

Ariosto, Opera, and the 17th Century: Evolution in the Poetics of Delight. By Edward Milton Anderson. (*Historiae Musicae Cultores*, cxxiii.) Appendice documentaria su CD-ROM, ed. Nicola Badolato in collaboration with Amyrose McCue Gill. Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2017. [xii, 280 p. ISBN 978-8-82226-501-2. €32]

This is an original, informative and fascinating book on a large and important subject—the corpus of seventeenth-century Italian dramatic texts, mostly opera librettos, based on *Orlando furioso*, and what those texts reveal about the development of Italian opera during its first hundred years.

Orlando furioso is the masterpiece of Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533), one of the greatest Italian poets of all time and the illustrious precursor of Torquato Tasso (1544–95) and his *Gerusalemme liberata*. The title character is the medieval Frankish paladin Roland (died 778), his “fury” the frenzy or madness induced by his obsessive but unrequited infatuation with Angelica, the beautiful daughter of the king of Cathay who married the African soldier Medoro. The poem tells of Orlando’s superhuman exploits in war and in love, and of his travels across Europe and beyond. Over the course of its forty-six cantos—38,736 lines in 4,842 stanzas of *ottava rima* (eight lines of eleven syllables)—this monumental epic also recounts the adventures of, for example, Alcina, Ariodante, Atalante, Bireno, Bradamante, Ginevra, Olimpia, Rinaldo, Rodomonte, and Ruggiero, ranges over a vast geographical area and probes almost every corner of human experience. First published in 1516, *Orlando furioso* had, by the end of the sixteenth century, achieved over 150 Italian editions and been translated into French and English. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the following two centuries it furnished material for musicodramatic works by many composers, including Marco da Gagliano, Francesca Caccini, Luigi Rossi, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, Giovanni Alberto Ristori, Carlo Francesco Pollarolo, Vivaldi, Handel, Leonardo Leo, Wagenseil, Graun, Paisiello, Hasse, and Haydn. Some librettists supplied their own ending to the story of Angelica, which Ariosto had deliberately left incomplete (“forse altri canterà con miglior pletro”), but most went in other directions.

Edward Milton Anderson (1966–2013) was an American scholar, a historian of Italian literature with interests also in music and art. His book is not the first attempt to trace the use of Ariosto in sixteenth-, seventeenth-, or eighteenth-century vocal music. Most well-known, perhaps, are Tim Carter’s lists of works based on Ariosto and Tasso in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera* (London: Macmillan, 1992), but a start on both poets had already been made by Alfred Einstein in his article “*Orlando Furioso* and *La Gerusalemme Liberata*: As Set to Music during the 16th and 17th Centuries” (*Notes* 8, no. 4 [September 1951]: 623–30). Ariosto in music was subsequently explored by Renate Döring (1973), Maria Antonella Balsano and James Haar (1981), and Irène Mamczarz (1983), with Balsano and Thomas Walker (1988) conducting further research into the contribution of Tasso. Stefano Tomassini’s 110-page study—“Un ‘Orlando’ novissimo: Ripresi teatrali, melodrammi e intermezzi dal Cinquecento al Settecento”, in Lina Bolzoni, et al. (eds.), *L’“Orlando furioso” nello specchio delle immagini* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 2014)—appeared too late for the author of the book being reviewed.

Anderson was fortunate, however, in being able to draw on Claudio Sartori’s catalogue of Italian opera librettos, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800: catalogo analitico con 16 indici*, 7 vols. (Cuneo: Bertola & Locatelli, 1990–1994). His debt to Sartori is clear from his two appendices providing lists of Italian dramatic texts inspired by Ariosto, the first devoted to the seventeenth century, the second to the eighteenth. Appendix A includes forty-three works, compared with twenty-one in *Grove Opera*. The difference is explained by a variety of factors: Anderson’s list includes manuscript as well as printed texts, items intended for music but not set, and works other than opera librettos—including a prologue that was printed in a larger collection, a *favola maritima* (Sebastiano Martini, *Alcina, favola maritima regia con gl’intermedi apparenti* [Ferrara: Baldini, 1609]), and the text or description of a *torneo* (Ridolfo Campeggi, *Ruggero liberato, soggetto del torneo da farsi da i nobiliss. & valorosiss. cauallieri bolognesi* [Bologna: Cochi, 1620]; and Francesco Berni, *Il torneo a piedi, e l’influenzione, ed*

