

HENRIK RUNG  
– ‘A FEELING FOR MUSIC LIBRARIES’\*

BY  
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Civilization is cumulative – which is, of course, no guarantee of progress, as experience can be both positive and negative and advances are constantly counteracted by retreats. Yet we believe, as Coleridge said, that “The dwarf sees farther than the giant, when he has the giant’s shoulder to mount on.” Accordingly we collect things (some of us more than others, perhaps, to the despair of our wives) for fear that potentially valuable information will be lost or forgotten. The classic figure of a collector is the 17th-century English antiquarian John Aubrey (1625-97), who wrote: “As with the light after Sun-sett – at which time clear; by and by, comes the crepusculum [that is, dusk or twilight]; then, totall darkness – in like manner is it with matters of Antiquitie. Men thinke, because every body remembers a memorable accident shortly after ‘tis donne, ‘twill never be forgotten, which for want of registering, at last is drowned in Oblivion; which reflection haz been a hint that by my means many Antiquities have been reskued and preserved (I myselfe now inclining to be Ancient) – or else utterly lost and forgotten.”<sup>1</sup> And again he mused: “How these curiosities would be quite forgot, did not such idle fellowes as I am putt them down.”<sup>2</sup>

Libraries are collective memories, the repositories of all those thoughts and recollections that are the achievement, the glory and disgrace of mankind. The Liberal politician Lord Samuel called a library “thought in cold storage,” but I have always felt them to be dynamic places, filled with ideas just waiting to be liberated, taken out and

\* This paper was read in the Royal Library’s Dronningesal on 15 January 2004, at the ceremony celebrating the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Music Section as an independent division of the Royal Library. The lecture was followed by a concert given by the university choir “Lille MUKO,” directed by Jesper Grove Jørgensen, in which music referred to in the lecture was sung.

<sup>1</sup> *Aubrey’s Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1962, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

used. We expect a great deal of our libraries, but the efforts of the most conscientious librarian, even with the assistance of the modern copyright deposit law, cannot ensure that any library will have everything. All libraries must therefore depend on the acquisition of the libraries of specialist collectors to enlarge their holdings at least in certain areas. Such, for example, was the case with the collection of Arni Magnusson, the Icelandic-born Danish civil servant, who at the end of the 17th and in the early 18th century saved from oblivion most of the Icelandic manuscripts that still survived at that time and together with other books and manuscripts, collected also in Norway and Sweden, built up a library that was one of the wonders of Copenhagen, a "must" on the itinerary of visiting scholars. Part of it was unfortunately lost in the great fire of 1728, but the rest was donated to the library of the University, where it has since been one of the treasures of Danish libraries, now shared with the National Library of Iceland.

If not actually on Philon's list of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Great Library of Alexandria was nevertheless in its way also a wonder and it too went up in flames. In the words of Ted Hughes,

"Fourteen centuries have learned,  
From charred remains, that what took place  
When Alexandria's library burned  
Brain-damaged the human race."

Here too the library incorporated special collections, such as, it is said, the library formed by Aristotle, acquired by Ptolemy II, and the official texts of the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, borrowed from the library in Athens on the payment of a deposit, which Ptolemy III apparently thought was a small price to forfeit in order to keep the books in Alexandria. Even in so great a library (700,000 books according to one estimate), however, no mention is made of a music collection and this is not really surprising, for what purpose could it possibly serve to have music in a library? Music is for playing and singing and presumably even in the Alexandrian Library there were signs enjoining the readers to read in silence. It was not before music acquired an historical dimension, when one became interested in studying music's history and development, that it came to deserve a place in institutions of collective memory – and that happened comparatively recently.

In his *A General History of Music*, the first history of music in English, published between 1776 and 1789, Dr. Charles Burney makes the following plea: "In a library, formed upon so large a scale as that of the

