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GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN, *DER FÜR DIE SÜNDE DER WELT LEIDENDE UND STERBENDE JESUS*, PASSIONSORATORIUM VON BARTHOLD HEINRICH BROCKES, TVWV5:1

ED. CARSTEN LANGE

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Telemann's *Brockes-Passion*, one of the major works from the composer's Frankfurt period and a sister work to settings of the same text by Handel, Keiser and Mattheson, among others, appears here in a new, lavish edition edited by Carsten Lange as part of the continuing Telemann-Ausgabe. In this volume Lange has applied his extensive research on this important but little-known work to achieve a good result. It is provided with an extensive Preface, encompassing sixteen large-scale pages of historical background, the composition of the text by the Hamburg attorney and later senator Barthold Heinrich Brockes, entitled *Der für die Sünde der Welt gemarterte und sterbende Jesus* ('Jesus, martyred and dying for the sins of the world'; note that Telemann's Frankfurt librettos alter the title, changing the word 'gemarterte' (martyred) to 'leidende' (suffering)), the work's performance history, the music itself, contemporary and later reception, and so on. While to some the Preface may look like overkill, the information is likely to be useful to scholars exploring the performance of the Passion oratorio as a genre in Germany during the eighteenth century, given the work's enormous popularity during the composer's lifetime and well after his death. Thankfully, the volume includes a complete facsimile of an early libretto, as well as a pointer to a website offering a second version of the libretto which can be downloaded (from <http://edocs.ub.uni-frankfurt.de/volltexte/2006/3612/pdf/Mus_W_305.pdf>). Brockes's text, of course, is best known for its appearance in Bach's St John Passion; compare, for example, Telemann's and Bach's settings of 'Eilt, ihr angefochtenen Seelen' (textual changes in Bach's setting have been noted elsewhere by Michael Marissen, in his *Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion: With an Annotated Literal Translation of the Libretto* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 30–31).

Arriving at anything approaching an urtext for this piece is a daunting task. The question of sources for this work is quite complex. No scores survive from the original performances, and Lange has done a good job of sorting out the myriad manuscripts, none of which is autograph. His Source A constitutes a score from Darmstadt, apparently from the 1720s, by an unknown scribe and with some odd variants, and with an unknown place of origin (he proposes Hamburg). Source B is also a bit distant from the original performance: it comprises a set of parts in Berlin in the hand of a known Hamburg scribe who worked for Telemann, with the parts arranged in a particularly odd configuration (he proposes, reasonably, that they were intended as exemplars for further copies). The remaining sources represent performances in other locations or pasticcios (the latter documenting an interesting practice of presenting a composite of settings of the text by various composers). Altogether there appears to be no really authoritative source for the work, and some of the music, especially the *turba* choruses, have alternative versions (which are included at the back of the volume). Librettos, on the other hand, do indeed survive from the earliest Frankfurt performances, and serve as a starting-point for various textual variants in Lange's motley assembly of sources.

Lange's account of the first performances of the work is quite detailed, and important for what it shows about the early development of the public concert (and concert performances of the passion oratorio) in a major German city in the early eighteenth century, in this case Frankfurt am Main in April 1716 (with a pair of performances on consecutive days). The initial performances took place in a packed church, the Barfüsserkerche, an institution for which Telemann also had the responsibility of providing the weekly cantata. The concert venue had been changed at the last moment from the orphanage to the church as a result of the overwhelming sale of the libretto, promising an audience that would require the seating capacity



of the church (guards were posted to prevent the entry of anyone who had not bought a libretto). The concert was attended by the Landgraf Ernst Ludwig of Hesse-Darmstadt, who had also put the virtuosos of his own court Kapelle at Telemann's disposal for the performance (the ensemble was a mixture of a Frankfurt collegium musicum and the Darmstadt Kapelle). The work was directed not by Telemann, but by Heinrich Bartels, the director of the collegium musicum. Lange quite rightly points out that Telemann must have originally intended the music for the Darmstadt players, judging from the showy virtuosity that some parts of the work require. The original performances used female singers, though they were not involved in the cantatas that were regularly performed at the church services in Frankfurt. The work quickly became popular, with performances documented in a number of places in Germany over the following few years. Telemann himself performed the work several times in Hamburg.

The music itself shows Telemann at his best in this relatively early part of his long career. The opening Sinfonia, with its hushed, static, dissonant beginning and extended solo work for the oboe, is particularly wrenching in emotional terms, as are many of the arias, which are quite operatic. The instrumentation is rich, including a part for the viola d'amore. This instrument was not generally used in the Frankfurt cantata repertory, but it was popular at the courts of Darmstadt and Dresden (and was used by Vivaldi); here it is given a lovely solo obbligato in the aria for the Daughter of Zion 'Es scheint, da den zerkerbten Rücken des Kreuzes Last'. Solo instrumental writing can be difficult for the player, befitting the court virtuosos for whom the parts were intended. Especially remarkable is the technically challenging recorder obbligato to the arioso 'Mein Heiland, Herr und Fürst', a tour de force of rapid octave changes and flying demisemiquavers (though Telemann also provided an alternative recorder part that is considerably easier to play). The composer's use of unusual playing techniques for special effects extended to the strings, especially in the soprano aria 'Brich, brüllender Abgrund', where in the B section the upper strings are given the instruction 'Hier können die Bogen nahe am Stege touchieren', essentially a direction to play *sul ponticello* or close to it; the passage consists of repeated semiquavers in the strings, illustrating the trembling of the heavens at the crucifixion. A number of the movements exist in alternative versions; these are largely the *turba* choruses, which appear to have been enlarged in later performances (alternative versions are given in two appendices in the back of the volume that show variants in Source C and Source F).

