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Youri Carbonnier and Jean Duron, *Charles Gauzargues (1723-1801): Un musicien de la Chapelle royale entre Nîmes et Versailles*. Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 2016. 180 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. €20.00 (pb). ISBN 978-2-7084-1014-5.

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During the reign of Louis XIV, oversight of the music for Royal Chapel fell to a high-level cleric, one appointed to what was essentially an honorific post. This individual held the title of *Maître de musique de la chapelle royale*. Once appointed, these *maîtres* tended to serve for life and even beyond: for example, Charles-Maurice Le Tellier (1642-1710), Archbishop of Reims, held the post at a salary of 1200 *livre tournois* from 1668 until 1713 despite his death in 1710. In 1714, the diplomat Cardinal Melchior de Polignac (1661-1742) succeeded Le Tellier, serving in the post for three years until his exile, at which time the Bishop of Rennes took over until Polignac's restoration. While these individuals contributed nominal administrative supervision, royally appointed *sous-maîtres* actually provided and directed the music of the Royal Chapel, thus carrying the primary functions of the musical establishment in the chapel from what appeared to be a subservient position. However, the post of *sous-maître de la chapelle royale* was the highest position to which a church musician could ascend under the ancien régime, and thus, musicians coveted the post. Louis XV discontinued the oversight post of *maître de musique* by 1761, due no doubt to financial considerations, but the head musicians in the chapel retained the title *sous-maître*, a title that so named lived on until the Revolution.

From the time of Louis XIV's majority until the Revolution, at least seventeen composers served as *sous-maîtres* for the Royal Chapel. Of those, the name Charles Gauzargues (1723-1801) remains among the most obscure. Gauzargues came from *le midi*. Born and raised in Tarascon, where he served and trained as a choirboy, he took clerical orders and rose to be *maître de musique* at the cathedral in Nîmes, where he served from 1751 until his appointment at Versailles in 1758. (Despite published suggestions to the contrary, there is no evidence that he served in Montpellier after his time in Nîmes.) Gauzargues served as *sous-maître* in the royal chapel from 1758 to 1775. He wrote many large concerted motets, though only one is known to survive. Perhaps for that reason, no study of his life and work appeared until the present volume was published in 2016. Gauzargues also published two treatises that have survived, and there remains hope that more of his musical work might surface, so this initial exploration of his life and surviving work is most welcome.

It must be kept in mind that during the reign of Louis XIV, the *motet à grand cœur*, sometimes called the *grand motet*, rather than a mass setting of the ordinary, served as the primary musical

vehicle for Louis's daily mass ceremony. This music-loving King turned the daily mass into a sacred concert, where grand-scale concerted motets were performed while the priest intoned the Latin ritual audibly, but somewhat in the background. Louis XV and Louis XVI continued the practice. During the famous visit with his talented children to Versailles in 1763-1764, Leopold Mozart, usually a harsh critic of French music, wrote admirably of the music he heard at the mass: "Every day I have been with my little man [Wolfgang] to the mass in the Royal Chapel to hear the choir in the motet, which is always performed there" also observing that "the choruses are good and even excellent."^[1] Gauzargues's time at Versailles had begun, but it was his senior colleague Antoine Blanchard's (1696-1770) semester during the Mozart's visit, so while it is not out of the question that they heard Gauzargues's music, it is more likely that Blanchard performed his own motets.

This book offers two primary accounts: a historical and archival study of the life of composer Charles Gauzargues; and a descriptive and analytical musical perspective on his few surviving works, specifically the one motet and the two musical treatises. Youri Carbonnier addresses the former in a series of five short essays (with introduction), and Jean Duron discusses the latter in two extensive essays (with introduction). The essays are complemented by eight useful appendices that include a genealogical table, a chronology of Gauzargues's life in the context of important historical events, two earlier biographies of the composer, summaries of his two treatises, one movement from the motet *In te Domine speravi*, and lastly, a surviving chanson, *J'aime les grâces, les talents*, published late in Gauzargues's life.

