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**Messiaen's Contemplations of Covenant and Incarnation: Musical Symbols of Faith in the Two Great Piano Cycles of the 1940s, and: Messiaen's Explorations of Love and Death: Musical Signification in the 'Tristan Trilogy' and Three Related Song Cycles, and Interpretations of Holiness and Trinity: Echoes of Medieval in the Oratorio, Organ Meditations and Opera (review)**

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work' (p. 133). Such statements are in marked contrast to the approach of earlier sections, providing analysis of the state of mind and motivations behind the events documented. They also raise questions of interpretation and meaning that future scholars can elaborate.

The journal entries are connected by a contextual narrative that aids in comprehension and readability. There are interpretative and bibliographic footnotes throughout, which augment Imogen's writings with largely unpublished materials found in the Britten-Pears Library. One small complaint: it is impossible to tell if the interpretative notes in the journal entries are those included by Imogen in her edited version, if they were added by Grogan, or if they represent a concatenation of the two.

After the diary ceases, Grogan returns to the biographical sketch covering the rest of Imogen's life, especially her central role in the burgeoning Aldeburgh Festival and her dedication to the promotion of her father's works. This section makes use of a wide variety of unpublished material held by the Britten-Pears Library, which is helpfully cited throughout.

The final section of the book, written by Christopher Tinker, focuses on Imogen's compositional output, and is really a short introduction to the annotated catalogue of works found subsequently. Here the prose style and approach of Imogen's *The Music of Gustav Holst* (3rd rev. edn., Oxford, 1986) and Michael Short's more recent *Gustav Holst* (Oxford, 1990) seem near ancestors. However, the brevity of the section and the relative unfamiliarity of the music prove problematic, despite lavish use of examples. Tinker's approach, to attempt a brief sketch of stylistic development within genres, ends up missing the forest for the trees, giving little sense of a continuum of stylistic traits that might unify her compositional output. No rationale emerges for the identification of a unique 'style'. Tinker acknowledges that many of the works discussed are unpublished and that most have received only a single performance, which makes the title of this section, inspired by a remark from Imogen upon hearing that her late string quintet was to be published—"A *real* composer": an introduction to Imogen Holst's musical style—seem a bit overstated.

Taken as a whole, this volume could seem a little disjunct, given the approaches of its contributors and its origins as three separate projects (p. xvi). In its contradictions, though, lies its value. Strode's deeply respectful biographical sketch and Tinker's evangelizing account of Imogen's compositions seem

descended in tone, structure, and format from her own prose writings. The Aldeburgh Diary, though, coming as it does in the centre of this volume, throws Imogen's work as a historian-grapher and biographer into question. This was almost surely not the intention of the project, as the editorial decisions serve to simplify and streamline the presentation of the diary, rather than to show what Imogen withheld, and what she wanted to make available. For those interested in Britten and the culture of Aldeburgh this book will prove fascinating. Those who have read Imogen's writings, especially about her father, will perhaps come away more unsettled than satisfied. If she wanted substantial portions of her diaries withheld, what did she knowingly withhold about her father's biography? This book is well worth reading, as it provides a wealth of new biographical information about Imogen's life and personality. One can only hope that this is the beginning of a reassessment of Imogen Holst's 'life in music', for surely there remain more questions than answers.

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*Messiaen's Contemplations of Covenant and Incarnation: Musical Symbols of Faith in the Two Great Piano Cycles of the 1940s.* By Siglind Bruhn. pp. 296. Dimension and Diversity: Studies in 20th-Century Music, 7. (Pendragon Press, Hillsdale, NY, 2007. £22.50. ISBN 978-1-57647-129-6.)

*Messiaen's Explorations of Love and Death: Musical Signification in the 'Tristan Trilogy' and Three Related Song Cycles.* By Siglind Bruhn. pp. 288. Dimension and Diversity: Studies in 20th-Century Music, 9. (Pendragon Press, Hillsdale, NY, 2008. £22.50. ISBN 978-1-57647-136-4.)

*Messiaen's Interpretations of Holiness and Trinity: Echoes of Medieval Theology in the Oratorio, Organ Meditations and Opera.* By Siglind Bruhn. pp. 229. Dimension and Diversity: Studies in 20th-Century Music, 10. (Pendragon Press, Hillsdale, NY, 2008. £24. ISBN 978-1-57647-139-5.)

