

NAXOS

MAYR
Gioas
(Oratorio)

2 CDs

Brown • Sellier • Frey • Burkhart
Bavarian State Opera Chorus
Simon Mayr Chorus and Ensemble
Franz Hauk



**Simon
MAYR**
(1763–1845)
Gioas
Oratorio in Two Parts
Florence 1823

Libretto by an unknown author

Sebia (Zibiah, Mother of Joash) **Andrea Lauren Brown, Soprano**
Gioas (Joash, her son) **Robert Sellier, Tenor**
Adrasto (Confidant of Zibiah) **Cornel Frey, Tenor**
Giojada (Jehoiada, High Priest) **Andreas Burkhart, Bass**

Bavarian State Opera Chorus
Simon Mayr Chorus and Ensemble
 Directed from the harpsichord by
Franz Hauk

CD 1	63:35	CD 2	47:55
Part One			
1 Sinfonia	5:35	1 Recitativo: Per mano ostile (<i>Adrasto, Sebia, Gioas</i>)	1:41
2 Introduzione: Inno: Del raggio, del purissimo (<i>Chorus</i>)	4:15	2 Recitativo accompagnato: M'odi (<i>Gioas, Sebia</i>)	0:47
3 Recitativo: Coll'armi e l'arte in mano (<i>Giojada</i>)	0:42	3 Duetto: Sei di pietade indegno (<i>Sebia, Gioas</i>)	4:10
4 Cavatina: Ombre amate (<i>Sebia</i>)	3:32	4 Recitativo: Fidi Leviti intorno al sacro altare (<i>Giojada</i>)	0:23
5 Recitativo: E Adrasto ancor non viene? (<i>Sebia, Adrasto</i>)	3:38	5 Recitativo accompagnato: Ecco il sasso feral (<i>Adrasto</i>)	2:04
6 Recitativo accompagnato: Come soave (<i>Adrasto</i>)	0:51	6 Aria: Confusa quest'alma (<i>Adrasto</i>)	1:54
7 Aria con coro: Cessate di piangere (<i>Adrasto, Chorus</i>)	4:56	7 Recitativo accompagnato: Dal Sacerdote (<i>Gioas</i>)	0:58
8 Recitativo accompagnato: Vedo di Giojada al fianco (<i>Sebia</i>)	2:36	8 Aria: Desolata genitrice (<i>Gioas</i>)	4:19
9 Cavatina: Sommo clemente Dio (<i>Sebia</i>)	3:55	9 Recitativo accompagnato: Questo, no, non m'inganno (<i>Sebia</i>)	4:27
10 Recitativo: E da tuo duol (<i>Giojada, Sebia, Gioas</i>)	1:52	10 Aria con coro: Non tradirmi in quest'istante (<i>Sebia, Giojada, Chorus</i>)	5:34
11 Recitativo accompagnato: Tu mi rammenti quei giorni fortunati (<i>Sebia, Gioas</i>)	1:25	11 Recitativo: Dal delirar hai tu cessato ancora (<i>Giojada, Sebia</i>)	1:04
12 Duetto: Figlio mio (<i>Sebia, Gioas</i>)	5:41	12 Aria: Il mortal s'attenta invano (<i>Giojada</i>)	3:35
13 Recitativo: Che vidi! (<i>Giojada</i>)	0:35	13 Recitativo: Hai risoluto? (<i>Sebia, Adrasto</i>)	0:27
14 Aria: Spesso in tacer si fugge (<i>Giojada</i>)	4:45	14 Terzetto: Dopo si barbare, si rie vicende (<i>Gioas, Adrasto, Sebia</i>)	1:08
15 Recitativo: Signore, Dimmi Adrasto dov'è? (<i>Sebia, Giojada</i>)	1:57	15 Recitativo: Sebia non mi fuggir (<i>Giojada, Sebia</i>)	1:47
16 Finale: Recitativo accompagnato: Qual timor, qual rispetto (<i>Adrasto, Gioas</i>)	3:54	16 Quartetto con coro: Ferma (<i>Sebia, Giojada, Gioas, Adrasto, Chorus</i>)	2:33
17 Finale: Coro: L'Arcano impenetrabile (<i>Chorus</i>)	1:42	17 Aria: Lasciatemi, inumani (<i>Adrasto, Gioas, Chorus</i>)	3:05
18 Finale: Recitativo: Adrasto, a te commessa (<i>Giojada, Adrasto</i>)	0:36	18 Marcia	1:49
19 Finale: Aria con coro: Nume benefico (<i>Gioas, Adrasto, Giojada, Chorus</i>)	3:02	19 Coro: I pianti scendano (<i>Chorus</i>)	1:44
20 Finale: Scena: Pietà! Pietà! (<i>Gioas, Adrasto, Chorus</i>)	0:45	20 Recitativo: Cessi ogni timor (<i>Giojada</i>)	0:30
21 Finale: Duettino: Giusto ciel (<i>Adrasto, Gioas</i>)	1:14	21 Recitativo accompagnato: Dopo tante vicende (<i>Giojada</i>)	0:55
22 Finale I: Qual fragor! (<i>Tutti</i>)	6:04	22 Finale II: Noi prostesi al Regio Trono (<i>Tutti</i>)	2:59

