

## “Oderiferous Oyls Balsams and Spirits”: Music and the Material Culture of Monarchy in Handel’s London

*Peter Kobanski*

In May of 2023, I traveled to London to research eighteenth-century British royal events that featured music by George Frideric Handel. The timing was auspicious. Two weeks before my arrival, Charles III was crowned King of the United Kingdom in Westminster Abbey. The coronation, along with the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II some months earlier, left royal music—William Croft’s funeral sentences and Handel’s coronation anthems—and ceremony—sparkling jewels or glimmering cloth of gold—imprinted on my mind as I began research at the National Archives (TNA). I was immediately struck by a similar material record of King George II’s coronation in 1727 and the funeral of his wife, Queen Caroline, in 1737. Caroline’s death prompted a material change in the royal household, which entered a period of mourning. Palace interiors were draped in black cloth. All members of the household—down to the lowliest servant like Mrs. Elizabeth Stubbs, the rat killer—received black mourning livery. Finally, documents from the Privy Council registers and the Lord Chamberlain’s office detail the material necessities for the funeral: white satin to line the queen’s coffin or a black velvet bag with silk strings and tassels for the king’s crown.<sup>1</sup>

In its material lavishness, Caroline’s funeral was unremarkable among eighteenth-century royal events. At coronations, funerals, and weddings, the government adorned people, spaces, and objects with imported fabrics or precious stones. Despite its extensive documentation, musicologists have only mentioned this material culture in passing while presenting otherwise comprehensive histories of Handel’s large-scale anthems.<sup>2</sup> However, a reconstruction of their material

context reveals that these pieces were sonic analogues to the sight, smell, and feel of material objects. Handel’s music expressed the ideals of mourning or sacral kingly power precisely because it was fused to various articles the royal family felt, smelled, or saw. This article outlines these relationships at George’s coronation and Caroline’s funeral. Centering material culture in histories of Handel’s royal music not only illuminates the royal family’s listening experiences but also elucidates the material origins of canonicity in the eighteenth century.

The early Hanoverians—George I and George II—exhibited a complex relationship with sacral monarchy. Hannah Smith paints a picture of frugal men who gave little thought to top-down artistic representation. Nevertheless, they embraced spectacle when called for by “events of dynastic significance.”<sup>3</sup> George II had numerous such opportunities during his reign. In addition to his coronation, he celebrated the marriages of Princesses Anne and Mary and Frederick, Prince of Wales.<sup>4</sup> These events suggest that he embraced sacral kingship more enthusiastically than his father, George I, who discontinued ceremonies that emphasized the monarch’s sacralty: the royal levee, the royal touch to heal scrofula, and the Royal Maundy.

In any case, the Hanoverian court remained a lively social venue and a legitimate political forum.<sup>5</sup> And despite its lack of an official representative agenda, it was not dull. Swiss traveler César-François de Saussure observed George I’s apartments at St. James’s Palace in 1725 and wrote of luxurious furnishings like beds, chairs, and canopies of crimson and purple velvet, all embroidered and braided with gold and silver. The king’s guard, clad



*King George II in coronation robes,  
by Charles Jervas,  
National Portrait Gallery, London*

3. Hannah Smith, *Georgian Monarchy: Politics and Culture, 1714–1760*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 102.

4. Not incidentally, Handel composed an anthem for each marriage. Burrows, *English Chapel Royal*, chapters 12 and 13. Based on my archival research, Princess Anne’s marriage to William IV, Prince of Orange in 1733 displayed the most extravagant material culture.

5. Smith, *Georgian Monarchy*, 194–195. Musicological research, which emphasizes the English public’s dominant role in artistic production and elite sociability, has not fully reckoned with the implications of Smith’s argument.

*continued on page 10*

1. Records of Special Events, Funeral: Queen Caroline, The National Archives of the United Kingdom, Lord Chamberlain (LC) 2/24, no. 13.

2. Donald Burrows, *Handel and the English Chapel Royal*, Oxford Studies in British Church Music (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Matthias Range, *Music and Ceremonial at British Coronations: From James I to Elizabeth II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); *British Royal and State Funerals: Music and Ceremonial since Elizabeth I* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016).

## From the Editor

Michael Vincent

The SECM Newsletter is published twice yearly, in Fall and Spring. Submissions in the following categories are encouraged:

- Original research articles;
- News of recent accomplishments from members of the society (publications, presentations, awards, performances, promotions, etc.);
- Reviews of performances of 18th-century music;
- Reviews of books, editions, or recordings of 18th-century music;
- Conference reports;
- Dissertations in progress on 18th-century music;
- Upcoming conferences and meetings;
- Calls for papers and manuscripts;
- Research reports and research resources;
- Grant opportunities.

Contributions should be submitted as an attachment to an e-mail message (preferably in Microsoft Word format) to the SECM Newsletter editor (michael.vincent@unf.edu). Submissions must be received by September 1 for the Fall issue and by March 1 for the Spring issue. Annotated discographies (in the format given in the inaugural issue, October 2002) will also be accepted and will be posted on the SECM web site.

### SECM Officers

Drew Edward Davies, President (2023–25);  
Kimary Fick, Vice President (2024–26);  
Evan Cortens, Secretary-Treasurer (2023–25)

### SECM Board of Directors

Ashley Greathouse (2024–26), Emily Green (2023–25),  
Danielle Kuntz (2023–25), Erica Levenson (2023–25),  
Catherine Mayes (2024–26),  
Olga Sánchez-Kisielewska (2024–26)  
*Student representative* Peter Kohanski (2024)  
*ex-officio* Mark W. Knoll, Michael Vincent

### SECM Honorary Members

† Eugene K. Wolf (2002), † Daniel Hertz (2003),  
† H. C. Robbins Landon (2004), Malcolm Bilson (2005),  
Bathia Churgin (2009), Sterling E. Murray (2016),  
† Paul R. Bryan (2017), Mary Sue Morrow (2018),  
Neal Zaslaw (2020)



### New Members

Dora Dong, Sarah Miller

## President's Message

Drew Edward Davies

The focus of an organization such as SECM should not be the entity itself, but rather its members, who bring knowledge, skills, and effort to a community based upon shared interests. Today, SECM counts not only on the largest membership in its history, but more importantly on an active membership of scholars engaged in fruitful collaborative projects.

In this spirit, I encourage members to consider participating in the newly launched Academic and Peer Support Program, which is an opportunity for building intergenerational and peer connections among those involved with eighteenth-century music. For students, this offers an opportunity for mentorship and networking supplemental to degree programs that is focused specifically on helping shape intellectual pathways into eighteenth-century studies. Equally, early career scholars, musicians engaged in period performance, and others looking for feedback or advice may also be able to connect through the program to help navigate an ongoing professional journey. Information about the program can be found at <https://secm.org/mentoring.html>. In addition to participating yourself, please let others know who could potentially benefit from or contribute to the program.

The articles in this issue of the Newsletter feature some of the new research members are engaged in, and I am especially excited when historical research leads to professional collaboration in the way that Vanessa Tonelli discusses in her essay on the modern premiere of Maria Margherita Grimani's oratorio *La decollazione di San Giovanni Battista*. It is my hope that connections formed or nurtured in SECM can lead to more successes such as this, and the new Academic and Peer Support Program may be one avenue to foster that.

I hope to see many of you at AMS in November!



### Fall 2024 Member News

**Bertil van Boer** and **Alan Swanson** have edited the book *Essays in Swedish Culture during the 18th Century*, published by Cambridge Scholars Press.

**Alyson McLamore** and **Barnaby Priest** announce the publication of *The Periodical Overtures in 8 Parts*, originally published in London by Robert Bremner and John Preston between 1763 and 1783. Musikproduktion Höflich began issuing the modern editions in March 2024 and plan to release them on a monthly basis (December excepted), which matches Bremner's initial plan for his series. Five of the sixty-one symphonies have been published so far, and the sixth is in press to be released soon. More information about the project can be found on the publisher's website: <https://repertoire-explorer.musikmph.de/en/periodical-overtures-details/>

**Guido Olivieri's** book *String Virtuosi in Eighteenth-Century Naples. Culture, Power, and Music Institutions* has been published by Cambridge University Press (January 2024). His article "Naples at a Crossroads: Transformations in Neapolitan Music at the Turn of the Seventeenth Century" has appeared in the volume *Transitions in Mid-Baroque Music*, ed. C. Churnside (Boydell and Brewer, 2024).