Of the Royal *sous-maîtres* that served between 1660 and the Revolution, Gauzargues was the last to come from the south of France. Three other important *sous-maîtres* from the south of France, specifically André Campra (1660-1744), Antoine Blanchard (1696-1770), and Jean-Joseph Cassanéa de Mondonville (1711-1772), all served the monarchy. Campra and Blanchard both received their training at Saint-Sauveur in Aix-en-Provence, where a true *école aixoise* developed, producing at least nine composers who served the churches and cathedrals in principal cities of France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although most of their music was lost during the de-Christianization period of the Revolution, a host of composers flourished in *le midi*, among them Narbonne-native Mondonville, Tarascon-born Gauzargues, Marseilles-native Charles Levens (1689-1764) and his son Nicolas-Vincent Levens (1721-ca. 1790), all along with the composers of the Aix School—André Campra, Jean Gilles (1668-1705), Jacques Cabassole (1674-ca. 1733), François Estienne (1674-1755), Laurent Belissen (1693-1762), Claude-Mathieu Pelegrin (1682-1763), and Blanchard. These composers formed a prominent group of music masters from the south whose works appear to share certain style characteristics, but much of this has not yet been studied. Therefore, the assessment of Gauzargues's small surviving musical legacy offers a meaningful segment of information for the study of the stylistic differences between composers who developed in the orbit of the *île-de-France*, versus those from Provence and elsewhere in *le midi*.

The first essays in the book present a carefully researched biography of Gauzargues from his birth in Tarascon through his years at Versailles. The next section gives an extended essay titled "Vingt-six ans de tribulations," addressing the fascinating time from 1775 to 1801, and offering one of the most interesting sections of this book, with accounts of and insights into Gauzargues's life during that period. Gauzargues retired from the Royal Chapel in 1775, shortly after the death of Louis XV, when the composer was only fifty-one years old. At that point he anticipated a bright financial future, for in addition to his 3000 *livres* royal pension, he enjoyed income from

the Nîmes cathedral chapter, where he remained a beneficiary on leave, as well as income and property from the priory of Saint-Léonard in Limousin that Louis XV conferred upon the musician in 1769. Soon after retirement, however, Gauzargues found himself in protracted litigation with his chapter when he chose not to return to Nîmes, proceedings that threatened not just his income from that cathedral, but his other assets as well as the chapter sought to recover past losses. Youri Carbonnier presents a detailed and well-documented account of those legal proceedings.

Rather little of the composer's last twenty-six years involved music. At the time of Louis XV's death in 1774, Gauzargues became closely associated with the house of Artois, and apparently served in both musical and non-musical functions. He became a special secretary, presumably primarily a ceremonial post, to Louis XVI's brother, the Count of Artois, the future unpopular Charles X. The composer is known to have provided music for important household occasions, e.g. a performance of his *Te Deum* upon the birth of the Duke of Angoulême, son of the Count.

However, in the ensuing years Gauzargues's links to nobility presented him with challenges as he navigated the treacherous waters of the Revolution. Remarkably, he survived. Imprisoned during the late months of the Reign of Terror, he probably owed his survival to luck, due to the fall of Robespierre on July 27, 1794. Gauzargues was released three weeks later. His nephew-in-law, Jean Raoulx, husband of the composer's niece, with whom Gauzargues seems to have lived at times in his late years, was not so fortunate, having been executed along with his priest brother Joseph, just two days before Robespierre's downfall.

Gauzargues's music may have been lost due to the composer's own actions. At his retirement from the Royal Chapel, he kept his music, both scores and parts: this is known because those manuscripts appear in an inventory of possessions he ceded to Jean Raoulx when he entered that household. That Gauzargues was able to retain his music is peculiar, for his predecessor, Mondonville, had tried to do the same, but lost that right when a legal process judged that the Crown owned the music the *sous-maîtres* created for the Royal Chapel. It is no doubt thanks to that policy that the music of Campra, Blanchard, Mondonville, and others survived in the Royal Library that became the French National Library of today. But only one large work survives of at least thirty-eight known compositions from Gauzargues's pen. He is also known to have written a few secular works of which only one chanson, published late in his life, survives.

Jean Duron thoroughly examines the motet, *In te Domine speravi...in justitia* (Psalm 30). He observes that this motet does not conform to an extant text of Gauzargues's motet of that name preserved in the *Livres du roi*, the published libretti for the motets that were performed at the royal mass at Versailles. Duron concludes logically that this motet copy must then represent either an earlier version of the motet, or a revision Gauzargues composed after the version referenced. Duron suggests that the most likely explanation is that the motet was composed in Nîmes and subsequently reworked at Versailles, but he concludes that the question remains open. There are other indications however, not presented here, that would support a Nîmois provenance for the manuscript in Aix: there is ample evidence that manuscripts circulated among the cathedrals of southern France, as shown in Marc Signorile's study of Arles,^[2] and more recently in my book on the Aix School.^[3] Indeed, early versions of Campra's motets, ones that were revised at Versailles, indisputably exist in the Saint-Sauveur musical archives in Aix, the same library that holds Gauzargues's *In te Domine speravi*. Similarly, Blanchard's *Dixit dominus*, most certainly an early work, exists only in manuscript copies in the south of France, specifically

