

without difficulty be extended to most of the Western societies at the end of the nineteenth century, *Composing the Citizen* opens a more 'local' debate, by posing the question of a specifically French model at once according to the definition of a musical politics (in the sense of the actions taken by the State to convert an entire population to a republican regime) and according to the constitution of a political conception of music (as an instrument of civic harmony).

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Luca Sala, ed., *European Fin-de-Siècle and Polish Modernism: The Music of Mieczysław Karłowicz*. Ad Parnassum Studies 4 (Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizioni, 2010). xv+415 pp.

In the introduction to this first-rate volume of collected essays, Luca Sala writes that he aimed to explore the broader European musical and cultural framework that ultimately inspired Mieczysław Karłowicz's (1876–1909) life and works. Sala shows a deep understanding of the composer's musical contributions in the book's opening chapter, 'Il senso dell'assoluto e l'idea dell'arte nell'opera di Mieczysław Karłowicz'. The author makes use of musical examples, as well as excerpts from the composer's memoirs and letters, to evaluate the way in which the composer employs unusual timbres to create a fresh orchestral texture that incorporates layers of luminous sound structures. Sala concludes that, although the composer was inspired by the images surrounding his life in the Tatra region, his music largely represents an organic outgrowth of the European *fin-de-siècle* compositional style.

The book is divided into two sections: 'European *Fin-de-Siècle* and Polish Modernism' and 'The Works of Mieczysław Karłowicz'. The first section revolves around social and political nuances that reveal the extent of Karłowicz's acceptance of a European cultural tradition that existed both within Poland and outside its borders; the second delves into the composer's compositional process and reception history. The book opens with three essays, concerning the composer's life in Poland. In 'La Polonia al tempo di Mieczysław Karłowicz', Andrej Cwiałba focuses on the historical and cultural background of Polish music from the eighteenth century to the close of the nineteenth, and examines Karłowicz's musical and historical links to the nation's past. Agata Mierzejewska's 'Jan Karłowicz: A Portrait with Mieczysław in the Background' illuminates the composer's life in Poland, pointing out that the Karłowicz family descended from Polish nobility; they had their own coat of arms and belonged to rich Polish/Lithuanian gentry (p. 55). Drawing on letters, memoirs, and contemporary accounts, Mierzejewska offers a fascinating account of Karłowicz's father, Jan Aleksander Ludwik August, who studied theory and history with the renowned François-Joseph Fétis at the Conservatoire Royal de Musique de Bruxelles. The elder Karłowicz was an advocate of a new notation system that involved the substitution of the staff system with equivalent symbols; the project did not develop beyond its initial stages. The author concludes that despite Jan Karłowicz's Western-European and secular education, his works nonetheless show distinct qualities associated with the Lithuanian music that he vividly

recalled from his childhood in the Vilnius province. Mierzejewska includes a valuable appendix listing the composer's extant works, including solo songs with piano accompaniment, choral songs, works for piano solo and chamber music.

Jadwiga Paja-Stach's 'The Contribution of Mieczysław Karłowicz to European Musical Culture' dovetails nicely with Mierzejewska's essay on the composer's roots. Paja-Stach argues that musical life in Warsaw and Lvov influenced life in the provinces, and shows how the members of the Karłowicz family, who settled in Warsaw in 1887, were active participants in the city's musical circles. She shows how Karłowicz's songs for voice and piano conform to the conventions of the Romantic era in their use of harmony, tonality and timbre. Karłowicz's use of texture and timbre brought praise, as contemporary critics proclaimed the composer as a rightful inheritor of the musical ideas of Wagner, Tchaikovsky and Richard Strauss.

The next four essays are devoted to the composer's cultural connections to the *fin-de-siècle* modernists and to issues of musical and national identity. In 'Shared Stories? Karłowicz and the *Fin-de-Siècle* Musical Narrative', Peter Franklin, points out that Karłowicz had little emotional attachment to the late nineteenth-century harmonic language embodied in the symphonic works of Mahler and Strauss. Franklin suggests that the composer viewed the composition of a symphonic work as an 'idealized elevation' of a sublime and powerful Nature in which the music represented serenity and rebirth. Franklin broadens the discourse introduced in Alistair Wightman's pioneering study, *Karłowicz, Young Poland and the Musical Fin-de-siècle*,<sup>1</sup> in his interpretation of Karłowicz's symphonic prologue and intermezzo for orchestra, op. 6 (1899–1900), entitled, 'Bianca da Molena' (Bianca from Molena), *Symphonic Prologue to Józefat Nowiński's Drama 'The White Dove'*. The author concludes that the composer's classically oriented aesthetic shaped his musical narrative in his later programmatic works.