Olivieri has presented papers at the 22nd International Conference of the Association RIdIM (*Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale*) in Seoul (Korea), at the conference *Cantieri. Tra prassi esecutiva e storia*, organized by Fondazione Turchini, Naples (Nov. 2023), and at the conference *La rappresentazione degli ambienti sonori. Problemi metodologici e storiografici* at the University of Naples "Federico II" (April 2024). He has also taught doctoral seminars at the University of Rome "La Sapienza." Together with the research group *Arcomelo*, he was among the organizers of the international conference *Giuseppe Torelli e la musica del suo tempo a Bologna* (Bologna, September 2023). The CD *Le virtuose fatiche: Francesco Paolo Supriani's complete works for cello* (Da Vinci Classics) has been based on a collaboration with the ensemble "Les Amies Partimentistes" and includes Olivieri's liner notes. In 2024 interviews featuring his work include the podcast *The Nikhil Hogan Show* and RAI Channel3 (Italian National Public Broadcast). He has been elected a member of the AMS Council.



## Announcements

The virtual forum *Encounters with Eighteenth-Century Music* returns on October 1<sup>st</sup> with the panel "Maria Theresia Paradis, Blind Musicians, and Musical Culture before and after Braille." Other topics of the 2024–2025 season will include the reception of Western music in China, Mozart the performer, the analysis of opera seria, and a celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ruth Smith's *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*. To find more information and register for these events, please visit <https://encounters.secm.org>.

SECM is thrilled to announce the launch of an Academic Mentoring and Peer Support Program to provide assistance to student/early career members of the Society as they pursue professional development activities, engage in scholarly exchange, and build a peer network in the field of eighteenth-century music studies. Please watch your email for more information about the 2024–2025 program and consider participating either as a mentor or mentee!



## 2023–2024 SECM Financial Report

*Evan Cortens, Secretary-Treasurer*

The Society finished the 2023/24 fiscal year with \$1,989.29 net revenue over expenses (compared to \$953.85 for the previous year). The financial position of the Society continues to be healthy, with \$29,241.34 in total assets as at June 30, 2024 (compared to \$27,252.05 for the previous year.) Membership numbers are stable remaining at 123 members, the high point we reached last year. Detailed financial statements for the Society are available on our website at: <https://secm.org/misc/2023-24-financials.pdf>

## Call for Abstracts

Special issue "Seeing Bach: Visual Responses and Reimaginings" co-edited by Christina Fuhrmann and Erinn E. Knyt

*BACH: Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute* announces a special issue in September 2026 on the ways in which Bach and his music have been represented visually. The only extant visual records of Bach are portraits, autograph manuscript scores and letters, and contemporary publications, but Bach has been "seen" in multiple ways. Connections have been drawn between his music and art and architecture, both of his time and later, as in Douglas R. Hofstadter's *Gödel, Escher, Bach* (1979). Bach has been memorialized in statues, museums, and 3D reconstructions. Numerous visual artists have created works inspired by Bach in a variety of media, including Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, and Hans Richter. Multimedia presentations often accompany concerts of his works. Visualizations have also been used to explain and analyze Bach's works, from Schenkerian graphs to YouTube videos. While Bach has often been studied solely in terms of abstract sound, there are multiple ways of "seeing" Bach.

We invite scholars of music, art, architecture, and multimedia to submit abstracts that explore the myriad ways in which Bach's music has been "seen." Articles might explore questions such as the following, although this list is not comprehensive:

- What has made so many artists feel that Bach's music is conducive to visual representation?
- How have visual artists responded to Bach's music? How do their works enhance, obscure, or offer a new understanding of Bach?
- What are specific ways artists have theorized about connections between Bach's pieces and color, visual rhythm, or structure?
- What comparisons can be made between Bach's music and art and architecture, whether of his own time or later?
- How has Bach been represented in portraits, statues, museums, or websites? What do these representations reveal about both Bach and his reception?
- What can we learn from the study of the visual aspects of Bach's scores (autograph, manuscript, printed, and/or annotated)?
- What role have visualizations played in musical analyses of Bach?
- How have visual elements been utilized pedagogically to increase understanding of Bach's music, whether in the classroom or in public musicology and theory?
- How have visual interpretations contributed to Bach reception, helping Bach speak to a new generation and/or respond to social issues of the day?

Please send an abstract of ca. 500 words and a bio to [bachjournal@bw.edu](mailto:bachjournal@bw.edu) by 15 January 2025. Authors of accepted abstracts will be expected to complete their articles by February 2026. Completed articles should be between 7000 and 12,000 words.



## Maria Margherita Grimani's *La decollazione di San Giovanni Battista* from Manuscript to Stage

Vanessa Tonelli

After over 300 years of obscurity, *La decollazione di San Giovanni Battista*, an oratorio by little-known composer Maria Margherita Grimani, has been performed once again. Chicago's Haymarket Opera Company, during their 2023–2024 season, offered a compelling revival informed by the original 1715 score, which is today preserved at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.<sup>1</sup> While engraving and editing this manuscript for the historically-informed ensemble, I have come to believe a full performance and study of this piece was long overdue.

The examination presented here aims to draw attention to Grimani's *La decollazione* as another fascinating contribution to the larger history of eighteenth-century music for the Austrian imperial court, as well as to highlight particular elements that can appeal to modern audiences. Most significantly, Maria Margherita Grimani's works contain the potential to reveal details about women and their roles in Viennese circles, while this particular oratorio offers an alternative musical setting of a well-known biblical story. Grimani composed a work about Salome asking for the head of John the Baptist that is distinct from many of the other more well-known depictions, as she was a woman composer cognizant of her social positioning in the eighteenth century.

As previous research by Barbara Garvey Jackson has shown, Maria Margherita Grimani was the last of a line of women who composed oratorios and other semi-dramatic works for the Viennese court during the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> *La decollazione*, therefore, was not exactly unique to those who heard its premiere, but part of a decades-long tradition of creative women serving musical and religious needs of Vienna and the imperial court. The most known of these composers is Maria Anna von Raschenau (d. 1714), who served as a *Chormeisterin* of St. Jakob auf der Hüllben and composed oratorios for feast days when the imperial family attended this convent. Three other known composers—Camilla de Rossi, Caterina Benedicta Grazianini, and, of course, Maria Margherita Grimani—followed with their own musical offerings. Unlike Raschenau, however, little has come to light about how the Italian-named women received training or came into imperial service.<sup>3</sup>

Raschenau grew up as a daughter of court employees, received royal stipends for her education, and took vows around 1674, but to my knowledge Rossi, Grazianini, and Grimani left no clear records of either imperial employment or religious commitment. It seems most likely, at least, that each had personal connections among courtiers or court employees, since we know their oratorios and other dramatic works premiered in the *Hofkapelle* and Habsburg residencies, not in local convents.<sup>4</sup> Grimani in particular



Cesare da Sesto, *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*  
(ca. 1512–1516)

shared a surname with a notable Venetian aristocratic line, but the connection between our composer and this family has yet to be confirmed.<sup>5</sup> All told, she only left us three works: one *diagolo* for the name day of Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI *Pallade e Marte* (1713), an oratorio *La visitazione di Elisabetta* (premiered in 1713 and repeated in 1718), and finally *La decollazione di San Giovanni Battista* (1715).<sup>6</sup> Grimani's obsequious dedication in the score of

5. Pietro Grimani, Venetian aristocrat and later doge, who negotiated alliance between Venice and Charles VI in 1713 against the Turks, is a logical path to pursue. The overlapping time period of her compositions with these negotiations is indeed interesting to note.

6. Various numbers from these three works have been previously published by Barbara Garvey Jackson: "Maria Margherita Grimani: Sinfonia from *Pallade e Marte*, opus dramaticum," in James R. Briscoe, *New Historical Anthology of Music by Women* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 2004), pp. 99–106; *Arias from Oratorios by women composers of the eighteenth century: Five Arias for Alto Voice by Camilla de Rossi and Maria Margherita Grimani*. Vol. 7. (ClarNar Editions: Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1999); *Sinfonia from La Decollazione di S. Giovanni Battista, 1715* (Editions ARS FEMINA: Kentucky, 1991). A full edition of *Pallade e Marte* is also now available: Dennis J. Gotkowski, "Maria Margherita Grimani's *Pallade e Marte*:

1. ÖNB, Musiksammlung, Mus.Hs.17666

2. Barbara Garvey Jackson, "Maria Margherita Grimani (fl. 1713–1718)," in Sylvia Glickman and Martha Furman Schleifer, eds. *Women Composers: Music through the Ages* Vol. 2 (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1996), pp. 366–381.