Among the numerous concerts, events, articles, and books prompted by the centenary of Messiaen's birth, it is hard to think of any more ambitious than the project undertaken by Siglind Bruhn. Producing a trilogy of books, each devoted to a significant portion of the composer's oeuvre and containing reams of new

analytical insight and commentary, is quite an undertaking. For all three books to appear in the course of little more than a year and, at the same time, produce parallel books in German and one in French, is a task befitting the monumental works of Bruhn's subject.

The titles of the books seem like essays in themselves, especially when put alongside the equivalent French and German offerings: *Les Visions d'Olivier Messiaen* (Paris, 2008); *Messiaens musikalische Sprache des Glaubens* (Waldkirch, 2006); *Messiaen – Troubadour* (Waldkirch, 2007); *Messiaen – Theologien* (Waldkirch, 2008). The first of the trilogy, *Messiaen's Contemplations of Covenant and Incarnation: Musical Symbols of Faith in the Two Great Piano Cycles of the 1940s* (henceforth *Contemplations*), is an examination of *Visions de l'Amen* (1943) and *Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* (1944); the second, *Messiaen's Explorations of Love and Death: Musical Signification in the 'Tristan Trilogy' and Three Related Song Cycles* (henceforth *Explorations*), looks at what might be regarded as the works devoted to love, namely the 'Tristan trilogy'—*Harawi* (1945), *Turangalila-symphonie* (1946–8), and *Cinq rechants* (1948)—the song cycles *Poèmes pour Mi* (1936) and *Chants de terre et de ciel* (1938), and *Trois petites Liturgies* (1943–4), even if it is stretching matters to call the latter a song cycle. The final volume, *Messiaen's Interpretations of Holiness and Trinity: Echoes of Medieval Theology in the Oratorio, Organ Meditations and Opera* (henceforth *Interpretations*) examines three major late works, *La Transfiguration de Notre Seigneur, Jésus-Christ* (1965–9), the organ cycle *Méditations sur le mystère de la Sainte Trinité* (1969) (though not, inexplicably, the equivalent cycle *Livre du Saint Sacrement* (1984)), and *Saint François d'Assise* (1975–83).

There is a similar pattern to each book, starting with background materials giving contextual information on some of Messiaen's sources, and outlining some general aspects of musical language and style, before undertaking a more detailed consideration of the music. *Contemplations*, for instance, outlines the musical information that might be regarded as a starter kit for anyone wishing to study Messiaen's music. This has been covered numerous times before, but rarely as well as here. Bruhn also provides perceptive comment on Messiaen's spiritual background and heritage, with a useful digest of the Catholic renewal in France that started in the late nineteenth century. The works are treated separately, though there are numerous cross-references. Bruhn provides useful background information to the specific approach (usually theological) taken in each,

before embarking on a hermeneutic traversal of the music.

An invaluable aspect of each volume is the information contained in the appendices. For *Contemplations*, there is succinct biographical information on Ernest Hello and Columba Marmion, the two theologians whose thought profoundly influenced *Visions de l'Amen* and *Vingt regards* respectively. For *Explorations*, there are summaries of the various myths, stories, and poems that feature in the 'Tristan Trilogy', notably the various incarnations of the Tristan myth itself, but also the stories behind figures such as Vivian, Perseus, and Piroutcha, stories by Poe, and poems by Breton, as well as the full texts for the various vocal works discussed. A list of birds used in the works discussed, as well as the opera's libretto, make up the appendices in *Interpretations*. If these seem a little more prosaic, this final volume begins with an impressive exposition of the manner of influence exerted by St Thomas Aquinas on Messiaen. Bruhn points out that it is to the thought and writings of Aquinas that Messiaen turned whenever he wished to explore the qualitative nature of the sacred, whether God, the resurrected, or the transfigured Jesus (*Interpretations*, 35). Similarly, the opening material in *Explorations* includes much perceptive material on possible sources of inspiration. One particular piece of detective work exemplifies numerous other finds. In the preface to *Vingt regards*, Messiaen mentioned an 'old tapestry' as being influential. Bruhn has identified this anonymous artwork as being part of the medieval 'Apocalypse of Angers' sequence of tapestries. Crucially, this clarifies both Messiaen's comments in the preface and helps with the understanding of 'Regard de l'Onction terrible'.

The generally excellent contextual information is merely a prelude for the discussion of the specific works. While including much analytical comment, this is harnessed to a hermeneutic approach primarily aimed at supplementing the theological and spiritual understanding of these works. Each cycle is explored on a movement-by-movement basis, though often grouped by issue and to reflect Bruhn's structural insights. The self-conscious *pièce de résistance* in each case is the final summation, in which 'Messiaen's musical subtext' for the relevant work is unfurled.

