

**The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Second Edition.** Edited by Stanley Sadie. New York, NY: Macmillan/Grove, 2001. 29 volumes. ISBN 1561592390. \$4,850 U.S.

This autumn, we music librarians have been pointing students toward a *New Grove* that isn't pencil-marked, dog-eared, and older than they are. And we are adjusting the caveats and benchmarks developed over the life of the first edition: yes, those *NBA* volumes in square brackets are truly still in preparation; no, the bizarre speculations about his death are no longer a serious part of the Tchaikovsky article.

The April reviews by journalists quoted the statistics of words and articles helpfully provided by the New Grove publicity machine and, after a few pro forma criticisms, had happy endings: "indispensable" (*Gramophone*) or "invaluable" (*Billboard*). In June, Charles Rosen offered his magisterial opinions in *The New York Review of Books*, noting some articles as "improvements" and one as even an "immense improvement" on the previous edition, and some new ones as "splendid," but maintaining a tone of judicious irony about the probable future insignificance of many of them. Sharper and specific reactions to errors and omissions, from contributors and music librarians, often shared on professional listservs, have resulted in the replacement of two volumes (and numerous and ongoing corrections to the online version). A false alarm about the paper and binding quality raised on MLA-L resulted in an informative exposition of current printing practices. But after the appearance of the online version, discussions narrowed to technical and design-related questions.

The impressions that follow are taken from a wander through a sample volume of

articles, plus a look at the two new end volumes.

Half a dozen lengthy bibliographical articles (Libraries and private collections, Sound archives, Dictionaries and encyclopedias, Periodicals, Historical editions, and Congress reports) have been placed in the "Appendixes" volume, a handy package of lists that I find easier to flip through than the electronic equivalent. Sound archives are organized by continent, starting with Africa and Asia, and the information includes URLs. The Libraries list reveals its conservative RISM origins. Africa, except for South Africa, and Asia, except for Japan and Israel, are *terra incognita*, and there are no Internet addresses even for institutions such as the NLC, already included as Sound archives.

The best volume is kept to the last. The new "thematic index" by Margot Levy opens with a curved-line diagram that looks like something from a self-help mental health book. With "styles and genres" in the centre, it draws the connections, near and far, between these and other "nodes" such as composers, instruments, cities and countries, and theory. Remarkably, there is no pedagogical node since music education topics are well-covered in the index itself. It then rolls on for over 800 glorious pages of names of individuals and organizations (with a list, for example, at "Cistercian order," of all its members in *NG2*), places, and terms. (There is "sex" and "rock and roll," but not "drugs;" your eyes will be led instead to four enchanting columns on "drum," with lists of types, countries, musical genres....) And

while there is no article on aesthetics, the index has a column of references to writers, theories and applications which should satisfy any seeker. Letter-by-letter filing and an integrated alphabet mean that the only two people named “Chan” (Charlie, a nickname for Charlie Parker, and Wing-wah, a Hong Kong composer and musical force) are separated by half a column of terms including chance, chanson, and chant.

At the back of the volume are lists of composers by period and country, women composers, singers and performers in six selected categories of western instruments, and writers by century. Undergraduates answering their assignment-related questions will be happy to see these shortcuts to the French baroque or to the Italian high renaissance, but in some areas they may generate disorientation. Great care was taken in separating the Croats, Slovenes and all the other Balkans, but only until 1900 do the Scots properly have their own lists distinct from the English, and the Basques and Catalans are mixed in with the Spanish. And, as a local concern, the list of twentieth-century Canadian composers included in the *New Grove* is misleading in a couple of ways. It seems to mean Canadian-born composers, most immigrants from Europe (though Evangelista, who has been here since he was in his twenties, is listed as Spanish), and immigrants from Great Britain (Healey Willan) or the U.S. who died here. Most living immigrants from Great Britain (Derek Holman) or the U.S. (Stephen Chatman), no matter how long or established their Canadian sojourn, are listed with their countries of origin. For performers also, an early association with one of the Anglo imperial powers is hard to shake. Anton Kuerti (b. Vienna) is an “American pianist” (he lived in

the U.S. for about 20 years), despite his move to Canada nearly 40 years ago and his adoption of Canadian citizenship.

