come counterpoint to the (mostly) shorter pieces in the collection (for example, Timothy A. Johnson, "Harmonic Vocabulary in the Music of John Adams: A Hierarchical Approach," *Journal of Music Theory* 63, no. 1 [Spring 1993]: 117–56; or Matthew N. Daines, "Nixon's Women: Gender Politics and Cultural Representation in Act 2 of *Nixon in China*," *Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 [Spring 1995]: 6–34). The criticism that does appear, besides Taruskin's forceful critique, is superficial and easily dismissed. Edward Rothstein wants to paint Adams as a composer whose bad taste panders to middlebrow audiences (pp. 282–85). Limitations of space (and probably of will) prevent him from exploring this critique in any depth, and so assure its status as a straw-man argument. Whether or not this is May's intention remains unclear.

The inclusion of other pieces makes even less sense. Daniel Colvard's essay on *The Dharma at Big Sur* comes from his undergraduate senior thesis, and reads like the work of a very intelligent but overly enthusiastic student. Arthur Danto's "The Art of 9/11" discusses the responses of various artists to the destruction of the World Trade Center, but never mentions Adams. Surely, May intends the reader to draw a connection between these responses and Adams's *Transmigration of Souls*; Danto's description of Lucio Pozzi's work—photographs of smoke in a New York street outside his studio, which he then photocopied and stapled together in pamphlets for friends (p. 371)—suggests an analogy with pre-recorded sounds in Adams's work. But Danto's observation that "9/11 art was private and personal" (p. 375) ultimately renders any imagined connection to Adams's very public and opulent score opaque in the extreme.

In sum, *The John Adams Reader* will probably function very well for bright undergraduate students who are working on term papers that explore Adams's career to 2005. It will probably inform and delight music lovers—still an important audience, after all—who lack technical knowledge but would like to learn a bit more about Adams's art. But John Adams is one of the most complex and fascinating figures in recent history; he and scholars of his work deserve much better.

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SCHOENBERG STUDIES

The Musical Idea—And the Logic, Technique, and Art of Its Presentation. By Arnold Schoenberg. Edited, translated, and with a commentary by Patricia Carpenter and Severine Neff. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006. [xxviii. 343 p. ISBN 0-253-21835-7. $ 27.95.] Bibliographic references, indexes.

In 1995 Columbia University Press published this important work—and saw it rapidly go out of print. For reasons not known to this reviewer, and despite the clear evidence of an eager readership, the book was not reprinted. Eventually the copyright was transferred to Indiana University Press, and so once again it is in circulation. Thankfully; for it is the single best volume extant if one wishes to learn about the technical conception of music held by one of the greatest composers (and greatest music educators) of modern times.

From the "Editor's Preface," we learn that Schoenberg had begun work as early as 1923 on a theoretical text which would present the nature of "the musical idea." The core of this book is a presentation, in English translation, of what appears to be his final attempt to consolidate his thought on the subject into a coherent publication. The German text was spread out over four small notebooks Schoenberg kept in the mid-1930s. Altogether there were about two hundred pages of entries, the first dated 5 June 1934, the last 15 October 1936.

A chief difference between the 1995 edition, and this one, is that whereas in the former Schoenberg's original German and the English translation faced each other, page by page, in the current edition this "bilingual" format is dropped. For those

who wish to work directly with Schoenberg's original language, the Columbia edition is, by necessity, the one to use. Those who do not feel the need to do so may use the Indiana edition with confidence; I have read the original German carefully, and it is clear that Carpenter and Neff are excellent and faithful translators. Moreover, one "bilingual" aspect of the book remains: the "Concordance of Terms" which follows the core text. This "Concordance" is derived from other works of Schoenberg, both published and in manuscript, and thus provides useful points of comparison with the mid-30s "Gedanke" manuscripts which comprise the heart of this volume.

As is well known, Schoenberg, in attempting to explain how musical thought takes place, advocated the concept of the *Grundgestalt*—the "idea" in its primal form. What exactly is that? And how exactly is it the source of an entire composition? Some light on these matters was shed by the publication in 1975 of *Style and Idea* (New York: St. Martin's Press), an anthology of Schoenberg's writings edited by Leonard Stein. The present work, however, sheds far more. As Walter Frisch writes in his "Forward," which is new to this edition, "The musical "idea" on which a piece is based is neither a theme nor a harmony, but something more abstract—a relationship between tones—and yet very real and recoverable by close analysis." (p. xiv). And as the editors Carpenter and Neff, observe in their "Preface": "Schoenberg's thought cannot be understood without understanding his organic bent of mind. . . . [He] fervently disagreed, however, with the prevailing nineteenth-century view of the musical organism—that it grows from a seed, like a plant. In this manuscript he presents a striking image. The musical work, he asserts, is a body, a tonal body, whole and centrally controlled. The inner force that gives it life is the idea it presents" (pp. xxii–xxiii).

