

texts, therefore isolating the text from these disciplines and contexts. Adorno, for example, is described as ‘purposefully left out’ (p. 254) but is often conspicuous by his absence. The idea of heterotopia, elsewhere most often considered a facet of postmodernity, is automatically conceived as modernist without further explanation. Brodsky’s approach may be new, radical, modernist, or even banal, but all but the most well-informed reader will have no idea which.

Chronologically, modernism is defined in the first part of the book as beginning with the reception of Beethoven’s late quartets (p. 61). This fits the book’s premise that relationships between the ideas discussed are social and psychological, but also underlines the method as one that will not engage with the specifics of music. The history of modernism Brodsky explores is described as ‘the repeated endeavor to engage in such moments [as the ‘shocking enigma’ of late Beethoven]’ (p. 62) or as Rostropovich’s, Hasselhoff’s and Bernstein’s 1989 performances described in the book’s blurb. However, this justifies the inclusion of almost any work, performance or event under the banner of ‘modernism’, with the idea of ‘fantasy’ as their ‘common ground’ (p. 19). There is little differentiation between them as the text quickly moves from one to another. While the fragmented nature of the text is also somewhat explained by this approach, its frequent changes of pace and topic, and overall conversational tone, eventually become off-putting. Specific details are often eluded or lost each time the narrative turns another unexpected corner.

Similarly, the heterotopian networks that are described certainly paint a picture of a complex reality, but on occasions the rationale for what they include and exclude is unclear. In many ways the music, events and theories described in the book appear to be a list of things that caught the attention of the author – related, of course, but in ways that many other conceivable relationships could also be imagined. For example, a reference to a Facebook post by a young composer towards the end of the narrative (p. 260; pp. 267–8) feels particularly uncomfortable in its inclusion after Adorno has been ‘purposefully’ excluded: on the one hand the Facebook post is obviously tangentially related at the very edge of the kind of networks that are explored, but on the other it seems contrived and included merely for its mention of Beckett in relation to New Music.

As an exploration of psychoanalytic ideas in counterpoint with the New Music and events of the late twentieth century, this book will be

of interest to a reader already immersed in both disciplines. It does not provide an historical or musical account of the year of its focus, or the works that it references. As a narrative, it reads as an account of a very personal journey taken by the author among the music and theories that are described. As such, it will likely appeal to a smaller, more specialist, audience than those more generally intrigued by the history and analysis of works of New Music.

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Mike Svoboda and Michel Roth, *The Techniques of Trombone Playing*. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2017. €54

*The Techniques of Trombone Playing* is the most recent (tenth) contribution to the Bärenreiter *Techniques* series written by and for composers and instrumentalists. The co-author team in this case is trombonist Mike Svoboda and composer Michel Roth.

I was pleased to be asked to review this publication, despite being neither a trombonist nor a composer, as, when creating my own resource (for cello<sup>1</sup>), which I began by undertaking a large-scale literature review, it became apparent that there was a lack of critical review across this literature. There does not seem to be a culture of instrumentalists reading books that focus on other instruments; indeed, the authors themselves rarely reference the literature in their publications. This seems at odds with the rise in practitioner-led research, where performers and composers are developing research skills and producing relevant contributions that are expanding the notion of musical research. In addition, a lack of publisher accountability seems evident through incomplete or absent bibliographies and often inconsistent referencing. This means that, despite the proliferation of literature for contemporary instrumental technique since the 1970s, which now numbers around 60 books and several online resources, the quality of the resources themselves varies, and the progression of development has been rather uneven.

The history of this model is interesting, since it constitutes the first resource to describe new techniques to both composers and performers, lying somewhere between an orchestration guide and technical handbook. In addition to this balance between serving composer and

<sup>1</sup> See Ellen Fallowfield, [www.cellomap.com](http://www.cellomap.com).

performer, there arises the question of how to use notated and sound music examples, and to what extent these should represent a historical or contemporary illustration of notation and practice. Furthermore, it is sometimes relevant to discuss the acoustics and physical processes behind new techniques, the understanding of which lags necessarily somewhat behind musical experimentation and so, at the time of publication of such books, is often only partly understood. In short, authors of such books must manage a broad range of eclectic information and present it to a dual readership within a publishing system where good research practice has not been well established.