King of France at Paris, the Bodleian [of Oxford University], and Museum in England, it seems as if music should be put on a level with other arts and sciences, in which every book of character is procured. In a royal or ample collection of pictures, specimens at least of every great painter are purchased, and no private library is thought complete, while the writings of a single poet of eminence are wanting."<sup>3</sup> At this point Dr. Burney introduced in a lengthy footnote a plan for the organization of such a collection, which he prefaced with these words: "In forming such a Musical Library as would assist the student, gratify the curious, inform the historian, and afford a comparative view of the state of the art at every period of its existence, it were to be wished that the books, when collected, were classed in a way somewhat like the following: [here the systematic plan is outlined]."<sup>4</sup> The legitimate expectations of the student and historian of music are thus clearly expressed to the custodians of libraries. A similar argument was used by F. L. Æ. Kunzen in December 1812 when recommending the purchase by the Danish state of a private music collection. As Music Director of the Royal Chapel, he had been asked if a certain collection should be bought for the Royal Chapel, but in his answer he expressed the wish that the collection could be acquired so that it might serve as the foundation for a proper music section of the Royal Library, which at that time, he said, was totally unequipped to meet the needs of the student of music. Kunzen's recommendation was endorsed and approved in 1813 "for those who in future may wish to study and cultivate music from a scholarly point of view" [for dem som i Tiiden maatte studere og videnskabeligen dyrke Musikken], a decision of which, as Professor Heinrich Schwab observes in his very interesting account of this important development in the history of the Royal Library, "die Königliche Bibliothek heute, zumal im internationalen Vergleich, berechtigt stolz sein darf."<sup>5</sup>

In September of 1837 the young Danish composer Henrik Rung wrote from Vienna to the administrative director of the Royal Chapel in Copenhagen, A.W. Hauch, to inform him, among other things, of the fact that he had now been six weeks in this great musical centre

<sup>3</sup> Charles Burney: *A General History of Music*, ed. F. Mercer, London 1935, I, pp.708-9. In fairness it should be observed that Burney's *History* preceded by only some seven months *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* by Sir John Hawkins, a quite different, but in its way equally remarkable, achievement of musical historiography.

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> H.W. Schwab: F.L.Æ. Kunzen, der Hofkapellmeister und die königliche Bibliothek. *Fund og Forskning* 34, 1995, p. 163.

where, in addition to attending the theatres, he says that he has had admission to a large music library where he has studied the scores of the greatest masters.<sup>6</sup> Henrik Rung, who was born in 1807, had since 1834 been a member of the Royal Chapel as a contrabassist, but in March 1837 he had had a remarkable success as composer with music for Henrik Hertz's play *Svend Dyrings Hus*. On the strength of this, and with recommendations from such influential musicians as Weyse and Frøhlich and support from Hauch, he had been awarded a two-year travel grant with which he had left Copenhagen in July. That he should go directly to Vienna is not at all surprising; as the home of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, Vienna more than any other European city was the capital of the world of modern music. That he should attend the theatres, which presumably included opera performances and concerts, is also quite as one would expect, but that a musician should use his time visiting a music library is less to be taken for granted. Carl Thrane suggests in his book about Rung that he may have acquired "his feeling for music libraries" – the quality that I have used as the title of my talk – from the composer Weyse,<sup>7</sup> who had a large private library that it might be assumed Rung had been privileged to see. This may indeed be so, but, though Rung certainly knew Weyse, I am not aware that he ever mentioned having had access to his library (which, incidentally, after Weyse's death in 1842 was deposited in the Royal Library). Nor do we know if he had ever made use of the Royal Library, though it was his protector, Hauch, who in 1812 had approved and recommended to King Frederik VI Kunzen's suggestion for the establishment of a music collection in the Royal Library. However this may be, Rung now wrote from Vienna that he had had admission to "a large music library in which he had studied the scores of the greatest masters" and one cannot help wondering to what library he was referring, since, as we have seen, libraries in which there were music collections were still at that time fairly rare.

There would seem to be two possibilities: the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, which had been founded in 1812 and had from the start had plans for the establishment of a library and archive, and the Hofbibliothek (now the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek), which in the 1820s had begun to organize its great Musiksammlung. In reply to my

<sup>6</sup> Carl Thrane: *Cæciliaforeningen og dens stifter*, 1901, p. 38: "... har haft Adgang til et stort musikalsk Bibliothek, hvor jeg har studeret de berømteste Komponisters Partiturer."