And while anyone’s selection of the 81 most significant twentieth-century Canadian composers would be questionable, a few of these choices are indefensible. The accomplishments and contributions to Canadian musical life of Maya Badian and of Piero Gamba are minuscule, particularly in comparison with large omitted figures such as Howard Cable, Gabriel Charpentier, or John Rea. From my seat as a regular new-music concertgoer, I would have added Henry Kucharzyk, Ka Nin Chan, James Rolfe and Linda C. Smith; but that seat is in Toronto, and it is not occupied for concerts of “accessible” pieces by the likes of Michael Conway Baker and Nancy Telfer.

The general article on Canada is uneven. The first section, on art music, by Carl Morey, is an updated version of his historical article in the 1980 edition, including geographical influences, education and broadcasting. The bibliography has *not* been updated: it is a reprint of the list from 1980, which had titles dated up to 1977, with the addition of three misplaced items about pop and folk. So, the current sources to which we direct students – Morey’s 1997 Garland bibliography, *EMC2*, and the CMHS series of music editions – are missing.

The sections on traditional music have been newly written by a variety of scholars, and there is a promise of a new approach: “Searching for ‘authentic’ folk or traditional music is no longer as important as is understanding the contextual processes reflecting the contemporary realities of an ethnically plural Canadian society.” However,

Gordon Smith then provides an extensive discussion of the methodology, motives and theories of early collectors of French Canadian materials, while Jay Rahn, after noting the social settings, purposes, and transmission methods of traditional songs and instrumental music of British origin, essays a description of their musical characteristics. The single illustration, repeated from the 1980 edition, is the familiar one of "Minuets of the Canadians," a visitor's perspective on colonial social strata at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Only for Ukrainian, Caribbean, and Indian traditions are there specific descriptions of cultural transformations in their present-day Canadian settings. Under the heading "research" is a list of scholars, and the announcement that "From historical and contemporary perspectives, Canada has played a major role in the study of traditional music." The supporting bibliography is lengthy, but ends with publications from 1996. The final section, popular music, is a brief survey of the successes of the industry in the last half of the twentieth century; jazz is barely mentioned.

In contrast, the article on Brazil in the same volume is far more expansive and detailed. There are maps, numerous musical examples, and illustrations of performers and instruments, most notably of the eight-foot-high Urua flutes held by a lightly-clothed male performer. There is a close-up of the "external ducts" which obviates the need for any words to assist us in "understanding the contextual processes." (The printed volumes still have the overwhelming advantage of such visual support.) The history and significance of multiple cultural influences and musical genres are described by one scholar, Gerard Behague, who has updated both the text and bibliography of his lengthy 1980 article.

There are several articles in this volume on really major composers. George Bozarth and Walter Frisch frame their article on Brahms in the traditional divisions of "Life," focussing on the development of his intellectual interests and curiosities, and the influence of musical experiences, and "Works," in which a variety of thematic, structural, and a very few extramusical purposes are attributed to his compositions.

James Pritchett's article on John Cage, after a resumé of his early studies, chronologically describes his work as responses to the needs of performers, meetings with musicians from Asian cultures, meetings with other composers, his introduction to the *I Ching*, and his public fame since the early 1960s. The only personal themes and subjects exposed are the ones Cage himself chose to publicize, such as his interests in nature and in the works of James Joyce.

In Philip Brett's article on Britten, the much less discreet life becomes the basis of the works: "Britten's artistic effort was an attempt to disrupt the centre that it occupied with the marginality that it expressed." The discussions, mainly of works with texts, are suffused with attributions of homosexual purposes, self-involvement and self-awareness. Friendships, travels and musical influences are described in highly coloured terms. At the end, he "died in the arms of Peter Pears." (In contrast, a few pages on, William Byrd "died at Stondon Massey on 4 July 1623.") The bibliography reveals the committed scholarship behind all this, with publications listed through 1999 and forthcoming.

Different alphabetically-nearby composers are treated differently. To Pierre Boulez are

baldly attributed “resolute imagination, force of will, and ruthless combativeness” at the top of the article, but then his career is described without reference to family, friends, social interactions or purposes. With Frank Bridge, there is no mention of his ménage à trois discussed in the article on his student, Benjamin Britten. Henry Brant’s significance is described only in terms of his spatial and stylistic innovations and multi-cultural inclusions.

