

an art such as music, perhaps preferable. One can measure endlessly and still fail to understand the nature of a work's musical language or esthetic value. Numerical measurement unquestionably has its uses, but a book like *De Musica*, that concentrates exclusively on measurement, is somewhat limited in value and interest when compared with the work of other theorists from the same period such as Zarlino, who treat more immediately and extensively the design of the art-work and the methods of its composition and performance. Writers such as Zarlino and Gafori say much more about what musicians now want and need to know regarding Renaissance music than Salinas.

These reservations aside, Salinas still deserves our attention as a distinguished musical humanist, for the light his work sheds on the history of music theory in general, and possibly for what he might contribute to present attempts to find alternatives to equal temperament. Daniels' study is an ideally thorough treatment of Salinas' work and can be heartily and unreservedly recommended to anyone concerned with music theory of the Renaissance.

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Wallace C. McKenzie, Jr. *The Music of Anton Webern*

Ann Arbor: University Microfilms (UM order no. 60-2792), 1960. (507 p., pos. film \$6.45; North Texas State College diss.)

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Reading this thesis reminded me anew how much progress we have made in accepting contemporary musical trends as fit subjects for musicological research. Such was not always the case. I vividly remember the furor caused twenty years ago when it was announced that my Columbia thesis subject would be *Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg*. What! a thesis partly about a still living composer? Horrors! Thus the reaction of a sizeable portion of the musicological world. Thanks to enlightened advisors, the project was nonetheless fulfilled, and I like to think that this pioneer work helped prepare for the greater liberality of today in this respect.

When reading this work, it is necessary to remember that it was finished in 1960. Of course, more Webern material has come to publication since then. There are the Webern essays *Der Weg zur neuen Musik*, the Jone-Humplik correspondence, Kolneder's study in the

series *Kontrapunkte*, and that most fascinating "whodunit" in musical literature, Hans Moldenhauer's *The Death of Anton Webern*. Many previously unknown compositions of Webern have come to light through Moldenhauer's researches. Therefore, in McKenzie's thesis one will find omissions which are not his fault.

The work begins with a brief account of Webern's life, drawn mainly from Robert Craft's leaflet accompanying his record album of Webern's complete works, from Rognoni's *Espressionismo e dodecafonìa*, and from Wildgan's biographical table in the Webern issue of *Die Reihe*. In this section, there is one curious error. McKenzie speaks of the 1907 Piano Quintet as not having been finished. Actually it was finished and has been recorded in the Craft album. Elsewhere McKenzie mentions this but not the blueprint publication (Boekle-Bomart).

In Chapter II, the general movement of Expressionism is discussed. Good use is made of Robert Wiedman's unpublished N.Y.U. thesis on this subject, and the appropriate literary and artistic sources are adduced. In this section, I think McKenzie makes one bad mistake in equating *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the twelve-tone "technique." If anything, the *Neue Sachlichkeit* is closer to such things as Hindemith's *Gebrauchsmusik*. (I know he repudiated the term in later years, but the thing did exist.) For a better perspective on all this, read Schoenberg's wonderful essay, "New music, outmoded music, style and idea," in *Style and Idea*.

A word here concerning the use of the term "twelve-tone technique" which McKenzie (and many other writers) employ a great deal. Schoenberg himself objected to this term because he thought it suggested an undue rigidity. He always preferred to say "method of composition with twelve tones." I think we should respect this preference and use his expression (or, for greater brevity, "twelve-tone method"). The point may seem subtle and pedantic but I think it is meaningful. (Incidentally, the cacophonous mouthful, *dodecaphony*, I can do nicely without.)

Chapter III deals with Webern's music between Opp. 1 and 16—i.e., the pre-twelve-tone works, and is by far the bulkiest section of the thesis. This is probably as it should be, for the twelve-tone works have been more frequently and exhaustively analyzed (especially Op. 24, the Concerto for nine instruments, has become a classical subject for analysis and, as I have experienced, is even accessible to the undergraduate novice in this field). Starting out with the Passacaglia, Op. 1, McKenzie convincingly compares its theme to representative Bach and Beethoven motifs that were certainly well-known to Webern (basic motif of Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge*, theme of Bach's B minor fugue, *WTC I*).

Before tackling the works that abandon a tonal center, McKenzie discusses the vexed question of the term "atonality." As is well-known, Schoenberg objected violently to the negative connotations of this word, preferring "pantonicity." But other writers (cf. Rudolf Reti) have used the latter term with a quite different meaning. What

to do? McKenzie does plump for "atonality" (which I would not) but at least he gives us the benefit of a full discussion of all problems involved.

