

sources, valuable insights can be gained from missionaries who directly engaged with enslaved populations. For Jesuits, this occurs from what should be considered a global perspective, and Mongin in particular exhibits a wider awareness of the Caribbean and France, as someone educated in the Jesuit system should. At the same time, the stereotypes regarding race, gender and nationality that appear in these letters must be seen as the product of that time period, but as long as such biases are acknowledged, these letters are valuable sources for studying French Caribbean plantations.

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crac024>

Advance Access publication 16 May 2022

Music, Pantomime & Freedom in Enlightenment France. By Hedy Law. Woodbridge, and Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer. 2020. xvii+265 pp. £60. ISBN: 978 1 78327 560 1.

Can musical performance fuel genuine reflection and societal change? This question has informed much scholarship on musical practices leading up to the French Revolution. In *Music, Pantomime & Freedom in Enlightenment France*, Hedy Law adds to this research by investigating eighteenth-century French pantomime practices as they intersect with the developing concept of 'moral liberty'. She distinguishes this concept from the legally defined terms of 'civil' and 'political' liberty (3); 'moral liberty' instead, emerged out of intellectual discussions on 'freedom of speech' and 'freedom of action' and she equates it with our present-day understanding of 'agency' (xii). By reading practices in close connection with discourses, the book suggests an active role for eighteenth-century artists (including librettists, composers and performers) and their audiences in fuelling the development and dissemination of Enlightenment ideas.

The book's chapters follow the development of eighteenth-century pantomime in largely chronological order. The introduction examines the rise of a new understanding of pantomime as a vehicle for communication. 'Dissociated from the *bas comique* tradition and understood to be a vehicle for truth (9)', it became a topic worthy of intellectual discussion and was contrasted with *la belle danse*—the French seventeenth- and eighteenth-century tradition of formalized, figurative dances. In Chapter one, Law analyses how composers, and especially Jean-Philippe Rameau, used this contrast not only to dramatic ends, but also to defy conventional expectations, thus highlighting his agency—or 'free will'—as a composer (41). In addition, Law states that Rameau's pantomimes emphasized the need for performers to exercise their own 'freedom of motion' in complementing (not merely imitating) the musical signs with bodily ones that deepened the performance's communicative power. The next chapter moves from performers to audience members, as Law analyses how Rousseau encouraged the latter to exercise their 'freedom' to think; he does so by modelling ideal, reflective spectator behaviour as characters in his *Le Devin du village* watch a pantomimic scene. This attention to the spectator continues in Chapter three while the interaction between Gluck's compositional practices and contemporary pantomimic acting 'illustrate d'Holbach's materialist thesis that human actions are unfree' because determined by their environment (126), the

multivalent connections between music and an actor's bodily movements encouraged spectators, according to Law, to become '*thinking* interpreters (133).' Chapter four details how four ballet and opera adaptations of the ancient Greek myth of the Danaïdes exemplify how humanity was measured by the extent to which the ability of reflection was exercised and by the creation of *instituted* (as opposed to natural) signs (160). Finally, Law connects late-eighteenth-century conceptions of agency, as displayed in Salieri's and Beaumarchais' *Tarare*, to considerations about moral liberty as central to 'natural law theory (185)'.

The conclusion and introduction frame her eighteenth-century pantomime history as leading up to the French Revolution: she foregrounds the moment when the guillotined head of Louis XVI is paraded around by a boy making enthusiastic sounds and indecent gestures—illustrating, according to Law, 'free expression of thoughts and opinions', an article in the 1789 *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* (1). Framing the book thus strengthens Law's narrative, which casts pantomime as 'an Enlightenment phenomenon' (7) that had a tangible impact on (and in Law's view, even preceded) the emergence of the 'political concept of freedom of communication (230)'. In doing so, Law suggests that musical creation and performance had indeed an active role in societal and political change. Yet, one issue of this narrative is measuring audience impact and historical sources often provide limited opportunities in this regard. Law's interlocutors are largely drawn from a small circle of intellectuals; her 'spectator' remains a nebulous, idealized figure hardly representative of the diverse group of individuals attending theatre in eighteenth-century Paris. To some extent, this results from Law's principal focus on pantomime as developed in the intellectual and cultural context of the Paris Opéra. While the early chapters briefly discuss pantomime's roots in more popular theatre practices, little attention is paid to contemporaneous usages in more popular traditions, for instance, the emerging *mélodrame* which tends to be given an important role in societal trends leading up to the French Revolution as well as in histories of pantomime.

Nonetheless, within the confines of her chosen repertoire, Law provides an admirably broad view that includes several little-known works. Moreover, her focus on pantomime offers new avenues to consider eighteenth-century issues of artistic agency, art as imitation, and connections between intellectual discourse, musical composition and the corporeal aspects of performance. Consequently, her book is of interest to musicologists as well as theatre and performance scholars, and cultural and intellectual historians. Moreover, by putting human agency central, she advocates a continued critical emphasis on what we *do* with music—an issue relevant not just to scholars, but also to performers and those that engage with performances more broadly today.

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crac033>

Advance Access publication 16 May 2022

Paris et ses peuples au XVIIIe siècle. By Pascal Bastien and Simon Macdonald, eds., Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne/Comité d'histoire de la Ville de Paris. 2020. 304 pp. 25€. ISBN 979-10-351-0531-0.