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doi:10.1093/ml/gcm118

This rigorously argued and strongly focused book seeks, as its conclusion states, ‘an interpretative perspective’ to facilitate a ‘move beyond the cosy, small-scale image of Grieg that has prevailed in much Anglo-American scholarship’ (p. 223). This is a laudable aim. It is also, as the preface declares, a timely one. Grieg’s image in American scholarship remains notable for its virtual absence. In Richard Taruskin’s Oxford History of Western Music (New York and Oxford, 2005) the composer is granted a single mention, and that is a passing comment in the discussion of Gershwin and authenticity. This is perhaps a surprising omission from Taruskin, since Grieg’s music inevitably raises the problematic notion of ‘periphery’ and, as Grimley states, the ‘tension between competing musical discourses, the folklorist, the nationalist and the modernist’ (p. ix). All these topics have, of course, been central to much of Taruskin’s work.

Grimley’s book focuses these discourses on the ‘contested category of landscape’ (p. ix). He proposes that this raises tensions and contradictions that can ‘ultimately’ be ‘resolved’ through musical analysis. The book is thus firmly tilted towards close reading. The many analyses are delivered in prose. There are no voice-leading graphs, motivic charts, or harmonic summaries, and this places a heavy burden on the text. It results in paragraphs of dense, richly observed material. The reader needs to digest the book slowly and in small portions, with frequent recourse to the generous selection of music examples. All analyses are offered in tandem with cultural critique. Thus, to embed this critical dimension, the book first explores definitions of musical nationalism from musicologists such as Celia Applegate, Taruskin, and particularly Carl Dahlhaus, who (unlike Taruskin) did not leave Grieg out. Indeed, Dahlhaus’s discussion of Grieg in Nineteenth-Century Music (German original, 1980; English trans. 1989) resurfaces at various points in the book. Through further reference to a range of influential cultural theorists and historians, Grimley offers a useful survey of recent approaches to nationalism, providing a cogent context for specifically Norwegian issues. The focus on Norway turns to discussion of little-known music, including Waldemar Thrane’s comic opera Fjeldeventyret (‘The Mountain Tale’, 1825), the debate on folklorism and national spirit in the writings of Henrik Wergeland, the performances of the virtuoso violinist Ole Bull, and the folksong collecting of Ludvig Mathias Lindeman from the 1840s onwards.

Central to Grimley’s thesis is the notion that landscape functions in Grieg’s music as an expression of being in a certain time and space. He argues that landscape must be understood not merely in terms of imitative representation or pictorial evocation in tone painting but fundamentally as an ideological construction. He hears this manifest in tensions between differing obligations and characteristics in the music’s formal process. As Grimley notes, similar conflicting expressions and structures have been discussed by Julian Johnson in studies of Mahler. Grimley hears Grieg’s music sharing with Mahler’s a strong sense of alienation, but finds very little irony: in Grieg landscape ‘seems to point inwards, rather than outwards as in Mahler’s work, leading towards a contemplative inner realm which is fully enclosed’. By comparison with
Mahler there is also in Grieg a ‘lack’ of fracture and realism. But it is important to note the generational difference between the composers. Romantic Innigkeit might be less profoundly problematized in Grieg's musical landscapes than in Mahler's, but the product is in other ways deceptively subtle and complex. As Grimley demonstrates, Grieg's descriptions of his response to the mountain landscape of western Norway as an ecstatic or epiphanal experience reverberate with the expressions of ‘high’ romanticism (if I may use a terrible pun). This combines, to powerful effect, with a strong sense of home and nation. In Grieg's compositional response to this experience of landscape an effect of enchantment, distance, and nostalgia is generated by a ‘suspended temporality’ or radical ‘spatial’ quality, and a ‘heightened sense of aural awareness or sensitivity to sound’ (pp. 79–80).

Of great importance is the relationship of Grieg's techniques and materials to those of the Naturklang or Klangfläche as influentially defined by Dahlhaus. For Dahlhaus these concepts are defined as ‘other’ to the organic, teleological process of nineteenth-century ‘symphonic’ music. They are characterized by a motion within stasis, an ‘internal motion’ frequently generated by repetitive rhythmic patterning and ostinatos. Grimley quotes Dahlhaus (who in turn is alluding to Hegel): ‘musical landscapes arise less from direct tone-painting than from “definite negation” of the character of musical form as process’ (Nineteenth–Century Music, 307). But Grimley's analyses demonstrate that the category of the picturesque is more complex than the exotic or colouristic functions Dahlhaus identifies. Primarily this is because of a move from the representational to an ‘abstract mode of musical discourse’ constructed through the use of certain folkloristic materials as ‘primary structural elements’, generating Grieg's individual kind of temporal suspension, effects of distance, problematizations of teleology, and sense of nostalgia (p. 108).