<sup>7</sup> Thrane 1901 (note 6), p. 40: "Hos Weyse kan hans Sans for Musikbibliotheker være bleven vakt."

query, my Austrian colleague, Professor Rudolf Flotzinger, expressed the opinion that in 1837 only the Hofbibliothek would have had an adequate collection for the study of "the scores of the greatest masters." He thinks it probable that visitors to Vienna would have been able to gain admittance to the Hofbibliothek without too much difficulty, but he considers it more likely that a musician visiting Vienna at the time Rung was there would have wanted to visit one of the great private music libraries, of which two in particular were famous, one belonging to Simon Molitor and the other to Aloys Fuchs.<sup>8</sup> Though Rung's movements in Vienna are not documented, circumstances would suggest that he may well have had the privilege of studying in both. In addition to being a passionate music collector, Simon Molitor was an enthusiastic advocate of the guitar, for which instrument he had written an instruction manual and composed a large number of pieces. In this interest he was a kindred spirit of Henrik Rung, who was a virtuoso performer on the guitar and also a composer of guitar music. Since his youth, when he had been bed-ridden for a long period, the guitar had been his principal instrument, whereas the contrabass was only a practical necessity in order to get a place in the Royal Chapel. It would seem entirely likely that one of Rung's purposes in visiting Vienna was to meet Molitor, the famous authority on the guitar, and that access to his library followed as a fortunate consequence of that acquaintance. It appears, furthermore, that Simon Molitor regularly played string quartets in his home together with the other great collector, Aloys Fuchs, so it is reasonable to suppose that Rung would have had the advantage of being able to consult his great collection as well, known for its autograph scores by Bach, Händel, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, among others. Would this not be a library in which he could indeed report having studied "the scores of the greatest masters"?

If he did not have it before he came, then, Rung must certainly have left Vienna with "a feeling for music libraries," as he proceeded via Munich to Rome. He arrived in Rome in December 1837 and already in March 1838 he wrote to his chief and patron, Hauch, in Copenhagen describing the benefits he was enjoying from his stay in Italy. "Every Sunday and holiday I am able to hear the papal choir perform excellent compositions," he wrote. "I have also been so fortunate as to obtain entrance to the most famous library in Rome, where I occupy myself with the study of church music; this is especially interesting, since the music as well as the style in which it is written is virtually

<sup>8</sup>I am grateful to Prof. Flotzinger for his good advice, given in a private communication.

unknown to us [in Denmark]."<sup>9</sup> We know precisely what music he was studying at the time he wrote this, for amongst the music of his great collection, which eventually was deposited in the Royal Library, is a copy of the so-called *Missa Papae Marcelli* by Palestrina dated "Rome, March 1838." He had only been in Rome three months at that time, but he could hardly have made a better start. The work that he copied is a work of central importance in Palestrina's production, perhaps in the history of Renaissance music, and it is appropriate that a movement from it should open the concert following this lecture. By July Rung was prepared to affirm that "Palestrina is the noblest and purest composer who has ever lived; much concerning style in church music that previously was obscure to me has become clear after hearing his masterpieces."<sup>10</sup>

The library described by Rung as "the most famous library in Rome" belonged to a priest, the Abbate Santini, but before long he was introduced into even more sacred precincts. Rung was probably now reminded that he ought to use his stay in Rome to prepare himself to apply for the position of singing-master at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen in succession to Giuseppe Siboni, whose distinguished career was approaching its end. He accordingly engaged a singing-teacher and was fortunate to be accepted by Girolamo Ricci, recognized as one of the best in Rome, who introduced him to the Academy of St. Cecilia, where he was subsequently (12 June, 1839) elected an honorary member. He came now into contact with other singers, in particular of the papal choir, as well as with Salvatore Meluzzi and above all with Giuseppe Baini, who was the general administrator of the college of papal singers. Ten years earlier Baini had published a monumental work on Palestrina's life and works,<sup>11</sup> which, despite its shortcomings, "ranks even now as not only the first, but still the most comprehensive,

<sup>9</sup> Thrane 1901 (note 6) p. 39: "Hver Søn- og Helligdag har jeg Lejlighed til at høre det pavelige Kapel foredrage fortrinlige Kompositioner. Jeg har ogsaa været saa lykkelig at faa Adgang til det berømteste Bibliothek i Rom, hvor jeg beskæftiger mig med at studere Kirkekompositioner; dette er i Særdeleshed meget interessant, fordi saavel Musikken som Stilen, hvori den er skreven, næsten er aldeles ubekjendt hos os."

<sup>10</sup> Thrane 1901 (note 6) p. 41: "Palestrina er den ædleste og reneste Komponist, der har levet; meget angaaende Stilen i Kirkemusik, som forhen var mig dunkelt, er blevet mig klart ved at høre hans Mesterværker."

