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Gary Tomlinson. *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993. xvi, 291 pp. ISBN 0-226-80791-6 (hardcover)

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authorized by Augustine and Jerome, what greater advantage could an instrument have in providing a festive sound on occasion.

This book is the first in a series, Cambridge Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music, and with its mastery of detail and its thorough treatment of various aspects of instrument building and music theory, will interest a wider range of readers than students of organs and organ music.

William Wright

Gary Tomlinson. *Music in Renaissance Magic: Toward a Historiography of Others*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993. xvi, 291 pp. ISBN 0-226-80791-6 (hardcover).

In a recent article by Bruno Nettl entitled "The Dual Nature of Ethnomusicology in North America: The Contributions of Charles Seeger and George Herzog," the author comments that American ethnomusicologists tend to think of their work in dualisms – sound and context, anthropology and musicology, theory and application.<sup>1</sup> In the last several decades, which have seen the institutionalization of ethnomusicology in the North American academy, ethnomusicology has exerted varying kinds of influence on historical musicology; a heightened awareness and need on the part of scholars to consider seriously social and cultural factors is an example. Notwithstanding some historic tensions between the two disciplines, there is an emerging corpus of research in which attitudes and critical methods from both historical musicology and ethnomusicology are combined in innovative ways. Some of these resonate with and extend Nettl's dualisms: one of the most striking is relationships between the interpreter and the interpreted, and questions of "otherness" and "difference." Gary Tomlinson's recent book is a case in point. In Tomlinson's text, the discussion is constructed elegantly and with scholarly thoroughness around the dualism of hermeneutic and archaeological levels of interpretation.

A historical musicologist at the University of Pennsylvania, Tomlinson is known for his doctoral dissertation (UCLA 1979) on the humanist heritage of early opera, several related articles, *Monteverdi and the End of the Renaissance* (1987), and, of course, *Music in Renaissance Magic*. These writings have earned for Tomlinson a deserved reputation as a distinguished Renaissance specialist. A close reading of *Music in Renaissance Magic* shows Tomlinson

1 Bruno Nettl, "The Dual Nature of Ethnomusicology in North America: The Contributions of Charles Seeger and George Herzog," *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music*, ed. Bruno Nettl and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 273.

to be thoroughly coherent in other large and difficult domains as well, notably that of critical theory (anthropology, linguistics, and philosophy), and related concepts of historiography. As much as *Music in Renaissance Magic* is about a historical topic, namely music and its relationships to magic (and vice versa) in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, its subject is much broader and inclusive of issues and ideas Tomlinson feels have been left aside in Renaissance studies, largely because of the traditional eurocentricity of historical musicology. In the opening paragraph of the book's preface, Tomlinson expresses the hope that "the book will appeal both to students of Renaissance and early-modern culture and to those writers in various disciplines who are fostering new, postobjectivist historical approaches" (ix).

*Music in Renaissance Magic* is divided into eight chapters, a preface, and an appendix in which Tomlinson provides longer originals of primary source quotations cited in the text. The book is framed by two chapters entitled "Approaching Others (Thoughts Before Writing)" (Chapter 1) and "Believing Others (Thoughts upon Writing)" (Chapter 8). In chapters 2 to 6 Tomlinson explores in detail ideas and concepts in theoretical, largely philosophical sources on musical magic. Chapter 7 is a discussion of two Monteverdi pieces in which the author applies some of the notions explored in the earlier sections of the book in these two specific musical contexts. In an overall structural sense, the book can be read as a series of essays as well as a continuous narrative; indeed, Tomlinson suggests this several times in the text with references to the book's "essays" (e.g. p. 43).

The chapter that stands apart most – at least in the view of this reader – is the opening one in which Tomlinson discusses the critical apparatus upon which the book is based. As he points out in the preface, his discussion throughout the book moves on two separate, but connected levels: the archaeological and the hermeneutic: "... in this dual motion the book constructs two distinct (if ultimately inseparable) varieties of meaning in the cultural traces it treats" (ix). For Tomlinson, "hermeneutic" is concerned with interpretations of texts that form hypotheses of their authors' conscious or unconscious meanings, as well as the construction of hypotheses about relationships between texts and traditions of writing. The term hermeneutic "signals an engagement in the conventional activities of cultural history and the history of ideas" (x), an engagement Tomlinson maintains has dominated writing in historical musicology. In chapter 1, with effective and succinct references to appropriate critical literature (Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Bakhtin), Tomlinson advocates extending hermeneutics beyond content of ideas and subject interpreting object, to include intersubjective, dialogical interpretation.

