DAVIDE DAOLMI

recensioni a:

LORETO VITTORI
La Galatea
a cura di Thomas D. Dunn
Middleton (Wisconsin): A–R Editions, 2002
(Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, 119)

GEORGE FRIDERICH HANDEL
Cantatas for alto and continuo
16 alto cantatas from the manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford
a cura di Ellen T. Harris
Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 2002

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virgules are inconsistently given as commas); and it would have been helpful to explain how decisions on text underlay were made in those instances of repetition where it had to be supplied. With regard to the number of facsimiles, it would have been splendid to have had all the parts for an entire piece provided, both to check the editorial process and for the use of those who might like to try performing from the original notation.

Issues in editing music of this period include the challenges presented by changes of metre and coloration. For the former, the original signature and note values are used, with editorial suggestions on proportions. Coloration is indicated by brackets and triplets, but suggested equivalences, although promised, are not provided.

More problematic is the matter of *musica ficta*. Solomon takes a firm stance: editorial accidentals are, in most cases, 'not to be understood as optional'. Indeed, most of her decisions for added accidentals make sense. There are, however, a number of situations where performers might at least consider altering them, usually by adding leading notes in cadential figures. A few examples follow. Most obvious are cases where a dominant-function chord is followed by its tonic—for example, no. 1, bar 22, and no. 2, bar 33. Less clear are instances where (in modern terms) a dominant chord containing a melodic cadential figure is followed by a deceptive progression to IV, VI, or vi—for example, no. 1, bars 35, 41, and 47; no. 12, bar 13; and no. 19, bar 13. In all these situations a singer reading from a single part would be almost certain to sing leading notes, and I am inclined to add them (and also at least to experiment with leading notes in no. 18, bars 24, 25, and 30). In her critical notes to no. 12, Solomon points out potential problems with *ficta* in bars 10–16 and 27–36; here all her decisions except the omission of a leading note in bar 13 seem reasonable. In the same piece, she refers to the fauxbourdon effect of bars 42–5, but without explaining how she decided where to add flats; I might add none—or perhaps another day try adding them in different places (a necessary B♭ is missing in bar 68).

A welcome addition would have been more detailed comments on individual pieces to supplement the brief remarks in the introduction and critical notes. Two passages especially strike the ear as worth mention, and there may well be others. One is the surprising final cadence of no. 19, *Aller Welt Sin und Muth*, a brief, cynical text on the futility of all earthly striving, which ends only in death ('so legen sie sich nider und sterben'). The construction of the piece as a whole suggests that the final cadence will be on A or E, but near the end a prolonged bass A and a cadential figure in the discantus make a convincing approach to D. At the very last minute, though, an unconventional twist in the harmony produces an abrupt and essentially unprepared plagal cadence on E. In no. 6, *Kein Bulerey ficht mich mehr an*, Solomon points out examples of word-painting (unsupported pitches in the tenor on the words 'nichts' and 'allein' in bars 5 and 13–14). However, what would be an egregious error on the part of any skilled composer—which Eccard undoubtedly was—is the passage of parallel fifths (repeated!) in bars 6–8, clearly intended to illustrate the text 'und bin sonst ungeschaffen' (translated as 'and, besides, I am ugly').

It is certainly valuable to have more of Eccard's music available to modern performers. As with so much Renaissance music, today's singers and players will wish in some instances to make their own decisions about aspects of performance of the pieces in this mostly admirable edition.

VIRGINIA HANCOCK

Loreto Vittori, *La Galatea*, ed. Thomas D. Dunn. Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era, 119. (A–R Editions, Middleton, Wis., 2002, $94. ISBN 0-89579-506-X.)

Of the dozen-odd operas published in score in Italy in the seventeenth century, nearly all were printed at Rome in the first decades of the century. They were not published to disseminate the repertory but to bear witness to the sumptuousness of court festivities. *La Galatea* (1639), one of the last in the series, is exceptional because it is not related to any known performance. As far as we know, it seems to have been published at the expense of its author, Loreto Vittori, one of the most famous castrati of his time, who needed to be forgiven a few offences.

