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- Music and Society
- John Cage Interview
- Scores, Books, Magazines, Records and Reports
- Howard Riley
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EDITOR
Keith Potter

ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Hilary Bracefield
David Roberts
John Shepherd

EDITORIAL ADDRESS
Keith Potter
Department of Music
University of London
Goldsmiths' College
New Cross
London SE14 6NW

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Please note the following new list of editors' addresses:

EDITORIAL ADDRESS for all contributions, material for review, etc.: Keith Potter, Department of Music, University of London Goldsmiths' College, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW

BUSINESS ADDRESS for subscriptions and back numbers: Mrs Hilary Bracefield, Department of Music, The Northern Ireland Polytechnic, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, BT37 0QB, Northern Ireland

ADVERTISING ADDRESS for rates and other information regarding advertising: John Shepherd, Institute of Advanced Studies, Manchester Polytechnic, Hilton House, Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 2FE

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Music and Society-1

'Serious' Music — an 'A-social' Phenomenon?

THIS ARTICLE IS THE FIRST of a series in which authors with different backgrounds and outlooks will examine the complex web of relationships that exists in the modern world between 'music' and 'society'. This series cannot, of course, hope to be comprehensive. It will therefore seek to highlight some of the more interesting areas with a view to instigating further thought and discussion.

Although it is not universally the case, there has been an unmistakable tendency in the modern world to think of 'serious' music (and, consequently, the entire musical process) as an 'a-social' phenomenon. It therefore seems appropriate that the first article in a series which stresses the social nature of music should examine this attitude and seek out some of the reasons for its existence. As a result, it will also be possible to gain some insight into the reasons for the many different types of music that exist in society today (I am thinking here of 'serious' music, 'jazz' and 'rock' and the many other kinds of music to be found within these rather unsatisfactory categories).

Surface reasons for the scant attention given to the sociology of *music* (as opposed to the sociology of musical life) are not hard to find. Few sociologists are competent in music, and those that are find music problematic in terms of existing modes of social and symbolic analysis. Musicologists, on the other hand, repelled by unending waves of pseudo-scientific jargon, have decided, perhaps wisely, that the area should be left well alone. But reasons for the area's neglect go deeper than sociologists' lack of musical knowledge, or musicians' healthy scepticism for social 'science'. Evidence for this assertion is to be found in the undoubted link which exists between the sociology and the aesthetics of music. For if musical style is understood to reflect its 'social background' in some way, and if it is accepted that style has something to do with our aesthetic response, then the question of musical significance must be faced in order to understand fully the relationship between 'music' and 'society'. Conversely, any serious consideration of musical aesthetics inevitably brings one face to face with the necessity of sociological analysis.^{1*} The ultimate suggestion, therefore, is that the sociology of music has consistently been avoided as an area of academic enquiry because it contains within itself one of the more intransigent epistemological problems confronting modern scholarship. This problem may best be summarised by asking: how can we know that music has significance?

Insights into this problem and its causes may only be gained by considering areas of thought traditionally foreign to musicology. Some of the ideas in this article might therefore seem strange, difficult to grasp and at times unconventional. They are not, however, put forward with the purpose of confusing the reader, but in a genuine attempt to highlight for future discussion a central but neglected area of the discipline, namely, the theory underlying musical criticism.

The first idea to be put forward is that the knowledge or commonly shared reality of a group or society is *constructed* by its members. This idea is central to the sociology of knowledge, and has been argued with great lucidity elsewhere.² All that will be done here, therefore, is to indicate briefly the core of the idea by reference to the role played by words (man's most important symbolic mode) in the construction of social reality.

As any reference to *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* will illustrate, words are created by individual people to cope with the many varied situations in which they find themselves. But once a word has been created in such a situation, it retrospectively colours it. When people look back at events, they do so by means of and through the words created to define them. Furthermore, new words may be used in other situations. Since the words are not specifically created for these other situations, they bring to them meanings which although not necessarily 'irrelevant' or 'wrong' are obviously coloured by previous usage. The reverse is equally true, for new situations modify the meanings of the already existing words used to denote such situations. To summarise: situations, meanings, words — and indeed all symbols — have a mutually interdependent, but not determinant, relationship crucial to the dynamics of the social process.

Words, of course, are not created merely to denote situations and meanings, but also to communicate those situations and meanings to other people. The world we live in has meaning for us because we

*Notes at end of article.

linguistically — and thus symbolically — mediate the events that take place in it with those other people. Reality — often conceived as an objective fact which cannot be changed by people, only misconstrued — is constructed by people through the mutual agreement by words and other symbols on experiences they undergo. This process is clarified by Walter J. Ong:

“world-view” is an elusive term, but when we speak of someone’s world-view in any sense, we do not simply mean the world impressing itself upon his passive receptors, sensory or intellectual. A person does not receive a world-view, but rather takes or adopts one. A world-view is not a datum, a *donne*, but something the individual himself, and the culture he shares partly constructs; it is the person’s way of organising from within himself the data of actuality coming from without and within.³

The social process is therefore a symbolic process. That is to say, collective outlooks on the world, and the commonly agreed meanings essential to those outlooks, are created and maintained in and through people’s symbolic utterances. Every perception made and every symbol uttered is done so as a contribution to and in the context of the symbolically mediated reality peculiar to any group or society.

The second idea is that the form or structure any particular outlook on the world adopts will be influenced to a very high degree by the media predominant in its construction. It is perhaps easier to understand that the form a reality takes depends to some extent on the way that a society’s symbols categorise and denote what we might *imagine* to be a previously undifferentiated world. Many people have the experience of trying to understand, even in closely related European languages, words for which there are no direct equivalents in English. A true understanding of these words involves a change in their outlook on the world, however slight. What is being suggested here, on the other hand, is rather different. That is, that the way people communicate in constructing their reality (whether the face-to-face oral-aural situation of spoken discourse, the visibility of handwriting and typography, or the aural-visual immediacy of electronic forms of communication) affects their outlook on the world at a very deep level. It is not so much what is conveyed that is important, but how it is conveyed. This idea has, of course, received its most ‘notorious’ formulation at the hands of Marshall McLuhan. It is worth noting, however, that the idea was simultaneously put forward by other writers in more accessible forms.⁴

In view of these first two ideas, it is possible to put forward a third. On the one hand, the outlook of pre-literate man is, by definition, mediated almost totally in an oral-aural and face-to-face situation. On the other, although music is now mediated to a large extent through visual notation, it is still an essentially ‘oral-aural’ phenomenon. Furthermore, music seems to possess an immediacy and ‘power’ not totally dissimilar to that experienced in face-to-face situations. Since modern industrial man’s outlook is mediated to a very high degree through vision (that is, through the written and above all the printed word), it seems reasonable to speculate that pre-literate man’s world-view is inherently more suited to an understanding of music than industrial man’s.

To some people, this idea may seem to verge on the ridiculous. Our whole upbringing has led us to believe that modern Western society is the most advanced form of civilisation that has ever existed, and that pre-literate or ‘primitive’ man lives in a world which is vastly inferior. Social anthropology has, over the last century, thankfully led us away from such an ethnocentric position, and it appears more than likely that pre-literate societies are, in their own way, as ‘mature’, as developed and as ‘complex’ as industrial society. This being the case, it does not seem so ridiculous to look at some of the features of pre-literate man’s outlook on the world, and see if we can learn anything from them as regards the musical process.

Firstly, however, it needs to be established that the question of musical significance is problematic for Western man. On the surface, this would seem to be so. For although many theories for the significance of music have been put forward, none has met with unqualified agreement. Moreover, while the statement that a representational painting or a piece of writing conveys a certain meaning or significance is likely to go unchallenged (providing, of course, that the statement represents a ‘correct’ indication of the pertinent content), the statement that a piece of music conveys a certain significance is more likely to meet with discussion — often heated. To put it more abstractly: music, unlike pictures and words, has no referents in the world of objects and ideas.

This problem seems to centre on the one hand round a distinction between form and content, and on the other round a distinction between physical and mental, outer and inner, and (by implication) non-human and human. The problem is well known and may be summarised as follows. Music has no obvious ‘content’. Because of this ‘lack’, it seems unlikely that music refers to anything outside itself. Consequently, the significance of a piece of music must thus be sought in its internal structure. However, a strict interpretation of this position itself becomes problematic, as Leonard B. Meyer indicates:

The absolutists have contended that the meaning of music lies specifically, and some would assert exclusively, in the musical processes themselves. For them musical meaning is non-designative. But in what sense these processes are meaningful . . . they have been unable to state with either clarity or precision . . .⁵

Susanne Langer has put it this way: the absolutists ‘seem to feel that if musical structures should really be found to have significance, to relate to anything beyond themselves, those structures would forthwith cease to be musical.’⁶

Both Langer and Meyer have tried to get round this conundrum by assigning significance in music to 'psychological laws of "rightness"'⁷ or 'psychological constants'.⁸ Broadly speaking, what they seem to be suggesting is that since all music originates in the human mind, and since all minds are assumed to possess similar psychological characteristics, it is taken that there will be a certain conformity of patterning or structure between all music and all minds. Consequently, all minds are presumed to be suitably predisposed for the 'superimposition' of the particular structure that constitutes a piece of music. Music has meaning, in other words, because that meaning already has potential existence within the human mind.

The approach of both Langer and Meyer remains problematic, however. Briefly, Langer suggests that, unlike the written word, music expresses that which is essentially unutterable. But although her approach is undoubtedly of some insight, it ignores the fact that much analysis of tonal music successfully parallels the aesthetic experience. Meyer, for example, has been able to generalise in a most convincing manner about the way in which tonality works. Yet even he admits that analysis cannot reveal the psychological constants that he believes to be the ultimate source of musical meaning.⁹

There are two logical possibilities here, of course. Either Langer is right, and music genuinely does express that which is *ultimately* unutterable, or both authors are mistaken in their views on the significance of music. On balance, the latter possibility seems more likely. For although both Langer and Meyer assign music some significance or 'content' over and above music's 'mere existence' as form, that significance is restricted to the inner and mental worlds. And since the form and content distinction is closely related to that between inner and outer, and mental and physical (that is, content involves the notion of something *outside* the form of a symbol to which that symbol refers), it would seem that the inability to transcend this latter, inner-outer, distinction would almost necessarily involve an inability truly to transcend that between form and content. Langer appears to be implicitly conscious of this possible deficiency in her theory when she assigns a lower 'rational priority' to music, and thereby adopts a position perilously close to that of the absolutists:

Music is a limited idiom, like an artificial language, only even less successful; *for music at its highest, though clearly a symbolic form, is an unconsummated symbol*. Articulation is its life, but not assertion; expressiveness, not expression. The actual function of meaning, which calls for permanent contents, is not fulfilled; . . .¹⁰

But it still remains to be firmly established that Langer and Meyer do in fact fail properly to transcend the inner and outer, and mental and physical distinction. It could, for example, be argued that because music refers outside itself to psychological constants, the distinction is no longer problematic. However, as a symbol may only have meaning because it has a content outside itself, so a thought or feeling might only exist because it too has some 'content' located in the outside world. More specifically, there exists an equivalence between the inner-outer distinction as it applies to both symbols and consciousness: a symbol may only refer outside itself to something because a thought (itself having the same external referent) gave that symbol its meaning; conversely, a thought may only exist because it possesses an external referent implanted by a symbol (itself having the same external referent).

Now although there is little doubt that people possess deep-seated desires which are genetically programmed, there is equally little doubt that a high proportion of the way we relate to the world results from symbolic interaction with other people (who, as far as each of us is concerned, exist 'out there' in 'objective reality'). If, therefore, it is maintained that there is no need to transcend the inner-outer distinction as it applies to the mind (because all psychological constants or psychological laws of rightness are genetically programmed, thereby making reference to the outside world unnecessary), then that is something the aesthetician or music theorist needs to argue explicitly. Symptomatically, Langer appears to doubt, as does Meyer, 'that the explanation of musical practice needs to be pushed back this far'.¹¹ The question of musical significance, in other words, remains problematic.

It is extremely interesting that pre-literate man does not seem to place very much importance on the distinctions around which the discussion of musical aesthetics in the modern world revolves. First of all, the distinction between physical and mental, outer and inner, non-human and human in such societies is weak, as Mary Douglas points out:

In all the cosmologies mentioned so far, the lot of individual humans is thought to be affected by power inhering in themselves or in other humans. The cosmos is turned in, as it were, on man. Its transforming energy is threaded on to the lives of individuals so that nothing happens in the way of storms, sickness, blights or droughts except in virtue of these personal links. So the universe is man-centred in the sense that it must be interpreted by reference to humans.¹²

Concomitantly, little distinction is made between symbol and meaning, or form and content. Words in pre-literate societies 'become icons, they do not represent things, they are themselves things'.¹³ J. C. Carothers illustrates this phenomenon by reference to his non-literate son:

Some years ago my little son said: "Is there a word 'pirates', Daddy?" When I replied in the affirmative, he asked "Are there pirates?" I said, "No, not now, there used to be." He asked, "Is there a word 'pirates' now?" When I said, "Yes", he replied, "Then there must be pirates now". This conversation, which might have come straight from Parmenides' doctrine of twenty-four centuries earlier, is a reminder that, for a child, a thing exists by virtue of its name; that the spoken or even imagined word must connote something in the outer world.¹⁴

Whereas we, in industrial society, focus on the 'hard informational content' that can be distilled from a message, and relegate the form or media to a position of neutral insignificance, pre-literate man senses the word as efficacious in *all* its aspects. For him, the word has a power and immediacy we find hard to understand. The following passage from a Papago Indian's autobiography provides one illustration of the phenomenon:

Many, many songs the men sang but I, a woman, cannot tell you all. I know that they made the enemy blind and dizzy with their singing and that they told the gopher to gnaw their arrows. And I know that they called on our dead warriors who have turned into owls and live in Apache country to come and tell them where the enemy were.¹⁵

From such accounts David Riesman concludes that:

We become aware of the emotional force that can be harnessed by the spoken or sung word in such a group — so powerful here that it can shatter the morale of a distant enemy and can bring alive the desert with its small creatures slipping like spies through the bush.¹⁶

If the parallel being suggested here between the musical process and pre-literate man's outlook on the world has any validity — and there is considerable evidence that it has¹⁷ — what are the consequences for our understanding of the musical process in industrial society? Almost inevitably we should have to start looking for the significance of music within the social processes of its creation. That is, if the power and immediacy of the word in pre-literate societies is derived from the power and immediacy of its social context — and in this respect it should be remembered that in these societies words *cannot* be divorced from the face-to-face (i.e. social) situations in which they occur — then it seems reasonable to conclude that the similar power and immediacy imparted by music owes its existence to a *similar* set of circumstances. Support for this supposition may be derived from the fact that pre-literate man does not evolve an abstract aesthetic for his music, choosing rather to assign it a social significance unquestioningly.¹⁸

The obvious thing to do would be to follow this line of thought through to its logical conclusions. Unfortunately, there is insufficient space to do that here. Instead, it will be assumed that the intuition is basically correct, and the problem will be approached from the opposite direction. That is, it will be shown how the distancing from social context implicit in any form of literacy has allowed industrial man to think of music (or at least of 'serious' music) as an a-social phenomenon.

When words necessarily occur in the here-and-now (because they cannot be preserved independently of the here-and-now of their use), there is no way in which the people who utter and listen to them cannot at least be intuitively aware of the necessarily social nature of the knowledge they mediate. This assertion is substantiated to a large degree by Mary Douglas's statement above. Everything that affects pre-literate society would seem to be related in one way or another to the activities of its people. The situation in industrial society is very different. Although our knowledge inevitably results from the activities of individual people, we are quite capable of accepting that many occurrences in the 'natural' world happen completely independently of any form of human volition. Our ability to do this rests in no small measure on the possibilities inherent in literacy for permanently storing knowledge, not only apart from the social context of its creation, but apart from consciousness itself. In other words, man and his knowledge become separated or 'distanced' to such an extent that it is possible to think of knowledge as 'independently given', and of reality as 'objective fact'.

The supremacy of this 'independent' and 'objective' knowledge over that 'resulting from social mediation' was symbolically asserted through Plato's expulsion of the poets:

Plato's banishment of the poets and his doctrine of ideas are two sides of the same coin. In banishing the poets from his *Republic*, Plato was telling his compatriots that it was foolish to imagine that the intellectual needs of life in Greek society could still be met by memorizing Homer. Rather than deal in this verbalisation, so much of a piece with the non-verbal life-world, one needed to ask more truly abstract questions.¹⁹

Thought and action, mind and body, self and environment were separated to such a degree that a considerable amount of importance was able to be given to the 'cerebrally derived' at the expense of the 'socially experienced':

In classic Hegelian thesis-antithesis fashion Plato's ideas, the "really real" were *polarized at the maximum distance from the old oral-aural human life-world*. Spoken words are events engaged in time and indeed in the present. Plato's ideas were the polar opposite: *not events at all but motionless "objective" existence, impersonal and out of time*.²⁰

All forms of knowledge thus tend to be isolated from the social context of their creation and come to be grounded in a scheme of absolutes:

In oral culture words — and especially words like “God”, “Justice”, “Soul”, “Good”, may hardly be conceived of as separate entities, divorced both from the rest of the sentence and its social context. But once given the physical reality of writing, they take on a life of their own; and much Greek thought was concerned with attempting to explain their meanings satisfactorily, and to relate these meanings to some ultimate principle of rational order in the universe, to the *logos*.²¹

That this tendency has pervaded our understanding of music is undeniable, as the following passage from Zuckerkandl illustrates:

It is not that the mind of the creative artist expresses itself in tones, words, colours, and forms as its medium; on the contrary, *tone, word, colour, form express themselves through the medium of the creative mind*. The finer that medium the better tone, word, colour, form can express themselves. The greater the genius, the less it speaks *itself*, the more it lends its voice to the tones, the words, the colours, the forms. In this sense, then, music *does* write itself — neither more nor less, by the way, than physics does. The law of falling bodies is no invention of the genius of Galileo. The work of the genius consists in bringing the mind, through years of practice, so into harmony with things, that things can express their laws through him.²²

There can be no clearer expression than this of an a-social view of music, in which music is taken to have absolute and objective internal laws beyond the vagaries of human thought and creativity. But the theories of Langer and Meyer, although stressing the psychological aspect of the musical process, are no less absolute and objective in their conception. For the psychology of Langer's and Meyer's theories has nothing to do with the symbolic interaction of socially constructed reality. Thus, although social and political forces may be relevant to musical style, they cannot, for Meyer, become the focus of attention:

Yet the explanations furnished by reference to political, social and cultural history tell only part of the story. For stylistic changes and developments are continually taking place which appear to be largely independent of such extramusical events. Although an important interaction takes place between the political, social, and intellectual forces at work in a given epoch, on the one hand, and stylistic developments, on the other, there is also a strong tendency for a style to develop in its own way. If this is the case, then the causes of these changes must be looked for in the nature of aesthetic experience, since for composer and listener style is simply the vehicle for such an experience.²³

Because music has its own internal and objective laws independent of the social process, there is no need for the musicologist to go beyond the ‘purely musical’ in order to understand the musical process.

