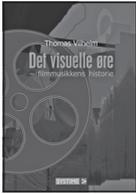


that follow from e.g. referring to hip hop as a tribal community, would have rendered the book less appealing to its intended readers, these features would none the less have enriched the text and perhaps even facilitated a broader use of the book (e.g. in the gymnasium). Like the short 'side-stories' already present along the main text theoretical notes could have been added contributing an obvious extra source of reflection.

However, despite these critical remarks Rune Skyum-Nielsens book on Danish hip hop culture is an important contribution to the shedding of light on this increasingly important aspect of Danish popular music culture.

Mads Krogh



Thomas Vilhelm, *Det visuelle øre – filmmusikkens historie*

Århus: Systeme, 2005

325 pp., illus.

ISBN 87-616-0970-6

DKK 325

Danish publications on film music are still too few, given the important role this music plays in music culture and in many people's daily music consumption. Thomas Vilhelm's book, *Det visuelle øre – filmmusikkens historie* (The Visual Ear – The History of Film Music), is therefore a much needed publication. It must be emphasized straight away that this is not an academic work but a descriptive book based on interviews with composers and directors. Vilhelm neither theorizes nor analyses, but on the other hand, the book is a treasure trove of factual knowledge about film music, composers, and directors. For the first time the historical development of film music in Denmark is reviewed, and in addition alongside the developments in other European countries and USA. Due to the chosen structure of the material, the book is most useful as a reference book to have at hand if you have any interest in film music. But *Det visuelle øre* can also be read as a whole giving a perceptive updated overview of the history of film music in western societies.

The book's 325 pages are divided into four main parts, introduced by a short prologue and followed by a few notes, references, and indexes. The book is richly illustrated with black and white photos, though they are quite uniform – all but a few portraying composers and directors.

The first part is a historical review of the development of the film medium and film music primarily in the USA. It begins with the Lumière brothers and what is said to be the world's first public film screening on 28 December 1895 in Paris, and ends with Howard Shore's scores for *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–3). In between we are told about the golden age of the Hollywood symphonic film score in the 40s, how jazz and rock influenced the film music of the 50s and 60s and how electronic music made its entry in the 80s together with a revival of the symphonic score beginning with *Star Wars* in the 70s. As a natural result of the relative closeness of the period, the general contours of the last 20 years are not apparent. Instead the 90s and the first years of this century are reviewed mainly by focusing on specific directors (e.g. Clint Eastwood and Quentin Tarantino) and films (e.g. *Magnolia* and *The Lord of the Rings*). The important perspective of the mutual dependency between the record industry and film music in the last decades is also briefly reviewed in this first part.

The second part has the same historical perspective as part one, now focusing on Denmark (chapter one) and the rest of Europe (chapter two). Again the author carefully ensures a wide

view for the reader, though primarily keeping to the main ‘canonized’ road. Chapter one begins with the Danish composer Jacob Gade and his job as responsible for the musical underscore to films (e.g. by Carl Th. Dreyer) shown at *Palads Teatret* (The Palads Theatre) in Copenhagen in the beginning of the 20th century. Well known Danish composers such as Bent Fabricius-Bjerre and Fuzzy are presented hereafter. The focus, however, is on contemporary composers (Joakim Holbek, Halfdan E, Søren Hyldgaard, Jacob Groth) and directors (Lars von Trier, Per Fly, Søren Kragh Jacobsen, Nicolas Winding Refn, Christoffer Boe), and here the author’s fruitful connection to the milieu is revealed. Chapter two presents the different European schools – many of them a reaction to the ‘fiction dreams’ produced in Hollywood: *Expressionism* in Germany (e.g. Fritz Lang and Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau), *Neo-Realism* in Italy (e.g. Rossellini, Fellini, and Bertolucci), *New Wave* in France (e.g. Truffaut, Godard, and Chabrol). But also individuals like the Swedish director Ingmar Bergman and the English composer Michael Nyman are mentioned. Almost each chapter in these first two main parts is followed by short portraits of the most influential composers of the period. They function as a supplement to the historical reviews, but also generate some redundancy, which is distracting when you read the book in its entirety. It can be difficult to distinguish the portraits from the rest, and the structure is further weakened due to the vague, almost invisible grey titles in the subsections, which is a general problem in the book.

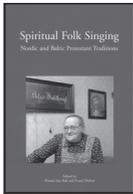
After the general historical review in the first two parts, the rest of the book goes deeper into the work of selected artists. Part three, ‘Komponisten og instruktøren’ (The composer and the director), describes the influential partnerships of Nino Rota and Federico Fellini, Ennio Morricone and Sergio Leone, Bernard Herrmann and Alfred Hitchcock, and finally Angelo Badalamenti and David Lynch. The last part of the book ‘De musikalske billedmagere’ (The musical image makers) focuses on different directors who were/are all deeply conscious of the use of music in their films: Charlie Chaplin, Stanley Kubrick, Martin Scorsese, and Spike Lee. In general, one of the main strengths of the book is that the music is not described as something isolated, but something we must understand in relation to the film context.

