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Newe deutsche Lieder (review)

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REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Johannes Eccard, *Neue deutsche Lieder*, ed. Magen Solomon. Recent Researches in the Music of the Renaissance, 134. A–R Editions, Middleton, Wis., 2002, \$70. ISBN 0-89579-445-4.)

As Magen Solomon explains in her introduction, the secular music of the German composer Johannes Eccard (1553–1611) has been neglected by modern publishers and performers in comparison with his sacred works, which were hailed in nineteenth-century Germany as representing the Protestant answer to Palestrina. The present edition contains the set of twenty-four settings of German texts for four or five voices (twelve of each) published in five partbooks at Mühlhausen in 1578; most have never been reprinted since then.

Solomon's introduction includes a short but useful history of the German Renaissance secular lied (she uses the term 'partsong'), a biography of Eccard, with an account of his works and special mention of the influence on him of Lassus, and a review of the output of Eccard's contemporaries Leonhard Lechner, Ivo de Vento, and Jacob Regnart. She explains that the texts come from older sources, previously set by a number of composers, and describes them as exploring 'a wide range of moods and subjects': two are sacred, others are 'quasi-religious contemplations on the nature of the world', and the remainder 'tell stories alternately celebrating and bemoaning the qualities and effects of both wine and women'. With only two exceptions (a setting of *Christ ist erstanden* and the final (partly obscene) quodlibet, *Ein Guckguck wolt ausfliegen*), the melodic material is original; Eccard's 'structural building blocks are the individual text phrases', in which the motifs invented by him for each phrase are employed 'in ever-varying homophonic or polyphonic configurations'. The use of word-painting is relatively restrained, especially in pieces with serious texts, but Solomon points out a few examples.

The edition is presented in two sections: texts and translations, and the lieder themselves in open score without keyboard reduction. Four plates are provided: the title page, dedication (also transcribed and translated), and table of contents from the Tenor partbook; and the first

page of music from the Discantus partbook. The three-page critical report that concludes the volume summarizes details about the source and the editorial methods used, and includes brief 'critical notes' on many of the songs.

Solomon explains the editorial methods used for the texts and translations both in the critical report and in a prefatory note to the section itself. The texts are presented in their simplest possible form so as to show metric and rhyme schemes, with line breaks but without punctuation. The erratic spelling is in general reproduced as in the source, except that when it is inconsistent within a single song, the most often encountered version is used throughout that work. The editor's argument—'since the text sources for the collection are varied and frequently unidentifiable, by retaining idiosyncratic spellings future identification of region or dialect may be facilitated'—suggests, however, that it might have been worthwhile to retain all the variants. Line-by-line English translations are provided beside the German texts; these are fairly literal and generally good renditions of what are in many cases very difficult texts. Only one actual wrong translation leaps from the page: at the end of no. 12, *Ein Verrehter und ein Suppenfresser*, the lines 'Hüt euch vor solchen schedlichen Katzen / Die vornen lecken und hinden kratzen' should certainly be translated 'Protect yourself from such dangerous cats, who lick in front and scratch at the back' (rather than 'who lick the front and scratch the back'). Comments following a number of the texts describe textual variants in settings by other sixteenth-century composers; no attempt is made to provide sources for the texts or complete concordances.

The editorial methods used in transcribing the music are in most respects admirably straightforward. Time signatures, rhythmic values, pitches, and text underlay are reproduced exactly as they appear in the partbooks (a few corrections of obvious errors are detailed in the critical notes), along with such conveniences as modern clefs and bar lines (a sensible 4/2). Since only a single plate that shows original notation is provided, it is not possible to check implementation of all the editorial principles described (although one can see that

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 *Calena 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