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**Lionel Sawkins**, *A Thematic Catalogue of the Works of Michel-Richard de Lalande (1657-1726)*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. xlvii + 700 pp. Tables, colour plate, figures, facsimiles, music examples, bibliography, and index of titles and first lines. \$225.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 0-19-816360-6.

Review by Graham Sadler, University of Hull.

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A musical time-traveller from the *ancien régime* would surely be amazed at the low profile nowadays suffered by Michel-Richard de Lalande. Here was a composer who held many of the most coveted musical posts at the courts of Louis XIV and XV, who developed sacred music in the Sun King's chapel to its highest peak, and whose legacy of *grands motets* formed the core repertory of the Concert spirituel for almost half a century after his death.<sup>[1]</sup> Yet no modern *Opera omnia* exists; indeed, with the exception of privately produced editions, only a dozen of the sixty-five more-or-less complete *grands motets* have been published during the past four decades, while earlier editions are, for various reasons, virtually unusable today. The secular works have, for the most part, fared even less well.

Such lack of readily available editions has seriously hampered the dissemination of Lalande's music. Despite the sterling efforts of organisations like the Centre de la Musique Baroque de Versailles, performances remain relatively few and first-class recordings fewer still. Even specialist groups like Les Arts Florissants, La Simphonie du Marais, and Ex Cathedra have between them issued scarcely more than half-a-dozen Lalande CDs. This general neglect is the more regrettable, since the quality of the music belies its relative modern obscurity. Indeed, Lalande fully deserves a place as one of the outstanding composers of the *grand siècle* alongside Lully, Charpentier and François Couperin.

One of the greatest challenges to anyone wishing to edit Lalande's music is the complexity of the source situation. It is not merely that the principal manuscripts and other materials are widely scattered or that questions of dating, provenance and filiation have not hitherto been precisely answered. The editor must also grapple with the composer's lifelong practice of revising his works, to the extent that we often have several radically different versions of ostensibly the same piece. Moreover, many motets can be reconstituted only by reconciling several different sources, and even then a certain amount of editorial completion of inner parts may be needed.

With the publication of this magnificent thematic catalogue by Lionel Sawkins, musicologists need no longer be daunted by such problems. As the late James R. Anthony puts it in a characteristically elegant foreword, "the *Catalogue raisonné* presented here will surely act as a catalyst for a new generation of scholars" (p. vi). The author's expertise in this field has long been unrivalled. One has only to glance at the contents page to realise that this is not just a thematic catalogue. It contains a huge amount of broad contextual information, much of it new or readily accessible for the first time. Numerous tables include not merely information on the sources but also details of the *sous-maîtres* and organists in the Chapelle royale during Lalande's time, his self-borrowings, and—most usefully, perhaps—the often complex relationship between the revised versions of a given work. A thematic locator allows scholars to track down hitherto unidentified sources. There are also several substantial essays on such matters as Lalande's biography and his place in the Concert spirituel repertory, and on the respective backgrounds to the sacred and secular music. These are presented in English and French, as is the explanation of how the catalogue is organised. Happily, the translations were entrusted to Denis Herlin, a leading specialist in French music of this period. The individual catalogue entries are given in English only—an inevitable decision if the length and cost of the volume were to be kept within reasonable bounds. The book is well

supplied with facsimiles which illuminate the accompanying text, while a sixteen-page bibliography extends to material well beyond the confines of Lalande research. Catherine Massip's brief but useful life-and-works, *Michel-Richard Delalande ou Le Lully Latin*, presumably appeared too late to be included, though Sawkins's bibliography is sufficiently up to date to include other material published in 2005. [2]

For the thematic catalogue that forms the bulk of the volume, the complex presentation of individual entries is clearly explained at the outset. Each of the 175 entries is given an S (Sawkins) number and includes full details of sources, origin of text, dating, performing forces, and length in measures; these are followed by the all-important music examples of principal themes together with references to relevant literature, iconography and modern editions. Each entry also includes a lengthy and often informative commentary. If these last involve much repetition when taken in sequence, then that was perhaps unavoidable: few people other than reviewers are likely to read the book from cover to cover, and it was evidently judged important that a given entry should include all relevant information. Some matters might have been dealt with centrally, however. To take just one example: fourteen entries include an identical ten-line paragraph on the *balancement* ornament. If this had been situated in the preliminary matter with cross-references in the individual entries, the space saved would have allowed discussion of how this notation should actually be interpreted—more immediately useful to performers than the existing citation of a symposium chapter by Sawkins in which this topic is treated.

