

Abstracts

GRAHAM PONT: *Reminiscences of «Rinaldo»: The Keyboard Transcriptions of «Vo' far guerra»*

The production of Handel's *Rinaldo* in 1711 was a turning point in the history of keyboard music as well as opera. In the aria «Vo' far guerra» (HWV 7a: 28), the soprano solo was supported by the composer's improvised accompaniments and cadenzas at the harpsichord which introduced London audiences to a new style of keyboard virtuosity. This featured the modern technique of hand-over-hand arpeggios which first appeared in print in William Babell's *Suits of the most Celebrated Lessons Collected and Fitted to the harpsicord or spinnet* (London, 1717). The success of this publication won the editor an international reputation: his arrangement of «Vo' far guerra» became known as the 'Celebrated Grand Lesson'. This remained in print throughout the eighteenth century and has been ascribed ever since to William Babell (who was certainly a distinguished exponent of the new keyboard style). The present article questions the accepted attribution in the light of the other keyboard transcriptions of «Vo' far guerra». These survive in three complete manuscript versions and some related sources which the author argues should all be attributed to Handel. The printed version of the 'Grand Lesson', he concludes, was only a pastiche of Handelian sources edited by Babell, who was one of the composer's principal copyists for about twelve years and therefore had access to his manuscripts. The traditional misattribution of the 'Grand Lesson' has robbed Handel of the recognition due to him alone as the creator of the first great 'operatic transcription' which initiated a new era in the art of the keyboard. Thus identified, a substantial volume of original and historically significant music can now be restored to the Handelian canon.

FABRIZIO AMMETTO: *Análisis técnico-instrumental y de la praxis ejecutiva en los conciertos para dos violines de Vivaldi*

In the eighteenth century the most important composer in Europe of concertos for two violins was undoubtedly Vivaldi, who left twenty-eight works written almost throughout the duration of his creative career: this substantial corpus – exceptional in its quantity and variety when compared, for example, with the output of Telemann (of whom fewer than ten concertos of this kind have survived) or J. S. Bach (only one) – offers numerous subjects for analysis, one of which is performance practice. During the first decade of the eighteenth century, or for slightly longer, Vivaldi conceived the functional role of the solo parts in a concerto for two violins as a 'reduced version' of the *concertino* of a *concerto grosso* lacking a separate bass part: one of these two solo parts was drawn from the ranks of the first violins, the other from the second violins. Subsequently, but not later than the end of the second decade, Vivaldi switched to regarding the concerto for two violins as an 'augmented version' of the solo concerto, drawing both solo players from the ranks of the first violins. The compositional impetus for a concerto with two solo violins was twofold.

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On the one hand, it had a pedagogical function: by taking the part of the second solo violin, a pupil could wrestle with a solo piece without becoming too ‘exposed’. On the other hand, it represented a genuine competition: a challenge to the technical and musical abilities of both contenders. By examining archival documents and analysing Vivaldi’s scores, the article seeks to address questions connected with the performance of these works: the orchestral forces required by Vivaldi at the Ospedale della Pietà (for his concertos in general and his ‘double’ violin concertos in particular), the instruments employed for the basso continuo, and the different spatial layouts of the two soloists and the orchestra that the composer himself preferred (a subject never explored before).

RENATO RICCO: *La produzione violinistica di Giuseppe Paolo Ghebart*

The aim of this article is to analyze the output for violin of the virtuoso, teacher, composer and orchestra conductor Giuseppe Paolo Ghebart (1796–1870). Pupil of Felice Radicati and a contemporary of Paganini who, in a letter of 27 November 1824, expressed admiration for his ‘duets’, Ghebart was the last *maestro di cappella* of the Royal Chapel of Turin, having succeeded Giovanni Battista Polledro. Until now the importance of Ghebart has been examined from a strictly historical point of view, in various studies (Basso, 1971, 1976 and 1991; Berutto, 1984; Moffa, 1990; Dell’Ara, 1999); there has been only one investigation (Rostagno, 2003) of the compositional activity of the Piedmontese musician, and this has been limited to his symphonic works. In the framework of the rediscovery and scholarly investigation of the Italian instrumental patrimony, the goal of this study is to add a new, hitherto practically unknown piece to the puzzle of violin music contemporary with and related to that of Paganini. Alongside the analysis (instrumental, structural and aesthetic) of printed editions and manuscripts (non autograph) of compositions for the violin by Ghebart, dating from around the middle of the nineteenth century and now held in the library of the Conservatory of Music of Turin and in the Giordano Collection of the National University Library of Turin, an attempt has been made to throw light on the transformation, in all of its ramifications, of the figure of the composer/virtuoso at the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century.

BEVERLY JEROLD: *Eighteenth-Century Stringed Keyboard Instruments from a Performance Perspective*

Documentation about the practical usage of the clavichord, harpsichord, and piano in the eighteenth century indicates that the clavichord and harpsichord had considerably more volume than today’s reproductions, and that the mechanical limitations of all three instruments could not have permitted today’s advanced technique. In German-speaking countries, the expressive clavichord was favoured for solo usage until late in the century, when the improving piano began to assume this role. In contrast, the harpsichord’s loud, penetrating tone caused it to be valued for leading and holding together ensembles of musicians who had never experienced metronome training. There were marked differences between the Viennese and English piano actions, and each brought both advantages and disadvantages for the player.

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MASSIMILIANO SALA: *Four Unpublished Letters by G. B. Viotti*

Today, thanks to the development of new technologies and the ongoing work of archiving and digitization of documentary sources by libraries around the world, and the easy availability of online catalogues of collectors and antique dealers, new material of historical interest continues to come to light. In particular, a group of four recently uncovered letters by Giovanni Battista Viotti may now be added to the known documentary heritage of the violinist, providing their own, albeit limited, evidence of the period and revealing new elements of Viotti's life and character. These letters describe moments in the everyday life of a composer who had a busy social life, who was an administrator and who moved within most important and fashionable circles. In addition to their intrinsic value as new documentary sources on the life of Viotti, these letters allow us to understand better the personality of Viotti and shed further light on his life and relationships.

FRANCESCO ESPOSITO: *Controllo monopolistico e strategie protosindacali: le iniziative dell'Irmandade de Santa Cecília nella Lisbona liberale (1833-1853)*

This article is dedicated to the musical life of Lisbon in the nineteenth century, with particular emphasis on the initiatives of the Irmandade de Santa Cecília, the brotherhood that, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, brought together musicians from the Portuguese capital and that, thanks to a royal privilege, had a monopoly on the musical activity in the city. Within the political climate determined by the eventual introduction of liberalism in Portugal, the Irmandade was forced to adopt new methods to protect their corporate interests in the attempt to create a system of social protection through the establishment of Montepio Filarmónico (1834). Following the Associação Música 24 de Junho (1842), the Irmandade de Santa Cecília attempted to appropriate associationism (in particular Freemasonry) to increase the bargaining power of the musicians contracted to the orchestras of municipal theatres. Whereas on the one hand the initiatives of this association, in relation to theatre managers, resembles those of a trade union, on the other, its general policy tended to establish a strict self-referential system removed from the laws of the market, able to generate privileges for its members and discrimination against musicians outside the association.