

of that personality by starting the section with an investigation of the composer's psyche, including his connections with the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (p. 233). A life beset by the death of a child and the unfaithfulness of a wife, plus workaholic and ailing health, ended with virulent streptococci, cultured from Mahler by a distinguished microbiologist (p. 240). The final diagnosis was 'bacterial endocarditis', or an infection of the lining of the heart and heart valves (p. 240).

The ninth chapter is entitled 'Breathless' and subtitled 'Respiratory Diseases' (p. 257), a common cause of death after heart failure, especially 'bronchial and lung conditions' (p. 257). As in previous chapters, Noble begins with a broad review of common ailments, then discusses how such diseases affected composers, including Carl von Weber, Chopin, Grieg, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg. Significant space is devoted to Chopin, whose medical history has often been debated, due to his frail and sickly countenance, as noted by contemporaries (p. 264). Noble is convinced that the likely cause of death was tuberculosis (TB), as Chopin was sick for two decades with symptoms consistent with TB, but medicine at the time lacked all of the advancements necessary for a complete diagnosis (p. 269).

The final two chapters are devoted to the diseases that are usually regarded as the most serious, both for modern medicine and for musicians: cancer and what Noble calls 'The Ultimate Blow: Deafness'. The tenth chapter, on cancer, features Rossini, Debussy, Brahms, Puccini, Rachmaninoff, Bartók, Finzi, and Massenet. The last chapter deals almost exclusively with Beethoven (twenty-one pages), one of the most famous deaf composers, but also in smaller parts with Fauré (four pages). The composer who receives significant attention in chapter 9 is Brahms, whom Noble introduces romantically as a 'titanic figure' who has the 'mantle of Beethoven . . . descend upon him' (p. 298). At the end of his life, he suffered from what was probably a stroke, evidenced by paralysis on one side of his face; this was followed by blood in his vomit and the inability to speak (p. 303): most likely, pancreatic cancer.

The final chapter, on deafness, invokes the common trope about Beethoven as a hero: 'Many ask how musicians can compose when they cannot hear the result of their labours. Beethoven showed that they can' (p. 321). After laying out the anatomy and maladies of the ear, Noble begins with a quotation from Beethoven in 1801, which serves as the title of the book: 'That jealous demon, my wretched health' (p. 323). As with other composers, Noble chronicles

Beethoven's illnesses throughout life, including deafness, and then investigates his last illness and cause of death. There are several pages with various probable and improbable diseases and scientific evidence from the history of medicine and Noble's own investigations. He ends with a detailed chart of diseases that do or do not include deafness, but concludes that there is no way to be 100 per cent sure of Beethoven's cause of death (p. 345).

To close, Noble emphasizes several themes: first, the questioning of 'dogmatic claims' or 'chronic exaggerations'; second, the relationship between creativity and illness (not always true); third, the importance of modern medicine in saving lives; fourth, the effect of melancholia on composition; and fifth, the innate nature of genius. Noble's book is an impressive feat, but it lacks parallel competence in both medicine and musicology. He is strong when consulting the history of medicine and in his knowledge as a physician, but his command of musicology focuses more on biographies and less on current trends. Similarly, current musicology is much more interested in histories of music that de-centre Western music and include composers outside the traditional European canon, such as women and BIPOC/BAME composers. It would also be interesting to know more about successful medical practices of the past, rather than the negative reports of how composers would have fared better from modern medicine. Let us hope that this time in history will inspire future research on current musicology and medicine.

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*Richard D'Oyly Carte*. By Paul Seeley. Pp. xii + 177. Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain. (Routledge, London and New York, 2019. ISBN 978-1-138-48628-7 (hard cover), £120.00, -0-036-766437-4 (paperback), £36.99; -351-05591-9 (ebook), £33.29.)

