interprets this series as a nested form that creates an overarching tripartite structure: pairs 1–3 center around injustice and victimhood, 4–6 focus on nature and human agency, and the seventh and final pair sets out a way forward for humanity (pp. 132–33). Sly explains that the seven proverbs are bound together by the use of a series of three tetrachords in various combinations that together form a chromatic aggregate (pp. 135–38). These tetrachords can be explored further in the songs that follow the proverbs. Sly searches for intersections between the text and the music: the artificial whole-tone scale appears prominently in the first proverb and song, "London," which depicts an oppressive civil society, the diabolic tritone is featured in "The Chimney Sweeper," which criticizes the complicity of the church, and the inner conflict between expression and suppressing anger and frustration against the injustice of the Old Testament God is depicted through the musical conflict between a melody and its inversion.

As mentioned earlier, Sly's examination of both the text and the music is in conversation with past scholars, and the author does not seek to dispute or dismiss interpretations that clash with his own. Instead of arguing whether there is any single correct or definitive answer, he considers music analysis to be an attempt to convince the reader to consider a new interpretation. Regarding Sly's analysis of these three settings, I found his efforts to be persuasive, in part because of his multifaceted approach to their history, his knowledge of the existing scholarship on these works, as well as his examination of their textual and musical content. The only thing that I felt was missing in this experiment was a control, such as an analysis of a setting that lacked the cohesion necessary to be considered a cycle. Examples of such works were mentioned in the preface: *On This Island*, op. 11; *Who Are These Children?*, op. 84; and *A Birthday Hansel*, op. 92 (p. xviii). Such an omission certainly does not detract from what proves to be an excellent study, which will undoubtedly be of use to music theorists, musicologists, and the performers of these pieces. It would have been interesting, however, to discuss why some works lie outside of Sly's definition of a cycle in addition to the pieces that lie within it. That said, this monograph will be of great interest to both professional scholars and students interested in Britten's vocal compositions, and it can also serve as a model for the well-informed and well-executed music analysis of other works as well.

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Polyphonic Voices: Poetic and Musical Dialogues in the European Ars Nova. Edited by Anna Alberni, Antonio Calvia, and Maria Sofia Lannutti. (La tradizione musicale, 22; Studi e testi, 13.) Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2021. [xxiv, 293 p. ISBN 9788892901476 (paperback), €54; ISBN 9788892901766 (ebook: PDF), open access.] Music examples, illustrations, bibliography, indexes.

This insightful collection of essays explores the semiotics of fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century polyphony through the prism of intertextual theory formulated by Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, and Cesare Segre. The authors extrapolate this linguistic framework to citational practice of the *ars nova*, trecento, and *ars subtilior*. In a *jeu de mots* on the Bakhtinian notions of polyphony and dialogic exchange, the authors apply these constructs to musical polyphony. Bakhtin used the term *polyphony* to describe a plurality of discrete voices and consciousnesses, which transcends authorial direction

to create its own dialogic signification. Bakhtin's theory became a point of departure for Kristeva's explication of intertextuality. Segre differentiated the precise intentionality of "intertextuality" per se with the synergistic interlace of collective thematic, linguistic, and semantic codes. For the latter phenomenon, Segre coined the term *interdiscursivity*. Applying such linguistic analysis to music, this series engages a wide array of lyric repertoire spanning from the trecento compositions of Jacopo da Bologna, Giovanni da Cascia (Johannes de Florentia), Johannes Ciconia, Filippotto da Caserta (Philipoctus de Caserta), and Nicolò del Preposto to a survey of Catalan refrain songs.