allegoria, colla quale il Signor Borso Bonaccosi comparì a mantenerlo: e l'Alcina maga favola pescatoria [Ferrara: Gironi et Gherardi, 1631]). The entries are presented in chronological order, those in Sartori being identified by their number in his catalogue. As the century wears on, the variety of genres goes down—by 1700, the *dramma per musica* predominates—while the frequency of Sartori numbers rises. This trend continues in Appendix B, where only two of the ninety-six entries lack a Sartori number. That Carter lists only fifty-two of these items, plus fifteen missing from Anderson, suggests that a literary historian is more likely than a musicologist to identify Ariosto's influence.

The body of the present book consists of an introductory chapter, three central chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 draws attention to the use of stanzas from *Orlando furioso* in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century madrigals, explores the publication history and the reception of the poem in the seventeenth century, and outlines the rationale for the three periods into which the dramatic uses of the poem—and the history of seventeenth-century Italian opera—are divided in the following chapters. Chapter 2 considers the response to Ariosto in dramatic works from the period 1609–1635, when music drama took many forms and was cultivated mainly in north-Italian courts. The principal themes here are *autorità* (Ariosto as a literary authority in the period following the Florentine Camerata) and the suitability of *Orlando furioso* as a basis for the development of a musical poetics of *meraviglia* (the power of the unexpected or astonishing to create a sense of wonder). These themes, along with technical innovations in the writing of Italian poetry, are explored in a detailed discussion of sixteen Ariosto-inspired texts by twelve authors, among them Francesco Berni, Battista Guarini, Andrea Salvadori, Ferdinando Sacchini, Ottavio Tronsarelli, Giovan Leone Sempronio, and Prospero Bonarelli della Rovere.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the period 1642–1675, following the opening of the first public opera house in Venice. The librettos of this period are characterised by a quality of *farraginosità*, a word denoting “confusion, complexity, miscellany, gallimaufry . . . hodgepodge” (cf. English “farrago”). A precedent for such an approach is seen in Ariosto's practice of

jumping non-sequentially from one story to another, an approach that permitted the introduction of extraneous elements such as comic servants and other features of the *commedia dell'arte*. The same approach led also to the subordination of Aristotle to the public's desire for delight, a desire that encouraged librettists to concentrate increasingly on arioso and aria verse (and prompted the subtitle of this book). These trends are traced in a discussion of eight texts by Giulio Rospigliosi, Bonarelli della Rovere, Fulvio Testi, Pietro Paolo Bissari, Giovanni Andrea Spinola, and Aurelio Aureli.

Chapter 4, “Ariosto in Arcadia”, charts the process of reform—the Arcadian reaction against *farraginosità*, the growth of narrative clarity, the separation of comic and tragic, and the development of the *intermezzo*. Covering the period 1682–1699, it also witnesses the triumph of the aria “da capo” and the rise of the aria “con stromenti”, and suggests that the motive for instrumentally accompanied arias had less to do with music *per se*, or with characterisation, than with an overwhelming requirement for variety. The texts discussed in this chapter were written by Aureli, Adriano Morselli, Giulio Cesare Grazzini, Gerolamo Giovanolli, and Giovanni Tamagni. Anderson suggests that the layout of a libretto in a seventeenth-century printed wordbook may not convey its true poetical form and that the text therefore requires the attention of a literary editor. Nearly all the texts discussed in chapters 2, 3 and 4 are presented in full on an accompanying compact disc in his careful edition, downloadable as a pdf.

