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SVEN OLIVER MÜLLER, *Das Publikum macht die Musik: Musikleben in Berlin, London und Wien im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 448 pp. ISBN 978 3 525 30064 0. €49.99

Sven Oliver Müller's monograph, which has grown out of the *Habilitationsschrift* he submitted to the University of Bielefeld, focuses on the role of the audience in opera houses and concert venues during the nineteenth century. In Berlin, London, and Vienna he is looking at three distinct and well-chosen cities. This is an ambitious and fascinating project and, to anticipate, Müller pulls it off beautifully.

In his introduction Müller usefully points to the power of audiences and their influence on performances. His study focuses on patterns of behaviour that were often seen as annoying and disruptive by composers and musicians, such as talking through performances, applauding in the middle of a scene, walking in and out of auditoria in the middle of a performance, and so on. Disappointingly, Müller's focus is entirely on middle- and upper-class audiences at concert and opera performances. Although this is perhaps understandable given the enormity of the project and the comparative approach, the focus on elite audiences and the canonical high-art repertoire they patronized is also limiting. It sidelines the vast audiences attracted by a more popular musical programmes, for example, in the music halls and variety theatres of Britain, and the body of work on popular entertainment.

Müller usefully sets out the ideas for his book in a number of theses. He argues that musical performances made and extended social and political groups; that audience behaviour was not static but changed throughout the nineteenth century; that the pleasure of attending concerts cannot be separated from their social function; that the years from 1820 to 1850 were a distinct turning point in the reception of music and the process of creating mass audiences for concerts and operas; that we can detect changing mechanisms of exclusion in practices of musical communication; that audiences were multifaceted and interconnected; and, finally, that audiences were co-creators of musical performances. In working through these theses, Müller looks for common ground in Europe's musical life by taking a comparative approach. One area of common ground, he argues, was the middle-class appreciation of music that decisively influenced its reception. Patterns of behaviour, Müller argues, were,

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in fact, very similar across Europe, with similarities decidedly outweighing the differences (p. 28).

In terms of balance, Vienna, perhaps surprisingly, gets the shortest treatment. Müller's expertise lies elsewhere, as illustrated by his previous publications, and he clearly feels much more at home discussing the situation in London. At times he could have explored the fundamental differences between Germany and Austria on the one hand and Britain on the other in more detail, in particular, relating to state funding. On page 44, when discussing musical venues in Europe, he could have mentioned that there was no equivalent to a *Hoftheater* (court theatre) in Britain (although he briefly notes this on p. 59). He could also have stressed that the performance 'pot-pourri' on offer at London theatres did not actually cease to exist with the emergence of the symphony as an art form (p. 49), but continued well into the twentieth century at many venues. Otherwise this second chapter's focus on audiences, social structures, inequalities and status, and distinctions is highly convincing. Müller shows how concert and opera venues in growing cities acted as spaces for meeting and negotiating social distinctions. Elite bourgeois and aristocratic audiences consciously linked aesthetic beauty with economic power (p. 67).

In chapter 3 Müller turns to programmes and repertoires. He addresses the issue of 'cultural transfers' and the development of common repertoires, aesthetics, and tastes. The nineteenth century saw the development of a standard opera repertoire consisting of Mozart, Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Verdi, and Wagner. The same applied to orchestral music, with symphonies by Beethoven, Brahms, and Dvorak topping the bill across Europe. These similarities, Müller argues, were down not only to the qualities of the musical compositions themselves, but also to the discourses surrounding them (p. 106). Europe, on the whole, was fascinated by the idea of the 'musical genius', for example, especially Beethoven and Wagner, who almost created his own myth. Strauss and Mahler, on the other hand, divided opinion (p. 134). The cult of the virtuoso, too, was a European phenomenon with Liszt, Jenny Lind, and Paganini the most obvious examples. Another pan-European development was a longing for oriental dreams and illusion on stage, with increasingly elaborate productions being staged from the 1830s on (one minor point of criticism here is that Gilbert and Sullivan's enormously successful Savoy operas warrant a broader discussion here, or at least a

bit more space than just a footnote on p. 191). From the 1850s on, however, a more conservative taste in musical programming took hold all over Europe, with calls for 'true art' and 'absolute music' (p. 175).

