

evade the fusion of patterns which constitute contemporary experience.

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Il 'concerto grosso' romano: Questioni di genere e nuove prospettive storiografiche. By Agnese Pavanello. pp. xx + 384. *Speculum musicae*, 11. (Brepols, Turnhout, 2006, €100. ISBN 2-503-52350-1.)

Remarkably, the Baroque concerto continues to be a controversial field of research even beyond the hundredth anniversary of Arnold Schering's *Geschichte des Instrumentalkonzerts bis auf die Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1905), which was the first comprehensive survey of the genre. Part of the trouble lies in the fact that simple expressions that we would ideally like to have perfect taxonomic clarity, such as 'concerto grosso', 'da chiesa', and even 'solo', were used at the time as descriptions rather than definitions, leaving room for conflicting interpretation. Take 'concerto grosso'. Translated into English, the expression means 'grand concerto' (which is exactly the form used for the title of Handel's Op. 6). But does this mean anything more precise than 'grand sonata' a hundred years later? If we agree, at least, that the 'grandeur' refers to the size of the ensemble, not to length or musical weightiness per se, do these many instruments have to double up to play a smaller number of contrapuntal parts? Could they not equally well play, each instrument independently, a large number of parts? Does 'da chiesa' mean 'expressly for performance in church', 'suitable for performance in church', or merely 'in elevated style, similar to other pieces of the same description'? Does 'solo' mean 'with the instruments reduced to a single, principal instrument', or does it merely point to the temporary dropping out of other parts, thereby bringing the part so labelled into prominence?

It is probable that there was never unanimity on these questions. Even when writers of the time attempted to make sense of the terminology, they were apt to slip into arbitrariness, as when Quantz stated that a 'Kammerkonzert' was a solo concerto, a 'Concerto grosso' a concerto with multiple soloists (*Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen* (Berlin, 1752), 294)—a distinction belied time and again by the form taken by actual titles and validated by no earlier theorist. The only sensible advice to give a modern scholar is to maintain a rigorous distinction between analytical vocabulary—whether using new terms or ones based on

eighteenth-century precedent—and the titles adopted for collections and individual works. In this sense, a work belonging to a set entitled *Concerti grossi* is as valid a candidate for the analytical category of 'solo concerto' as any other. 'Concerto grosso' itself is practically unusable as an analytical category, not only on account of its vagueness but also, more important, because any taxonomic meaning attached to it will conflict too often with historical usage.

Much of this, but not everything, is recognized in Agnese Pavanello's study, which, by placing quotation marks around 'concerto grosso' already signals trouble ahead. Based on a doctoral dissertation (Fribourg, 2003), this investigation is focused on the Roman concerto tradition represented by Corelli, Valentini, Mossi, Montanari, and early Locatelli, but also introduces, for purposes of comparison, concertos with one or more solo parts by non-Romans such as Torelli, Manfredini, Gentili, and Vivaldi. The contextualization is so full, indeed, that one wonders at times whether this is not an investigation into the early concerto *tout court* rather than the exploration of a distinctive local tradition, as promised in the title. The book's origin in a thesis is evident at every turn: the literature review includes many superannuated items that, to be honest, one would include only as an insurance against being accused by an examiner of not bothering to consult them; the tone is everywhere measured; lists and computations abound. Personal reactions to perceived musical quality are kept firmly under wraps, so that it is not clear by the end whether the author thinks that Torelli is a better composer than Gregori, or Vivaldi than Gentili. This is a positivist's paradise.

What this book lacks most of all is the 'new historical perspectives' that it claims, in the title, to present. Where it does propose something new, its argument is sometimes suspect. For example, the suggestion (p. 82) that appearances of the 'trumpet' style in Corelli's Op. 6 concertos point to the co-option of actual trumpets when these same works were originally performed in Rome carries no conviction. What about manifestations of the *stile tromba* in Albinoni's and Alberti's string concertos? Also, the suggestion (p. 78) that the viola in this collection doubles the fugal entries made by the cello reverses the true situation. Op. 6 is specially contrived, as a published work aiming at the widest possible dissemination, so that it is playable by *concertino* alone. For similar reasons, the *concertino* violins never dialogue properly with their *ripieno* counterparts: the latter enter and exit with splendid colouristic and dramatic

