componimento drammatico', 'divertissement', 'festa teatrale', 'opéra-comique', 'pastorale', 'pièce d'un [or: en un] acte', 'poemetto drammatico', 'prologue' (in various languages), 'scherzo musicale', 'serenata' and 'Sing-Spiel', and even introductions to ballets, tourneys and other entertainments. However, not everything in the list is an opera or an independent work; some music dramas were never intended for staging, and the word 'drammatico' does not turn a poem into an opera libretto.

Definitions aside, the most striking revelation is that, since only eleven of the listed works date from before 1689, *La lotta* and *Baccanali* appear to be among the earliest examples of one-act opera. Although the former is styled a 'divertimento drammatico' and the latter carries no designation whatever ('*Baccanali celebrati nel Picciolo Teatro Elettorale d'Hannover*'), they clearly are operas in a single act – independent, self-sufficient stage works with a coherent plot, set to music that articulates action and delineates character. Few works of this size from this period compare with them in nature or quality. According to Lach, they inspired Sophie Charlotte to cultivate one-act opera in Berlin and were the precedent for Bononcini and his librettists in *Cefalo* and *Polifemo* (both Lietzenburg, 1702). *La lotta* and, to a lesser extent, *Baccanali* also served Handel as sources of borrowed material. The author makes a significant addition to the many borrowings from *La lotta* identified by John Roberts, showing that the B section of 'New scenes of joy' (*Theodora*) is indebted to the third section of Steffani's 'La cerasta più terribile'.

The second half of the volume is the edition of *Baccanali*, the first of this opera to have been published. A copy of the work survives in the Royal Music Library at the British Library; selected movements are found in two contemporary Hanoverian manuscripts, two collections in Berlin and a set of volumes split between Sondershausen and Brussels, with isolated numbers elsewhere. Needing to ascertain the reliability of these manuscripts, Lach investigates the copyists of all the sources of Steffani's Hanover operas, most of which were copied repeatedly in the early eighteenth century. Previous scholars have studied parts of this complex of sources, but none has published such a comprehensive survey, with so many illustrations, as Lach presents here. Seven hands are identified, and some are given names. A few manuscripts managed to escape the net – an *Orlando generoso* in Hanover (Stadtbibliothek) and aria collections in Modena (Biblioteca estense) and New York (Public Library) – and source D is attributed on different pages to copyists A and C (A is correct); the omissions do not, however, detract from the value of this work, of which the implications will take time to sink in but could be far-reaching.

Some features of the edition, however, are less impressive. Alarm bells start ringing at the edition of the libretto. The orthography of the Italian – there is also a German translation – is said to follow the contemporary printed wordbook, but 'u' and 'j' are changed to 'v' and 'i', as appropriate, arias are not set off, and a *da capo* instruction is added when the wordbook lacks a repeat that appears in the score. The libretto, in other words, reflects the score, not the wordbook. An unfortunate consequence of this occurs in Act 1 Scene 2, where the opening line of Aminta's recitative ('*Son povero pastor, ma son contento*'), which is repeated at the end of the stanza and set, both times, in *arioso* style, is presented in the libretto and the score not as an aria *cavata*, which it is, but as an independent movement. This obscures the contributions of both the librettist and the composer.

Notwithstanding its title, the edition is not entirely historical or sufficiently critical. The complete copy of the score is treated as the 'reference' (not 'principal') source, readings from other manuscripts being adopted as



appropriate (there is no stemma). Information on editorial procedures is divided between a Preface and a Critical Report. Clefs are modernized, but the obbligato oboe part in No. 6 is printed nevertheless in G₁. Although the retention of original key signatures is acceptable, little is gained from adhering to the time signatures 3/4 or 3/2, or to the sources' irregular barring, in the case of movements barred mainly in six. This policy leads to the claim that a dance for the followers of Bacchus (No. 40) comprises two phrases of two and a half bars each, followed by a third that begins with a bar of 5/4: the phrases are actually composed of two, two and four bars of 6/4, and all three of them begin with a two-crotchet upbeat. The notation of repeats, too, would have benefited from modernization, for the combination of original *segno* markings and dotted double barlines is occasionally unclear. In the opening 'simphonia', a heading omitted from the score, the last dotted barlines have no earlier counterpart; in the closing dance (No. 41) the final *segno* and dotted barlines imply repetition from two different points in the movement. Furthermore, the edition follows the reference manuscript uncritically in over two dozen places where the reading is obviously wrong, and includes unprovoked errors in at least a dozen more. In the ritornello on page 206 all four parts in bar 2 are a tone too low, and in several places (such as page 190, bar 30 and page 229, Aria, bars 5–7) the underlay of the text is incorrect.

Information on instruments and scoring appears in a discussion of performing practice ('Aufführungspraxis'), a list of performing forces ('Besetzung') and the Critical Report. Lach recommends a 'colourful' and 'richly varied' continuo section, but her listing of an organ is unjustified and the role of the lute in Steffani's *Amor vien dal Destino* is exceptional, not a model for a continuo instrument. The upper three parts of his orchestral scores are notated in the G₁, C₁ and C₃ clefs and seem to have been played at Hanover on violins (doubled by oboes), *hautecontre* and *taille*. For modern performance the editor suggests two violins and viola, but one violin and two violas would be possible and maybe more appropriate. When the source calls for two violins, the parts are for soloists. Having explained that 'flauto' means recorder, Lach eschews the term 'flauto dolce' in the score and suggests recorders for the on-stage 'piferi' mentioned in the stage direction for the *scena ultima*, though the music is a 'Marche pour l'orqueste, et les haub: sur la scene'.

By highlighting the quality and historical importance of Steffani's one-act operas, presenting an edition of *Baccanali* and surveying his Hanover copyists, this volume sheds new light on a talented dramatic composer. It is unusual, however, in comprising two such distinct (if complementary) parts; although the title-page covers both study and edition, the edition also sports its own title-page with the date 2018 but no imprint. The exceptional structure arises from the fact that the book is a lightly revised version of the author's PhD dissertation (Universität Tübingen, 2019) and reflects the fact that under her maiden name (Kautz) she had edited *La lotta* for her master's degree (Universität Heidelberg, 2012); as Kautz-Lach, she has also edited *Agostino Steffani: Musiker, Politiker und Kirchenfürst. Schriften von Gerhard Croll* (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2018). Librarians may wonder whether to shelve *Die Operneinakter* among books, but it probably belongs with other music, and its size and format (A4, upright) should ensure it a home there.

Finally, it is a pity that Lach did not revise her dissertation more thoroughly for publication. If she had, she might have completed the list of Steffani's operas already edited for publication or performance, supplied music examples in the discussion of *La lotta*, changed the references in that of *Baccanali* from scene numbers to movement or page numbers, shortened the Appendix (given the dates of *La lotta*, *Baccanali* and Steffani's last opera (1709), it could have ended as early as 1710), improved the spacing of the music in the edition, compiled an index and corrected the mistakes – including the attribution of an article to 'Helen Coffey und Milton Keynes' (122, 296).

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