3. Egon Wellesz, "Die Opern und Oratorien in Wien 1660–1708," *Studien zur Musikwissenschaft* 6 (Breitkopf & Haertel, 1919), 5–138.

4. Barbara Garvey Jackson, "Oratorios by Command of the Emperor: the Music of Camilla de Rossi," *Current Musicology* 42 (1986), 7–19.

*Pallade e Marte* notably contains her signature from Bologna, so further research in that Italian city may reveal more.<sup>7</sup>

While it is not surprising to discover Italians composing for the Viennese in the eighteenth century, women's contribution to this work is also fitting for the time and place. During the short five-year period that Grimani set music for Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI and his family, the court was truly attentive to women's roles in the future of the empire. The governing Habsburg family had failed to birth any new sons to inherit the throne. Thus, Joseph I's young daughters Maria Josepha (b. 1699) and Maria Amalia (b. 1701) stood as heirs presumptive to the childless Charles VI.<sup>8</sup> Plagued with the memory of the War of the Spanish Succession, an obsession with securing these women's right to rule beset Charles VI.

In fact, two years after his elder brother had passed away in 1711, the same year that Grimani composed her first two extant works, Charles VI issued the Pragmatic Sanction, which declared that the Habsburg realms could be inherited by a daughter undivided. He negotiated with surrounding rulers for decades to support this sanction.<sup>9</sup> The arts assuredly had a role to play in securing this political work. Why not publicly bolster the message of women's power in court, as well as provide for the necessary social and educational needs of these noble girls, by creating appropriate dramatic musical works about and by women?

On closer examination of Grimani and the others who came before her, it is clear they catered to the tastes of Austrian nobility, including in their compositions conservative musical styles, deep religiosity, and general themes that celebrated the Habsburg family. Grimani's musical writing contains short overtures for four-part orchestra, as well as straightforward *da capo* arias and *recitativo secco* comparative to her Austrian and Italian contemporaries. Occasionally, an aria might also feature *obbligato* wind instruments for color and dramatic affect. *La decollazione*, for instance, calls for oboe in two numbers: one aria for the character Salome, as well as the final aria for John the Baptist. In Haymarket Opera Company's rendition, they chose to expand this role for a modern performer, allowing the oboist to double the first violins in a few numbers. Additionally, their ensemble included a bassoonist in the *basso continuo*, which tastefully balanced and augmented the orchestral timbre. Like much music of that period, Grimani's writing can easily be adjusted to the faculties of a historically-informed ensemble.

Beyond catering to the conservative and Italianate tastes of Austrians, Grimani and the others also demonstrated a persistent focus on female characterization. Their most popular topics were biblical and hagiographic stories about women, especially Saint Teresa and the Virgin Mary. These religious narratives were easily

molded to the cultural interests of the Viennese. Grazianini, for instance, composed music on a tale of 4th-century Bishop of Modena Saint Geminianus. Rather than focusing on Geminianus's more well-known intercession to save the Modenese from the Huns, this setting depicted how he exorcized a demon from the daughter of Byzantine emperor Jovian. The choice to focus on an Italian saint recognized both Italian commitment to the emperor and Viennese appreciation in return, while also highlighting the significance of the daughter within their religious devotion.

Celebrating military victories of the Viennese was also a common theme. On commission from Holy Roman Emperor Joseph I, for example, Rossi composed the oratorio *Santa Beatrice d'Este* (1707), which represented both a woman's devotion to God and her power to withstand the pressures of an enemy's approaching military invasion. Similarly, Grimani's first two works—*Pallade e Marte* and *La visitazione di Elisabetta*—both celebrated Charles VI's martial successes.<sup>10</sup>

It is not difficult therefore to find Grimani's *La decollazione* linked to imperial interests as well. The ancient court of King Herod Antipas, for example, easily parallels that of the Austrian Habsburg monarchy. It contains no less than four separate *da capo* arias that praise and celebrate a blameless King Herod on his birthday, thus honoring the virtue of the local sovereign in religious allegory.

Additionally, her setting highlights Habsburg religious conservatism by remaining faithful to the fundamental messaging of the biblical text. Her music centralizes the holiness of John the Baptist over any other character. Originally composed for an unnamed castrato voice, Grimani's musical lines for the saint feature long sections *senza basso*; the alto voice floats among upper strings, untethered from earthly desire.

Among the musical numbers for John the Baptist, the most notable is his final aria, the last number in the entire oratorio. Its pastoral rhythms emphasize his innocence and serenity, and the *obbligato* oboe uplifts the blissful melody. When I heard this aria performed live by soloist Fleur Barron and Haymarket Opera Company, I understood why Grimani chose to let her oratorio trail off upon the pensive thoughts of the martyr. The audience never sees or hears his beheading. Instead, we are left to ponder as the aria imparts deep religious sincerity and holy sacrifice. The final moments of Grimani's music, with Barron's nuanced approach to John the Baptist's acceptance of his martyrdom, left me and others in the audience with tears in our eyes.

Grimani's characterization of Salome, on the other hand, contrasts markedly from representations that may be more familiar to modern scholars and audiences. The eighteenth-century imperial court required depictions of young women that were appropriate for their empire, and Grimani's version reflects just that. In *La decollazione di San Giovanni Battista*, Salome only dances on request, out of obedience to King Herod. She then respectfully declines his offers of gifts in recitative, mentioning how terrible it would be for his kingdom to be split in half for her benefit (perhaps a subtle reference to Charles VI's Pragmatic Sanction), until finally she humbly asks for John's head. Even the aria Grimani composed

---

An Edition with Commentary," DMA Thesis (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2017).

7. Dedication in ÖNB, Musiksammlung, Mus. Hs. 17741 (1713), p. i.

8. His first child Maria Theresa was born in May 1717. For details of the Pragmatic Sanction and the Habsburg rulers during this time, see Charles W. Ingrao, *The Habsburg monarchy, 1618–1815* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 129.

9. Charles VI never had a son that survived past infancy. His spouse Empress Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel had one son Leopold Johann who died at seven months. She and her three daughters (b. 1717, 1718, and 1724) must have employed musical women in their entourages.

---

10. Suzanne G. Cusick and Rudolf Klein, "Grimani, Maria Margherita," in Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel, eds., *The Norton / Grove Dictionary of Women Composers* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995), 198.

for Salome's dance—rendered well in Haymarket's performance by soprano Kristin Knutson Berka—is very tame: a simple strophic song with unison violins. Grimani's setting offers demure respect towards the king rather than anything that could seem enticing, persuasive, or dangerous. This musically and narratively leaves Salome's power reliant on the beneficence of the sovereign man before her.

This depiction of Salome is important to consider among the long history of artists who have been inspired by the biblical story of John the Baptist's beheading.<sup>11</sup> It is the only known Salome of the early modern era to have been designed by a woman. Plus, it contrasts dramatically to the most well-known Baroque musical setting on the same narrative: Alessandro Stradella's oratorio *San Giovanni Battista* (1676). Stradella, for instance, echoes social anxieties of women's seductive power that were common in contemporaneous visual representations of Salome.<sup>12</sup> Particularly, in his aria "Queste lacrime e sospiri", for Salome, he features lamentations and characteristic dissonant suspensions, the "feminine tears" that guile and manipulate King Herod into granting her gruesome desire. Stradella's Salome is just another erotic and "dangerous" woman as depicted from the male gaze.

Grimani, on the other hand, was a woman connected to Viennese courtly circles. She could not let the blame for the beheading of John the Baptist rest with a young noble girl. Instead, following the original biblical text, the dangerous woman appears in the mother Herodias. Salome remains a desexualized and appropriate young lady. In performance, Haymarket's Erica Schuller vividly portrayed this mother's scorn and cruel delight at the sentencing of John the Baptist. Any other ensemble would do well to emulate Haymarket Opera Company's choice of such a powerful vocalist. Schuller expertly underscored Grimani's musical distinctions between the innocent and tender daughter and this spiteful mother.<sup>13</sup> The mother Herodias represents a foreign danger inserting itself into the virtuous court, while Salome represents the increasingly expected gracious young lady.