This ‘intellectual’ cause of an implicitly a-social view of music has an analogue in the social organisation of industrial society. It is useful, in this context, to refer to Berger and Luckmann's discussion of ideal-typical extremes as regards the scope and modes of institutionalisation in different societies. On the one hand:

It is possible to conceive of a society in which institutionalisation is total. In such a society, *all* problems are common, *all* solutions to these problems are socially objectivated and *all* social actions are institutionalized. The institutional order embraces the totality of social life, which resembles the continuous performance of a complex, highly stylized liturgy. There is no role-specific knowledge, or nearly none, since all roles are performed within situations of equal relevance to all actors.²⁴

On the other hand:

The opposite extreme would be a society in which there is only *one* common problem, and institutionalization occurs *only* with respect to actions concerned with this problem. In such a society there would be almost no common stock of knowledge. Almost all knowledge would be role-specific.²⁵

Examples of such societies do not exist. However, there are different types of society which tend towards either extreme, and one way of identifying them is through the degree of division of labour prevalent in any society. According to Berger and Luckmann, therefore, ‘any society in which there is increasing division of labour is moving away from the first extreme type described above’.²⁶ Given the limited division of labour in pre-literate societies, ‘it is . . . then possible to say that primitive societies approximate the [first] type to a much higher degree than civilised ones’.²⁷ Further, ‘it may even be said that in the development of archaic civilizations there is a progressive movement away from this type’.²⁸

Besides the development of a high degree of division of labour and of role-specific knowledge, there is one other phenomenon which needs to be mentioned in order to understand why the social organisation of industrial society has permitted and encouraged an a-social view of music. This phenomenon rests in the different attitudes that may be said to exist in pre-literate societies and industrial societies towards creativity. Because pre-literate man's knowledge is mediated in a completely oral-aural fashion, his control over that knowledge — and hence over his environment — is slippery and elusive:

Man knows what he can recall — all else is so ephemeral as to be negligible. In an oral culture this means he knows what is cast in fixed thematic formulatory patterns. Anything else will seem unreal, nonknowledge,

reprehensible and dangerous. This is the noetic foundation for the traditionalism stemming from oral cultures. What is non-traditional . . . is dangerous because it is slippery and unmanageable. Oral-aural man does not like the non-traditional because, beyond his limited means of control, it advertises the tenuousness of his hold on rationality.²⁹

Industrial man, on the other hand, has the ability to store vast tracts of knowledge safely and permanently. His control over that knowledge and hence over the events of the world is thus much greater. Consequently, his hold on 'rationality' is extremely firm, and at no time was this better demonstrated than during the Enlightenment:

Seeing the beautiful demonstrations of Descartes and Newton as they explained the heavens with their coordinates, the great classical minds sought to rival this perfection on earth. Philosophers used the geometric method to arrive at moral and religious truth; social scientists reduced government to mechanics; the tragic muse imitated the tight deductive gate of Euclid; and I am not merely playing with words when I say that poetry itself adopted one common meter as if scientific accuracy depended on it. In all the imponderables of life, conduct, and art, the test was no longer the flexible, "is it good, true or beautiful for such and such a purpose?" but "Is it correct?"³⁰

Now although pre-literate man dislikes the non-traditional, he must constantly be ready to react to a world which is essentially dynamic and unpredictable. To this extent he may be said intuitively to accept as necessary and even faintly desirable activities which we label as 'creative' or 'deviant'.³¹ Industrial man, on the other hand, because he has such a good control over the events of the environment, might be said to find *true* creativity (that is, creativity which implicitly challenges the status quo in any area) largely unnecessary. To go one step further, it is likely that true creativity in industrial society is regarded in an ideologically suspect light.³²

It is now possible to describe the different status ascribed to music in pre-literate and industrial societies. Because of the 'underdevelopment' of the division of labour and, consequently, of role-specific knowledge in pre-literate societies, the degree to which musical activity can be distanced from the central core of everyday reality is severely circumscribed. Moreover, because creativity has a higher degree of intuitive acceptance (and it is being assumed here that 'artistic' activity is inherently creative), there is no desire to remove music from the central concerns of the society.³³ In industrial society, on the other hand, the high development of role-specific knowledge allows music to be removed to a considerable distance from the central core of everyday reality. Further, because true creativity is so incompatible with the deterministic rationality which constitutes the overriding mythology of industrial society, the temptation to assign music (and music must surely be amongst the most 'irrational' of activities) a peripheral status in society is very strong indeed. Once again, music is implicitly 'removed' from the social conditions of its creation.

Up until now 'music' in industrial society has been discussed as if it were comprised only of 'serious' music (this because aestheticians and musicologists seldom consider any other kind), or as if it were one homogeneous entity. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth. Because of the high degree of social stratification that accompanies its high division of labour and highly developed role-specific knowledge, industrial society may be thought of as a composite of many different groups, all of whom 'create' and 'consume' different kinds of music. And because those who have traditionally been disadvantageously placed in society have comparatively recently gained greater economic power, many different forms of 'popular music' have increasingly become 'forces to be reckoned with' in the 'cultural world'.

Now although few people today would say that any type of music is of *fundamental* social importance, there is an undoubted tendency to think that 'popular' forms of music are of more social relevance than 'serious' forms. In order to understand why this should be, it is necessary to describe one final characteristic of industrial society. A high division of labour, a highly developed role-specific knowledge and the ability to commit new ideas to paper at various times in history inevitably results in the phenomenon of cultural lag. In pre-literate societies, on the other hand, where all knowledge must necessarily be mediated in the ongoing present of face-to-face situations, and where most people are aware of most of the society's knowledge most of the time, the possibilities for cultural lag are minimal. The phenomenon of cultural lag in industrial societies is best described by Goody and Watt when they say that 'the content of the cultural tradition grows continually, and in so far as it affects any particular individual he becomes a palimpsest composed of layers of beliefs and attitudes belonging to different stages in historical time'.³⁴ A new piece of role-specific knowledge may, in other words, take a long time to filter through to the central core of everyday reality (or just to 'other people' in general) — if, indeed, it ever filters through at all.

But the 'historical time' to which such knowledge belongs need not, from the point of view of the common stock of knowledge, be in the past. Indeed, for reasons already put forward, it is fairly safe to say that the more 'advanced' or 'consciously creative' a piece of knowledge is, the more likely it is to belong 'to the future' and to be seemingly irrelevant as far as the majority of society is concerned. This phenomenon undoubtedly applies to music. The latest technique in electronic or serial composition, for example, is a lot less likely to impinge on the 'collective consciousness' of society than, say, the latest antics of the Bay City Rollers.

It is this phenomenon of cultural lag, then, that finally ensures an a-social view of 'serious' music as against the social significance often assigned to 'popular' forms. For reasons already discussed, this distinction is one with which musicians and aestheticians are not entirely unhappy:

The term *music* is taken to include as many aspects of the composer's work as fall under the heading *art-work*. An art-work is one which makes some claim on our serious attention. This implies a creative, unique purpose on the part of the composer, and an active response on the part of the listener; it implies that the composer possesses and uses both vision and technique, and that the listener in return is expected to bring to bear his full intelligence. This excludes non-art music, such as pop music, whose purpose is chiefly, if not entirely commercial. Pop groups are big business; they are socially significant; there is no question that they form a remarkable contemporary phenomenon — but this does not make the result into an art-work, and to consider it as if it were is an illogical affectation.³⁵

This distinction is also the reason why many people instinctively think that the sociology of music has as its subject matter *only* 'popular' forms of music, most notably 'pop' and 'rock'. It would seem that a reassessment of this view, and the explicit and open discussion of the theory underlying critical method which would result, is long overdue.

NOTES:

- ¹ See John Shepherd, review of Meyer's *Explaining Music*, *Contact* 13 (Spring 1976), pp. 42-43.
- ² See Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality* (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1967).
- ³ Walter J. Ong, 'World as View and World as Event', *American Anthropologist*, Vol.LXXI (1969), p. 634.
- ⁴ See, for example, Walter J. Ong, *The Presence of the Word* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) and Jack Goody and Ian Watt, 'The Consequences of Literacy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.V (1962-63), pp. 304-345.
- ⁵ Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p. 33.
- ⁶ Susanne K. Langer (1942), *Philosophy in a New Key* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), p. 236.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 240.
- ⁸ Leonard B. Meyer, *Explaining Music* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1973), p. 14.
- ⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 245-246 and p. 267.
- ¹⁰ Langer, *op. cit.*, p. 240.
- ¹¹ Meyer, *Explaining Music*, p. 8.
- ¹² Mary Douglas (1966), *Purity and Danger* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 103-104.
- ¹³ James W. Carey, 'Harold Adam Innis and Marshall McLuhan', *The Antioch Review*, Vol.XXXVII (1967), p. 10.
- ¹⁴ J.C. Carothers, 'Culture, Psychiatry and the Written Word', *Psychiatry*, Vol.XXII (1959), p. 309.
- ¹⁵ Quoted in David Riesman, 'The Oral and Written Traditions', in Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan, eds., *Explorations in Communication* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 109-110.
- ¹⁶ Riesman, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
- ¹⁷ One may usefully compare, for example, pre-literate time sense [c.f. Edmund Leach, 'Primitive Time-Reckoning', in Charles Singer, E.J. Holmyard and A.R. Hall, eds., *A History of Technology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), Vol.I, pp. 115-120] with the sense of time that may be derived from a phenomenological analysis of the musical process [c.f. Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and Symbol: Music and the External World*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1956)].
- ¹⁸ See Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 259-273, and Bruno Nettl, *Music in Primitive Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p.20.
- ¹⁹ Ong, *The Presence of the Word*, pp. 33-34.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- ²¹ Goody and Watt, *op. cit.*, p. 330.
- ²² Zuckerkandl, *op. cit.*, pp. 222-223.
- ²³ Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music*, p.65.
- ²⁴ Berger and Luckmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

- 25 Ibid. p.98.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ong, 'World as View and World as Event', p. 640.
- 30 Jacques Barzun, *Classic, Romantic and Modern* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1943), p. 40.
- 31 See, for example, Merriam, op. cit., p. 134 ff. where the toleration of deviant behaviour in musicians in some pre-literate societies is discussed.
- 32 Between about 1920 and 1940, jazz was under constant attack in the USA. Unlike in pre-literate societies, the behaviour of musicians which was seen to transgress the norms of society was regarded as intolerable. See Merriam, op. cit., pp. 241-244.
- 33 C.f. foot-note 18 above.
- 34 Goody and Watt, op. cit., p. 324.
- 35 Francis Routh, *Contemporary British Music: the Twenty-five Years from 1945 to 1970* (London: MacDonald, 1972), pp. x-xi.



CONTEMPORARY MUSIC NETWORK

The Arts Council of Great Britain

1976

Graham Collier Music

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12 Bingley College of Education
13 Huddersfield Polytechnic
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Howard Riley and 'Non-Jazz'

1. JAZZ?

JAZZ, THEY SAY, is where you find it. Sometimes, however, 'they' decide on the time and place of discovery, and in so doing set highly dubious limits on various types of music. It would be unrealistic to deny that labels are needed to describe music, if only for purposes of verbal identification and communication, but when the label bulks larger than the music, such description and classification becomes redundant in terms of its original purpose and assumes a life of its own.

This has been a perennial problem of jazz. Where does it stop? It could be defined racially, in which case a large amount of this century's music that normally goes under that name would be excluded. Such identification also smacks of snobbery: implicit within it is the idea that black music has been ruthlessly exploited by commercialising whites. So, indeed, it has. Much the same, however, happens with any 'mass' form: witness the appalling state of 'folk' music today. Blacks, too, have been adept at exploiting the label of 'jazz': Duke Ellington, surely the most successful 20th century American musician, had a relationship with jazz which was, to say the least, opaque.

Jazz could, perhaps, be defined in terms of aspects of style, and this is the most widespread description. 'It don't mean a thing if it ain't got swing'¹ is, possibly, still the criterion for the army of music lovers who believe their favourite music is jazz. Swing, however, is notoriously difficult to define, *pace* Andre Hodeir.² Improvisation is, perhaps, the next favoured means of identifying jazz. This would exclude much 'big band' jazz and, unless qualified, include much 'experimental' and even 'avantgarde' music (terms as used by Michael Nyman).³ 'Karlheinz Stockhausen and the Red Hot Stompers' is a nice thought, but unlikely to be realised.⁴ Apart from the minutiae of scale formation and characteristics (which, in the plethora of scale systems in the world, are unlikely to be unique) the one other possibility of surface-level identification of jazz rests on the instrumentation of the ensemble. But while jazz has certainly developed some unique blowing techniques, these could not collectively define the area of the music. Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto* shares much of the instrumentation of one type of jazz, but bears very little relationship to jazz music, however that may eventually be defined.

Despite the difficulties of defining by style, this is the principal means used by the 'they' referred to at the beginning of this article. Astonishing though this may be, at the time of writing Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, Howard Riley and Paul Rutherford are among those officially not regarded as jazz musicians by the BBC. That is, they will not be played on the radio programmes 'Jazz in Britain' or 'Jazz Club'. It would appear that they are too 'far out', and thus more suitable for the limbo of 'Music in our Time'.

While these musicians freely admit to being difficult to categorise (which might have been thought grounds for congratulation rather than penalty), they would all regard themselves as deriving most of their attitudes towards music from jazz: *their* definition of jazz seems to be aesthetic rather than racial or purely musical. Jazz is, for them, not a style but an attitude of creativity and spontaneity towards the performance, and this, because of the directions of their spontaneous and imaginative music, places these musicians beyond the boundaries of the official definition. Much heat has been generated in the last 50 years by the lack of cultural freedom in the Soviet Union. In that country, however, there is an officially defined policy which is clear in both its theoretical and practical bases.⁵ Here there is the BBC, which, until recently, had a monopoly of the broadcast medium most suited to the propagation of music. In the name of democracy or liberalism there is no clearly defined policy, but a pragmatic bureaucracy which is not necessarily the most helpful background for musicians, especially those on the wrong side of the swing of the pendulum.

The question of definition has been laboured to this point in order to show the difficulties that such vagueness can cause: it demonstrates a perennial problem concerning definition itself and not only that of jazz. Should definition be retrospective (the art of consulting a dictionary, for example) and therefore passive (in the case of jazz this would include the racial and/or musical categories of definition), or should it be active (i.e. the 'if I say it's jazz, it's jazz' of the musician involved in the field)? The answer is, presumably, to attempt a synthesis.

Suddenly to be told 'it's not jazz', and therefore that a certain channel of exposure is closed, must have an effect on such musicians: it is not an enviable position, however resilient they may be. Resilience is a

necessary condition for any English composer/performer, and especially for those involved in jazz, however it may be defined: even those 'trad jazz' musicians unlucky enough not to have been called Ball, Bilk, Colyer, Lightfoot or Lyttleton seem to be having a lean time. Being in jazz is, therefore, a problem: coming out of it, especially when the journey comes as a surprise, must be an even greater one.

These problems have their repercussions, not only musically but also in the development of social and political attitudes. Without necessarily developing an avowed stand in the manner of Cornelius Cardew, it would be difficult for such musicians to resist conclusions as to the nature of the values of the society in which they are working. These values affect not only one channel of communication with a possible audience (radio), but also the other insituate medium, records.

The Beatles and such West Coast rock groups as Grateful Dead provided a much needed jolt to the recording industry in the 1960s. Many small studios were set up, musical and financial risks were taken, and rock went through its great creative period. The large companies, taken by surprise where they had not had the foresight to bind the musicians hand and foot, reacted to this development by agreeing to market the products of the studios and, in their own right, began to cast around for original and creative musicians. Howard Riley, for example, had two records released by CBS at about this time.

With the downturn in the economy, such frills had to be abandoned, and this group of musicians, interested in group or solo improvisation, has been forced back on its own resources. One example of this is the achievement of Incus records. Founded in 1970 by Evan Parker, Tony Oxley and Derek Bailey, by the end of 1976 it will have released 19 records of basically improvised or improvisatory music: little enough by the standards of the large companies, but remarkable for a group of people without such resources. There are other such small labels and their productions are, in many cases, well worth investigating.

It may be objected that it is hard enough for any musician to gain a hearing, and that this admittedly non-popular music should not be the subject of special pleading; there are and have been other groups of musicians in as parlous a position. While this may well be true, it is an argument to be turned on arbiters (controllers of media) rather than on fellow musicians.