Few composers more readily invite a hermeneutic approach than Messiaen. Nonetheless, an exploration of what hermeneutic analysis means in the context of this particular composer, and an indication of Bruhn's views

on the extent of what can and cannot be inferred from the score, might have neutralized some of the myriad questions arising in this trilogy, with the first book provoking more than its fair share. As a composer who never lost his faith in music's ability to portray and to convey, and who developed key components of his compositional apparatus at a remarkably early age, the argument is rarely whether the music has meaning, but what the precise nature of that meaning might be.

While it can be discussed in purely musical terms, there is little in Messiaen's output that might be described as abstract. Indeed, it might be thought that Messiaen himself told us so much of what his music is about that a hermeneutic analysis would do little more than regurgitate the composer's prefaces and interviews in more convoluted form. However, just as his analytical comments on his music frequently raise as many questions as they provide answers, there is much more locked up within this music than is perceptible at the surface. In this respect, Bruhn establishes the case for the hermeneutic approach convincingly. Nonetheless, with three books devoted to decoding Messiaen's scores, it would have been beneficial to have some discussion of the nature of meaning for this particular composer, the different levels at which symbols and symbolism might work, and, crucially, where the limits of what can be deduced might lie.

From his profound Roman Catholic faith, Messiaen would have been quite comfortable with the notion that, depending upon context, an object can fulfil different functions, have radically different symbolism attached to it, can substantively change what it is, and can be two entirely different things at the same time. This is most apparent in the Christian view of Christ, or, more specifically, in the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, but it permeates Messiaen's faith even more deeply. Returning to the musical sphere, for Messiaen an E major triad would have a red or orange-red colour, it could be part of the overall colour of a transposition of one of his modes, it might capture an aspect of a bird's plumage, or it might embody Christ's glory. Crucially, it might on occasion simply function as an E major triad, or even just the pitches E $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ , and B $\sharp$ . The question for the hermeneutic analyst is whether, in the latter case, the E major triad also contains resonances of the other meanings for Messiaen. Can a chord have meaning? Can a single note have meaning? Or, more accurately, did Messiaen imbue a particular chord or note with

meaning? If so, did it always have the same or similar meaning? Bruhn repeatedly suggests a consistency of meaning within works, and often infers meaning between works, but the degree to which she is convincing, even to a reader sympathetic to her aims and objectives, is variable.

In the extensive, detailed commentary on the music, Bruhn reveals much of value. She is especially astute regarding recurrent patterns, whether in terms of metastructure, or the detail of individual chords, or aspects of layout where the symbolism (like some aspects of Bach) is more visual in the score than in the sounding of the notes. There are also numerous telling, original insights spanning movements or works, such as noting that the distinctive sighing motif at the climax of 'Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus' is strongly reminiscent of the earlier 'Regard de la Croix'. Moreover, these sighs come in the section marked 'Arms extended toward love', prompting Bruhn's observation that 'his extended arms will later be nailed to the beam of the cross on Golgotha' (*Contemplations*, 190). Then there are her comments comparing the expectations of *Poèmes pour Mi* and the *Trois petites liturgies*:

The earlier songs [*Poèmes pour Mi*] are generally taken as love songs. Audiences therefore feel puzzled to realize that they are essentially shaped by the composer's pervasive struggle with what he perceives as the demands of his faith. In the *Trois petites Liturgies*, the situation is reversed. The titles suggest meditations on religious doctrines...but, as Messiaen's introductory comment shows, the three Liturgies are essentially about love. (*Explorations*, 120)

In terms of the cyclic themes in *Turangalîla*, Bruhn rejects Robert Sherlaw Johnson's characterization of the 'statue theme' as male and the 'flower theme' as female, making a convincing case for viewing them as differing types of female (*Explorations*, 202). Equally telling is her observation, in *Interpretations*, of the striking conjunction of horizontal and harmonic thinking in the Angel's utterances in *Saint François d'Assise*, the melody being harmonized in thirds, yet tracing a path through diminished seventh chords. Bruhn's convincing thesis here is that Messiaen uses octave-halving intervals (minor thirds and tritones) for the terrestrial, whereas the divine, specifically Christ, draws upon major thirds.

