



Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Secular and Sacred Music to 1900. Edited by Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft. Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers, vol. 1. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 288 pp. ISBN 9780190237028.

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Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Secular and Sacred Music to 1900 is the second in a planned series of four volumes dedicated to the analysis of music by women composers. As with the first published volume, identified as volume 3 and focused on concert music from 1960-2000, each chapter in volume 1 begins with a brief biography of its composer. The works analysed date from

the Middle Ages to the late-nineteenth century and are grouped into three parts: (1) early vocal music (Hildegard, Casulana, Strozzi), (2) Baroque and Classical music (Jacquet de La Guerre, Martines), and (3) nineteenth-century music (Hensel, Lang, Schumann, Beach). Although the collection is organized chronologically, editors Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft clarify that it deals with the analysis of distinct works, rather than suggesting an evolution of music.

As in the introduction to volume 3, Parsons and Ravenscroft affirm that this collection of essays responds to a need for more analytical studies on works by women composers. The first part of the book (chapters 2-4), entitled “Early Music for Voice,” opens with Jennifer Bain’s study of Hildegard of Bingen’s Sequence for St. Rupert: *O Ierusalem aurea civitas* (ca. 1150–1170). Using manuscript evidence to argue that the work is a sequence, Bain focuses on how Hildegard negotiated setting the changing text. Bain begins with the poetic text and then turns to the relationship between text and music from the small scale (syllables, words, gestures) to the large scale (phrases, verses). In chapter 3, Peter Schubert examines Maddalena Casulana’s madrigal “Per lei pos’ in oblio” from *Cinta di fior* (1570) primarily through chordal phrases. He argues that his approach differs from other scholars who consider harmony or melody as the primary focus since he treats both in his analysis. After briefly surveying common contrapuntal techniques that the composer incorporated in her works, he analyses the musical structure of “Per lei pos’ in oblio” by focusing on “bass-line soggetto” (p. 53), texture, and the inclusion of an aria in the madrigal. In chapter 4, Richard Kolb and Barbara Swanson explore Barbara Strozzi’s cantata



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Appresso ai molli argenti (1659), a lament. They discuss the structure of the text by Giovanni Pietro Monesi and explore the conventions for laments at the time the work was written. They then highlight the relationship between text and music, primarily through text painting, chromaticism, dissonances, descending-tetrachord bass pattern, tonal plan, and musical structure. They argue that Strozzi divided the lament into two parts instead of the five-part structure implied in the poetic text.

The second part of the book, "Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Keyboard Music" includes two studies. In chapter 5, Susan McClary examines two sarabandes (from *Suite in A minor* (1687) and *Suite in D minor* (1707)) written by Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de La Guerre. Rather than focusing on the score and recording, McClary turns to an aesthetic approach to draw out the richness of the works. She highlights the intricacies of the dance—feet, arms, face, hands—that would be indicated in the music. In addition, she discusses the importance of the harpsichord mechanism in allowing for control of colours and attention to the tactile, as well as the performer's touch and facial expressions, all important features in the performance of this repertoire. In chapter 6, L. Poundie Burstein analyses the first movement of Marianna Martines's *Sonata in A Major* (1765) focusing on phrase structure, rhythmic expansion, and large-scale tonal relationships. Burstein argues that Martines not only included conventions of the gallant style, but that she also manipulated these conventions in her works.

The third part of the book, "Nineteenth-Century Lieder and Piano Music," includes three chapters on lieder and one chapter on piano music. In chapter 7, Stephen Rogers analyses two lieder by Fanny Hensel ("Von dir, mein Lieb, ich scheiden muss" (1841) and "Ich kann wohl manchmal singen" (1846)), arguing that Hensel, whose compositional style is often associated with fantasy rather than formal conventions, created free-sounding works in a structured manner. He examines the harmonic structure to show how Hensel avoided tonics and spontaneously changed keys to accommodate the text. He also identifies harmonic schemata (chord patterns with specific scale degrees) that are unique to Hensel and that allow her to compose in such a way as to give the impression of fantasy or improvisation. In chapter 8, Harald Krebs explores two lieder ("An einer Quelle" (1840/1853) and "Am Morgen" (1840)) by Josephine Lang; he focuses on how the composer used the same texts to create two versions for each lied. He discusses the two different settings of each text by comparing harmony, meter, pulse, texture, rhythm, and formal structure, and interprets the similarities and differences in the context of events that happened in Lang's life. In chapter 9, Michael Baker analyses the large-scale structure of Clara Schumann's lied "Liebst du um Schönheit" (1841) primarily through Schenkerian analysis. He borrows the notion of interruption, which occurs multiple times and at different structural levels, to explain how Schumann set the last stanza differently from the others to reflect the poetry. In the last chapter, Edward D. Latham uses Schenkerian tools to analyse the harmony and large-scale tonal structures of Amy Beach's solo piano piece "Phantoms," opus 15, no. 2 (1892). He also focuses on timbre and register to explain some of the ways in which Beach evokes the title of the piece.

This book has much to offer, showcasing, as it does, relatively unknown repertoire and employing a variety of analytical approaches. That said, as it examines a mix of vocal and keyboard works it is less coherent than the earlier volume and less suitable to classroom use. This diversity is also a strength, with music spanning almost 700 years carefully analyzed through a wide range of methods. I highly recommend it.