Cultural decisions are an inevitable consequence of the structure of society. If a particular form of music neither makes money nor conforms to accepted patterns — if, in the case of jazz, it is 'outside the Afro-American tradition': a neat mixing of racial and musical traditions that collapses when it is considered that there cannot be many British musicians *within* such a tradition (and therefore no British jazz?) — it is incompatible with the prevailing intellectual 'hegemony'⁶ and, consequently, will have little chance of making its way. Riley, for example, would not claim that his music is ever likely to be popular. In their continued underestimation of their audiences, however, the media rarely provide a coherent opportunity for such musicians to attract an audience, and so the extent of any popular appeal they might have is simply not known. The same is true of other 'minority' interests. While these may well be unpopular, the dictatorship of the majority ensures that the extent of their unpopularity is never known: it might be less than imagined and therefore pose a threat to the prevailing hegemony.⁷ Access to the possibility of obtaining an audience is therefore a prominent issue with this particular group of musicians.

Without denying the difficulties of the music of, for instance, Riley (typical of this group in his untypicality and originality), it seems reasonable to expect listeners to make some effort in order to understand the aims of the musicians: enough effortless music is provided already. The difficulties of definition enable this music to be described as 'elitist' or 'specialised', whereas, in its wealth of sound, its mixture of fine technique and musical intellect at work and in its great range of possibilities, it is anything but specialised.

2. RILEY

Riley has worked in the London jazz field since 1967, having started his career playing in jazz clubs while still at school. He studied at the University of Wales (Bangor) and later went to Indiana University in the USA, completing his studies externally at the University of York. His academic qualifications are impressive: BA, MA, M.Mus, M.Phil. Since 1967 his work has been primarily concerned with his trio, formed with Barry Guy and Tony Oxley. The trio format and the compatibility of the musicians have enabled this group to be amongst the leaders in its particular field, concerned as these players are with group improvisation and, within that genre, with the extension of the possibilities of their respective instruments.

As if to emphasise the problematic nature of the description of their music and its transgeneric qualities, Riley, in common with other musicians involved in this area, moves easily into the 'avantgarde'. *Textures* for string quartet and *Three Fragments* for flute and piano have been performed at the Cheltenham Festival and the Purcell Room, London, respectively, while recent commissions have included two pieces for string quartet, written for the ILEA Cockpit Theatre Ensemble, and a string trio, played by the Nash Ensemble at the Greenwich Festival last June.

In the latter work, entitled *Changes*, four blocks of material are presented, viewed from different angles. Pitch and duration largely remain the same, while other features of attack and decay are altered. The processes involved seem somewhat analogous to Messiaen's expansions and contractions, although vocabulary and material are completely different. *Zeroth*, one of the quartet pieces, uses the contemporary vocabulary of sound, and shares with other new music the use of a smaller number of notes and the consequent concentration on individual note quality. The notation of Riley's compositions varies from total predetermination to the minimum of barred indication; graphics indicate improvisatory elements.

These broad characteristics — concentration on individual sound, a wide range of notation and an interest in process — extend into Riley's jazz-based work. Many of his pieces have been performed by the London Jazz Composers Orchestra, a line-up which may include cellos and synthesizer as well as the more traditional instruments. One work written for the LJCO, *Two Designs*, presents quiet, sustained material at the outset which returns, modified, at the end, although it is present to a greater or lesser degree throughout the work. It provides a background for the solo and group improvisations of the piece, sections in which the individual musician becomes of paramount importance. It is as individual musician and as member of a small group that the improviser/performer/composer comes into his own. Riley now performs both as solo pianist and as trio leader, and the contrasts of the musical personality revealed by recent recordings of him in these contexts are as interesting as the similarities.

It was, I think, Wilfrid Mellers who commented that as the works of the avantgarde became more and more organised they *sounded* more and more improvisatory. This paradox is supported by another. Contemporary composition modifies our ideas about the sound of improvisation so much that the most improvised music may sound like composition. Riley may believe that he provides merely a framework in the trio pieces, as indeed he does, and that ideas from improvisation may influence ideas in composition without the two ever merging, but the simplicity of his framework in *Mandrel*, the first track on the record *Synopsis*, ensures that the track is heard as a composition, and a well organised one.

This is both a tribute to the musicality of the players, who throughout their careers have avoided the degeneration into the nursery floor of 'free-form bore-ins', and a reflection of the nature of performance and particularly recorded performance. Recording is antagonistic to the nature of improvised music, both because of the nature of the studio which renders spontaneity unlikely, and because the improvisation frozen for posterity is no longer improvisation. One recording, however, is better than nothing, even if Cage's famous bromide on composition, performance and listening should be modified to take account of recording — and not only for improvised music: every recording of a totally-notated composition is, of course, only a version.

The simplicity of the compositional ideas of *Mandrel* (Riley usually provides a graphic/verbal/musical framework for these trios) conceals another aspect which may or may not be dangerous for the listener. Only three pitches are indicated during the course of the work, and they are notated and presented unambiguously. In the nature of things, the listener will seize on every recurrence of these pitches during the piece and possibly throughout the record. This is perhaps an excellent way of becoming acquainted with the pieces, but it would, equally, perhaps be a mistake to imagine that Riley is primarily concerned with this semitonal relationship. The shift of a semitone, however, seems to be a powerful impetus for Riley, recurring throughout *Synopsis* as it does, and it is also very prominent in the pieces on Riley's solo album *Singleness*.

For other, less motivically-minded listeners, interest in the trio's pieces might well centre on the extension of instrumental techniques and the actual wealth of sounds employed by the musicians, principally achieved by the use of electronics. Oxley and Guy have vastly extended the range of percussion and double bass respectively, Oxley in the creation of new sounds and the merging of acoustic and electronic sound, Guy in the modification of the apparently unpromising tone of the bass. Riley's interest in the use of electronics began with his wish to expose sounds from the interior of the piano, sounds too quiet for normal hearing. Even with the range of possibilities available, his use of electronics mainly *modifies* rather than creates, although the very effective *Inside* (on the album *Singleness*) is an exception.

The principal means of modification that Riley uses is the ring modulator, and this circuit, which produces the sum and difference tones of two incoming frequencies, forms the basis of a box devised by Riley and an engineer from Liverpool which is actuated by foot pedals. This differs from the conventional synthesizer in that it eliminates the need for 'patching', a laborious business which militates against ease in performance.

The interest in the act of performance, symbolised by this development, has remained paramount with Riley, the trio and this area of music. Riley, for example, provided a jazz analogue of Stockhausen's *Solo* in his 'Music in our Time' broadcast last January by means of a live reaction to his own improvisation; the result was a duo-piano piece played by one pianist. The aspect of *playing* musical instruments — that is, of using a technique that it has taken years of training to acquire (and usually years of conventional training, as in the cases of, for instance, Paul Rutherford and Barry Guy) — to produce sounds is a natural complement to being concerned with music as sound. In the 1960s Cardew was complaining of 'disastrously under-stimulated performances of contemporary music',⁸ and this problem is still current in the avantgarde field. It achieves a solution in the area of jazz under discussion, however, and, in addition to this, Riley's clear formal structures are an excellent bonus.

As already mentioned, Riley and his colleagues would define jazz not as a style but as a creative attitude. If jazz is where you find it, it is to be searched for in the musician. The premises of jazz are creativity in the performing musician, spontaneity as a consequence of this and individuality. The received wisdom of our time, the hegemony of taste, decrees that a particular style is forced to become a restriction, so that a particular manifestation may be labelled with ease, consigned to its appropriate enclosure and, possibly, forgotten.⁹

Jazz as an attitude cannot so easily be described. Indeed, it is easier to point to its absence rather than to its presence. It does, however, highlight a problem of contemporary music in the areas of both jazz and 'straight' music. A complement of the under-stimulated performances of contemporary music mentioned above is a lack of emotional projection: this projection is an integral part of jazz. The introspective or even neurotic character of much avantgarde (and experimental) music, depending on obsessive repetition or some aspect of mysticism, contains, however, a wealth of ideas which are, frankly, absent from jazz. There is a dearth of ideas in jazz and consequently a dearth of individuality. Jazz stands in danger of denying its own essence. To synthesise the projection and playing aspects of jazz and the rigour of compositional thought to be found in contemporary 'straight' music seems to be the aim of Riley and his colleagues, and the greater flexibility of jazz, however ossified as a totality, ensures that jazzmen have a greater chance of succeeding in this than those whose musical experience is wholly 'straight'.

This synthesising quality is important, however, both for musicians and listeners. Those whose listening experience is confined to one field are not likely to be the most immediately sympathetic, although they probably stand in greatest need of liberation. This music can be an act of conscious emancipation from the Muzak of our Time if approached sympathetically.

This is not to say that Riley, for example, always succeeds in his aims, or that there are not dangers in the approach. There are, perhaps, too many pointers in *Mandrel* and *Sirens* from the album *Synopsis*; it's almost as though he cares too much about his audience. In *Mandrel*, within a wealth of sound and expectations that are almost entirely textural, it is a little disconcerting to hear tiny motives used almost melodically, referring back to the opening G-A flat relationship. *Sirens* depends a little predictably on the opening announcement returning at the close: ternary design is not necessarily the most appropriate format for group improvisation. Riley also employs a loose recapitulatory framework in his solo piano album, *Singleness*, but here, however, it is not as intrusive. The second side of *Synopsis* is free of these 'interpolations', and the restraint of *Ingot*, the final track, is particularly rewarding.

Singleness begins almost conventionally with *Imprint 8*, a heavy chordal piece recognisably related to traditional procedures. From this point the music moves away from conventions, although the two-part melody and accompaniment texture is never far away, whether in the spare-textured *Item* and *Gypsum* or in the excellent use of electronics in *Inside*. Within this two-part style, Riley's playing is very ornate, with cascades of notes decorating each verticalisation. This style of playing culminates in the Cecil Taylor-like *Glancing* and the arpeggiated opening of *Ice*, which resembles a distorted version of the opening of Bach's First Cello Suite.

The most exploratory piece in terms of sonority is the final track, *Chained Melody*, which opens with electronic imitation of chain sounds. In this the piano texture is at its most fragmented, but even here Riley glances back over his shoulder, for the piece falls into a clear ternary division. On the one hand this is solicitude for his audience, on the other it could be heard as a regrettable lapse. This unevenness is, however, a sign of strength, for Riley has obviously much creative potential to be exploited.

Riley stands as a paradigm of this group of musicians. If they were given the chance of obtaining an audience, it might be possible to speak of another 20th century musical renaissance in this country, this time in the field of jazz. Riley, however, also stands as a paradigm in his comparative neglect. Most of his performances are in Europe, and during the 1976-77 season he will be in the USA. A similar story could be told of the other musicians in this field, *pace* Incus, Canon and Obscure records. It is to be hoped that the

apparently official attitude that originality is a disqualification for access to the media will be modified.

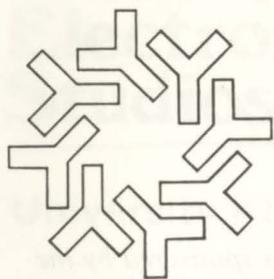
'They' are making jazz very hard to find.

NOTES:

- ¹ Attributed to Louis Armstrong.
- ² Andre Hodeir, *Jazz, its evolution and essence* (London: Gollancz, 1956).
- ³ Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and beyond* (London: Studio Vista, 1974).
- ⁴ See *Melody Maker* (April 22, 1976) supplement on the 'avantgarde', in which Stockhausen speaks of his attitude to rock music.
- ⁵ See, for example, C. Vaughan James, *Soviet Socialist Realism* (London: MacMillan, 1973).
- ⁶ The concept of hegemony — the intellectual and cultural complement to the Marxist theory of the State — was developed by Antonion Gramsci in his *Lettere dal carcere* ('Letters from Prison'). See, for example, Giuseppe Fiori, trans. Tom Nairn (1970), *Antonio Gramsci* (London: NLB, 1975), pp. 239-245.
- ⁷ For an example of the prevailing hegemony in music, see Hans Keller, 'Music 1975', *The New Review*, Vol.2, No. 24 (March 1976), pp. 17-53.
- ⁸ Cornelius Cardew, *Octet '61 for Jasper Johns* (London: Hinrichsen, 1962), notes to the performer.
- ⁹ C.f. the virtue of clarity demanded by both the philosophical and educational systems, which is discussed in Fredric Jameson, *Marxism and Form: Twentieth-Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. xiii.
- ¹⁰ In jazz the 'interpreter' is absent: the composer and performer are often bedevilled by the interpreter and his 're-creative', i.e. second-level, function.

DISCOGRAPHY

COMPOSITION		DATE OF RECORDING	
<i>Dejeuner sur l'herbe</i>	New Jazz Orchestra	Verve VLP 4236	1968
PERFORMANCE			
<i>Ode</i>	with London Jazz Composers Orchestra	Incus 6/7	1972
<i>Tony Oxley</i>	with Tony Oxley	Incus 8	1972
COMPOSITION/IMPROVISATION/PERFORMANCE			
<i>Discussions</i>	Howard Riley Trio	Opportunity 2500	1967
<i>Angle</i>	Howard Riley Trio	CBS Realm 52669	1968
<i>The Day will Come</i>	Howard Riley Trio	CBS 64077	1970
<i>Flight</i>	Howard Riley Trio	Turtle 301	1971
<i>Solo Imprints</i>	Howard Riley (solo piano)	Jaguar CS1	1972
<i>Synopsis</i>	Howard Riley Trio	Incus 13	1973
<i>Singleness</i>	Howard Riley (solo piano)	Canon 5967	1974



YORKSHIRE ARTS

NORTHERN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CIRCUIT 1976-77

Leeds Wind Quintet with Wendy Nightingale: Ilkley, Guisborough, Sunderland, Newcastle, Leeds, Bradford, Bingley, York and Richmond during October and November

Yvonne Seymour, Lesley Schatzberger, Alan George and Peter Seymour: Doncaster in October

Delme String Quartet with Freddie Phillips, John Barrow, Roger Stalman or Jack Brymer: Skipton, Bury, Lancaster and Sheffield in October; Keighley and Ilkley in February

Amphion Wind Quintet with Keith Swallow: Scarborough, Skegness, York, Halifax, Horbury, Huddersfield, Keighley, Sheffield, Bradford, Elland and Teesside in November and December

Aulos Ensemble and John McCabe: Huddersfield and Bradford in December; Doncaster in January

Clap: Sheffield in March

For full details of the northern contemporary music circuit contact Richard Phillips Music Officer of the Yorkshire Arts Association Glyde House Glydegate Bradford BD5 0BQ (Tel. Bradford 23051). This new development in the north puts the emphasis on northern musicians and northern composers and will, it is hoped, develop even more in future seasons.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC NETWORK IN YORKSHIRE

The Arts Council of Great Britain's great contribution to the contemporary music scene in Yorkshire brings the following for the 1976-77 season:

Graham Collier Music: Bradford University 19 October, Leeds College of Music 20 October, Hurlfield Campus Sheffield 22 October and York Arts Centre 27 October

Sarah Walker (mezzo-soprano)/Electronic Music: Leeds University 10 November, Bingley College of Education 12 November, and Huddersfield Polytechnic School of Music 13 November

Tuckwell Wind Quintet: Leeds University 19 January

John Taylor Octet: Hurlfield Campus Sheffield 22 January

London Sinfonietta: Huddersfield Town Hall 28 January and Leeds Town Hall 29 January

Steve Reich Ensemble: Huddersfield Town Hall 1 February and York University 2 February

Chilingirian Quartet: Huddersfield Polytechnic School of Music 15 February, York British Music Society 17 February and Leeds College of Music 27 February

Bob Downes: Hurlfield Campus Sheffield 5 February

El Cimarron: York University 17 March and Huddersfield Polytechnic School of Music 18 March

Howard Riley Unit: Hurlfield Campus Sheffield 20 March

COMPETITION FOR YOUNG YORKSHIRE COMPOSERS

The second of these competitions is now open to all composers of under thirty with Yorkshire connections, who should write to the Music Officer of the Yorkshire Arts Association for details. Winners will be announced in April 1977.

JAZZ CENTRE SOCIETY COMES NORTH

There is now a northern administrator of the Jazz Centre Society, so if you're interested in jazz why not contact **Ian Croal c/o North West Arts Association 52 King Street Manchester M2 4LY?**

This page is paid for by the Yorkshire Arts Association

Interview with John Cage

This interview was conducted at Stony Point, New York, on July 14, 1973, and was sponsored by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, to whom we are grateful for the kind permission to publish.

ALAN GILLMOR John, I'm aware that you do not believe in linear notions of cultural history; however, it seems evident to me that even the most iconoclastic masters belong to some tradition. Therefore I'd like to talk to you about certain stages in the development of your thought leading up to your present activities. Among your first teachers were Adolph Weiss, Henry Cowell and Arnold Schoenberg. In view of your later proclivities, I find it somewhat curious that you would choose, in Schoenberg, a representative of 'central Europe's immortality machine',¹ as your colleague Virgil Thomson once described musical Germany, especially at a time when the vast majority of young American composers — among them Copland, Harris, Piston and Thomson himself — were seeking an antidote to Germanic solemnity in the fresher and less tradition-bound music of France. Would you comment on this?

JOHN CAGE And particularly Stravinsky, don't you think? . . .

AG Yes.

