

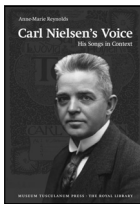
findes en række med tekster af J.P. Jacobsen og Holger Drachmann. I det hele taget havde Sjøgren stærke forbindelser til København, hvor han fik mange af sine kompositioner udgivet hos Henrik Hennings.

Efter læsningen af Edlings bog forstår man, hvor centralt Emil Sjøgren var placeret i sin samtids svenske musik. Han skrev en lang række klaverværker, megen kammermusik, hvoriblandt de fem violinsonater er hovedværker, nogle få og til gengæld vægtige orgelværker, men stort set ingen orkesterværker. Ligesom for Lange-Müller gælder det for Sjøgren, at sangene (romancerne) formodentlig var hans egentlige domæne.

Det har været hensigten, at komponistseriens biografier “inte kræver några avancerade förkunskaper”, som det hedder i forordet. Denne beslutning har to følger; for det første har forfatteren måttet give afkald på fodnoter, men har i stedet efter hvert kapitel en kort tekst, hvor anvendte kilder og litteratur bliver oplyst. For det andet har forfatteren ikke haft mulighed for at benytte nodeeksempler. Til gengæld leverer Edling klare og instruktive beskrivelser af de enkelte værker, og han forsyner løbende læseren med titler på indspilninger, hvor man kan få klingende eksempler på Sjøgrens kunst. Men dels vil sådanne indspilninger ofte være svære at opdrive, dels er Sjøgrens musik i en vis forstand klangkunst, hvorfor man oprigtig savner nodeeksempler til at støtte læsningen på.

Når dette er sagt, er det en fornøjelse at sidde med den smukt layoutede og trykte bog, og efter læsningen føler man sig grundigt informeret om en af Sveriges betydeligste komponister og hans musik. Og tilmed kaster bogen lys ind over relativt ubeskrevne områder af dansk musikhistorie.

Claus Røllum-Larsen



Anne-Marie Reynolds

*Carl Nielsen's Voice. His Songs in Context*

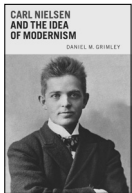
Danish Humanist Texts and Studies, 38

Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press / The Royal Library, 2010

371 pp., illus., music exx.

ISBN 978-87-635-2598-5

DKK 340, EUR 46



Daniel M. Grimley

*Carl Nielsen and the Idea of Modernism*

Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010

xix + 314 pp., illus., music exx.

ISBN 978-1-84383-581-3

GBP 50, USD 80

Two important books on Nielsen were published in 2010. Quite remarkably both these books are written by native English speakers who learned Danish in order to study Nielsen. They confirm the trend that Nielsen scholarship has moved beyond the point where Nielsen has to be introduced outside Denmark as a fairly unknown, exotic composer of the Northern outskirts of Europe. These contributions consider Nielsen an established composer quite well-known, at least as a symphonist, on equal range with contemporaries like Sibelius. International Nielsen scholarship goes back to Robert Simpson's *Carl Nielsen. Symphonist* (1952, 2nd edn. 1979), but until the 1990s publications in English were more often than not based on Danish scholarship. Mina Miller's *The Nielsen Companion* (1994) was a major contribu-

tion to an international view on Nielsen, and lately mostly British scholars have published on Nielsen; the journal, *Carl Nielsen Studies*, has become quite an important source of international Nielsen research in English.

Internationalization is not just a matter of language or recognition beyond national borders; it is as much a matter of approach. Danish scholarship on Nielsen at least were – and to some degree still is – situated within a national(istic) framework, where the task of providing the history of music of the nation-state of Denmark inescapably were part of the job. And Nielsen being the great Dane and ‘our’ ‘national composer’ tends to give him credit for inventing everything himself, his inventions being ‘personal style’ and his style expressing some kind of ‘Danishness’. Outside views help recognizing Nielsen as a figure in European musical life, one among others, taking part in different trends within the development of modern music. This is the challenge facing all Nielsen scholars today, were they to be Danish or not.

