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Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, Philippe Bourdin, and Charlotta Wolff, eds., *Moving Scenes. The Circulation of Music and Theatre in Europe, 1700-1815*. Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2018. xii + 391 pp. Figures, notes, bibliography, and index. £75 (pb). ISBN 978-0-7294-12-3.

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The reader of this collection encounters twenty-one essays and an editorial introduction (see titles printed after this review); then comes Philippe Bourdin's modestly-titled "Conclusion", which is, in fact, as long as any of the constituent essays. Although the authors are almost all from universities outside the U.S. or U.K., the entire book has been translated where necessary into English by various hands and edited by the French/Finnish triumvirate named above. So, it must be said straight away that the resulting text has been given an extremely high standard of finish, linguistically and editorially. The results ought to justify the editors' expressed hopes that their collection will "reach an international readership" (p. xi): vast expenditure of funds, human resources, and time has been invested in making this book possible. Its origins involved research programmes linking France (including CITERE (Beaurepaire) and THEREPSICORE (Bourdin)) with Finland (the Helsinki project "Comic opera and society in France and northern Europe, c. 1769-1790" (Wolff)). The book's contents were then specially expanded in the course of development by the Voltaire Foundation.

A consistent aim that emerges from the start is the desire to stand back from what the introduction calls "the classic but narcissistic model of *L'Europe française*" (p. 4). The book does not adopt an "excessively radical" position, but wishes to examine "competing national tastes and canons ... with the same attention" as that given to French cultural productions, paying due attention to "social, personal or aesthetic factors" (p. 4). The first six essays were intended together to reconsider "national taste and cultural domination," using case studies to assist in the "dismissal of the 'national' as a frame of research" (pp. 4-5). Three of these essays concern spoken theatre and the other three constitute the collection's only texts dedicated to aspects of music. In constructing their second group, namely the next nine contributions, the editors see "the heart of the topic," focusing on "the agents, intermediaries, forms, motives and modalities of circulation" plus reasons why objects of exchange were highly valued (p. 5). Most of these nine essays feature a single influential figure involved in a certain type of circulation. The third and last group of contributions includes those studies where translation is examined, particularly involving dramatic texts, and often linked with a particular function on the stage, whether inside or outside France. This the editors fashion as "the double processes of transmission and literary cross-breeding ... in revolution," illuminating "intercultural dynamics" (p. 5).

Nevertheless, the above groupings seem not the only possible way of juxtaposing such a variety of interests. In the following paragraphs I shall adopt my own groupings, first so as to help potential readers through to what may interest them most, and second so as to better evaluate the finished results. These essays are neither jargon-ridden nor unapproachable, but neither are they even in quality or even equally able to address all the criteria arguably necessary to define "the circulation of music and theatre", let alone to explain "how and why musical and dramatic materials became such precious objects

of exchange and why that mattered” (p. 5). To carry off the discussion successfully one must surely know about the object, its uses, the mode of circulation, and the social implications.

Almost a quarter of the essays discuss theatre companies in action, mainly during the Revolution and Empire. As a group, I found these the most coherent and absorbing, the best of them able to analyse a manageable repertory of material, a defined set of conditions regarding circulation, and defined agents responsible for bringing about provable change (Bourdin; Markovits; Gilli; Roman; Le Borgne; Platelle).

In fact, Paola Roman’s essay currently risks the most by being categorised simply as about translation (see titles at the end). This is actually one of the most satisfying essays for the way it explores crossovers between changing politics, live performance, changing translation policies, and, of course, publication. It is one of the minority of contributions to contain reference-lists for future research use. Roman also gets the rhythm of discussion right, serving both the new reader and the more expert colleague. Future work awaits: music is not mentioned for Favières’s *Lisbeth / Elisabetta* (originally set by Grétry), Hoffman’s *Le Secret / Il Secreto* (originally set by Solié) or *Les Deux petits Savoyards / Costanzo e Michieletta* (first set by Dalayrac).