JC . . . and the teaching of Nadia Boulanger that tended in the direction of Stravinsky, it seems to me, rather than Schoenberg. However, what happened was that during the depression in the early 1930s I found myself in Santa Monica, California, after having spent about a year and a half in Europe — in Paris, actually — where I rather quickly came in contact with a wide variety of both modern painting and modern music. The effect was to give me the feeling that if other people could do things like that I myself could. And I began, without benefit of a teacher, to write music and to paint pictures, so that when I came back from Europe I was in Santa Monica where I had no way to make a living — I was a drop-out from college — and I showed my music to people whose opinion I respected and I showed my paintings to people whose opinion I respected. Among those for painting were Galka Scheyer, who had brought 'The Blue Four'² from Europe, and Walter Arensberg, who had the great collection that was formed really by Marcel Duchamp. And I showed my music to Richard Buhlig, who was the first person to play Schoenberg's Opus 11. The sum total of all that was that the people who heard my music had better things to say about it than the people who looked at my paintings had to say about my paintings. And so I decided to devote myself to music. Meanwhile I had gone from house to house in Santa Monica selling lectures on modern music and modern painting. I sold ten lectures for \$2.50 and I had an audience of something like 30 or 40 housewives once a week. I assured them that I knew nothing about the subject but that I would find out as much as I could each week and that what I did have was enthusiasm for both modern painting and modern music. In this way I taught myself, so to speak, what was going on those two fields. And I came to prefer the thought and work of Arnold Schoenberg to that of Stravinsky.

AG And yet could not one argue that Schoenberg represented a dying Germanic tradition?

JC It didn't seem that way to me and the reason it didn't was this: we already had such pieces from Stravinsky as the *Serenade in A* which gave a clearly neo-classic atmosphere. One could also say that some pieces of Schoenberg, the *Opus 25 Suite for Piano*, for instance, give a neo-classic atmosphere. Nevertheless, what was so thrilling about the notion of twelve-tone music was that those twelve tones were all equally important, that one of them was not more important than another. It gave a principle that one could relate over into one's life and accept, whereas the notion of neo-classicism one could not accept and put over into one's life.

AG With hindsight one can see that Charles Ives, Henry Cowell and perhaps Edgard Varèse were the really potent influences on the development of American experimental music in the period between the Wars. I'd like to ask you when you first discovered the music of Ives?

JC Not until much later and not through my own curiosity but through that of Lou Harrison. Two of the inspiring books — inspiring because they gave me the permission to enter the field of music — were *New*

Musical Resources by Henry Cowell³ and *Toward a New Music* by Carlos Chávez, the Mexican composer.⁴ And I am, as you know, the son of an inventor and I didn't feel that anything in me prepared me to do something following Beethoven, but I thought that if I could do something it would be in the field of invention, that I had been born, so to speak, to do that.

AG What relation do Ives's ideas and experiments have to some of your own works?

JC Well, now of course I find Ives quite relevant. But I didn't come across Ives's work until the late 1940s, and as I said through Lou Harrison. He had an enthusiasm for Ives. What had put me off Ives was all the Americana business. I didn't like that. You see, in modern painting I was devoted to Mondrian; just as I had chosen Schoenberg in music so I chose Mondrian in painting. And it was not through my own inclinations but through the excitement and work of Robert Rauschenberg that I came to be involved in representational work. If, then, I could accept representation in painting I could of course accept the Americana aspect of Ives. But even still, deep down, when I listen to a piece of Ives, what I like about it is not the quotation of hymns and popular tunes — nor do I particularly like that in Satie, by the way. What I like is the rest of it, the way it works, the process of it, the freedom of it, the 'do this or do that, do whatever you choose' — that I love.

AG In the 1930s and 40s you wrote almost exclusively for percussion instruments, including the now famous Cageian 'prepared piano'.

JC Well, I have, so to speak, no ear for music, and never did have. I loved music but had no ear for it. I haven't any of that thing that some people speak of having — knowing what a pitch is. The whole pitch aspect of music eludes me. Whether a sound is high or low is a matter of little consequence to me.

AG So this in fact was the great attraction that percussion music had for you; it could liberate you from . . .

JC . . . noises delight me; each one of them interests me; and time interests me. And when I saw that time was the proper basis of music, since it included both sounds and silence, and that pitch and harmony and counterpoint and all those things that had been the basis of European Music were improperly so and had made it into the boring thing that for the most part it symphonically became . . . Don't you agree?

AG I hesitate; we'll leave it there.

JC Anyway, that's how I feel. I agree with that African prince who went to a concert in London and afterward was asked what he thought. He had heard a programme of music that began before Bach and went on up to modern times, and he said: 'Why did they play the same piece over and over again?' And you know nowadays we get to hear, probably as a result of communication and transportation and all, a great deal of music from other cultures, and you have to go back very little in time to discover that Europeans listened very little, or took very unseriously whatever they heard from the Orient.

AG In this respect Henry Cowell was a rather important influence.

JC That was very important for me, to hear through him music from all the various cultures; and they sounded different. Sound became important to me — and noise is so rich in terms of sound. Surprisingly, you can even read statements in the early 50s from young composers in Europe, who are otherwise revolutionary and adventurous, to the effect that sound has no importance in music. Do you realise that? They tended to think that the thoughts, the constructions, the ideas that form the relationships of sound were important, but that the sounds themselves were of no importance.

AG John, the late 1940s was a period of fresh discovery for you. I'm thinking of your study of Eastern philosophies, in particular Zen, and your contact with Gita Sarabhai, who revealed to you that the reason for making a piece of music in India was 'to sober and quiet the mind, thus rendering it susceptible to divine influences'.⁵ Is this a view you still hold?

JC Certainly. I might alter it slightly now and not state it so 'churchily'. I would say that the function of music is to change the mind so that it does become open to experience, which inevitably is interesting.

AG Is it not possible that a movement, a slow movement, say, of a Mozart symphony or string quartet could serve the purpose of sobering and quieting the mind?

JC On occasion Mozart can do that. On other occasions he's quite incapable of it, and it's due to the performances. I had the occasion to hear a performance of *Don Giovanni* in New York in the 40s that was

magnificent. I later heard the same piece in southern France at Aix-en-Provence and it was a farce. And I heard so much Mozart in two weeks — they had a Mozart Festival in Aix-en-Provence — that I wished at the end of those two weeks never to hear another note of Mozart in my whole life. It seemed all frivolous, all decorated, all ornate. Impossible! Of course I love Mozart; but there are ways to hate Mozart.

AG Well, I was going to say that you do have some special affection for Mozart's music. In fact it plays a rather significant role in your 1969 work *HPSCHD*, for example. How do you explain your particular preference for this classical composer when you have rejected so many others, in fact almost all of the others?

JC I like Mozart because he moves toward multiplicity, whereas in contrast Bach moves toward unity. When you have six or seven voices or four voices or whatever you have in a Bach composition, they all add up rhythmically to a motor rhythm, which goes ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta-ta consistently and there aren't any pauses of any kind. Also pitch-wise the Bach business is all organised so that nothing is extraordinary, everything moves in the same way, whereas in a Mozart work everything works in a different way and in two or three measures of Mozart you can have many ways rather than one way of doing things.

AG What about the question of form? This seems to me a significant fact . . .

JC . . . form is a very different word . . .

AG Mozart is a closed form and Bach is an open form.

JC I find it just the reverse.

AG How do you explain then the regularity . . . ?

JC . . . *Don Giovanni* bursts into flames; how could it be more open than it is?

AG I'm thinking, of course, more of symphonic music, the sonata-allegro principle as opposed to the open-endedness of fugal procedures.

JC When I think of Mozart I really think of *Don Giovanni*.

AG I see the period 1950-52 as being a very important stage in your development. You yourself have said as much. In 1950, for example, you moved into chance operations with the aid of the *I Ching*, and in 1952, in collaboration with David Tudor, Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg and others, you performed a mixed media work at North Carolina's Black Mountain College which became in effect the progenitor of the 'happening'. Also, in that year, in August I believe, your 'silent' piece 4'33" was first performed at Woodstock, New York, and this, I think, has remained one of your most controversial works. I wanted to ask you: is it only coincidental that Rauschenberg's equally controversial 'white' paintings appeared also at that time, in 1952?

JC No. As a headnote to my article on Rauschenberg which appears in *Silence*, I say, to whom it may concern, that the white paintings came first; my silent piece came later.⁶ I had thought of the silent piece since 1948. I gave a lecture at Vassar College — I think it was in 48 — called 'A Composer's Confessions' and I related the history of my musical thought and announced that I wanted to write a silent piece which I'd not yet written. But it took me four years to decide actually to write it because I didn't wish it to appear, even to me, as something easy to do or as a joke. I wanted to mean it utterly and to be able to live with it. And it was Robert Rauschenberg's white paintings that gave me the permission to do that. One way or another we get permission. Of course, sometimes we give it to ourselves, but other times we gratefully receive it from friends.

AG Would you agree with Rauschenberg that the artistic activity itself is more important than the resulting art work?⁷

JC This carries me to Duchamp, who said that he didn't like art, that what he liked were artists. He liked to be with artists; something about the way they conducted their lives led them to be people that he enjoyed being with, whereas their works didn't so much interest him. Robert Rauschenberg said something with which I wholly concur: he said that a work of art can be deemed good when it changes you. If it doesn't change you, you're either not looking at it very clearly or it isn't a very good work of art. Just the other day I received a request from a lady in Oregon asking me to say what enabled me to know how to recognise a work of art. She didn't use the word 'good', fortunately. I wrote back to this effect, and I'm not sure that my answer is good, but it's in the direction that I think: I said, first you change your mind, then wherever you

look — implying that wherever you look you can look aesthetically — you can see life as art, if your mind is changed. Then I made a postscript to it after a few days. I said: or you just start looking; in other words you start going out of yourself and looking at the world around you, and then your mind changes.

AG It seems to me that if one follows Rauschenberg's statement to its conclusion the art work becomes in effect disposable; it becomes merely the by-product of the artistic activity.

JC But look, history proves that art is disposable! How otherwise can we accept Venus with her arms chopped off?

AG So in effect, then, museums, art galleries and concert halls become nothing more than what we might call cultural dung heaps.

JC Our attitude toward Greek art, for example, is that if we have any of it left, just a scrap, we love it. We even get fond of utensils from the past. Any damn thing from the past strikes us as art strikes us. In other words we pay attention to it. Can't we then see it as reasonable to pay attention to the world around us?

AG In an interesting reversal of 4'33", La Monte Young's *Composition 1960 No. 6* directs the performers to stare at the audience as if the audience were the performers. Now it seems to me that your own 4'33" is a serious statement with far-reaching philosophical implications. On the other hand, I cannot help but view Young's work as a return to a kind of 1920s Dadaism, with very strongly antagonistic and nihilistic overtones.

JC But we have to realise with La Monte Young that he is still alive and that he's done many things. One of the marvellous things about him is that he continues to change. He's now deeply involved with Indian music. He has an Indian teacher and he's practically performing Indian music now. And I am sure that, though it may be fairly classical at the moment, out of it will come a great benefit both to Indian music and to Western music. I'm convinced that La Monte Young is a great musician.

AG Knowing something of your views on the matter, I was not going to urge you to pass a value judgement on a colleague's work.

JC The reason I value La Monte Young so much is that he has changed my mind; he's one of the ones who has.

AG What I did want to ask you coming out of this was for you to comment on your relationship, if any, to the aesthetic ideals of the Dada movement of the early 20s.

JC I forget what year it was, but I remember that I'd given a concert in New York at the Museum of Modern Art — of the *Amores*, I think it was — and Paul Bowles, the composer and critic, related my work to Dada. I was insulted at the time. The reason I was insulted was that the word 'dada' then struck me as not being serious. I have since realised that Dada is the most serious of the 'isms'. If we say that Zen Buddhism is serious then Dada is very serious. Surrealism, for instance, relates to therapy, whereas Dada relates to religion. I'd like to point out something amusing here. Most people take the word amusing as having no serious import. But Duchamp based his life, virtually, on amusement. And this is close to comedy, which is actually a higher art than tragedy, in the last analysis. What was I saying that was amusing? I've forgotten now; that's even more amusing: to forget.

AG I've always found the Dada movement . . .

JC Oh yes, that's what it was. I didn't realise when they connected me with Dada that it could be serious. I thought it was simply frivolous, and I wanted people to know, even though I appeared to be cheerful and all, that I was perfectly serious — which I was. Humour, in fact, is perfectly serious. And now I know that Dada is more serious than Surrealism. Oh, I know what I want to tell you that's amusing. In Paris in the 20s we had Dada first, and it was followed by Surrealism. In Dada is a certain self-abnegation; in Surrealism is a certain self-pronouncement. Now, neo-Dada, which is what we have in New York in the work of Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, is followed by what's called Pop Art, which is, in another sense, Surrealism. But it is not Surrealism as related to the individual, but Surrealism as related to the society, so that Andy Warhol's work is like André Breton's, and we can equate Breton's interest in sex with Warhol's interest in supermarkets.

AG Do you agree with Marcel Duchamp's statement that repetition has been the great enemy of art in general?

JC Marcel said that?

AG Yes he did. In fact, it's quoted at the head of Kostelanetz's book.⁸

JC That's what he disliked about music, isn't it? I think he said that the reason he found music so boring was that it was constantly repeating the same tune. Duchamp's statement is quite relevant and, I think, very perceptive. There's so much repetition in music: repeated measures, the same rhythm, and the same tunes and all that, which is really unsupportable.

AG You don't think he was referring to the past — the musical or artistic past?

JC Yes I do think he was. Duchamp also didn't like violins; he said that it was inconceivable to him that anyone would take cat-gut and scrape on it.

AG Bertram Jessup has suggested in a recent article in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* that it doesn't follow that 'because it is meaningless to imitate works of the past, it is therefore meaningless to value them'.⁹

JC I don't know that this statement arouses in me much comment. What we want is to get to a point where we value first the simplest things in life; we should value water. I'm now becoming a gardener, and I now know that we must value earth. I've been reading about China. The Chinese say that water is more precious than air, earth more precious than pearls. And I know that from seeing the way the plants are growing in the garden. I know that we must — if we're going to speak in terms of value — first of all get the earth productive and the water clear. This is more important than valuing a work of art. I would prefer to hear a bird sing, as Thoreau did, than go hear Boulez conduct.

AG Christian Wolff has said that 'form in music could be taken as a length of programme time'.¹⁰ Does this fit in with your concept of form in music?

JC Yes.

AG Could you explain the difference between chance operation and indeterminacy?

JC Chance operations can be used to make something that is fixed. That is how I made the *Music of Changes*. I used the *I Ching* in order to write down something that enforced a performer to go through a particular series of actions. Then later, when I began my series of *Variations*, I was intent on making a kind of composition which was indeterminate of its own performance, a composition which didn't itself prescribe what would be done. In other words, I was intent on making something that didn't tell people what to do. At this point I attack, if I may say so, what seems to me to be a questionable aspect of music. Music is, after all, not like painting; music is a social art, social in the sense that it has consisted, formerly, of people telling other people what to do, and those people doing something that other people listen to. What I would like to arrive at, though I may never, what I think would be ideal, would be a situation in which no one told anyone what to do and it all turned out perfectly well anyway.

AG If absolute or total indeterminacy is not possible, is it then futile to attempt merely to approach it?

JC It's not futile to do what we do. We wake up with energy and we do something. And we make, of course, failures and we make mistakes, but we sometimes get glimpses of what we might do next.

AG You often have spoken of 'curiosity' and 'awareness'. In fact these two terms are, I think, central to your thought.

JC Right.

AG And I believe you have said that the specific function of music is to help us to attain a more intense awareness of life, and that in order to do this all art should 'imitate nature in her manner of operation'.¹¹

JC I was not the first one to say that.

AG I think you found that in Ananda Coomaraswamy.

JC Yes. And it's to be found in traditions of India and of Europe.

AG How does indeterminacy relate to nature's manner of operation? I find this statement a little cryptic.

JC Perhaps I could answer your question if I knew more about modern physics. But I have a layman's attitude toward modern physics and I do think that we know just vaguely that nature operates indeterminately.

AG I don't know.

JC But you surely don't believe that God is sitting in heaven and organising everything properly!

AG No. But — again from a layman's point of view — I can't imagine that nature works in a totally facetious way.

JC But just look around you! Look around where we are now and you see that everything is going wrong!

AG What?

JC Just look at it! It's either going right or wrong, but it's certainly not going according to plan.

AG Milton Babbitt, in an article called 'Who Cares if You Listen?' suggests, and I quote, the 'complete elimination of the public and social aspects . . .'¹²

JC Look at those leaves over there! No one conceivably — not even God — could have decided that.

AG All right, John; I'll accept that.

JC So, indeterminacy.

AG I would like to get back to this statement of Babbitt's: he suggests the complete elimination of the public and social aspects of musical composition. In other words, he advocates the removal of the audience.

JC That's surely in response to my thinking, because I've insisted that those must remain.

AG It seems to me that the *reductio ad absurdum* of indeterminacy is the complete elimination, on the other hand, of the composer.

JC That's perfectly all right. The sooner I get on unemployment compensation the better off I am.

AG In 1970 you said that 'more important today than the accomplishment of an individual is social change'.¹³ How do you react to the Soviet view of music, in particular the oft-stated view that music must be comprehensible to the people for whom it is in effect being created?

JC I've never been friendly to such views. I feel like Ives did that we should have a music that will pull us up by our bootstraps. He wanted a music that would make us stronger than we had been; he was sure that music could do that. And I think so too. I know in my own experience that music has changed me. I have hoped that it will change other people. I even have hoped that it could change society, which corresponds to an old Chinese view that music has an effect on society. I would like to improve society, but now I sometimes feel pessimistic that that might not happen, that we might just all go to the dogs.

AG I've always sensed, since I first discovered your work, that there is a great tradition of humanism here. But there is no doubt that you outrage traditionalists, although I sincerely believe that you want to reach all kinds of people.

JC I'm afraid I'm more traditional than those traditionalists.

AG Yet you do maintain a rather uncompromising approach to art and life that has made you something of an artistic elitist. Isn't this a bit paradoxical?

JC Yes.

AG Marvellous answer; no other possible.