Simon Mayr (1763–1845)

Born in the Bavarian town of Mendorf, near Ingolstadt, in 1763, Simon Mayr was the son of a schoolteacher and showed some early ability as a musician. He was a pupil at the Jesuit College in Ingolstadt, before entering the university to study theology, while continuing to demonstrate great versatility as a musician. His musical training, however, only began in earnest in 1787, when a patron, noticing his talent, took him to Italy. There, from 1789, he studied with Carlo Lenzi, master of the music at Bergamo Cathedral. There followed, through the generosity of another patron, a period of study with Bertoni in Venice. His early commissioned compositions were largely in the form of sacred oratorios, but in 1794 his opera *Saffo* was staged in Venice. His turning to opera owed much to the encouragement he received from Piccinni and Peter von Winter, and other operas

Gioas

Opera as Oratorio: A Parody Procedure in Nineteenth Century Italy

It can be easily assumed that the practice of re-working operas into oratorios was carried out mostly without the knowledge of, or even the involvement of, composers. However the fact that Mayr was not opposed to the practice is apparent from his adaptation of Étienne-Nicolas Méhul's opera *Joseph*.

Johann Simon Mayr's parody-oratorio of an opera, *Gioas* (Joash), was written in Florence. The work was commissioned by the Confraternità degli Scolopi (Brotherhood of the Piarists) which gave the first performance of it in the church of San Giovanni Evangelista (Church of St John the Evangelist) in 1823. *Gioas* is based on Mayr's own opera *I misteri eleusini* which was first performed at La Scala, Milan in 1802. If the history of the work's reception is to be believed, it should rightly be counted among Mayr's most popular stage works. Stendhal had a high opinion of it and in 1824 wrote: "*I misteri eleusini* ranked among the strongest and most powerful musical works of the age."

The operatic model for the parody was heard by the Florentine public in 1806 at the Teatro della Pergola. Right up until 1823 Mayr was constantly engaged with the

followed for Venice and then for La Scala, Milan, and for other Italian theatres, with an increasingly large number of performances abroad. In 1802 he followed Lenzi as *maestro di cappella* at the cathedral of Sta Maria Maggiore in Bergamo, becoming director of the cathedral choir school three years later. Mayr held these positions until his death in 1845. As a teacher he won the particular respect of his pupil Gaetano Donizetti. He did much to promote the knowledge of the Viennese classical composers, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, in Italy. His own style reflects something of this, but essentially in an Italian context. He was, needless to say, immensely prolific as a composer, with nearly seventy operas to his credit between 1794 and 1824, and some six hundred sacred works.

Keith Anderson

composition of operas; in all he wrote twenty-one for Florence's various opera houses, most of them for the Teatro della Pergola, including several revivals such as *Ginevra di Scozia* and *L'amor coniugale*. An opera by Mayr (*Ginevra di Scozia*) was presented for the last time in Florence in 1824, one year after the parody *Gioas* was heard for the first time in the Church of St John the Evangelist. There is no record of any further performances in Florence of operas by Mayr.

The name of the Brotherhood of the Order of the Piarists, which was founded in Rome in 1597 by the Spanish counter-reformer Joseph Calasanz, is derived from the "Fathers of the Sacred Schools". The principal aim of the brotherhood, whose official name was "Clerics of the Mother of God", was the education of poor children and at the end of the eighteenth century it took on the spiritual line of succession of the Jesuits. Abolished by Napoleon in 1808, from 1815 – the year in which Ferdinand III was reinstalled as Grand Duke of Tuscany – the order devoted itself once more to teaching duties, naturally including religious education.