effect but do not carry any indispensable thematic substance. So it is the cello that, in make-shift fashion, ‘shadows’ the viola entries. Pavanello has taken the special, in fact rather anomalous, case of Corelli’s Op. 6 as the prompt for a new technical term: the ‘concerto a tre’—meaning a concerto whose structural voices comprise two treble parts and a bass. I find this nomenclature very unhelpful, since whenever this term is actually used during the period (which is not often), it refers to concertos that are quite literally in three parts—for two violins and bass, united violins, viola, and bass, or a combination employing wind instruments.

There are also some misconceptions about the relationship between Torelli’s heavily scored concertos and sinfonias preserved in manuscript in Bologna and the cognate works with simpler scoring existing in earlier printed collections. Pavanello assumes that the printed versions are pared-down versions of the more generously scored originals. But the reverse is true: the printed versions are the simple originals, of which the manuscript versions are elaborations designed to show off the S. Petronio players. This relationship becomes quite evident when one compares the trio-sonata versions of TV 50 and TV 51 in the British Library (in Add. MS 64965) with their orchestrally scored concordances in Bologna. The first, brought to England from Germany by Pepusch, must have been in existence during Torelli’s travels in northern Europe (1696–1701), whereas the latter clearly belong, on notational evidence, to the period of his re-employment at S. Petronio (1701–8).

Since the book gives priority to the Roman repertory, I am disappointed that the social dimension of the *concertino*—the foundation of the peculiarly Roman mode of scoring—is not discussed at all. As we know from the careers of Corelli and Montanari, spent in the service of a succession of princes or prelates, the *concertino* was commonly coextensive with the assembled house musicians. When extra players were brought in for a grand function, it was logical that the integrity and (within that household) the privileged position of this permanent group of players was respected: hence the segregation, in a separate unit, of the *ripieno*. The legacy of this respect for employment status underlies the dogged retention, in music by Roman composers, of four violin partbooks (rather than three, as in Venice), even where the presence of a single solo violin, rather than two, made one of the partbooks functionally redundant.

There are, of course, positive things to say about this book. The sheer amount of factual

information is very considerable, and not a few works by minor composers receive what may well be their first-ever mention in modern literature. Musical illustrations are plentiful, with few errors, and there are some very useful transcriptions of written accounts and photographic reproductions of iconography and music. The writing is clear and unpretentious. As usual with volumes in the *Speculum Musicae* series, production standards are high.

This is certainly a book that I will turn to for quick information on unambiguous aspects of the music covered: for example, the keys and the disposition of movements of the works in a particular collection. But it reveals nothing new to me on what made the Roman concerto special or what contemporaries understood by a ‘concerto grosso’. In the end, it disappoints through its narrowness of vision and rather formulaic approach. It also fails to establish a sufficiently clear separation between the foreground (the Roman concerto) and the background (the early concerto in general). The commonplace properties of the concertos studied receive so much more attention than the small but significant things (e.g. Montanari’s fondness for short bursts of unaccompanied writing during solo episodes) that make the best composers stand out. This is one instance where a little more missionary zeal would have paid dividends.

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Eighteenth-Century Russian Music. By Marina Ritzarev. pp. xxviii + 388. (Ashgate, Aldershot and Burlington, Vt., 2006, £55. ISBN 0-7546-3466-3.)

Marina Ritzarev (Rytsareva) has been writing about eighteenth-century Russian music for several decades now, and this new book finally makes her labours available in comprehensive fashion to an English-language readership. The work is full of strengths, particularly in her mastery of the huge repertory and her equal and very welcome control of the complex archival holdings. The book’s title is something of a misnomer, for although she covers a great deal of eighteenth-century Russian musical territory, the work concentrates on the a cappella choral concerto, which flourished in the last half of the eighteenth century and into the early decades of the nineteenth. Indeed, by focusing so tightly on this genre, Ritzarev rectifies several imbalances. Many earlier studies of eighteenth-century Russian music (only a