The volume opens with Maria Caraci Vela's in-depth examination of Viscontean musical culture at Pavia, in which she challenges the conventional historiographical juxtaposition between Florentine protohumanism and Viscontean absolutism. Her interpretation aligns with Luchino Visconti's vision of Milan as a "New Rome," a bastion from the current fragmentation of Italian statehood. Caraci Vera utilizes Gérard Genette's taxonomy of five species of intertextuality and Segre's ideas of interdiscursivity as a matrix for analyzing citational practices in music. The author contrasts later musical exempla of intertextuality such as Carlo Gesualdo's madrigal "Da le odorate spoglie"—a tribute to Luzzasco Luzzaschi and Giaches de Wert—with trecento compositions like Paolo da Frienze's "Soffrir m'estuet" or Guillaume de Machaut's "Phyton, le merveilleus serpent." For Caraci Vera, understanding these intertextual resonances requires deep knowledge of a complex web of references, ranging from political and literary to visual and heraldic, and drawing on sources from ancient *auctores* to Francesco Petrarca and Machaut. Caraci Vera argues that, bereft of any extant classical musical heritage, this body of work fastens on canonized models and archaisms to legitimize or reconstruct an intrinsically Italic musical legacy. She surveys Pavia's musical culture in light of the foundation of a university and castle library under Galeazzo II and the city's intellectual enrichment by the musical presence of composer Johannes de Janua and of Pietro Filargo, future Pope Alexander V and patron of Matteo da Perugia.

Caraci Vela argues that the Francophile leanings expressed in many Italian manuscripts reflect strong reception of French musical tastes at courts like Pavia. She revisits the hypotheses of Reinhard Strohm and Claudio Sartori as to "J. Galiot" being a French diminutive referencing Gian Galeazzo (Giangaleazzo Visconti) and regarding the penchant at Pavia for French tastes. But the "predilection for two-voice textures" (p. 8) is interpreted as a protohumanistic aspiration toward the Italic. As problematic a generic reading of tyranny and protohumanism might be to decode message, meaning, and "to explain and understand . . . individual, fundamental *rationes*" (p. 10), so too a dualistic approach to French late-Gothic and Italian protohumanistic aesthetic and notational aspiration remains somewhat fraught. A caveat that this hermeneutic enterprise may incorporate anachronistic perspectives on basic concepts like *nation* and *polylingualism*—frames which potentially bias any reading in hindsight.

Anna Alberni explores how Aragonese strophic refrain songs reformulate the *formes fixes* deployed by Machaut and his circle and how these Catalan forms constitute what she terms a "syntax of sentimentality" (p. 46). Alberni observes that Catalan poetry offers a range of linguistic "fusion" spanning from the *Cançoneret de Ripoll* to the *Cançoner Vega-Aguiló*. Born from the linguistic tropes of Dante Alighieri and Petrarch, this composite idiom

allows for alternation that heightens poetic economy and allusion. Given the dearth of musical attestation, a repository of poetic texts without music forms the basis for reconstruction. Alberni posits that these poetical "'vestiges' (*tracce*)" (p. 46) arbitrate for the reassessment of this corpus. The author collates her findings with corroborating documentation in the Archives of the Crown of Aragon (Archivo de la Corona de Aragón).

In her masterful contribution, Yolanda Plumley explores a fifteenth-century Passion cycle's citational allusions to earlier thirteenth- and fourteenth-century secular lyrics from a range of sources including Machaut, Watriquet Brassenel de Couvin, Jean de le Mote, and the much-quoted anonymous rondeau "Esperance, qui en mon cuer s'embat." The author demonstrates how the cycle of twelve *balades* brings greater immediacy to its audience through its interpolation and transformation of secular forms like the *fastras*. This textual interplay lends currency to the devotional texts, which concentrate on the experience of the three Marys at the sepulcher and their response to Christ's resurrection. Plumley offers a convincing case for how this group of Eastertime *balades* might have been composed for a Parisian audience, notably that of Charles VI, King of France. Tracking down corollaries to incipits and quotations of secular sources for the majority of the twelve, Plumley uncovers a richly imbricated intertextual fabric in *Les xij. balades de Pasques*.

Davide Checchi discusses the "biscia cycle" (p. 127) of the grass snake in Verona, a sylloge according to the nomenclature of Genette's and Segre's concepts of intertextuality. The cycle comprises the madrigals "Nel bel zardino," "Posando sopra un'aqua," and "Soto l'imperio" in settings by Jacopo da Bologna and the madrigal "Donna già fui" in a setting by Giovanni da Cascia. The author points out the slippery slope of "dangerous polysemy" (p. 125) in the often conflicting analyses of Kristeva, Umberto Eco, Michael Riffaterre, and others. Checchi refutes interpretations by Geneviève Thibault, Giuseppe Corsi, and others, which draw for meaning on a heraldic allusion to the Visconti emblem, a geographical reference to Verona, and the localization of composers Jacopo and Giovanni at Mastino II della Scala's court in Verona. After hypothesizing how "cingere" and "bel zardino" might be specific topographical references to Verona, Checchi proposes the 1339 war between Milan and Lodrisio Visconti (after John of Bohemia decamped to eradicate strife in his homeland) as the setting. The author offers new dating and possible events underpinning the cycle, beginning with the 1336 betrayal and flight of Lodrisio to Verona in "Nel bel zardino" and depicting Lodrisio's disingenuity and duplicitous character in "Soto l'imperio."

