larly those works, described in detail, that refer the reader to published modern editions. The decision to include a few scores in an appendix rather than in the text make reading the analysis a more difficult task than need be (only short examples are included in the text). Despite this, the reader comes away with the knowledge that Bembo was a master composer. The inclusion of the compact disc is especially helpful, and I would even say an integral part of the book’s success.

Fontijn’s book convincingly demonstrates that Bembo “made the most of her unusual circumstances by cultivating encomiastic song in praise of the French kingdom, by bringing into vital confrontation the Italian and French musical cultures with which she was intimately familiar, and by finding a suitable context in which to convey a particularly feminine perspective and powerful emotion” (p. 273). Thanks to Fontijn’s erudite, comprehensive, and fascinating book, it is no longer possible to ignore this remarkable composer.

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Music examples, indexes, bibliographical references, list of works.

In 2009, the Bibliothèque nationale de France will unseal containers of documents belonging and related to Nadia and Lili Boulanger that have been kept under wraps since the death of the former in 1979. Scholars of the two sisters’ lives and works are more than eager to discover the contents of those boxes, and it is perhaps with this interest in mind that Caroline Potter and Ashgate decided to publish Potter’s new book, Nadia and Lili Boulanger, late last year. Unfortunately for readers and scholars looking for new material or insights to tide them over until that momentous day in 2009, they will find little original work in this slight book save for some brief analyses of the sisters’ compositions.

Organized into six chapters, Potter’s book attempts to cover the lives of Nadia and Lili Boulanger, albeit briefly; the music both composed as part of their preparations for taking part in the Prix de Rome; Nadia Boulanger’s compositions; Lili Boulanger’s work after 1913, the year in which she won the Prix de Rome; Nadia Boulanger’s teaching methods; and the lasting reputations of each woman. There are also two appendices, providing catalogs of each composer’s works.

The downfalls of Potter’s book are its heavy reliance on previous biographies and books about the sisters, some of them of questionable repute; its lack of primary sources; and the level of analysis provided in the discussions of individual works. It also neglects a considerable amount of recent research on the Boulanger, including materials from the American Music Research Center/University of Colorado’s symposium on “Nadia Boulanger in America” (held in 2004), leading to a datedness in its approach.

In her chapter on Nadia and Lili’s lives, Potter draws primarily from Léonie Rosenstiel’s two books on the sisters (The Life and Works of Lili Boulanger [Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1978] and Nadia Boulanger: a Life in Music [New York: W. W. Norton, 1982]) and Jérôme Spycket’s paean to Nadia Boulanger (Nadia Boulanger [Lattes: Payot Lausanne, 1987]) and more recent book on Lili Boulanger (A la recherche de Lili Boulanger: essai biographique [Paris: Fayard, 2004]). While Potter does include some newly-translated quotations from Lili’s diaries, the result is a traditional account of Nadia’s and Lili’s upbringing and early music training, including time-honored anecdotes about the young Nadia’s initial dislike of music and Lili’s prodigal abilities. Although Potter makes a note of stating that her intention in this book is to focus on the musical connections between the two Boulanger composers rather than their lives, she omits a significant amount of biographical and contextual material that illuminates both Nadia’s and Lili’s musical works and professional spaces. She writes that the “gender issue cannot be avoided in any discussion of the sisters’ musical activities” (p. xi), but rarely discusses the atmosphere of the compositional or musical world they inhabited, offering only a few comments on the topic. It is a crucial omission, as the musical profession at the time of both Boulangers’ composition careers was one saturated with
debate and turmoil as to the proper position and privileges of women as professional musicians. The account is factual and straightforward, with little analysis of the important events in Lili’s or Nadia’s lives; again the lack of contextualization prevents readers from fully understanding the weight of countless life-shaping details. The coursework that both sisters underwent at the Paris Conservatoire and that influenced Nadia so heavily in her own teaching is only lightly discussed; the actual studies, repertoire, and musical philosophy taught there are not mentioned. Potter mentions briefly that both Boulangers frequently attended concerts of music by new and established composers, but leaves the reader wondering what they heard; she states that Nadia and Lili worked during World War I to forward letters and news to soldiers on the front, but aside from the mention that Lili was composing her opera La princesse Maleine, which deals with war, during this time, Potter does not provide any new understanding as to how the conflict and its effects on musical and daily life might have influenced the Boulangers.

What is somewhat useful in the biographical treatment of Lili and Nadia Boulanger is the inclusion of materials quoted from Lili’s diaries, housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and cited in Spycket’s A la recherche de Lili Boulanger. Although in recent years the idealized fantasy of Lili as the passive invalid has already deteriorated in favor of a more factual version in which the young composer is given her full due as an intelligent, often vivacious woman embracing both her professional and social lives, Potter’s inclusion of Lili’s own words assists in buttressing the more modern and accurate view. However, the diary entries Potter uses are rarely about Lili’s work, but instead are selections meant to illustrate her social activities and the state of her health, which was always in flux. Nadia’s diaries, too, are at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and including correlating entries from these would have provided readers with new information or insights into the thoughts and composition processes of both sisters. It is curious that her words were not included along with her sister’s.

