

some issues superficially (Nietzsche and neoclassicism, for example), and buries many interesting points in the endnotes, his extensive incorporation of unpublished primary sources and unexplored published ones, multidisciplinary reading list, meticulous reconstruction of virtually unknown works, discovery of new information and fresh perspectives on more familiar ones, and engaging style make this study a top recommendation for scholars interested in Strauss and/or ballet. It is not easy to make “bad” or forgotten works seem interesting and relevant, but Heisler does just that.

MORTEN KRISTIANSEN
Xavier University

Mozart on the Stage. By John A. Rice. (Composers on the Stage.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. [xv, 278 p. ISBN 9780521816342 (hardcover), \$72; ISBN 9780521016612 (paperback), \$28.] Music examples, illustrations, bibliography, index.

“The stage held up to the audience a kind of mirror” (p. 29): on page 170 of John A. Rice’s *Mozart on the Stage* is a reproduction of a longitudinal cross-section of the Cuvilliés Theater in Munich that shows the seating of various classes, the placement of an actor onstage, the slope of parterre, and below it all, the mechanical devices (winches and levers) that could raise or level the floor. Also a cross section of society, this illustration could be a synecdoche of the world of Mozart’s operas that Rice depicts in his book, as well as the manner in which he does so.

A volume in the Cambridge series “Composers on the Stage,” the mission of which is to introduce readers to operas within their social contexts, *Mozart on the Stage* shows us the structure of this world from many varied perspectives: we witness what the mirror of the stage would have reflected, as well as what happened behind the scenery, in the financial office, in the royal box, in the orchestra, in the rehearsal rooms and more.

The organization of the book, like the image of the theater in cross section, gives us a new way to view and connect many of the details of this period that have already

been presented in the numerous works available on Mozart’s life and works. As the author writes,

I propose what anthropologists might call a “synchronic” study of Mozart as a composer of operas: a book organized not chronologically or by individual operas, but by topics as relevant to the early operas as to the late ones. . . . This book shows how Mozart—whether he was thirteen or thirty, in Milan or Vienna, writing a Singspiel or an opera buffa—put an opera together in a series of interactions with a libretto (and sometimes—but not always—a poet who wrote or revised the libretto), singers, a stage designer, an orchestra, and an audience. (p. xiii)

By taking this fresh perspective and examining even familiar material within new non-traditional categories, some surprising information jumps to the foreground about Mozart himself and the society in which he lived and worked. For instance, many educated opera lovers would not know that Carnival balls often took place in the theaters, with dancing on stage as well as in the auditoria, whose floors could often be raised (p. 23), or that the audience members who came to operas given during Carnival were costumed, masked and even cross-dressed just like the opera seria performers on the stage itself (p. 27). It too may have escaped attention that the composition of recitatives was sometimes relegated to assistants (p. 96), or that an avid operagoer could spend most of his time in the theater in amorous pursuits or trading gossip while the opera was on stage (pp. 205–12).

We are told as well that Mozart was so imbued with the operatic spirit that he liked to “speak” in recitative to friends, even in public (p. 2), and that he performed a commedia dell’arte sketch during a Carnival ball in Vienna in 1783 (p. 3). Other surprises may include Mozart’s composing in a less than supernatural manner by using the keyboard, writing sketches, etc. (pp. 92–94), requesting the dinner scene in *Don Giovanni* to be performed “parlando and almost improvised” (according to the first Giovanni, Luigi Bassi, p. 156), being sent an unsolicited libretto by novelist and playwright Isabelle de Charrière (p. 39),

and getting the idea for the start of the “Pa-pa-pa” duet in *Die Zauberflöte* from librettist Emanuel Schikaneder (p. 152).

None of this information derives from original research, but the novel presentation by topic reveals it in a new way. Another effect of this organization is the problematization of traditional modes of sorting Mozart’s oeuvre. Rice sees opera seria and opera buffa as points along a continuum, rather than in binary opposition, and suggests that differentiation by national style, number of composers, or length would be more authentic and hence relevant (pp. 19–22).

Writing about the social context of Mozart’s operas is not a new idea in itself. Three fine books are already available that treat this topic, but each has a scope more limited than the Rice work. Close in style to it is Thomas Forrest Kelly’s *First Nights at the Opera* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), which explores the cultural background of only *Don Giovanni*, but includes much information on Prague, the Bondini company, Lorenzo Da Ponte, the audience, the singers, and the theater (diagrams—sets, reception, etc.), while reproducing documents as evidence. Mary Hunter’s phenomenal *The Culture of Opera Buffa in Mozart’s Vienna: A Poetics of Entertainment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) is limited to a specific location and operatic style, yet treats in fascinating detail the gender and class roles of the time, socioeconomic issues, conventions in the structure of plots and arias, and more. It is further distinguished from the Rice opus, for as Hunter writes, it “is not about Mozart, though he is an inevitable and pervasive presence It is a study of a repertory” (Hunter, *The Culture of Opera Buffa*, 24). Finally, Andrew Steptoe in his *The Mozart-Da Ponte Operas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), while treating only three operas, includes discussions of Vienna and its history, the social class structure, Mozart’s contact with Enlightenment circles, some biography, information on the singers, costumes, scenery, and fees (helpfully supplying a guide to the currency), spicing up the narrative with tidbits on social customs such as cicisbeos and post-feast purging. As part of his work, Steptoe asks the question, as Rice implicitly

does, “How did Mozart go about composing an opera and how did the composer and librettist collaborate?” (Steptoe, *Mozart-Da Ponte Operas*, 10), and so the aims of the two works overlap to some degree.

