

Introduction

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NORTHERN PERSPECTIVES ON MUSIC AND CULTURE

Friedemann Sallis and Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam

INTRODUCTION

We are very pleased to present a selection of articles written by Finnish and Canadian scholars on subjects that examine cultural aspects of the composition, the performance, the reception and the interpretation of music. One common thread linking the authors is the fact that we all presented papers at the 7th Symposium for Music Research in Finland organized by the Suomen Musiikkitieteellinen Seura [Finnish Musicological Society] and the University of Turku from 15 to 17 May 2003. This project began innocuously enough as a motion adopted by the executive board of the Canadian University Music Society (CUMS) in 2001. The motion mandated Friedemann Sallis and Edward Jurkowski to explore the possibility of establishing a collaborative project with the Finnish Musicological Society. Contact was made with Tomi Mäkelä, who together with Sallis, worked out the idea of having a group of CUMS members present papers at the annual meeting of the Finnish Society and cobbled together a theme: Northern Perspectives of Music as a Vehicle for Cultural Transmission. A program committee was struck consisting of Edward Jurkowski, Jukka Louhivuori, Tomi Mäkelä and Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam, and a call for papers was organised by CUMS. In the end, six CUMS-members presented papers at the Turku meeting.

Beyond the obvious value of academic exchange per se and notwithstanding the fact that numerous Finnish and Canadian scholars and artists have established long-standing, fruitful working relationships, this project was motivated on the Canadian side by the belief that our Society should more actively encourage and promote exchange projects with similar-sized societies outside of North America. At the time (2001–02), there was much ominous rumbling about the establishment of some kind of “fortress America.” We felt we should be doing more to open up new avenues for dialogue and to actively seek out discussion partners, whose perspectives are different from our own. Despite obvious linguistic and cultural differences, Finland seemed a perfect fit. As well as latitude and some winter sports (particularly ice hockey), we share the experience of living next to large, often insensitive super-power neighbours. As independent nations, Finland and Canada are both relatively young; a point, which also underscores an important difference. Whereas Finland seized its independence from Russia in 1917 in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution, Canada has never completely broken its ties with its colonial past. Though it often appears anachronistic to others, the monarchy,

the most obvious link with our colonial past, has been conspicuously maintained down to the present day. Both countries are officially bilingual. Swedish is an official language in Finland. Today it is spoken by 5.53% of the population. However at the beginning of the twentieth century, Swedish was the language of the cultured and the educated; for example Jean Sibelius's mother tongue was Swedish, though he also had a good command of Finnish. In both countries, a small, primarily urban population, located in the relatively clement south, holds sovereignty over vast expanses of northern territory. Due in part to the uneven distribution of population, the cultures of both countries are marked by strong regional identities, which are not necessarily well-known outside of their respective borders. Finally both countries have culturally distinct indigenous populations, which constitute a significant part of the population of their respective northern territories.

The Canadian University Music Society and Suomen Musiikkitieteellinen Seura are also about the same size and because they are both relatively small (at least when compared with mastodons like the AMS), they tend to be inclusive, large-tent organisations, encompassing historical musicology, music theory, popular music studies, ethnomusicology, music education, and performance. Where we lack critical mass in any specific field of study, we gain in our ability to organise discussion and orient debate across disciplinary boundaries.

The articles presented here constitute a cross section of the scholarly study of music currently being undertaken in Finland and Canada.¹ The selection is neither exhaustive nor could we claim it to be representative in any general sense. It does however provide a window enabling us to see how music is currently being examined in our respective countries. Methodologies range from those of traditional musicology and music theory to more recent techniques such as critical discourse analysis and genetic criticism (sketch studies). The close reading of scores, reception history and aesthetic considerations mingle with the study of the political and social aspects of practicing music in a given place and a given time. The objects of study range from Western art-music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to the production and multicultural reception of popular and folk music. The selection also bears witness to a certain mutual interest. Two Canadian authors broach Finnish topics and one Finnish author takes a close look at aspects of Canadian culture. All of the authors tend to concur with Erkki Salmenhaara (1941–2002), who, at the very beginning of his long and influential career, wrote that the acoustic phenomena of music always entail a subjective hermeneutic perspective.² In the following contributions, the authors are concerned with setting their studies of music in broader discursive contexts. Thus the problems exposed and the method-

¹ As such this collection of articles takes its place in a long-standing tradition established by this journal when it was founded (Deaville 2000, 1-2).