JC I think we should all be elitist. I agree with Ives that music should improve us. We should improve ourselves constantly. The things that make us depressed about society and about the world generally are the views that enter our minds from time to time that the situation is hopeless, that people are just

ineradicably stupid, and that they won't improve. But they just might. We have currently the example of China. I don't know how they're getting along now, but it's perfectly clear to everyone that one quarter of the world, through Mao Tse-tung, has actually improved.

AG Since the first appearance of your book *Silence* you've turned more and more to the written word for the expression of your ideas. Is this trend significant in any way?

JC Actually, if the record of what I've done since 1961 is examined in detail, you'll see that I've written more music than I've written words. But people have come to think that they can disregard my music because they can read my words much more easily. Eventually they may be able to listen to the music, but whether or not they do, I'm not sure that it makes much difference.

AG Do you consider your writings simply an extension of your other artistic activities or do they have in fact a different function?

JC No. I enjoy doing all these various things. I like to do other things too. I like to play chess; I like to hunt mushrooms, etc. I don't mean to say that I'm intent on pleasing myself from minute to minute, but I do remain active.

AG What pieces are you working on now?

JC I have to do a new piece of music for Merce Cunningham's ballet to be done in Paris in November. It's not concluded yet what the nature of that piece will be. I will hope it will be an example of a piece in which I've written none of the notes, but all of the notes have been written by Erik Satie. But I'm running into problems with the copyright holders. I would like to base the music on the *musique d'ameublement*, which would be *I Ching*-determined; then other pieces of Satie's would be superimposed on that, and still other pieces of his superimposed on that, so that it would be *musique d'immeublement*, or apartment-house music.

AG Marcel Duchamp, Marshall McLuhan, Buckminster Fuller and Norman O. Brown are a few of the creative minds you've admired. Have you recently made any new discoveries in these areas? You mentioned Thoreau to me earlier today.

JC I'm getting more and more interested in Ezra Pound. He's a great man. We have the possibility of liveliness when we have such people with us.

AG One of the most fascinating bits of theatre unfolding in the United States today is the Watergate affair. How have you reacted to this drama?

JC Well, I sit glued, as everybody else does, to the television. We are, if I may say so, a corrupt society. I'm very impressed by an article I read recently in *The New York Review of Books* by Mary McCarthy.¹⁴ She has been a critic of Viet Nam and is still a critic of Viet Nam because Viet Nam continues even though President Nixon tells us that it has stopped. McCarthy sees Watergate as a continuation of Viet Nam; she sees it as a silly and pathetic attempt on our part to atone for our true crime, which is Viet Nam. But Viet Nam is not, I would say, our only crime. We have also ruined our environment. We've done everything in order to be selfish. We should listen now to Mao Tse-tung, who points out that the earth in which capitalism grows is just pure selfishness. What was Nixon's excuse for continuing in Viet Nam and now Cambodia? It was to come out of that whole thing as he says with some kind of face or self-respect. It all turns back on the self, and here I would like, if you permit me, to criticise the entire tradition of Christianity. I think the Golden Rule, which is often thought of as the centre, really, of Christianity, is a mistake: 'Do unto others as *you* would be done by.' I think that is a mistaken thought. We should do unto others as *they* would be done by.

NOTES:

¹ Virgil Thomson, *Virgil Thomson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 118.

² I.e., Lyonel Feininger, Alexej Jawlensky, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee.

³ Henry Cowell, *New Musical Resources* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930; 2nd revised edition, ed. Joscelyn L. Godwin, New York: Something Else Press, 1969).

⁴ Carlos Chávez, trans. H. Weinstock, *Toward a New Music: Music and Electricity* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1937).

⁵ Quoted in Calvin Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors: The Heretical Courtship in Modern Art* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), p. 99. This book later appeared in Britain under the title *Ahead of the Game: Four Versions of Avant-Garde* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968).

⁶ John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961; Cambridge, Mass. and London: The M.I.T. Press, 1966), p. 98.

⁷ See Richard Kostelanetz, 'A Conversation with Robert Rauschenberg', *Partisan Review*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1 (Winter 1968), p. 94.

⁸ Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *John Cage* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970; London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1971), p. xvii.

⁹ Bertram Jessup, 'Crisis in the Fine Arts Today', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1 (Fall 1970), p. 5.

¹⁰ Christian Wolff, 'On Form', *Die Reihe*, No. 7 (English edition, 1965, of the German original, 1960), p. 26.

¹¹ See Tomkins, *The Bride and the Bachelors*, p. 100; and Kostelanetz, ed., *John Cage*, p. 50.

¹² Milton Babbitt, 'Who Cares if You Listen?' in Elliot Schwartz and Barney Childs, eds., *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p. 249.

¹³ Quoted in Kostelanetz, ed., *John Cage*, p. 191.

¹⁴ Mary McCarthy, 'Watergate Notes', *The New York Review of Books*, Vol. XX, No. 12 (July 19, 1973), pp. 5-8.

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UNIVERSAL EDITION

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Electronic Music Studios in Britain - 3

University of Durham

NO FORMAL DECISION was taken to found an electronic music studio at Durham. Two coincidences — the appointment of David Lumsdaine as Lecturer in Music and the start of a postgraduate project investigating the development of electronic and computer music — inspired the purchase of a single VCS3 synthesizer and the start of a tentative venture which rapidly gained momentum. From such modest beginnings (the only other item of equipment was an old valve Revox tape recorder) the studio has grown steadily both in size and musical activity to become a major teaching, research and development project within the Faculty of Music. This has been due in no small part to the generosity of the University in sustaining a steady supply of funds for the purchase and maintenance of equipment and in establishing two permanent staff appointments exclusively for the studio, one academic, the other technical.

The studio is situated on the lower floor of the music school in a room measuring about 22 feet by 15 feet. Two much smaller rooms lead off the main studio, one providing a small stock room, the other a rather cramped workshop. The latter in turn leads to a back passage area where the main tape library is housed, along with a useful collection of literature on the medium of electronic and computer music. Two recording rooms are linked to the studio via balanced land-lines and closed circuit television, one measuring about 20 feet by 15 feet, the other 40 feet by 25 feet.

The lack of an initial block grant to equip the studio in a single operation has not in practice proved a major drawback. The constraints imposed by a limited but so far steadily increasing supply of funds have forced us to adopt a highly critical approach to the long-term objectives of the studio. In particular, the highest priority has been given to the acquisition of funds and technical skills for designing and building our own studio equipment rather than the purchase of 'off the shelf' packages from commercial firms. This has not only allowed the studio to cultivate an environment where composer and engineer may work in close co-operation, but also ensured that the money available has been spent efficiently. Most of the pioneering work in the early days was carried out by David Lumsdaine and myself with assistance from members of the Physics and Applied Physics Departments. It was the appointment of Dr. John Emmett as full-time technician in 1973, however, which provided the electronic expertise necessary for embarking on major development projects.

The heart of our system has been a studio-designed 16-in 4-out console mixer offering six channel equalisation on each channel and comprehensive stereo and quad panning facilities. This, however, has just been up-dated to a 32-in 16-out mixing system to facilitate the efficient operation of a 1" eight track and a ½" four track tape recorder. As at York, a strong emphasis has been placed on high quality recording equipment without which any electronic studio is at a serious disadvantage. The initial emphasis on sound treatment facilities is reflected in the provision of a bank of six remotely controlled, high speed Revox recorders and a four channel Teac, complemented by a set of eight Dolby 'A' noise reduction units. Two of the Revoxes have been fitted with our own variable speed control option, offering tape speeds from about 26 inches per second to dead stop.

Two VCS3s and a DK1 keyboard are the only items of commercial synthesis equipment in the studio. The other devices, apart from a pair of sine/square audio oscillators, are almost entirely home grown, including a pair of third octave filter banks, four multi-function amplitude processors (compressors) and a pair of digital delay lines. The latter marks the first important product of a long-term research project into the possibilities of digitally based studio devices.

Despite the considerable amount of time consumed by the development of the studio itself, a healthy number of compositions have been realised by undergraduates, postgraduates, members of staff and visiting composers. David Lumsdaine has realised the tapes for his Cheltenham Festival commission, *Caliban Impromptu*, his BBC commission, *Aria for Edward John Eyre*, and the ballet, *Meridian*, for the Northern Dance Theatre. Peter Wiegold has produced an electronic tape for Paul Bailey's play, *A Worthy Guest*, produced at the University Theatre, Newcastle upon Tyne, and in collaboration with myself

realised the ballet, *The Night Visitors*, commissioned by Northern Arts for the Northern Dance Theatre and given its premiere at Sadlers Wells Theatre. Elgar Howarth has paid a visit to realise *Pagliacci* for the Cardiff Festival, and Nicola LeFanu has produced the tape section for her ballet, *The Last Laugh*. A more comprehensive listing is given below.

Durham University Electronic Music Studio
 Department of Music
 Music School
 Palace Green
 Durham DH1 3RL

Current Personnel

Directors: Peter Manning
 David Lumsdaine (on leave 1976)
 Technician: Dr. John Emmet

Principal works composed in the studio

Enquiries for performances to the address above. We will then refer to the composer. Asterisked items are published by Universal Edition, the remainder by the studio.

Anna Antoszkiewicz	<i>The Phoenix</i> (1975)
Jeremy Birchall	<i>Crystallized Ginger</i> (1974)
Jeremy Birchall and Matthew Doyle	<i>Pizz</i> (1973; tape with film, mime, lighting and strings) <i>Civil's End</i> (1976)
Caroline Chamberlin	<i>Moments in Dessication</i> (1976)
Paul Crunden-White	<i>Electronic Music 1 and 2</i> (1975)
Simon Emmerson	<i>Come Up with Me</i> (1975; tape with ballet)
John Howard	<i>Close Enough for Jazz</i> (1976; tape and double bass; Northern Arts commission)
Elgar Howarth	<i>Pagliacci</i> (1971; tape and ensemble)
Diana Howell	<i>Change Rhythms</i> (1975)
Nicola LeFanu	<i>The Last Laugh</i> (1973; tape with instruments and ballet)
David Lumsdaine	<i>Looking Glass Music</i> (1970; tape with brass ensemble) * <i>Aria for Edward John Eyre</i> (1972; tape with soprano and double bass solos, and chamber ensemble) * <i>Caliban Impromptu</i> (1972; tape with piano trio) <i>Meridian</i> (1974; tape with ballet)
Peter Manning	<i>Vortices</i> (1973)
Peter Manning and Peter Wiegold	<i>The Night Visitors</i> (1975; tape with ballet)
Carolyn Martin	<i>Sweet Rose of May</i> (1976)
Benedict Mason	<i>Durham Dream with Miners' Gala</i> (1973) <i>Ertshub</i> (1974; tape and pianos)
Peter Wiegold	<i>A Worthy Guest</i> (1973; tape for play)
Helen Witherington	<i>Sea Change</i> (1975)

List of main studio equipment as at October 1976:

Studio design 32-in 16-out mixer
Two Quad stereo power amplifiers
Four Tannoy 15" monitor speakers in York enclosures
Two VCS3 synthesizers
DK1 keyboard for above
Two Tech sine/square oscillators
Studio design digital oscillator
Two studio design 28 channel third-octave filter banks
Two Barr and Stroud filters offering high-pass/low-pass/band-pass/notch options with continuously variable Q and centre frequency
Four studio design companders offering compress/expand/limit/gate/invert options with variable threshold, sidechain, attack and decay functions, separate envelope follower, voltage output and control input
Two studio design digital delay lines, with sample and hold and voltage-controllable clock options
Studio design digital pink noise generator
Studio design double pulse generator
Eight BBC pattern peak programme meters
Eight Dolby 361 noise reduction systems
58 x 74 central control matrix for the inter-connection of studio devices
Venner digital counter/timer
Advance OS 250 dual beam oscilloscope
Studio design 28 channel spectrum analyser
Thorens TD 160 record deck and Shure M75 cartridge
Six Revox stereo tape recorders (all high speed, two offering studio design variable speed option 26 i.p.s. to dead stop)
Teac A 3340 high speed four track tape recorder
Tandberg low speed stereo tape recorder
Uher 4200 portable stereo tape recorder
Uher 4000 portable mono tape recorder
One 1" eight track and one 1/2" four track tape recorder fitted with full sel-sync facilities, using Brennel deck transports, studio electronics (the 1/2" tape recorder may be extended at a later date if required)
AKG microphones, various headphones, test tapes and test equipment
CCTV (Camera plus monitor)

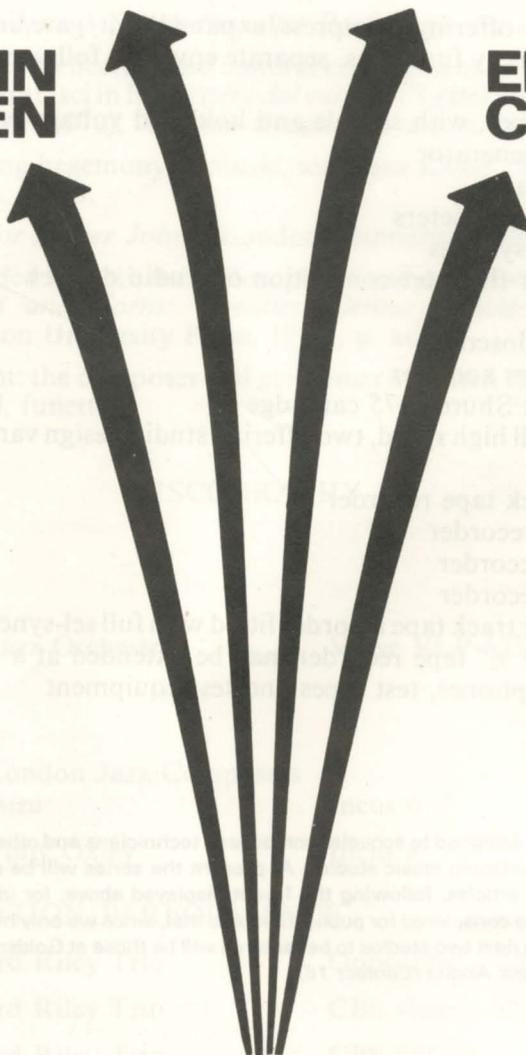
This is the third of a series of articles designed to acquaint composers, technicians and other studio users as well as our general readers with current activities in electronic music studios. At present the series will be confined to those in Britain. Studio directors are invited to submit *brief* articles, following the layout displayed above, for inclusion in future issues. It must be stressed that only brief articles will be considered for publication, and that, since we only have space enough for one studio per issue, a waiting list may develop. The next two studios to be featured will be those at Goldsmiths' College, University of London (*Contact 15*) and the University of East Anglia (*Contact 16*).

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Reviews and Reports

MILKO KELEMEN: OLIFANT for soloist (trombone, trombita, Bali-flutes, zurla, büchel, alphorn) and two chamber ensembles

Edition Peters No.8229, 1974 (£6.80)

MILKO KELEMEN: ABECEDARIUM for strings

Edition Peters No.8182, 1974 (£5.00)

GERHARD HOLZER: CONCERTO for trumpet and strings

Edition Peters No.8238, 1974 (£9.00)

JOSEPH SCHWANTNER: CONSORTIUM (I) for flute, clarinet, violin, viola and cello

Edition Peters No.66556, 1973 (£3.50)

KRZYSTOF MEYER: CONCERTO DA CAMERA Op.29 for oboe, percussion and strings

Edition Peters No.8325, 1974 (£8.50)

JOHN CASKEN

Anyone wishing to get to know the work of these largely unfamiliar composers will not be encouraged to do so by the extremely high cost of the scores. The only reasonably priced score (that of the Schwantner) is printed by Peters, New York, while the remaining ones are printed by Peters, Frankfurt. In terms of size, clarity of layout and presentation, Krzystof Meyer's *Concerto da Camera* is the only German-produced score which possibly warrants such a high cost. But consider that the manuscript itself was printed in Poland (the texture of the paper tells me this) and that the score would be sold there for perhaps one eighth of the price we are asked to pay. Holzer's *Concerto*, the most expensive score, is small and difficult to read (a reduction in size of the composer's own spiky manuscript). Throughout there is constant wastage of empty staves at the top and bottom of the page, and four out of the six pages of the second movement contain one staff only, for solo trumpet. A more intelligent layout and a little bit of imagination from Peters would have reduced such unnecessary wastage and, I hope, would have brought down the price. On the other hand, Kelemen's scores are at least legible (despite the pocket-sized score of *Olifant*), with sensible layouts and no wasted space.

Milko Kelemen, born in Yugoslavia in 1924, was a pupil of Messiaen and Milhaud, and after teaching in Zagreb and working on electronic music in Munich now lives in Berlin. *Olifant* was composed in 1970-71 for Vinko Globokar and, as we might expect, uses various virtuoso trombone techniques perfected by him. The use of other, less common wind instruments makes for a colourful composition, although it is difficult to tell how successful the juxtaposition of such diverse sounds as Bali-flutes and buchel are in performance. Sensibly, Kelemen makes provision for the use of substitute instruments should those specified not be available: Polish trombita can be replaced by horn, Bali-flutes by recorders, Swiss buchel by a muted trumpet (transposing the melodic line a fifth lower), the Turkish zurla by a trombone fitted with an oboe mouthpiece and the Swiss alphorn by a tuba. The two chamber ensembles (mostly wind) are placed on either side of the stage, and each has its own large percussion group (two + two players) including some less conventional instruments such as pasteboard rattle, super ball (!?), panderata brasilena and sanctus bells. On the whole the work relies heavily on sustained sounds initiated by the trombone which are transformed in some way, for example by wide vibrato, simultaneous singing and playing, rapid repetition, accel. or rit. and so on. The more fragmentary middle section — first for brass, then bells and then the Bali-flutes — provides a welcome change, and towards the end he makes interesting use of 4/4 unisons (crotchet = 144) which are gradually obscured by the returning sustained, sliding sounds of the opening.

