



UPLOAD: 26 February 2017

Shared Meanings in the Film Music of Phillip Glass: Music, Multimedia and Postminimalism. By Tristian Evans. 240 pp. (Routledge, 2015, £62.99; ebook, £24.49. ISBN: 9781409433293).

THE sudden collapse of Ashgate Publishing in 2015 seems to have deterred the dissemination of its last titles. Even though Routledge stepped in quickly to acquire the imprint, this may be why so little critical attention has been given to Tristian Evans's *Shared Meanings in the Film Music of Philip Glass: Music, Multimedia and Postminimalism* (Ashgate 2015; Routledge, 2015). There is no other conceivable explanation. Evans's subject is certainly not unpopular or obscure. Glass is one of the best-known, most iconic composers of minimalist and postminimalist music. His music has accompanied many advertisements; he has either written music for, or had his music repurposed for a great number of films. He is so much a part of film iconography that he appeared as himself in *The Truman Show* and guested (in animation form) on *The Simpsons*. Yet Glass's film music has not been seriously and rigorously explored until *Shared Meanings*, an expansion and update of Evans's Ph.D. thesis at Bangor University. In fact, in university research slang, Glass's film music is a "sexy" topic.

Shared Meanings in the Film Music of Philip Glass provides a comprehensive examination of Glass's works in both concert and as film music. Evans presents a two-pronged approach to the subject: first, to understand the works in the context of its existence in the realm of minimalism, postminimalism, and postmodernism, as applicable to each work; second, to understand the works in terms of film meaning and intertextuality. Evans explains concepts developed for the study of film, multimedia (Nicholas Cook), minimalism (Rebecca Leydon's typology of minimalism), and postminimalism/postmodernism (Jonathan Kramer's work on postmodernism) and applies them to Glass's output and those of other contemporary repetitive minimalists, including Steve Reich and Terry Riley. In later chapters he explores the intertextuality of Glass's film music and concert music that was used in film, through the methods first introduced by his thesis supervisor, Pwyll ap Siôn, in his work on the British postminimalist and film composer Michael Nyman. Evans uses music analysis, mostly Schenkerian, to explore these features of Glass's intertextuality.

Though still in the first stages of his career, Evans has a good range of experience that he applies to *Shared Meanings*. He studied minimalist music since he was an undergraduate at Bangor University, and he assisted ap Siôn in mounting the first international conference on musical minimalism in 2007. He is a founding member of the Society for Musical Minimalism, launched at that conference. More important, Evans is a practicing pianist, skilled in the performance of minimalist music for piano, so that his theoretical work is grounded in practical experience.

While *Shared Meanings* reads best in chapter order, later chapters contain plenty of signposts leading to concepts raised in earlier chapters. The first three chapters establish some of Evans's primary definitions and methodological models, with examples from Glass's media work and those of others. In Chapter 1, Evans establishes the range of defining features of "postminimalism", a term which seems to have come first from John Rockwell in 1981, then onto variants of documentary postminimalism (subject "portraits" in the postminimalist style, plus music of this type paired with other media, followed by a short survey of Glass's film music. Evans begins Chapter 2 with Nicholas Cook's three basic models of multimedia, a flowchart of "yes/no" conformance between components of media, such as sound, visuals, and dialogue. He compares this to Deleuze's and Foucault's forms of mediation, and then depicts the use of these concepts through, first, a Volkswagen advertisement. "Night Driving," set to a reading of an extract of Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, read by Richard Burton, and second, a Ford Mondeo commercial called "Desire". In Chapter 3, Evans uses Rebecca Leydon's typology of minimalist tropes and Kramer's ideas on traits of unity in postmodern music, to examine music for film by Glass in his early work with Ravi Shankar and Reich. Having established these fundamental methodological models and their uses, Evans moves more closely to Glass's film music, applying Schenkerian analysis to recent film scores by Glass, beginning with Chapter 4. Following up Siôn, Evans provides an intertextual reading of the uses Glass puts to his music for different soundtracks in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 is an in-depth analytical portrait of Glass's soundtrack to the 1931 film *Dracula*. Evans presents this update, and arguably a completion, of the classic horror film by Tod Browning, which was originally released without a soundtrack, as a music drama more than an accompanying score. In Chapter 7 Evans focuses on three films: *Naqoyqatsi*, *Watchmen*, and *Book of Longing*. The conclusion reviews contexts and applications through two commercials.

Evans writes his story in clear, well-structured prose that is understandable to any educated reader, much as ap Siôn had done in his book, *The Music of Michael Nyman: Texts, Contexts, and Intertexts* (Ashgate, 2007). Although there are a number of musical examples (mostly Evans's own transcriptions), and some Schenkerian graphs in the analytical sections of later chapters, these act as proofs of the ideas rather than introducing the ideas themselves. Evans applies the methods and praxis of his sources, such as Leydon's typology and Kramer's postmodern unity, organically. However, when Evans moves into original analysis, as in his chapter on *Dracula*, the book becomes especially enlightening and enjoyable.

There are some small flaws in what is otherwise and fascinating and readable book. Occasionally Evans uses language, background argument, and recapitulates ideas in a way that betrays the book's origins as a Ph.D. thesis (and one chapter is an expanded conference paper), but this over-engineering does not really detract from his story. Evans's use of Cook's model of multimedia and Deleuze's mediation seems to be less practical and immediately enlightening than Leydon's typology (an under-rated and sometimes dismissed method of categorization as analysis) or Kramer's postmodernist criteria. In introducing Kramer's concepts, Evans fails to explain the differences between postminimalism and postmodernism adequately. However, he cannot be faulted in this, as no one else has explored the distinctions between these concepts adequately, either (the present writer included). Kramer's criteria for postmodernism are eminently adaptable to the description of postminimalism and other types of music in the experimental tradition, but the relationship between them lacks thorough unpacking. While his diversions into work by other minimalists provides context, in the case of

advertising, Evans compares Karl Jenkins with Reich in his chapter on postmodernism. This begs the question of where postminimalism ends and where vacuous New Age pop begins.

Shared Meanings in the Film Music of Philip Glass is definitely an academic research book, but it is an enjoyable one. It is far better written, better researched, and better structured than some recent books that have received critical attention, and Glass is a better subject than most. It is a good source on Glass's film music, and the first comprehensive study of this area of his music, both for the student of Glass and the educated listener. It should be more widely known.

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