Lest this seem remotely "philosophic," this reviewer would like to make clear that the manuscript itself develops this concept in a richly technical manner, complete with dozens of clear musical examples. Among the many subjects Schoenberg investigates are "The Laws of Musical Coherence," the "Elements of Form," "The Difference between Gestalt and Phrase," "Sonority as a Formative Element," "Accentuation and Nonaccentuation," "Mirror Forms," "The Structural Capacities of the Scale," "Extramusical Means of Coherence," the "Origins of Repetitions," and "The Constructive Function of Harmony." Some of these sections are quite short; in fact, almost epigrammatic. (Schoenberg liked epigrams.) Others, however, are lengthy, and follow a detailed, clear, and sequential logic. One would expect such diversity from an unfinished manuscript. Nevertheless, every section —long or short, sequential or epigrammatic —is provocative, insightful and illustrative of a profound, and keen musical intelligence. Schoenberg is remarkably sensitive to the subtleties of musical coherence, independently discerning many of the concepts we ordinarily associate with Schenker, and, at least to this reviewer's mind, often employing them with more discernment. The musical examples he employs to make his points are always apropos, even as they range quite widely in terms of the various styles of European "classical" music: from Auber to Verdi, with instances from Beethoven, Bizet, Haydn, Léhar, Mahler, Mozart, Puccini, Schubert, and Johann Strauss (among others) along the way. And, of course, Schoenberg.

In addition to concentrating on the European classics, there is also a chronological limitation. Only one example prior to Handel is given, and except for Schoenberg and Richard Strauss, nothing from the twentieth century appears either. Of "world music," nary a mention let alone a musical transcription. Of American popular music, the same silence obtains. Thus, the reader is left to decide the extent to which Schoenberg's point-of-view may, or may not, be relevant to such composers as Machaut, Josquin, Ellington, Tyagaraja, Yatsuhachi Kengyo, or Bartók. The absence of Bach in this two hundred-page manuscript is certainly perplexing, given Schoenberg's great love for that master musician. After all, as he said in his *Preliminary Exercises in Composition*: "there is no greater perfection in music than in Bach!"

If Carpenter and Neff had a different purpose in mind as they created this volume, perhaps they would have addressed these questions extensively in their "Preface." They do not, which this reviewer regrets. However, what they *do* address is exceedingly valuable: they give a seventy-four page "Commentary" on Schoenberg's the-

ory of music. It is a miracle of clarity and richness. Thoughtfully, it precedes the translation of Schoenberg's own text—for since that text is fragmentary and incomplete, and not necessarily laid down in the most sequentially logical order, reading this "Commentary" first enables us to benefit all the more from what follows.

Here are some instances of what Carpenter and Neff have to say. Under the heading, "The Ground for Theory," they write: "Schoenberg believed in the interaction between subject and object in an organically interrelated universe. His belief that the human mind is fitted to the world and the world to the human mind was his ground for knowledge and therefore for his theory" (p. 10). Under the heading, "The Musical Idea," they explain how Schoenberg compared the musical idea to a pair of pliers—each is "a relation of opposing forces." As the opposing motions "thus multiply the power of the man who squeezed them," (p. 16) so a sensible musician sets musical elements in opposition to each other, to increase the power of the composition. (Carpenter and Neff do not mention at this point Eli Siegel's great principle of aesthetic realism: "All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves." But they easily could have.)

Under "Motive and Variation," the authors note something which usually goes unacknowledged: "The importance of rhythm to Schoenberg's concept of motive cannot be overemphasized" (p. 28). A little later they add (and here, again, we see the importance of musical opposition):

> Because the motive is incomplete, it depends on continuations and consequences, asking for expansion. Like the motive, larger forms gain impetus for extension from inherent unrest: 'In the *motive* there must be present a certain *unrest* that will give rise to further motion, an unrest produced by the combination of partly dissimilar components. Just such impelling unrest will arise when larger forms are put together from components that are only partly similar.' (p. 28)

Of particular importance is how Carpenter and Neff write about twelve-tone music. Far too often analysts assume that in a dodecaphonic work the row *is* the underlying, fundamental musical idea. Perhaps, but the editors caution us. They write: "In twelve-tone composition the relationship of the twelve tones to one another develops, on the basis of a particular prescribed order, determined by the idea" (p. 14). Thus the "row" may only be an expression of the deepest background idea, and is not to be conflated with it.

The name Schoenberg has often struck terror into people's hearts, bringing with it a set of formidably "abstract" and "difficult" associations. So it comes as a useful corrective to see in *Der musikalische Gedanke und die Logik, Technik, und Kunst seiner Darstellung* (the original German title), a kaleidoscope of charmingly earthy "extra-musical" references. We have already noted the analogy to that item of hardware, the pliers. Other analogies found in this text are to cats, emperors, soldiers, the activities of revolutionary parties as they attempt to overthrow established governments, the journeys of Columbus, the work of a postman, the military expeditions of Hannibal, and people crowding themselves by a theater coatroom. Schoenberg contrasts bold swimmers and those so timid that they hug the shore. (This, interestingly, *not*—as one might expect—in terms of harmonic adventurousness, but in terms of metric accentuation.) And—oh yes—there are references, too, to cannibals, butchers, and the stupidity of the Nazi laws of "racism purity." Meanwhile, God gets in—as the "higher commissioner."

A few "technical" matters now as to the book itself. There is a cunning mixture of both footnotes and endnotes. Ordinarily, this would be annoying, but the editors so distribute these notes as to make the reading of the book unusually efficient. The bibliography is just the right length: rich enough to guide an average reader forward, but not so extensive as to be daunting. And there are three scholarly appendices, dealing respectively with "Descriptions of the *Gedanke* manuscripts," the "Contents of Manuscript No. 10, Listed in Their Original Order," and "German Texts of Unpublished *Gedanke* Manuscripts Referred to in the Commentary"—these being Schoenberg's pre-1934 attempts.

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