Reader's Guide to

MUSIC,

History, Theory, Criticism

Editor

MURRAY STEIB

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the revised edition of Simpson, no significant English-language monograph on the composer was published until MILLER (1987). This excellent bibliography contains more than 400 entries of materials in nine languages. Her annotations are generally accurate and frequently extensive.

Miller was instrumental in sparking the third wave of scholarly interest in Nielsen in English-speaking countries. Her Garland bibliography made research on the composer much less time consuming. Moreover, she organized a session on the composer for the 1991 Society of Music Theory conference, which was the starting point for MILLER (1994). This highly provocative but somewhat uneven collection of essays shows the growing diversity of musical work on Nielsen. Its contents can be grouped into three categories. First, there are a number of articles of relatively narrow topics, such as Nielsen's compositional procedures, performance history, Nielsen's writings, and Nielsen's Danishness. Second are in-depth analyses of seminal works, such as the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, the early songs, the string quartets, the violin sonatas, and the wind quintet. Finally, there are essays that examine Nielsen's tonal, formal, and thematic techniques. Unfortunately, this volume is almost completely silent with regard to Nielsen's operas. Of special interest are translations of a selection of Nielsen's letters and of two important articles written during the early 1930s (Tom Kristensen on Nielsen's writings and Povil Hamburger on the issue of form in *Sinfonia espansiva*).

While Miller (1994) is likely to interest listeners and performers who are well-acquainted with Nielsen's oeuvre, two recent books serve as good introductions to the composer and his music. LAWSON, the first book-length biography of Nielsen in English, includes an impressive number of illustrations, such as concert posters, portraits, art works that inspired the composer, and photographs of manuscripts. Lawson also extensively discusses the early reception of Nielsen's music and includes a large number of quotations from primary sources, such as Nielsen's letters, diaries, and early concert reviews. The discussion of Nielsen's music, however, is rather superficial and extremely brief.

The other excellent introduction to Nielsen is FANNING. This slim volume opens with a chapter that places Nielsen's Fifth Symphony in the context of the symphonic tradition and Nielsen's career, and it closes with an extended discussion of the 20-odd recordings of the work. The bulk of the book, however, is devoted to an extremely detailed analysis of the Fifth Symphony.

**Notation: To 1600**


The notation of music in western Europe prior to 1600 demonstrates the remarkable adaptability and invention of the musicians who documented and recorded the evolving styles of monophonic and polyphonic music. Although the pitch notation of the ancient Greek musicians was transmitted to the early Christian Church through music theory texts, the rhythmic notation of the Greeks apparently was not. Early chant books of the liturgy of the Church are annotated with a variety of symbols apparently indicating voice inflection, but there is considerable debate among scholars as to what these symbols represent. The ambiguity of early chant notation has led to a host of questions regarding the role of memorization in the transmission of chant and the possible use of improvisation in performances of the liturgy. The development of staff notation by the 11th century greatly clarified the notation of pitch. Two questions of pitch notation, however, remain for scholars of the music throughout this period: the division of the whole step into smaller intervals and the use of *musica ficta*—non-notated chromatic alterations.

Scholars are still divided on the appropriate rhythmic interpretation for much early medieval music. Interpreting rhythm becomes more certain for music notated after note shapes (or neumes) used in chant were adapted to form specific rhythmic patterns known as the rhythmic modes in the Notre Dame School of the late 12th century. By the late 13th century, musicians such as Franco of Cologne began to make distinctions among individual note shapes to indicate specific rhythmic durations. Symbols for the regular division of time in

**Norway** see Scandinavia
music (similar to the modern concept of time signatures) were used by the early 14th century. From that point onward, the development of rhythmic notation was mostly a matter of adding ever finer distinctions to the note shapes (such as stems, flags, and color) to produce increasingly precise distinctions of rhythm.

APEL's text has remained a standard introduction to the topic for over 50 years. The author derives general rules for interpreting the notation from a variety of theorists and applies these principles to a wide body of manuscript sources. The text includes 88 facsimiles of early manuscripts and provides sample transcriptions into modern notation. Although its longevity is a credit to Apel's ability to explain the intricacies of the subject, not all of his conclusions are currently considered valid. As can be expected of an introductory text on such a broad topic, general rules are stressed at the sacrifice of local variants and unique insights of individual theorists.

A basic introduction to chant notation can be found in CARDINE. As a publication of the Solesmes monastery, the book represents the interpretation of Gregorian notation promoted by the Catholic Church. The book introduces each basic neume, providing various examples from early chant sources, and describes its interpretation. The work is detailed, and a basic knowledge of chant notation and history is assumed by the author.

JEFFERY represents one of the most recent monographs on the transmission of chant. The author presents a brief review of the major theories in chant transmission of such scholars as Helmut Hucke, Leo Treitler, and Kenneth Levy. (The scholarly debate on early chant notation and transmission has taken place primarily in journals, and the interested student will need to consult articles by these writers for a full view on the topic.) Jeffery suggests that traditional methods of studying chant can be supplemented using the methods of ethnomusicology to investigate such questions as the interrelationships between chant and folk music. The book is brief for such a broad pursuit but contains an excellent bibliography on recent scholarship.

Anna Maria Busse BERGER gives a history of the various mensuration symbols developed in the 14th century, which are roughly equivalent to modern time signatures; a few of these symbols have remained in our notation system today. She documents the various ways musicians used these signs to create complex proportional relationships within their works. The book is intended for a specialist, but an introductory reader will gain a great deal from the first portions of the text in which the author recounts the early history of these symbols; the extensive bibliography and annotations are also very useful.

_Musica ficta_ refers to the chromatic alterations of music that are not notated in the sources. The modern student will often see accidentals written above the staff of a modern edition of early music, indicating where the editor believes the addition of _ficta_ is appropriate. Theories about what constitutes the correct application of _musica ficta_ have varied from scholar to scholar; such debates explain why many recordings and modern editions of early music do not agree with one another. Karol BERGER's book gives a detailed history of _ficta_. Although the study is intended for an advanced student, a reader with a moderate degree of knowledge can gain a great deal from it. The work includes an extensive bibliography and is well annotated.

The polyphonic repertoire of Saint Martial and Santiago de Compostela provides an interesting test case in notation. Scholars have debated how to interpret the rhythm of these works and how these rhythmic interpretations might be related to the rhythm of the Notre Dame composers in Paris. KARP is the latest scholar to address the question of transcribing these works into modern notation. The first volume discusses the issues related to transcription; the second provides modern editions of the pieces. Karp gives a history of earlier transcriptions of these works and addresses such issues as the interpretation of basic note shapes, the interaction between the text and the pitches, theories of consonance and dissonance, and the role that ornaments played in the music.

MATHIESEN describes the rhythmic notation found in Greek manuscripts and explains his interpretation of it in light of Greek ideas of rhythm and meter. The work cites several Greek theorists and gives annotated examples. The article is written for a sophisticated student, but much of the arguments can be grasped by any interested reader.

SANTOSUSSO thoroughly examines various letter notations employed by theorists of the early Middle Ages. These notations, derived from the pitch notations used by ancient Greek theorists, demonstrate the close relationship between theory and practice as they were subsequently employed to notate both monophonic and polyphonic music in the early Middle Ages. This volume contains numerous illustrations of the manuscripts and an extensive bibliography.

C. MATTHEW BALENSUELA

**Notation: 20th Century**