<sup>11</sup> Giuseppe Baini: *Memorie storico-critiche della vita e delle opere di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina*, I-II, Rome 1828.

study of Palestrina, and a landmark in the field of musical biography."<sup>12</sup> Baini gave him access not only to his own vast amount of material, but also obtained for him admission to the incomparable Vatican Library. Rung took good advantage of his opportunities, studied singing and the performance of classical Italian music, but especially he copied a considerable library of both sacred and secular music from the richness of material available to him, which he knew he would not be likely to see again once he left the Eternal City. When in March 1839 the news came that Siboni had died, Rung's application to succeed him was supported by powerful recommendations from all three of his distinguished Roman friends, Baini, Ricci and Meluzzi, which must have made a strong impression on the theatre administration in Copenhagen, and, indeed, his application was successful.

Though Rung was thus welcomed with enviable friendliness and helpfulness into the innermost circle of Roman musical life, he was able to keep from going completely native by engaging actively in the life of the Scandinavian community in Rome, that at this time had reached such proportions as to organize itself into a Scandinavian Society. It was in the year that Rung arrived in Rome, 1837, that Constantin Hansen painted his famous picture of "A Group of Danish Artists in Rome," which includes the architect Bindesbøll and the painters Kùchler, Blunck, Sonne, Marstrand, Rørbye and Hansen himself. In that same year another artist, Jørgen Roed, joined the group and in particular Marstrand and Roed were to become Rung's life-long friends. Both were singers and sang in a choir that Rung conducted as leader of the Scandinavian Society's musical activities. When they returned to Copenhagen the three friends, and their equally musical wives, continued to meet in each other's homes where they kept alive their happy memories of Rome by singing Italian music from Rung's collection.

The complication of Siboni's death and the choosing of a successor had the advantage for Rung of extending his stipendium with a third year abroad, part of which he used to fulfill his original intention to include Paris in his study tour. At the Conservatory there it appears that once again he got more out of using its fine library than from the instruction he received<sup>13</sup> and except for the singing at the Italian Opera nothing suggests that his experience of Paris could compete with the impression made on him by Rome.

<sup>12</sup> G.P. da Palestrina: *Pope Marcellus Mass*, ed. L. Lockwood. Norton Critical Scores, New York 1975, p.34.

<sup>13</sup> P.H.Warming: Henrik Rung. *Illustreret Tidende* Årg. 13, nr. 640, 31 Dec. 1871, p.146.

Back in Copenhagen he took up his position as singing-master to students at the Royal Theatre and at the same time resumed his career as composer. However, his association with choirs in Rome and his own experience directing the choir of the Scandinavian Society there had given him a taste for conducting that came now to constitute a third aspect of an active musical career. He was soon asked to train the choir of the Music Society [*Musikforeningen*] and already in the spring of 1841 he included Palestrina's 8-part *Stabat Mater* on a Music Society concert. The reception of this must have been encouraging, for the following year Rung arranged a Good Friday concert in the Church of Our Lady [*Vor Frue Kirke*] (the present cathedral of Copenhagen) exclusively devoted to old Italian church music (if for this occasion one can accept Orlando di Lasso as an Italian). In the advertising for this concert Rung's special expertise in this field, gained in Rome itself, was emphasized and the public streamed to attend, one report estimating that the audience numbered 3000! In his enthusiasm Rung apparently gave the public more of an unfamiliar experience than it was yet able to appreciate and the concert did not entirely live up to expectations. It proved to be heavy going for much of the audience – four *Misereres* were after all quite a few at one sitting, even if one of them was the legendary setting by Allegri.<sup>14</sup> Rung did not give up, however, but he did learn to proceed more slowly with his programme for giving his countrymen the opportunity to enjoy the beauties of the music of earlier times. In 1843 the Scandinavian Society was formed in Denmark and he turned now to developing the choir

<sup>14</sup>One of those for whom Rung's concert was too much was Clara Schumann, who had arrived in Copenhagen on 20 March to give concerts. She remained about 3 weeks, during which time she came in contact with many of the leading personalities of the Danish "Golden Age" and her constant stream of letters to her husband, Robert, contain many interesting observations. In a letter of Saturday, 26 March, she gives a very critical report of the concert, criticizing the placement of the choir: "eine ganz Etage über der Orgel, ganz oben an der Decke," the performance: "dieses furchtbare unrein singen," the music: "Dazu kom nun noch eine furchtbare Composition [ein] Miserere von Allegri, das der schlechteste Kirchenstück ist, das ich je gehört," and the conductor: "der in Italien gewesen ... und schätzt die alten Italiener höher als Bach, Haydn, Händel ect." *Clara und Robert Schumann. Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, III 1840-1851*, ed. Eva Weissweiler, Frankfurt a.M. 2001, no. 455. Clara Schumann's Germanic antipathy to Italian music (in contrast, as she is aware, to King Christian 8) is abundantly clear from several of the other letters in this fascinating series from Copenhagen. I am grateful to Inger Sørensen for calling Clara Schumann's eye-witness report to my attention.