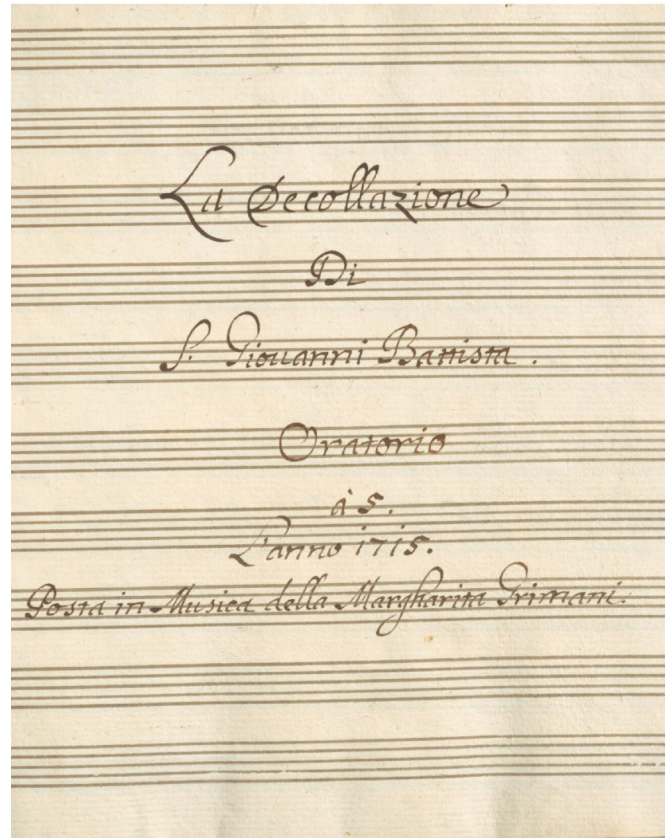
It is my opinion that Grimani's Salome resembled an idealized woman of eighteenth-century courtly life. Grimani perhaps even saw this woman in herself: a dutiful woman who had need of favors from a powerful ruler. As Grimani herself wrote in her dedication to Emperor Charles VI, "There is no cultured individual today who is not deeply moved by the desire to appear at the foot of the high throne of Your Caesarean Majesties with some tribute of their own

talent."<sup>14</sup> Just as Salome dutifully and humbly performed her arts to earn a favor of her king, Grimani also dedicated her musical compositions to the sovereign whom she served. Now, through Haymarket Opera Company's recent performance, Grimani also received her own desire, even if well past her time: she has distinguished herself through her humble offering.<sup>15</sup>

Details of Haymarket Opera Company's Performance:  
March 22, 2024  
Gannon Concert Hall  
Chicago, IL

Artistic Director:  
Craig Trompeter

Dramatis Personae:  
Herod: Christian Pursell, bass-baritone  
Herodias: Erica Schuller, soprano  
John the Baptist: Fleur Barron, alto  
Salome: Kristin Knutson Berka, soprano  
Herod's Confidant: Eric Ferring, tenor



Grimani, *La decollazione di San Giovanni Battista*, detail

11. Regina Janes, *Losing Our Heads: Beheadings in Literature and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 97–137.

12. Most notably, Caravaggio's *chiaroscuro* painting of *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist* (c. 1610) and Rubens's *The head of Saint John the Baptist presented to Salome* (c. 1609). For a painting created closer in time to Grimani's composition, consider Tiepolo's *The Beheading of John the Baptist* (1732–1733). A few painted representations of Salome were also kept in Vienna during the eighteenth century, such as *Salome* (c. 1501) by Cesare da Sesto and *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist* by Bernardino Luini (1527), which was displayed in the Imperial Gallery in Vienna until 1773.

13. I am grateful to Regina Janes for her suggestions and help while thinking through this representation of Salome. Ibid., "Over-sexing Herodias," Paper presentation, *American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies Conference* (Montreal, 2006).

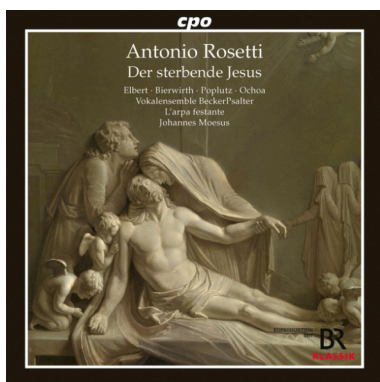
14. Dedication in Maria Margherita Grimani, *Pallade e Marte* (1715) ÖNB, Musiksammlung, Mus. Hs. 17741, p. i. "Non si ha letterato oggi-giorno, cui non resti altamente impressa la brama di comparire a piè dell'alto Soglio delle M.V.C. con qualche Tirbuto del proprio talento.

15. Ibid. "questa mia umile Offerta ... di poter contrassegnarmi per essa."

## Recording Review

Antonio Rosetti. *Der sterbende Jesus*, Anna-Lena Elbert, soprano; Anne Bierwirth, alto; Georg Poplutz, tenor; Daniel Ochoa, bass; Vokalensemble BeckerPsalter (Director Andreas Becker), L'arpa festante, conducted by Johannes Moesus. cpro 555 567-2

Sterling E. Murray



Our present body of eighteenth-century music is continually being enriched with the discovery of works by previously unnoticed or unacknowledged composers. Exceptional among these discoveries is the music of Antonio Rosetti (1750–1792), whose symphonies, concertos, and wind partitas have captured the attention of today’s music buffs. The CD performance of Rosetti’s passion oratorio, *Der sterbende Jesus*, adds to the growing reputation of this talented composer’s works.

Born in Litoměřice, Bohemia, Rosetti spent most of his musical career in the *Hofkapelle* of Kraft Ernst (1748–1802), Prince of Oettingen-Wallerstein. Hired in 1773 as a servant-musician, he advanced quickly and by 1786 was named *Kapellmeister*. Unfortunately, Rosetti’s years at Wallerstein were plagued by financial burdens, and in 1789, after sixteen years of service to the Wallerstein family, he accepted the post of *Kapellmeister* to Friedrich Franz I (1756–1837), Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwein. After only three years in his new post, Rosetti died in Ludwigslust on June 30, 1792, at the age of forty-two.

Rosetti completed *Der sterbende Jesus* in March 1785, and the following year Artaria published the score bearing a dedication to Prince Kraft Ernst. This was Rosetti’s first large-scale choral work designed for the Wallerstein court, and its creation must have consumed a great deal of his time and effort. One might wonder what could have encouraged Rosetti to undertake such an exhaustive project. His diminishing purse may have had some influence on his decision. As was often the case, Rosetti was in need of money. He petitioned the prince to appoint him music director (*regens chori*) of the local parish church, anticipating that income from this position, added to his regular salary, would ease some of his financial worries. A major work such as *Der sterbende Jesus* might make an impression on the prince and persuade him to grant Rosetti’s request. Whatever the reason, this composition stands out among Rosetti’s other sacred music of this period as exceptionally ambitious and demanding.

The libretto for *Der sterbende Jesus* was the work of Carl Friedrich Bernhard Zinkernagel (1758–1813), Wallerstein court archivist. Neither an historical nor narrative retelling of the Passion of Christ, Zinkernagel’s text centered on the emotions and

reactions of four principal characters: Mary mother of Christ, John the Apostle, Joseph of Arimathea, and Jesus. The contemplative and expressive approach selected by Zinkernagel has its roots in the *Empfindsamer Stil*.

Zinkernagel’s text is laid out in three groups. The first (nos. 1–9), told largely from the perspective of John and Mary, follows the appearance of Jesus before Pilate, his journey to Golgatha (Calvary), and his crucifixion and death. Mary’s grief at the death of her son is the subject of the second section (nos. 10–15), and the final segment (nos. 16–23) introduces Joseph of Arimathea and focuses on the tomb of Jesus and the promise of resurrection.

Rosetti’s setting of *Der sterbende Jesus* is monumental in scope, with twenty-three movements comprising recitatives, choruses, arias, ariosos, a duet, fugue, and a score requiring a SATB chorus, four vocal soloists, and a substantial orchestra. Roughly half of these movements involve recitatives, all but three of which are *recitativo accompagnato*. Rosetti’s objective is to match recitatives with the emotional intensity of Zinkernagel’s text. In several instances, recitatives assume the character of small dramatic scenes. Jesus’s trial before Pilate (no. 2 “Wohin verfolgt die Unruh mich”) offers a good example. To achieve the intense affect of this passage Rosetti blends multiple changes of tempo, dynamics, and rhythm with a variety of recitative formats, slipping freely in and out of *secco* and *accompagnato* passages. Especially striking are the two interruptions of chorus and orchestra portraying the uncompromising crowd’s demands that Pilate crucify Jesus.

