



Castrati : the history of an extraordinary vocal phenomenon and a case study of Handel's opera roles for Castrati written for the First Royal Academy of Music (1720-1728)



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Abstract

Castrati were without doubt, an extraordinary phenomenon in the vocal world. Four centuries of history exist from the first evidence of their presence in music, dating from the 1550s, and the death of the last castrato Alessandro Moreschi, in 1922. A tradition almost solely practiced in Italy, the castrati experienced their halcyon days in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. At first, they were recruited and castrated as young boys to sing in the soprano sections of the church choirs. They enjoyed an extensive training in specialized conservatorios and grew to be the most accomplished vocalists the world had known thus far. Inevitably, their art was noticed by opera composers of the time. They flourished and were celebrated in Italy and abroad. Their vocal technique and artistic skills dictated the bel canto style for nearly two hundred years. At the end of the eighteenth century, the growing awareness in moral philosophy, and a series of political shifts in Europe put an end to the overwhelming success of the eunuchs. Yet their influence on opera composition of the time and of the subsequent decades was of immense consequence. An important question should be raised when performing the opera roles written for castrati nowadays. Who will sing the castrato roles? As a logical solution, women or countertenors should adopt these roles into their repertoire. A study of opera roles written for castrati by a baroque master in the genre, Georg Friedrich Handel, sheds some light on the music for these rare birds. The castrato role-study encompasses Handel's operas written for the First Royal Academy of Music (1720-1728). By disclosing some particular aspects in the music and the drama, it becomes clear what voice type should be singing these roles in present day Handel opera production.

Department

Music

Description

text

Subject

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Opera is a style of entertainment that involves theater combined with orchestral music and singers who perform using a distinctive classical method of projecting their voice. Performers in opera are not only trained in singing, but also in stage craft such as acting and choreography. to hold a superb falsetto indistinguishable from that of a woman. The introduction of women into opera as performers tho wasn't always seen as a disgrace to be remedied with castratis, indeed the famed English composer Henry Purcell wrote an English language opera for the dancing professor of a girls boarding school, which received critical review in the late 1600s and featured a cast of young ladies drawn from the gentry of. England. Be the first one to write a review. 16 Borrows. 3 Favorites. Opera: The Art of Dying (Convergences: Inventories of the Present). Mar 27, 2014 03/14. by Linda Hutcheon; Michael Hutcheon. Solid foundation : an oral history of reggae. May 15, 2013 05/13. by Katz, David, 1965 Castrati : the history of an extraordinary vocal phenomenon and a case study of Handel's opera roles for Castrati written for the First Royal Academy of Music (1720-1728). Castrati choir and opera singers Urology, May 1974, Volume 3, Issue 5, Pages 663-670. M.D. Meyer M. Melicow, M.D. Stanford Pulrang Departments of Urology, and Educational Projects of Squier Urological Clinic, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, New York, USA. The castrati: a physician's perspective - Part 1 Article details the history, sociology and musical history relevant to the rise