

¶ Britta Britta Bengtsson. *1751 års män: Anteckningar om amatörer och hovkapellister vid "Kongl. Begravnings och Kongl. Krönings Musiquerne år 1751."*. *Musiken i Sverige: Dokument och förvecklingar*, Vol. 12, ed. By Anders Lönn and Veslemøy Heintz. Stockholm: Statens musikbibliotek, 2001. 180 Pp, Map. ISBN 91-85172-01-4.

Often the most difficult detail work in a musicological investigation of a particular place, time, or event surrounds the precise details of the participants. The documentation is often quite rich in terms of names, but information on these people is commonly lacking to such a degree that identification is usually based only upon supposition or the most meager of circumstantial evidence. If one has the time, patience, or interest to proceed further, say, if a particular turn of phrase or person stands out, it becomes a major project, with the subsequent likelihood of fruition being placed into some indefinite future, as is not uncommon in scholarship, or coming to a dead end as the virtually anonymous figure lacks the biographical data to outline him or her with anything more than the most superficial scholarly clothing. Yet, these are the people who made such events worthy of documentation happen, and their story, though not as well defined as perhaps the Kapellmästare or chorus master, is nonetheless part of the historical continuum without which such could not have occurred.

This long preamble in a somewhat philosophical tone is perhaps obvious, but it only points out the singularity of Bengtsson's book. The author, whose late husband was responsible for the renaissance of Swedish music of the galant period, particularly the principal figure Johan Helmich Roman, is herself part of the extensive scholarship of this composer and his times, having published other documentation and assisted in the completion of the critical source study of his vocal works published over half a decade ago by Anna Lena Holm. She is uniquely qualified to undertake such a daunting task as bringing into focus, even for such a brief glimpse, the lives of those who made the music of Roman and his contemporaries come alive. Her work, though hardly a

scholarly tome in the traditional sense, provides information that will be of use to musicologists for some time to come.

Her focus is a particularly momentous event, the 1751 funeral for Frederick I. This King, a German prince who was largely a figurehead in his adoptive homeland, was nonetheless a good ruler and a striking contrast to his predecessor, the bellicose Carl XII. His rule, while not particularly prominent, nonetheless had kept Sweden a relatively prosperous nation, and while the event of his death was certainly less ceremonial than the excessive marriage of his successor, Crown Prince Adolph Frederick of Holstein-Gottorp to Princess Louisa Ulrika of Prussia, in 1744, an occasion for which Roman wrote the now famous *Drottningholmsmusik*, it was an occasion when at least most of the musicians attached to the court were involved in the music. In her introduction, Bengtsson notes that Roman, himself aging and facing physical disability, composed a new cantata, *Herren känner de frommas dagar* for the burial on September 27, 1751 in the Riddarholmskyrka, as well as a more joyous companion piece, the cantata *Prisa Jerusalem Herran* and three anthems (as well as adapting pieces by Handel, Roman's mentor, Hasse, Leo, and Paradies) for the coronation ceremonies. The actual funeral music for Frederick performed during the ceremonies on April 11 was left to Roman's successor, the luckless Per Brant; his music is not identified, but probably consisted of Roman's works as well. While the new cantatas in question are important works from Roman's late career, it is the fact that he had at his disposal no less than a hundred musicians, drawn from the Hovkapell to "skole barn" (school children) and "främmande som hulpit" (strangers who helped out), indicating that the musical life in Stockholm, even with two official court ensembles, could be richer than one might suspect from the documents that belabor the deplorable state of music in the preceding years. Bengtsson points this out in a rather impressive introduction that ranges from historical overview to the presentation of facts such as the salaries of the lead singers. More interestingly, many of the musicians who participated in this event were later to become part of the increasingly active and powerful musical establishment, some even being major figures in the succeeding years.

Bengtsson wisely keeps from making the event out to be more than it was, i.e. just another important musical-ceremonial occasion, referring to it more as a specific point in time that justifies the main section of her work, the individual biographies of the musicians. These are divided systematically by genre, beginning with the vocalists, followed by the children arranged according to the three classes, instrumentalists, the well-meaning strangers, and finally the “Capell-Dränger,” or apprentices. She also provides a good bibliography and sources, along with a useful names index. The author omits Roman, about which much information already exists, although she oddly enough does include his rival and eventual successor, Hinrich Philipp Johnsen, about whom there has also been a relatively good amount of scholarship in recent years. One might fault her for this ranking, but to include him does not cause any harm, though it likewise provides no new information.

Of particular interest in this book are people who later became major contributors in the late Frihetstid and Gustavian eras. For example, Anders Wesström, one of Sweden’s first violin virtuosos, and Ferdinand Zellbell, both leading contenders for the privilege of writing Sweden’s first opera (a commission that went to the Italian Uttini) are both well represented, as is Jonas Åman. When writing on Åman’s contributions to the development for the Swedish symphony, he was listed as an “amateur,” with no biographical information about him whatsoever apart from the fact he had once donated a cello to the new Royal Academy. Her identification of him as an oboist brings to light a different sort of circumstances which allows his true significance to be identified in the Swedish musical historical canon. Among those “helping out” is Lars Hjortsberg, the father of Sweden’s leading actor of the Gustavian period and no mean singer himself, and Patrick Ahlströmer, under whose protection and auspices the Gustavian opera was launched some twenty years later. Finally, Anders Nordén, nine years old at the time, began his singing career at this event; he was later to become the leading bass at the Royal Opera, known for his interpretive ability.

In short, this is a work that is both useful and pertinent to the development of a comprehensive knowledge of Swedish music history of the eighteenth century. It does not pretend to be exhaustive or complete,

but the information sheds some light on the people, some of whom were significant in their contributions in later years. Bengtsson's writing style is simple and direct, and scholars will be using her work to supplement their own for many years to come. In doing some of the tedious tasks that lead not to brilliant discovery but to a compendium of small facts she has done a remarkable service to the field.

*Bertil van Boer*, Western Washington University,  
Bellingham, WA