Of *Abecedarium*, written in 1972, Kelemen says, 'Primarily it has been my aim to make such means [contemporary techniques and notation] intelligible to the younger generation of musicians and audiences, whilst retaining the artistic aspects involved'. The work consists of 26 parts (really 'moments') to each of which is designated a city or country whose first letters taken together correspond to the letters of the alphabet (the international spelling guide). The conductor states aloud the letters he wishes to play to make up whole sections (e.g. Amsterdam, Baltimore, Roma etc.), cutting from one letter to another and leaving letters out. Student string players should gain a lot from playing this work: it is not difficult and parts are particularly memorable. As a piece of functional educational music it is both interesting and creative.

Gerhard Holzer's four-movement *Concerto* is memorable if only for its unimaginative trumpet writing, its conventional rhythmic articulation, banal 'modern effects' and rather easy technical devices such as 'follow-my-leader' canons.

Joseph Schwantner's *Consortium (I)* was written in 1970 for Richard Pittman and the Boston Musica Viva. The score is bold and

large, but often difficult to read due to unnecessary cluttering with over-explained proportional divisions and the duplication in the score of the post-Pendereckian symbols which have already been explained in the preface. The beams are rather too thick and tend to draw one's attention away from the notes. Dotted lines may help to make the score more visually exciting but most of them really only get in the way. Schwantner makes use both of metred and proportional notation and occasionally combines them (e.g. at bar 84): 'play notes by eye according to the placement of the notes within the measure' (instruction to the strings). At the same time he asks flute and clarinet to play and count complex divisions of the bar, yet the differences between the two styles will in this case be inaudible. Bar 28 is notated exactly, but is virtually impossible to play without the performers rewriting their parts: both flute and clarinet are attached to the same beam and the whole 'bar' has the appearance of difficult, fast piano writing. And yet when the music moves away from the frantic cadenza-like writing, there are sensitive but far too infrequent moments of repose.

Krzystof Meyer was born in Cracow in 1943 and studied in the late 60s with Nadia Boulanger. The *Concerto da Camera*, Op.29 was written in 1972 for Lothar Faber and was awarded second prize at the 1972 Artur Malawski Competition in Cracow. Meyer calls this a chamber concerto but the forces employed are really quite large: a good-sized percussion section (four players) and 40 strings (20.8.8.4.). Unlike Schwantner's piece, Meyer's score is quite uncluttered: he almost goes to the opposite extreme, giving only a minimum of dynamic markings, but by so doing allows the music to play itself. Similarly, in the first part of the work, where the oboe has predominantly long notes and decorative flourishes, the strings and percussion are metred, whereas the oboe is asked to synchronise only at specific points. The shape of this work is unpretentious and clear: two sections, each with its own climax and separated by a cadenza for the oboe. The block sounds of the first section are changed in the second in favour of a much more varied texture, and here Meyer seems to have integrated the three forces rather well. The percussion climax at the end of the first section is possibly a little incongruous in the light of what has gone before: it is more outre and influenced perhaps by Serocki's treatment of percussion. The oboe writing explores the full range of the instrument (played normally without combined tones) and makes particularly effective use of two-part writing, where the two levels are clearly differentiated by large intervals, the lower level moving by leaps and the upper by step. This work, then, is a valuable addition to the list of contemporary compositions for oboe and orchestra, and, despite the taxing nature of much of the music, Meyer never allows himself to indulge in idiosyncratic obscurantism.

BIRTWISTLE: THE TRIUMPH OF TIME
Universal Edition 15518, 1974 (£4.50)

KEITH POTTER

This is one of Birtwistle's rare works for full orchestra, the first since *Nomos*, his Prom commission of 1968 (UE 14671), which was broadcast again by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Pierre Boulez last November. And it is, I am sure, the finest flowering so far of the composer's 'new' style: new, that is, since the beginning of the present decade when pieces off the chopping-block of the forthcoming opera, such as *Nenia — The Death of Orpheus* (1970) and *The Fields of Sorrow* (1971) began to appear.

Commissioned by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and first performed in 1972 under Lawrence Foster, *The Triumph of Time* is inspired by Brueghel's famous painting of the same name. This depicts the allegorical figure of Time riding in a cart, surrounded by marauding bands of skeletons in a ravaged landscape filled with images of death: a grotesque funeral cortege, in fact. Drawing an analogy between space and time the listener could well imagine himself standing motionless while a funeral procession passes slowly by him.

Birtwistle's style has been described as 'processional', which indicates how apt this analogy is for appreciating the nature of his music in general and of this work in particular. Here we have the block structuring, the 'knotty' sounds of wind and brass in extreme registers playing short, fast passages in rhythmic unison, the solo use of high trumpets, the delight in sudden bursts of percussion, the low rasping of the bass instruments or the (here amplified) squeaking of high wind in unison shortly before the end, which are

familiar from his earlier instrumental works. The overall form, too, is reassuringly simple: essentially three loud climaxes, the first halfway through, after a long build-up, the others roughly equally spaced in the second half, which winds down to a quiet close.

What is new is, first of all, the speed: extremely slow for the most part, almost as though the composer were asking the listener to share with him the actual experience of composing the piece as it goes along. Birtwistle says with reference to the idea of the procession that 'the position of the spectator is identical with the composer's during the process of composition'. To follow an analogy which, again, the composer has himself drawn and which will be familiar to those who know anything of his musical processes, time is here slowed down to the speed of a slow-motion film sequence. We are suspended in time and yet involved with it. Variation of listening focus is thus allowed by the processing of ideas (in both senses) at a slow tempo, and by maintaining simple foreground/background procedures that allow a clear and instant appreciation of perspective.

This reflective quality — formalised and archetypal like the Greek texts or tombstone inscriptions which the composer has set in the past, also indicative of his preoccupation with the physical world and death — leads naturally to a return to the more melodic style of Birtwistle's earliest works, such as the *Monody for Corpus Christi* (1959). Yet, just as in some of the recent works of Maxwell Davies (where a parallel development seems to be taking place), the lines are simpler, smoother, calmer and less 'expressionistic' than before. They are also allowed clearly audible repetitions: indeed, the essential structural device omitted from my description of the work as a series of climaxes is that of the twice repeated cor anglais melody which is first heard just over two minutes into the piece. On its first appearance this is followed immediately by a three-note figure (major third up, perfect fourth down) on soprano saxophone, which is repeated at frequent intervals at the same pitch throughout the work until, as the composer says, 'it explodes at the end of the piece, blossoming into a gigantic unison'. In addition the soft beds of string sound, on which lies, for instance, the cor anglais melody for the first two of its three appearances, have not been readily associated with Birtwistle's music in the past.

All this is to say that *The Triumph of Time* is both strikingly new and at the same time typical of its composer. I believe that this work will come to be recognised as a masterpiece and one of the greatest works by the leading British composer of his generation. The full score is fairly neatly laid out in a facsimile copy of the composer's handwriting. It is in parts a little too small to read easily (particularly by a conductor, I would have thought, though the work has now been played all over the world), but at least it should be accurate,

which was not always the case with the earlier printed scores of Birtwistle's music. The work is available in an apparently good performance but an incomprehensibly indistinct recording by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Boulez, coupled with the same composer's tape piece, *Chronometer*, on ZRG 790.

ANNE BOYD: ANGKLUNG for solo piano
Faber Music Limited, F0113, 1976 (£1.00)
PETER SCULTHORPE: SUN MUSIC for voices and percussion
Faber Music Limited, F0172, 1976 (£0.80)

NEIL SORRELL

Those who expect Australian music to be nothing more nor less than émigré European music should consult an atlas. The fact that Japan and South East Asia are much closer than Europe (or America) helps explain why young Australian composers have become seriously involved with Asian music, along with the music of their Aboriginal compatriots, and used it as an antidote to an oppressive European influence. Thus a composer like Peter Sculthorpe (b.1929) consciously moved from the technical complexities and aesthetics of 20th century European music via Copland and other 'straightforward' Americans to what he hopes will be accepted as something genuinely Australian. The series of pieces called *Sun Music*, for various combinations, mainly orchestral, gives a good idea of his progress and mature style. The compositions date from the late 60s, and since then the interest in musical traditions nearer home has continued, as titles such as *Tabuh Tabuhan* and *Ketjak* (both from Balinese musical terminology) or *Koto Music* and the part for 'various ethnic instruments' in *Dream* testify.

Sun Music for voices and percussion (plus piano), first performed in 1966, makes use of the sonorities obtained from a chorus articulating isolated sounds, gong, cymbal, bass drum, tom-tom, bongos, maracas, guiro, sandblock and piano struck with various sticks and hands directly on the strings. It is fairly sparse, atmospheric music, lasting some nine minutes, with perhaps a hint of Balinese interlocking patterns in the 'con precisione' section. It is not a difficult piece and, now that it is readily available in score, deserves frequent performances.

Another deliberately simple piece, and one which shows a more overt Asian influence, is *Angklung* by Sculthorpe's younger compatriot, Anne Boyd (b. 1946). This is a piano piece for Roger

Anne Boyd

Angklung for piano solo

£1

Peter Sculthorpe

Sun Music for Voices and Percussion 80p

**Please write for details of these and other works by Anne Boyd and
Peter Sculthorpe**

Faber Music 3 Queen Square London WC1N 3AU

Woodward, whose performances, I am told, reveal it as a delicately beautiful and successful miniature. *Angklung* is the name of a Javanese bamboo xylophone and also of the better-known (and somewhat curious) Javanese bamboo sliding rattle. In Bali the ensemble known as 'Gamelan Angklung' nowadays paradoxically uses percussion instruments other than the angklung. It is an eminently portable, even toy-like ensemble, and is usually limited to a four-note scale. I do not know exactly what Anne Boyd had in mind when naming her piece, but it is worth pointing out here that it restricts itself to four notes: B flat, A flat, E flat, and an F flat in one register only which may be retuned to a 'true' (untempered) F flat. Otherwise, the music has none of the vigour usually found in Javanese angklung music and none of the tone-quality of bamboo.

The piece is to be played as softly and as slowly as possible throughout. I find this kind of static music soothing and hypnotic rather than boring. Apart from the connection with South East Asian music — bearing in mind that Anne Boyd's angklung is a stylised one, as is the music she has written for it — there is some reminiscence of the New York 'process' composers. After smaller sections, which are separated by long-held notes and groups of rapidly-played notes, comes the long concluding section, with its sustained, slow crotchet pulse. This section grows from the oscillation between A flat and B flat (which began the whole piece), to which a repeated E flat and another oscillation, between F flat and E flat, are added. Thus the density gradually increases and then decreases as the music reverts to the A flat/B flat oscillation, dying away on a single B flat.

NEW MUSIC VOCABULARY: A GUIDE TO NOTATIONAL SIGNS FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, by Howard Risatti
University of Illinois Press, 1975 (£2.75)

*Obtainable from American University Publishers Group Ltd.,
70 Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3BY*

RICHARD ORTON

'It has been the intent of the author to make readily available a considerable body of contemporary notational material in order to show the logical growth of present-day musical ideas, as well as to offer a source list of symbols and ideas for student and composer alike.' So states the author's preface. A source list of symbols — yes, though by no means comprehensive enough on the one hand, nor selective enough on the other, to be very useful. As to the rest, no. I do not believe that it would be possible to make available musical *ideas* through fragments of notational systems, however well they are presented.

At first sight the book would seem to have a logical enough format — a chapter on 'General Notational Material' followed by chapters on individual classes of instrument — strings, percussion and harp, woodwind, brass and a final chapter on voice — and finally a 'List of Composers Cited', a bibliography and an index. In the last five chapters and in much of the first the presentation is such that the symbol appears on the left-hand side of the page with a brief explanation on the right, this being followed by a code referring to the 'List of Composers Cited' which gives the composer and title of the work, with date, that the symbol is taken from. So far so good — apart from the errors that have crept in during transcription and often inadequate or elliptical explanations. But musical ideas can surely only be expressed through groups of symbols, and, best of all, through the whole notation. Far better, then, to turn to real scores — or, dare one say it, to real listening — than to Howard Risatti's book.

Perhaps the volume could be useful for a composer who wanted to find a way of notating a particular movement in piano pedalling or of a vocalist's cupping the hand over the mouth. Well, yes, it would, if our composer were really so uninventive as not to be able to find a solution of his own. The difficulty with trying to regard Risatti's book as a reference work is that not enough scores are represented. Though 'more than six hundred scores were examined', less than half of this number are cited. (It would be interesting to know what the others were and why they are not included.) The 'List of Composers Cited' reveals some strange anomalies. The *only* scores dating from the 70s are eight by Howard Risatti. Forgive me, Mr. Risatti — I do not know your compositions — but I cannot believe that your notational innovations are that much more important than those of John Cage, who is represented by only one score.

For sloppy thinking and inadequate presentation one need look no further than the first few pages. Here an example of what is described as 'traditional notation without bar lines or meter' written on a single staff each for 'pft' and 'vib' is followed by 13 'transcriptions' into 'various notational systems' — often amalgams of the work of several composers. The 'traditional notation' gets no commentary at all beyond the remark that 'the spacing of the noteheads always approximates the desired rhythm; this is so even in the traditionally notated phrase'. Really? And if it were, it is certainly not apparent from the example, which seems deliberately perverse in *not* approximating 'the desired rhythm'. The 'transcriptions' which follow contain countless anomalies — what one can only presume are straightforward errors, together with changes unexplained by the symbols-key above the examples.

I confess I find this book tiresome. From the lack of thought and care in its presentation, I suspect that it also became so for its compiler and that what began as a 'special topics course in Music at the University of Illinois' became little more than a chore in preparing it for publication.

SOUND STRUCTURE IN MUSIC, by Robert Erickson
University of California Press, 1975 (£7.10)

Obtainable from University of California Press Ltd., 2-4 Brook Street, London, W1Y 1AA

DENIS SMALLEY

If persuaded to pass some judgement on the most significant development in Western music since the stabilising of the tonal system in the Baroque period, some musicians might vote for the downfall of the tonal system, some might select progress in the escape from metre towards total durational flexibility, some might wish to emphasise ideology or technical advances, and others might champion changes in formal thinking. But to me there is little present doubt that the once nebulous field of timbre has been gathering enough momentum since the 19th century to come top of the list. For we can view the tonal system, its precursors and extensions, not only as triumphs in themselves but also as the thin end of a wedge: we can see pitches and their aggregates in harmonies as one end of a continuum stretching from pitches to non-pitches, from single notes through chords to sound masses. Such an historical pronouncement needs more thought and examination than such a grand generalisation, and this is what Robert Erickson cogently sets out to do in this book.

There are two important consequences which the book highlights, two questions which cannot be overstressed. Firstly, music is an interdiscipline: we can no longer talk fruitfully about music in terms of music alone. The progress and research in other disciplines reverberate around music and cannot be ignored by composers, performers or thinking listeners. Erickson approaches acoustics, psychoacoustics, biology, physics, ethnology, psychology and philosophy as a musician. Above all, his book is about perception — what is perceived, and what can and could be perceived. Secondly, the academic pigeonholing which even now continues in music education institutions (even the most 'progressive') is no longer valid. Orchestration, harmony and counterpoint, acoustics, aural training and stylistic studies can no longer be productively divided. Timbre, therefore, embraces not only other disciplines, but cuts across the traditional artificial chastity of distinctions within music.

Erickson divides his book into six chapters: (1) 'The Sounds Around Us', (2) 'Some Territory Between Pitch and Timbre', (3) 'Timbre and Time', (4) 'Drones', (5) 'Klangfarbenmelodie: Problems of Linear Organisation' and (6) 'Timbre in Texture'. Each chapter is subdivided, sometimes into as many as twelve sections, and every idea is supported by constant reference to research work and carefully selected music examples taken from sources as widely ranging as Berlioz and Erickson's Californian colleagues, the drols of Indian drumming and Schwitters' Dadaist poem *Sonata in Primeval Sounds*.

The first chapter introduces the scope of timbre. Parallels are drawn with the sounds of speech, a dangerous procedure since the speech mode of listening and the music mode of listening are quite different. Erickson is intelligently cautious, suggesting that although the two are different we can still make use of insights into speech research. A thumbnail definition of timbre is an impossibility these days, because we now realise that the Helmholtz description we have lived with until recently is severely straightjacketed, though pardonably so since the music of his time has emphasised timbre as a *carrier* of pitch, as a nuancer of notes rather than an *object* in itself. If we are to attach more importance to the object function than to the carrier function this means an intensification of perceptual effort, focussing on aspects of a sound's life which up to our time have not been so important in musical composition, and therefore not recognised. Up to this century we have been educated for timbre constancy in an environment where timbre has thrown pitch into relief. The results of the growing change in emphasis are widespread, the most obvious being that we are now more interested in the musical instrument as a collection of contrasting sounds as opposed to a source of sounds which are heard as an unvarying function of pitch change. '... the new approach to timbres as objects represents a watershed in music. Sounds, a variety of sounds, all sounds, have become available to music. The management of this vast new vocabulary has become a central interest for musicians.' (p.16).

Chapter Two looks at the area along the pitch-timbre continuum, firstly examining auditory theory to extract the ideas most useful to musicians, and then expanding them with examples and musical applications. So we learn that a single pitch can be heard either as a pitch or a chord depending on attention and practice; we can direct the listener's attention to aspects of a sound by emphasising the ground between pitch and timbral transformation; pitches participating in a chord can lose their individual identity and fuse into a 'sound mass' (Varèse's 'fused ensemble timbres' are brilliantly analysed here). There are, of course, a lot of 'ifs':

dependence on musical context, relationships amongst component pitches, durations, listener familiarity and questions of acoustic environment.

