

Book Review

Diamond, Beverley and Robert Witmer, editors. *Canadian Music: Issues of Hegemony and Identity*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1994. xi, 615 pp.

This volume contains 29 essays. After Beverley Diamond's general introduction, "Issues of Hegemony and Identity in Canadian Music," there are four sections: "Studying Up": The Structuring of Power and Control Within Canadian Culture," "Identities: Music and the Defining of Nation," "Identities: Boundaries of Region, Class, Gender and Ethnocultural Community," and "Identities: Individual Musicians in the Canadian Context." The introductions to these sections and nine of the essays were written especially for the collection; the other 20 items are reprints.

The book fills a need, not only for university courses, but for any Canadians who want to investigate and ruminate about their culture. The title may be *Canadian Music*, but this is not an autonomist/formalist approach to the subject. There are only two short examples of Western musical notation (fiddle music in Gordon Smith's contribution), and there is none of the jargon of music theory (cf. Detels, 113). Instead, such approaches of the "new musicology" as deconstruction, hermeneutics, postmodernism, feminism, and neo-Marxism are brought to bear on a wide range of musical expressions in Canada. The issues raised are relevant not just to music but to culture in general.

"Culture," defined in various ways, is a dominant theme. Diamond begins by stating: "Although the claims of 'two founding nations' have been a vigorous attempt to imagine an authentic Canadian culture, with Rosaldo, we suggest that 'the view of an authentic culture as an autonomous internally coherent universe no longer seems tenable in a postcolonial world'" (p. 8). In the essays by Maria Tippett and Marie-Thérèse Lefebvre, culture is not clearly defined but seems to refer to a concept of "high art" derived from Europe. The word appears in the title of Jack Granatstein's essay on the first ten years of the Canada Council; its meaning is clearly connected with the high-art concept as in the statement: "No one could have claimed that culture, difficult to define as it was, flourished in Canada" (p. 98). Carole H. Carpenter's essay underlines that this seeming lack of culture was due in part to Anglo-Canadians not recognizing their own folk heritage as part of culture (p. 124). In an impressive analysis of three standard histories of Canadian music, Diamond underlines that Kallmann, Ford, and McGee present their narratives in a periodization based on European models and concentrate on European-derived musics in Canada, making

only passing references to folk musics and almost completely neglecting Native and other non-European cultures.

The propensity to view culture as almost synonymous with European-derived high art forms—instead of using the anthropological meaning that Nina De Shane gives, namely, “the customary ways of thinking and behaving that are characteristic of a particular population of society” (p. 76)—is the basis for Rick Salutin’s argument that “culture is not the same as the arts, but in Canada they come closer than in most societies.” He goes on to say:

This is because we lack the broader elements of culture other societies have: a unique or ancient language, a long history, a set of traditions or folklore.... If we had more culture in the larger sense, maybe there’d be less pressure on the arts.... It’s not a matter of artists setting out to fill a need for identity, but of both artist and audiences sensing a need, a cultural need to know who and where you are in an era when the forces of global businessization seem to be shredding everything human (39f.).

Many of the remaining essays refute Salutin’s statement by revealing that we have a history dating back thousands of years through the experiences of the First Nations. We need to learn from them about musical expressions that are appropriate to our particular Canadian “climate and geography,” as R. Murray Schafer points out (p. 224). Moreover, certain essays emphasize that a person or group from a particular milieu, class, or ethnic background may enjoy a wide variety of musical expressions that resists the rigid formats of the music mega-business. For instance, Franziska von Rosen explores the musical tastes of Micmac elder Michael Francis, which range from sounds in nature, chants, and fiddle tunes, to Tchaikovsky’s *Violin Concerto in D* (pp.557f.)

Anglo-Canadians need not only to recognize their own rich heritage but also to learn how to dialogue in meaningful dialectic with the Others in the Canadian cultural landscape. The inclusion of essays using paradigms drawn from neo-Marxism, feminism, deconstruction, postmodernism, and neo-pragmatism provides helpful guidelines on how this may be done. With regard to governmental action to increase Canadian content on Canadian radio, the analyses of the effects of CRTC regulation by Jody Berland and John Lehr show the difficulties in allowing Canadians to hear and thus recognize their contributions to the soundscape. Referring to country music, Lehr states: “there is not yet a distinctive Canadian exchange of images, analogies and metaphor being broadcast on the airwaves of Canadian radio stations, despite their adherence to the Canadian content rules of the CRTC” (p. 279). These essays should be discussed not just in Canadian music courses, but in all offerings of Canadian content in schools and universities, and by representatives of the media.

I find the selection of items strong. Particularly pleasing are the two translated from French, particularly Lucien Poirier’s important essay, “A

Canadian Music Style: Illusion and Reality.” As to what was omitted, I would say that a translation of Christian Côté’s “L’influence américaine dans la musique québécoise” could have added a fascinating spin to the issue of hegemony. Too little is known in Anglophone Canada of the vibrant Francophone popular music scene which is rooted in its folk base.

Hopefully, a second edition will include more Francophone material and correct the inevitable errors and omissions. Improvements would include deleting the superscripts in page 10’s chart; supplying the full date of the *Toronto Star* reference on p. 19; substituting “1968” for “1908” in n. 100, p. 121, and “eight” for “8”, p. 243; emending the Letondal reference, p. 259; removing unnecessary word repetitions, pp. 197, 500; correcting spelling mistakes, pp. 198, 258, 261, 266, 271, 331, 391, 414, 422, 440, 484, 505, 577, 602. Meanwhile, readers of this *Journal* can be grateful to Diamond and Witmer for emphasizing the importance of, and the need for, performing, appreciating, and celebrating the Canadian musical expressions with which we are concerned.

REFERENCES CITED

- Côté, Christian. (1989). “L’influence américaine dans la musique québécoise.” *Yé-Yé: Revue musicale d’agrément* 6/3: 34-46.
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- Salutin, Rick. (1993). “Culture Vulture: Rough Cuts.” *This Magazine* 27/3: 37-40.

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