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Farewell, My Youth and Other Writings by Arnold Bax, edited by Lewis Foreman (review)

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music examples 22 and 23), sixteen show openings with a rising fourth, six show horn fifths, and fifteen illustrate various motives that recur in different pieces. Jensen uses these music examples for their biographical significance, not for musical analysis. Although he says that all the music examples are discussed, he makes no direct reference to any of them within the text. Particularly puzzling is the inclusion of the score *Paraphrase for Blæseorkester (Nærmere Gud til Dig)*. Jensen's reason—that it has never been published—is not sufficient without further explication.

We still await, then, a comprehensive musicological and theoretical study of this enigmatic composer. The last major work in English was Robert Simpson's *Carl Nielsen: Symphonist 1865–1931*, first published (London: J. M. Dent) in 1952, with later revisions (New York: Taplinger) in 1979. One of the last Danish overviews was Torben Meyer and Frede Schandorf Petersen's *Carl Nielsen: kunstneren og mennesket* (Copenhagen: Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1947–48). Several primary sources contribute immensely to an understanding of Nielsen: his diaries and letters are published, the most recent work by Torben Schousboe (*Carl Nielsen: Dagbøger og brevveksling med Anne Marie-Carl Nielsen* [Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1983]), and Nielsen's own two books, *Levende musik* (Living Music [Copenhagen: Martin, 1925]) and *Min fynske barndom* (Copenhagen: Martins Forlag, 1927), have long been available in Danish and English. Jensen's book is a welcome addition to this biographical literature, one full of interesting ideas and with an original approach; but better organization and greater integration of musical discussion would have made it easier to appreciate Jensen's main points.

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Farewell, My Youth and Other Writings. By Arnold Bax. Edited by Lewis Foreman. Aldershot: Scolar Press; Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing, 1992. [xxxii, 192 p. + 24 leaves of plates. ISBN 0-85967-793-1. \$41.95.]

Lewis Foreman has been an active champion of early twentieth-century British mu-

sic for well over twenty years. The author and editor of books on Arthur Bliss, Havergal Brian, Percy Grainger, and Edmund Rubbra, he is particularly identified with that singular figure Arnold Bax, whose music he has tirelessly promoted through his activities on the board of the Bax Trust and through his major biography, *Bax: A Composer and His Times* (London: Scolar Press, 1983; 2nd ed. 1988). Foreman has also revived Bax's literary career, publishing a number of poems that Bax produced under the *nom de plume* Dermot O'Byrne before the First World War, when he was a close associate of George Russell and the Dublin writers of the Gaelic Revival (*Dermot O'Byrne: Poems by Arnold Bax* [London: Thames, 1979]). *Farewell, My Youth and Other Writings* reprints the composer's elegant 1943 autobiography as well as a selection of his occasional writings on aspects of the British music scene, and includes a particularly vivid "Irish" short story, "Ancient Dominions," by his literary *alter ego*. The text is accompanied by over 100 illustrations of the people and places to which Bax refers in the course of the book.

This publication is useful on two related counts. First, it makes available more in-depth information than we had hitherto about Bax the man, his personal opinions, and artistic motivations. In particular it goes a long way toward showing how Bax found in "the world less than half material" (p. 145) the inspiration for his essentially Gaelic music and the source of his extreme Romantic escapism. Second, as Foreman himself notes in his introduction (p. xxii), it provides "a vivid and authentic source on the musical life of the brief period covered" (roughly 1890–1914). This aspect of the book has given Foreman the opportunity to display to virtuoso effect his encyclopaedic knowledge of early twentieth-century English musical institutions, concert life, and artistic personalities. Not only do his elaborate endnotes clarify the figures and events that Bax discusses in the text; Foreman also goes out of his way to give us interesting (if incidental) information, such as that concerning the pre-War reception of Arnold Schoenberg in England.

What Foreman has produced here, in effect, is another "Bax and his times" book—a strategy that persuasively suggests, as did the biography, just how mistaken it is

to separate the lives of artists from their working milieux. This is particularly instructive in the case of a composer who took dreamy inspiration from recondite Gaelic legend and life in the isolated far west of Ireland, but whose astonishing technical proficiency was the product of a rigorous academic training and decidedly earthbound capacity for hard work. Unfortunately, this delicate balance is nearly undermined by Foreman in his single-minded pursuit of the details of Bax's imaginative life. For example, Bax's sudden realization of his own mortality, movingly described at the impressive conclusion of the autobiography, prompts Foreman to provide a note retracing the route of Bax's bicycle journey in the Dublin Mountains, where this epiphany took place. That Bax joined his enigmatic Russian lover at Lausanne station en route to Ukraine apparently merits a contemporary engraving of the railway terminal with the caption: "the station as [Bax] would have known it" (plate 45). Foreman clearly feels the need to counterbalance his copious commentary on the people and places of Bax's public life with similar documentation of his private life; and he no doubt feels justified in doing so since Bax himself placed a high premium on these events as "fresh food for art" (p. 60). But one suspects that Foreman's occasional exercises in micro biography derive more from a personal enthusiasm for Bax and his music than from a discreet weighing of their scholarly value. On the whole, such descents into a realm bordering on hero-worship run the risk of limiting the book's appeal solely to Bax enthusiasts—surely, if unfortunately, a minority—and of obscuring its many, more general attractions.

But it may be that any work on Bax will necessarily circulate only among Baxophiles. As such, Foreman's book is valuable as a companion volume to his biography, the research for which clearly turned up much of the material presented here. Bax's writings do shed light on the mind of a quixotic composer. Their availability may even help to revise received opinions about his music. The autobiography, for one, shows a restraint and cogency that will surprise those who are skeptical about Bax's artistic discipline. Its successful fusion of structure and emotion puts one in mind of

the symphonies, those other products of the later Bax, which evidence a similar—and equally convincing—balance of form and highly charged expression. Similarly, the wholly linear narrative structure of the story "Ancient Dominions" can be seen as the literary counterpart of the early "formless" tone poems. The prose instructs us about the music, for it is precisely in the cumulative emotional effect of the fluent and stunningly imaginative writing that its structure resides, and perfectly so.

Ultimately, the reception of Bax's music probably hinges on one's view of the artistic merits of the Celtic Twilight. To date, his music has been judged by the critical values of a Central-European musical rationalism to which this sensibility is wholly alien. As the publication of Foreman's volume makes abundantly clear, an honest assessment of the music of this most Irish of English composers must depend on other, no less worthy standards of criticism.

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Le Jardin retrouvé: The Music of Frederic Mompou. By Wilfrid Mellers. Illustrations by Robin Hildyard. York: The Fairfax Press, 1992. [x, 139 p. ISBN 0-907209-03-3. (Available from the Fairfax Press, P.O. Box 59, York YO1 1QQ England.)]

Artistic renewal has been a persistent theme in the work of Wilfrid Mellers. His *Studies in Contemporary Music* (London: Dobson, 1947), which contained some of the first truly insightful writing on Gabriel Fauré and Albert Roussel available in English, analyzes a variety of solutions to the problem of developing an individual musical language in the modern era. *Caliban Reborn: Renewal in Twentieth-Century Music* (London: Gollancz, 1968) examines more systematically the vital interplay between tradition and originality, while *The Masks of Orpheus: Seven Stages in the Story of European Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987) undertakes a metaphoric journey through five centuries of crisis and change, revolution, and rebirth. *Le Jardin retrouvé* is a much more intimate story of