Grimley discusses the role of landscape in the critical reception of Grieg's work, noting that the concept ‘often supported ideological reading’ (p. 110). Walter Niemann's Die Musik Skandinaviens (Leipzig, 1906) is dedicated to Grieg, and the composer stands as an important figure in the book since landscape and nation are at the forefront of Niemann's critical discourse. Grimley's discussion of this source is especially useful for bringing the complexities of Grieg's landscape music into the context of Austro–German critical orthodoxies.

There is a lengthy discussion of the song cycle Haugtussa, Op. 67 and the debates it raises concerning language, identity, and cultural vitality. The official language of government (riksmål) was at the time considered tainted by the aims of Danish colonialism and thus viewed as a symbol of repression. The alternative language of landsmål—a romantic synthesis of folk dialects—was, by contrast, seen as new, vital, and healthy. The cycle's poet, Arne Garborg, was a dedicated supporter of landsmål, a sympathy enthusiastically shared by Grieg. The songs offer excellent demonstrations of how landscape functions in a relationship with issues of language in artistic constructions of Norwegian national identity. Most important for Grimley is the manner by which the ‘structural implications of certain kinds of musical gestures conventionally associated with landscape: diatonically dissonant sonorities, linear chromatic voice-leading progressions and various categories of nature sounds’ work within the evocation of different narrative temporalities—seasonal, mythical, religious, and metrical. Conflicts are also revealed to operate on a subjective or psychological level. For example, in the opening song the ‘tension between ... sophisticated harmonic elisions and the apparent Heimatkunst–like simplicity of the musical surface’ can be heard as a ‘reflection of schizophrenia’. Moving to combine hermeneutics and biographical levels, Grimley suggests that the cycle's ‘suspension of regular musical time' creates ‘a sense of hollowness, isolation and loss', one which ‘can be read as a metaphor for
Grieg’s own creative condition, particularly his sense of alienation from perceived mainstream centres of musical progress’.

In *Slåtter*, Op. 72, ‘Grieg’s most ambitious and radical response to Norwegian folk music’, the ‘creative tension’ between landscape’s ‘represenational function (particularly the evocation of visual modes of perception)’ and its ‘structural character’ are heard intensified, raised to the level of ‘fundamental structural dissonance’ (pp. 147–8). Important here also for Grimley is the sense of authenticity and ‘plain speaking’, an authenticity which he views as much discursive as ethnic, since it exemplifies a type of ‘cultural nationalism’, which Grimley draws from the work of John Hutchinson. Through this is released a ‘progressive, regenerative force, directed towards an imaginative transformation of national identity in the light of synthetic (or artificially constructed) folk modernism’ (p. 168). But if the second piece of the set has a ‘formal trajectory’ that ‘suggests a strongly teleological narrative that lends itself readily to metaphors of liberation and release’, then reading this narrative is problematic. A ‘colonial’ interpretation would most likely involve a move from folk simplicity to aesthetic completion or a ‘gradual uncovering and celebration of an essentialised folk identity’. Characteristically, Grimley resists such a monophonic reading, sustaining the notion of ‘tension’ through the interpretative process.

In two case studies of Grieg’s influence—David Monrad Johansen and Percy Grainger—Grimley turns to Kevin Korsyn’s employment of Bloomian theory as a model. *Tessera*—‘antithetical completion’—is identified as usefully describing the relationship of Johansen’s music to Grieg’s; *apophrades*—‘transumption’—is posited as appropriate for Grainger (p. 195). The tensions which Grimley hears in Grieg’s music are ‘superseded in Johansen’s work by an even greater anxiety’ (p. 207). Johansen ‘exposed the points of tension and conflict that underpinned Grainger’s individual musical character … underlined his feelings of alienation and displacement, while simultaneously presenting the opportunity to create his own sense of musical space’ (p. 208). The discussion of Grainger’s setting of *Brigg Fair* (in which Dahlhaus once more raises his head) is especially suggestive of a potentially wider use for Bloom’s theory: ‘the idea of national identity itself could be conceived as a state of anxiety, an Oedipal struggle for independence and self-determination allied to the fear of abandonment or annihilation by external forces (imaginary or real)’ (p. 195).

Grimley concludes that ‘the association between Grieg’s music and the Norwegian landscape is not a natural one … but is an ideological phenomenon, an assumption which has been culturally and historically defined’ (p. 221). The music reveals a ‘fundamental tension in Norwegian nationalism, between cosmopolitan, assimilatory, and isolationist trends’. Grimley artfully and precisely identifies how such tensions are articulated in Grieg’s music ‘by the juxtaposition of elements drawn from Norwegian folk music … and a conventional (mainstream continental European) diatonic harmonic syntax’ (loc. cit.). The typographical errors every dozen pages or so, and the decision to present almost all music examples in ‘landscape’ (of course) at 90 degrees rotation to the text (thus making playing through them at the piano an exercise necessitating at least three hands) are minor irritations that do not detract from a very fine study.