Antonio Calvia delves into the polyphonic reception of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Filostrato*, focusing on two madrigals by Nicolò del Preposto. Calvia highlights how these pieces reference ballata forms within the framework of the *ottava rima*. In another survey of ballatas by Francesco Landini, dedicated via a *senhal* to "Sandra," Michele Epifani examines the intricate web of interwoven musical and poetical connections, while Jason Stoessel situates Ciconia within the vernacular humanism of Padua. Stoessel considers Ciconia's opus beyond the scope of his *ars subtilior pièce de résistance*, "Sus une fontayne," implicating the composer during his later years in a Paduan literary culture hearkening back to Petrarchan humanism. Stoessel uncovers a thriving literary tradition revealed through visual and sociopolitical culture referencing Domizio Brocardo, Leonardo Giustiniani, and others in

the orbit of the Carrara court at Padua. He also suggests an alternative earlier dating and setting for Ciconia's votive motet "O Petre, Christi discipule." Maria Sofia Lannutti shows how textual errors result when a musical compilation intended to amass repertoire produces textual analysis that necessarily misconstrues meaning due to scribal corruption. All in all, the collection presents a rewarding and intriguing application of twentieth-century linguistic criticism to its "mirror" in the semiotics of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century polyphony.

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ROCK AND POP

George Harrison: The Reluctant Beatle. By Philip Norman. New York: Scribner, 2023. [xxii, 487 p. ISBN 9781982195861 (hardcover), $35; ISBN 9781982195878 (paperback), $20.99; ISBN 9781982195885 (ebook), $16.99.] Illustrations, bibliography, index.

A biography of any member of the Beatles is always inviting for readers hungry for more about the Fab Four. A Beatle biography is just as inviting for writers looking for a subject loaded with drama, intriguing characters, and historical significance. Any biography of John, Paul, George, or Ringo can easily cover all those bases. The problem is how to write a Beatle biography and make it new. Many of the stories familiar to fans—the boys in Hamburg, the Beatlemania days, the acrimonious breakup—are necessary for the narrative, but authors need to write in such a way that the reader does not feel as if they have read it all before. So how does Philip Norman's 2023 biography, *George Harrison: The Reluctant Beatle*, make it new?

As the author of ten rock biographies, including books on John Lennon and Paul McCartney, Norman has been down this road before, and in his study of George Harrison he paints a compelling portrait of the man he dubs "the reluctant Beatle." Based on this nearly five-hundred-page biography, Norman could have chosen from numerous other subtitles to describe Harrison: the spiritual Beatle, the dour Beatle, the rakish Beatle, to name just a few. Like his three bandmates, Harrison was a complex character and cannot be easily reduced to a pat label. While he wore his spiritual heart on his sleeve, his sour, curmudgeonly side was equally on public display, yet always excused by his adoring public. Harrison's sharp tongue and his lack of diplomacy in the media was easy to overlook, considering that he stood next to the even sharper- tongued and acerbic Lennon. This book is about a brilliant songwriter–guitarist lurking to one side, always overshadowed by Lennon and McCartney. Perhaps the best subtitle for this book would have been *The Overshadowed Beatle*—a musician eclipsed even in such a glaring and global spotlight.

As Norman progresses through the familiar chronology of the Fab Four, we read of the familiar success that Harrison shared with his bandmates and, less well-known, how success brought out his resentment and envy. Harrison constantly fought for representation, measured primarily by the number of songs he managed to get on each album. The author shows how this songwriting competition with Lennon and McCartney in fact preceded the Beatlemania days, as the three future Beatles jostled for position. A few of the earliest recordings featured cocredits such