that was to be one of its activities.<sup>15</sup> This was originally a male chorus which it was intended should specialize in Scandinavian music and in arrangements of Scandinavian folksongs, but before long Rung had added ladies' voices and introduced Italian music into the programmes of the Society. At the same time he continued to meet regularly with his friends from Rome, gradually adding a few voices to the original sextet and enlarging their repertoire of Italian church music to include Italian madrigals. Eventually a plan was worked out to form a choir entirely his own, with which he would be able to realize his own musical ideals. This was the choral society *Cæcilia*, later the "Cecilia Society" [*Cæciliaforeningen*], which was officially founded on 29 October 1851 and is perhaps to be regarded as the embodiment of Rung's strongest-felt musical ambition, his life's work. In the statutes it is stipulated that the purpose of *Cæcilia* is to be "to endeavour to make Italian church music from an older period, in particular the 16th and 17th centuries, more widely known than it has been heretofore to those who care for good music."<sup>16</sup> Though after Henrik Rung's death in December 1871, and especially under the leadership of his son Frederik, who conducted the Cecilia Society from 1877 to 1914, works by German composers, including Bach and Händel, figured large, the Cecilia Society under Henrik Rung remained faithful to its original purpose. Nevertheless, he would seem to have learned his lesson at the fateful Good Friday concert in 1842 and from the first *Cæcilia* concert in 1853 music by Danish composers, in particular by Weyse and Rung himself, was included – as they are on the programme this afternoon – to vary and perhaps to relieve what might at first be regarded as too great a uniformity of the concerts. In addition, from the 4th concert in 1857 madrigals and other pieces of Italian secular music were included. – Also this aspect of Rung's activity is represented

<sup>15</sup> See H. C. Andersen: *Mit livs Eventyr*, ed. H. Topsøe-Jensen, I, 1975, p. 210: "Skandinavismen satte imidlertid Blomst i *Kjøbenhavn*, ... vi fik et "Skandinavisk Selskab," det vil sige en *Forening* i *Kjøbenhavn*, hvor man holdt broderlige Taler om Nordens tre Folk, gav historiske Foredrag og fik skandinaviske Concerter, med Sange af *Bellman* og *Rung*, *Lindblad* og *Gade*, og det var jo ganske fortræffeligt!" [Scandinavianism blossomed in Copenhagen ... we got a "Scandinavian Society," that is, an association in Copenhagen where one held brotherly speeches about the three Nordic peoples, gave historical lectures and were presented with concerts of Scandinavian music, with songs by Bellman and Rung, Lindblad and Gade, and of course it was quite splendid!]

<sup>16</sup> Thrane 1901 (note 6) p. 109: "[at] klassisk italiensk Kirkemusik fra en ældre Tid, navnlig det 15de og 16de [*recte* 16de og 17de] Aarhundrede bliver i en større Omfang end hidtil gjort bekjendt for den gode Musiks Dyrkere."

on this afternoon's concert by the two madrigals of Luca Marenzio, one of the finest of Italian madrigal composers.

Henrik Rung was musical director and conductor of the Cecilia Society for twenty years, conducting his last concert on 18 June, 1871, just six months before his death. This concert included a composition by his 17-year-old son, Frederik, whose musical talent was then so obvious that it was decided that he was to assume the direction of the Cecilia Society when he reached maturity. In 1877, therefore, at the age of 23, he took possession of his inheritance, after the interim regency of Holger Paulli.