No analysis can be comprehensive, of course, so it is inevitable that Bruhn overlooks some features that might support her points. For instance, the astute discussion of the chords that make up the first piano's carillon in the

opening movement of *Visions de l'Amen* unpicks its symbolic symmetries convincingly. It is rather surprising, then, that Bruhn has overlooked the fact that the chords comprise alternating bands of the whole-tone scale (Messiaen's mode 1), a sonority the composer generally tends to utilize when his intention appears to be to imprint as little of himself on the music as possible.

Amidst the myriad analytical observations, there are also some more puzzling assertions. For instance, Bruhn asserts that the opening version of the theme in 'Regard du Temps' is the variant, and the subsequent, shorter, version is the basic form, without really explaining her reasoning. She also states that Messiaen's 'music knows two prominent "home keys"; identifying them as F# major and E major (*Contemplations*, 50), yet this overlooks the importance of A major, which suffuses the *Visions de l'Amen* and *Trois petites liturgies*, and is the tonal goal of *Des canyons aux étoiles...*, *Un Sourire*, and *Éclairs sur l'au-delà...* Bruhn interprets E major as being 'the key devoted to the glorification and praise of God', stating that it is 'the tonality of humankind's answer to God's love' (*Contemplations*, 50). While it is true that the two 'Louanges' from the *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* are movements of praise, E major more often represents the glory of God, specifically Christ, rather than God's glorification, whether in the opening movement of *L'Ascension*, throughout *La Transfiguration*, and in key movements of *Des canyons* and *Éclairs*. The latter two works are overlooked by Bruhn to the extent that *Éclairs* seems barely to exist.

More worrying, though, is that amidst the vast amount of insight there are rather too many occasions where Bruhn undermines her position by overstating her case. For instance, speaking of the coda of 'Amen du jugement', she states that:

the dominance of the E-major triad, which seems secure given that E is reinforced in five octaves, is called into question by an A $\flat$  major chord in the central register. Extrapolating from the spiritual interpretation of the pitch E and/or the key E major, the pitch A $\flat$  and /or the A $\flat$  major chord must be read as the converse of pious obedience (*Contemplations*, 116; my emphasis).

While it *might* be read as such, it is difficult to see why A $\flat$  must be viewed as the antithesis of pious obedience, making this just one of a number of cases of reading an interpretation into the text rather than drawing meaning from it deductively. It is all the more puzzling given that Bruhn has already noted that, in the

final movement, the 'theme of Creation' is transposed from A to C sharp, and again to F major before returning to A major (*Contemplations*, 88–9). On this occasion, rather than arguing that these transpositions create a fundamental change of meaning, Bruhn simply notes that they create different modal colours, and decides that this process is analogous to the multiplicity of colours in St John's vision of the celestial city. This is more convincing, and can be supported by what we know of Messiaen's colour associations, and the fact that he emphasized that he viewed the modes not as scales, collections of pitches, or harmonies, but as colours. The nature of the second and third modes, Messiaen's two favourites, means that harmonies and fundamental pitch relationships a major third apart are commonplace in his music.

Unsurprisingly, numerology plays an important part in Bruhn's discussions. It is undoubtedly the case that Messiaen used number symbolism extensively, and it is useful to delve beyond the most obvious examples. In order to emphasize her observations, Bruhn frequently capitalizes her numbers, a trait that rapidly becomes wearing:

the first piano juxtaposes a THREE-part texture in which a phrase of FIVE palindromes is repeated THREE times... The basic element is here a chromatic motif built from THREE different pitches, which is accompanied in the inner voices by a THREEFOLD 'sigh' with appoggiaturas resolving in contrary motion, and in the lowest voice by an equally chromatic THREE-tone descent. (*Contemplations*, 98)

In this instance, the fact that the 'THREE-tone descent' is actually three semitones (G $\flat$ –F–E) does not help matters.

While much of the numerology is absorbing, the difficulty is, as Ruth Tatlow has pointed out with regard to Bach studies (*Bach and the Riddle of the Number Alphabet* (Cambridge, 2006)), it is all too easy to get a little carried away. On occasion, the capitals are mercifully absent, but there is a sense that, rather than the prevalence of certain numbers being noted and interpreted, the evidence is being marshalled to fit the numbers:

It is certainly no coincidence that [Messiaen's] three explicit references to the Crucifixion all happen in movements appearing under the number VII: see 'Jésus accepte la souffrance', the seventh movement in the organ cycle *La Nativité du Seigneur* (1935), 'Regard de la Croix', the seventh movement in the piano cycle *Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus* (1944), and 'Les Stigmates', the seventh tableau of the opera *Saint François d'Assise*. (*Interpretations*, 44)

A reasonable observation, except that it overlooks two other movements in which the crucifixion is clearly the subject matter: 'Amen de l'Agonie de Jésus', the third movement of *Visions de l'Amen*, and 'les ténèbres', the ninth movement of *Livre du Saint Sacrement*, both of which are at least as explicitly about the crucifixion as the three movements cited by Bruhn.