As a result of this, in 1820 the order also reintroduced the *quarantore* (the forty hours' devotion) to the last three days of Carnival at its church of St John the Evangelist, known also as S. Giovannino, San Giovanni degli Scopoli or San Giovanni degli Scolopi. With that there began just under a century of a continuous oratorio tradition within the context of the religious activities of the brotherhood in this church. The first *quarantore* celebration to include an (unknown) oratorio was documented in 1821 and Vittorio Trento's *I Maccabei* was performed in 1822. Mayr's parody *Gioas* followed later. From 1828 it was usual each time to perform two different oratorios on the three evenings, a custom which was abandoned in 1844. The last oratorio to be performed in the Church of St John the Evangelist, in 1912, was Emilio Cianchi's lyrical tragedy *Giudetta*, which had been composed in 1854. According to newspaper reports of the three evenings at which the most holy sacrament was to be presented "in the form of the *quarantore*", the church was decorated and lit solemnly. Podia were erected for the musicians and sermons were delivered between the two parts of each oratorio.

The number of musicians in the ensemble can be ascertained from the number of parts which have survived, such as in the case of *Gioas*. The orchestra, therefore, probably consisted of thirty-three musicians (twenty string players, twelve wind players and a percussionist) while the choir comprised at least twenty-two singers. It is presumed that no women sang; even if soprano parts have survived these were probably sung by boys. The musical activities of the Padri Scolopi were financed generously by the governors of the time and by the city's patrons of the arts. This new tradition, linked to the celebration of the *quarantore*, continued the history of the oratorio which had been developed in Florence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and which extended most impressively into the nineteenth century. Musically the parody adheres closely to its operatic model. Arias, ensembles, choruses and accompanied recitatives are borrowed virtually word for word from the original texts. The ordering of the movements accords with those from the score of the opera. New texts and new settings are present above all in the *secco* recitatives.

The religious action of *Gioas* takes place in mythical times in a sacred wood dedicated to the goddess Ceres, as well as in and around the temple of Ceres. Antinous, the king of Thebes, is burdened with guilt. He had once killed the king Lysander in revenge for the abduction of his son Polybetes, and kidnapped Lysander's daughter Themisto. Later, out of jealousy, he has her and her family killed. In order to unburden himself of his sins he visits the shrine of Ceres. In the temple he finds in Adrasto someone who reminds him of his son, whom he believes to be dead. But the high priestess, who is to carry out the holy ceremony for the stranger, is none other than Themisto herself, who has survived the attempt on her life and contemplates revenge. Earlier she had promised Adrasto and her retinue that she would avenge the death of her family. As soon as Themisto recognizes her adversary an earthquake interrupts the ritual. In the second act Adrasto swears everlasting friendship to the unfortunate, unknown, king. Meanwhile the high priest decides to reveal to Antinous the identity of Polybetes, alias Adrasto, who was entrusted to him by the dying Lysander. Themisto has decided against the murder of Antinous, which Adrasto is expected to carry out. At the eleventh hour Adrasto is arrested by the high priest, learns the truth and is in despair at the thought that he almost murdered his own father. In order to appease the goddess Adrasto and Themisto are sentenced to death for having planned the wicked deed. To assuage his own guilt Antinous wishes to die instead of his son. Touched by Antinous's desire for self-sacrifice Themisto renounces retribution. The high priest carries out the happy ending, allows Adrasto to return to Thebes with his father and commands Themisto to devote herself solely to the service of the goddess.

The "pseudo-sacred" subject-matter with its numerous choruses of priests, ceremonies and its prayers, was perfectly suited to a religious parody. It picks up on the Old Testament account of the rescue of the young Joash from the murderous Athaliah and his enthronement as king by the priest Jehoiada (2 Kings 11).