Accompanied recitatives are sometimes mixed with short arioso or aria-like passages. Such is the case with movement 4 where Jesus responds to his mother’s anguish in a slow and lyric arioso (no. 4 “Meine Mutter”). In a similar passage, Joseph’s grieving over the death of Jesus (no. 17 “Es ist gescheh’n!”) switches from recitative to an Adagio with strings (“Weine, königliche Blume”) extensive enough to be considered a short aria.

Although essential to the creation of this work, choruses posed a practical problem for Rosetti. Unlike many other court ensembles, the Wallerstein *Hofkapelle* did not include a compliment of trained vocalists. Singers for *Der sterbende Jesus* were recruited from among the orchestra, wives and daughters of court musicians, and members of the local church choir. Working against these practical constraints, Rosetti kept his choral parts simple, emphasizing homophonic textures and limited vocal ranges.

Throughout this work, choruses vary in musical form and presentation: the full ensemble’s expressive introduction (no. 1 “Er kommt zu bluten auf Golgatha”), the violent trembling of earth and the resurrection of the bodies of saints (no. 8 “Der Vorhang im Temple zerriss”), the persistence of nervous rhythmic ostinato (no. 14 “Selig sind von nun an alle”), and the joyous festive conclusion to the oratorio (no. 23 “Frohlockt! Der Fromme steht voll Zuversicht”). Three choruses (no. 5 “Preis und Dank!”, no. 19 “Zwischen Hoffnung, Angst und Beben,” and the first section of no. 8 “Fallet nieder und dankt!”) are chorale-like settings. Rosetti distinguishes these movements by reducing their accompaniment to winds alone. *Der sterbende Jesus* contains only one fugue, “Jesus Christus geht voran” (no. 16). Throughout this movement vocal parts were doubled by instruments in the orchestra, a plan that Rosetti probably chose to compensate for the complexity that may have been challenging for the Wallerstein chorus.

Unlike recitatives, arias concentrate on a single emotion. Among the four soloist, Mary (soprano) and John (tenor) possess

the leading roles. Both of Mary's arias (no. 10 "Wenn dann einst der Tränen müde" and no. 12 "Weh mir Armen!") are designed in da capo form. Rosetti's melodic gift is especially well displayed in "Wenn dann einst der Tränen." The duet shared between soprano and oboe obbligato in "Weh mir Armen!" is hauntingly beautiful and, for this reviewer, one of the captivating moments in this work. The tenor aria "So steigt nach Ungewittern" (no. 3) opens with a passage reminiscent of the extended introductions so commonly found in Rosetti's instrumental music. In general, this movement stands apart from the others, with technical demands that are by far the most exacting in the score. The bright C major tonality and festive instrumentation featuring trumpets and timpani are well matched to the joyful sentiments of Zinkernagel's text. Joseph and John's duet (no. 21 "Tief anbetend hier im Staube,") that reflect upon the meaning of Christ's sacrifice, reveal Rosetti at his best—a musical setting that is expressive without becoming maudlin. Jesus has a minimal role—dramatic and somewhat separated from the other figures.

Johannes Moesus has made the interpretation of Rosetti's music a specialty. *Der sterbende Jesus* is perhaps his greatest achievement within the large body of Rosetti's music. His production of *Der sterbende Jesus* draws on an outstanding group of musicians. The orchestra of *L'arpa festante* employs period instruments which create an authentic sound that greatly enhances the richness of Rosetti's music. The chorus consists of singers from BeckerPsalter's chamber choir, under artistic director Andreas Becker. The solo vocalists excel in their respective roles. Anna-Lena Elbert's bright and clear tone fits perfectly her role of Mary. The richness and expression of her voice is especially apparent in the duet with obbligato oboe. Georg Poplutz's performance as John revolves primarily around recitative passages, which he handles with ease, but it is in his single aria that we can fully appreciate the flexibility and control of his voice. Anne Bierwirth's rendering of Joseph of Arimathea produces a strong and rich musical quality that balances well when joined in her duet with Poplutz. Jesus, sung by bass Daniel Ochoa, appears only twice in this work—once in a recitative and then in a short arioso. Ochoa has done a fine job in handling these two passages—one requiring dramatic statement and the other a quiet repose.

The extensive and useful program notes by Günther Grunstedel are certain to add to one's listening enjoyment. Over the years, cpo (Classic Produktion Osnabrück) has provided excellent recordings of Rosetti's music, and the present disc offers no exception.

In short, this CD is first rate. Thanks to Moesus, the musicians, and the support of cpo, we now can add Rosetti's passion oratorio to the expanding repertory of splendid music by a composer who once was unknown.



## Book Review

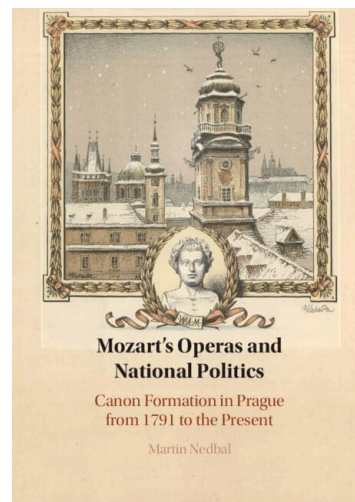
Martin Nedbal, *Mozart's Operas and National Politics: Canon Formation in Prague from 1791 to the Present*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

*John Mangum*

On a recent visit to Prague, I noticed that *The Marriage of Figaro* was on at the Estates Theater. It was the summer tourist season,

and one of the most popular operas in the repertoire seemed like a wise choice, one that would ensure full houses. There was a rightness about the choice for another reason. *Figaro*, of course, was one of the operas that marked a high point of Mozart's association with the city over the last decade of his life, a fruitful one that would produce three important works from that period, the "Prague" Symphony, *Don Giovanni*, and *La clemenza di Tito*.

Where Daniel Freeman has written authoritatively on Mozart's time in the city in his *Mozart in Prague* (2013, revised 2023), Martin Nedbal takes the story further in his *Mozart's Operas and National Politics: Canon Formation in Prague from 1791 to the Present*. Nedbal's fascinating study looks at how Mozart's works, specifically his operas with strong ties to the city (*Figaro*, *Giovanni*, *Zauberflöte*, and *Tito*, and, to a lesser extent, *Entführung*), served as vehicles by which competing groups in the city—Bohemians, Czechs, and German-Bohemians—could define themselves, gain cultural capital, and accrue political power. The tension between Prague, itself a multiethnic city, and Vienna, the capital of the even more ethnically disparate Austro-Hungarian Empire of which Bohemia was a part, adds another layer to the story Nedbal sets out to tell.



After a brief review of Mozart's relationship with Prague, starting with performances of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* in 1783, and a reminder that the composer spent only a few weeks there in total, Nedbal lays out the scope of his study and the lines of argument he plans to pursue. The book covers Mozart opera reception in Prague from Mozart's death to the present (2023). Nedbal takes performances during the composer's lifetime as a starting point to explore, he writes, "how and why these events and works came to be understood as defining for the cultural identity of Bohemia and its inhabitants in the subsequent two centuries."

The addition of Mozart's operas to the canon and early analyses that were foundational in forming perceptions about key works (for example, *Don Giovanni* as the progenitor of Romantic opera) often originated with the efforts of Prague-based commentators, foremost among them Mozart's first biographer, Franz Xaver Niemetschek. Nedbal offers this focus on Prague scholars and writers as a corrective to and expansion of other Mozart reception studies that rely on French, German, and anglophone sources.

The book is laid out in three parts. The first looks at questions of authenticity and ethnicity, specifically delving into the Bohemian origins of what 20th-century commentators would call *Werktreue*, originating with Niemetschek's praise for the high artis-



tic level and accuracy of Prague performances of *Figaro*. Mozart's operas would also be held up by critics and musicologists as conveyors of specific German and Czech-Bohemian ingredients, especially folk music. We learn about different versions of Mozart's operas that comprised the repertoire in the city during the 19th century, versions that rendered the works into Czech and German, with recitatives or dialog, and with various cuts and changes to the libretto in translation, resulting in shifting emphases that favored different national groups and political interests. At one point, the competing groups even fought over Niemetschek's identity. Nedbal also offers a detailed recounting of musical analysis that attempted to find traces of Czech folk music in Mozart's works, most convincingly in "Se vuol ballare" from *Figaro*, which bears a strong resemblance to a song Mozart could easily have overheard; less so in more sweeping studies after World War II, given that there is no documented proof that Mozart spent time in the countryside during his weeks in Prague.