Like some of the analyses of Rudolf Réti, there are periodic instances of Bruhn trying too hard to make a point, and lapsing into selective use of evidence in the process. A prime case arises in the categorization of works in the introduction to the second book, *Explorations*. Bruhn lists compositions in three groups, the first being works with biblical, liturgical, or mystical titles, the second works centred upon birds, and the third those dedicated to the idea of love. The first thing to note is that Bruhn assumes that the titles encapsulate the entirety of the content. The second is that the categories are regarded as mutually exclusive in this listing, so that each work only appears once. This results in the absurdity that *Des canyons aux étoiles...*, despite its explicit religious content, is termed a birdsong work, while *Éclairs sur l'au-delà...* (in an all too rare mention) is a biblical work, despite containing far more birdsong than *Des canyons*, and being one of Messiaen's greatest movements on the subject of love. The seminal *Chronochromie* receives no mention at all, yet one movement from *Sept Haïkai*, 'Les oiseaux de Karuizawa', is included.

While this merely illustrates the dangers of trying to place such works in neatly defined boxes, Bruhn then goes a step further and tries to demonstrate a symmetry of subject matter in Messiaen's compositions around the mid-point of his life. This is a fundamentally flawed notion on several fronts. To start with, the mid-point of Messiaen's life was not the mid-point of his career. Even if it were, Messiaen would not have known this (as demonstrated by his erroneous assumption that he would die upon completing *Saint François* in 1983). And so on, and so forth. Assigning significance to such coincidences is tempting, but ultimately misleading. What will have made Bruhn excited is that the mid-point of Messiaen's life did coincide with a change of direction, following the completion of *Turangalîla* and *Cinq rechants*. The point she goes on to make, which is interesting and valid, is that there is a change at this point from works focusing on love to works focusing on birdsong. This is broadly true, and is an important observation, but it has nothing to do with Messiaen being halfway through his

life. The frustration is that, as with Réti, Bruhn's points generally do make sense, but the periodic tendency to move beyond the credible is in danger of undermining confidence in her many solid propositions.

Elsewhere, there is also a tendency to state what Messiaen believed without any supporting evidence from the man himself (even though plenty exists). When he is actually quoted (directly or indirectly), references are frequently omitted. Such oversights are not uncommon. Proofreading is poor, with numerous factual and typographical errors. Some are of analytical detail, such as the false assertion that minor triads can be formed 'on each of the eight steps' of mode 2 (the octatonic scale—Bruhn may mean minor thirds). Then there are numerous typographical slips, like describing 'Regard du Temps' as being the tenth rather than ninth movement of the *Vingt regards* (*Contemplations*, 177), stating that movements I and XIII open the two Septenaries of *La Transfiguration* rather than I and VIII (*Interpretations*, 60), and that *Livre du Saint Sacrement* has twenty rather than eighteen movements (*Interpretations*, 97). Such errors may be symptomatic of a desire to have the books published in time for Messiaen's centenary.

While generally excellent on the modes, Bruhn is on much shakier ground when discussing the later chord types. She seems unaware that the 'chord on the dominant' evolved into the *accords à renversements transposés*, a set of sonorities that dominates Messiaen's later music. As if we did not have enough overlapping and frequently confusing names for chords from Messiaen, she adds two of her own epithets, taking the pitches and calling them the 'two cluster mode' and 'imitation Christi' mode. She highlights a prominent sequence found at key moments in *Saint François*, and ponders 'why would Messiaen, whose musical language is famous for the consistency of its elements, have conceived for and highlighted in this work a new application of an otherwise fairly inconspicuous vertical aggregate?' (*Interpretations*, 174). Well, the simple answer is that he did not, as he had prominently used the exact sequence for the lake music in *La Fauvette des jardins*.