The action of the oratorio begins shortly before the coronation ceremony. At the grave of her son Zibiah harbours thoughts of revenge against Athaliah **CD1** **4** and of atoning for the fate of her family, with which Adrasto, her

confidant, is expected to help **CD1 [5]**. Later Zibiah comes upon Joash with the priest Jehoiada, and Joash reminds her of her own son **CD1 [10 [11]**. Joash is moved by her fate **CD1 [12]**. Jehoiada, who knows Joash's true identity, observes the scene but decides to keep quiet in order not to jeopardize the coronation **CD1 [13 [14]**. The finale of the first part begins with the ceremony **CD1 [17]**. But the ceremony is interrupted by Athaliah and her retinue. The intervention of the adversary occurs off-stage; Adrasto merely comments on what happens: "*Cinta d'armati, e spade/Urta del Tempio i cardini/L'empia Ataliah cosi*" (Armed with weapons and swords/so does the wicked Athaliah/attack the doors of the Temple) **CD1 [19]**. The first finale ends in general uproar and consternation **CD1 [22]**.

At the beginning of Part Two Adrasto reports to Zibiah that Athaliah is now indeed dead, but that Joash, as the supposed son, will be crowned by Jehoiada in order to maintain her power **CD2 [1]**. When Joash meets Zibiah again after that, she rejects him, bitterly accusing him of treachery **CD2 [3]**. Standing by the graves Adrasto contemplates Zibiah's fate **CD2 [5]**. Joash, who now knows the whole truth from Jehoiada, mourns for his hapless mother **CD2 [7 [8]**. The high priest succeeds in persuading Zibiah that in fact her son is still alive **CD2 [10 [11]**, but only later does he tell her his name **CD2 [15]**. Meanwhile Adrasto decides to fulfil his promise to Zibiah and to kill the false

Joash **CD2 [13 [14]**. In the nick of time he is prevented from carrying out his intention and is informed of the true identities, at which he breaks down, horrified **CD2 [16 [17]**. Jehoiada proclaims divine providence and completes the coronation **CD2 [21]**. The oratorio concludes with joyful singing from Zibiah and Joash at the happy ending **CD2 [22]**.

At the centre of the action in the oratorio, Joash and his mother Zibiah stand in opposition to one another in their conflict-ridden relationship, in a parallel with the father-son axis of the opera. The Joash episode was popular subject-matter for oratorios but it was Metastasio who, in his *azione sacra Gioas Re di Giuda* (Joash, King of Judah: 1735), first introduced the figure of the mother. Metastasio featured Zibiah in various spiritual states. As early as the second part of his *azione sacra* the subject of her doubt about the sincerity of Jehoiada can be found and Zibiah sees Joash as a traitor. This motif, which Metastasio raised to the highest emotional tension, is now developed further in Mayr's *Gioas* parody and, following on from the template of the opera, establishes the core of the plot. Even so, in this respect the libretto for *Gioas* goes far beyond the characterisation of Zibiah in Metastasio's work, in which the mother has no thoughts of a bloody revenge.

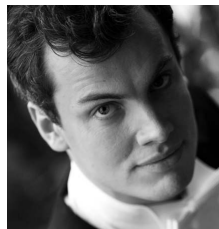
Anja Morgenstern

English translation by David Stevens



Andrea Lauren Brown

Born in Wilmington/Delaware, the soprano Andrea Lauren Brown holds a Master of Music degree in Voice Pedagogy and Performance from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and a Bachelor of Music degree from West Chester University, in Pennsylvania, where she graduated summa cum laude. She was a prizewinner at the International Summer Academy of the University-Mozarteum in Salzburg in 2002. She won second place at the International Competition of the ARD 2003 in Munich. She made her operatic debut at the age of seventeen in Libby Larsen's *A Wrinkle in Time*. She has sung in many of the most important theatres and festivals of Europe, performing both opera and concert repertoire in at least twenty different countries, in collaboration with leading conductors, and in 2006 took the principal rôle of Pamina in Bernhard Lang's opera *I Hate Mozart*. With a repertoire ranging from the baroque to the contemporary, she has a number of successful award-winning recordings to her credit, including Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Schütz's *Symphoniae Sacrae*.



Robert Sellier

The tenor Robert Sellier was born in Munich in 1979 and studied at the Augsburg Musikhochschule with Jan Hammar, participating in master-classes with Margaret Baker-Genovesi, Margreet Honig, Gerd Uecker and Rudolf Jansen. In 2003 he received a scholarship from the Richard Wagner Verband and the following year won first prize in the Nuremberg-Augsburg Musikhochschule Singing Competition. He has appeared with various early music ensembles and his varied rôles as a soloist include Orfeo (*Orfeo ed Euridice*), Ferrando (*Così fan tutte*), and Charly (*Mahagonny-Songspiel*). In 2006 he sang Emilio in Mozart's *Il sogno di Scipione* at Klagenfurt and in the Salzburg Festival and he has sung Count Almaviva in Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Berlin Komische Oper. He joined the Munich Staatstheater am Gärtnerplatz in 2007, with rôles that have included Don Curzio, Fenton, Count Almaviva and Tamino.