Vittori, under Barberini protection, was one of the first opera stars. A soprano in the papal chapel, he sang in Domenico Mazzocchi's *Catena d'Adone* and Marco da Gagliano's *Flora*, and appeared as the *primo uomo* in the magnificent Parma celebrations of 1628, for which Monteverdi was involved in various intermedi, and in the tourney *Mercurio e Marte* (in which he appeared in the finale as Galatea). Having assisted in the kidnapping of a Roman noblewoman, he had to leave Rome to avoid prosecution. It was apparently during those months that

he prepared the libretto and the music of *La Galatea*. He dedicated it to Cardinal Antonio Barberini, probably as a means of easing his return to court (the Barberini pope Urban VIII pardoned him publicly during the Easter celebrations of 1640). And indeed his singing career resumed as before, accompanied for several years by other new compositions (of which only a collection of *Arie a voce sola* (Venice, 1649), survives). But he continued to write poetry for the rest of his life, including his mock-heroic *La troia rapita* (in imitation of Tassoni's *La secchia rapita*), incorporating numerous autobiographical episodes, which was published in 1662.

It is not surprising that *Galatea* was not staged till 1644, and then in Naples, where no more than traces of Roman operatic experiments had penetrated. In fact, the opera respects a staging still tied to the productions of the 1610s and 1620s (pastoral setting, choruses concluding the acts, scant dialogue, absence of comic scenes, events mostly described rather than acted). Its retrospective stance was so conventional that only fifteen years later it was *Galatea* that the metatheatrical prologue of Rospigliosi and Marazzoli's *Le armi e gli amori* (1655), another Barberini opera, affected an intention of performing, only to declare that the public would no longer tolerate yet another love story with improbable gods and shepherdfolk. Indeed, Stefano Landi's *Sant'Alessio* (1632) and Michelangelo Rossi's *Erminia sul Giordano* (published 1637) had already opened up a successful new dramatic course.

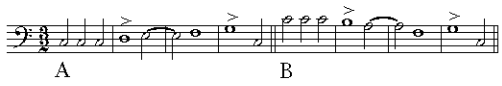
That does not prevent *Galatea* from remaining a delightful opera, written with a competence that we should rarely expect from a beginner (which suggests that Vittori must already have written other music), with a contrapuntal proficiency that allows him to take on eight-part choruses, and with an extraordinary ability to combine verse metre with musical rhythm.

An interesting example is the finale of the second act, where a strophic solo passage framed by choruses of satyrs is set out in the following metric form:

Prima ch'ei tenda	ooo òo
suo dardo asprissimo	ooo òoo
da noi si prenda,	ooo òo
ché poi ch'il rigido	ooo òoo
ferito n'ha	ooo ò
allor non giova più gridar 'Pietà!'	oòo òo òo òo ò

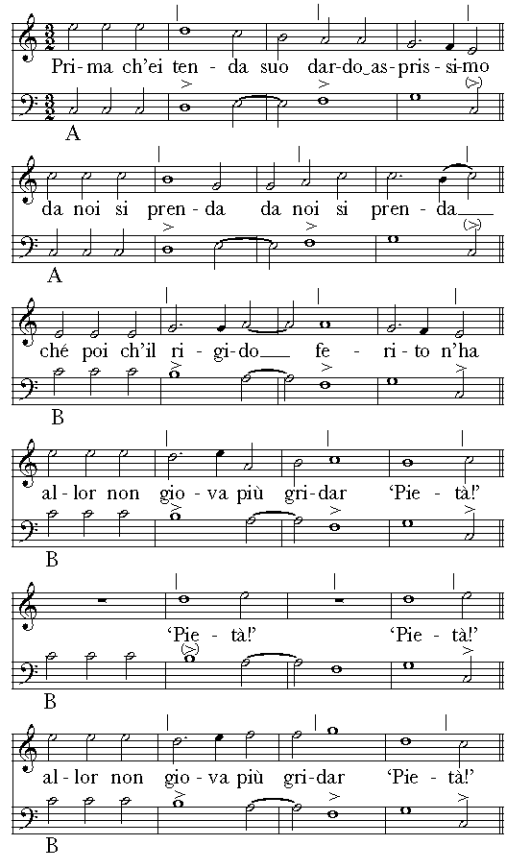
The curious concluding *endecasillabo tronco* imposes on the ternary rhythm of the first five lines an unexpected shift to binary pulse that characterizes in a novel manner its purpose as dance music. The strophe in fact is sung to a rhythmic pattern in the 'usanza spagnola' ('Spanish manner') that is repeated six times, freely alternating sections A and B (see Ex. 1).