Anne-Marie Reynolds’ *Carl Nielsen’s Voice. His Songs in Context* starts out, after an Introduction, with a chapter on Nielsen’s art song style in his settings of poems of J.P. Jacobsen and Ludvig Holstein, and a further chapter with analyses of these songs. Another pair of chapters discusses the ‘folkelige’ or folk-like song style and provides analyses of that repertoire. Chapter six investigates connections between song and symphony, comparing the findings in the songs with Nielsen’s First Symphony, and before a short Conclusion she relates the songs to the opera *Maskarade*. Besides abundant music examples in the text, four songs are related in full length in the appendices. And it should be mentioned that the music examples are carefully edited and instructively woven into the text. At all times they appear of relevance, and one never gets the feeling that there are too many – or too few.

What is astonishing is that Reynolds’ study is not just the first book-length study of Nielsen’s songs in English; it is the first scholarly monograph on Nielsen’s songs at all. Except for a short essay in the 1965 *Centenary Essays* and a chapter (of her own) in *The Nielsen Companion*, only a single major text on the songs has been published in English recently, i.e. the valuable 146 pp. bilingual introduction to the four volumes of songs in the Carl Nielsen Edition, which is available online on [http://img.kb.dk/ma/cn/forord/CNU\\_III\\_07\\_pr.pdf](http://img.kb.dk/ma/cn/forord/CNU_III_07_pr.pdf). Thus, it is also the first study, which considers such a broad scope of features concerning his song compositions. This implies that not only melody, form, and text-music relationship, which are common features of Nielsen analysis, but also modal mixture, harmony, and contrapuntal procedures are thoroughly analysed. In the art song chapter, this approach reveals to which extent Nielsen relied on late nineteenth-century procedures of chromaticism, flux of minor-major mode and in a wider sense employing flats rather than naturals in thirds, sixths, and sevenths, avoidance of simple V-I-relations for weighty excursions into the plagal domain, thus reaching a state of ‘pervasive harmonic ambiguity’ (p. 90). Further, Reynolds demonstrates how Nielsen’s chromaticism ‘is not just a surface phenomenon invoked for coloristic or intensifying purposes, but rather is an indispensable player in the unfolding of the harmonic scheme and poetic plan, with associative as well as unifying powers’ (p. 100). Foreground features are integrated in middleground structures.

As ‘art songs’ Reynolds considers the early collections of songs on texts by J.P. Jacobsen (op. 4 and 6) and Ludvig Holstein (op. 10). She could as well say *Lieder*, as that is clearly what Nielsen aims at in the 1890s. He is not yet opposing a Danish tradition of ‘romances’, he is probably not even suggesting that these art songs are specific ‘Danish songs’; he is merely following the example of Schubert and his successors into the realm of song composition. One should notice that the choice of Jacobsen’s texts is not an early warning of Nielsen becoming a Danish national composer: this is actually pointing to him as an up-to-date European artist, sharing the immense interest in the ‘modern’ lyrics of Jacobsen that flourished in Central

Europe in the 1890s and early 1900s. Neither should one forget that Nielsen published six of the Jacobsen songs in German and that op. 10 as well as the Strophic Songs op. 21 were originally published in German-Danish bilingual editions. (It puzzles me that the Carl Nielsen Edition omitted the German text in these settings and relegated them to an appendix without music, as they might be considered ‘original compositions’ along with the Danish versions).

Reynolds’ analyses of the ‘folkelige’ songs are centred on Nielsen’s contribution to the 1915/17 edition, *En Snes danske Viser*, in two volumes. Without diminishing the rest of the book, this might be the most convincing pair of chapters, as the author demonstrates to which extend these ‘folkelige’ songs are perfectly constructed art songs on a minor scale than the earlier ‘art songs’. Truly, Reynolds relates to the reader such a profound understanding of these songs that one gets an even deeper appreciation of them and a better understanding of why one is used to finding them so naturally and convincing. There are reasons for that, and she explains them meticulously. She points out how the concept of ‘folkelige’ songs is to be understood as a conscious heritage from Enlightenment composer J.A.P. Schulz that is simple and comprehensible songs composed in a style *reminiscent* of folk and popular song. And she adds that Nielsen in particular composes in a way where every phrase is carefully preparing the listener of what might come next, which makes a single performance a singing lesson. This makes the melody easy to grasp. Thus, the familiarity of the music is not just referring to a well-known style, but to the melody in itself during unfolding. In these strophic songs, the rhyme scheme and structure of the poems are of great significance to Nielsen. His approach combines the logic of step-wise melodic motion, traditional counterpoint procedures, and a fairly advanced use of harmonic progressions, key relations, involving uncertainties, evasions, ‘thwarted expectations’ (p. 163), and surprising conclusions.