Cornel Frey

Born in Lucerne in 1977, Cornel Frey was first treble in the Lucerne Boys Choir. He studied with Jakob Stämpfli at the Berne Hochschule für Musik und Theater, where he graduated in 2003. A winner of various prizes, he has appeared in particular as an interpreter of Bach, making his name throughout Switzerland. In the 2002-2003 season he was a member of the Zurich International Opera Studio, with which he made his debut as Albert Herring in Britten's opera, and from 2003 to 2009 was a member of the Wuppertal Theatre, joining the Bavarian State Theatre in the Gärtnerplatz in Munich in 2009. His career has brought festival appearances in Ludwigsburg, Graz, Vienna and Lucerne, under Wolfgang Gönnenwein, Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Alois Koch respectively, and he sang, under Harnoncourt, Aufidio in Mozart's *Lucio Silla* in the Vienna Festival Weeks in 2005. A recording for Sonarte of *Lieder* by Beethoven and Schubert was released in 2005.



Andreas Burkhart

The baritone Andreas Burkhart was born in 1984 in Munich. From 1992 to 1999 he was a chorister in the Tolz Boys Choir and from 2002 to 2005 a member of the Bavarian Singakademie. In 2005 he was regional first prizewinner in the solo voice section of the Jugend musiziert competition and in September of the same year became a student of Frieder Lang at the Munich Hochschule für Musik und Theater. In March 2007 he took the rôle of Father Augustine in Prokofiev's *Betrothal in a Monastery* as a guest of the German-French Forum of Young Art. Since October 2007 he has been in the *Lieder* class of Helmut Deutsch and since March 2009 has been an award holder of Live Music Now.



Franz Hauk

Born in Neuburg an der Donau in 1955, Franz Hauk studied church and school music, with piano and organ, at the Munich Musikhochschule and in Salzburg. His teachers included Aldo Schoen, Gerhard Weinberger, Franz Lehmendorfer and Edgar Krapp. Several distinctions followed and in 1988 he took his doctorate in the department of musicology with a thesis on church music in Munich at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Since 1982 he has served as organist at Ingolstadt Minster, and since 1995 has also served as choirmaster. He has given concerts in Europe and the United States and made a number of recordings. He has done much to revive interest in the music of Simon Mayr and since October 2002 has taught in the historical performance and church music department of the Munich Music and Theatre Hochschule. He has served as a juror in music competitions and directed master-classes at international music festivals. He founded the Simon Mayr Choir in 2003.



Bavarian State Opera Chorus

The Chorus of the Bavarian State Opera can count on a long and distinguished history, sharing with the Bavarian State Orchestra and Bavarian State Ballet a repertoire of some 350 opera and ballet performances annually at the Munich National Theatre, the Prince Regent Theatre and the Cuvilliers Theatre. Since 2003-2004 the chorusmaster has been Andrés Maspéro, with Stellario Fagone as deputy and Anna Hauer as répétiteur.



The Simon Mayr Chorus and Ensemble

The Simon Mayr Chorus and Ensemble were established by Franz Hauk in 2003. The chorus's repertoire ranges from the sixteenth to the twentieth century and a special emphasis is laid on historical performance techniques and the performance of vocal music by Simon Mayr. Members of the chorus include vocal students from the Munich Hochschule für Musik und Theater and singers from Ingolstadt and the surrounding region. The chorus made its début in 2003 in Bach's *Mass in B minor* with the Wasa Baroque Orchestra in Norway. The chorus and ensemble, its players drawn from leading German orchestras, have recorded for Naxos a number of works by Simon Mayr.

Simon Mayr (1763–1845)

Gioas

Oper als Oratorium: Ein Parodieverfahren im 19. Jahrhundert in Italien

Es ist wohl davon auszugehen, daß die Umarbeitungen von Opern zu Oratorien meistens ohne Wissen oder gar Beteiligung der Komponisten vorgenommen wurden. Daß Mayr derartiger Praxis jedoch nicht ablehnend gegenüberstand, zeigt das Beispiel seiner Adaption der Oper *Joseph* von Etienne-Nicolas Méhul.