² "Das akustische Ereignis hat immer eine innere imaginäre Perspektive" (Salmenhaara 1969, 141).

ologies used to examine them can all be situated on that line which separates, or at least used to separate, musicology and music theory, particularly here in North America (this line was never so neatly drawn in Europe). Indeed, this collection of articles leads one to wonder whether this old division and the tired arguments mustered in its defence are not things of the past.

Our selection begins with a study of music by Kaija Saariaho, one of Finland's leading contemporary composers. Anne Sivuoja-Gunaratnam performs a close reading of certain aspects of *Lichtbogen* for nine musicians and electronics (1985–86), notably miniature forms, sound colour and silence. She also undertakes a critical analysis of discourse surrounding the work. By bringing the data of these two analytical approaches together, she is able to circumscribe certain phenomenological aspects of this music, which would otherwise escape the scrutiny of traditional analysis. Edward Jurkowski follows up with an analytical survey of the music of early Finnish modernism. He brings to light the significant influence the music of Alexander Scriabin and Igor Stravinsky had on the compositional technique of young Finnish composers of the early twentieth century, namely Uuno Klami, Aarre Merikanto and Väinö Raitio. In so doing he implicitly questions the notion that national identity can or should be applied to art music of the early twentieth century. The next two articles take a close look at Glenn Gould and his Canadian context. Markus Mantere examines the aesthetic and ethical impact that Gould's "idea of north" and his identity as a "northerner" had on his creative output. He accomplishes this through a careful study of Gould's writings and statements and in so doing opens up a hermeneutic window on Gould's musical thought. Friedemann Sallis takes a second look at the aesthetic identity of *The Idea of North*. Through a study of the documents Gould used to produce this work, Sallis attempts to better define the inherently musical nature of this work, which over the past half century has been misunderstood and neglected. He concludes by examining how the act of apprehending this work as music can contribute to the construction of identity. Yrjö Heinonen presents a remarkably detailed study of both the genesis and the reception of the song 'Äijö' by Värttinä, currently one of Finland's most successful pop groups. Using the tools of critical discourse analysis Heinonen shows how the elements of Finno-Ugric folk tradition became part of the song and how the meanings of these elements are modified and transformed as the song resonates within and among diverse international audiences. In his thought-provoking study of Yrjö Kilpinen's cycles of German *Lieder* written and performed during the 1930s, James Deaville raises the sensitive question of composer's political affiliations and how they relate to his oeuvre. How should we interpret the actions and work of a composer whose music was actively promoted in the Third Reich? Deaville's analysis of Kilpinen's music will no doubt provide food for thought for those interested in the relationship between the aesthetic values of a work and ethical implications of a composer's actions and statements. Benita Wolters-Fredlund

examines the social implications of musical performance through a study of the activities and repertoire of the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir during the period leading up to and including the Second World War. She shows how this ensemble, once on the margins of Canadian society, prefigured central elements of the current policy of multiculturalism. Finally, last but not certainly not least, Brian Black presents an in depth analysis of modulation in the music of Franz Schubert. With a nod towards Umberto Eco, who famously observed that “art knows the world through its formal structures” (Eco 1989, 144), Black demonstrates that the Romantic notion of yearning for the unattainable is embedded in the modulatory structures of Schubert’s music. Through his detailed discussion involving numerous examples, he shows that analysis and hermeneutics are in fact two sides of the same musical coin. As one would expect, some of this work may stir controversy. We fervently hope that all of it will stimulate discussion across disciplinary, linguistic and cultural boundaries.

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