The catalogue is divided into two broad sections, sacred and secular, the works being further subdivided by genre. Those within each genre are presented in chronological order. Some may consider this a debatable decision when one considers that the dating of a significant number of items is to a greater or lesser degree conjectural. Indeed, there are already some apparent anomalies. Among the *grands motets*, for example, we find the following sequence:

**S9**, c1683, **S10**, 1686, **S11**, c1683, **S12**, 1686, **S13**, c1683, **S14**, 1684, **S15**, 1685, **S16**, 1687, **S17**, 1686.

On closer reading of the commentaries, the reason for several of these anomalies becomes clear, since they stem from inconsistent interpretation of conflicting evidence. Given the likelihood that the last word has not yet been said on matters of dating, a more neutral arrangement by alphabetical order would better stand the test of time. Still, the admirably full index of titles and first lines provides the surest way of locating a given composition or subsection.

One particularly welcome feature of the volume is the generous number, length and completeness of the music examples. These are expertly set by John Nightingale, who was Lionel Sawkins's assistant for several years and who devised a number of the indispensable tables. Instead of the short and heavily abbreviated incipits found in many thematic catalogues, each music example presents a complete unit in such a way that the user gains a clear idea of the nature of the relevant movement and a sense of its musical quality. If I could single out the one feature of this volume most likely to stimulate new interest in Lalande's music, this is it. Leafing through these 3,180 examples, one can only marvel at the quality of invention tantalisingly on display and regret that so little is yet in the public domain.

It must already be clear that Sawkins's catalogue represents a huge contribution to the cause of Lalande research. The book will be invaluable not merely to musicologists but to practising musicians seeking to bring the works to life in performance. Some users may not, however, find all aspects of the text as intelligible as they might be. The author assumes a high degree of specialist knowledge of French baroque musical terminology and conventions, and many terms are often unexplained—for example, *partitions réduites* (scores in which the inner vocal and/or instrumental parts are omitted) or *matériel* (vocal and/or instrumental performing parts)—though a definition may or may not appear somewhere else in the volume. A similar problem occurs with the frequent references to, say, the *Livres du Roy*

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(cumulative publications of the motet texts performed in the royal chapel) or the *messe basse solennelle* (that extraordinary rite favoured by Louis XIV which was the *fons et origo* of the so-called Versailles motet). While it would be tiresome if these and other terms were defined on every occasion, the non-specialist would surely have appreciated a glossary—or better still, a general index, which would have made the vast amount of material in this volume more accessible to all users, whatever their level of expertise.

The author's English translations are done with skill and sensitivity. In the provision of translations of quotations or titles, however, the text is sometimes inconsistent. On p. 415, for example, we are given only the French of a long passage from the preface to Racine's *Cantique sur le bonheur des justes*, whereas on the previous page a quotation from a letter from Racine to Boileau appears only in English. (The letter is unidentified: here and throughout the main text of the catalogue, there are no footnote references.) Moreover, numerous untranslated passages comprise diplomatic transcriptions involving phonetic spelling and quirky punctuation. While such presentation is standard practice, the more obscure passages deserve at least some comment. What, I wonder, would a novice make of the following enigmatic annotation (p. 410): "je prie monfrère de manvoye le dominé de mon neveut Et les deux menuets de Mr. Marchand laisnée Et Un autre que vous mavé promis seluy Lon a joué au bal le dernier"?

It would be churlish to dwell on these and other inconsistencies, which may well result from the long gestation period of this catalogue. They pale into insignificance alongside of the colossal achievement that it represents. Lionel Sawkins has been a tireless champion not just of Lalande but of French baroque music in general. This book will justly be regarded as the crowning achievement of a lifetime's work on the composer for whom he has done so much.

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## NOTES

[1] Extended settings of sacred texts involving soloists, chorus and orchestra.

[2] Catherine Massip, *Michel-Richard Delalande ou Le Lully Latin* (Geneva, Éditions Papillon, 2005), "Méliphiles 17," 160 pp.

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