Ex. 1



The intensive use of hemiola (second and third bars of the section) produces a constant oscillation between compound binary (3+3) and simple ternary (2+2+2) in the manner of Bernstein's famous 'America' in *West Side Story*. Nevertheless, the unusual conjunction with the verse accents, instead of emphasizing the rhythmic oscillation, makes it appear that a bass articulated in three metrical groups proceeds vaguely in a binary manner (see Ex. 2; the accents identify the notional tempo in 4/2, more explicit in the second part of the strophe).

Ex. 2

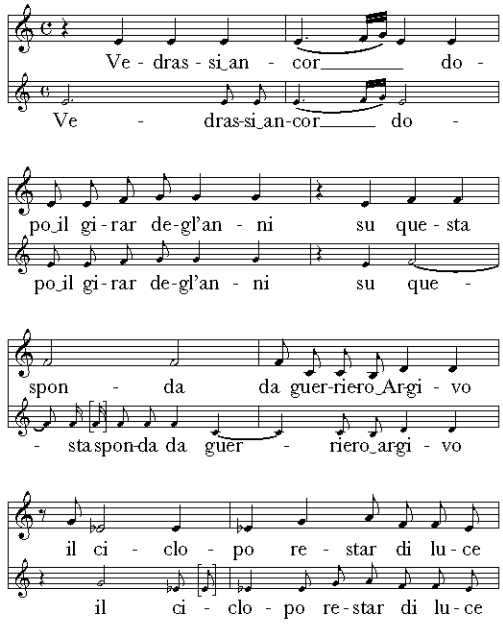


It is above all observations such as these that should have appeared in a modern edition, whose intended readers include those who have not occupied themselves with the subtleties of Italian metre. But Thomas D. Dunn's edition not only fails to bring out the metric and rhythmic ambiguity of the piece but, in the present case, though drawing attention to the presence of the bass pattern, omits to regularize the bar division, and thus risks rendering the rhythmic foundation unrecognizable (the exact opposite of what he says in the Critical Report: 'The barring of the source is irregular and has been modernized', p. 179).

Considering that the edition has only one printed source, if the editorial work was to be more than a literal transcription (with the clefs modernized and a few errors corrected), it would have been opportune to explain, for example, that the '3' preceding the sections that we today would transcribe as 3/2 or 6/2 is not a tempo indication but *proportio tripla*, which—at least in older theory—suggests a rapidity of execution in which a dotted semibreve corresponds to a minim in **𝔠**. Whether perhaps Vittori no longer paid any attention to proportions (which in those years counted for less and less in theatrical music) is a question that could have been taken up in the introduction.

But these are only sins of omission. A case of certainly unwarranted editorial intervention, on the other hand, is to be found, for example, in Proteo's strophic aria opening the last scene of the opera. Here eight quatrains of *endecasillabi* are set to music written only for the first strophe. The need to adapt a verse line with shifting accents such as the *endecasillabo* to the same vocal line prompted the editor to modify the internal rhythms, certainly a practical solution as long as it is limited to occasional modifications. Instead, Dunn gave free rein to his creativity, proposing for the succeeding strophes a vocal line rhythmically far removed from the original. Take, for example, the sixth 'ritornello' (Ex. 3; Dunn's edition is given in the top line; underneath is Vittori's music for the first strophe, with the text of the sixth adapted). It would have been sufficient to eliminate two notes (those bracketed in the second line) to preserve the verse accent, thus avoiding, among other things, stressing 'ciclopo' on the first syllable instead of the second (a similar mistake happens at bar 63 in the Prologo). Clearly, contemporary extemporaneous practice allows variations, even radical ones such as those suggested by Dunn, but it is one thing to sing them on stage, quite another to fix them permanently in a critical edition.