The expansion of the *turba* choruses brings us to the issue of performing this piece in the early twenty-first century. Brockes's treatment of the Jews in his text is very negative: they are portrayed as bloodthirsty and as having pushed the reluctant Pontius Pilate into ordering Jesus's execution. The Jews are depicted with all of the traditional anti-Jewish canards: not only are they bloodthirsty, conniving and vengeful, but they are also the children of Satan, Satan being depicted here as a dragon. Brockes himself seems to have borne no love for the Jews, whether the ancient Jews of the Bible or the contemporary Jews in Hamburg or its environs (and in this attitude he had the support of the local Lutheran clergy).

It can be seen that Telemann's music for the *turba* choruses only reinforces these stereotypes. They tend to be mocking in tone and have the character of a caricature. This feeling is intensified in the longer versions of some of the choruses. Consider, for example, the Chorus of 'Jews and Murderers' – 'Pfui, seht mir doch den König an' – which directly follows the crucifixion. The earlier version comprises seven bars of 4/4, with some repetition of the word 'Pfui', but is generally brief, without much emphasis on the alliteration built into Brockes's text ('So wissen wirs gewiss'). The second version is twenty-eight bars long in 2/4 (hence twice as long), has much more extensive treatment of the scornful 'Pfui's, and positively hisses the final 's's of 'gewiss', as the words are repeated over and over. Further, Telemann simulates laughing with repeated notes on the same syllables.

Similar issues, of course, have been raised with Bach's Passions, and anti-Semitic representation in music is a problem inherent in the repertory of liturgical Passions and Passion oratorios as a whole. Many modern performances, especially in the United States, include some type of explanatory material in the programme book. The issue is completely ignored in the edition, but it really cannot be ignored in actual performances. Performing the work with explanatory material, perhaps on the history of Passion plays and music, and European anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, seems to me to be a better solution than altering the text



(another possibility). After all, this is a work composed and initially performed in a city that from 1462 had locked its Jews in a ghetto.

It is indisputable that the music is finely crafted, but in a way this makes the issue of representation more troubling. The text remains problematic, regardless of which of the various composer's settings is being considered. Perhaps what we can draw from the piece is a lesson on clothing objectionable sentiments in brilliant music, and the incentive to consider how the changing views of historical texts affect our assessment of the music to which they are set.

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ANTONIO VIVALDI, *JUDITHA TRIUMPHANS DEVICTA HOLOFERNIS BARBARIE*,
RV644

ED. MICHAEL TALBOT

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Of the four oratorios Vivaldi is known to have composed between 1713 and 1722, only *Juditha triumphans*, from 1716, has survived. Luckily the sole source is in the composer's hand; while mostly neat and ready for the copyist, it also includes some hastily penned passages that illustrate last-minute changes. As Talbot points out in his excellent Introduction to this new edition, which forms part of the ongoing Vivaldi *Edizione Critica*, the formal coherence and timbral magnificence of *Juditha triumphans* were quickly recognized in the early days of the Vivaldi revival in the 1940s (xxxiii). More recently, a plethora of recordings since 1998 (including those of The King's Consort, Academia Montris Regalis, Capella Savaria, Modo Antiquo, I Barocchisti and the Orchestra of the Antipodes) have made the work even more popular among a wider public.

Juditha triumphans is truly one of the great masterpieces of early eighteenth-century Venice. Richly orchestrated and thoughtfully conceived for the talented women and girls of the Ospedale della Pietà, the treasures of *Juditha triumphans* stimulate speculation on the nature of Vivaldi's other lost works in this genre as well as curiosity about the nature of the few surviving works of his Venetian contemporaries. At first glance, this 'sacrum militare oratorium' is distinguished from contemporaneous operatic traditions by an increased use of the chorus and a Latin libretto; moreover, the ancient tongue of the Roman Republic imparts here a cultural capital that served to legitimize the civic virtue of the institution as well as the pedagogical worthiness of the original performances themselves. Above all, we find an overt and extravagant use of obbligato instruments, designed to display the formidable talents of the female performers on the diverse instrumentarium of the Ospedale. Included in the already large orchestral scoring for *Juditha triumphans* are solo parts for soprano chalumeau, viola d'amore, four theorbos, a mandolin, oboe and organ, two treble recorders and a five-part collection of mysteriously-named 'violettes all'inglese', which Michael Talbot has convincingly demonstrated to be equivalent to a chest of viols ('Vivaldi and the English Viol', *Early Music* 30/3 (2002), 381–394). This kind of sonic sumptuousness makes the work just as attractive now as it must have been then. Benedetto Marcello alludes to the popularity for obbligato treatment in sung drama at the time in a brief satirical jab made in his *Il Teatro alla moda* of 1720, which includes the lampooning 'ariette accompanied by stromenti pizzicato, sordini, trombe marine, piombé [Jew's harp] etc.'. One seeks in vain for other works of the 1710s or 1720s approaching the stature of Vivaldi's work; however, most are lost. Talbot mentions in passing an intriguing (and hitherto unpublished) serenata with a