

**Keith W. Kinder. 2014. *This Awareness of Beauty: The
Orchestral and Wind Band Music of Healey Willan*. Waterloo,
ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 221 pp. ISBN
978-1-55458-960-9 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-77112-127-9 (paper), ISBN
978-1-55458-962-3 (ebook)**

Elaine Keillor

Volume 33, numéro 2, 2013

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1032702ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1032702ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Canadian University Music Society / Société de musique des universités
canadiennes

ISSN

1911-0146 (imprimé)

1918-512X (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Keillor, E. (2013). Compte rendu de [Keith W. Kinder. 2014. *This Awareness of
Beauty: The Orchestral and Wind Band Music of Healey Willan*. Waterloo, ON:
Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 221 pp. ISBN 978-1-55458-960-9 (cloth), ISBN
978-1-77112-127-9 (paper), ISBN 978-1-55458-962-3 (ebook)]. *Intersections*, 33(2),
167–169. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1032702ar>

BOOK REVIEWS / COMPTES RENDUS

Keith W. Kinder. 2014. *This Awareness of Beauty: The Orchestral and Wind Band Music of Healey Willan*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 221 pp. ISBN 978-1-55458-960-9 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-77112-127-9 (paper), ISBN 978-1-55458-962-3 (ebook).

As Keith W. Kinder reminds us in his first sentence, Healey Willan in the eyes of many is “Dean of English Canadian composers.” That certainly would be true in the period prior to 1950, but with the creation of the Canadian League of Composers in 1951, its founder, John Weinzweig, gradually became known as “Dean of Canadian composers” through his efforts to build bridges between those of varied heritages and the promotion of performances of Canadian works (Keillor 1994, 4). Even with two previous studies of Willan’s music—Giles Bryant’s *Healey Willan Catalogue* (1972, with a supplement published in 1982) and F.R.C. Clarke’s *Healey Willan: Life and Music* (1983)—this monograph is welcome, as it corrects some errors in those earlier works and details an area of Willan’s output that has been only superficially examined to date.

In contrast to F.R.C. Clarke’s monograph, which devoted twenty-three pages to the symphonic and band music produced by Willan, Kinder concentrates his study on those works after a brief introductory biography of seventeen pages. In the process he examines in detail how Willan became adept in these genres. Surprisingly Kinder does not refer to symphonic works that, as Clarke documents, Willan heard in London, England: symphonic compositions by Schumann, Dvořák, Beethoven, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn, as well as current English composers. In this reviewer’s opinion, a reference to these musical experiences as well as Willan’s life-long admiration for the musicianship of conductor Arthur Nikisch would help the reader to better understand aspects that Kinder brings out in his discussion of the compositions. As Kinder strikingly underlines in his analyses, Willan was also somewhat aware of currents in early twentieth-century composition and should not be passed off as a pale reflection of Elgar. On the other hand, Kinder succinctly summarizes characteristics of English orchestral music that are present in Willan’s output, which include blended rather than pure timbres and textures, and an emphasis on the middle tessituras (21).

Kinder rightly acknowledges some of Clarke’s observations and uses some of his terminology, such as that of the “Willan motto” (Clarke 1983, 94). Occasionally he disagrees with Clarke’s assessment, and/or proposes different reasons for the choices that Willan made (93, 98, 134). With his close analysis of the works under consideration, Kinder is able to add to the compositional

“fingerprints” that Willan used, one of which is what he has labelled the “Willan rush,” consisting of the instruments sweeping up to their higher register, often to introduce the main melodic material or a new section. Another, for example, is that Willan’s instrumental works frequently begin with a tympani roll; additionally his use of brass chorale, sometimes supplemented with tympani, articulates the structure of a work.

Melodically Kinder points out Willan’s periodic use of the tritone, a dominant feature of early twentieth-century works. By using contemporary harmonic analytic techniques, Kinder shows how Willan rarely has a functional diatonic progression in mind, but instead makes extensive use of bitonality, polychords, and chains of parallel sixth chords. At important cadences, often an open fifth appears rather than a full chord. Frequently the key is ambiguous, even when a key signature is present. Of course, reference often occurs to modal influences, but this reader found it strange that the use of a whole-tone scale was not commented upon in the example given while discussing Willan’s Symphony No. 2 (first movement) (example 5.45, 120). Also this reader had difficulty making the connection that Kinder purported between this particular example and P2, given in example 5.32 (114). Certainly there is a rhythmic connection, but the “melodic wedge” used by Willan, as given in example 5.32, outlines the ascending first five notes of a minor scale ending at the dominant. The passage in example 5.45 presents a whole-tone scale ascending and thus has a tritone between the opening G and the fifth note a C-sharp.