Ex. 3

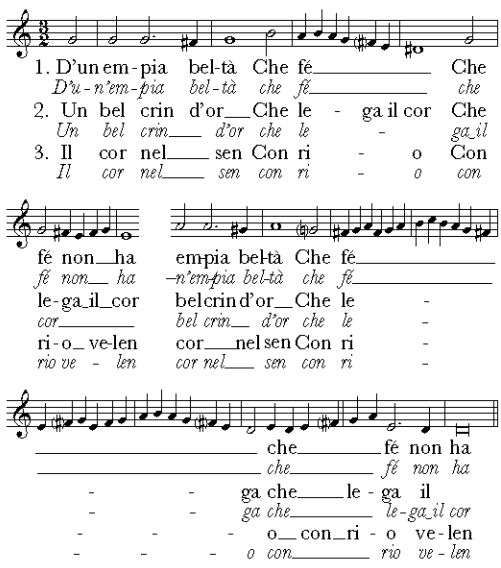


Even Lucindo's strophic arietta (II. iv) presents problems in adapting the text, but in this case the editor's contribution is more wrong-headed than creative. The transcription shown in Ex. 4 involves improbable solutions throughout (a version purged of errors so far as possible appears below in italics). The second strophe adopts for 'crin d'or' a slurred cadence, which, even if typical for *versi piani*, is inappropriate when the ending is, as here, *tronco*. Furthermore, repetitions are added needlessly and superfluous ones not corrected, with the result that melismas are broken up and the rhythm of the concluding hemiola is impaired.

Misplacement of the syllables under melismas appears elsewhere (e.g. Prologo, bb. 97 and 118) and, if the movable type makes it difficult to determine the alignment of notes and text, the editor should at least have realized that in melismas Vittori avoids changing a syllable on the strong beat if it does not carry a stress or fall at the end of a line of verse.

It is regrettable to have to observe that even today scholars do not recognize how much music of the Seicento lives through its text. The obstacles imposed by the music (apart from questions of performance practice, not that Dunn considers them) are at bottom slight compared with those involving the poetic text. Syllabification is the first problem to be confronted in vocal music, and yet even in this case misunderstandings are too numerous to count.

Ex. 4



A few examples may suffice: Prologo, bar 1, '*Io che* de *l'o*-ce-*an'* (strong beats are italicized) needs to be corrected to '*I-o* che *del* o-*cean*'; bar 63, '*da* un *ci-clo*-po_uc-*ci*-so' to '*da_un* ci-*clo-po* uc-*ci*-so'; Act I Sc. iv, bar 101, '*mie*-i *sì du*-ri_af-*fan*-ni' to '*mièi* sì *du-rì* af-*fan*-ni' (to allow the dissonance to fall on 'duri', hard, not on 'sì'); bar 194, 'in-*cen*-si *e* vo-ti' to 'in-*cen*-si_e *vo*-ti'; bar 273, 'con-*ti-nu*-o_il *duo*-lo' to 'con-*ti-nuo* il *duo*-lo'; bar 484, 'so-no e¬ (= melisma)' to 'so¬-no_e'; Act II Sc. i, bar 120, '*l'a*-ri-*a_e di*-stil-*la* di¬ *piog*-gie' to '*l'a*-ri-a *e* di-*stil*-la di *piog*-ge'; bar 241, '*pre-sti* ad' to '*pre*-sti_ad'; bar 249, '*dir*-ti_o *fa-re* trat-*to* ar-*cie*-ro' to '*dir*-ti *o fa*-re *trat*-to_ar-*cie*-ro'. I could go on correcting such errors, but I stop here.