Philippe Bourdin’s essay would probably head up my hypothetical re-ordering of essays in this section; it is a longish piece covering many centres of activity: Brussels, Hamburg, Amsterdam, Anvers, Trier, Genoa. Bourdin also establishes the reasons for failures in the grand Napoleonic scheme and sets up the picture exceptionally clearly. “French submission to Italian opera” is an important contribution in itself (p. 102). Elsewhere, “military setbacks weakened...organisation along the lines of the French model” (p. 90) so that ultimately “the penetration of French theatre in Napoleonic Europe was therefore slight” (p. 109). In his piece, Markovits covers occupied Hamburg and Turin, the co-existence of companies in one building (Magne studies the same thing in Teplitz, see below), and censorship, diving straight into archival documents. He finally articulates the binary which will be identified by Le Borgne too: just as “cultural imperialism was branching out”, various forces back home were wanting to “discover and promote foreign literature” (p. 87).

Markovits’s concluding mention of the Variétés-Étrangères theatre in Paris would, in my re-ordering, lead not into Bourdin’s concluding essay. As did Paola Roman, so Françoise Le Borgne gives us a table relating to performances of plays, namely the repertory of the Variétés-Étrangères in its short life from November 1806 to August 1807, totalling thirty-four productions. This essay is much better furnished than many with a developing set of arguments and interpretations, although the author also has the benefit of a 1960 article by Renée Lelièvre to help project the material from. [1] She argues that translation and performance worked together to produce a sometimes subversive counter-classical experience. Helping this process (though unmentioned here) was surely music, which vivified the apparition of the ghostly Evelina at the close of *Le Spectre du château*. At least, music is what did this in London’s *The Castle Spectre*.

In my next personal grouping I might include essays where individual personalities are discussed for their influence and activity in pushing for, or simply promoting, artistic developments in taste and practice in Europe. David Do Paço’s essay on Da Ponte stands out here for its command of sources and unique rejection of models and methods current elsewhere. It involves an ingenious reconception of narrative along entrepreneurial and financial lines: money first and art second. In an age of upheaval, the networks of Casanova and Da Ponte “were not much use to them” (p. 182). Do Paço’s “behavioural approach” (p. 173), his “focus on actors” will for him replace the previous generation’s attitude towards “the social dimension” as being “somehow artificial” (p. 171, n.1). If “precariousness” (p. 186) is therefore important, it would involve the contingency also seen in the above essays on theatre. This is an extraordinary, memorable chapter, even covering the history of Da Ponte in the New World, where he opened a book-shop “stocked with Italian books supplied by his contacts” (p. 183), “defended Italian theatre” and Rossini (p. 184), and yet memorialised “the security and kindness of aristocratic patronage” (p. 185) as he knew it originally.

In the same group I would include the essays—all including aristocratic agents—by Rizzoni, Mele, Wolff, and Magne, ending with those by Yvernault on Beaumarchais and Beaurepaire on Masonic interactions with theatre and actors. The first three of these essays involve promotion of *opéra-comique* abroad, and sometimes French opera too. All three writers are strong on the personalities, fairly strong on the objects of transmission, but variable concerning “why [such] materials became such precious objects of exchange” (p. 5). Perhaps they imply potential case-studies or conduits yet to be discovered. Rizzoni has seen the correspondence of the Paris cellist Hivart with Count Sheremetev in Saint Petersburg. The latter drank deep from Hivart’s knowledge of opera production, and he used Hivart’s carefully-expedited materials to Russia. They had played music together in Paris, presumably meeting at some Masonic lodge. Rizzoni is unaware that exactly the same sources have been written about by John Rice, which is unfortunate insofar as Rizzoni could have used freed-up space to include other details. [2] The separate second half of her piece centres on the *écrans* (hand-held screens) she has published about before, but here made relevant to Sheremetev, who was sent a lot of them. But were these ever used for more than shielding oneself from the heat of the fireplace?

