

of an MTV-era pop icon rather than Michael Jackson. *The Lady Swings* tells a story not many have heard. It honors one woman's significant contribution to jazz drumming. Most importantly, it presents a woman's voice and point of view in the history of a male-dominated genre on a masculine-coded instrument. Moreover so, I end my review with the same last sentence that Dodgion used to conclude her book: "who could ask for anything more?" (241).

Mandy Smith is the director of education at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. She oversees all pre-kindergarten through college onsite and online learning as well as The Garage, the Rock Hall's interactive musical instrument exhibit. She earned her PhD in musicology from Case Western Reserve University, her MA in musicology from California State University, Long Beach, and a BA in the history of Rock & Roll Music from Indiana University. Smith has drummed in punk, metal, alternative, and progressive rock bands for nearly 30 years.

Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski

By Amy C. Beal. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2022.

Denise Von Glahn

College of Music, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, USA

Email: dvonglahn@fsu.edu

doi:10.1017/S1752196323000457

Terrible Freedom: The Life and Work of Lucia Dlugoszewski is Amy C. Beal's third and most fully developed study to date of a little-known artistic polymath who she coaxes into the light. Her earlier books on Carla Bley (2011) and Johanna Beyer (2015) reveal a scholar with insatiable curiosity and unassailable integrity who is drawn to look beyond the pin spot and locate those figures in the shadows.¹ All three books show Beal to be unflinching and even-handed in her treatment of subjects whose personal stories could invite easy rants about being relegated to footnotes and margins in the best of cases, and systematic historiographic practices of silencing or exclusion. She is able to stand back, however, and consider the potential complicity of her subjects in their situations, not with the intention of minimizing the real obstacles regularly encountered by women who dared to be extraordinarily gifted and accomplished, but with a scholar's commitment to weighing all the evidence and evaluating multiple explanations for how things play out. To do less would be to deny women the agency they exercised.

In the case of the once applauded but more recently disappeared Lucia Dlugoszewski, Beal wonders whether the composer "may have sabotaged her own reputation by insisting on portraying herself as a neglected, excluded figure" (164). Was she complicit in the creation of the myth of her isolation? Or did Dlugoszewski presciently anticipate historiographical neglect and exclusion yet to come? In 2022, it is hard not to consider her neglected and excluded, because she does not appear in accounts of the era, including any biographies of John Cage. Plentiful evidence exists, however, detailing her participation in multiple arenas of New York's mid-twentieth-century modernist scene. A "Selected Works List" that includes 142 pieces for piano, numerous solo instruments, variously sized ensembles, and theater and film scores suggest the range of Dlugoszewski's productivity and involvements. Her fascination with the timbral qualities of sound and her exploration of their possibilities are evident in hundreds of invented percussion instruments, which were regularly noted in reviews. The enthusiastic support of figures as diverse as composer-critic Virgil Thomson and Yale's Sterling Professor of Philosophy and Law F. S. C. Northrop also speaks of Dlugoszewski's serious reception. Although Beal confronts head-on the gendered politics of U.S. music culture and acknowledges that outrage is a reasonable

¹Amy C. Beal, *Carla Bley* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Amy C. Beal, *Johanna Beyer* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

response to that reality, she goes beyond gut reactions and brings a finely tuned arsenal of scholarly and temperamental tools to her study of Dlugoszewski. Beal champions a figure whose work she believes matters and deserves to be known. In the process of introducing twenty-first century readers to a composer who should need no introduction, Beal exposes the complex workings of twentieth-century U.S. music culture in New York City's larger interdependent arts scene, and the ways that history has been selectively shaped, told, recorded, and taught. Dlugoszewski's visible presence in mid-century New York avant-garde arts circles and her regular interactions with marquee figures did not guarantee her place at history's table. We learn that lived realities and historical records are not necessarily the same.

Beal's chronological study invites readers to experience Dlugoszewski and the activities and relationships that sustained and challenged her as they unfolded over her 75 years (1925–2000). Individual chapters focus on specific periods of time, sometimes as long as 23 years (1925–48), describing her family life and youth in Detroit. Others are as short as 2- to 3-years (1949–51 or 1950–53), detailing when Dlugoszewski arrives and establishes herself in New York and meets Erick Hawkins (1909–94). Their fraught but mutually stimulating relationship that included marriage would last until Hawkins's death and even beyond, when Dlugoszewski assumed artistic and choreographic control of his eponymous dance company. Occasional chronological switchbacks within individual chapters do not undermine a reader's understanding of the general arc of Dlugoszewski's life, interests, or accomplishments, although they can be momentarily confusing. In truth, they often reflect the vagaries of undated documents within Dlugoszewski's papers and the needs of Beal's larger narrative design.

Beal introduces Dlugoszewski as an outgoing, intense young girl: The only child of Chester (Czesio) and Jennie (Jolas), Polish immigrants living in Detroit, who fed "Lucille's" self-confidence (and her appetite for Polish delicacies) and in return guaranteed that she remained their devoted daughter. According to Dlugoszewski, their nurture of her many talents and focus on her success meant she "had to be a prodigy" (14), and she delivered. She excelled in school and then took her habit of achievement to New York where she developed close relationships with John Cage and Edgard Varèse, who were among her most famous early supporters. She grew to idolize Varèse whose focus on sound as its own material and timbre became foundational to her own aesthetic philosophy. As Varèse "dreamt of instruments obedient to my thoughts," a young Dlugoszewski also challenged the limitations of an instrument she "increasingly considered an "anachronism" in notes that she titled "piano insights" (65). She was determined to explore the piano's expressive potential, especially its registers. By performing with dance-like theatrical gestures directly on the strings of her "timbre piano," she became famous for a softer, gentler, more poetic interaction with the instrument than the more aggressive, dominantly percussive one often associated with Cage.