Fortunately, the Italian is modernized—but only in part. Dunn leaves, for example, the capital at the beginning of a line and does not correct the endings *-cie* and *-gie* into the more up-to-date *-ce* and *-ge*, nor does his punctuation assist comprehension. Errors are introduced: *Pluton* for *Pluto* (I. ii, b. 71), *poiché* [for] in place of *poi che* [after] (b. 77); *da* [from] for *dà* [he gives] (I. iv, b. 201); *fè* for *fé* (II. i, b. 180). The senseless correction of 'puol' to 'può 'l' (p. 99) is annoying, because 'si puol' is a shortened form of *si puollo*, or *lo si può* [it can be] and did not need changing. Above all, an egregious misunderstanding of a pair of words compromises the translation itself. 'Pafo' (Paphos, Venus) is read as 'paso' (I. iv, b. 26) and the line 'or non potiam di Pafo in su l'altare' [now we cannot on Paphos' altar] becomes 'or non potiam di paso in su l'altare', translated as 'we cannot now go up to the altar' (p. xxii), where 'di paso' was perhaps understood as 'di passo', quickly. Similarly, the word 'fole' (I. iv, b. 577), a contraction of *favole* [tales, trifles], becomes 'sole' [sun], for which 'ci vuol senno e non son fole' [you need prudence, it's not a trifle] is translated 'you need prudence, not just sunshine' (p. xxvi), which smacks more of Edward Lear than Loreto Vittori.

I end with a general observation. A–R Editions, with no fewer than seven ongoing series of critical musical editions, is conspicuous for the courage with which it faces the disarray of modern publishing, in which music, expensive and unprofitable, is now rarely undertaken. Nevertheless, I do not believe that editions prepared in haste can check the haemorrhage of purchasers. The failure, for example, to beam the notes by syllable, in addition to encouraging a fixed and rigid performance by the singer, is particularly inappropriate to this music, and has led to an unnecessarily widely spaced layout of music and text. The music sprawls over the page, the eye gets lost and no longer knows where to look. A publisher ought to know that the golden rule of impagination responds more to physiological than aesthetic needs; to contradict four centuries of musical typography means to fail of one's purpose. And why stretch out the bars? To increase the number of pages and justify the high cover price? In the end it costs less to obtain printouts from a microfilm of the original edition (postage included). The original printed version is certainly more elegant, and sometimes even more legible, and it surely presents fewer errors.

DAVIDE DAOLMI
(*Translated by Bonnie J. Blackburn*)

George Frideric Handel, *Cantatas for Alto and Continuo: 16 Alto Cantatas from the Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford*, ed. Ellen T. Harris. (Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 2002, £30. ISBN 0-19-345413-0.)

Handel wrote some hundred cantatas in a fairly short period of his life that roughly corresponds to the years in which he enjoyed the protection of generous aristocrats, first Italian—when he was in his early twenties (1706–10)—and then English (1712–23). Before he reached the age of 40 Handel had, after a decade in London, become economically independent; as a composer of the Chapel Royal, he decided not to depend any longer on the hospitality of patron friends and, having moved to Brook Street, gave up composing cantatas.

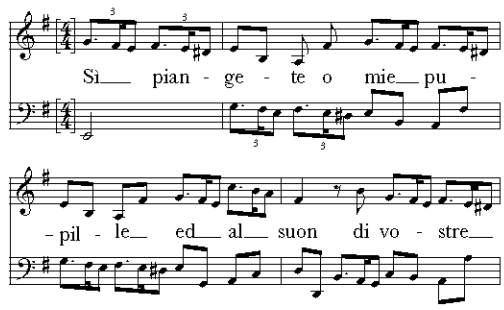
The conjunction in his life between patrons and cantatas is not fortuitous: the genre is linked to aristocratic taste through cultivated private entertainments. It is above all the cantatas for solo voice with simple continuo accompaniment (there are some sixty in the Handel catalogue) that betray this select destination, uninterested in exhibition. Characterized by delicate shades, an often sophisticated use of harmony, alert to the delineation of the most intimate meanings of the text, Handel's cantatas cry out for subtle interpreters and a public prepared to show itself at its best. An extraordinary cantata such as *Lungi n'andò Fileno*, in which a lover laments the departure of the beloved, not only offers harmonic audacities capable of reflecting the inconsolable sorrow of his loss, but distinguishes the first aria from the second by contrasting two similar rhythmic schemes. Both derive from the funereal dactylic metre (– ⏑ ⏑), which, in the second aria, that in which he awaits death alone, is transmitted in a regular