The overall image Rice leaves of Mozart and his contemporaries is that their place in society was a distressingly low and powerless one. This is not new, but the documentary evidence weighs in more heavily than mere discussion. In essence, composers were tailors of music, and indeed, Mozart makes that comparison himself: “I assured [singer Anton Raaff] that I would arrange the aria for him in such a way that he would sing it with pleasure. For I love an aria to fit a singer as perfectly as a well-made suit” (p. 116). Like other opera composers, Mozart had to wait until shortly before the performance to meet and get to know the principal singers, and to write their arias for them. Some even cooled their heels in the next room, waiting for their “fitting” while Mozart composed (p. 99).

But these were not the only indignities suffered. Singers had more influence in the choice of libretto than the composers (p. 52), and a well-known singer such as Giovanni Manzoli repeatedly earned five times more than Mozart (p. 71). The score also had to be tailored to the theater’s size and capabilities (p. 161), but if the opera were to be performed elsewhere, no fee would be forthcoming and the composer would have no control over the performance (p. 229). Joseph Haydn refused a request from Prague to have one of his operas performed without his supervision “since all my operas are too closely bound up with our personnel [at Eszterháza] and moreover would never produce the effect which I calculated according to local conditions” (p. 91). A composer could earn a bit extra making arrangements of the score for other ensembles or instruments, but if a copyist (who could also sell scores of the work with no profit to the composer) did it first, the financial opportunity was lost (pp. 233–34). A contract with impresario Domenico Guardasoni from July 1791 shows the relative importance of the collaborators on an opera project: securing the singers came first, then arranging for a librettist, then the composer, followed by a promise of providing new scenery, costumes and house decorations (pp. 41–42).

At one point, the frustrated Mozart threatened to become his own impresario and find his own pre-made libretto so that he could collect more of the earnings. But as Rice writes, "This project, completely at odds with the operatic practices of Mozart's time and those of Mozart himself, came to nothing" (p. 69).

A strong feature of *Mozart on the Stage* is the wonderful iconography, mostly engravings, with some digitally altered to improve comprehension. For example, an engraving of Luigi Bassi in the role of Don Giovanni (a role he created) appears superimposed on an image of a stage design (p. 190). The collated information—visual and otherwise—on scenery, set design and theaters is all eventually related to the music's composition in various ways: the composer might be responsible for music during a scene change; the various depths of a set would affect orchestration; and so forth.

Occasionally, though, the author's quest to show traits that all Mozart operas have in common (p. xiii) becomes problematic. Here, Rice sometimes oversimplifies to gain

only a tenuous result. For example, he suggests a plot archetype that applies to all the operas—two lovers and a second man—in the process labeling Hunter's plot archetypes "subcategories" (p. 34–35). Yet isn't Don Giovanni the "second man" for at least 1,003 pairs of lovers in Spain alone? This generalizing concept is too reductive for the variety of repertoire under discussion.

More troublesome are the references. On page 15, note 45 gives some useful information on the term "grottesco;" yet that sort of informative detail is mostly lacking in the rest of the book's notes, so a reader's natural curiosity about terms and ideas goes unrewarded. Further, there is some repetition of material, but this might actually aid those readers who are perusing one chapter at a time. None of this, however, seriously diminishes the intrinsic value of a fine book that truly holds up a looking-glass to this fascinating time and place.

DEBORAH BURTON
Boston University

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Music and the Book Trade from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century. Edited by Robyn Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote. (Publishing Pathways.) New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press; London: British Library, 2008. [xv, 218 p. ISBN 9781584562450 (Oak Knoll); ISBN 9780712350303 (BL). \$49.95] Music examples, facsimiles, tables, index.

This collection of seven essays is based on papers given at the 2007 Conference on Book Trade History, an annual event sponsored by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association. The theme of the conference and this collection of well-researched articles was "the common ground in the broad area of book history between music and other forms of print" (p. vii). That this was the first time in its thirty-year history the conference has covered a musical topic is emblematic of the fact that book historians have typically overlooked music printing and its place within the book trade, treating it instead as a "self-contained area of research" (p. vii). In their introduction, the editors attribute the inattention to differences in production and distribution. At the same time, musicologists have only re-

cently taken to studying the business side of music and its influence on the creation and dissemination of music. Both sides of this scholarly divide stand to benefit from convergent study considering the many areas of inquiry in common having to do with the production, distribution, and consumption of printed works.

The first essay is Iain Fenlon's "Music Printing and the Book Trade in Late-Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth-Century Iberia." Compared with other parts of Europe, the Iberian music printing industry developed to a much lesser degree and production rates were small; Fenlon points out that between 1535 and 1628 only forty-nine books containing polyphonic music were printed in Spain and Portugal. Most of the printed music in Spain, primarily