In Chapter 5, a reflective conclusion, Anderson looks forward to the production of a “satisfying account” of Tasso's contribution to seventeenth-century Italian music drama (he seems to have been unaware of Thomas Stein's *Nel nome del gran Torquato: 'Gerusalemme liberata' e drammaturgia secentesca* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), summarises the achievements of the three periods identified in his book, considers the reforms in the light of eighteenth-century criticism of the Arcadian movement, and finishes by commenting on Da Ponte's libretto for *Così fan tutte* (1790), which refers to *Orlando furioso* and ends with an Ariostan octave, a poetical form that had been out of favour with musicians for about 160 years.

The first draft of this book was completed in 2009 and earned Anderson a Cambridge Ph.D., but he continued to work on the material thereafter and signed the Acknowledgements in 2012. The book's origins seem clear from its structure, which although logical and meticulous, is also rather elaborate and formulaic, with various small sections being self-consciously interlinked. The writing, on the other hand, is fluent and a pleasure to read, and the text commendably free from mistakes: the only slip that caught my eye is the reference on p. 112 to sections "9.1" and "9.2", which should read "10.1" and "10.2". Amyrose McCue Gill undertook "the editorial fine-tuning of the English text", Nicola Badolato, the editing of the book as a whole.

The only place where standards slip is Appendix A. This section is indispensable as a list of the sources of the raw material of the book, but is weakened by limitations in content and presentation. For example, although it includes Steffani's *Orlando generoso* (1691), because it is restricted to texts in Italian, it excludes the German translation—*Der großmüthige Roland* (1696)—and its derivatives, along with Lully's *Roland* (1685) and other works in French. All the entries give the place and year "of publication or première", but only a few of them distinguish between these events—a distinction that sometimes is crucial. Every entry cites copies of the text preserved in Italian or (occasionally) foreign libraries, but reliance on Sartori means that most copies outside Italy go unrecorded: others could have been found via the online catalogues of major libraries in Germany, Great Britain, and elsewhere. If a musical setting is preserved, the title of the text is normally underlined, but in the case of *Orlando generoso* and Abbatini's *Il Pianto di Rodomonte* (Bologna: Forni, 1633), underlining is absent and no mention is made of the musical sources. Six titles are underlined, but of these only the entry for Sabadini's *Olimpia placata* (1688; 1687 in *Grove*) gives the location of the music manuscript. For this information, one must in most cases turn to the Bibliography, where further anomalies are found.

The other five works underlined are treated in a variety of ways. Lucio's *Medoro* (1658), Freschi's *Olimpia vendicata* (1682), and Gabrielli's *Carlo il Grande* (1688) are appropriately placed in the first section of the Bibli-

ography ("Manuscript"), where their entries give the library and pressmark of the scores. *Medoro*, however, appears also in the second section ("Musical Scores in Modern Edition"), because the manuscript has been published in facsimile (*Drammaturgia musicale veneta*, 4): this information could have been given under "Manuscript", avoiding repetition of the source's location. Luigi Rossi's *Palazzo incantato* (1642) also survives only in manuscript and should have been placed in Section 1, but instead it appears in Section 2, which cites the facsimiles of two of the sources but ignores the other manuscripts of the work. Francesca Caccini's *La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* (1625) also appears in Section 2, where reference is made to the original print, the facsimile reprint (*Archivum musicum: Musica drammatica*, 4), and Doris Silbert's edition of the score (Smith College Music Archives, 7); depending on one's attitude to facsimiles, the last is arguably the only "modern edition" amongst these five works. As these examples suggest, this appendix would have benefited from more musical input and more editorial intervention. Most of these difficulties are avoided in Appendix B, because it does not attempt to identify or locate the musical settings of its eighteenth-century contents; this may seem a pity, but in a book on the seventeenth century, this appendix, though a bonus, is also superfluous.