In the first aria, however—where tears are still being shed by the beloved—all of a sudden, by reducing the first of the two short beats, Handel transforms the rather martial dactylic pattern into the imitation of plaintive sobbing:

It is not, as might appear, the rhythm of a siciliana, for the systematic use of three against two displaces the accent to the semiquaver of the triplet, suggesting the jerky movement of one who is prey to tears, as shown in Ex. 1 (*Lungi n'andò Fileno*, first aria: 'Sì piangete o mie pupille', bb. 4–7). Instances of such artifice, in which Handel indulges only in chamber music forms, demand an attention that a public accustomed to the pyrotechnics of opera is often not disposed to concede, and perhaps because of this the cantata repertory continues to be performed comparatively rarely and often badly.

For years Ellen T. Harris has been engaged in countering this indifference and, after an analytical book on Handel's cantatas (*Handel as Orpheus: Voice and Desire in the Chamber Cantatas* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), reviewed in *Music & Letters*, 85 (2004), 62–82, esp. 72–82), has now published a critical edition of sixteen cantatas for alto and continuo. Now that the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe is nearing completion, Harris's volume might appear superfluous. In fact, the HHA has not yet published the first two

Ex. 1



volumes in its fifth series, which will contain the cantatas with basso continuo; moreover, Harris does not provide a critical edition *tout court* but has chosen to publish some cantatas from one of the most important Handel sources, the Legh Collection.

This latter—together with the more famous one copied for Cardinal Ruspoli and today preserved at in the Santini collection at Münster—is one of two non-autograph collections of cantatas made during Handel's lifetime. It was put together by Elizabeth Legh (1695–1734), a keyboard player of some accomplishment and an enthusiast for Handel's music. Her brother Charles, a friend of the composer, may have had occasion to put Handel up at his residence, Adlington Hall, in Cheshire, when the composer was on his way to Dublin in 1741. Here, among other things, is still preserved a precious organ of 1670 signed by Bernard ('Father') Smith (Schmidt). Among the little information we have about Elizabeth Legh is the anecdote of the pigeon recounted in the introduction to the libretto of John Christopher Smith's opera *Rosalinda* (1740); it seems that the bird flew from the dovecote to listen every time that she played a particular aria by Handel on the keyboard. Elizabeth died at the age of 39, twenty-five years before her favourite composer, leaving the world some forty volumes of Handel's music, mostly now in the Earl of Malmesbury's collection housed at the Hampshire County Record Office, Winchester. Two volumes of cantatas fared differently and turned up in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, where they carry the shelfmark Mus.d.61–62.

To judge from the preface, the interest in this collection of fifty-five cantatas—for some of which it is the only witness (at least in their disposition) and for others, in the absence of an autograph, one of the most trustworthy sources—is linked to the presence of ornamentation ('more than [in] any other Handel cantata collection', p. iv) and to the predilection for the

contralto range, to which the sixteen cantatas published by Harris are devoted.

In reality the cantatas for continuo that Handel wrote for contralto can be counted on the fingers of one hand; all the others are transposed versions made for Elizabeth Legh (it is not surprising, therefore, that they appear only in this source or derive from it); among the cantatas published here, ornamentation is found only in *Dolc'è pur d'amor l'affanno* and is not conspicuous for its originality. In both categories of cantata we have information on the ways in which a dilettante used Handel's cantatas, not on the cantatas themselves. If the aim, therefore, is to offer a repertory for contralto (or mezzosoprano), reference to the Legh collection is of course a good criterion; nevertheless, all Handel's cantatas, following contemporary practice, can potentially be transposed and adapted to a different register, and to single out the repertory chosen by Miss Legh may be reductive.