Aix and Carpentras. So, while certainty is elusive, it is highly likely that the manuscript of Gauzargues's motet was copied for the Aix cathedral from an early work of the composer, one which subsequently was re-worked one or more times. Alas, the loss of the other works renders this supposition meaningless with regard to Gauzargues's oeuvre, but it may be useful for comparisons with motets of other composers. Jean Duron presents a detailed outline of the motet's nine movements and includes musical examples. He concludes with a positive assessment of the musical craft and value reflected in the work. Thus if, indeed, this is an early work, the loss of Gauzargues's more mature oeuvre is to be greatly mourned.

Duron follows with an essay describing and assessing the theoretical works, Gauzargues's *Traité de l'harmonie* and his *Traité de composition* (both available for download on *Gallica*). He wrote and published these two works in 1797 in his last years, after his Revolution era difficulties had passed, and not long after the founding of the Conservatoire in Paris (1795). Several conditions could have prompted these publications by a seventy-four-year-old composer, one who had been largely inactive in music, except perhaps for teaching, for many years. Were they works written earlier that could only be published after the Revolution? Could Gauzargues have hoped for recognition by the newly formed Conservatoire? Perhaps he sought to use his knowledge of music to secure some income in his old age, given the precarious financial condition he and his widowed niece must have faced, but his selection of one of the finest engravers in Paris (Antoine-Jacques Richomme, 1754-after 1835), indicates a serious undertaking. He sold these two works at his home address, and through the music vendors *aux adresses ordinaires*.

Quoting relevant passages from the original works liberally, Duron examines the two treatises noting convergences and divergences with post-Rameau theory as well as with the views of younger theorists, most notably Honoré Langlé (1741-1807), in some respects the founding theorist of the Paris Conservatoire. The twenty-page *Traité de l'harmonie* appears to be a primer on harmony, laying out basic principles, but it ends suddenly after introducing the chord of the added sixth: the treatise may have been truncated, possibly reflecting funding issues. The more developed forty-seven-page *Traité de composition* offers twenty-seven principles of composition followed by twenty-six "chapters," which present musical models ranging from beginning root position chord progressions to the fugue: the work ends with a 124-measure developed choral fugue to the text *Cantate domino canticum novum*, the first verse of Psalm 95, an interesting selection for the teaching of an old musical form.

A brief conclusion summarizes the authors' overview of Gauzargues the man and his place in music history. It ends with a faint but expressed hope that more of Gauzargues's works might yet be found. Because his manuscripts remained with the family, and were not in the care of a church, they may not have suffered the fate of so many other works that were lost in the de-Christianization period of the Revolution, and perhaps may exist neglected in a descendant's household, an unlikely but not impossible scenario.

There is little to criticize in this informative book, one that is rich in original archival research and thorough investigation. There are occasional oversights, for example, a few footnotes lack page references, as on page 97, which makes a reference to Jack Eby's two-volume dissertation on Gauzargues's successor, François Giroust, without giving a volume or page number, and similarly on page 107 it would be helpful if footnote 25 were more specific. But the detailed biography, the clear organization, the thorough and up-to-date bibliography, the useful

appendices, the contemporaneous quotations, and the careful documentation in this volume are all to be commended.

So, what can be learned from the life and career of Charles Gauzargues? Indeed, this book finds itself worthy of study for the historian, the musicologist, and the theorist. For the historian, the book, by virtue of its extensive archival research, offers considerable insight into the workings of the church, the court system on the eve of the Revolution, and the interactions of a Royal (perhaps Royalist) musician who used the old system adeptly as he worked to acquire and preserve assets over his career, and who then somehow managed to survive what followed. For the musicologist and theorist, the book adds to a little understood period in the history of music. Thus, despite the loss of most of his oeuvre, and the obscurity of Charles Gauzargues today, his life, times, and work warrants this and further study. The volume merits acquisition by any library that holds strong collections in French history and music. For the present, there is no e-book available.

NOTES

[1] Emily Anderson, trans., *The Letters of Mozart and his Family*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (London: Macmillan/St. Martins's Press, 1966), p. 35.

[2] Marc Signorile, *Musique et société: Le modèle d'Arles à l'époque de l'absolutisme, 1600-1789* (Geneva: Minkoff, 1993), especially pp. 233-266.

[3] John Hajdu Heyer, *The Lure and Legacy of Music at Versailles: Louis XIV and the Aix School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 194-205.

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