In the last two chapters Reynolds sets out to ‘assess the precise nature of the correspondence between Nielsen’s songs and other genres, from surface similarities to underlying musical processes common to both mature styles’ (that is ‘folkelige’ songs and complex large scale writing; p. 217). Concerning the First Symphony (completed 1894) she succeeds. It is shown how this symphony uses the same kind of structural development as in the art songs in particular, not just as a surface phenomenon but also in contrapuntal and harmonic features of the middleground. It has always been claimed – by Nielsen and by subsequent scholars – that this was a fact, but Reynolds shows that there is truth to the tale. And she is able to suggest that Nielsen’s specific way of doing this – combining contradictive features of centuries old contrapuntal techniques with recent harmonic developments – gives way to an understanding of his manner of being a ‘modern’ composer (p. 256f.). It would be interesting, however, to expand this test to the late(r) symphonies of Nielsen.

The chapter on *Maskarade* shows a large-scale complex of relations of stylistic features (‘folkelig’ song, nineteenth-century art song, and eighteenth-century dance music), key associations, and themes in the story line (such as modernity, youth, pleasure vs. tradition, authority, and duty). Even if this analysis is conclusive on its own terms, I am less convinced that these relations are of the same kind as those demonstrated between the songs and the symphony. Surely an opposition of ‘folkelig’ song and art music style is of importance, but it seems to me that the large scale Mozart-like planning of related spheres of the opera has more of a theatrical flavour to it. The association of Enlightenment philosophy, Henrik speaking for Holberg, eighteenth-century dance music, the masquerade, equality, modernity, and the A major key is clearly stated, but how is the opposition to be understood? It connects ‘folkelig sang’, the figure of Jeronimus, outdated tradition, and paternal authority. One way is simply to state that Nielsen needs these contrasts and key relations for theatrical purposes. Otherwise, this would suggest that Nielsen *at this point* of his life did not (yet) embrace the ideal of

the 'folkelige sang' as the goal of his striving, along with the development of complex forms of modern instrumental music. If so, *Maskarade* is not that 'strategic work containing the key to Nielsen's future artistic growth' (p. 260) that Reynolds wants it to be.

A few errors might have been omitted in the proofs. It seems that an earlier Appendix 1 has been removed at a late stage, as almost all references to the four songs in the appendices should have been one number below the actual number in the text. That the ongoing edition of Nielsen's letters has proceeded during the preparation of this book, is reflected in a quite strange sentence on p. 28, referring to 'To date four volumes' of the letters covering the years until '1910' (as in vol. 3), while the footnote refers to vols. 1–5. And it is odd that Reynolds considers the singing officers approaching the masquerade being police officers, as they clearly sing of themselves as soldiers (and their speaking German points to the fact that German was the language used in the Danish army in the eighteenth century; p. 312).

Daniel M. Grimley's *Carl Nielsen and the Idea of Modernism* has an even wider scope. His approach is to relate a thematic and still chronological view on the Nielsen *oeuvre* in total. Between an introduction called 'Carl Nielsen at the Edge' and a Conclusion, Chapters 2 through 7 are named 'Thresholds', 'Hellenics', 'Energetics', 'Funen Dreams', 'Counterpoints', and 'Cosmic Variations'. In Grimley's own words, the purpose of the book is fourfold: firstly, 'to offer a broad critical summary of Nielsen's work through detailed analytical exegesis of his musical language'; secondly, 'to provide analytical readings of selected excerpts from major works'; thirdly, it 'attempts to outline a critique of the notion of Danish identity in Nielsen's work'; and, finally, 'to articulate and negotiate Nielsen's shifting sense of musical *place*' as it 'offers broader reflections on Nielsen's relationship with a European modernist musical practice' (p. xi), not just adding to our understanding of Nielsen but contributing to the discussion of the concept(s) of early twentieth-century modernism.

In brief, the result is highly recommendable. Grimley is extremely well read in cultural, literary, and art history, in music theory and music aesthetics of Nielsen's and later times as well as in music history, be it of Scandinavia, United Kingdom, Germany, or France. Thus his readings are very convincing, in analytical detail as well as in the contexts of Danish and European cultural life. A Danish translation should be mandatory.