That this biography, coming well more than a century after its subject's death, is the first substantial treatment of a figure as significant as Richard D'Oyly Carte is a good reminder of the research remaining to be done, even in the comparatively well-trodden territory of the Savoy operas. A surprising percentage of Paul Seeley's source material is published, but before Seeley no one had gone through it with an eye to Carte's role; this, Seeley shows, has been under our noses

the whole time. Indeed, the designation ‘Savoy’ itself is a reminder that W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan were not a collaborative duo, but rather part of a triumvirate with Carte; further, Carte’s vision, initiative, patience, and ability to negotiate allowed his Savoy Theatre to find its way into Victorian consciousness as a jewel of respectable entertainment. Collaboration with Gilbert–Sullivan was actually only one of the pies in which Carte had his fingers; and if we may regard Gilbert as narrowly English, and Sullivan as the more cosmopolitan European, we should think of Carte as the head of a much more ambitious global enterprise. The broad outline of Seeley’s treatment is a very familiar story: the details, and his readings of them, usefully illuminate an impresario until now in the shadows who emerges as a restless, pragmatic, adventurous, and calculating businessman. That Carte does not escape unscathed from Seeley’s treatment seems a healthy indicator of a biographer not beholden to his subject.

Seeley compartmentalizes Carte’s activities: rather than following a strict chronology, the narrative is interrupted to focus on specific projects. Thus, Carte’s management of celebrity lectures, the construction of the Savoy Hotel, and his attempt to found a lasting Royal English Opera House (which opened with Sullivan’s *Ivanhoe* in 1891, but was sold off a mere eighteen months later) each get their own chapter. For Carte, however, all of these endeavours were interspersed with the quotidian management of Gilbert and Sullivan productions in both the metropolis and a periphery that extended to North America and Australia. Seeley reports that, in February 1881, ‘Carte now had no fewer than eleven companies directly or jointly managed or licensed by him’ (p. 81). I am not convinced that this compartmentalized narrative does either the reader or the subject a service: Seeley concludes chapter 5 with a tantalizing mention of the infamous ‘Carpet Quarrel’, which threatened the future of the Gilbert–Sullivan partnership, but he does not return to it in earnest until the beginning of chapter 8; similarly, discussing Carte’s many activities separately obscures how many plates Carte was spinning of simultaneously. Carte was necessarily a multitasker, albeit not with uniform success in every project, but he generally seems to have learned from his mistakes: for example, he extricated himself from managing celebrity lecture tours once conditions abroad became harder and harder to control, and he lost the patience to deal with divas.

It is refreshing to see Seeley so convincingly laying the blame where it belongs for the oft-told

fiasco of the Royal English Opera House’s opening (p. 124). It was not Sullivan’s grand opera *Ivanhoe* itself that doomed the project, but rather Carte’s intent to run grand opera night after night as he did comic opera at the Savoy, and his lack of foresight in planning anything to follow *Ivanhoe* once the public was ready for something new. But even though Carte misjudged his audience and made a costly mistake, it would be difficult to regard Carte’s business ventures as anything other than a phenomenal success story. His estate at his death was valued at over £250,000, ‘which was then the largest fortune ever made by a London impresario’ (p. 148). Yet, Seeley reminds us that ‘the real cost of his failure was the human cost borne by those whose careers and livelihoods were jeopardised by unemployment’ (p. 124). In this regard, Carte is as much a man of our time as he was of his.

Did Carte have an inner life? Documents available to Seeley might leave the impression that Carte was a man who lived entirely in balance sheets, advertising copy, and contractual clauses. He apparently kept no diary, and his own musical compositions are pedestrian and prosaic. However, as Seeley explains, Carte’s feeling for his fellow man can occasionally be found in the accounting: Carte drove hard bargains when negotiating with the performers in his company, but was exceedingly generous when tragedy struck, or when seeking to establish a ‘happy family’ feeling for his performing company by paying for picnic outings and the like. Just as often, though, Carte seems to have been absent from these events while pursuing other business ventures. Reading between the lines, Carte was a small man, narrowly focused on business success at the expense of virtually everything else. His relationship with his first wife, Blanche Julia Prowse (daughter of William Prowse, of the similarly entrepreneurial box-office company Keith, Prowse & Co.), seems to have been distant; scarcely eight months after her death in 1885, Carte married his deputy Helen Lenoir (née Helen Couper Black), and if that relationship was closer, it may only have been a consequence of Helen’s total involvement in the business. That was where Carte really came alive.

