

AMERIKANSK AFHANDLING OM CARL NIELSENS KLAVERVÆRKER

MILLER, Mina. »The Solo Piano Music of Carl Nielsen: An Analysis for Performance.« Unpublished dissertation for the Ph. D., New York University, 1978, xvi, 307 p. Musical examples, illustrations, facsimiles.

Resumé af forfatteren præsenteret af Torben Schousboe

For dansk musikvidenskabelig forskning er det interessant, at der er fremkommet en amerikansk afhandling om Carl Nielsens klaverstil. På basis af indgående kildestudier har forfatteren, der selv er uddannet som pianist, før hun påbegyndte sine videnskabelige studier, udvundet en række stilistiske erkendelser af væsentlig betydning for udførelsen af de behandlede kompositioner; hertil føjer sig en indgående kritik af de gængse udgaver af værkerne.

Mina Miller er uddannet som pianist på Manhattan School of Music, hvor hun i 1970 blev Bachelor of Music og i 1971 Master of Music; blandt hendes lærere i klaver og kammermusik kan nævnes pianisten Artur Balsam og cellisterne Benar Heifetz og Antonio Janigro. Sin uddannelse som professionel pianist supplerede hun på sommerkurser ved Accademia Musicale Chigiana i Siena og ved Mozarteum i Salzburg, og hun har givet koncerter i bl. a. New York, Siena, Salzburg og i Israel. 1971-72 underviste hun i klaverspil ved Brooklyn Conservatory of Music og blev i 1973 ansat ved New York University som lærer i musikteori og prima vista klaverspil. Sideløbende med denne ansættelse studerede hun fra 1974 musikvidenskab ved New York University med henblik på at erhverve graden »Ph. D.« på en afhandling om Carl Nielsens klavermusik. Som led i dette projekt gav hun den 27. maj 1976 en koncert i New York med Carl Nielsens fire store klaverværker på programmet: *Tema med Variationer* op. 40, *Tre Klaverstykker* op. 59, *Chaconne* op. 32 og *Suite* op. 45. Selve afhandlingen afsluttedes og forsvarede i marts 1978. Umiddelbart derefter blev hun ansat som »assistent professor« i musikteori og klaverspil ved University of Kentucky i Lexington.

I september 1975 var Mina Miller i København for at indsamle oplysninger til brug for sin afhandling; her havde jeg lejlighed til at vejlede hende i studiet af Carl Nielsens manuskripter, kompositionsteknik og stilling i dansk

musikliv. I august 1978 var hun her igen for at udbygge sine studier, bl.a. med henblik på en kritisk revideret udgave af Carl Nielsens klaverværker.

Mina Millers maskinskrevne afhandling er interessant ikke mindst derved, at den kombinerer den udøvende musikers holdning til musikken med musikologens kildekritiske tilnærmelse til sit stof. Lykkeligvis er det i de senere år blevet selvfølgelig at inddrage studiet af Carl Nielsens manuskripter i seriøst anlagte analyser af hans musik; benyttelse af de trykte udgaver giver nemlig ikke tilstrækkeligt grundlag herfor, dels på grund af de mange trykfejl, som desværre findes deri, og dels fordi manuskripterne i mange tilfælde giver et værdifuldt indblik i komponistens arbejde med sit stof og dermed åbner mulighed for analytiske konklusioner af betydning bl.a. for udførelsen af værkerne. Resultater af studiet af Carl Nielsens manuskripter indgår på væsentlig måde i Mina Millers afhandling, som er den hidtil grundigste behandling af Carl Nielsens klavermusik. Som tillæg bringer den en omfattende fortegnelse over diskrepanser mellem manuskripter og trykte udgaver af værkerne opus 8, 32, 45 og 59 samt kritiske bemærkninger til den trykte udgave af opus 40, hvortil manuskripter for tiden ikke er tilgængelige.

Nedenfor bringes forfatterens eget resumé af afhandlingen, hvoraf et eksemplar nu er indgået i biblioteket på Musikvidenskabeligt Institut i København.

Abstract

The problem of this dissertation was to identify and develop solutions to specific interpretive-technical problems in the performance of Carl Nielsen's solo piano music. This problem was seen as containing four inherent subordinate problems: 1. to summarize historical, biographical and literary works pertinent to Nielsen's solo piano music, 2. to determine characteristics of Nielsen's compositional style in his solo piano music, 3. to identify and develop solutions to problems of interpretation and technique in Nielsen's solo piano music, and 4. to evaluate the characteristics of Nielsen's compositional style through a synthesis of its technical-aesthetic demands upon the performer.