When the score of a work under discussion is difficult to obtain or in some cases exists only as a manuscript, this book fortunately has 173 examples for the reader. Unlike the 475 examples at the back of the Clarke monograph with no individual labels or captions, the examples in the Kinder are placed close to the actual discussion of the material. This reader found that the labelling of the example and reference to it in the text was not always adequate for ease of reading in the first half of the book but considerably improved from the discussion of the symphonies onward.

Differently from the Clarke monograph, Kinder gives extensive footnotes and sources. However, in his footnote on Calixa Lavallée (1991), he evidently had not consulted the second volume of orchestral music released by the Canadian Musical Heritage Society. That publication contains an orchestral work, *La Patrie*, actually performed in Paris, and refutes the statement of “an orchestral suite supposedly performed” (199).

Except for some awkward syntax at the top of page 89 where Kinder describes an example of the cyclic aspect of Willan’s Piano Concerto in C Minor, the text reads well. It is curious, though, that the editor did not catch the discrepancy of usage between Library and Archives Canada on page xvii but from thereon a consistent usage of the old term, National Library of Canada. In 2004 an Order in Council united the collections, services, and personnel of the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada.

It is hoped that this thoughtful assessment of Willan’s orchestral and band music, both incomplete works and those completed, will have an impact on publishers and performers as Kinder succinctly argues for many valuable

works, most of which are now out of print or have never been published. In previous considerations of Willan, the emphasis has been placed on his organ and choral works, while the instrumental genres have not been treated with the same respect. Perhaps in part this oversight was due to published non-organ instrumental works being mainly pedagogical piano pieces. (Curiously Kinder does not even refer to this facet of Willan's output in the introduction of his chapter entitled "Pedagogical Music.") Kinder's detailed investigation of letters, annotations by Willan himself, and his own observations could assist in future editing of scores and improved band arrangements, such as that for the *Royce Hall Suite*. The publication and republication of these noteworthy Canadian compositions by Willan that Kinder calls for will be most welcome in the future.

REFERENCES

- Bryant, Giles. 1972. *Healey Willan Catalogue*. Ottawa: National Library of Canada.
- . 1982. *Healey Willan Catalogue: Supplement*. Ottawa: National Library of Canada.
- Clarke, F.R.C. 1983. *Healey Willan: Life and Music*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Keillor, Elaine, ed. 1994. *Music for Orchestra II*, Ottawa: Canadian Musical Heritage / Le patrimoine musical canadien.
- . 1994. *John Weinzwieg and His Music: The Radical Romantic of Canada*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow.

ELAINE KEILLOR

Bálint András Varga. 2013. *From Boulanger to Stockhausen: Interviews and a Memoir*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press. xi, 400 pp. ISBN 978-1-58046-439-0 (cloth).

From Boulanger to Stockhausen is a recent title in the Eastman Studies in Music series, under the senior editorship of Ralph P. Locke. It is also the third book in the Eastman series written by Varga, preceded by his *György Kurtág: Three Interviews and Ligeti Homages* (2009), and *Three Questions for Sixty-Five Composers* (2011).¹ In many regards, *From Boulanger to Stockhausen* continues where the previous two books leave off, completing the trilogy with an appended memoir extending to one-quarter of this third book's total length. And the memoir, covering both personal and professional aspects of Varga's life, is as touching as it is informative.

All three books spotlight transcriptions of tape-recorded interviews conducted by Varga over the better part of forty-five years. The orientation in *From*

¹ Varga has published several books, the first in the early 1970s. The genesis of each publication has issued from the author's deft ability as an interviewer. *Three Questions for Sixty-Five Composers* initially appeared in 1986, as *3 kérdés, 82 zeneszerző*. Budapest: Zeneműkiadó.