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*Antonio Vivaldi , and: Antonio Vivaldi und seine Zeit*  
(review)

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**Antonio Vivaldi.** By Egidio Pozzi. (Constellatio Musica: Collezione di musica antica, rinascimentale e barocca, 15.) Palermo: L'Epos, 2007. [776 p. ISBN 9788883022425. €48,30.] Music examples, illustrations, tables, catalogue of productions, bibliography, discography, indexes of names and works cited.

**Antonio Vivaldi und seine Zeit.** By Siegbert Rampe. Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2010. [447 pp. ISBN 9783890074689. €39,60.] Music examples, tables, illustration, bibliography, indexes of names and works.

Rarely do two books on the same subject with such commendable content emerge at so nearly the same time. Neither of these titles is readily available in the United States; they must be ordered from an overseas distributor. Pozzi's book was published in 2007 but was in slight circulation until 2008. Rampe's book appeared in 2010 and was undoubtedly in preparation by the time Pozzi's appeared.

Both works owe their existence to the steady accrual of new sources and information that have appeared since the third centenary of Vivaldi's birth in 1978. Streams of new information regularly appear, together with musical supplements, in the *Studi Vivaldiani*. The proceedings of the four decadal conferences on Vivaldi have produced voluminous proceedings. For 1978, 1988, and 1998 they were published (in book form) by Leo S. Olschki; the most recent proceedings actually took place in 2007 and are available online ([www.cini.it/en/publication/detail/5/id/1040](http://www.cini.it/en/publication/detail/5/id/1040), accessed 6 July 2011). Multiple series of editions of Vivaldi's works outside the realm of instrumental music have been published by Ricordi under the auspices of the Vivaldi Institute (at the Fondazione Cini, Venice), which has also sponsored monographs exploring particular genres among the composer's oeuvre (Michael Talbot's on sacred music, Reinhard Strohm's on operas, Federico Maria Sardelli's on flute music, Cesare Fertonani's on violin music). Taken together, they provide ample new scope for examining the music, as the contours of the repertory grow and change. Addi-

tionally, Ryom's comprehensive catalogue (*Antonio Vivaldi: thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis seiner Werke (RV)* [Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 2007]), which continues to be updated in the *Studi Vivaldiani*, brings coherence to several decades of manuscript studies. Continuing biographical research by Micky White regularly injects unanticipated findings into the Vivaldi family portrait. Pozzi and Rampe have taken full advantage of all of it. Both weave this miscellany into different tapestries, of course, but both do so faithfully and with a commendable balance of content.

Pozzi's book presents Vivaldi's life in seven chapters. This block of material is preceded by two chapters on Venice and its musical life; it is followed by three topical chapters—one each on sources, style, and reception. Unnumbered tables add up to thirty-two in Pozzi's work and address a variety of topics. The chapter on musical style contains thirty-four music examples, many with several component parts. The twenty-nine figures provide valuable images of various kinds, although roughly half appear to come from scans of images that are not clearly reproduced. Sources are acknowledged in Pozzi's book, but permissions to reproduce them are not included.

On balance, the book is attractively presented. The text is easily legible throughout; the listings, especially at the rear, are helpfully indented, with search terms in boldface. When it comes to the legibility of musical detail, some elements of the design prove to be problematic. The music examples, and an occasional harmonic scheme, vary in size from "small" to "too small to read." In example 10 (p. 499), in which extracts from three different works with similar melodic shapes are being compared, the work-location indications and most of the analytical markup have shrunk into oblivion. Twelve bars (mainly containing eighth and sixteenth notes) have been fitted into a width of  $3\frac{13}{16}$ " and a height of  $1\frac{5}{16}$ ". Example 13 (p. 505), showing more than 4 measures from the second concerto of *L'Estro armonico*, is fitted into a slightly taller space ( $1\frac{3}{4}$ ") and is much clearer. In example 18 (p. 525)—a single staff showing the opening bars of the sixth concerto of *La Cetra*—the three bars of notes are visible, but the designations *Violino principale con scordatura* and the

*Allegro* can be seen only with a magnifying glass. Instrument designations and other textual features are similarly difficult to recognize in many other places. Basso continuo figuration is largely a lost cause. Some readers might have preferred to forgo the forty-page discography in favor of extra space for more easily readable examples.

The visual quality and general readability are greater in Rampe's book. The paper is whiter, the print darker, the typography clearer (and the cover, incidentally, more durable). Most music examples, although small, are easily comprehended. Yet examples with thirty-second notes (of which there are many) are sometimes hard to read because of compression. On page 188, for example, the second of six examples (showing the first two bars of the opening sinfonia for the opera *L'Olimpiade*, RV 725)—presses sixty-four notes in four inches of horizontal space (eighteen notes per inch).