The 'Timbre and Time' chapter examines the intimacies of a sound's life: attacks, changes in the pseudosteady state as a sound evolves (vibrato and beats for example), 'grain', the effect of speed on the perception of note groupings and timbral contrast, traditional uses of timbre contrast (Berlioz, Mahler, Debussy, Webern, Feldman), and less familiar concepts like 'rustle noise', 'spectral glide' and 'backward masking'. In an 'aesthetic interlude' Erickson, in an isolated tilt at contemporary attitudes, reminds the reader that perception is paramount in music: 'The journals present reams (some of it mere sportswriting) about mosaics, serial organisations, indeterminacy, and so on. Regardless of the newsworthiness of the theory of the day, the hierarchical nature of music is not dependent on aesthetic formulations. Hierarchy will function in any music or in any succession of environmental sounds that attracts our interest, because it is built into the way we perceive.' (p.80).

The remaining three chapters develop more familiar ground. Drones (from Wagner to the didgeridu) possess inherent possibilities of timbral concentration over non-varying pitch. The 'Klangfarbenmelodie' chapter (beware of unnatural parallels in the 'melodie' segment of the term) goes back to where Chapter Two left off, looking at melody nuanced by timbre, the articulation of motives through timbre (Webern), the concept of 'channelling' (the separation of the listener's attention during concurrent events) and the 'trill threshold' (when are two alternating pitches perceived as a trill?), music without motive, and music where pitch is negligible, vague or clouded. In the final chapter the reader is on most familiar territory — so-called 'texture music': masses, clouds, Ligeti, Xenakis, Debussy, Ives and many others. Erickson includes the spatial nature of sound and the acoustic problems of performance in the perception of musical texture, as well as the compositional problems of blending and layering.

I have felt it necessary to summarise much of the content of Erickson's book, since although the ideas separately may not be new, their ensemble is. Every reader will find much he has thought little about, many will find they have not thought at all, and no one who lives in the music of the present or immediate past should avoid reading it. My only regret is that Erickson, as far as I can surmise, does not have a good enough knowledge of French to read and digest Pierre Schaeffer's *Traité des objets musicaux*¹ (or even place it in the otherwise extensive bibliography), which expands much of the material Erickson has gathered, in particular, experiences and experiments in the morphology and typology of sounds and their relationship to perception. Having absorbed both books, one is in a better position to imagine music's future and to appreciate the far-reaching extensions to the low-key unpretentiousness of Erickson's preface to his book: 'I wanted to look closely at how we have used timbre in music, and at our traditional ideas about what we are doing. I hope I have offered no recipes for constructing timbral music. That needs ears and imagination above all. This is more a what-might-be than a how-to-do-it book, for all its emphasis upon practice'.

NOTE:

¹ Pierre Schaeffer, *Traité des objets musicaux* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966).

SOUND SCULPTURE: A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS BY ARTISTS SURVEYING THE TECHNIQUES; APPLICATIONS; AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF SOUND SCULPTURE, edited by John Grayson
A.R.C. Publications, 1975 (\$14.95 or \$11.95)
ENVIRONMENTS OF MUSICAL SCULPTURE YOU CAN BUILD: PHASE 1, by John Grayson
A.R.C. Publications, 1975 (\$14.95 or \$11.95)
BIOFEEDBACK AND THE ARTS: RESULTS OF EARLY EXPERIMENTS, edited by David Rosenboom
A.R.C. Publications, 1975 (\$14.95 or \$11.95)

The higher prices listed above represent the cost at retail: these books are now available in Britain from the Record Department of Dillons University Bookshop, 1 Malet Street, London, WC1. Alternatively, all A.R.C. material can be ordered directly from A.R.C. Publications, P.O. Box 3044, Vancouver, B.C., VCB 3X5, Canada, at the lower price. We hope to publish further reviews of A.R.C. material as we receive it, including the records issued in connection with the above books, Michael Byron's Pieces anthology, the Journal of Experimental Aesthetics and two more books.

RICHARD ORTON

The Aesthetic Research Centre of Canada has been established upon a broad base. It was originally proposed in an article written by John Grayson in 1970 as 'a centre devoted to the study and reification of the visual and aural senses in aesthetics'. A year later a research programme was set up at the Cowichan Centre for Gestalt Learning on Vancouver Island, and the Aesthetic Research

Centre became registered as a non-profit educational and research Arts Organisation. Other branches have since sprung up, notably in Toronto; and during 1976 a series of local research projects is being conducted, applying various aspects of the Centre's work.

The A.R.C.'s endeavour appears one of the most impressive of recent attempts to integrate experimental work in the arts and commends itself especially to musicians. The publications under review, the first of a series of books and discs recently announced, eloquently persuade us both of the need to collect and document these new researches and of the value of doing so. All three volumes are attractively designed, well illustrated and adequately bound books, clearly printed on a good quality paper.

Sound sculpture is a fairly new term, and its content is by no means clearly delineated. It can refer to three-dimensional kinetic art works which happen to make noises through their movement; or, more usually, to sculptures designed to sound — automatically, powered by natural forces like the wind or by electricity, or through human interaction, as 'audience participation'. Or the term can refer to a constructed sound environment, where the 'sculpture' is identical with the sounds occurring, often electronically produced standing wave patterns articulated by the shape of the environment including, of course, the people within it. Or it can refer to musical instruments, as a special case of the sound sculpture in which an intended manner of performance is embodied in the form of the instrument.

All of these, and more, are to be found in John Grayson's *Sound Sculpture*. The book's great value lies in its documenting the work of many different artists, largely through their own words and through excellent photographs and drawings. It opens with Bernard and François Baschets' 'Structures Sonores'. Two short articles previously available only in French set out the philosophical as well as the practical base to their work, suggesting their individual differences and acknowledging their many collaborators and assistants. The illustrations range from simple musical constructions to the interactive 'Hemisfair Musical Fountain' in San Antonio, Texas, in which jets of water controlled by the public may be directed to different sets of tuned metal rods and flanges. Their work embodies visual and aural elegance and a refreshing lightness of touch, shown in the 'Piano with two ears', especially when contrasted with François' statement 'The grand piano is a heavy musical wheelbarrow'. Other brief quotations will serve to indicate their dedication and range of ideas. 'It is the hands which discover and the completely unconditioned ear which listens attentively.' '... we instinctively search for the harmony which exists between shape, sound, sculpture, light, poetry, music... but is it not first necessary that this harmony exist in ourselves before we are able to realize it?'

Apparently close to the concerns of the Baschet brothers are Harry Bertoia's musical rod constructions, to house which he has built a special 'sound-box' barn, and Harry Partch's instruments. The scant four pages devoted to Partch should not be taken as representing his relative importance; the editor's decision to restrict the material mainly to a short article called 'No Barriers' (previously published but long out of print) was presumably justified by the ready availability elsewhere of material on this giant of instrumental development.¹

One of the most delightful contributions is from the American Reinhold Pieper Marxhausen (sic!), who describes his involvement with sounds at different times in his life: 'The yet unheard of, unearthly, indescribably beautiful and haunting sounds came from the hollow chamber of a door knob. Intimate sounds only heard by the player. Sounds that have made a nun dance, old people laugh, and everyone smile'. The discovery led to a series of head-bands and door-knobs with spikes, shown in use in accompanying photographs.

Stephan von Huene, David Jacobs and Charles Mattox are kinetic sculptors whose work has been extended to incorporate sound elements. Von Huene's sound-making automata strongly emphasise the human absence, as in the one-man-band without the man, or the tap dancing boots. An excerpted 'photo essay' shows the inside of some of his objects and suggests how they work. David Jacobs' Wah-wah objects are enormous pneumatic breathers rather wastefully documented in many pages of drawings, photographs and notes; while of Charles Mattox's work only the large, rocking 'Theremin Piece' seems to have had the sound element consciously designed. Similarly, Max Dean's 'Sound Sculpture' (which appears misplaced at the end of the book) is simply a large box that saws its own top off; the sound here is surely a by-product.

We move on to further conceptual and practicable possibilities. Murray Schafer's essay 'The Graphics of Musical Thought' relates the ways in which musical time processes are preserved through their coding in 'spatial screens' — notation. David Rosenboom's 'Vancouver Piece' is simultaneously 'an invisible static airpressure sculpture, changes in which can only be experienced by moving around the space' and a visual biofeedback work, which also receives some attention in his biofeedback book. David Rothenberg's frustratingly insufficient 'Visual Music' is presumably intended as a trailer to a complete volume on his work which is promised at a later date. Then we have 'corporeal sound sculpture': a brief reference to nada yoga, Corey Fischer's sound-acting and John Grayson's sensory workshops.

The last section of the book returns to musical instruments. There is an admirably clear account by William Colvig of the 'western gamelan' he built for Lou Harrison. We are reminded of the latter's

dictum 'Make an instrument — you will learn more in this way than you can imagine' (from *Lou Harrison's Music Primer* excerpted earlier in the book). There are also a giant 'Musical Carillon' built by Tony Price with a scrap from an atomic energy testing ground and Luis Frangella's 'Rain Music II' — large modules with tuned drums intended for large-scale assembly in the open air.

As an introduction to, and as an exploration of its subject, this book is excellent. There are many inspiring examples for anyone remotely interested in the area. I do not think the balance is quite right yet — the Schafer article and some of the kinetic works hardly qualify at all. In future editions a greater distinction needs to be made between those sculptures which require human agency — placing them in the category of the musical instrument — and those that do not. But the book is successful in drawing together the work of some interesting artists and musicians and allowing both their similarities and differences to demonstrate themselves. Let us hope that the many British artists one knows of working in the field will respond to the request to make their work available for documentation in future editions.

The companion volume *Environments of Musical Sculpture you can build* is an extension of the practical aspects of *Sound Sculpture*. Information is provided in the form of work sheets, references and analyses of materials to be used, to enable anyone to begin the invention and construction of his own musical instruments, all of which is based on projects initiated by the author. In an opening essay John Grayson proposes several areas of basic development: through rhythm, pitch, control of timbre, and through psychoacoustic aural illusions and infrasonics. But the core of the book is the collection of descriptions, drawings and photographs of new musical instruments that have been built. These include huge low-frequency instruments, called 'Big Boomers', 'Mushrooms', which are grouped tuned steel discs, a giant koto, marimba and steel drum instruments, gongs, bells and the 'Garden of Tears' — a collection of Pyrex coffee percolator tops in different sizes, set in a frame.

Several other sections follow. One gives a full-scale work sheet (blank for duplication) and reduced examples of completed sheets showing the research notes on materials that preceded the making of the instruments. A score showing the notation for the instruments was a good idea, but the reproduction of Douglas Walker's *Requiem* in its full 70 pages appears rather a luxury unless a recording of the work is also to be made available. There is documentation of a musical environment for handicapped children, a notable example of applying some of these ideas to social ends and, judging by the photographs, a very successful one; and, looking hopefully to the future, a proposed 'Sound Sculpture

Exploratorium' with plans and drawings of an environment to accommodate sound sculptures.

David Rosenboom, currently head of the Laboratory of Experimental Aesthetics at York University, Toronto, Canada, is the American composer and researcher one associates with biofeedback applications in music. His *Biofeedback and the Arts* must already be regarded as an essential source-book for documentation of the early work in this field. Much of the book is written by him, with contributions from a few other artists, musicians and scientists.

Biofeedback is achieved though the use of electrodes, usually two placed on different parts of the head, connected to a differential amplifier which reads the voltage fluctuations between the electrodes. A filter is normally employed to limit the range of frequencies monitored. The signals, detected and amplified, can be used to create sensory feedback for the subject by several methods — through triggering events or through continuous modulation. The feedback may be visual or auditory. The examples given in this book range from very simple basic researches, such as the triggering of a simple audio tone or line-tracing on a television screen, to complex multi-media 'events'.

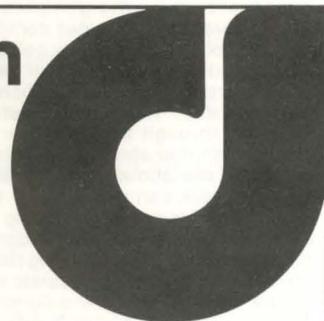
By means of the feedback a degree of control over electroencephalographic readings can be learned. From an apparent continuity of brain-wave frequencies, three have been isolated as corresponding to definable states of consciousness. Subjective descriptions of these states are as follows: *Theta* (3.5-8Hz) 'Pure relaxation. Oneness. Everything on automatic pilot'; *Alpha* (8-13Hz) 'Super consciousness of the presence of everything in the environment but not making abstractions. Raw data stored but not coded. No filters on incoming information'; *Beta* (13-25Hz) 'Maximum efficiency in making abstractions. Making instantaneous logical connections between things seen. Very attentive'.

David Rosenboom's book is an invaluable focus both for those wanting to know more about these techniques and, not least through its substantial bibliography, for those wishing to initiate their own research.

NOTE:

¹See, most notably, Harry Partch, *Genesis of a Music* (New York: Da Capo Press, second enlarged edition, 1974). For a review of this see *Contact* 72 (Autumn 1975), p. 42.

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FEEDBACK PAPERS 5-9

Feedback Studio Verlag, 1973-75 (DM8 each or DM25 for a year's subscription)

Obtainable from Feedback Studio Verlag, 5 Köln-1 Geneterstrasse 23, West Germany

TIM SOUSTER

During 1969, at exactly the same time as some of their contemporaries in this country, a number of young composer/performers living in and around Cologne decided to take the promotion of their music and ideas into their own hands. In 1970 the Feedback group was duly founded by Johannes Fritsch, Rolf Gehlhaar, Peter Eötvös, David Johnson and Messias Maiguaschca. The group soon established itself as a significant force in new music in West Germany. It has since toured widely on the Continent performing the, largely, live-electronic compositions of its members. The group holds regular musical 'at homes' ('Hinterhausmusik') in their studio in the Genterstrasse in Cologne and summer concerts in the barn at Oeldorf outside the city. As well as bringing out the *Feedback Papers* (FBP), they publish most of the music of the main participants in the group, plus pieces by Klarenz Barloh, John McGuire, Werner Klüppelholz, Michael von Biel and Joachim Krist, all of whom are residents in the Cologne area.

Recently things have changed in that Rolf Gehlhaar has come to this country to direct the studio at Dartington and David Johnson has taken up a similar post in Basle. This leaves Fritsch in a leading role at Feedback, but he intends to carry on the group's activities and the publication of the *Papers*, all in close collaboration with Maiguaschca, Eötvös and Barloh.

The force which originally attracted this diverse assortment of people to Cologne emanated from, of course, Stockhausen, with whom all of them have either studied or collaborated (Eotvos still does) as performer or assistant. Most people fall out with Stockhausen in the end — indeed Stockhausen starts to wonder about those who hang on over the normal two-year limit — and most of the Feedback group now keep him at arm's length both practically and aesthetically. But the *FBP* are mercifully free of any rankling, although occasional barbed comments are made, for example with regard to the scandalous dismissal of his assistant, Richard Toop.

Before summarising the main areas dealt with in *FBP 5-9* (issued between January 1973 and Summer 1975), I should say that the pages of news flashes contained in each issue were some of the most illuminating things that I read, not because I was closely involved in just this area of German musical life during this period, but because they give glimpses of the functioning of that musical life in a way which invites comparison and contrast with our own. (Same problems, but more going on and more money.) I feel this is something that *Contact* itself might emulate: short factual reports on concerts, conferences, appointments, commissions, criticism of criticism etc.¹ The principal strength of the Feedback group is revealed through this medium: their self-awareness. They have illusions neither about the true nature of the music industry in West Germany nor about the infinitesimal degree of influence a group like Feedback can wield in the face of such a juggernaut.

FBP 7 contains a depressing but informative list of reports on badly attended lectures and concerts, lack of interest in ordering new scores and a threatening rise in the rent of the Feedback studio premises. Significant snippets of information are culled from the media. The details of the German Gramophone Record Prize for 1972 reveal that whereas 44% of record buyers go for operetta, new music does not even constitute a category and is lumped together with Others — at 2%! It is cold comfort for the Feedback-Leute that their works are not available on commercial records anyway.

But they soldier on. Fritsch lectures at Darmstadt and at the Cologne Music Hochschule and has formulated a comprehensive new-music plan for that well-endowed but surprisingly chaotic institution. Gehlhaar organises courses at Darmstadt. Johnson works with children and turns out invaluable circuits for do-it-yourself electronics engineers. (He generously publishes circuits for various kinds of mixers, quad pan-pots, an amplitude modulator and a dynamic compressor.)

Fritsch contributes the most substantial theoretical articles, most of which stem from his preoccupation with what he calls 'general harmony': all kinds of systems of proportions — Platonic, Chinese, planetary. This is a sure indication of the influence of The Master, but Fritsch's application of these ideas in his own music is individual. His tape piece *Musica Mundana* is based on the principle of deducing all musical parameters from the characteristics of the various planets: distance from the sun, volume, density, mass, rotation, orbit time and brightness. The overall duration of the piece compresses the events of a Saturn-year into 49 minutes and 6 seconds. As Fritsch comments: 'In many subsequent Saturn-years ever new harmonic constellations arise which unfortunately cannot be presented, as they would entail a duration which would exceed the limitations of even the most well-disposed listener.' This wry, slightly self-deprecating irony informs much of the editorial writing in *FBP* as well, and thereby the very agreeable tone of the whole is set.