This book is distinguished above all by its author's insights as a literary historian. Anderson identifies more Ariosto-inspired texts than any earlier writer on Italian literature or opera and discusses many that were unknown or neglected. He shows that *Orlando furioso* is far more important as a source of material for Italian music drama than previously was thought and that the ways in which this material was used illuminate the history of seventeenth-century Italian opera in general. His familiarity with Italian literature of the period enables him constantly to refer from one poet to another and shed light on the significance of both. The process also suggests, however, that the poets themselves were aware of their literary context; this was sometimes the case, as is shown by examples, but whether it was the norm is less certain. Anderson says little about opera as music, but his book contains much that will, or should, be of interest to music-lovers of all kinds. The

broad outlines of Italian opera history are little changed by his findings, but the sketch is fleshed out by countless detailed observations, not least on technical developments in poetry for music, the emergence of *arioso* and the rise of the *da capo* aria. This book should encourage all devotees of seventeenth-century Italian opera to take a deeper interest in Ariosto and his glorious masterpiece and in the cultural context of the art they admire.

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Baudelaire in Song, 1880–1930. By Helen Abbott. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. [224 p. ISBN 978-0-19879-469-1. £55]

Brahms and his Poets: A Handbook. By Natasha Loges. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2017. [496 p. ISBN: 978-1-78327-236-5. £50]

Helen Abbott's and Natasha Loges's books are two of the most significant recent interventions in the scholarship of art song. They approach their subjects from different disciplinary angles but both focus on the reputation of one artist. Abbott, a modern linguist, is concerned with the reception of the poet Charles Baudelaire in song; Loges, a musicologist, concentrates on the poets selected for song setting by the composer Johannes Brahms. While Abbott focuses on a sample from the hundreds that use Baudelaire's poems—and not necessarily from the most famous composers—she pursues a kind of quantitative analysis intended to reveal stylistic trends. There is a completist aspect to Loges's project, too, for she deals with all the poets Brahms used for his published solo songs, lending the whole an encyclopaedic air. Despite the large number of songs Brahms composed, they have less presence on the concert platform and in academic discourse than might be expected: Loges's book looks set to become the definitive volume on them for years to come.

Abbott's book is more methodologically orientated and much slimmer than Loges's tome, but is packed with ideas and examples. Its first three chapters contextualise Baudelaire's poetry within the world of song (with a helpful overview of song types), discuss how to analyse poetry-as-song, and explore the consequences of "repackaging" Baudelaire's poems as songs.

Each chapter will be of use to lecturers and students exploring the manifold ways in which words and music can be approached, as will the appendix tabulating "shared critical language used in adaptation, translation, and word/music theory".

For such a small and simple genre, song is remarkably evasive. Abbott explains in detail the various interpretative strategies that have been adopted to cope with song's inherent slipperiness. In part, the problem is one of hoary romantic tropes: even modern theorists describe song as mysterious, conveying individual emotions at the same time as it evokes communal experience. There is also, more pragmatically, resistance to analysing song as a genre. In her second chapter, Abbott provides an account of existing approaches, most notably that of Kofi Agawu, whose 1992 article "Theory and Practice in the Nineteenth-Century Lied" (*Music Analysis* 11, no. 1 [March 1992]: 3–36) remains one of the most convincing attempts to devise a systematic method of analysing song. Where Agawu falters, Abbott argues, is that he privileges music over words. Here, she attempts to provide instead "a new, testable model for working with song" that faces head on the genre's potential to provoke "boundless" analytical activity (p. 27). ("Boundless activity" is Agawu's phrase; importantly, he does not say that the provocation is unique to song but that it is true of all music analysis.)

It is crucial, Abbott says, to admit to song's instability; its format may change according to how it is scored (for different voice types and for piano or orchestral accompaniment), or how it is performed and disseminated. We can then ask:

What is it that enables poem and music to cleave together? What is the nature of the bonds between poem and music? Why is it that some of the bonds are particularly strong in some songs, while in others the connection seem too flimsy for the song to stay the course? (p. 28).

Looking at the "how" of song, rather than the "what", "who", or "why", promises to deter readings that habitually resort to biography or that treat song as nothing more than the juxtaposition of two different art forms, poetry and music, as if in a montage. Abbott proposes as an alternative model the "assemblage", which brings poem and music together "to form a temporary,