Rampe's book contains fewer chapters (six) but more subparts (30 in all). The coverage is much the same and follows a similar plan, but there are some notable differences. He delves into opera slightly more and gives coverage to several one-off topics, such as Vivaldi's favorite opera singer, Anna Girò (final topic in chap. 3, "Worldly Composer: Concertos, Operas, Church Music"). Rampe devotes an entire chapter (chap. 5) to Vivaldi iconography and the composer's personality. Like Pozzi, he concludes with reception (chap. 7: "Heritage and Afterlife"); this chapter ends with a consideration of performance practice (treating pitch, tempo, ornamentation, and improvisatory elements).

The book begins with a fifty-page year-by-year chronicle, which accommodates major events in Venice and in the lives of other composers, some of them hardly of relevance to Vivaldi. As an example of the barely relevant, we read that in 1721 "the painter Antoine Watteau died in Nogent-sur-Marne, Île-de-France" (p. 43). Entries for 1726 (p. 47) note that "Charles Burney (d. 1814) was born in Shrewsbury, England" and "Domenico Zipoli died in Santa Cecilia, near Cordoba (Argentina)." This is presented in a seemingly endless block of type, punctuated visually only by the year numerals, and is thus inherently hard to read. The composite *Chronik* reads

like a set of notes for a book rather than the product itself. Even though it is the *Chronik* that generates the biographical dates given after surnames (including Burney, Watteau, and Zipoli) in the critical index, readers could be better served by liberating most of the 50 pages this consumes for other purposes.

Rampe's six-part *Anhang* includes a 20-page section of illustrations (paintings, musical sources, title pages, portraits, musical instruments). They are on balance larger and much clearer than the illustrations in Pozzi's work; Rampe properly credits their sources in his book's front matter as well. His list of works (the *Werkverzeichnis*, discussed below) is easier to follow than Pozzi's because it is laid out in a single column. The seventeen-page bibliography is well organized but hard to use for single items because one block of small type appears under each rubric (on four of the pages there is no visual segmentation of any kind). Indices of proper names (including titles of publications) and of individual works complete the work. Lists, tables, and music examples are numerous, but none are numbered and there is no general summary of them.

While the strengths and similarities of these two works are very numerous, each book is distinguished here and there by content that seems particularly engaging. In Pozzi's case the chapter on musical style is, despite its cryptic music examples, full of invigorating insights. It also offers an excellent synthesis of wide-ranging topics—articulation, form, structure, organic features, use of dynamics indications, contrapuntal techniques, melodic borrowings between repertoires (e.g., ex. 16, p. 521), and the derivation of miscellaneous orchestral parts from the principal violin part (hardly a new subject, but one that is unlikely to come to the notice of those who have never worked with Vivaldi manuscripts).

In Rampe's case, the coverage of the fiendishly obscure years of Vivaldi's life (scattered between 1729 and his death in 1741) is marked not only by a clever piecing together of all known information but also by analytical insights no doubt acquired through his work on other composers of the time (especially Handel) and activities as a performer. Vivaldi's years as a "free agent" (1731–35, pp. 224–33) are

especially well handled. Both books cover the same sparse factual ground concerning Vivaldi's death in Vienna. Pozzi's account conveys the bittersweet ironies of its circumstances quite forcefully.

Rampe's chapter on concertos, operas, and church music is particularly noteworthy. He has integrated these subjects into a coherent chronological overview that does not imply favoritism by Vivaldi towards any one of them. This welcome balancing act redresses the popular view of Vivaldi as a violin virtuoso whose compositional contributions beyond instrumental music were negligible.

Rampe's approach to musical commentary is to itemize long series of titles and then to comment on each group en masse or, selectively, on individual works or movements. In the running text, his aim is clearly not to discuss every piece Vivaldi composed, but instead to focus on those of particular importance or relevance to his argument. Although RV numbers are in bold type, the font size in these lists is small and the line spacing tight: in 5½ vertical inches on pp. 170–71 (concertos with subtitles and nicknames) some thirty-seven works and variants are named (with instrumentation, assumed date, and RV number). Rampe reiterates the individual works of published collections both at appropriate points in the text and in the *Werkverzeichnis* (pp. 345–86). The endnotes in Rampe's book are easier to read than many of the footnotes in Pozzi's, although one needs three thumbs to navigate between the relevant text (whether here or in the main body), the *Werkverzeichnis*, and the *Werkregister* (pp. 429–46). The *Verzeichnis* gives substantial titles, dates, and, in the case of manuscripts, scoring (following Ryom). The *Register* gives more abbreviated titles and page indications. Both are ordered by RV numbers. While not every work by Vivaldi is discussed, the earlier listings of works by group serve to populate *Register* entries for the vast majority of compositions (some RV numbers are now vacant because of disattribution). The scoring information in the *Verzeichnis* largely duplicates indications in the earlier listings (e.g., pp. 141–42) of the body.

Pozzi's organization is generated more by sources and recent writings. The corre-

spondence between Vivaldi and Ferrarese authorities is discussed extensively. Pozzi cites Remo Giazotto (whose sources are notoriously hard to recover and may vary in small ways from Giazotto's own quotation or paraphrase) more than most living scholars would do, but he also acknowledges certain problems with Giazotto (p. 197). Pozzi offers a useful discussion of the many catalogues of Vivaldi's works.