"Archaeology," the other part of Tomlinson's methodological dualism,

derives from Foucault (*The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, 1970; *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, 1972) and involves seeking hidden structures of ideas. Tomlinson observes that “archaeological history differs from hermeneutic history in that it takes us beneath questions of authorial intent and intertextuality to the grid of meaningfulness that constrains and conditions a discourse or social practice” (x). Conversely, and a crucial point in Tomlinson’s equation, is that archaeology also includes, and indeed, “welcomes” the dialogical impulse. In chapter 1 Tomlinson discusses implications of the hermeneutic/archaeological dualism first with a review of recent trends in anthropology (“Anthropology and Its Discontents”), emphasizing (with reference to the work of James Clifford and Bernard McGrane) the theme of critical self-consciousness that has come to dominate ethnographic research. Tomlinson then proceeds to examine magic in sources on Renaissance history and philosophy, and anthropology (*i.e.* Todorov, Tambiah, Dodds, Lloyd, Walker, Allen, Said). In this discussion, and indeed, throughout the book, Tomlinson highlights the idea of “lopsided cultural hegemony” that dominates much writing on Renaissance culture. His position is that intersections between music and magic are of fundamental significance in gaining understanding of human history in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries – certainly much more than many writers have led us to believe.

In Tomlinson’s view, no where has this hegemonic lopsidedness been more prevalent than in musicology. Tomlinson notes that, despite Charles Seeger’s 1946 admonition in which Seeger warned scholars not to view one’s own brand of music or musicology as the only one, “the fallacy of synecdoche pervades musicological constructions of Renaissance culture ... Music historians have made the Renaissance their own, appropriating it with an aggressiveness that seems at times to obscure all but its most easily recognisable aspects” (15). This hegemonic stance was apparent in the early years of the discipline (e.g. Guido Adler’s 1885 proclamation that music developed from simple to complex, inferior to superior, bad to good), the discovery of Bach (and other composers such as Handel, Schutz, Palestrina, Lassus, Victoria) in the nineteenth century, the subsequent progeny of editions of such composers’ music, and perhaps, most significant, the so-called “great” composer notion that has dominated decades of scholarly writing on music in our century. Tomlinson comments that, although much of the dominant bad-to-good evaluation in nineteenth-century historicism has eased, we have not entirely worn out the teleology of this thinking: “We may convince ourselves ... that the evolution we now scrutinize is from good to good, but evolution toward known and prevalidated goals still tends to determine what we study” (p.17). The fact we (or at least some) still

teach that Josquin was the “Beethoven” of the Renaissance, and Monteverdi was the “creator of modern music” is disturbing because it limits our vision of music-making and thinking in the Renaissance, and leads us to believe that this narrow vision sees most of what there is to see, or worse still, all that it is important to see (18). Thus Tomlinson leads us to the idea that hegemonic inequality, or the emphasis of the same familiar strains of Renaissance musical culture, has made it difficult to introduce and discuss magical dimensions in any kind of serious way, the subject, of course, of his book.

In Chapter 2, “The Scope of Renaissance Magic,” Tomlinson examines the significance of “the new magic” in the sixteenth century, which coincided with a reorganization of the divisions of knowledge around 1500. Much of this discussion is based on Tomlinson’s reading of *De occulta philosophia tres*, a 1533 treatise on magical knowledge by the German Renaissance magician (Tomlinson’s designation), Henry Cornelius Agrippa, in which he synthesizes earlier sources on magical thinking (*i.e.* Platonic) thereby laying the foundation for the new magic. What follows is an engaging comparison between Agrippa’s conception of magic and that of Foucault, as expressed in *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. This discussion is a good illustration of Tomlinson’s identification of intriguing resonances between Renaissance occult thought and postmodern thinking as a means to uncovering “other” voices. Tomlinson appears to be cognizant of the difficulty or “thickness” (Geertz’s term) of such resonances, and, as is his style throughout the book, summarizes a conceptual framework for locating magical musics; he tells us, for example, that musical magic in the Renaissance tended to fall into three classes: (1) the magic of music’s effects on sublunar objects such as the human body and soul, (2) the music of the spheres, and (3) the power of music to bring about trances and exalted states (65).

As much as such objectifying serves to aid the reader, Tomlinson advocates a flexible and open interpretation of classification. This is the case in the following chapter in which connections between the modes and ethics and cosmology are discussed. As Tomlinson observes, two of the most venerable, fascinating, and difficult to grasp ideas that have been handed down from the ancient Mediterranean world are “the ideas of music’s ethical power to affect man’s soul and...the presence of harmony in the cosmos” (67). Here Tomlinson takes us back to writings by Plato, Aristotle, and Boethius among others, and then leads the discussion forward to an examination of related concepts in treatises by the Renaissance theorists, Ramos, Gafori, and Ficino. Much of the book’s centre is an examination of the work of the third of these, Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), the Florentine doctor, philosopher, translator, musician of some note, and, of course, magician.