In chapter one, Grimley discusses Nielsen as a figure 'at the edge' between notions of Danishness and modernism. Both concepts are questioned, the first stated as a 'highly contested category' (p. 2), and concerning modernism he aims at 'a more anxious reading' (p. 4) of Nielsen's modernism, one that remains aware of its ambiguity. In accessing this question, he points rightly to Gunnar Heerup's article, 'The way to the new music' of 1929, as it is in fact a kind of 'programme' for the young generation of Danish composers and music critics born around 1900. But I would like to add that this is not a narrow nationalistic programme, an impression one might get on p. 12f. Even if Heerup does give full credit to Nielsen as a composer with a firm sense of authentic music heritage from the Danish 'folk', it should be noticed that Heerup aims at an alternative reading of what is modern, challenging the story of the Wagner-*Tristan*-Schönberg-inevitability towards atonality with a different story, where nineteenth-century recovery of folk music after the breakdown of late-romanticism gives way to a reviving force able to renew musical invention along other lines starting with Mussorgsky and Debussy – and that Heerup's real hero in this respect is Béla Bartók. In the last paragraph of his article, Heerup refers to his three-part follow-up on how a modern composer translates this programme into action, i.e. Gunnar Heerup, 'Béla Bartók', *Dansk Musiktidsskrift* 4 (1929), pp. 49–55, 71–75, 90–95.

The second chapter is interesting as it deals with some of same works as Reynolds, the J.P. Jacobsen songs and the First Symphony. Grimley's approach is embedded in a discussion of

symbolism and the category of *gennembrud* and *Durchbruch*, referring to Georg Brandes' *Det moderne Gjennembruds Mænd* (1883) and to Adorno's Mahler-exegesis. He reveals the magnificent significance of Brandes for the Danish cultural sphere of the 1880s and 1890s and points to the crucial fact that Brandes with his book on modern Scandinavian writers is the first to mark the period as modern 'in the sense that it is consciously and deliberately aware of its own modernism' (p. 25f.). This consciousness of being 'modern' anticipates the Vienna 'modern' age, which dates back to E. Bahrs essay 'Die Moderne' of 1890, by six years, thus pointing to the fact that this Nordic vogue of modernism was not just received as such by Central Europeans, it was actually already perceived as such in Scandinavia. Even if Nielsen clearly exhibits symbolist features, especially in some of his Jacobsen settings, Grimley is inclined to see the First Symphony more as a pre-designation of vitalism by its vigorous gesture. He delivers a very interesting reading, challenging both Simpson's reading and the well-known Danish reading as a Johan Svendsen-repercussion. Instead he considers it a *Durchbruch*-symphony in a Mahlerian (that is Adornoan) sense – five years prior to Mahler's First Symphony. The crucial difference to Mahler he sees in the fact that Nielsen 'shifted the balance of structural weight away from the symphony's conclusion towards its initial gesture' (p. 59f.). One of the very few errors occurs on p. 57, as the 'bass Db in b. 205' seems to be the one in b. 208.

In the chapter, 'Hellenics', a vitalist reception of Classic Greek art and philosophy (as in *Helios*) is combined with the Neo-Classical approach (as in *Maskarade*). Considering *Helios* as a powerful vision of the force of Nature, combining strength and organicity, Grimley suggests that this represents the anti-decadent trend of the modern breakthrough. Nielsen denies as usual that he should have such a programme in mind (p. 65), but one should keep in mind that Nielsen always denies belonging to whatever trend he is at the moment undeniably occupied with (cf. p. 48, where he complains of 'this symbolist nonsense'). *Maskarade*, on the other hand, is interpreted as a multi-layer 'carnival' with references to topical issues of democracy, eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and ancient bacchanals.

The chapter 'Energetics' delivers a thorough reading of Nielsen's *Espansiva* embedded in a large account of early-twentieth-century German music theory, and in the following chapter further considerations on the second and fourth movement of this symphony are found along with readings of *Springtime on Funen* and some of Nielsen's simple song settings. This is where the concepts of landscape and *place* are evoked in order to discuss the notion of Danishness or specific 'Funen dreams'. This landscape, along with the Limfjord landscape of Northern Jutland, delivered an alternative to the national-romantic notion of how the Danish landscape (that of Northern Seeland) was supposed to look. This 'competition' seems to go on, as at the moment a national park named North Seeland of the Kings is probable to be established. In the last two chapters, Nielsen's use of counterpoint in strict and figurative sense is discussed. His way of adopting 'archaic' or 'anachronistic' techniques as a mean to revitalize the musical language is linked to readings of his *Chaconne* and *Theme and Variations* for piano, followed by an immensely rich (re)interpretation of Nielsen's Sixth Symphony in the spirit of a Bakhtinian comic novel.

