

THE ZANI STORY

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(to be continued)



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MARTIN RUMMEL

It all started in early 2012. I was teaching at the University of Auckland, and my colleague and friend Dr Allan Badley was the external assessor of a PhD thesis from the University of Canterbury: Jill Ward had written a biography and transcribed all extant works of Andrea Zani (1696–1757) into modern music typesetting. The 13 volumes continued the twelve cello concertos, the manuscript of which is housed in the collection of the Schönborn family in Wiesentheid (Germany).

To cut a long story short: I applied for funding from the university's highly competitive research fund to make the world premiere recording of these works with the Kölner Akademie and Michael Alexander Willens, to be published by Capriccio. I was awarded nearly NZ\$50,000 to pay for the orchestra, the conductor, the recording and editing, and my travel. Subsequently I flew down to Christchurch and met with Jill Ward's supervisor, Dr Brian Pritchard, to go through the scores for mistakes. Already there I should have been warned: When I took some pictures from that meeting, he said that I was not to use them publicly (not even on Facebook!), and that I had to get permission to record the works from the Schönborn archive.

I repeatedly contacted the then librarian via email, letter and even tried to phone her, and for nearly half a year I did not get a reply. While we were already in the editing phase of the concertos, I received an email from a certain Mr Stingel, a lawyer who said he was in charge of handling the archive now. After referring him to the owner of Capriccio, I put some money of the university grant aside to pay for copyrights. In a phone conversation, I tried to convince him to register the concertos with GEMA as "nachgelassenes Werk" (which would ensure royalties for 25 years) and also offered to make contact with publishers who might be interested to print the works for wider distribution. It became soon clear that all he was interested in was money – the music did never matter. I believe the deal that was made with Capriccio was well over EUR 1,500 for the first print of the recording, but it might even have been more. Mr Stingel made it clear that any live performance was forbidden unless it was subject to further payment. I will leave it to you to judge the ethos of taking money of that sort from a university funding a recording (as a comparison, the regular GEMA tariff would likely have been somewhere in the region of 800 to 1,000 Euros).

However, the case was solved, and the CD is what it is. It won a "Pizzicato Supersonic", was an ICMA nominee, is shortlisted on the Fanfare Wish List and got rave reviews all over the world in magazines and newspapers from the American Record Guide to Gramophone, and in multiple languages. I understand from the owner of Capriccio that now, three years later, Mr Stingel is demanding more money for this recording because of its apparent success. I do not know the sales figures, but I would be surprised if they were significant enough to justify an even bigger payment – and all that for a composer who died over 250 years ago, and for who the Schönborn estate never did anything. Had Dr Ward's dissertation and my funding application not happened, these concertos would still collect dust in the archive.

Since its release in 2013, I so far had about 30 requests from cellists all over the world for the music, all of which I turned down with an explanation along the above lines.

Yet this is not the end of the story.

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THE ZANI STORY – Martin Rummel

In September 2013 and doing a random Google search, I discovered that the German Wikipedia article on Andrea Zani (de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea_Zani) now gave a link to download Dr Ward's complete thesis at the University of Canterbury, sheet music included (<http://hdl.handle.net/10092/5442>). Assumingly like many others, I downloaded that file. Johannes Kernmayer, the owner of Capriccio, urged me to record more Zani, and with the music now available, we scheduled the divertimenti with violinist Lena Neudauer and myself for late 2014. Remembering the saga with the cello concertos, I insisted on a specific clause in the contract that Capriccio would take care of the appropriate copyright clearance. The recording was released in mid-2015, and it got a handful of favorable reviews since.

On 20 March 2016, I received an abusive email from Dr Ward, accusing me of all sorts of things for having recorded the Divertimenti, backed up by Mr Stingel, who claimed a copyright breach, implicating that this might be subject to criminal prosecution. I referred both to Capriccio, and wrote a polite letter to Paul von Schönborn in an attempt to settle the matter and to get some sensible direction into the discussion – this is not a multi million-dollar pop music hit after all (the divertimenti have sold some 450 copies so far, from what I understand from Capriccio). As of today (10 April), this letter remains unanswered.

A week later, I received an even more abusive email from Dr Ward, making it clear that I was a purely selfish idiot amongst other things. Since I have to this day never met Dr Ward (Michael Willens, the conductor of the cello concertos, even raised the question if she exists at all) and knowing from Dr Pritchard that she has gone back to nursing and is not pursuing a career as a musicologist, I have my doubts if it is really her who wrote these messages. Especially since on 1 April and clearly in the New Zealand time zone, somebody who calls themselves "Mii 97531" (and has never done anything else on Wikipedia) filed a request to get my entry in the English Wikipedia deleted. The justification is too good to not share with you: "Firstly, it is questioned whether Martin is notable enough for his own wikipedia page. There are many, many (millions of) artists and musicians who have performed just as widely and released as many recordings who do not have a page. Secondly, there are not enough sources for most of the biographical information. In fact, I would go so far to say that most of the article is written by Martin Rummel himself. The information is incredibly detailed and a lot of it, such as Martin's appointment as Head of School, just a few weeks ago, is very recent, which you would not expect on a biography of a person of his relatively limited notability. Most of the sources are for the discography at the end, but many of these are not cited. Lastly, the style is very questionable. Compare the article with Martin's biography on the University of Auckland website, which is written in a very similar, boastful style and tone. Again, it seems clear that the article was written by Martin. The specificity of information for a relatively un-famous musician, the lack of sources to support this detailed information, and the narrative-style of writing point to the article being written by Martin himself. It begins like this and continues throughout: 'The son of Peter Rummel, professor of law, grew up in Linz, where he went to primary school...' In summary, I believe this article fails on the grounds of: notability; lack of sources; and style." I have every reason to believe that "Mii 97531" is either Dr Pritchard (likely) or Dr Ward (unlikely).

As a sideline: No, I have not written my own Wikipedia page. I am aware that some people I know have updated biographical details and especially the discography and the list of publications (which is not hard, since all these details can be found and verified via simple Google searches), and it is more than logic that all officially circulated biographies have "similarities in style", since it is most likely that they all are copies of each other, at some point written by a manager and then constantly updated, modified for the purpose etc. A simple Google search of my name will result in dozens of narrative PR texts and biographies. My university biography was indeed my doing, using and modifying one of the official texts written by a PR professional – that is what they are there for. Another sideline: I have naturally not made a single Euro on the Zani recordings; on the contrary: I have put money into them by contributing to travel etc., not to talk of the work.

The University of Canterbury has taken Dr Ward's dissertation off the internet, and Johannes Kernmayer has offered Mr Stingel to take the Zani recordings off the market if the situation becomes too complicated. And this is where it stands as of today – I will update this if there is any further development.

If you want to get in touch with any of the people involved, you can find their addresses here:

Dr Brian Pritchard: <http://www.arts.canterbury.ac.nz/music/people/pritchard.shtml>

Peter Stingel: <http://www.wrangel-law.de/de/anwaelte/stingel.html>

Paul Graf von Schönborn: <http://www.schoenborn.de/Contact.kontakt.0.html?&L=1>

Johannes Kernmayer: <http://www.capriccio.at/?s=kontakt>