All this confirms what seems to me Charles Rosen’s most helpful remark in his review, that the *New Grove 2* “reads in part like a union directory to the present state of the profession of music history,” a description actually prefigured in a “Letter from the editors” in one of the early pieces of promotional literature, that it “must also reflect the changing concerns of the discipline... and the areas of scholarly enquiry of its times.” Another prospectus promised “an entirely new collection of articles [exploring] controversial, often ignored and forgotten topics: deconstruction, postmodernism, gender and sexuality, feminism....” Even with these additions, the predominant concerns of the “old” musicology still form the bulk of *NG2*’s coverage. For example, the list of pieces by Antoine Busnoys has only about half a dozen definite new attributions as well as a few additions of conflicting or conjectural works (his oeuvre would still fit on a CD or two if any performers were interested). But because of the lasting fascination medieval music exerts on scholars, the bibliography of writings about him has doubled and the article has more than tripled in size. The new article on “Borrowing,” covering Gautier de Coinci to John Corigliano, is wonderful indeed, but the general article on “Broadcasting” has

disappeared; the topic is covered only in a few country articles, perhaps where it was of interest to the individual author.

Concerning recordings, the introduction in volume one says that “discographies [are] included in many articles on traditional and non-western music... [and] may also be given in entries on performers of traditional and non-Western music and jazz.” This vague claim to unpredictability is fulfilled, at least for traditional music: the Brazil article has none, the Bushman music article lists four recordings and the Canada article lists two. There were no discographies for any jazz figures in the volumes I skimmed (e.g., Adderly, Henry Red Allen, Almeida, Alpert, Braxton, Clifford Brown, Brubeck, Calloway). The article on David Bowie is enthusiastic and musically literate, with internal references to some albums, but without any listing the quality and quantity of his work is untold.

In literary style and readability, the editors have allowed a fair amount of individuality. But by accident or design, many of their authors turn to the same term to describe the musical styles of widely varying figures. “Essential Englishness” is ascribed to the work of Bowie, Billy Bragg, and Frank Bridge; Gavin Bryars has a “very English perspective on the experimental tradition;” Britten “as he grew older ...became more English;” Alan Bush used advanced techniques “in an entirely personal way which is unmistakably English.” Editors might also have altered the confusing juxtaposition of metaphor and literal reporting in the comments about Nadia Boulanger’s “fondness for modally-inflected lines and parallel chordal progressions” followed by a remark about her “fondness for Stravinsky’s works.” But I am pleased they left this in the article on

Brunei: “The shallow pool of literature on the musical practices of Brunei’s Malay population appears bottomless compared to the sprinkling of studies on the musics of minority groups.” Jane Austen could not have said it better.

Are there any fake articles, as were discovered in the original *NG*? One entry is surely a joke: half a column on Burgas, a Bulgarian town which *Britannica Online* describes as a fishing port, population around 200,000. Its only musical claim to fame is the performance in an 800-seat hall, built in 1954, of Italian and Bulgarian operas “suitable for its nature as a summer resort.” Don’t try booking on the Internet: the closest accommodations are in Varna, 90 kilometres further north up the Black Sea coast.

The printed volumes of *NG2* are certainly not “the last word in music scholarship” as the pre-publication ads proclaimed. Even the

online version will be just the latest report, subject to confirmation. Errors both significant and unimportant continue to be identified. Gilles Tremblay will forever meet an early death on the page, and some illustrations will remain misplaced or mislabeled. The cutoff dates for bibliographies are inconsistent, the works’ lists are still organized idiosyncratically, and their typographically more generous format makes them strangely more difficult to read.

These volumes do provide an immense panorama of the values and concerns of many music scholars at the end of the twentieth century. Users of our libraries will find them at various times helpful, irrelevant, exciting, puzzling, disappointing, and perfect.

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## Books Received

**Music for More than One Piano: An Annotated Guide.** By Maurice Hinson. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001. Paperback reprint. 218 p. ISBN 0-253-21457-2 \$22.95

**Red Stars: Personality and the Soviet Popular Song, 1955-1991.** By David MacFadyen. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001. 319 p. ISBN 0-735-2106-2 Cloth \$55.00

**You Can’t Steal a Gift: Dizzy, Clark, Milt and Nat.** By Gene Lees. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001. 269 p. ISBN 0-300-08965-1 Cloth \$27.95