Overall, though, Bruhn's traversal of numerous, diverse sources is impressive, going substantially beyond anything yet attempted in Messiaen studies, so she can be forgiven for also including some material, such as on the genesis of the *Vingt regards*, or the debates of 'le cas Messiaen', which neither adds anything new to what is already known, nor enhances

the principal thrust of her arguments. Given the scope of the books, it may seem curmudgeonly to mention omissions, but a few are striking. When discussing *Poèmes pour Mi* in *Explorations*, for example, Bruhn makes no mention at all of the orchestral version, the implication being that Messiaen's instrumentation illuminates nothing at all of the work's subject matter or its interpretation. Nor is there any discussion of the impact of the Second Vatican Council on Messiaen, notably (though not exclusively) in *La Transfiguration*. In terms of primary sources, despite quoting an appearance of it in the libretto of *Saint François*, Bruhn overlooks Messiaen's use of St Francis's *Prayer of Peace*, which is far better known among modern-day Catholics than the *Canticle of Brother Sun*. In an ideal world, given that they are cited repeatedly, the various scriptural and theological inscriptions assigned to the movements of *Visions de l'Amen*, *Vingt Regards*, and the *Méditations* would have been collated into appendices or given at the start of the discussion of the relevant movements.

Given that human and divine love are central to the works examined in *Explorations*, Bruhn is curiously reluctant even to note potential correspondences between aspects of the Tristan trilogy and Messiaen's tragic personal circumstances at the time. It may be impossible, even undesirable, to draw any remotely firm conclusions, but it is surely relevant in discussing the composer's treatment of love in the 1940s to be aware that Claire Delbos, the composer's first wife, was suffering a distressing, ultimately terminal, mental disintegration, while, at the same time, the extraordinary pianism of Yvonne Loriod, his eventual second wife, became a remarkable creative catalyst. In discussing *Turangalila*, Bruhn notes that:

as Messiaen reveals in his synopsis, the two love songs refer to an additional female character: Ligeia, the eponymous heroine of a story by Edgar Allan Poe who usurps the body of another woman, her widower's second wife, to defy her own physical death and live on. While this death-surmounting woman does not seem to have a specific musical theme assigned to her, the story, evoked in immediate vicinity with the symphony's two cyclical themes and the female characters they portray, seems to suggest that what matters to Messiaen is the contrast between a gentle love *in life* [Bruhn's emphasis] and a powerful, awesome love that is stronger than death. (*Explorations*, 208).

This is a major point in its own right in terms of understanding *Turangalila*, but Bruhn is exercising a remarkable restraint in not even raising the question of whether this relates to Messiaen's difficult circumstances at the time.

It is a pity that such caveats periodically impinge upon Bruhn's discourse, for her insights are many and there is much to digest. Her structural insights tend to be especially keen. For instance, in *Contemplations*, her perception of the structure of the *Vingt regards* as having a fivefold exposition of musical, theological, and narrative ideas that are then explored further in the remaining fifteen movements is especially striking. Similarly, she builds admirably on Paul Griffiths's description of the *Chants de terre et de ciel* as a triptych of diptychs, culminating in a masterly traversal of the tonal, as opposed to symbolic, links between the six songs. In reading all three books in succession, the perception is that the various problems outlined above tend to diminish in the second and third volumes. This may be a matter of becoming accustomed to Bruhn's style, but it may be pertinent that the first book covers territory on which she published ten years earlier (Siglind Bruhn, *Images and Ideas in Modern French Piano Music: The Extra-Musical Subtext in Piano Works by Ravel, Debussy, and Messiaen* (Stuyvesant, NY, 1997)). There is a sense at times in the discussion of *Visions de l'Amen* and *Vingt regards* in *Contemplations* that Bruhn may have spent a little too long in their orbit, for the later volumes appear to benefit from not trying to explain the music in such exhaustive detail. Despite the various frustrations and cautions, this rough diamond of a trilogy is still a noteworthy achievement that demands, and deserves, to be read by all those wishing to explore this remarkable music.

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*Filmmusik: Beiträge zu ihrer Theorie und Vermittlung*. Ed. by Victoria Piel, Knut Holtsträter, and Oliver Huck. pp. 190. (Georg Olms, Hildesheim, Zurich, and New York, 2008, €28. ISBN 978-3-487-13640-0.)

The study of film music in Anglo-American academia has come a long way since its renaissance in the 1980s, a period that perhaps marks its birth as a discipline that might now be labelled confidently 'film musicology'. It is, for example, the subject of several refereed journals, in addition to numerous international conferences, an ever-expanding number of Scarecrow Press film score guides, and other university press monographs. While that first generation of new film music scholarship (par-