However, the editorial principle of transcribing the copy text (the Oxford MSS) and comparing it with some of the most important sources (beginning with the surviving autographs) is carried out well, though I am not in a position to evaluate the editor's preference for some witnesses over others: we still lack a well-constructed stemma of Handel sources. If anything—but this is an observation that applies to all critical editions of music—the apparatus is still insufficiently reader-friendly and could have distinguished between patent errors (which might have been corrected silently), insignificant variants (which could have been relegated to notes), and significant variants, that is to say, those that offer suggestions for performance and the understanding of a piece and its history. It would have been opportune to discuss these last at greater length (e.g., again in *Lungi n'andò Fileno*, the discarded autograph reading in bars 13–14 of the first recitative might suggest a faster performance that would accord well with the words: 'volar vorrei d'appresso' (I would fly close)).

The decision to realize the continuo—in conjunction with some welcome observations on performance practice (pp. ix–x)—can be appreciated in an edition such as this, intended also for non-professionals, and on the whole the sobriety with which it has been carried out may be a good visual aid for the professional who wishes to undertake a more original realization. At most it would not have been a bad idea to reduce the size of the second stave to prevent the less alert reader of this repertory from thinking that it derives from Handel.

The regretful note, as usual, is on restoration of the Italian text. Harris, though not setting out the criteria for the edition of the text, gives evidence of knowing the language well, offering a transcription that is substantially correct (I note a *sé* without accent in *Qualor crudele*, and an 'ed ostro' to be corrected to *e d'ostro* in *Nel dolce tempo*), and above all a translation that adheres to the meaning of the texts; but she errs conspicuously in the division of the lines of the recitatives. Seventeenth-century Italian recitative, as is well known, rarely uses more than two metres, the *settenario* and the *endecasillabo*; why therefore publish, for example, the opening lines of *Qualor crudele* in this barbarous manner (p. 177)?

> Qualor crudele, sì, ma vaga Dori,
> A tue rare bellezze fisso le luci
> E ai tuoi ridenti lumi,
> Veggio ed ammiro
> Quanto san far per nostra meraviglia
> I Numi.

This is in fact three *endecasillabi* interspersed with two *settenari* (which could have been transcribed avoiding the useless initial capitals and improving the punctuation):

> Qualor crudele, sì ma vaga, Dori,
> a tue rare bellezze
> fisso le luci e ai tuoi ridenti lumi
> veggio ed ammiro quanto
> san far per nostra meraviglia i numi.

And similarly the four lines of the first recitative of *Irene idolo mio* (p. 172):

> Io peno,
> E pur non hai pietà
> De' miei sospir,
> Delle mie pene,

are really only two (*settenario* plus *endecasillabo*):

> Io peno e pur non hai
> pietà de' miei sospir, delle mie pene,

Unfortunately, the misunderstanding of the division of the lines is to be found throughout: every cantata has some kind of error (most frequently the division of the *endecasillabo* into two lines in an improbable metre), and the second recitative in *Nel dolce tempo* is set out in twenty-five lines when there are in fact only fourteen! Then it is necessary to correct 'Lungi, lungi n'andò Fileno' (p. 175), where the repetition of 'lungi' is only musical and the line an ordinary *settenario*, while in 'Clori degli occhi miei, Clori del cuore' the repetition is not Handel's but belongs to the poetic text (the line is an *endecasillabo*) and cannot be omitted, thus misrepresenting the line as 'Clori degli occhi miei, del cuore' (p. 169).

Despite its obvious limitations, this edition is valuable for the diffusion of a neglected repertory (Centaur has recently recorded eight of these cantatas; the performances do not inspire much enthusiasm, and the choice has not fallen on the best pieces, but it is a good sign that a new edition should have been followed immediately by a CD) and above all—this is its true value—it restores the pleasure of a domestic Handel, to be sung and played among friends, not necessarily virtuosos but simply lovers of good music. It resolves, in sum, to put forward anew a model of private performance that—rare in these days of too many media—is not far removed from the purposes for which this music was composed three centuries ago (aristocrats aside).

