



quite apart from those of both opera seria and opera buffa. The generic nature of nineteenth-century *opera semiseria*, conversely, is grounded in the idea of generic mixture, with no concern for a contemporary subject. In this respect, *opera semiseria* can hardly be conceived as the late stage of sentimental opera, but rather as a manifestation of its ‘undoing’ (228).

With its nuanced argumentation, ambitious scope, absorbing prose and intellectual rigour, this book constitutes a seminal contribution both to opera studies and to the history of eighteenth-century culture at large. By advocating a more fluid understanding of generic boundaries in opera, Castelvechi is also complicating our understanding of the inclination for taxonomy inherent within much late eighteenth-century thought. His many thought-provoking and path-breaking ideas whet the reader’s appetite and raise a plethora of questions. Some of them, inevitably, are destined to remain open. One wonders, for instance, how the cultural axis masterfully traced in the book (from England to Italy, via France) intersected with other intellectual orientations of the time – most notably, the development of proto-romantic trends of moral philosophy in the German lands – which also had a major impact on the aesthetic of drama. Even if Castelvechi does not address this issue, *Sentimental Opera* will certainly offer an essential starting-point for possible answers.

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MARY SUE MORROW AND BATHIA CHURGIN, EDS
THE SYMPHONIC REPERTOIRE, VOLUME I: THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SYMPHONY
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012
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This excellent volume is as formidable as it is rich and strange: rich, as a twenty-two-author assault on a still practically virgin landscape of twenty thousand neglected symphonies; strange, because unbalanced at every level of its baroque intricate architecture. The spine bears the name of ‘Brown’, but the late A. Peter Brown bequeathed an organizational scheme and a treasure-trove of data to the two actual editors, Mary Sue Morrow and Bathia Churgin. Morrow is very much the senior partner: nearly two hundred pages (seven chapters) of the volume are by her, amounting virtually to an embedded monograph. At the next level down we have seven senior scholars contributing substantial capstone essays to the various geographical regions: Bathia Churgin for Italy, Joanna Cobb Biermann for North Germany, Sterling E. Murray for South Germany, Morrow again for the Austrian monarchy, Robert O. Gjerdingen for France, Simon McVeigh for Britain and Bertil van Boer for ‘The Periphery’. The edifice bottoms out with assorted case studies of individual composers: some canonic (Sammartini, Stamitz, and J. C. and C. P. E. Bach), many less familiar (such as Brunetti, Harrer, Guilleman), but emphatically excluding W. A. Mozart and Joseph Haydn – whereas the latter’s brother Michael gets an illuminating chapter by Michael Ruhling. (Brown himself completed the second volume of the series, *The First Golden Age of the Viennese Symphony: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).)

The lion’s share of ideas stems from Morrow. Her one-hundred-page introductory ‘Overview’ throws down a number of gauntlets. A historically and historiographically responsible survey of this rich terrain must reject the symphony’s standard Sammartini–Stamitz–Haydn–Mozart–Beethoven evolutionary narrative. The provenance of composers is defined not by the region of their birth, but by where they did most of their work (thus the Italian-sounding Antonio Rosetti, though Bohemian born, is covered by Murray in the South Germany section, because he served at the *Hofkapelle* of Kraft Ernst at Oettingen-Wallerstein). Getting away from the ‘Great Man’ view of music history, we must focus on a plurality of practices, options and



conventions, rather than on individuals of commanding influence. Most pertinently, Morrow contends that this plurality is better served by the group effort of an edited volume than by a single-authored monograph. Taking a particular swipe at Stefan Kunze's *Die Sinfonie im 18. Jahrhundert: Von der Opernsinfonie zur Konzertsinfonie* (Laaber: Laaber, 1993), Morrow points out that a single-authored study runs the risks of reducing and distorting the true state of affairs, as in Kunze's egregious denial that a symphony may have plural stylistic and generic sources (and not just the Italian opera sinfonia), and his rigid definition of a symphony as one thing (a concert symphony). 'In essence', she states, 'Kunze was simply doing with greater specificity what other historians had done before: define the "real" symphony and construct his narrative accordingly' (27). Enshrining the concert symphony allowed Kunze to shunt Sammartini out of contention, since his works were for strings alone; the present volume restores Sammartini to his established position, with a magisterial chapter by Churgin. It also comfortably absorbs the symphony's mixed terminology of overture, serenade, divertimento, quartet and so on.

One of the standout messages of Morrow's essay is that the system of single audition (where symphonies were unlikely to be heard more than once) and the symphonies' use as functional accompaniment rather than as objects of aesthetic contemplation made them acutely vulnerable to review culture. Critical reviews shaped symphonic practice more than they reflected it, with often dire consequences across Europe. In north Germany, anti-Italian polemics militated against stylistic fusion; in Italy, the critics' obsession with opera snuffed out a potential symphonic tradition. Indulging in a counterfactual, Morrow wonders whether Italian composers might have been emboldened to write more symphonies had Italian reviewers nurtured an aesthetic of 'calm, beautiful melody' as a symphonic option to rival the Teutonic sublime of Schulz and E. T. A. Hoffmann (67). The most spectacular example of this is the tragedy of the British symphony, as recounted in McVeigh's brilliant chapter. Without gainsaying the merits of homegrown talents such as Maurice Greene, Boyce or Arne, McVeigh laments how the snobbery of Europhile publishers and aristocrats froze out budding symphonists such as John Marsh and Samuel Wesley.