Flora Mele’s useful piece contains a handlist not of the unpublished letters between Charles-Simon Favart and Count Giacomo Durazzo, which form the frame of her account, but of letters from various French theatre artists who had been hired by Durazzo for the French theatre in Vienna. We hear about their conditions and complaints, but less about the work they were doing. In any case, they may not have been the best of talents: there were “obstacles erected by the French authorities to keep the best artists from leaving” (p. 134). Mele is able to lean on Bruce Alan Brown’s pioneering work in the field, [3] but Brown will not have been responsible for oddities in notes 19 and 20, which suggest authorial confusion about the nature of Paris repertory in the 1750s, e.g. that Goldoni somehow wrote the “score” for his *Bertoldo, Bertoldino e Cacasenno*, which itself somehow connected with “Gherardi’s work” (p. 130).

Correspondence in Charlotta Wolff’s essay concerns the Comte de Creutz, the music-loving diplomat who rose finally to become Gustav III’s surrogate during the king’s one-year sabbatical. Here again a substantial secondary literature helps anchor the narrative. Creutz was a key figure in Grétry’s early Paris career, oiling the wheels of *opéra-comique*’s journey to world-wide dissemination and public enthusiasm. He matters, says Wolff, because “Swedish opera” and “opéra-comique as a philosophical genre” significantly gained from his interest and help (p. 143). The essay is most useful in synthesising numerous Scandinavian publications dealing with Creutz’s whole career and influence in Paris and Stockholm.

In Magne’s essay, too, we are grateful for insights into secondary literature, here concerning Teplitz and its castle archives: specifically, the history of a once-aristocratic theatre that became multi-functional. Yvernault’s essay on Beaumarchais—not containing much on music—is a very satisfying counterpart to Do Paço’s contribution on Da Ponte, focused less on travel, opportunity, and patronage than on the amazing literary ramifications of “Figaromania” (the neologism is explained on p. 157). The essay is backed up by twenty or more secondary reference texts. Its key sentence states: “across Europe...there were significantly more performances of translated versions of Beaumarchais’s comedies than there were productions in French” (p. 159). The author’s conclusion could stand as a motto for the volume: Beaumarchais’s work was not “a sign of the symbolic dominance of the French language and theatre” (p. 170). Instead, “each area—be it linguistic, cultural or political—created its own Figaro” (p. 170). Yvernault’s account and methods are one of the clearest pointers here to future research.

Being less anchored in knowledge of performances, the translation-based articles by Johnson, Maffre, and Plagnol-Diéval represent way-stations along the story of circulation—the literary objects become the main focus. Perhaps there is a way forward methodologically here, in embryo: the idea of “microhistory” (p. 290, n. 4) as being a valid response to the morphologies of macrohistory, which are generally predominant in this volume. Johnson’s focus is on one average individual who, caught up in exceptional times, played out his own drama of politics by making a private French *tragédie* out of

Metastasio's *Artaserse*. Then he was guillotined. Surely the question here is an essential one: how does art matter? How does art fulfil its mission to warn against violence?

Objects and their moving targets likewise form the basis of essays by Soulatges, Glon, and Geoffroy-Schwinden: a newspaper, a collection of dance-manuals, and a manuscript list of Italian operas. All were aimed at potential spreading of knowledge. If only we knew where that knowledge ended up in the real world, and how it would have been construed. "Speculative usage" might be my heading for this group; what is not problematised by Soulatges are the 8,000 actual readers of the *Courrier d'Avignon*, people obliged to read their news and cultural stories while obviously knowing that these were mediated by an all-pervasive editorial voice. At least Glon can show that dancers held their manuals as they tried out their steps; more importantly, she demonstrates how French publications were assimilated abroad by being altered, re-engraved, and re-interpreted. Furthermore, the two European countries where French theatre was least performed (Spain and Britain) were those which "made extensive use of the art of describing dance" (p. 252) so that, in all, "describing dance can be seen as ... generating circulation," and a "force capable of moving bodies as well as boundaries" (p. 255). Freed, too, from the need to translate at all, professional dancers (one might add) slipped ceaselessly from country to country, promoting further publications in their wake.