Emma Sutton addresses issues of national and musical identity in her essay, 'Karłowicz and *Fin-de-Siècle* Wagnerism', concluding that while Wagner's orchestration and harmonic language largely influenced Karłowicz's symphonic output, the climate in Poland was not, in general, receptive to Wagner's music. Stephen Downes's chapter, 'Karłowicz and the Dionysian: Pessimism, Nihilism, Decadence', delves into the function and character of Dionysian imagery in Karłowicz's symphonic poems and shows how these works served as the composer's response to the existential crisis of nihilism. Downes concludes that the programmatic images in Karłowicz's Symphony in E minor, 'Rebirth', op. 7 (1901–02), depict the nostalgic imagery of Nietzsche's Dionysian experience by means of chains of diminished sevenths, whirling rhythmic figures and chromaticism.

Alistair Wightman, who has written persuasively about the Young Poland movement (an artistic flowering that lasted from 1898 until 1904), and about the music of Szymanowski and Karłowicz in particular, offers a compelling chapter, 'Karłowicz and Young Poland in Literature and Music'.<sup>2</sup> Wightman presents evidence from nineteenth-century writers, most notably, Bolesław Prus, whose descriptions of literary images and expressions underpin Karłowicz's aesthetic and form the nucleus of Young Poland in music, art, and literature. Yet as Wightman points out, only two of Karłowicz's songs – 'Zawód', a lament for lost love, and 'Mów do mnie jeszcze', a plea for words from the beloved – provide the

<sup>1</sup> Aldershot: Ashgate, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> See Wightman, *Karłowicz, Young Poland and the Musical Fin-de-siècle*, and *Karol Szymanowski: His Life and Work* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

composer with a vehicle for personal expression (p. 202). Like Downes, Wightman argues that the programme symphony was a significant genre for the composer's creative process, 'enabling him to resolve basic creative issues at the outset of his career' (p. 208). Wightman concludes that although Karłowicz was not overly impressed by the composers of the Young Poland movement, he nonetheless contributed greatly to the modernist aesthetic that enveloped European arts and society at the close of the nineteenth century.

The volume's second section is devoted to essays on Karłowicz's musical style and reception history. Andrzej Tuchowski's opening essay, 'L'attività letteraria di Karłowicz alla luce della sua estetica compositiva e di aspetti della personalità', places Karłowicz's expressive style within the musical milieu of the European *fin-de-siècle*. Tuchowski makes use of evidence drawn from the composer's letters and memoirs, and contemporary reviews and journalism, to argue on behalf of the composer's unique contributions to the Polish modernists. Stefan Keym's chapter, '"Tearing Knowledge from the Germans": Mieczysław Karłowicz and the German Symphonic Tradition', explores the controversy surrounding German influences in Polish music composed between 1870 and 1918. Keym argues that Karłowicz, who spent a third of his short life in Germany, employed German models in his compositional techniques and programmatic ideas. He explores the composer's background in harmony and counterpoint in private studies in Berlin with the violinist and composer Heinrich Urban (who taught composition to the harpsichordist Wanda Landowska). Keym concludes that although Karłowicz acquired technical and formal skills from his studies with Urban, he nonetheless looked to themes from Polish folklore as aesthetic justification for his symphonic works. Keym's article is illustrated lavishly with musical examples that point out similarities between Karłowicz's music and the works of Wagner, Paderewski, Anton Rubinstein, Noskowski and Brahms. The author concludes that despite Karłowicz's roots in the technical and aesthetic concepts of the German symphonic tradition, he serves as a worthy representative of Polish-German cultural transfer in the late nineteenth century. In his essay, 'Mieczysław Karłowicz, the New Symphony, and His Innovative Symphonic Style', James L. Zychowicz, offers a valuable overview of the composer's works for orchestra. Zychowicz points out that Karłowicz composed ten works for orchestra, including an orchestral serenade, a violin concerto, a symphony, and several symphonic poems, all of which the author briefly outlines in Table 1 (p. 290). The author goes on to explain how Karłowicz expands the symphonic poem (his favoured means of expression) to include multi-movements, as in *Odwieczne pieśni*, op. 10 (1904–06). Zychowicz concludes that Karłowicz renewed the symphonic idiom by means of a fresh, introspective narrative that set his music apart from the works of his contemporaries in Central Europe.