DAVIDE DAOLMI
(*Translated by Bonnie J. Blackburn*)

Charles-Marie Widor, *Symphonie pour orgue et orchestre, op. 42 [bis]*, ed. John R. Near. Recent Researches in the Music of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries, 33. (A–R Editions, Middleton, Wis., 2002, $106. ISBN 0-89579-515-9.)

Claude Debussy, *Fuge über ein Thema von Jules Massenet für Orgel*, ed. Otto Biba. Diletto musicale: Doblingers Reihe alter Musik. (Doblinger, Vienna and Munich, 2001, €9.95. ISMN M-012-18722-6.)

'Legendary' is one way in which John R. Near describes Charles-Marie Widor's Symphony for organ and orchestra, Op. 42[bis]. However imprecise and overworked that word may be, there is an extraordinary story to tell about this work. It was conceived at the behest of the future King Edward VII for a charity performance at the Royal Albert Hall, London in 1882. Widor fashioned it from three of his movements for organ solo already published in his organ symphonies: the first and last components of the Sixth Symphony, Op. 42, which remain the outer movements, and the Andante of the Second, Op. 13. (The organ and orchestra symphony was given the same opus number as no. 6, which already embraced no. 5 and would eventually take in nos. 7 and 8; 'bis' is Near's useful clarification.) The work was given its premiere on the Cavaillé-Coll organ of the Trocadéro shortly before the London performance; Widor was the soloist on both occasions.

In 1904 a young Belgian organist, Charles-Marie Courboin, performed the symphony at Antwerp, and when shortly afterwards he emigrated to the United States, he took his score with him. He became widely recognized as an organ virtuoso (even as the 'Rachmaninov of the organ') and participated in the 1919 dedication concert of the rebuilt organ of the Wanamaker department store in Philadelphia with the Philadelphia Orchestra under the baton of Leopold Stokowski. Then as now one of the largest and most idiosyncratic organs in the world, its combination with the celebrated Philadelphia Orchestra in Widor's symphony reportedly stole the show. Estimates of the size of the audience vary: 10,000, 12,000, perhaps even 15,000 (Near suggests at least 12,000; in any event, at 18,144, the organ still had more pipes than the audience had members). These numbers dazzled organists of the day, and continue to do so even now.

Never published, the symphony languished, and interest in it did not reawaken until near the end of the century. Linda R. Tyler has called attention to the 1919 concert as a 'pinnacle of musical extravagance' ('"Commerce and Poetry Hand in Hand": Music in American Department Stores, 1880–1930', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 45 (1992), 87). Craig R. Whitney has also drawn attention to it: 'Courboin and Stokowski brought electricity to the Wanamaker's event' (*All the Stops: The Glorious Pipe Organ and its American Masters* (New York, 2003), 42). Courboin's copy made possible a performance in 2000 on the enormous Spreckels outdoor organ in San Diego, and in 2002 the symphony as edited by Near was featured at the national convention of the American Guild of Organists in Philadelphia with James David Christie at the organ. Thanks to Near and his splendid edition, Widor's symphony finally has the chance to become a living legend.

As in Near's landmark edition of Widor's ten organ symphonies in as many volumes (*Charles-Marie Widor: The Symphonies for Organ* (Madison, Wis., 1991–7)), he here provides an impressively documented introductory essay (as well as fascinating plates and an exhaustively detailed critical report). The discussion of the 1919 concert is particularly rich in contemporary reports. For example, the Wanamaker concert director, Alexander Russell, thought the symphony created 'a perfect Niagara of sound'; however, the reviewer for *Musical America*, H. T. Craven, found in the work 'a degree of majesty and tremendous eloquence that is a little short of overwhelming' and had trouble determining if the work was a concerto or a symphony. Near is quick to acknowledge that the symphony resists assignment to such genres. Yet, as Craven suggested, the problem is not entirely a formal one; the tone of the symphony also raises questions.