Die Oratorien-Parodie einer Oper von Johann Simon Mayr, *Gioas*, entstand in Florenz. Auftraggeber war die Confraternita degli Scolopi, die das Werk 1823 in ihrer Kirche S. Giovanni Evangelista erstmals aufführte. *Gioas* beruht auf Mayrs Oper *I misteri eleusini*, die 1802 an der Mailänder Scala erstmals aufgeführt wurde. Verfolgt man die Rezeptionsgeschichte dieser Oper, darf man sie zu Recht zu den beliebtesten Bühnenwerken Mayrs zählen. Stendal schätzte das Werk noch im Jahre 1824 hoch ein: „*I Misteri Eleusini* galten als das stärkste und kraftvollste musikalische Werk der Epoche.“

Die Vorlageoper der Parodie hörte das Florentiner Publikum bereits im Jahre 1806 im Teatro della Pergola. Bis 1823 war Mayr kontinuierlich mit insgesamt 21 Opern an den verschiedenen Opernhäusern von Florenz, meistens jedoch am Teatro della Pergola, präsent, darunter mit einigen Wiederaufnahmen, wie zum Beispiel *Ginevra di Scozia* und *L'amor coniugale*. Zum letzten Mal stand in Florenz 1824 eine Oper Mayrs (*Ginevra di Scozia*) auf dem Spielplan, ein Jahr, nachdem die Parodie an S. Giovanni Evangelista erstmals erklingen war. Danach ist keine weitere Opernaufführung Mayrs in Florenz belegt.

Der Name der Bruderschaft *Confraternità degli Scolopi*, die 1597 in Rom von dem spanischen Gegenreformer Joseph Calasanz gegründet worden ist, leitet sich von „Padri delle Scuole Pie“ ab. Das Hauptziel der Confraternita, deren offizieller Name „Clerici di Madre di Dio“ lautete, bestand in der Ausbildung armer Kinder. Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts übernahm sie die geistige Nachfolge der Jesuiten. Nach der napoleonischen Aufhebung von 1808 widmete sich der Orden ab 1815 – dem Jahr der formalen

Wiedereinsetzung Ferdinands III. als Großherzog der Toskana – wieder den pädagogischen Aufgaben. Dazu gehörte selbstverständlich auch die religiöse Erziehung. Im Jahre 1820 bewirkte man deshalb die Wiedereinführung der Quarantore an den letzten drei Karnevalstagen in ihrer Kirche S. Giovanni Evangelista, auch bekannt als S. Giovannino, San Giovanni degli Scolopi oder San Giovannino degli Scolopi. Damit begann eine knapp einhundert Jahre währende Oratorientradition im Rahmen der religiösen Tätigkeiten der Bruderschaft dieser Kirche. Die erste Quarantore-Feier mit Aufführung eines (unbekannten) Oratoriums ist für das Jahr 1821 belegt. 1822 gab man *I Maccabei* von Vittorio Trento. Darauf folgte dann Mayrs Parodie *Gioas*. Ab 1828 wurde es üblich, an den drei Abenden jeweils zwei verschiedene Oratorien zu spielen, nach 1844 gab man diesen Usus wieder auf. Das letzte in S. Giovanni Evangelista aufgeführte Oratorium (1912) war die bereits 1854 entstandene Tragedia lirica *Giudetta* von Emilio Cianchi. Zeitungsberichten zufolge war an den drei Abenden, an denen das Allerheiligste Sakrament „in forma di Quarantore“ ausgestellt wurde, die Kirche feierlich geschmückt und beleuchtet. Für die Musiker errichtete man ein Podest. Zwischen den zwei Teilen eines jeden Oratoriums wurden Predigten gehalten.

Aus der Zahl der überlieferten Stimmen beispielsweise zum *Gioas* läßt sich die Größe des Musikerensembles ermitteln. So dürfte das Orchester aus 33 Musikern (20 Streichern, zwölf Bläsern und Schlagwerk) und der Chor aus mindestens 22 Sängern bestanden haben. Vermutlich sangen keine Frauen, auch wenn Sopranstimmen überliefert sind. Diese wurden wohl mit Knabenstimmen besetzt. Die musikalischen Aktivitäten der Padri Scolopi wurden durch die jeweils amtierenden Präsidenten und kunstliebende Mäzene der Stadt großzügig finanziert. Diese neue an die Quarantore-Feier gebundene Tradition setzte die reiche Oratoriengeschichte, die Florenz im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert ausgeprägt hatte, auf eindrucksvolle

Art im 19. Jahrhundert fort.