The first indication of how successful these books will be can be found in the contents page and bibliography. The contents page (i.e., the indication of the structure) is very important, as these are reference books, where users need to be able to access information easily. Often there are overlaps between distinct sections that leave the reader unsure where to search for specific information. This is not the case in *The Techniques of Trombone Playing*: Svoboda and Roth structure the book very clearly, starting with 'The instrument' and 'Basic techniques' (chapters 2 and 3), and progressing to 'Sound modulation' (vibrato, mutes, etc., chapter 4), 'Multiphonics' (chapter 5), 'Special sound effects' (air sounds, percussive techniques, etc., chapter 6) and 'Moving the sound with the instrument' (chapter 7). The multiple sub and sub-sub headings guide the reader well. Similarly, the bibliography is one of the most extensive in the literature, and is even divided into publications related to the trombone, wind instruments, acoustics and comparative literature (major woodwind and vocal titles). Throughout the book, the text is illustrated with notated examples from the repertoire and exercises that demonstrate specific techniques, many with corresponding audio examples (accessible online). Five composers (Kevin Juillerat, Roland Moser, Michel Roth, Nadir Vassena and Caspar Johannes Walter) were commissioned to write etudes that each focus on technical aspects discussed in the book. The scores for these etudes and Svoboda's recordings of them can be found online. As far as I am aware, this is the first time that etudes have been commissioned to complement such a book, although harpist Carlos Salzedo<sup>2</sup> and violist Garth Knox<sup>3</sup> both wrote

their own etudes that focus on specific techniques. The decision here to commission five composers with such contrasting aesthetics and of different generations is very successful in illustrating varied approaches to the techniques and pointing composers and performers towards further adaptations and experimentation.

The Preface and Introduction immediately establish two fundamental aspects of the book: the call for creativity on the part of the performer and composer, and the wide networking across the contemporary trombone scene that constitutes the book's base (this latter aspect is particularly in contrast to many other publications in the literature, which can have an almost crusade-like attitude with a strong bias towards music that the author has been involved in creating). In the Preface, Vinko Globokar suggests the book points 'to a future where interpreters become the composers and composers interpreters' (p. 9), which is supported by the importance Svoboda places on a 'lively debate between performer and composer' in developing new repertoire (p. 12). Roth describes the network of composers and performers who were involved in developing the book: not only were five composers commissioned to write etudes, but three trombonists were invited to peer-review the publication (pp. 11–13). This diversity is particularly effective in giving the reader an impression of the modern development of trombone repertoire, rather than celebrating the career of one trombonist (although Svoboda's role in developing trombone repertoire has, of course, been seminal). This inclusivity is extended by the audio examples being recorded by both Svoboda and five of his former or current students, and a list of suggested repertoire in the appendix, which gives the name of the trombonist who premiered each work. Moreover, two of the commissioned etudes are in fact duos for two trombones, and several of the notated and audio examples require more than one trombonist. Perhaps this is partly a reflection of the group culture of brass playing, but it seems also to be a conscious decision to place the book on wide-reaching foundations, and to foster co-learning, and gives a pleasing impression of a snapshot of a lively scene to be expanded upon.

At several moments, the text takes the reader beyond contemporary trombone playing, e.g., experiments to add a second bell (so-called Duplex instruments), which began in the nineteenth century and continue today, and Mahler's introduction of relative and absolute dynamics to address the contradiction of high-effort but quiet sounds, which is relevant to

<sup>2</sup> Carlos Salzedo, *Modern Study of the Harp* (Milwaukee: Schirmer, 1921).

