balance, Labounsky writes compellingly about worthwhile but neglected pieces, while frankly admitting that others (unspecified) should have remained unpublished: "Langlais could not objectively decide what to throw away. . . . Instead of reworking sketches for months at a time, he usually sent them to the copyist as soon as they were finished, without a second thought" (p. 330).

Labounsky's decision to place key works by Langlais in the broader context of his professional development and personal life is especially appropriate for a composer whose creative energies were often inspired by people, places, or events. Sometimes the inspiration is obvious, as in the highly programmatic pieces bearing descriptive titles and clear thematic allusions. In other works, like those containing motives melodically encoded from names of family members, friends, and lovers, the author's explanations are especially welcome, even though one is inclined to agree that in these pieces, "[t]he pleasure of discovering the name motifs and performing his music is sometimes greater for the performer than for the listener" (p. 330).

While Labounsky's presentation of Langlais's organ works leaves open the question of whether the best of them will eventually be ranked with those of Franck and Tournemire, her assertion that "[a]bove all Langlais should be recognized as a significant composer of sacred music" (p. 331) is substantiated by generous and informative coverage of the prominence of chant melodies and modes in his compositions and improvisations. Moreover, several of Langlais's important compositions (including some intended for concert performance) were—like the organ works of his friend and contemporary Olivier Messiaen—inspired by Roman Catholic liturgy and teachings. And even though opposed (philosophically, at least) to the Second Vatican Council's pronouncements on church music, Langlais contributed an important body of music for use in the new rites. Thus the composer's lifelong commitment to expressing his ardent Roman Catholicism through music may form his strongest link to the so-called Sainte-Clotilde Tradition.

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VARIOUS TOPICS

Operatic Subjects: The Evolution of Self in Modern Opera. By Sandra Corse. Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2000. [227 p. ISBN 0-8386-3858-9. $39.50.]

Like her previous books (*Opera and the Uses of Language: Mozart, Verdi, and Britten* and *Wagner and the New Consciousness: Language and Love in the Ring* [Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1987 and 1990 respectively]), Sandra Corse's latest one reveals both a literary scholar's attention to the subtleties of language and dramatic convention and a musicologist's concern for musical structure. Few people have the kind of dual professional training that she has, so few others can do justice to opera as a truly mixed genre. The book's central theme is opera's contribution to the delineation of modern subjectivity. While this delineation has been a topic much discussed in recent decades (especially in literary studies), opera too has recently joined the debates with Gary Tomlinson's study of how the operatic voice locates the subject in the world (*Metaphysical Song: An Essay on Opera* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999]) and Carolyn Abbate's recent essays, including "Outside Ravel's Tomb" (*Journal of the American Musicological Society* 52 [1999]: 465–530]). Corse's position is that opera combines the social interaction of characters with a representation (through both words and music) of a complex and contradictory interiority in a way that far surpasses, for example, the novel as a means of exploring inner consciousness. Operatic subjects are the products of physical, embodied characters presented on the theatrical stage *plus* the music that occurs with their words and actions, and thus opera contributes in a special way to our understanding of the contradictions of modern subjectivity. Careful to define what she

means by subjectivity, Corse draws on philosophical, literary, and linguistic discourses (rather than psychological or psychoanalytic) to offer a lucid, if sometimes simplified, overview of the history of philosophical modernity from René Descartes onward; she focuses on the sense of the individual from the Enlightenment emphasis on reason to the romantic beginnings of the modern view, through Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's critique and redefinition of the subject in terms of intersubjective social experience (and subsequent interpretations of Hegel by Theodor Adorno and Slavoj Žižek). Her argument is that opera does not reflect, reinforce, or reproduce the ideologies of bourgeois identity, as is often assumed, but challenges cultural conceptions of persons and interpersonal relationships precisely through its dialectical mix of drama and music.

The contradictions of the modern subject are explored in depth in a discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche's Schopenhauerian and Wagnerian *Birth of Tragedy* as a "drama of the self" (p. 44); this discussion acts as a preparation for the chapter on Richard Wagner and his redefinition of opera as a theater of the self. The world-historical teleology of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* is read through Hegel's theory of human consciousness, as is *Tristan und Isolde* (with the addition of Arthur Schopenhauer)—the first moment of operatic modernism. I did find myself quibbling with isolated interpretations en route here—for example, it is arguable that neither *Parsifal* with its structure of comedy, nor *Tristan* with its celebration of the night-death and the Schopenhauerian noumena, can really be called "pessimistic"—but Corse is always strongest when bringing together the music, the text, and the drama. In the next chapter, the legacy of the Wagnerian split subject in all its complexities is examined in symbolist drama and then in Claude Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande,* with its focus on the interior, not the social, realm. Here interiority is represented as experiential flux in a highly ordered flow of time, which is objectivized in the supporting orchestral music—and all this is said to force the audience to rethink its assumptions about subjectivity. Richard Strauss's *Elektra* is also treated in this chapter, for it too builds on Wagner's representation of the interior self, but this time in terms of social isolation. Given her focus on desire as always involving a relation to others, Corse interprets the physical body as incidental to both operas, but Mélisande does die after childbirth, so clearly it is not literally the case that "even the desire of the men around her cannot touch her" (p. 88), and Elektra is defined in bodily (and even in animal) terms from the very start of the libretto.

