

Editorial

A SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL not only strives to present individual contributions that develop a single thesis or debate; it should also attempt to merge them together, and present its readers with a global and critical viewpoint focusing on well-defined topics. The October 2007 issue, for example, was derived from a single session of the Birmingham conference (*Sixth Biennial Conference: Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, University of Birmingham, 5-8 July, 2007) devoted to Muzio Clementi. Within the vast landscape of musicological discussion, this editorial policy – whose importance has already been stressed in previous issues – has been stimulated by the birth and death anniversaries of a range of significant composers.

Since the establishment of the *Ad Parnassum Studies* series of collected essays¹, in this year's two issues of the journal we have decided again to dedicate space to certain important authors. In Issue 13 we published two articles on Franz Joseph Haydn, the two hundredth anniversary of whose death falls in 2009. The present issue fulfils the same purpose in connection with Handel (whose 250th death anniversary falls this year) and Mendelssohn, the bicentenary of whose birth is also 2009.

R. Larry Todd, one of the most prominent of Mendelssohn scholars, approaches the reception of Mendelssohn's work against the background of a nonlinear critical interpretation of his oeuvre. Todd proceeds on the basis of a developing interest in Mendelssohn, stirred by the publication of the first complete thematic catalogue of his works and of his correspondence. Todd investigates the reputation of composer as an embodiment of «historical continuities»; as an outcome of earlier thought, and as representing a crucial moment of synthesis and, at the same time, providing a significant model for the composers of the late 19th century and the whole of the 20th.

Moving from the propensity of Mendelssohn to 'rehabilitate' earlier models and musical genres in the context of stylistic renewal, the article by John Michael Cooper, another important Mendelssohn scholar, offers a survey of the twelve fugues for string quartet composed in 1821. Cooper comes to the conclusion that this early work resulted from Mendelssohn's rigorous study of counterpoint, pursued under the guidance of Carl Friedrich Zelter. Cooper sets out to examine the influence of Zelter's tuition throughout a large part of Mendelssohn's oeuvre.

Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald's article consists of a more analytical examination of a certain aspect of Mendelssohn's formal construction. He aims to demonstrate that in some of Mendelssohn's compositions the coda acts as a means of dramatic resolution and culmination, leading to conspicuous, and strategic, reductions of energy in the development section. A typical example is the first movement of the Octet in E-flat major Op. 20. This process, referred to as 'end-weighting' collaborating with 'recessions' in development sections, was developed by Mendelssohn in the full range of genres for which he composed. To an extent it revived eighteenth-century stylistic traits; but the techniques also remind us that Mendelssohn was equally able to devise innovative formal solutions, later replicated by Brahms, as well as by other composers of the 19th century.

¹. See for example the new volume of the *Ad Parnassum Studies* dedicated to the figure of Mieczysław Karłowicz, the anniversary of whose demise falls this year: *European 'Fin-de-siècle' and Polish Modernism. The Music of Mieczysław Karłowicz*, edited by Luca Sala, Bologna, Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2010 (*Ad Parnassum Studies*, 4).

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The first section, dedicated to Mendelssohn, is concluded with a contribution from Benedict Taylor. He discusses the 'Reformation Symphony' with reference to the composer's output in general and continues with an investigation of the often depreciatory role imposed onto this work. In particular, this Symphony participates in the dispute surrounding absolute versus programmatic music. Taylor underscores the importance held by the latter in Mendelssohn's work.

The contribution from Nancy November examines a topic closely associated with this journal, namely historically informed performance practice. Specifically, November investigates the use of the bow during the 19th century, its relation to modern-day performance practice, and the influence that the invention of the flexible bow exerted in defining a new style of execution in schools of violin playing of the early 19th century.

Finally, the essay from Graham Pont is dedicated to collections of works that could possibly be attributed to young Handel. A component of Handel's early keyboard music is in fact little-known and rarely studied by specialists. Despite this it represents an important aspect of the composer's artistic development. The collections examined are: 1) Berlin Mus. Ms. 30078, 2) three manuscript sources (Berlin Mus. Ms. 9181, Zürich Ms. Car xv 249 and Salzburg Mn 106) of the *Zwölf Fantasien* published by Georg Walter (Zürich, 1942), and 3) *Pieces Choiesies pour le Clavecin par differents Auteurs* (Amsterdam, 1733). These contain works composed by young Handel during his Italian tour (1706–1710). They disclose a considerable corpus of passages of keyboard music of direct relevance to the matter of authenticity. If considered genuine, Handel's catalogue would be extended by some thirty new compositions.

Luca Sala
Paris/Poitiers