In the second, Nedbal offers up the history of two monuments, one physical, the other, musical. The physical monument, Bertramka, where Mozart may or may not have stayed with the singer Josepha Duschek, who was its owner, and her husband, the composer Franz Xaver, in 1787 and 1791, gained its status as a rearguard action to protect Prague's preeminence as a site of Mozart pilgrimage with the rise of the Salzburg Festival. Nedbal's analysis convincingly reveals that Bertramka's association with Mozart was highly tenuous, stemming from an 1837 German novella and its Czech translation. The musical monument, *Tito*, is presented as an example of the tensions in Prague, with competing views of it as either a celebration of the Habsburgs or as an expression of Bohemian patriotism. Detailed analysis of differences between Italian, German, and Czech versions of *Tito*, again looking at cuts and changes to the libretto, reveal different political and national aspirations of the competing groups in the city.

The third part offers up two fascinating histories. The first traces the journey of a German-language version of *Don Giovanni*—*Don Juan*—created by Wenzel Mihule and premiered at the Patriotic Theater in Prague in 1790–1791. While the history of translations by Neeffe and Rochlitz are better known because they spread mostly along the Rhine and the Danube, Mihule's version illuminates the German theaters that thrived in Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, and Slovakia. The second history is that of *Die Zauberflöte* in Czech translation, starting with the publication of "A Collection of Songs Selected from the Magic Flute"—expected, given the work's popularity in Prague in its German version, but unique in that the collection was in Czech translation and marked an important milestone in early-modern poetry in the language. This was followed in short order by a Czech version by Wenzel Tham, performed at the Patriotic Theater in November 1794. *Die Zauberflöte* in Tham's translation became important for the Czechs, as opposed to the more cosmopolitan Bohemians, providing an entry point for Nedbal's analysis of the tensions between the two groups.

Nedbal ends with an examination of a source I was hoping he would tackle, given its iconic cultural status and its director's Czech origins: Miloš Forman's 1984 film *Amadeus*. He points out that the film was shot mainly in Prague and Kroměříž, and that it won eight Oscars, including several for its Czech creative team. It was and is, in a very real sense, a perfect culmination of the strains of national identity running through the story Nedbal tells, the true Czech monument to the outsize impact of Mozart and his three weeks in Prague.

## Musicians of the Old Post Road: The 36th Season

Two-time winner of the Noah Greenberg Award, Musicians of the Old Post Road continues its legacy of innovative programming with *Flights of Fancy*, a season celebrating creativity from a broad array of musical minds in four programs that blend musical "rediscoveries" with beloved 18th-century works. Concerts are again offered in-person and live-streamed.

The season-opening program, *Risky Business*, focuses on incredible innovations of early and late Baroque German composers. Earlier works include a trio sonata by Buxtehude and a violin sonata by J.J. Walther. These pieces incorporate the *stylus fantasticus* that features free, rhapsodic episodes in frequent alternation with more metrical sections. These works are juxtaposed with equally exploratory works by late German Baroque composers, including trio sonatas by Janitsch and Graupner, a Kleinknecht flute sonata, and the likely modern-day premiere of a rediscovered quintet by C.H. Graun. October 26, 4pm, First Parish Sudbury; October 27, 4pm, Old South Church, Boston, & online.

The December program, *Christmas Far & Wide*, highlights 18th-century yuletide selections by Bach and Handel, along with rediscovered vocal and instrumental works from across Europe, New England, and Mexico. Of special interest will be the modern-day premiere of Graupner's Advent cantata *Siehe, der Herr kommt*. December 14, 4pm, Trinity Lutheran Church, Worcester & online; December 15, 4pm, Old South Church, Boston.

In March's *Tall Tales* program, the ensemble showcases musical storytelling in narrative Baroque works, including Vivaldi's *Night* concerto, Couperin's *Apotheosis of Corelli*, and Geminiani's *The Enchanted Forest*. The series concludes in May with *Through the Listening Glass* featuring Classical chamber music for Glass Armonica. The ethereal, otherworldly sound of this instrument combines with flute and strings in Mozart's *Adagio and Rondo* alongside exotic gems by Reichardt, Naumann, and early American composers. Glass Armonica virtuoso Dennis James joins for this season finale. More info at [www.oldpostroad.org](http://www.oldpostroad.org).



## Obituary

**Bill Weber**, Professor Emeritus of History at California State University, Long Beach, died suddenly on August 8. His books contribute much to our understanding of the development of public concert life: *Music and the Middle Class* (1975), *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England* (1992), *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste* (2008), and *Canonic Repertoires and the French Musical Press* (2021), and his many articles and essays published in journals and edited volumes are frequently cited. His original work on the social, economic, and political contexts of music developed into a focused inquiry into when and why certain musical works became classics while others faded away. Bill is survived by his wife, Professor Emerita Linda Clark, and two daughters, a grandson, and a son-in-law. His passing is a great loss to his many friends and colleagues in musicology faculties on both sides of the Atlantic and to his many grateful students.

in scarlet uniforms with gold lace, carried “small axes or halberds covered with crimson velvet, and ornamented with big silver-gilt nails.”<sup>6</sup> The household’s Great Wardrobe books have left a painstaking record of this culture (Figure 1). The Great Wardrobe furnished “Provisions for Coronations, Marriages and Funerals of the Royal Family” and provided “the Court with Beds, Hangings, Clothes of Estate, Carpets, and other Necessaries.”<sup>7</sup> Each account presents these transactions year in and year out and the tradesmen and women of all types—mercers, tailors, lacemen, embroiderers, drapers, upholsterers, hosiers, milliners, glovers, carpenters, and joiners—who provided raw materials or labor, all of which amounted to unfathomable sums. From Michaelmas 1735 to Michaelmas 1736, for instance, the Great Wardrobe expended £25,866 4s 11¾d across all royal palaces.<sup>8</sup>

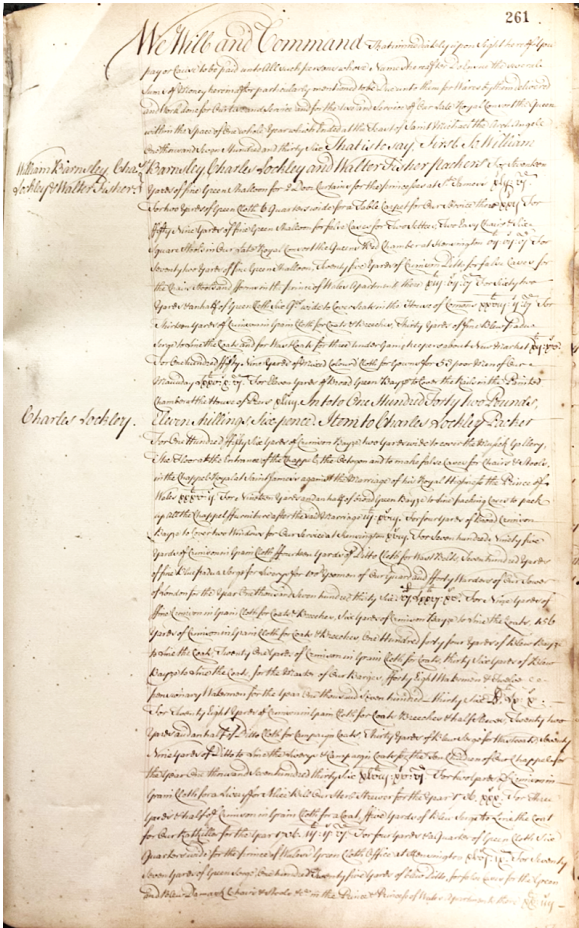


Figure 1. Great Wardrobe account for the 1735–36 period, (TNA LC 4/47). Courtesy of the National Archives

6. César-François de Saussure, *A Foreign View of England in the Reigns of George I and George II: The Letters of Monsieur César de Saussure to His Family*, trans./ed. Madame van Muyden (London: John Murray, 1902), 40, 42.