Naturally, in discussing the group of works now under consideration, McKenzie has to pay a great deal of attention to the importance of the individual intervals. Here he ignores enharmonic notation, e.g., he calls a diminished fourth a major third and an augmented second a minor third. I think this is very unwise. After all, Webern certainly had a very precise reason for notating each interval as he did—therefore these notations must be taken into account.

In this whole section, there is a great deal of purely "academic" analysis of motifs, canonic treatments, etc. I feared at first that McKenzie would give insufficient attention to the expressive ends which these means serve—would speak too much about how the work is "made" and not enough about what it "is" (as Schoenberg said). However, he does discuss expressive details, especially in the songs. Sometimes his interpretations are very convincing; sometimes he really reaches for them (e.g., in Op. 19 we are told that in the setting of the word "Grün" the sound "actually suggests the color green." Why? How?). Here we enter dangerous waters, for, as Mendelssohn said, there are certain things that are not too vague to be said in words, but too definite. Thus, there are times when verbal interpretation might hinder rather than help.

McKenzie did make one very interesting discovery. He calls this "signature phrase," which he finds in all of Webern's songs. It is characteristically a small interval (minor second, major second, or minor third) followed by a large interval (often a sixth or seventh)—both descending. The third note is in chromatic relation to either the first or the second note. This phrase is often set off by rests, or occurs with sudden changes of dynamics, rhythm, or tempo. McKenzie often points out this motif in the course of his text, and also devotes an appendix to its many appearances.

This is potentially an important discovery. The method could be refined still further by asking consistently the following questions:

1. Does it make any difference *which* intervals are used, or are only the descending direction, differing size of the intervals, and chromatic relation as described above significant?
2. Do the texts to which the motif is set show any type of inter-relationships?
3. If the motif is used in non-vocal music, is there any characteristic emotional connotation which may be detected from the musical context?

Research of this nature would form a valuable contribution to the type of investigation desired by Deryck Cooke as set forth in the challenging preface to his *The Language of Music*:

If this state of affairs (the frequent misapprehension of 'the new language of music') calls forth a clear and convincing outline of the expressive aims of the new language, with an account of some of the terms

of its vocabulary and some of its forms of expression, to offset ever so slightly the present welter of aridly technical, not to say purely mathematical exegesis, no one will be more pleased than the present writer, who whole-heartedly admires such of this music as he has found expressive of emotion.

More power, then, to the present and future scholars who will take part in this important enterprise!

Chapter IV discusses (rather briefly) the twelve-tone works. Of course, a brief presentation of the rudiments of the method is made. As always, simplification may lead to some misunderstanding as in this sentence: "The only way a particular tone may be repeated, before the completion of the series, is *immediately after it sounds the first time*" (italics mine). What about repetitions of successive groups of tones? (cf. the beginning of Schoenberg's Third String Quartet, first theme of his Piano Concerto).

McKenzie certainly hits the nail on the head when he says of Webern's total *oeuvre*, "The musical expression is essentially lyrical *This is not constructivist music*" (italics mine). This sentence ought to be engraved in bronze somewhere as an antidote to articles like Stockhausen's "Structure and Experiential Time" (*Die Reihe*, Vol. II, Webern issue).

Some may not agree, however, with the statement that Webern is "in many ways the most easily approachable of the group for the uninitiated listener." How about Berg's *Wozzeck*, which shattered the "uninitiated listener" at the Met to such an extent that the day after its premiere the number of lost objects reported to "Lost and Found" was the largest in the history of the house! In this connection, Leibowitz' article "Alban Berg; the seduction of truth," in a British *Horizon* issue of the late forties is of interest.

A technical aside: I must fault Mr. McKenzie, or his typist, or his adviser for letting pass too many careless mistakes in spelling of names and citing of titles. Thus I read about Rogers Sessions, Wallingford Rieger, Paul Gaugin, Kandinsky's *Über die (!) Geistige in der Kunst*—and I cannot forebear to mention that the title of my Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg received a supererogatory *and*. Such errors could so easily be avoided with a little more proofreading care. They are so irritating (even sense-interrupting) to the careful reader.

There is certainly much worthwhile research still to be done on Webern. (We look forward to the fine work-in-progress of Hans Moldenhauer.) Let us hope that such research will not take off from Boulez' notorious sentence "Schoenberg est mort," (with the implication "and a good thing, too.") Rather, Webern must be seen as the heir of the grand Viennese Classic-post-Beethovenian-contemporary tradition. In this way his true greatness will be seen. And his name and work will not be misused for tendentious purposes which he would—in my belief—have been the first to repudiate.