Of course, there are swings as well as roundabouts with any edited collection, and it is probably idealistic to expect all the contributors to march in common time. The authors were tasked to adopt their analytical categories from Jan LaRue's *Guidelines for Style Analysis* (New York: Norton, 1970) and James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy's omnipresent *Elements of Sonata Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). I found this irritating, particularly as the latter's agenda is unkind towards early (read: 'deformed') sonata forms and brings evolutionary thinking back in through the back door, as well as closing that door to alternative approaches by William Caplin, Charles Rosen and others. A case in point is the truncated reprise, which turns out to be far more common than is thought, and far less reprehensible than modern theory would like it to be. Thus Morrow tells us that the elided reprise of 'S' (Hepokoski and Darcy's secondary-theme area) in Reichardt's *Sinfonia to Andromeda* elicited no comment from Daniel Gottlob Türk in 1792 (57–60). And, according to Murray, truncated reprises were the norm in early Rosetti (398). How tenable is the theorists' judgment (Hepokoski and Darcy, *Elements*, 247–249) that this practice is extremely rare, and mostly found in dramatic opera sinfonias (Mozart's *Idomeneo*, for example)? A different issue arises when the contributors directly contradict each other, as in the following back-to-back *non sequitur*. Sarah Mandel-Yehuda, in her chapter on Brioschi, writes: 'Even within the limitations imposed by a 3 and a 4 strings, Brioschi manages to introduce much variety in his textures' (138). Seven pages later, Churgin, on Sammartini, says: '*Unlike the music of Brioschi* . . . Sammartini's early symphonies show a wide range of styles and textures' (147; my italics). This is very funny, but the serious point to make is that concepts such as 'variety' are so broad as to be meaningless, as are, indeed, the staple critical categories of most of the other composer case studies in the volume. Jeannette Morgenroth writes that the first movements of Johan Agrell's symphonies blend 'forward motion and rhythmic vitality', and that his melodies are 'strongly motivic' (245). Are there many eighteenth-century symphonies which *don't* fit this description? Equally, many of the contributors direct attention to their composers' use of disruption and surprise. This level of generality gives much of the volume a quality that at times verges on the platitudinous. The norm is: the author sketches their *Kleinmeister's* career, takes



snapshots of a handful of movements and supplies critical comments that are so generic as to be applicable to virtually any other movement discussed in the volume. Further redundancy is introduced when a capstone overview-essay oversteps its bounds and trespasses on the composer case-study chapters. Many of the authors do this, but Churgin is the most egregious: her 'The Symphony in Italy' chapter treats the works of Brioschi, Sammartini, Boccherini and Brunetti at some length, even though these composers are amply dealt with by her colleagues in separate chapters. The fault is the editors', and tighter control would have shortened the volume and made it more readable.

One antidote to generality is offered by Gjerdingen's contribution, a platform for his theory of schemata or partimenti. Since the work of Leonard B. Meyer, schemata have been the sharpest tools in the box for comparative style analysis; in Gjerdingen's hands, they precisely measure, as it were, French inflections of the Italian 'language'. For instance, Gjerdingen shows that bar 40 of a slow movement by LeDuc (c1776) subtly elaborates the Rosalia schema to the point of it being invisible (Judith L. Schwartz, Gjerdingen's colleague at Northwestern University, takes up his tools for her subsequent chapter on Gossec – neatly demonstrating that there are regions of theoretical as well as symphonic activity). Conversely, Gjerdingen parses the successive schemata in the first of Gossec's Op. 12 symphonies to discover 'very free scansion of modules of unpredictable length' (565). Gjerdingen's point is well taken: that norms and models throw local variation into sharp relief. But is this 'free scansion' quintessentially French, indeed akin to that of the French language? Raising the stakes somewhat, Gjerdingen appeals to the cognitive scientist Aniruddh D. Patel, who 'builds on various findings in linguistics that the French language has a lower degree of variability in stress and timing than, say, English' (558). Gjerdingen relates these qualities to the 'smoothness' and 'concealment' in French symphonies of Italianate schemata. The conceit is delicious, in keeping with Gjerdingen's rhetorical mastery, but one could ride a ducal coach and horses through it. Rameau's counterpoint, for instance, is a lot less 'smooth' than Bach's. And there is irregular scansion in the musical syntax of the English Boyce, as there is indeed in Shakespeare and Dryden. As Gjerdingen himself concedes, 'knowing all the sizes and measurements might be of little use in evaluating fashion' (558), and perhaps even schemata (which, ultimately, are no more than little jelly-moulds) are too monolithic to capture what is quintessential to the symphony's geographical variation.