<sup>3</sup> Garth Knox, *Viola Spaces: Contemporary Viola Studies* (Mainz: Schott, 2009).

many contemporary techniques. Similarly, the role that jazz has played in the development of mutes and articulation is outlined. This historical and stylistic assimilation is another expansion that serves the text well.

The repertoire examples are well chosen; figurehead composers of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Stockhausen, Xenakis, Globokar, Dusapin, and others) appear alongside emerging composers such as Timothy McCormack and Paul Hübner, again giving an impression of a widely varied repertoire that is in flux. These examples expand upon the text at the right moments, providing key illustrations of the resulting sound and concrete notations. Svoboda and Roth are not afraid to point to notation issues, which is effective and informative. For example, Nicolaus A. Huber's graphic notation of the plunger mute's movements cannot be interpreted literally since the relation between the physical movement and the sound modulation is not linear (p. 91), Luciano Berio's requirement to produce an [o] vowel with the tongue can actually only be performed with a mute (p. 99), and there is an unfortunate omission of a bracket in Iannis Xenakis's *Keren* (p. 110). Similarly, the situation in the Berio *Sequenza*, where female trombonists must find a solution to sing the pitches outside the female vocal range is described in juxtaposition with McCormack's relative pitch indications to allow performers to sing within their range. These reminders of the imperfections of notation illustrate the ongoing and elusive search for 'best practice' and, without getting weighed down by a detailed discussion of notation, point to compromises and practical issues. Extracts from the commissioned etudes are also included in the illustrative examples, and this provides an interesting glimpse of each composer engaging in the task of expanding a particular technique, in terms of notation, sound or physical limits (e.g., Walter's pulsating combinations of multiphonics, p. 112, and Roth's ethereal highlighting of individual partials in muted tremoli, p. 87). Also very enjoyable are the extracts where Svoboda invents short exercises or improvises on a technique, for example the fragile exercise in fading the voice in and out of a tone (p. 104), the highly controlled parallel glissandi lip multiphonics (p. 111) and the charming improvisations on the techniques from Cage's *Solo for sliding trombone* (p. 130). All of these examples, often at the limits of technical possibility, serve to open the reader's imagination and suggest future experiments to composers and performers.

The multiphonics chapter describes an area where much research is ongoing; in particular,

the etude by Walter, *Composite sound glides*, expands the current boundaries by establishing lip multiphonics which are stable at half-valve position. The techniques, their notation and practice methods are well described, and there is a sense of excitement at new possibilities, especially in combination with the audio examples. I was aware that a physical description of what is happening in the instrument is missing from the text, and this is simply because research in physics is yet to catch up with these developments. I would have liked Svoboda and Roth to have mentioned this specifically and called for collaborative work and attention from physicists, as has been done in previous books (Bruno Bartolozzi's call for physical collaboration in *New Sounds for Woodwind*,<sup>4</sup> for example, surely laid the path for the discourse that resulted in the first physical explanation of woodwind multiphonics in 1976).<sup>5</sup> I would also have liked the contents of the chapter 'Special sound effects' to have been reallocated into other sections. Many books end with a chapter on 'miscellaneous/special/extended techniques' and I find that the terminology and the very notion of special effects seems to contradict the continuity and historical line of development that is so important to developing playing techniques, which is something that has, in general, been so well handled in this book.

In summary, this is a clear and informative book, that is rich with music examples and ambitious and wide-reaching in its scope. It establishes a trajectory for future research and should become a model for future practice.

Ellen Fallowfield

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Christian Wolff, *Occasional Pieces: Writings and Interviews, 1952–2013*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. £26.49

Christian Wolff's place in the story of American experimental music seems secure, but it rests rather flimsily on a handful of isolated images: the school-age composer as 'Orpheus in tennis sneakers', in Morton Feldman's phrase, the youngest member by far of the Cage-centred 'New York School' of the 1950s; the demanding

<sup>4</sup> Bruno, Bartolozzi, *New Sounds for Woodwind*, trans. Reginald Smith Brindle, 1st edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Benade, *Fundamentals of Musical Acoustics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 559–67.