Die Parodie hält sich musikalisch sehr eng an die Vorlage. Arien, Ensembles, Chöre sowie accompagnato-Rezitative wurden exakt, meist nahezu textgleich übernommen. Die Satzbezeichnungen stimmen mit jenen der Opernpartitur überein. Neue Texte und Neuvertonungen ergeben sich vor allem bei den Secco-Rezitativen.

Die religiöse Handlung spielt in mythischen Zeiten in einem der Göttin Ceres geweihten Wald sowie in und um den Ceres-Tempel. Antinoo, König von Theben, lebt mit großer Schuld. Einst hat er aus Rache für die Entführung seines Sohnes Polibete den König Lysander getötet und dessen Tochter Temisto verschleppt. Später läßt er sie und ihre Familie aus Eifersucht töten. Um sich von seinen Sünden zu befreien, ersucht er das Heiligtum der Ceres. Am Tempel findet er in Adrasto das Ebenbild seines totglaubten Sohnes. Die Oberpriesterin, die auf die heilige Zeremonie an dem Fremden durchführen soll, ist aber keine geringere als die überlebende, auf Rache sinnende Temisto. Diese hatte zuvor ihrem Gefolge und Adrasto das Versprechen abgenommen, den Mord ihrer Familie zu sühnen. Als Temisto ihren Widersacher erkennt, unterbricht ein Erdbeben den Ritus. Im zweiten Akt schwört Adrasto dem fremden unglücklichen König ewige Feindschaft. Der Oberpriester entschließt inzwischen, Antinoo die Identität Polibetes alias Adrasto, den der sterbende Lysander ihm anvertraute, zu offenbaren. Temisto dagegen ist zum Mord an Antinoo, den Adrasto ausführen soll, entschlossen. Im letzten Moment wird dieser vom Oberpriester aufgehalten, erfährt die Wahrheit und bricht bei dem Gedanken, fast den eigenen Vater ermordet zu haben, in Verzweiflung aus. Adrasto und Temisto werden für die geplante frevlerische Tat zum Tode verurteilt, um die Göttin zu besänftigen. Antinoo möchte an seines Sohnes statt sterben, um die eigene Schuld zu sühnen. Besänftigt durch dessen Opfermut verzichtet Temisto ihrerseits nun auf Vergeltung. Der Oberpriester führt das *lieto fine* herbei, indem er Adrasto mit seinem Vater nach Theben ziehen läßt und Temisto gebietet, sich ausschließlich dem Dienst an der Göttin zu weihen.

Die "pseudosakrale Thematik" der Handlung mit zahlreichen Priesterchören, Zeremonien und Gebeten eignete

sich gut für eine geistliche Parodie. Diese nun greift die alttestamentarische Erzählung von der Rettung des jungen Joasch vor der mörderischen Atalja und dessen Einsetzung zum König durch den Priester Joiada (2 Kön 11) auf.

Die Oratorienhandlung setzt kurz vor Beginn der Krönungszeremonie ein. Sebia am Grabe ihres Sohnes hegt Rachegedanken gegen Atalja **CD1 4**, das Schicksal ihrer Familie zu sühnen, wobei ihr Adrasto, ihr *confidente*, helfen soll **CD1 5**. Später trifft Sebia an der Seite des Priesters Giojada auf Gioas, der sie an ihren eigenen Sohn erinnert **CD1 10 11**. Gioas ist von ihrem Schicksal berührt **CD1 12**. Giojada, der die wahre Identität Gioas' kennt, beobachtet die Szene. Er beschließt jedoch, noch zu schweigen, um die Krönung nicht zu gefährden **CD1 13 14**. Das Finale des ersten Teils setzt mit der Zeremonie ein **CD1 17**. Diese wird durch Atalja und ihr Gefolge unterbrochen. Das Eingreifen der Widersacherin ereignet sich, „hinter der Bühne“, Adrasto kommentiert lediglich das Geschehen: „*Cinta d'armati, e spade / Urta del Tempio i cardini / L'empia Atalia cosi*.“ **CD1 19**. Das erste Finale endet in allgemeiner Aufregung und Entsetzen **CD1 22**.