Described at the beginning as being the book's "protagonist," Tomlinson discusses Ficino's "magical songs" (Chapter 4), and, above all, assigns Ficino great general importance in the new magic of the Renaissance. Based on careful exegesis of Ficino's writings, especially *De vita* (1489), Tomlinson advocates his thesis that there are "corollary questions about Renaissance epistemology, psychology, and theories of sense perception that have not been grappled with in musicological studies of the period" (101). He suggests, for example, that D. P. Walker's functional distinction between words and music in his important study of Ficino's magical songs (*Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*), which was followed by others, is not substantiated in Ficino's writings. As Tomlinson comments, "we sense in it [Walker's position] the shutting of windows on Renaissance mentalities, the a priori imposition on sixteenth-century perceptions of more modern ways of thought" (103). Tomlinson builds an effective argument based on Ficino's Platonian premise that musical sounds and words emanate from divine ideas and represent images in the human world. The conflation of word and image must be seen in broader perspective, as the assimilation to image of word, sound and music alike. Further, he notes that Ficino's ranking of words and sounds over images runs counter to the traditional hierarchy of the five senses in Western thought, which places sight over hearing. Within the context of the development of the polyphonic madrigal in the sixteenth century, the possibility of reversing this order and placing hearing as the noblest sense, can lead to an enrichment of our usual tracing of madrigalists' concern for text expression to humanist rhetorical philosophies. Here Tomlinson moves beyond questions of the content of ideas and authorial intent to hidden structures of ideas – doing archaeological history to invoke part of his dualistic paradigm.

Tomlinson's protracted discussion of Ficino's work is continued in the two following chapters (5 and 6), both of which contain the same level of scholarly depth in their respective examinations of primary sources on the topics of musical possession and soul loss, and the archaeology of poetic furor, 1500–1650. In the book's penultimate chapter, "Archaeology and Music: Apropos of Monteverdi's Musical Magic," Tomlinson maintains that musicology has not yet found an archaeological approach, largely because archeology looks for other less familiar meanings thereby "cutting against the grain of too many long-standing goals" (229). Musicology's emphasis on composers' expressive aims, stylistic evolution, and relationships between musical works and styles with extramusical forces such as patronage systems and political events are examples of these goals. Tomlinson notes that musicology has resisted archaeology because of its "dispersing, decentering, and ultimately defamiliarizing aspect...that flies in the face of familiarizing tendencies of

musicological thought” (230). With their emphasis on the hermeneutic level of historical explanation, Tomlinson cites Iain Fenlon’s *Music and Patronage in 16th-Century Mantua*, Anthony Newcomb’s *The Madrigal at Ferrara*, and his own *Music and the End of the Renaissance* as examples. Particularly significant in Tomlinson’s position is his criticism of the eurocentricity of musical analysis, a methodology that has been, and continues to be, part of the musicologist’s strategy. The discussion of Monteverdi’s “Sfogava con le stelle” (4th madrigal book, 1603) and the “Lament of the Nymph (eight madrigal book, 1638), is a fascinating, if at times, abstruse application of the ideas expressed throughout the book. A more extended coverage (in terms of repertory) could serve to illuminate and further confirm Tomlinson’s position.

*Music in Renaissance Magic* is not an easy book. Indeed, its thorough and effective manipulation of primary and secondary literature, coupled with the application of postmodern critical writing, requires careful, thoughtful reading. In its forward (and backward) looking critical exegeses, it represents an exciting, important example of new musicological scholarship. It challenges all of us who aspire to write meaningfully about all musics to reconsider our long held assumptions, and to break down barriers through dialogues with “other” distant – past and current – neglected voices.

Gordon E. Smith

Jean-Jacques Nattiez. *Wagner Androgyne: A Study in Interpretation*. Translated by Stewart Spencer. Princeton Studies in Opera. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. xx, 359 pp. ISBN 0-691-09141-2 (hardcover).

In early 1854, Wagner opined to August Röckel that “the true human being is both man and woman,” and concluded that “it is the union of man and woman, in other words, love, that creates (physically and metaphorically) the human being.”<sup>1</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez contends that the figure of the androgyne – essentially the fusion of opposites – was central to the interpretation of both Wagner’s prose writings and musical works. Nattiez’s book is devoted to the exploration of the significance (both literal and metaphorical) of the figure of androgyny “in Wagner’s works and theoretical writings when seen within the context of the texts, the composer’s life, and the age in which he lived” (xiii–xiv). But it is more than that: it is the embodiment of androgyny itself.

1 Letter to August Röckel, 25/26 January 1854. Translation from *Selected Letters of Richard Wagner*, ed. and trans. Stewart Spencer and Barry Millington (New York: Norton, 1987), 303.