The range of Carte’s contacts was very wide, and in addition to a long list of big names with whom he had some sort of contractual arrangements (Oscar Wilde, Arthur Conan Doyle, J. M. Barrie, James McNeill Whistler, Adelina Patti, Henry Morton Stanley, Matthew Arnold, Mark Twain, Hans von Bülow, and César Ritz are just the cream of that list), all sorts of unexpected figures make an appearance in

Seeley's book. These range from Charles Gounod through to Walter Sickert and to Lord Alfred Douglas (an intimate of Carte's elder son Michael, who followed him from Winchester to Magdalen College, Oxford). Interconnected with many individuals who continue to interest us today, Carte was as an exemplar of Victorian ambition and industriousness.

There is an inevitable sense of a loss at what this book might have been, and the reader may feel from time to time that the focus is on the wrong Carte. There is surely much more to be said about Helen, who managed the company, first as Carte's assistant, then as a sort of regent as infirmities beset him during his final years, until she finally (with her own iron will) assumed sovereignty in 1901. She was not just 'the woman behind the man', but very much the woman behind the company. A joint biography—or a treatment of the D'Oyly Carte family bound together in the same enterprise across a century—would be welcome. The first decade of the twentieth century was a critical one for the company under Helen's leadership: Carte was dead, and the company was now living off a diet of established shows, whereas hitherto it had presented a more-or-less steady stream of novelties. Moreover, it had vacated the Savoy Theatre, and even upon returning for two repertory seasons (1906–7 and 1908–9) ostensibly under Gilbert's own direction, the lack of an established home in the Strand was damaging to the morale and reputation of the company, which, while carrying the Carte torch, was no longer a shrine of pilgrimage.

Seeley treats this in his final chapter, 'Legacy and Posterity', and it may be his most important contribution to the Savoy opera bibliography. The chapter is brief—just eleven pages—but could have easily been four or five times that length (although the period covered would go beyond that of the book's series, *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain*). It is not the first examination of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company after Carte's death, but it offers a valuable new perspective. Rather than a hagiography that is becoming too familiar, Seeley leaves one with the impression that the 1981 denial of the Arts Council grant application and the subsequent financial failure of the company was inevitable and well-deserved, given the ethos of the company management for the fifty or so years preceding it. The ironic contrast between the hide-bound conservatism of the company and the audacious and forward-thinking entrepreneurship of the man who founded it is striking. Seeley muses on this tension and locates the 1920s as the onset of the disease that would ul-

timately kill the company, when Rupert D'Oyly Carte made a series of decisions that resulted in a form of stylistic paralysis. The company's recordings, starting at about this time, could only contribute to ossification, intensified by a bad habit of hiring from within.

Seeley worked for the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company in its last years and saw vestiges of Carte's idiosyncratic administrative system still intact a century later (p. 89). He proposed a biography of Carte as early as 1978, but was discouraged by Bridget D'Oyly Carte (Carte's granddaughter) because 'it has always been found that there was no material available to make possible the writing of such a biography of a sufficiently serious, factual and interesting kind, and the idea has had to be abandoned' (quoted on p. xi). We can be thankful that Seeley did not abandon it, even if it took decades to complete the book. With the biographical details now more thoroughly examined, what Carte deserves now is a multidisciplinary symposium with published proceedings to follow. He was an important figure, and his accomplishments are too wide-reaching to be explicated properly within a single discipline.

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*Jews and Music-Making in the Polish Lands*. Ed. by François Guesnet, Benjamin Matis, and Antony Polonsky. Pp. xv + 552. Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, 32. (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, London, 2020. ISBN 978-906764-74-6 (hard cover), £55; -73-9 (paperback), £24.95.)

The essays in *Jews and Music-Making in the Polish Lands* offer rich examinations of a vast and under-studied scholarly terrain. They treat popular, religious, and classical music from roughly the mid-eighteenth century to the present, focusing on the region of eastern Europe that once had one of the world's largest Jewish populations. The book is the latest volume of *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, a series that since 1986 has been a main forum for scholars of Polish-Jewish history. It is especially welcome that *Polin's* editors have turned their attention to music: although Polish Jews were deeply involved with musical life in eastern Europe, scholars of Polish-Jewish culture have more often been drawn to literature or theatre than to music. The core contribution of *Jews and*