Zu Beginn des zweiten Teils berichtet Adrasto Sebia, daß Atalja zwar nun tot sei, aber Gioas als fingierter Sohn durch Giojada gekrönt werden soll, um ihre Macht weiterhin aufrechtzuerhalten **CD2 1**. Als daraufhin Gioas erneut auf Sebia trifft, weist sie ihn, des Verrats beschuldigend, schroff von sich **CD2 3**. Adrasto sinnt an den Gräbern über das Schicksal Sebias **CD2 5**. Gioas seinerseits, der von Giojada nun die volle Wahrheit kennt, bedauert seine unglückliche Mutter **CD2 7 8**. Dem Priester gelingt es, Sebia davon zu überzeugen, daß ihr Sohn tatsächlich noch lebt **CD2 10 11**, aber erst später nennt er ihr den Namen **CD2 15**. Inzwischen beschließt Adrasto, sein Versprechen gegenüber Sebia zu erfüllen und den falschen Gioas zu töten **CD2 13 14**. In letzter Sekunde wird er von seinem Vorhaben abgehalten und über die wahren Identitäten aufgeklärt, worauf er vor Entsetzen zusammenbricht **CD2 16 17**. Giojada verkündet die göttliche Fügung und vollendet die Krönung **CD2 21**. Das Oratorium schließt mit einem freudigen Gesang von Sebia und Gioas über das *lieto fine* **CD2 22**.

Im Mittelpunkt der Oratorienhandlung stehen Gioas,

dessen Mutter Sebia, sowie deren konfliktreiches Verhältnis zueinander, parallel zur Vater-Sohn-Konstellation in der Oper. Die Gioas-Episode war ein beliebter Oratorienstoff, aber erst Metastasio hat in seine Azione sacra *Gioas Re di Giuda* (1735) die Figur der Mutter eingeführt. Metastasio hat Sebia in verschiedenen Gemütszuständen gezeigt. Im zweiten Teil der Azione sacra findet sich bereits das Motiv ihres Zweifels an der Aufrichtigkeit Giojadas, und Sebia sieht in Gioas einen Verräter. Dieses Motiv, das Metastasio

zur Erhöhung der emotionalen Spannung eingeführt hat, wird nun in der Mayrschen *Gioas-Parodie* weiter ausgearbeitet und bildet in Anlehnung an die Opernvorlage das Zentrum der Handlung. Allerdings geht das Gioas-Libretto in diesem Punkt weit über die Charakterisierung Sebias bei Metastasio hinaus, wo die Mutter blutige Rachegeleüste nicht kennt.

Anja Morgenstern

Bavarian-born Johann Simon Mayr achieved renown as an Italianate opera composer, his earlier work taking the form of sacred oratorios. *Gioas* is a combination of both forms, being a parody-oratorio closely following Mayr's opera *I misteri eleusini*, which was considered by Stendhal to be "among [the] most powerful musical works of the age". This mythical drama of kings, priests and goddesses was ideally suited for its intended devotional use, and it joins other pioneering recordings from Franz Hauk which include *David* (8.570366-67) and *Samuele* (8.572721-22).



**Simon
MAYR**
(1763–1845)
Gioas
(Oratorio)



Sebia (Zibiah, Mother of Joash) . . . Andrea Lauren Brown, Soprano
Gioas (Joash, her son) Robert Sellier, Tenor
Adrasto (Confidant of Zibiah) Cornel Frey, Tenor
Giojada (Jehoiada, High Priest) Andreas Burkhart, Bass

Bavarian State Opera Chorus
Simon Mayr Chorus and Ensemble
 Directed from the harpsichord by
Franz Hauk

A detailed track list will be found in the booklet

CD1 1–22 Part One 63:35 • CD2 1–22 Part Two 47:55

The Italian libretto, with English and German translations, may be accessed at
www.naxos.com/libretti/572710.htm

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 Booklet notes: Anja Morgenstern, Keith Anderson • Cover painting: *Athaliah's Dismay at the Coronation of Joash*, c.1858, by Solomon Alexander Hart (1806-81) [Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK / © Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums / The Bridgeman Art Library]
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