In her further treatment of Nadia Boulanger’s life as a pedagogue and conductor, Potter recounts the familiar rosters of her students and those she famously did not accept into her classes; again she quotes heavily from Rosenstiel’s books and from interviews with Boulanger and her students previously published by Jeanice Brooks (“Noble et grande servante de la musique: Telling the Story of Nadia Boulanger’s Conducting Career,” Journal of Musicology 14, no. 1 [Winter 1996]: 92–116); Philip Glass (Writings on Glass, ed. Richard Kostelanetz [New York: Schirmer, 1997], 323), Bruno Montsaingeon (Made-moisielle: Entretiens avec Nadia Boulanger [Paris: Van de Velde, 1980]), and Andrea Olmstead (Conversations with Roger Sessions [Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987]). Potter claims that “surprisingly little is known about [Boulanger’s] approach to teaching and the content of her classes” (p. 127). This is an exceptionally erroneous statement, as detailed records of the materials Boulanger used, copies of exercises and assignments, and copious notes made by her students at various times are available at a number of archives, including the British Library, not far from the author’s home institution; at the Fondation internationale Nadia et Lili Boulanger; the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Lyon; and in the Nadia Boulanger Collection at the American Music Research Center, in addition to those held by Boulanger’s students and teaching assistants Emile Naoumoff and Robert Levin. The lack of analysis and contextualization that marred the earlier chapter on Nadia and Lili’s early lives and careers is also present in these considerations of Nadia’s later work. Much of the chapter discussing the legacies of the sisters is a recapitulation of the introductory biographical material, and is largely comprised of broad, general statements that, while widely accepted, are nonetheless not supported by any new research or enlightening commentary.

The chapters dealing with Nadia and Lili’s music are a little less problematic than the biographical sections, but are far from the “full analysis of the Boulanger sisters’ musical styles,” that the book claims. Potter covers works by both sisters in chronological order, offering some brief background on the circumstances under which each work was written and the state of its final version; several works are unfinished, especially in the case of Lili’s oeuvre.
The analysis itself is useful for novice readers or performers of the sisters' music, providing basic information on the structural forms and harmonic language of select pieces, but is mostly too superficial to be of use to more advanced students or scholars. There are about eighty music examples to help illustrate Potter’s comments on scoring, tonality, texture, and text-setting. Potter is interested in the question of influence in the Boulangers’ works, frequently citing harmonies and sequences reminiscent of Debussy and Fauré, and examines the sketches for the Nadia Boulanger-Raoul Pugno co-composed opera La ville mort with an eye towards identifying the ways the two worked together, but in the end declares that “[q]uestions about the nature of the collaboration between Boulanger and Pugno are fascinating, but perhaps ultimately unanswerable” (p. 67). She leaves readers with some tantalizing hints about their 1909 song cycle Les heures claires, but there is little investigation of the relative contributions by each composer other than an account of whose handwriting is present in Nadia’s notebooks.

Too often Potter doubts herself in her analysis; writing of La ville mort, she writes that because she is basing her final analysis on handwriting in manuscripts (rather than an in-depth musical examination, which would be expected), she cannot be sure what to believe: “These Debussy connections initially led me to believe that Nadia Boulanger would have played the principal role in the composition of the opera. I felt it was unlikely that Pugno, a composer working in the conservative genres of the opera-comique, ballet, and character piano piece, would be absorbing the influence of such a revolutionary figure at this late stage in his career. However, if the manuscripts available for study are any guide, it is not possible to distinguish between the composers’ styles, and both Pugno and Boulanger are responsible for obviously Debussian passages” (p. 82). Potter goes on to claim that the “contrast between the sisters’ compositional careers is best demonstrated by their musical responses to war,” but then shies away from further elaboration, writing only that Lili’s work Pour les funérailles d’un soldat was premiered during the war and that Nadia’s response to the conflict was a song set to her own “embarrassingly bad text” (p. 88). It would have been fascinating to have read more about how Potter views the music as individual responses from the Boulangers, or how the text-setting is accomplished, or anything even remotely more substantive than the scant three paragraphs she devotes to discussing this contrast.

What ultimately makes Nadia and Lili Boulanger disappointing is the fact that, with the use of primary sources, more sophisticated analysis and greater contextualization of the issues and topics considered, it could have been a much better resource. Perhaps time constraints or a lack of funding forced Potter to settle with the material presented in the finished book; the topic and attempted goals, in a more thorough treatment, would certainly make a revised or second edition a welcome addition to the literature.

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**FILM MUSIC**


As a long-time reader of Fanfare, I was saddened when Royal S. Brown announced that he would cease contributing to the bi-monthly magazine in 2001. Brown’s column “Film Musings” was always the first to which I faithfully turned when each new issue arrived in the mail. Here was a perceptive writer of not just concert music (for which he provided many reviews over the years) but also music used in film; a writer whose style was accessible and yet at the same time brimmed with intellectual substance. What I particularly appreciated in Brown’s columns was his no-nonsense, call-them-as-I-hear-’em approach to his reviews. For instance, like many reviewers, he had