In 1871, the year of Henrik Rung's death, a young student from Fyn named Thomas Laub (1852-1927) came to Copenhagen to enroll in the University. He almost certainly arrived too late to be present at Rung's last concert and it is not known if he met Henrik Rung during the few months that remained of his life. He became a close friend of Frederik Rung, however, and a familiar visitor in the home of the Rung family, where he had access to the large music library that Henrik Rung had built up, in which, as Laub's biographer Paul Hamburger says, "he first found his way to the music of the past."<sup>17</sup> Together with Frederik Rung he published a collection of music from the 17th and 18th centuries, including works by Cavalli, Carissimi, Scarlatti, Stradella and others, taken from the library collected in Italy by Henrik Rung, and in 1882 he decided to follow the older Rung's example and go to Italy himself. He visited libraries in many Italian towns and cities, especially Rome and Naples, and like his predecessor he copied eagerly as much as he was allowed to – though he found conditions were not as free as they had been 45 years earlier. He repeated the experience again in 1899, building up a considerable library of little-known Italian music from which he acquired a deep insight into the polyphonic style of 16th- and 17th-century *a cappella* music. (Laub's collection too is now deposited with the Royal Library.) He was also a composer, a respected teacher, a prominent organist and, above all, a powerful influence as church music reformer.

Laub in his turn was acknowledged as the teacher that Knud Jeppesen (1892-1974) felt had been most influential in determining his development as a musical scholar – as Carl Nielsen was in shaping his career as a composer. Jeppesen's dissertation on Palestrina's style, *Dissonansbehandling bei Palestrina* [The Treatment of Dissonance in the Music of Palestrina ], for which he was awarded the doctorate by the

<sup>17</sup> Poul Hamburger: *Thomas Laub, hans Liv og Gerning*, 1942, p. 14: "her var det, han først fandt Vejen til den gamle Musik."

University of Vienna in 1922,<sup>18</sup> and the text-book for teaching 16th-century counterpoint derived from it,<sup>19</sup> together with the remarkable discoveries, valuable editions and perceptive studies, especially of Italian music in the 16th century, that he made during a distinguished career, have been of central importance to our present-day understanding of Renaissance music.

After the death of Frederik Rung, the conductorship of the Cecilia Society and possession of Rung's great library of music passed in succession to Frederik's nephew, P. S. Rung-Keller (1879-1965), who finally deposited the Henrik and Frederik Rung's Music Archive [*H. & Fr. Rungs Musikarkiv*], numbering some 3000 volumes, in the Royal Library in the 1950s. In 1931 Mogens Wøldike (1897-1988) became the last conductor of the Cecilia Society until its activities ceased in 1934. Before that, however, in 1922, Wøldike, who like Jeppesen was a pupil of Carl Nielsen and Thomas Laub, had been asked to take over a choir that had been formed to give a performance, at the request of the Danish-Italian Society, of Palestrina's 6-part *Missa Papae Marcelli* in its entirety. Though movements of this famous mass had been sung from time to time on the programmes of the Cecilia Society ever since its first concert, they had never been performed altogether. This finally took place in 1923 in a concert introduced by Knud Jeppesen and the choir continued its existence under the name The Palestrina Choir. Like the Cecilia Society it ceased to exist in 1934, at which time its work and music library passed to the Copenhagen Boys' Choir, founded by Mogens Wøldike in conjunction with a proper song school, which still exists and occupies an important place in Danish musical life.

The *Missa Papae Marcelli* has been often mentioned in the course of this talk and I referred to it earlier as "a work of central importance in Palestrina's production, perhaps in the history of Renaissance music." The "perhaps" in this statement refers to an important claim that has been made on behalf of this mass, according to which, when the Council of Trent was convoked in the middle of the 16th century in order to consider what was to be done to counteract the division in the Christian Church caused by the Reformation, a powerful faction put forward the opinion that polyphonic music had become a vain ornament that often distracted the faithful from true devotion during

<sup>18</sup> This was enlarged and published as *Palestrinastil med særligt Henblik på Dissonansbehandling*, 1923; Ger. transl. 1925; Eng. transl. 1927.

<sup>19</sup> Knud Jeppesen: *Kontrapunkt (Vokalpolyfoni)*, [1930]; Ger. transl. 1935; Eng. transl. 1939.

the church service. This group would abolish the use of music in parts and return to an exclusive use of the traditional Gregorian Chant. In this situation, it is said, Palestrina wrote this mass as a demonstration of what ideal church music could and should be like, to show that polyphonic music too could convey the proper spirit of devotion. His mass won approval and polyphonic music that adhered to the ideals represented by the so-called Pope Marcellus Mass was permitted to continue to be composed and sung in the Catholic Church. This story was told at length by Baini in his fundamental study of Palestrina and was widely accepted after him; however, in more recent times it came to be doubted and was even thought to have been made up by Baini. Accordingly, when the late Gustave Reese wrote his great study, *Music in the Renaissance* in 1954, this story was treated as a romantic legend. Now the pendulum swung the other way and on Reese's authority Palestrina was deprived of the honour of being "the man who saved church music."<sup>20</sup> What is not as generally known as it should be, however, is that Knud Jeppesen wrote a masterly review of Reese's book<sup>21</sup> in which he showed that the story, though perhaps fancifully told by Baini, had not been invented by him; Jeppesen has found it at least as far back as a passage in a book by Agazzari published in 1607, that is, almost contemporary with Palestrina. And as for Reese's claim that it has been proved that this Mass was composed some years before the meetings of the Council, Jeppesen says that he, for one, knows no such proof.<sup>22</sup>

