

how to cope with it; to a compulsion to speak out and finally to transmitting the wisdom acquired and reintegration into the community. Footnotes suggest personal acquaintances as the source for the theory. Whatever the source, as the basis for describing the structures of the works under discussion, it is wonderfully illuminating, particularly in its power to reveal the intersections of race and gender in the individual development of the characters. *Their Place on the Stage: Black Women Playwrights in America*, then, is not only a fine study, it is also a splendid example of why one needs different paradigms and questions to understand the experience and the literature of marginalized people.

Many of the early plays that she discusses are published in James V. Hatch and Ted Shine, eds. *Black Theater USA: Forty-Five Plays by Black Americans, 1847-1974* (New York: The Free Press, 1974).

WOMEN COMPOSERS, A Lost Tradition Found

Diane Peacock Jezic. New York: The Feminist Press, 1988

Ann Armin

Women Composers, A Lost Tradition Found offers a fact-filled overview of the work of women composers from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries. Reading this 250-page volume, I found myself taken on a voyage of discovery into the virtually unexplored realm of the musically creative woman. Jezic surprises the reader into an awareness of the long line of women composers that stretches from the fascinating and prolific Hildegard of Bingen, abbess of a convent in the eleventh century, to Judith Lang Zaimont, composer-in-residence at Wesleyan University.

The book is divided into five sections corresponding to the major periods in musical history: medieval and baroque, classical, romantic, romantic and early twentieth century, later twentieth century. Jezic has selected twenty-five composers, and provides a chronology, a short biographical essay, an analysis of one or more scores, a selected listing of compositions/discography and a bibliography

for each. We meet the composer's contemporaries, both male and female, and gain a quick-study insight into the musical context in which they worked and the changing role of women composers over the centuries.

Author Diane Peacock Jezic is a pianist and music historian who teaches music literature at Towson State University. As she tells us in her preface, the book is designed to accommodate the needs of music history and Women Studies courses. It is also accessible to those of us who are unable to answer the simple question, "Can you name three women composers?" One happy feature of the book is that recordings of the scores selected for musical analysis are available on two cassettes specially produced by Marnie Hall of Leonarda Productions.

In spite of their success and popularity in their lifetime, and despite the quantity and quality of their output, most women composers prior to the twentieth century are largely forgotten in today's concert halls and go unmentioned in musical textbooks. Clara Schumann, for example, was a major composer of German lieder, solo piano works, concerti with orchestra. In P.H. Lang's prodigious *Music in Western Civilization*, she receives the following honourable mention: "Clara Wieck, the daughter of his (Schumann's) first piano teacher, one of the most distinguished women musicians in history, and an understanding and enthusiastic propagator of his music, became his wife after an epic courtship in 1840." A quick glance through the bibliographies supplied in *Women Composers* soon makes apparent that the correction of this astounding neglect of women composers in standard texts is being handled primarily by women, by means of articles and books.

It also becomes apparent that the last hundred years has brought about some positive changes in the status of women composers. Prior to this period, compositions by women were performed either in the religious setting of medieval or renaissance convents or in the intimate settings of musical academies, the European courts or chamber music evenings in the home. It is not until the mid-1800s that we hear of the first performances of large-scale works written by women. It would seem that American composer Amy Beach heralded a new era for women's music. In 1882, her concerto for alto and orchestra,

Eilende Wolken, was performed by the Symphony Society of New York, their first performance of a work by a woman. Her symphonies were performed by the Boston Symphony and other American orchestras as well as orchestras in Leipzig and Berlin. Of the six living women composers selected by Jezic, all have received recognition through performances in prestigious musical venues, commissions, financial support and awards. In 1983, Ellen Swilich was the first woman composer to receive the Pulitzer Prize.

LUNA

Sharon Butala. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1988

Eleanor Dudar

Embedded in the specific context of Canadian prairie life, concretely realized in precisely rendered detail, the central preoccupation of Sharon Butala's *Luna* is woman — her nature, her roles, and their meanings. Butala has drawn a strong trio of characters to embody her argument — Selena, defined almost completely by her roles as wife and mother; her younger sister Diana, who increasingly refuses definition of herself in these terms; and their aged Aunt Rhea, who lives alone in a tumbledown house, bakes bread in a wood stove — yes, she chops her own wood — and grows a flower garden on the thin prairie soil that no one else can match.

The novel is full of incident, beginning in June — taking us through a twenty-fifth wedding anniversary community dinner, a fowl supper, a 15-mile cattle drive in blinding snow at temperatures of -30, a family Christmas, and a Women's Night Out — and ending in March with the birth of a child to Selena's daughter Phoebe, at midnight under the full moon. Butala makes us feel the rhythm of the country year, where the change in the land and people's activities are so closely entwined. Much of this rhythm is reflected through Selena, working long hours in her garden in summer, preserving her harvest in the fall, assisting her husband Kent with the cattle throughout the year. Her sister Diane, unable to follow in this path, strikes out for the city, seeking civilization and the something-more she is unable to put a name to.

Diane, or Diana — she takes on more