For each of Nielsen's major piano works (*Symfonisk Suite*, Op. 8, *Chaconne*, Op. 32, *Tema med Variationer*, Op. 40, *Suite*, Op. 45, and *Tre Klaverstykker*, Op. 59) the identification and solution of performance problems was the result of a method which combined data from the theoretical analysis of each work, the study of relevant historical and biographical materials, the examination of original manuscripts, and the researcher's own performance experience of the composition.

Theoretical analysis was utilized to provide a broad orientation to the formal characteristics of each work, and relied primarily on three sets of tools: structural analysis, style analysis,¹ and Schenkerian analysis. These analytic approaches were used both singly and in combination, with their application guided by the criterion of optimizing the identification of performance-related characteristics of Nielsen's compositional style for the piano.

Historical and biographical materials were used to establish a background for each composition. Data from the examination of original manuscripts were used to clarify apparent ambiguities for performance and to resolve discrepancies discovered between them and each work's published edition.

The development of solutions to performance problems involved the application of both technical and aesthetic criteria. In many instances, Nielsen's original writings provided indications of effects he sought to achieve in specific sections and passages of his piano works. These indications, when existent, helped to establish an aesthetic framework within which technical solutions could be developed, and which, it is hoped, contributed to the musical coherence of the solutions.

An additional guide in the development of solutions to performance problems involved the concern which Nielsen explicitly stated in his writings for permitting interpretive flexibility on the performer's part, and for preserving the creative autonomy of the performer's role in the realization of musical compositions. In a manner which the researcher believed to be consistent with this concern on Nielsen's part, the solutions proposed in the dissertation did not seek to prescribe a technically rigid approach to the performance of any of Nielsen's piano compositions, but rather to suggest approaches to piano technique which could emerge from a broad conception on the pianist's part of the work's structural and aesthetic characteristics.

The critical evaluation of the piano music from a performer's perspective formed the basis for an important extension of the insights provided by formal analysis. The importance of this perspective, in the examination of Nielsen's piano works, is underscored by the fact that Nielsen himself was not an accomplished pianist. This fact can help, perhaps, to account for those features in his piano works which are highly virtuosic, yet strikingly idiomatic for their genre.

The investigation revealed the development of a compositional style characterized by a high degree of dynamic and textural contrast, and by the consistent use of several types of figurations, articulations, and tonal and harmonic patterns. Especially in Nielsen's later piano works, these features were found to represent not a set of isolated characteristics, but rather to be interlocking elements within a unified compositional approach.

Performance problems in Nielsen's piano works were found to center

increasingly on matters of interpretation rather than of pure technique. While Nielsen's first large piano work was highly unidiomatic for the instrument and contained passages which defied literal execution, his later compositions were found to be increasingly adapted to the possibilities of the instrument and the capacities of most performers.

A separate chapter is devoted to each major piano work. Each of these chapters contains four sections. The first section presents a historical, theoretical and stylistic overview of the composition. The following section, »Characteristics of Nielsen's Compositional Style,« contains a detailed discussion of salient stylistic features, with graphs, tables and musical examples used where appropriate to illustrate stylistic patterns. A third section, »Original Manuscripts and the Published Edition,« examines the extent of agreement or discrepancy between the work's original manuscripts and its published score, and discusses the implications of these factors for interpretation and performance. A final section, »Problems of Interpretation and Technique,« identifies and proposes approaches to solving problems in performance.

The dissertation's concluding chapter summarizes and evaluates the characteristics of Nielsen's compositional style in his entire solo piano music, and discusses the implications of these characteristics for the performer.

The dissertation includes two appendices. The first presents historical, theoretical and interpretive data, and a thematic excerpt for each of the smaller piano works (*Fem Klaverstykker*, Op. 3, *Humoreske-Bagateller*, Op. 11, *Festpræludium*, *Klavermusik for Smaa og Store*, Op. 53). The second appendix contains an assembled list of discrepancies between the original manuscripts and the published edition of each major piano work.

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1. Jan LaRue, *Guidelines for Style Analysis*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970.