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Since the 1980s, music scholars have been more and more interested in understanding the phenomenon of musical pastiche and arrangements, as a response to New Musicology's call for decanonising the repertoire. Alison DeSimone's *The Power of Pastiche* builds upon and goes beyond such genealogy (which used to concentrate mainly on opera) by proposing a much more inclusive exploration of the notion of 'music miscellany' in its various articulations, including, but not limited to musical theatre. By analysing the way foreign repertoires were arranged to suit the taste of local audiences, the organization and reception of public variety concerts, the entrepreneurship of musicians, the anthologizing of music into songbooks, and the discourses surrounding the aesthetics of such practices, DeSimone's book aims to uncover the sonic foundations for the shaping of a cosmopolitan cultural identity in pre-Enlightenment England.

*The Power of Pastiche* is structured around five main chapters, with an introduction that provides the general framework and definition of its main concepts (miscellany, cosmopolitanism, cultural identity). The first chapter explores the dissemination of variety concerts in the first decade of the eighteenth century, scrutinizing programmes and the marketing strategies that were required to engage with audiences – two case studies focus respectively on the successful career of violinist Gasperini and the fascinating multi-language musical programs put together by countertenor John Abell. Chapter 2 steps onto the crowded stages of pasticcio operas and their reception among contemporary audiences and present-day scholars, focusing on the early years of Italian opera inception in London and providing a historical context for the first pasticcios (1707–1717), viewed through the lens of miscellany as a cultural and performative process. Partially related to miscellaneous singing and musical assemblages is chapter 3, a study of songbooks and their material configurations which offers an excitingly in-depth investigation of the cultural milieu and identity issues of English society. DeSimone virtuosically analyses different aspects of everyday life (from drinking to aging, from money to sex) that act as topics for the works included in the songbooks, but also as social practices for the people engaged in re-enacting and listening to such repertoire. In dealing with some of today's most pressing subjects of academic inquiry (identity, otherness, gender), the chapter shines as the most 'political' of the book. It is not by chance that the author devotes several of the chapter's pages to study the implications of the 'musicalisation' of politics (in this case, the War of Spanish Succession) and the 'politicisation' of music. From here, chapter 4 proceeds to scrutinise the composers' most entrepreneurial skills in dealing with a cosmopolitan sphere of musical influences and collaborative labour and performing a miscellaneous approach to several aspects of their profession, from composing to programming, from adapting librettos to arranging Italian music. The final chapter sums up the various practices of musical miscellany and maps them onto the writings of intellectuals, including the debates famously pursued over the pages of *The Spectator*, the philosophy of John Locke and the aesthetics of Francis Hutcheson, up to the historical perspective of Charles Burney.

DeSimone's research is in dialogue with the most historicist side of the musicological community, but it also successfully intersects and even challenges notions and issues that are central to neighbouring disciplines, such as literary studies, the history of the book, material and performance studies, and even philosophy. The book is nicely structured by kaleidoscopically (and sonically) reflecting pastiche practices and theories over several crucial aspects of social life and cultural politics in early eighteenth-century England. It must be said that, while robustly relying on past and present English-speaking musicological literature (from the writings on London theatres by Curtis Price, and Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, to the study of concert programming by William Weber, and from Reinhard Strohm's essays on Handel's pasticcios to the reports on music publishing and

songbooks by David Hunter, to name but a few), the volume lacks a thorough bibliography of non-English musicological literature. The case study on Thomas Clayton's *Arsinoe, Queen of Cyprus* (the first opera in the 'Italian manner' in London, 1705) would have benefitted from consulting Jérôme Bonnet's 2004 article on the genealogy of the opera (*Revue Musicorum* 3) or my own contribution on the Milanese origins of the libretto and music (*Musica e Storia* 17/1, 2009). Both share findings/interpretations on the adaptation of Italian music, which are similar to the ones richly documented by DeSimone in her examination of the production of *Almahide* (1710) in chapter 2. Apart from this, and a few over-generalisations on cultural politics ('this cultural urge to construct something out of assorted smaller pieces suggests that miscellany reflected a broader need for creating order out of chaos', p.5) and on audience intentions ('buying a ticket meant that spectators risked attending an event for which they had little information', p.21), *The Power of Pastiche* is nevertheless a much-needed contribution to the study of artistic patchworking and miscellany music-making, which we can now acknowledge as fundamental aspects of pre-Enlightenment culture.