7. “Independent Sub-departments: Great Wardrobe 1660–1782,” in *Office-Holders in Modern Britain: Volume 11 (Revised), Court Officers, 1660–1837*, ed. R.O. Bucholz (London, 2006), British History Online, Accessed August 23, 2024, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/office-holders/vol11/pp146-156#s2>.

8. Great Wardrobe, Copies of Warrants, 1719–1737, TNA, LC 5/47.

Furthermore, occasional services required an increased expenditure. The household spent £40,109 1s 0d on the 1727 coronation, £24,611 15s 8d of which was allocated for jewels, crowns, and related fine metalware.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, musical expenditures amounted to a fraction of these totals. The labor of fifty-seven supernumerary musicians at the coronation cost only £215 6s 4d.<sup>10</sup> Music was not yet a product but a service.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, Handel’s four coronation anthems and the coronation’s material culture collaborated to transmit sacrally kingly power. I will consider two anthems here: *Zadok the Priest* at the anointing and *Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened* at the enthronement.<sup>12</sup>

The Master of the Great Wardrobe’s list of “particulars” for the coronation includes several items relevant to the anointing: a pall of “rich [Brocade] lined with [Mantuan] gold...and white silk trim’d with deep gold fringe” to cover the king; trousers, breeches, and stockings of crimson silk; “A Shirt of fine linnen laced for the Anointing[,] another of red Sarsnet...put over it, [and] a Surcoat of Crimson Sattin” (Figure 2).<sup>13</sup> The household further spent £206 on “a very large Composition of rich Essential Chymicall Odoriferous Oyls Balsams and Spirits, highly perfumed for the Anointing of his Sacred Majesty and the Queen at their Coronation.”<sup>14</sup> Listening to *Zadok*, then, George II was overwhelmed with the tactility of soft fabrics, the sight of fine textiles above him, and the fragrance of lush oil as William Wake, the Archbishop of Canterbury, anointed his body. These soothing tactile and olfactory sensations interfaced with the musical texture he heard: a dense double choir, exacting melismas, blaring trumpets, and timpani. Though less expensive, *Zadok* produced sonic extravagance and monumentality alongside material counterparts. Together, they corporealized the unseen, mystical endowment of sacrally kingly power.

A similar relationship took shape at the king’s enthronement. By then he was vested in kingly regalia: the *colobium sindonis*, made of Holland cloth; the supertunica and imperial mantle—“A pall...in the fashion of a cope”—both crafted with cloth of gold; and his crown. On August 18, the Lord Chamberlain instructed the Master of the Jewel Office, James Brudenell, to “cause all the Crowns, Scepters, Orb, and Circlett[s] which are to be made use of at the Coronation to be adorned with Jewels as at the last [coronation] for the king.”<sup>15</sup> Later, he ordered caps of purple velvet for the crowns.<sup>16</sup> Records also indicate the need for “a Sword with a Scab-

9. Jewel Office Warrant Books: Series I, TNA, LC 5/109, 442. The remaining goods cost £15,497 5s 4d. “An Account of the Expense of the Coronation of His Majesty King George the 2d. and Queen Caroline 1727,” Records of Special Events, Coronation: George II and Caroline, 1727, TNA, LC 2/22.

10. Burrows, *English Chapel Royal*, 610.

11. Rebecca Dowd Geoffroy-Schwinden, *From Servant to Savant: Musical Privilege, Property, and the French Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022).

12. The other two were *The King Shall Rejoice* at the recognition and *My Heart is Inditing* for Caroline’s coronation.

13. “An Account,” TNA, LC 2/22. The Master of the Great Wardrobe in 1727 was John Montagu, 2nd Duke of Montagu.

14. Treasurer of the Chamber Warrant Books, 1727–1732, TNA, LC 5/18, 7.

15. Jewel Office, TNA, LC 5/109, 418.

16. Jewel Office, TNA, LC 5/109, 425.

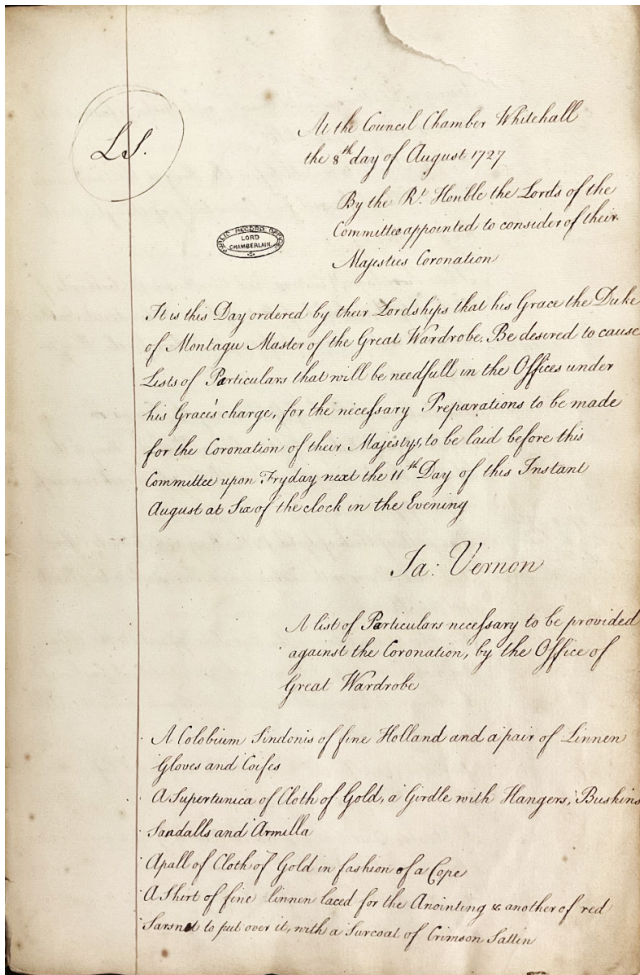


Figure 2. "A list of Particulars necessary to be provided against the Coronation, by the Office of Great Wardrobe." (TNA LC 2/22). Courtesy of the National Archives.

bard of purple Velvet for the King to be girt with."<sup>17</sup> Altogether, when George II was enthroned he was physically weighed down by the trappings of his office from his head to his shoulders, hands, and waist.

Handel, working from an unofficial order of service, intended *Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened* for the beginning of the service at the recognition.<sup>18</sup> He used only strings, oboes, and choir, omitting trumpets and timpani to heighten their impact in *Zadok*.<sup>19</sup> The actual performance order with *Let Thy Hand* at the enthroning ostensibly dampens his dramatic arc. However, the anthem, gentle and affirming, alleviated both the metaphorical weight of kingship and the physical weight of his office: vestments, a crown, scepters, and a sword. The anthem's text, derived from Psalm 89, bids God to "exalt" the king's right hand so that he may administer "justice,

judgment, mercy, and truth." His grasp on the scepters embodied the magnitude of his office and tangibly reminded him of these duties. Rather than heightening this pressure, *Let Thy Hand* emotionally encouraged him. Its reduced performing forces and lighter musical texture promised fortitude in the face of two heavy, inter-related burdens: one sacral and another embodied. Far from ruining a dramatic effect, the music affirmed the symbolic strength of his right hand if not his physical resolve to carry kingly emblems at the coronation.

At Queen Caroline's funeral in December 1737, mourning attire likewise shaped Princess Amelia's listening experience. Amelia, Caroline and George's second daughter, represented her father as the chief mourner. On December 5, the Privy Council issued guidelines for mourners' dress (Figure 3). They indicated that "The Chief Mourner be dressed in a Veil of black Crape containing from the Gathering of the Neck to the End of the Train Seven Yards in length." The actual veil "of the same Crape" was "to come to the Feet" from her head. Her train bearers and the late queen's Ladies of the Bedchamber similarly donned trains of six and five-and-a-half yards, respectively.<sup>20</sup>

The lengthy veils and trains draped over the women's bodies mimicked the expected embodied demeanors of mourning: drooping or weeping.<sup>21</sup> Handel's funeral anthem, *The Ways of Zion Do Mourn*, adds a musical dimension to the image of weeping, mourning bodies. The anthem is plaintive, especially in its repeated chorus, "How are the mighty fall'n," which signifies weeping, sighing, or wailing through severe dotted figures in a descending melodic pattern.<sup>22</sup> Music and materials reflected each other as audible and visual expressions of mourning.