In some ways, McVeigh's essay on 'The Symphony in Britain' is Gjerdingen's equal and opposite: equal in its insights and accomplishment; opposite in its Toveyish method, cutting even deeper to the quick with prose rather than theory. Haydn's letting slip that he had 'to change many things for the English public' (quoted on page 629) raises the question 'what things?'. McVeigh assembles a persuasive checklist of English fingerprints: freshness, rhythmic ebullience, outdoor rusticity, folk idioms, including dances such as jigs, humour. Can any of these features be captured by schemata? Even more ineffable – that is, seemingly beyond analysis – is that 'striding bass line that has come to be recognized as a British trademark up to Elgar and beyond' (635). One of the many rewarding lessons of McVeigh's chapter is that it so vividly paints the hinterland for Haydn's visits, and suggests that much of what we take for granted in what Rosen termed Haydn's 'popular style' (which he bequeathed to Beethoven and beyond) is English.

Although Joseph Haydn is not directly represented in the volume, he haunts it from the margins. The Haydn juggernaut rolls over the symphonic landscape (by end of century, thirty per cent of symphonic performances are his), squeezing out much of the competition like a highly successful virus. The depopulation of the symphony clears the way for Beethoven's double-whammy: his 'First' both reasserts a dying genre and directly confronts his Bloomian 'Great Precursor'. The narrowing of generic range – the main evolutionary narrative that Morrow does concede – is a pity. Experimentation was never linked to 'greatness', as in the remarkable case of Johann Samuel Endler (1694–1762). Endler's symphonies, according to Biermann, tended to as many as seven movements without devolving into orchestral suites. And they sported deviantly heterodox orchestration (his first dated symphony, F1 (1748), for example, includes a pair of transverse flutes and five timpani, tuned F, G, A, B \flat , C), far beyond the norm of four-part strings with basso continuo. Moreover, the lay story of the symphony massively understates the fact that for a long time most of these



works were in three movements. We are desensitized to how odd, unnecessary, indeed ‘unnatural’ a fourth-movement dance (in second or third position) must have sounded. Why shove a minuet or scherzo into the satisfying fast–slow–fast succession?

The volume’s size and scope notwithstanding, there are plenty of loose threads. The rejection of ‘Great Men’ and models is overplayed: Cannabich, so Jean Wolf tells us, worshipped Johann Stamitz (368), as did many other post-Mannheim composers, and both stole from Jommelli (Stamitz, the orchestral crescendo; Cannabich, the divided viola). Just how unified were these geographical regions, given the taste and dictates of the local potentate? For instance, Biermann states that ‘All the north German composers . . . met in Leipzig’, and were thereafter in close touch and mutual influence (211). Conversely, she tells us that Frederick the Great disliked stylistic fusion and forbade Carl Heinrich Graun to write French overtures (instead of Italian overtures). On the other hand, the volume is chock full of rare vignettes, as in Murray’s lurid tale of the rehabilitation of the Thurn und Taxis composer Franz Xaver Pokorny (1729–1794), whose 145 symphonies were once thought to be forgeries. After Pokorny’s death, a certain Baron Theodor von Schacht, a jealous minor composer (a smaller *Kleinmeister*, as it were), sought to discredit him by systematically deleting his name from the covers of his part-books, substituting the names of other composers such as Abel, Bonno and Grétry (a deception uncovered as recently as 1963). Ultimately the virtue of Morrow, Churgin and Brown’s project is that it sends you scurrying to explore new music. I have spent the past week living with the symphonies of Samuel Wesley, including the wonderful Symphony in B flat major of 1802. One can hardly ask a book for more.

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ROUSSEAU AMONG THE MODERNS: MUSIC, AESTHETICS, POLITICS

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Rousseau’s case has some interesting parallels with that of another French philosopher with a strong affinity for Plato: Alain Badiou. Badiou has a weighty theory of political change derived from a formidably rigorous set-theoretical ontology. A self-confessed Wagnerite, he has also penned a few dilettantish forays into musical aesthetics, the most substantial of which is a book-length defence of the founder of Bayreuth (*Five Lessons on Wagner*, trans. Susan Spitzer (New York: Verso, 2010)). Badiou’s musical knowledge bears no comparison with Rousseau’s. None the less, what unites these two giants of political philosophy is a suspicion that their thinking about music somehow shapes or even drives their conception of political categories. Badiou does not only think the political through the lens of musical examples, but, moreover, attributes to Wagner in particular a bringing-together of ontology and phenomenology which, by his own admission, he has yet to accomplish fully in his philosophical thinking. There is something to be gained, in other words, from thinking musically about the political. Julia Simon makes a similar and highly persuasive case for Rousseau, arguing that his lifelong engagement with music conditioned his thinking in a number of areas stretching beyond the horizon of aesthetics and, furthermore, that looking at his work on music can shed new light on the familiar foundational concepts of his social and political thought, such as the general will, democracy and the relations between individual and community.