

Webb himself. Available in softcover only, the book is attractively priced at around U.S. \$20.

One would expect to find somewhere in the book a thumbnail biography of Webb, but none exists. Nor is there much of anything about him on the web aside from a few basic facts: he was born in England, studied music in Cambridge and London, and now lives in Respighi's home town of Bologna, where he works in association with various Italian publishers, record companies, and universities. (This Michael Webb, incidentally, is not to be confused with the ethnomusicologist Michael Webb teaching at the University of Sydney in Australia, nor with eponymous British or American songwriters.)

So, a definitive, full-length, scholarly, English-language volume about Respighi still awaits publication. In the meantime, Webb has given us a lively, well-ordered narrative of Respighi's life. However, there are frequent, sometimes considerable tracts of time unaccounted for. Future scholars will certainly need to incorporate Webb's research into their own, but there is still much work to be done on the life, times, and music of Respighi. Those considering a doctorate in musicology, are you paying attention? **Robert Markow**

SOPHIE LACAZE: *Portrait of a Composer*. Dialogues with Geneviève Mathon, translated by Valérie Vivancos. France: Éditions Delatour, 2021. 160 pp. 21 illustrations. \$18.84

It is hardly a revelation to state that dialogue and interview can lead to insight: but when the "interviewer," Geneviève Mathon is herself a respected authority, the results can truly illuminate. Such is the case here, with French composer Sophie Lacaze in dialogue with musicologist Geneviève Mathon, a professor at Paris-Est, Marne-la-Vallée University who specializes in 20th-century and contemporary music.

Born in Lourdes in 1963, Sophie Lacaze studied at the Conservatoire National de Région de Toulouse and the École Normale in Paris; later, her teachers included Philippe Manoury and Franco Donatoni, while she worked in music theater with Georges Aperghis and attended courses by Pierre Boulez. Those names should give some idea of Lacaze's music at least on a philosophical level, given the level of uncompromising expression amongst those names. She is a multiple prize-winner, including the Claude Arrieu Prize from SACEM (the French the French copyright collection agency, the equivalent of the MCPS/PRS Alliance in the UK and ASCAP in the United States).

The dialogues themselves take up only approximately half of the book. The balance comprises appendices of selected texts (Rimbaud, Jean-Pierre Rosnay, Henry Kendall, Alin Carré, Apollinaire, Hildegard von Bingen), an analysis by the composer of her string quartet work *Het Lam Gods* (inspired by the altarpiece by Hubert and Jan van Eyck), an analysis by Mathon of *The Four Elements* (a concerto for flute, children's choir, and percussion), a glossary of technical terms (which is fine except it completely swerves a definition of Spectral music by simply calling it an "aesthetic trend"), a selective catalog of works in chronological order, a discography, a webography, and a bibliography. The 21 photo plates (17 in color) separate the dialogues from the appendices.

The dialogues themselves are separated into the following five chapters: "At the beginning"; "Instrumentality"; "Vocality"; "The composer and the city"; "The meaning of music." Such is the intensity of the dialogue between Lacaze and Mathon that there is far more information within around 80 pages than one might reasonably expect. The sense of fertile dialogue, of an exchange of ideas, yet with the focus always on Lacaze, is skillfully managed. There is much detail, but Lacaze emerges as someone who cares about the environment, is deeply enriched by the world we live in, holds a profound spirituality, and who is also very aware of the nature of her legacy and the ongoing function of music in peoples' lives via her work with school children.

From her formative years in Toulouse, we learn that poetry predated music for her, setting the stage for her fascination with text, words, and speech. This earliest chapter also introduces Geneviève Mathon, and more explicitly the poetic nature of her questions. This is a meeting of friends involved in the sheer passion of intellectual debate around music, and specifically Lacaze's music. And it is that palpable connection (it shines through between the spaces, between the lines) that elevates this book above the norm. We hear about formative events, such as Lacaze's meeting with Tortelier and Donatoni and her exposure to Aperghis ("Music is an art of time," says Lacaze; "Georges Aperghis had managed to control it for one hour.... I found this remarkable" (p. 19); the

piece in question was Aperghis's *Sextuor*). Other composers we find to be important to her are Bartók (because of his formal perfection), and later in the book Lacaze pays great homage to Erik Satie (whose *Vexations* forms the single notated music example in the interview section of the book).