All this, it may be said, has followed as a direct consequence of Henrik Rung's "feeling for music libraries." Of course, some may say that it would probably have happened anyway and indeed, others may point out that Henrik Rung was not the first in Denmark to show an interest in Renaissance music. It is quite true that in Weyse's music collection, now in the Royal Library, there is a copy of the *Missa Papae*

<sup>20</sup> Gustave Reese: *Music in the Renaissance*, New York 1954, pp. 452, 480.

<sup>21</sup> *The Musical Quarterly*, XLI, 1955, pp. 378-91.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387.

*Marcelli* which bears the annotation “Copiirt 1822, juni-juli.”<sup>23</sup> However, the fact is, that though Weyse was interested in a wide range of music, he was unable fully to appreciate the beauty of the Renaissance style. When Rung gave his ambitious concert of Italian church music in the Church of Our Lady in Copenhagen on Good Friday 1842, Weyse was present (he died in October) and wrote of it as follows: “The concert on Friday, at which the church was so full of curious people that I have never seen anything like it, bored everyone most miserably. No, Messrs Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Allegri, and so on, go and take your 300-year-old music with you; it is no longer to our taste.”<sup>24</sup> In his Autobiography he wrote: “They say I am a great admirer of Mozart. That is no doubt true; but not Mozart alone, also J.S. Bach, Händel, Em. Bach, Lotti, Haydn, Gluck, Schulz, and others, I hold in highest regard.”<sup>25</sup> One notices here that the earliest name on his list – and the only Italian – is Antonio Lotti (c.1667-1740), whereas all the other admired composers are Germanic.<sup>26</sup> Thanks to Rung and his feeling for music libraries the Danish public was able to enjoy, before those of many other countries, the advantage of having its musical horizon pushed back by the 300 years that Weyse failed to appreciate.

<sup>23</sup> It would appear that Weyse obtained Palestrina’s mass through the agency of a German music librarian, Georg Pölchau, who more than once refers to Weyse’s interest in it in his correspondence with Weyse, e.g., in a letter from Hamburg dated 18 June 1822 (Royal Library, NKS 2836 4o I, nr.212). Pölchau evidently had access to a great deal of music and music literature, both old and new, which he offers to Weyse in his letters; he has presumably been helpful to Weyse in building up his fine collection. There is, furthermore, a second copy of *Missa Papae Marcelli* in Weyse’s collection, which may have been copied as an exercise, as it is in open score, whereas the 1822 copy is compressed onto three staves, 2 voices per staff. In both cases the scores can only have been used for study of the musical technique and not for performance, since, except for incipits at the beginnings of sections, neither includes the text of the mass. I am very grateful to Carsten Hatting for informing me of these interesting letters.

<sup>24</sup> Letter to F. Schauenburg-Müller, 1 April 1842, *C.E.F. Weyse Breve*, ed. Sven Lunn and Erik Reitzel-Nielsen, 1964, I, p. 478: “Concerten i Fredags, hvor Kirken var saa fuld af Nysgerrige, jeg aldrig har seet den før, har paa det jammerligste ennuyert alle Mennesker. Nei! Mine Herrer Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Allegri & &, gak hen og læg Jer med Eders 300 aarige Musik, den smager os ikke meer.”

<sup>25</sup> C. Thrane: *Danske Komponister: Fire Skildringer*, 1875, p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> A lack of sympathy for Rung’s efforts on behalf of Italian music that must have prejudiced his reception of Rung’s concert is indicated by a comment made a year earlier, when he wrote in a letter, “Rung ... is ... so Italianized that it is something awful.” Letter to F. Schauenburg-Müller, 4 March 1841, *C.E.F. Weyse Breve* (note 24) I, p. 319: “Rung ... er ... saa italienisert, at det er en Gru.”