Ryszard D. Golianek examines the symbolic imagery in Karłowicz's symphonic poems, in his chapter, 'Caratteri e simboli musicali nei poemi sinfonici de Mieczysław Karłowicz'. Musical examples illustrate the compositional devices Karłowicz employs in such programmatic works as *Stanisław i Anna Ońwiczimowie*, op. 12 (1907), a work inspired by the story of a pair of seventeenth-century half-siblings whose incestuous love led to their deaths, and *Epizod na maskaradzie*, op. 14 (1908–09), a work completed by Frzegorz Fitelberg in 1913. Golianek concludes that while Karłowicz's musical language is similar to that of Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, and Richard Strauss, his expressive narrative invokes a Romantic *Weltschmerz* that continues to resonate in the present day.

Michael Murphy continues the book's focus on literary narrative, time and place in the works of Karłowicz, in his essay, 'Topical Allusions in Karłowicz's *Eternal Songs*: The Harmonic Series and the Tatras'. Karłowicz composed his three-movement symphonic poem, *Odwieczne pieśni* (*Eternal Songs*), op. 10, between 1904 and 1906, shortly before he resigned from the Warsaw Music Society and moved to Zachopane. The author argues that *Eternal Songs* was inspired by the composer's nostalgia for the Tatras, and points out that images of the Tatras are absent from all works composed thereafter (p. 336). Murphy examines the composer's use of Helmholtz's harmonic series in the work's third movement, 'Pień o wszechbycie' (*A Song of the Universe*), and addresses the question of semantic meaning on three levels: iconic, indexical and symbolic. He concludes that *Eternal Songs* represented for the composer an active engagement with the past, and provided a vital framework for Karłowicz's musical aesthetic. Tomasz Baranowski's chapter, "'My Soul is Sad..." The Songs of Karłowicz — Between Romanticism and Modernism', examines the musical and historical significance of Karłowicz's 22 extant songs, all but one of which sets a Polish text. The tradition of songs for the home, popularized by Moniuszko earlier in the century, served both a patriotic and musical function in Poland, and, in keeping with the conventions of that era, Karłowicz's interest in song emanated from within the family home. Baranowski offers a fresh perspective on the history of song in the Romantic era and explores the ways in which Karłowicz transformed the genre for the next generation of composers associated with the Young Poland movement.

Renata Suchowiejko's chapter, 'Karłowicz as Violinist', focuses on the composer's early attempt at a career as a violin virtuoso. She begins with his 1893 arrival in Berlin, where he hoped to study with the acclaimed violinist, Joseph Joachim. He was not admitted to Joachim's class and did not reapply for admission. Instead, he turned to compositional studies with Henryk Urban and composed his richly orchestrated *Violin Concerto* in A major, op. 8. By means of thoughtfully prepared musical examples, Suchowiejko illuminates Karłowicz's use of harmony and orchestration and shows how the *Violin Concerto* bisects the 'sound worlds' of Wagner and Strauss.

This volume addresses issue surrounding Karłowicz's life and works from a number of points of view and provides a wealth of analysis on musical works. The translations are first rate and the music examples, in particular, serve as a valuable source for musicians and scholars of the European *fin-de-siècle*. An appendix illuminates of six black and white photos the composer's vision of the Tatras, with images that include the composer on skis in Zachopane. The book concludes with an extensive Chronological Bibliography. Sala includes here a great deal of valuable material for further research on the composer's music in areas such as reception and cultural history, in addition to specific studies on individual works. The book is lavishly illustrated throughout with photographs, musical examples, manuscript reproductions, and other relevant archival documents. The book appeals to scholars of Polish music and reception history, and to a general readership interested in pursuing the artistic connections that contributed to Karłowicz's success in Europe and Poland in the period that spanned the two centuries.

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