Dlugoszewski's ministrations of her aging parents continued well into her middle years. The physical, psychological, and emotional displacements of months-long caregiving trips to the Midwest severely compromised the freedom of the then successful composer, poet, and philosopher, often at crucial moments. Despite the familial and professional demands that vied for her energies, however, Michael Silverton would write in *Fanfare Magazine* that "Lucia Dlugoszewski's genius is at once iron-clad and endlessly poetic" (155). Beal's study thus raises the questions: How is it that history has forgotten this iron-clad poetic genius? Is there room for only a handful of cultural exemplars, and always the same ones? Did longstanding professional rivalries between Erick Hawkins and Merce Cunningham, and Cunningham's partnership with the media-savvy Cage, mean that Dlugoszewski's access to the historical record was impaired by association?

In his book jacket encomium for Beal's study of Johanna Beyer (2015), Kyle Gann characterized the author's "detailed and touchingly intimate" record of Beyer as nothing short of "a musicological miracle." The same can be said of Beal's work excavating Dlugoszewski's life. Beal mines over a dozen collections of archival documents. She explains that still more materials surfaced after they could be incorporated in the present volume and encourages readers to seek them out. Voluminous evidence provides grounding and color for Beal's story: References include hundreds of letters written over

decades to and from parents, celebrated artists, composers, dancers, poets, theatrical personnel, and philosophers; and recital and concert programs detailing performances of Dlugoszewski's free-standing works and pieces written for the Erick Hawkins Dance Company for which she composed sixteen pieces. Beal points to Dlugoszewski's innovative graphic scores that show her unique concept of a "Curtain of Timbre" that were not included in major retrospectives of untraditional notational practices—most notably in John Cage's *Notations* of 1969 and Theresa Sauer's *Notations* 21 of 2009; and photographs capturing Dlugoszewski from childhood to elegant performing professional. Her seamless tale and my own slack-jawed wonder at why I did not know about this extraordinary woman kept me turning pages.

Not discounting a 1991 DMA performance project by Edward Stanley Bach that discusses Dlugoszewski's works among five contemporary composers, and a 2011 DMA thesis by Kevin D. Lewis that focuses on Dlugoszewski's invented instruments and percussion music (which Beal cites multiple times), *Terrible Freedom* is the reference for all things of Dlugoszewski.² With a seasoned scholar's appreciation of the complexities of writing biography, Beal interrogates Dlugoszewski's life more than her music as a first step toward re-placing Lucia Dlugoszewski in the network of the New York School of modernist artistic culture that she inhabited. Whether listing courses that Dlugoszewski took at Wayne State, or composers whose works were played on various programs, or performers who participated in different ensembles, or members of Hawkins's company, Beal provides names, places, and pieces with a comprehensiveness and at a pace that can be overwhelming and unsteady at times, although a little dizziness is worth the information. Appendices that itemize Dlugoszewski's compositions, her collaborations with Hawkins, and the most up-to-date discography suggest additional materials for consideration. Dense with details, the book becomes a one-stop shop for scholars pursuing insight into a woman Beal describes as living an "elusively dangerous, exquisite [ly] precarious" life (165).

As with the best scholarship, Beal's study of Dlugoszewski raises questions that resonate far beyond her subject. How do we correct historiographic practices predicated on exclusion, portraits that flatten out multi-textured realities, habits of thinking anchored in unexplored and possibly unrecognized assumptions and agendas, and reductionist, simplified storytelling and textbook-style surveys that promote and perpetuate false linearities and pantheon-istic thinking? Additional studies of Dlugoszewski's music, poetry, and philosophical writings are still to be written, but Beal has whetted the appetites of a wide audience that includes specialist and general readers across artistic disciplines. It is hard not to feel deeply grateful for the work she has done on behalf of Dlugoszewski and for all of us.

Denise Von Glahn is professor of musicology at Florida State University. She has written two biographies: *Leo Ornstein: Modernist Dilemmas, Personal Choices* (2007) with Michael Broyles, which won the Irving S. Lowens Award from the Society for American Music, and *Libby Larsen: Composing an American Life* (2017). Her other books include, *The Sounds of Place: Music and the American Cultural Landscape* (2003), which won an ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award, and *Music and the Skillful Listener: American Women Compose the Natural World* (2013), which won the Pauline Alderman Award from the International Alliance for Women in Music. In summer 2023 her newest book, *Circle of Winners: How the Guggenheim Foundation Composition Awards Shaped American Music Culture*, was published by the University of Illinois Press.

²Edward Stanley Bach, "A Performance Project on Selected Works of Five Contemporary Composers: Malcolm Arnold, Robert Henderson, Stan Friedman, John Elmsley, Lucia Dlugoszewski" (D.M.A. diss., University of British Columbia, 1991); Kevin D. Lewis, "'The Miracle of Unintelligibility': The Music and Invented Instruments of Lucia Dlugoszewski" (D.M.A. diss., University of Cincinnati, 2011).