In addition to this parallel, Princess Amelia's attire would have weighed on her as she listened. Even with attendants, she may have found it difficult to maneuver or sit comfortably in her voluminous dress. The weight and size of her mourning costume precipitated an awkward, if not downright miserable, listening experience. The fifty-minute anthem likely began around 9:30pm at the end of the three-hour funeral.<sup>23</sup> By the time it concluded, the princess—presumably physically and emotionally exhausted, weighed down by several yards of fabric, and stiff and immobile in her chair—would have acutely felt the loss of her mother. Despite what modern listeners might perceive as intricate, compelling music, Handel's anthem was taxing. Its length and position in the service, combined with Amelia's elaborate costume, articulated the funeral's emotional and physical burdens. This moment marked the culmination of a period when those very stresses were suitable, even natural, expressions of mourning.

The success of Handel's royal works effectively depended on other aesthetic, yet functional, objects and a brigade of merchants, artisans, and laborers who furnished them. Writing on the Stuart court, historian R. Malcolm Smuts critiques "a bias toward major art," namely portraiture or literature, that obscures "a visual expression of power" consisting of "gilt barges, embroidered cloths of

17. "An Account," TNA, LC 2/22.

18. Range, *British Coronations*, 137–139. Due to confusion at the coronation, some of the musicians must also have been using an earlier, not yet finalized order of service which had *Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened* first at the recognition. The Archbishop of Canterbury William Wake's finalized order of service placed *The King Shall Rejoice* first, so it is likely that different performers began both anthems at the same time.

19. Range, *British Coronations*, 140.

20. Privy Council (PC): Registers, October 1, 1736–September 4, 1738, TNA, PC 2/94, vol. 5, 324.

21. Phyllis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Costumes for Births, Marriages, and Deaths* (London: Black, 1972), 152.

22. Burrows, *English Chapel Royal*, 372–373.

23. Range, *Funerals*, 174.

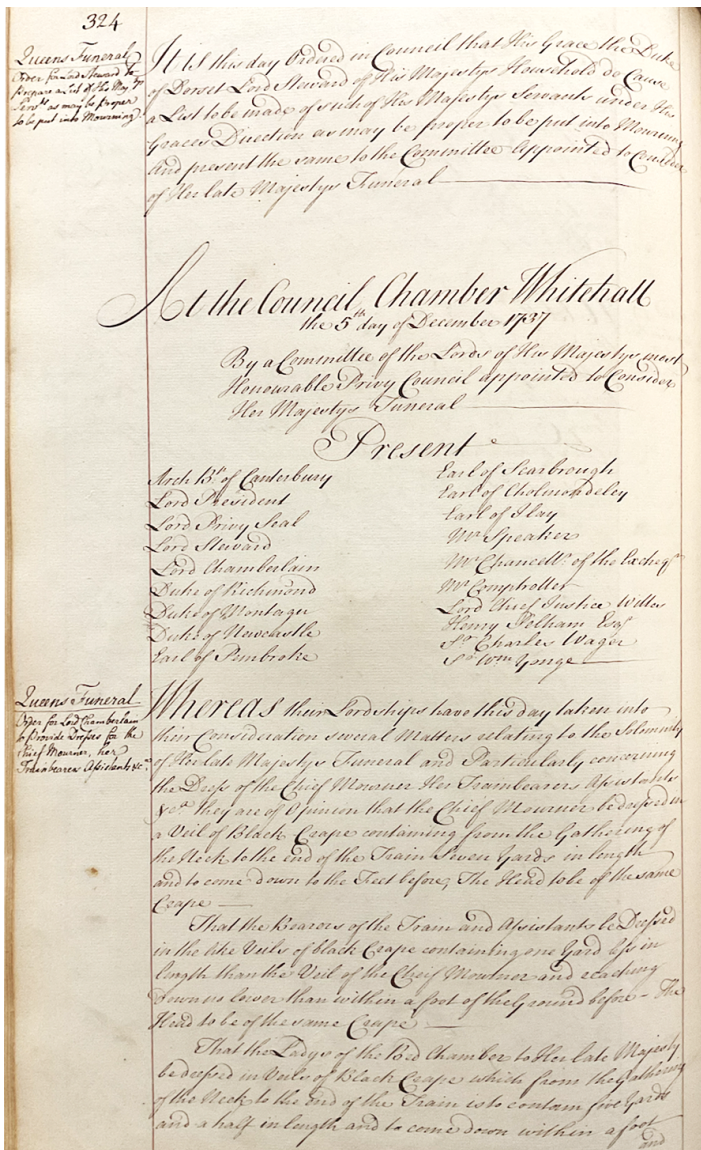


Figure 3. Privy Council Register for December 5, 1737 outlining dress for mourners at Queen Caroline's funeral. (TNA PC 2/84). Courtesy of the National Archives.

state, yeomen of the guard in resplendent liveries ... and rooms crowded with people in opulent clothes and jewels."<sup>24</sup> Likewise, a bias toward Handel's compositions valorizes the man at the expense of his musicians (for whom musicologists have nevertheless accounted) and people like Matthew Vernon, John Bell, and George Binkes, mercers who provided imported textiles for the coronation.<sup>25</sup> James Haye, a tailor, sewed the king's garb and that of musicians. A linen draper named Joseph Windham dispensed Holland cloth for the *colobium sindonis*. David Bosanquett, a merchant, provided velvet for William Haddock, a belt maker who

24. R. Malcolm Smuts, "Art and the Material Culture of Majesty in Early Stuart England," in *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture*, ed. Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 107–112.

25. Burrows, *English Chapel Royal*, chapters 16 and 17.

crafted the king's scabbard. And Thomas Phill, an upholsterer, sewed the anointing pall with fringe from lacemen Charles Matthew and John Hassell.<sup>26</sup>

From a broader perspective, this perhaps obvious historical reality highlights the material origins of eighteenth-century canonicity. William Weber's seminal argument about canon formation in England primarily considers ideology, ascribing significance to music festivals, a setting for civic ritual separate from the court, and the nobility's assertion of moral taste and social hegemony through ancient music starting in the 1770s. These two strands of canonicity culminated in the 1784 Handel Commemoration, which also exhibited a decidedly royal flavor.<sup>27</sup> Recent trends in eighteenth-century music studies illuminate this ideology's material dimensions. Nicholas Mathew argues that economic conditions like "work"—literal labor—precipitated the metaphysical work concept to which Weber pointed three decades ago.<sup>28</sup> By 1784, *Zadok the Priest* and *The Ways of Zion Do Mourn* were musical classics.<sup>29</sup> Their prestige derived from the royal power they conveyed and, in turn, the "immense investment of human energies, a tangle of practices and materials," undergirding it.<sup>30</sup> Mere artisans helped cast Handel's musical labors as musical works.

As further evidence for material culture's resonance, we can look to Britain's colonies. When news of the Handel Commemoration reached Calcutta, an East India Company merchant named Joseph Fowke was "made happy by the account of the Jubilee instituted to [Handel's] memory" and informed his daughter that "Westminster Abbey has been fitted up with the most suburb [sic] decorations."<sup>31</sup> Across the world, the commemoration delighted Fowke as a salient expression of moral reverence for Handel and Great Britain. Both at royal events and far from home, material culture stimulated people's lived experiences with Handel's music. Now preserved in the archive, it might similarly condition our experience of eighteenth-century music today.

26. "An Account," TNA, LC 2/22. Women's labor contributed to royal events as well. An upholsterer named Sarah Gilbert was responsible for decorating the French Chapel at St. James's Palace for Princess Anne's wedding. Great Wardrobe, TNA, LC 5/47, fol. 230v–232r. More details on the extravagant wedding are available in Burrows, *English Chapel Royal*, 314–315.

27. William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Smith, *Georgian Monarchy* leaves more space for the monarchy's active role in public ritual prior to the commemoration.

28. Nicholas Mathew, *The Haydn Economy: Music, Aesthetics, and Commerce in the Late Eighteenth Century*, New Material Histories of Music (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2022).

29. Weber, *Musical Classics*, 226.

30. Mathew, *Haydn Economy*, 136.

31. Quoted in Ian Woodfield, *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Indian Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 135. For more detail on the musical lives of Joseph Fowke and his family, see Woodfield's monograph and my dissertation-in-progress, "Sounding Britain, Crafting Self: Handel, the Imperial Experience, and Eighteenth-Century Lives of Empire."