The term "Instrumentality" brings in her predilection for the flute (including the remarkable "circle flute") but also her inclusion of the didgeridoo; but this chapter is wider, too, including the idea of "ecological music," plus a consideration of how acoustic and electronic musics influence one another. Next is "Vocality": vocal music makes up a substantial part of Lacaze's output. Her way with words includes setting out for the text to be deliberately unintelligible. But also there is the music of poetry, and of read poems, an appreciation forged by her experiences at the Club des Poètes in Paris; particularly via Jean-Pierre and Marcelle Rosnay. From Parisian clubs to the music of the planets in *Je vais passer l'ange* (2017), a work that is inspired by the sounds of the electromagnetic waves of the Earth, Neptune, and the rings of Uranus.

When it comes to "The Composer and the City," politics meets the cause of female composers (with some shocking statistics: 40 percent of European composers are female, but less than 2 percent of works programmed in European festivals are by women). There is also a consideration of how Lacaze works in her workshops, including asking people to compose a piece of music on one note, then giving examples of this via the first piece of Ligeti's *Musica Ricercata* and Berio's *Monotone*.

Finally, "Meaning in Music," a wide-ranging discussion that takes in a vast field of reference, lighting finally on ritual, dance, and possible Divine origins of music. Referring to the meaning of music to the Aborigines, she says music is "mystical, and poetic." "Mystical" and "poetic," then, become the final two words of the dialogues. An utterly fitting end, encapsulating two core traits of Lacaze's output.

Much of the research into this review in terms of Lacaze's own music had to be undertaken via YouTube: ArkivMusic lists but one compact disc (*Works with Flutes* on the Solal label) while *Fanfare* boasts a review of one small piece, *Histoire sans paroles* of 2002 for piano trio on an Aparté disc called *Accents*, reviewed as recently as *Fanfare* 44:6. The discography included in this book is far more extensive and includes discs from Australia (where the composer spent significant time, both in duration and impact on her work) and Romania, which may therefore be difficult to source. The book also includes a satisfyingly long "Selective Work List" with instrumentation, duration, and details of premiere for each piece. There is a Webography (but YouTube curiously does not feature at all) and a short but relevant Bibliography (always a good sign when I end up wanting to read every entry in a bibliography).

Lacaze's own website is extensive and clearly up to date: it lists the world premiere of the piano piece *Vers les étoiles* (Towards the stars) to be performed by François Dumont in Montpellier the day after this very review is being written. The website therefore functions as an invaluable adjunct to the present volume. Plus, the works listed on the website have extensive samples available.

If you do hop over to YouTube, try the phenomenally effective performance of *O Sapientia* (2013, after texts by Hildegard of Bingen) in the Cathédrale Saint Michel de Carcassonne, France, on 5/8/2014 featuring the astonishingly pure (and accurate) voices of Els Janssens-Vanmuster, Céline Boucard, Anne Delafosse, and Hélène Richter. There, one gets an idea of the sheer timelessness of Lacaze's music, cradled within a Modernist vocabulary. There is also more than one performance of the solo flute *Voyelles* (1993, and only the second work listed in the chronological selective work list). In *Voyelles*, the performer has to speak as well as negotiate a tricky solo part). There is also a performance of *And then there the sun in the sky* (2002, for flute, didgeridoo, and flute orchestra), extracts from her chamber orchestra of 2004 *Dreaming* (for two female singers, reciter, didgeridoo, flute, viola, percussion, and "fixed sounds"). I mention these pieces specifically as they are all mentioned in the text; as is *Het Lam Gots II* (2008, performed by l'Orchestre de Flûtes Française, l'OFF), this last particularly important because it is an offshoot of *Het Lam Gots* (2007), the piece for string quartet featured in the extensive analysis by the composer herself in Appendix 2.

This is a keenly observed window into the endlessly fertile mind of a brilliant composer whose music is fully deserving of greater currency. Interested readers should not hesitate. **Colin Clarke**