Chapter 4 deals with the changing musical experience during the nineteenth century and the 'invention of silence' (p. 217). Between 1820 and 1860 a fundamental shift occurred across Europe, as audiences at concert and opera performances grew increasingly quiet. Müller convincingly discusses this phenomenon as a change in patterns of behaviour through self-control. Quiet audiences first appeared in northern Germany around 1820 in a development which reached Britain around 1850, although as late as 1877 there were still complaints about London audiences applauding during a performance instead of at the end of it. Müller's particular interest in elite forms of performance, however, perhaps narrows the focus too much here as this kind of expression of the audience's appreciation could still be found in the 1940s and 1950s, especially at regional repertory theatres. Applause would break out as soon as the local favourite actor appeared on stage, regardless of whether this was appropriate to that particular moment in the play or not. In the context of high art, on the other hand, European concert and opera audiences had grown quiet by the last third of the nineteenth century, thanks to pan-European cultural transfers, as Müller argues (pp. 257–8). They had developed into quiet and avid listeners, and their behaviour consciously exemplified their elevated social and cultural status. Music was now considered art to be marvelled at, and not something to be enjoyed as background entertainment.

Müller rightly points out that this development is all the more remarkable when contrasted with the early nineteenth century, when riots had regularly broken out and audiences had taken a much more active role, almost playing out their own performances. Müller discusses a fascinating example from the Berliner Hofoper in 1818, when the audience decided to put on its own show in response to a vain soloist, Josef Fischer, who had criticized them previously for not showing sufficient appreciation of his performance (p. 264). At London's Her Majesty's Theatre in 1840 aristocratic audiences almost caused a riot in order to stake their claim to how operatic performances were run (pp. 265–6), and to reaffirm their place in society at large. Müller usefully puts this unrest into a larger political context,

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including London's Promenade concerts and other, similar, popular concert series elsewhere.

In chapter 5 Müller discusses the political dimension of operatic performances as events where power, control, and influence were negotiated, celebrated, and reaffirmed. Performances themselves were very similar across the Continent, irrespective of whether they were put on in celebration of a monarchy or a republic (p. 296). During official gala performances and through the active participation of audiences, an imagined nation came together. Interestingly, and again linking to Müller's claim that practices were similar across Europe, the nationalistic rituals played out in Vienna, Berlin, and London were almost identical (pp. 327–8). Müller also makes clear, however, that musical performances were used not only to affirm existing political structures, but also to question them. In the 1830s and 1840s, in particular, performances became political demonstrations and concerts were turned into 'battle grounds' (p. 337) in the run up to revolutions on the Continent, or to mock the behaviour and outdated taste of aristocratic audiences in London. In contrast to Berlin and Vienna, however, middle-class audiences in London enjoyed significantly more freedom of expression (at least after 1850) than their continental peers.

Overall, Müller has written a detailed, well-researched, and well-argued book. He is always in command of his vast material, and the study's comparative nature is exemplary. Müller is also able to place his research into current theoretical debates, although the tentative claim for a 'musical turn' may be a bit far fetched (pp. 19 ff.). As Müller's book does not only speak to a German-language readership, I would highly recommend that it is translated into English.

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1945 (2007); and *Theater in der Region: Westfalen und Yorkshire 1918–1945* (2012); and he has co-edited, with Kate Newey and Jeffrey Richards, a collection of essays, *Ruskin, the Theatre, and Victorian Visual Culture* (2009). He is currently writing a study of theatre in Europe under Nazi occupation during the Second World War. Other research interests include contemporary German theatre and performance, dramaturgy, and cultural policy.