The trouble with music is that, having a much better notation-system than dance, it was even easier to export, together with its national characteristics. A good professional, argued J. J. Quantz in the 1752 treatise quoted below, must be confidently able to reproduce any national style, whatever their personal origins. When it comes to singers, Quantz said, Italian and French musicians, unlike all others, have not chosen to try mixing styles: "The reason is not because they lack the talent to do it, but because they take few pains to learn foreign languages, are too taken in by prejudice, and cannot be persuaded that anything good can be produced in vocal music without their style and language." [4]

Writing at any period about vocal music, therefore, involves attitudes to language, at all levels, since it is essential to remember that all performers and composers with "the talent" (see previous quotation) could perform or write, if necessary, in different national styles, like J. S. Bach or Telemann. At the same time, prejudice or arrogance on the part of individual artists was another matter. Youri Carbonnier gets around these difficulties, focusing neatly enough on the hidden presence at Louis XV's court of non-French music and its performers. Here it was that Italian castratos sang in French and Latin, not Italian, while French princesses played Italian sonatas plus French sonatas pretending to be Italian sonatas. It was never possible to equate a musical person with a particular style on the single basis of their nationality or their institutional environment. Greater difficulties arise for Carbonnier and William Weber when the complex and variable factors mentioned above, concerning different national styles, enter discussions of opera. Carbonnier shrewdly points out that "a hybridisation of styles was preferred: the singing was always in French [in public, anyway], virtuosity was excluded, as were the castrati from the ... opera stage" (p. 37).

Opéra-comique is an ideal test-bed for studying the circulation of musical styles, and indeed their hybridisation, through its use of different languages in Europe. None of the essays under consideration uses that test-bed. Indeed, Weber's opening essay is a multiple paradox. First, it concerns less the idea of circulation than "concepts for identities of place" (p. 10), meaning supposed sets of "exclusive policies" (p. 9) at the King's Theatre and the Paris Opéra where—it is wrongly asserted—"no piece by a foreign composer" (p. 9) was staged before Gluck's advent in 1774. Actually, *Le Devin du village*, by the Citizen of Geneva, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, gave the Opéra its greatest success from 1753, while *Céphale et Procris* by the Liégeois, Grétry, arrived in 1773. Weber avoids factoring in practical difficulties in circulation presented by French requirements for a chorus and dancers. The musical circulation of Italian-language opera has nothing to do with nationality (Hasse and Handel were European masters of *opera seria*) and everything to do with individual soloists.

And yet it did provide for local variations every night, never stable or possessing the fixity of an

unchangeable text but fluctuating by reason of fresh singers bringing in new arias and ornamentation. Profoundly misleading is the assertion that all operas done at the King's Theatre "had been produced in Italy" (pp. 12-13). Weber sets aside Handel's thirty premieres at the King's Theatre, and those at Covent Garden (ignored on p. 11), but any libretto from Italy would have undergone changes determined by the singers and composer hired for that season. Handel experts have also demonstrated how local taste caused him to adapt received *opera seria* dramaturgy for the London theatre-public. This is not mentioned. To propose "their rigid policies" (p. 13) as a yardstick for the King's Theatre and the Paris Opéra is like comparing London apples with Paris pears.

When Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others discussed opera's future, they integrated the question of language. One way forward should be to study the export of Rameau's operas, and those of others. Casanova, after all, translated *Zoroastre* for performance in Italian at Dresden.[5] Beyond that lies the circulation and perception of Gluck's Parisian operas, outside France.

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Françoise Le Borgne, "'Imitations' at the Théâtre des Variétés-Étrangères: a subversive circumlocution?"

Philippe Bourdin, "Conclusion"

NOTES

[1] Renée Lelièvre, "Le Théâtre des Variétés-Étrangères (1806-1807)," *Revue de la Société d'histoire du théâtre* 47 (1960): 193-309.

[2] John Rice, "The Staging of Salieri's *Les Danaïdes* as Seen by a Cellist in the Orchestra," *Cambridge Opera Journal* 26/1 (2014): 65-82.

[3] Bruce Alan Brown, *Gluck and the French Theatre in Vienna* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[4] Johann Joachim Quantz, *On Playing the Flute*, translated and ed. by Edward R. Reilly, 2nd ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1985), 341.

[5] Graham Sadler, *The Rameau Compendium* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 53.

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