Both of these new contributions to Nielsen-scholarship help us understand, not just that Nielsen *was* a modern composer of the turn-of-the-century but also in what way he was such a figure and how his music testifies to that. Both are books on Nielsen's *music* in the context of cultural and music history of his times. Thus, to my great relief, one is not able to find such common-place naiveties abundantly present in Nielsen literature: that his music is expressing certain moods *because of* features of his personal life. That would of course diminish his status as a great composer if such nonsense were to be true. Reynolds points to the fact that Nielsen, composing 'Genrebilleder', gives *Jacobsen's* modern-day struggle to find his artistic voice an

adequate musical setting which at the same time is an interpretation of Jacobsen's poem. And to these two voices, Jacobsen's words and Nielsen's musical interpretation, we are as listeners invited to relate our own experiences of, for example, frustration. This is what makes these songs – and Nielsen's music at large – quasi-universal and thus of relevance to later generations.

Michael Fjeldsøe



Erling Kullberg

*Sange for kor – Dansk kormusik i det 20. århundrede*

København: Edition Wilhelm Hansen, 2009

239 pp., illus.

ISBN 978-87-598-1848-0

DKK 249

Som aktiv kor- og ensembleleder og underviser i korledelse vil jeg med det samme understrege, at Erling Kullbergs bog *Sange for kor* er en længe ønsket og savnet udgivelse. Endelig tages der, så at sige, hul på bylden. Erling Kullberg skriver i indledningen, at det danske korliv i dag tæller mere end 50.000 aktive korsangere. Dette tal sammenlagt med cirka tre generationer bagud i tiden giver et meget godt billede af det antal korsangere, der er og har været i berøring med bogens genstandsfelt: "originalkomponerede værker for kor a cappella", som det formuleres i indledningen. Det skal understreges, at det udelukkende drejer sig om originalkomponerede *klassiske* værker for kor a cappella, og det burde måske have stået allerede i bogens sekundære titel, da genstandsfeltet faktisk omtales sådan på s. 27. Det er til gengæld helt på sin plads at begrænse genstandsfeltet, som Kullberg har valgt at gøre det, således at rytmiske korværker, rytmiske og klassiske korarrangementer, værker for lige stemmer, samt korværker med instrumentaledsagelse udelades.

Bogen er at betragte som et opslagsværk, der primært består af en række kapitler, der hver omhandler en komponist. Kapitlerne er ordnet kronologisk efter komponisternes fødselsår og indeholder et kort komponistportræt, en omtale af vedkommendes produktion samt et signalement af kompositionsstil hovedsagligt med udgangspunkt i vedkommendes kormusik. Hvert kapitel afsluttes med en gennemgang af pågældende komponists korværker, især med henblik på en beskrivelse af værkernes tekst, karakter og kompositionsstil.

I bogens indledende kapitler berøres et par emner med indførende hensigt. Først en kort skitsering af udviklingen indenfor dansk korliv. Det er et emne, der bestemt indeholder nok stof til endnu en bog, som der kun kan opfordres til bliver skrevet en dag. Ligeledes har Kullberg valgt helt kort at redegøre for den store sangskat af enkle, homofone korsange. Mængden af disse korsange gør, at en gennemgang, ikke mindst en tekstlig, karaktermæssig og stemningsmæssig gennemgang, ville få et omfang svarende til en ny udgivelse.

*Sange for kor* er en kærkommen bog til korfolket fra en rigtig kormand, hvor Kullberg deler ud af sin store opsamlede viden efter mange år som korleder og musikforsker. Han har skrevet bogen med en ægte begejstring for det 20. århundredes klassiske kormusik – den musik som han gennem årene selv har dirigeret en hel del af. Dette skinner klart igennem i værkbeskrivelserne, som emmer af rytmisk, harmonisk og litterær indsigt i langt de fleste værker. Det er tydeligt, at disse beskrivelser kommer fra en person, som har haft materialet i hænderne, analyseret det og musiceret med det, med andre ord: 'haft musikken helt inde under huden'.

I bogens sidste kapitel skitseres kort, hvad det 21. århundrede allerede har budt på af klassiske korværker. Kullberg er ikke i tvivl om, at der er fremtid for denne genre, og det skal