In turning to Strauss and Hugo von Hofmannsthal's later neoclassical or neotraditional operas, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Die Frau ohne Schatten,* Corse shows how the pair moved to reexamine the Enlightenment individual and develop a complex notion of the social self in both the music (through symmetry of form) and the text (through a symbolic world with underlying reason and order). Her final assessment, however, is that these operas explore but then nullify the complexities of modern selfhood. For contrast, she turns to expressionist operas, specifically Alban Berg's *Wozzeck.* Using Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory,* she investigates the tension between fragmentariness and cohesion in an analysis of Berg's use of elaborately structured musical forms in relation to his character's drama of disintegration. Again, the relation of music to text and drama is central to the analysis, as it is in the discussion of Kurt Weill's *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* as a self-consciously antioperatic opera that leaves the self as only a quasi-mechanical victim of a corrupt social structure. From expressionist operas, Corse moves to modernist ones in which serial techniques are used as a unifying device in tension with the chaos of their characters' experience. Berg's *Lulu* and Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron* are said to be about the failure of intersubjectivity to ground the modern subject in meaning or value: neither Lulu's sensuality nor Moses's abstracted symbol of God suffice. Yet in both, the music "attempts both to represent and to create a process in which the communal attains a substantiality that evades the characters in the drama itself" (p. 146), thus bringing Wagnerian individualizing tendencies back into the picture through elements like vocal texture. This strange-seeming pairing of operas is a fruitful one, presented through the lenses of an analysis of the Hegelian spirit read through the work of Drucilla

Cornell and of serial technique as interpreted by Adorno.

Postmodern opera, the next historical step in Corse's narrative, is the opera of minimalism, itself seen as growing out of John Cage's modernist experiments, but as a challenge to serial music's rationality and totalization. If modernist opera explored subjectivity in an age "that recognized the contingency of the subject," then postmodern opera explores the "ways in which to turn the negative implications of this into positive gain" (p. 174) through the transformations of desire. Corse's contrasting of the assertive minimalism of Philip Glass and Robert Wilson's *Einstein on the Beach* with John Adams and Alice Goodman's *Nixon in China* nonetheless serves to convince me, I fear, that the former is still resolutely modern, and that it is the latter, through its "reappropriation of earlier harmonic materials that embody a romanticist notion of the individual" (p. 181), that is postmodern in the (parodic, reflexive) sense that other art forms use the term. Minimalist postmodern opera, Corse finally decides, does not go far enough: "The critique of subjectivity intended by these works is partially diluted by their dependence on historically venerable musical and dramatic forms. The effort to subvert the subject fails and the individual audience member emerges from either of these works more locked into individuality than ever" (p. 191).

What, then, is left? In her conclusion, Corse argues that since opera has always been a genuinely heterogeneous art form (unlike film, which privileges the visual), it is also an ethical genre that "tries to create/represent the subject as a concept, a social reality, but uniquely, as a physical entity composed of and around music itself" (p. 195). Her prime example of how opera deals with heterogeneity as an ethical imperative is Olivier Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise,* where both otherness and a different (radically dependent) kind of subjectivity are finally imagined anew: "Opera once again asserts itself as the genre of subjectivity, a new subjectivity that embraces heterogeneity without resolving it into domination, something opera, with its irreconcilable composite of elements—drama and music, Self and Other—is uniquely prepared to do" (p. 206). Corse's passionate defense of opera through this argument about subjectivity could not be further from Tomlinson's or Abbate's more theoretical and historicized philosophical and musicological explorations of the same topic, but in the end, her insight into particular operas is the real strength of this work.

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Rhythms of Resistance: African Musical Heritage in Brazil. By Peter Fryer. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, Wesleyan University Press, 2000. [xiv, 267 p. ISBN 0-8195-6417-6 (cloth); 0-8195-6418-4 (pbk.). $55 (cloth); $24.95 (pbk.).]

This volume is meant to be a general introduction to the heritage from black Africa in the music of Brazil. Peter Fryer gives no rationale for writing such a book. Its organization, however, readily shows that it is a basic survey of various historical sources from the eighteenth century onward that inform the various song and dance genres, as well as musical instruments, having alleged African origin. In nine chapters, the author treats (respectively) the heritage of Nigeria and Benin, the Angolan heritage, the "Angola warble" (street cries and worksongs), Brazil's dramatic dances, three vanished instruments, the African dance heritage, Brazil's Atlantic dances, the emergence of Brazilian popular music, and *maxixe* and modern samba. The introduction sets out the basic factual information for Fryer's subsequent discussion: the connection of *desafio* (translated as "challenge singing") and the Atlantic cultural triangle, the African presence in Brazil through the slave trade, the relative recognition over the centuries of the African cultural heritage in Brazil, so-called neo-African music, acculturated music, and finally, the sources of Brazil's "neo-African" music. This introduction reveals the author's a priori, diffusionist, and reductionist assumptions, and thereby his limited experience with his subject. Fryer is determined to give the *desafio* song genre a triple ancestry (African, Arab, and Portuguese), but rather than attempting to demonstrate