*Det visuelle øre* is ambitious, reaching far in both time and space and of course much is left out. The author’s only comment on this selection is, however, a sentence in the Introduction stating that the book deals mainly with the good examples, ‘the ones you can learn from and be inspired by’ (p. 7). But why are Disney Cartoons not mentioned (or animation films, or in general films for children)? They have been essential in the development of film music right from the beginning. And where is the film musical, which also plays a significant role in the broad development of film music? And what about the films and music from non-western countries? All these exclusions could have been acceptable if the author had mentioned them as de-selections instead of leaving the decision uncommented, instead providing the reader with a sub-title promising ‘The History of Film Music’. The main title ‘The Visual Ear’ is catchy but also rather misleading, since it is not a book about the senses and the experience of film music but mainly about the production side. It reverses the title of Birger Langkjær’s book about film music, *Den lyttende tilskuer* (The Listening Viewer, Copenhagen, 2000), which in contrast deals with the senses and their interaction in the film medium. Also the short introduction misleads the reader in that direction. Here questions about what music does to us and about the connection between music and emotion are raised – but never pursued. Indeed a more thorough introduction outlining the premise of the book would have been prudent. It is remarkable that none of the four books on film music published in Danish are mentioned in *Det visuelle øre*. That concerns Ansa Lønstrup, *Musik, film og filmoplevelse* (Music, Film and Film Experience, Århus, 1986); Birger Langkjær, *Filmlyd og filmmusik* (Film Sound and Film Music, Copenhagen, 1993); Martin Schmidt, *Short Cues* (Copenhagen, 1999),

and Birger Langkjær, *Den lyttende tilskuer*. Especially the historical perspective from *Filmlyd og filmmusik* and the interviews from *Short Cues* would have been useful in the context of Vilhelm's book, that generally supplements the existing Danish literature well.

In general *Det visuelle øre* is well-written in a fluent, easily read language. But the wide (journalistic) use of clichés and metaphors generates a nagging irritation that undermines the otherwise convincing presentation. This also applies to the titles of the chapters. A general inconsistency in the many film titles mentioned throughout the book also disturbs the reading: most are mentioned in Danish, some in English, and some in both languages. More serious proof errors also appear – for example Erich Wolfgang Korngold was not born in 1879 but in 1897 (p. 30). But these are details in a generally sturdy work that offers an impressive amount of information about and insight to the work and thoughts of professionals in film music.

Iben Have



Kirsten Sass Bak and Svend Nielsen (eds.), *Spiritual Folk Singing.*

*Nordic and Baltic Protestant Traditions*

Copenhagen: Forlaget Kragen, 2006

283 pp., illus., music exx.

ISBN 87-89160-11-8

incl. 2 CD's, DFS 9-10

DKK 300

Reading this book has been an exciting adventure, not least because of the articles from the Baltic areas, where the languages can seem impenetrable to non-natives. I think it would make a useful text book for university courses of ethnomusicology across Scandinavia (and why not in other countries?). The reader might already know a great deal about the singing in his or her own country, but the broad spectrum that this book presents makes it possible to compare the different singing traditions to each other and to discover interesting differences. The ten authors from eight countries (two from Norway and two from Iceland) are reputable and established researchers with many earlier published works in the area of ethnomusicology. The articles were written in 1999–2000.

The reader of this book might (perhaps not unexpectedly!) start by listening to the included two CD's, containing more than two hours of singing from all the countries, some of the 68 samples being very old (some recorded already in 1907), and others fairly new (2004). This makes listening confusing, and raises questions: 'What is common to all these differing recordings of folk singing?', 'Is this really one musical genre?'

The answer is given in the Introduction by Kirsten Sass Bak, one of the two editors. As there are many different local styles and ways of singing connected to different folk music styles, the 'spiritual folk singing' is also very disparate; even two neighbouring parishes might differ. This is not only due to historical and political circumstances, but is also shaped by individual singers. The introduction points out that there is no good international term for this traditional religious singing. The suggested term 'chorale variant' is judged to be inadequate, since it too much stresses the original melody but not 'the independent lives and shapes of the tunes in traditional practice' (p. 9). The book not only deals with this older 'traditional' way of singing, but also the singing with roots in the revivalist movements during the 19th century, material that still awaits much research. The common factors are thus a product of practical matters to do with singing, and the common use of variation, rather than a clearly defined repertoire: the book deals with Lutheran hymn singing in different tradi-