Both authors give special recognition to Alberto Gentili in the "rediscovery" of Vivaldi's music. In Pozzi's quite exciting account (pp. 585–93) Gentili provided in 1926 the first evaluation of the pending, not yet dedicated *Raccolta Foà*. Negotiations for today's *Raccolta Giordano* followed over the ensuing years. The values of these famous collections in the National Library in Turin were embarrassingly low by modern standards. The publication of a catalogue of the combined corpora was completed only in 2001 (as the *Raccolta Foà-Giordano della Biblioteca nazionale universitaria di Torino* [Milan: Electa, 2001]).

A potentially useful tool (but absent from both works) would be a guide to digital sources of Vivaldi's music. Although some of the 12 legitimate publications of instrumental music enjoyed wide circulation, most surviving manuscripts are preserved in only two libraries—the National Library in Turin and the Saxon State Library in Dresden. Representative works from the Foà and Giordano collections are posted online ([www.internetculturale.it](http://www.internetculturale.it), accessed 6 July 2011); nearly all have been digitized and await posting. In Dresden, the entire Schrank II collection of manuscripts has been digitized in a remarkably short time. All of its holdings are available online ([www.schrank-zwei.de/](http://www.schrank-zwei.de/), accessed 6 July 2011). Additionally, many libretti for his operas preserved in the *Raccolta Corniani-Algarotti* are available online through the Web site of the National Library in Milan ([www.urfm.braidense.it/cataloghi/searchrd.php](http://www.urfm.braidense.it/cataloghi/searchrd.php), accessed 6 July 2011).

Since both books are highly readable in their respective languages, the English-speaking public is at liberty to choose. Pozzi's senses of delicacy and poignancy have struck me over and over; it is always a pleasure to pick up his book. Rampe's clarity and insights sometimes make a shorter

job of seeking out a random detail or acquiring a quick overview. On balance, one might consider Pozzi to be slightly closer to the music itself, Rampe to its factual underpinnings and wider context. The choice is

entirely a matter of taste—and practicality. The composer himself remains, as ever, somewhat elusive.

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#### POSTCLASSICAL

**Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music.** Edited by Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010. [xvii, 288 p. ISBN 9780754667735. \$119.95.] Figures, music examples, notes on contributors, bibliography, index.

There are two groups of listeners that American “music theory,” with few exceptions and in all its institutional rigor and card-carrying professionalism, has been inclined to marginalize: amateurs and philosophers. That Gilles Deleuze and his partner Félix Guattari, with whom he co-authored his best-known works, belonged in both suggests at the outset the radicalness, complexities and potential complications of the endeavor undertaken by editors Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt. “The explicit reference to music has receded in most post-structuralism,” observes Martin Scherzinger (p. 107), and skepticism towards a thinker most often associated with film, political theory, and feminist theory may furthermore be quite difficult to dispel. The editors implicitly acknowledge the challenge by extolling as early as possible the “lavish attention Deleuze accords to music,” perhaps overestimating it compared to that of other philosophers in their pithy and inviting introduction to the volume (p. xv). They also clarify that “much of what Deleuze wrote about music was not transparently consistent with his overall philosophical project” (p. xv), much as no explicit illustration of this divergence is to be found in the volume (a possible disappointment for readers drawn to it by prior knowledge of the primary sources). The second challenge confronting the contributors is a pervasive opacity, the contradictions and iconoclastic poetry of the French poststructuralist’s language—qualities essential to his thought and not merely ornamental—and they negotiate it with an expert balance of authorial fervor and scholarly detachment. Overall, they are able to refrain from the temptation to can-

onize Deleuze despite the evident inaugural enthusiasm permeating the volume, which largely originates in a 2008 conference at the State University of New York and is only the second book-length text in English on the subject (following Ian Buchanan and Marcel Swiboda, eds., *Deleuze and Music* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004]).

It is actually laudable that the book does not attempt a systematic introduction to the philosopher’s ideas, as they are hardly conducive to textbook-style treatment or, alas, schematic “definitions.” The twelve chapters may be read in almost any order, in fact, although consecutive chapters coalesce into tacit thematic areas. The first two studies, by Christopher Hasty and Brian Hulse, challenge the conceptual underpinnings of music theory from a Deleuzian perspective and in doing so also introduce key terms that recur throughout the volume. The next three explore the boundaries of Deleuzian “music” as a domain—namely, and in oversimplifying brevity: its assimilation of sonic material traditionally rejected as “noise”; the extent to which Deleuze’s ideas apply to all music or, alternatively, to particular “minoritarian” repertoires evading genres and canons; as well as a political critique of Boulez’s post-1951 serialist technique and its implied nomination by Deleuze and Guattari as exemplary. Attention in the following chapters is directed, broadly speaking, towards the philosophical origins of Deleuze’s project, which are traced in Nietzsche, Bergson and, in terms of emphasis in the volume, especially Spinoza. But it is probably the final five essays that may most appeal to practicing musicians and “analysts,” as they most