A good balance is struck. It's not *over*-technical; it's not *over*-speculative, and it's certainly not evangelical (though at times a little bit parochial). The problem of new music in its social context is dealt with, though not in any great depth, in a stimulating article by Klüppelholz on 'Information-Theory Aesthetics' (Something which was due for a working-over in the Rhineland), in Fritsch's lecture called 'Material, Form, Content, Meaning, Effect' and in Rudolf Frisius's excellent account of the events of Darmstadt 1974. Party lines are rejected, and excesses, in either political direction, are presented without comment so that the reader may draw his own conclusions. Two prime examples: an extraordinarily silly 'Lenin Symphony' by Christian Bachmann, consisting of 3,000 copies of a sheet of paper with a crotchet (der Urton) printed on one side and the words 'Lenin Symphony' in Russian on the other. These were distributed in various corners of the Soviet Union in 1973, mostly by means of throwing bundles of them into rivers. The *FBP* editor cannot resist the jaundiced comment: 'Forwards, forwards, art belongs to the people, anyway art as stupid as this'. Those taking the capitalist road too gleefully are represented by Günther Becker (not West Germany's most convincing composer), whose *Ferrophonie* was promoted by an amazing PR handout (entitled 'The Song of the New Steel') financed, like the composition, by the huge steel combine, Klöckner Stahl. This is full of gems like: 'A sunny day. Get the bike out. Give a cheeky, jolly ring on the shining steel bell... The tick-tock of the stop-watch and the quiet sound as the chest-expander is drawn out. Klöckner steel is everywhere becoming the incidental music to the experience of success in sport'. The puff for Becker then ends: 'he has created something new in new music. But at the same time he has in this remained true to himself'.

I would recommend *FBP*, despite their now rather high price, to anyone in this country who can read German and who is interested in new music. If awareness of the significance of these musicians were to grow, we might finally be able to *hear* their works. Eventually the BBC might finally be persuaded to broadcast some of the tapes they must receive from the German radio stations of works such as Eötvös's *Moro Lasso*, Fritsch's Concerto for trumpet and orchestra, Maiguaschca's *A Mouth Piece* and Gehlhaar's numerous recent pieces. Until that time *FBP* at least enables us to *read* about them and their creators who, in adverse circumstances, really have remained true to themselves.

NOTE:

¹We're attempting to! (Ed.)

GAVIN BRYARS: THE SINKING OF THE TITANIC; JESUS' BLOOD NEVER FAILED ME YET

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DAVID ROBERTS

The first four releases of Brian Eno's Obscure Records (distributed by Island Records) make a promising start for the label. It must be hoped that 'obscure' is an ironic rather than a prophetic epithet, for on the whole the music presented on these discs is attractive and accessible. It deserves a wide audience.

Obscure No. 1 comprises two long pieces by Gavin Bryars, *The Sinking of the Titanic* and *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet*. The former takes as its starting point the report that the ship's band were still playing hymn-tunes as the Titanic went down. Bryars has conducted extensive research into the story in an attempt to unravel the various accounts and theories, and some of the conclusions of his detective work appear on the sleeve together with a number of 'pataphysical' speculations which arise out of them. The 'piece' is an assemblage of musical items associated in one way or another with the disaster; the recorded performance is just one of a number of possible realisations of this material. The most prominent components of the recorded version are hymn-tunes played by a string ensemble and a tape part consisting chiefly of sustained sounds, at times resembling foghorns. Given this emotive story, few composers could have resisted writing a violent and self-indulgent work, yet what Bryars has put together is impressively simple and direct, communicating the quiet dignity that the ship's band managed to retain in the face of imminent catastrophe.

Again, the word that is first brought to mind by *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* is 'dignity'. This remarkable composition springs from a recording of a few lines of evangelical doggerel sung by an unidentified tramp. These few phrases are repeated endlessly by means of a tape loop; with successive repetitions an instrumental accompaniment is gradually built up, texture and

FEEDBACK STUDIO VERLAG KÖLN

Erster Deutscher Komponistenverlag
Gegründet 1971 von Johannes Fritsch und Rolf Gehlhaar
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harmony growing ever richer, until eventually the accompaniment begins to overshadow the voice. With the constant reiteration of the tramp's song, a small piece of magic is worked: the original hoarse voice, uncertain in rhythm and intonation, is transformed by degrees to a point where all the coarseness is forgotten and it is heard as a performance of great artistry, every nuance deliberate and controlled. One is left puzzling whether the repetition has been obscuring or revealing the true quality of the singing. The growth of the accompaniment is skilfully handled, excepting, towards the end, the disturbing off-beat notes of the oboe. A shame too that the track should end with a moment of bathos — a fade from the tutti: it would surely have been better to have returned to the unaccompanied singing. But these are quibbles. This is a very fine and compelling piece, and one I shall want to hear many times more.

Bryars' contribution to *Obscure No. 2, 1, 2, 1-2-3-4*, is also based on borrowed material, though here the listener does not hear it direct, but via the playing of performers who listen to a recording over headphones and attempt to render it simultaneously as best they can on their instruments and voices. The recorded result is mildly interesting, but offers few surprises. Christopher Hobbs is represented by two pieces from the days of the Promenade Theatre Orchestra — *Aran* and *McCrimmon Will Never Return* — the first of these achieving the not inconsiderable feat of sounding like some kind of Highland gamelan. I should have been glad to have had more of Hobbs's characteristically gritty music in place of the fourth item on the record, John Adams's jejune *American Standard*, a portrait of three musical styles — Sousa marches, hymns, and Ellingtonian jazz. The piece presumably seeks its justification as a commentary upon American society, but even so, as a satire it's blunt-edged.

Brian Eno's *Discreet Music* for synthesizer and tape-delay system, which takes up a side of *Obscure No. 3*, is self-confessed *musique d'ameublement*. A dangerously simple and quiet piece, it is intended to form 'part of the ambience of the environment', in which modest aim it is very successful: when I first listened to it over headphones in my room at the University, its slowly-changing patterns became so completely fused with the noises of building work in the distance that it was something of a shock to discover later, when I played the track at home, that what I'd remembered as a particularly telling effect wasn't on the record at all, but had been produced by circumambient trucks. The second side of the disc is given over to Eno's *Three Variations on the Canon in D major by Johann Pachelbel*, which are as much variations on a performing style — the grand romantic manner — as on the Pachelbel itself. Quite witty as a skit upon inappropriate performances of Baroque music. The grotesquely reverberant quality of the mix is especially fine.

One of the most interesting developments in the experimental movement in recent years has been an increasing interest in the invention and construction of new instruments. A useful booklet on the subject is *New/Rediscovered Musical Instruments Vol. 1*, edited by David Toop (London: Quartz/Mirliton, 1974 — distributed by the Experimental Music Catalogue, 75p), in which the work of Paul Burwell, Hugh Davies, Max Eastley, Paul Lytton, Evan Parker and David Toop is described and illustrated. Eastley and Toop, represented on *Obscure No. 4*, exemplify two quite different approaches to instrument construction. Eastley begins from the standpoint of a visual artist, building sound-sculptures which, once set up, 'perform' without human intervention, operated by wind, water or electric motors. Four of his instruments are featured on the record: hydrophone, centriphone, metallophone and elastic aerophone. The results are astonishingly complex and inherently interesting, though it sounds as though the recording has been given a certain amount of cosmetic treatment.

David Toop's activities, on the other hand, have inclined towards the 'rediscovered' part of the album title. His instruments and music show the influence of several ethnic musics. The most elaborate of the three tracks by which he is represented is *The Divination of the Bowhead Whale* which employs the following exotic ensemble: prepared electric and bass guitars, bowed chordophone, two-string fiddle (made by Paul Burwell), grill harp (made by Hugh Davies), Japanese bells, bass drums and lorry hub. The rich and intricate sounds hold the attention throughout. It should not be forgotten, of course, that even the oldest instrument becomes new if it is used in an original way. Following this line of reasoning, one of the most original instruments heard on the record is Toop's voice in the songs *Do the Bathosphere* and *The Chairs Story*. His uncanny falsetto is quite unlike anything I've heard before. (It makes my throat ache too.)

ROGER DOYLE: OIZZO NO
THR 3 (£3.25: British Isles; £3.75: Overseas)

Obtainable from the composer at 'Rye', Rocky Valley, Kilmacanogue, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. Prices include postage and packing.

KEITH POTTER

Roger Doyle is an interesting young Irish composer from Dublin who has recently been studying at the electronic music studios in Utrecht, Holland. He's obviously fairly highly thought of, since not only did he get quite a healthy stretch of studio time as a composer after not all that long there as a student (difficult in such a prestigious set-up with so many students and well-known outside composers competing for use of the equipment), but has also just been awarded a Finnish government scholarship to work in the electronic music studio of Finnish Radio in Helsinki.

Despite all that, he's a very down-to-earth Irishman with a typically Irish sense of humour. I met him at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies last Easter (see Norman Josephs' report below for a survey of this) and found what I heard of his music, both on this record and his more recent work, which seems mainly to be for electronic tape, rather fascinating. It has an 'experimental' flavour about it, which is particularly interesting since I discovered that he had never heard the term before (that at least shows that promotion for English, as well as American experimental music doesn't extend to the Republic of Eire: EMC please note!). This is illustrated by the quirky tonality of *Bitter-Sweet Suite*, played by Doyle himself on a 'treated' tinny 'special piano', the occasional rather insidious use of quotation or found objects (in several pieces), and, to parochial English experimental ears, the pervading Celtic influence (normally Scottish in the case of composers such as Christopher Hobbs and Michael Parsons, but in Doyle's case quite obviously, and naturally, Irish).

This latter influence is to be found in several of the pieces on this record that use Irish speech on tape: *Why is Kilkenny so good?*, an actually rather rambling tape piece involving Doyle as interviewer, and *Oizzo No* itself, the title of which turns out to be a (typical?) Dubliner's response to that all-important question for listeners to new music: 'Do you get it?'. The answer, formulated in the Dubliner's style (and the pun), are self-explanatory. *Oizzo No* alternates electronic and concrete sounds with a 'live' instrumental sextet: the hard-edged 'primitive' rhythms of the group make an effective contrast to the slightly rudimentary electronics. As in several of the electronic pieces, such simple techniques as echo, playing backwards and panning, using the very effective stereo sound, are rather overworked, but all these pieces were done, I think, before Doyle had had a chance to compose very much in the Utrecht studios. A later tape piece of his that I heard is altogether more sophisticated.

Ceol Sidhe is for an effective Irish combination of Uilleann pipes (not for squeamish anti-experimentalists with equally tempered ears), Irish harp and tin whistle, while Brian Dunning (solo flute) and the Dublin Baroque Players give an account of Two Movements for flute and strings that sound more like student exercises. The disc is completed by *Obstinato*, a short piece using tape loop, *Theme from Emptigon* for multi-tracked (?) Doyle on drums, piano and guitars and *Extra Bit* for tape, which eventually takes us back to the questioning Dubliner of *Oizzo No*.

With the exception of some fade-outs which are rather too abrupt and the absence of separate banding of each track, the technicalities of recording and producing a record privately are well managed. The recording quality and surface are extremely good, which shows that these things can be achieved without the assistance of a commercial record company.

Distribution remains, however, a problem for all those who have the courage to put their cash into making their own disc. Doyle's record is worth buying, but few, I suspect, will hear about it. There must be others in the same position, so if *Contact* can do a little to draw attention to other worthwhile records of new music issued privately, then we shall be pleased to accept further discs for review. Meanwhile, Roger Doyle, for one, is worth looking out for. And details of another private recording venture follow below.

SALZBURG SEMINAR IN AMERICAN STUDIES
SCHLOSS LEOPOLDSKRON, SALZBURG, AUSTRIA
SESSION 167: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN MUSIC
MARCH 28 - APRIL 16, 1976

NORMAN JOSEPHS

American music in Salzburg? Why go there? Well, there was the opportunity of nearly three weeks there in the spring, the last week coinciding with the world-famous Salzburg Easter Festival. But even if one were lucky enough to be elected a fellow, would it be worth it? How could all the facilities required by musicians be brought in so as to make the Seminar something more than a sterile experience in musicological exchanges or dry and pretentious theorising?

There was, however, the reputation of the faculty who would

teach the fellows (without payment, I might add) during the three weeks. Admittedly they all seemed to be Princeton men by origin, but they had developed in different ways since they were students. There were three composers — John Eaton, a Professor of Music at Indiana, and Claudio Spies (who actually studied at Harvard) and Paul Lansky, both Professors at Princeton — and Michael Steinberg, music critic of the *Boston Globe*, then on leave to write a book on Elliott Carter which will be published in the Eulenburg Books series edited by Sir William Glock.

And what about one's colleagues? From the outset the 39 fellows were amazingly friendly and communicative — and younger than I had expected. They came from 14 European countries, both East and West, as well as from the USA. The largest group were primarily composers, others were teachers and performers, and a few were not formally trained musicians at all, but working in closely related fields such as broadcasting, American literature and sociology.

The opening day allowed us to take in the famous vistas and the grandeur of Schloss Leopoldskron in which we were staying. The first dinner was real 'cordon bleu', and marvellous food was to be provided for the remainder of our stay. My own room, shared with one other fellow, overlooked the Schloss lake with the mountains beyond. Even if there were to be no music at all, this alone would make it a fine holiday! But to return to the programme: we learned that although John Cage, Elliott Carter and Milton Babbitt had previously been here, this was the first purely musical session in the Salzburg Seminar's 29-year history. It was evident from the beginning that there would be no lack of response to this implicit challenge. We were a collection of polyglot individuals who were to contribute keenly, almost vociferously, to the lectures and seminars which followed.

The daily schedule (Saturdays and Sundays excepted) consisted of two morning lectures and two afternoon seminars. Each faculty member took it in turn to lecture, the emphasis being initially on an historical perspective with musical examples. There were also some more detailed lectures on particular works or on compositional techniques. Some examples of lecture titles in the opening week were 'American Music in the 20s and 30s' (Steinberg), 'Emigre composers in the United States in the 40s and 50s' (Spies), 'American Music in the 50s' (Eaton) and 'Concepts in Electronic Music' (Lansky). The later lectures were increasingly contemporary in content, centering on the last ten years, with some exploratory suggestions for new compositional paths. The seminars varied between the practical, the analytical and the evaluative. Spies and Lansky examined fellows' and some of their own compositions, Eaton chaired fellows' impressions and evaluations of several examples of American composers taken from recordings available, while Steinberg concentrated on the role of criticism and the duties and necessary limitations of the music critic.

In addition to the formal programme there was a musical event of some sort practically every evening — often fellows' compositions taped or live, or local concerts. Social events, including a dance, a barbecue and a banquet, were organised by the permanent staff, whose dedication, energy and charm throughout remain very memorable.

Issues were raised by all these events, not least by the formal programme which had to satisfy the varying experience and expectations of the fellows as well as the capabilities of the faculty. How, from a faculty angle, would it be possible to devise an adequate teaching programme for the fellows, some of whom were themselves eminent professors who might, however, have had little experience of American music, and others of whom were younger and might have heard plenty of American music but not in all cases be professional musicians or be interested solely in 'serious' music? So by the first Wednesday Jeffrey Cofer, a fellow with previous experience of the Salzburg Seminar, was co-opted alongside the faculty to give seminars on country music, blues, jazz and rock subjects.

This could not, of course, satisfy everyone all the time, but by the second week the formal programme was running smoothly enough, though it was very difficult to follow up all the classes. In their very limited spare time participants were able to listen to many records and tapes of contemporary American music on high quality equipment, or listen in the adjacent Meierhof building to a powerful set-up with additional recording facilities. The library resources were more modest. There were some interesting recent publications not generally available in Europe at present, as well as a small number of scores suitable for detailed analysis classes.

How did this all evolve? In arch form maybe, the greatest period of activity being towards the end of the second week with the evening events setting the scene for the real ebb and flow of ideas. The Seminar seemed to me like the USA itself — a melting pot full of life and struggle. This dynamism probably caused moans from most people at some time or other: for instance, composers obviously had different needs from others. Or had they? Was this not a great opportunity to talk *outwards* — to discuss the politics of musical creation, the politics of musical experience? Could there be no meeting point between the desires of those who viewed music as a phenomenon in itself — a thing apart — and those who ultimately saw music in terms of something else — a social expression? But the issue is perhaps wrongly expressed. It was not a case of 'either/or'. How could this consensus be accomplished between people whose different musical backgrounds would mean that such discussions could not reach a sufficiently high level, due to the

intrinsic difficulty of communicating in common terms back to the music itself? Besides, the concept of 'musical politics' might well suggest to a European the question 'what ideology (if any) is or should (or could) be communicated by those engaged in music?' To someone from the USA the concept might well revolve around how a composer can (or should) obtain adequate exposure of his music in the often frustrating, even seamy, hurly-burly of American musical life.

That small regret apart, I was personally glad to accept what was offered and was impressed by the faculty's sympathetic evaluations of composers from the West Coast of the USA, who were only represented at the Seminar by their music. I particularly valued the seminars on criticism, which on one occasion touched on the relationship between tourism and music. This was especially apt, considering that the Easter Festival was then taking place, the organisers of which generously gave us passes to one of Karajan's rehearsals. I found the solemn ethos of this rather unappealing, the lax rehearsal technique of the conductor contrasting with the wonderful resources of the orchestra. But times have changed since Beethoven: respectable people are no longer led by aristocratic taste to demand new music. I was left wondering if it would not be particularly hard for a young Austrian composer to get a fair hearing in a land continuing to benefit from Mozart's blood, sweat and tears.

But it is better to dwell on the more memorable moments: Professor Leopoldo Gamberini's '1 Madrigalisti di Genova', who sang Renaissance music with such sustained flexibility and emotion, John Eaton's *Blind Man's Cry* and, perhaps most of all, Boguslaw Schaffer's *Missa Elettronica*, quite the most immediately appealing and inspiring work in this genre that I have yet heard. I also cannot forget guitarist Joseph Lewis's remarkable extemporary musical/poetical and dramatic abilities as demonstrated in his late evening recital.

I came away with the conviction that American music is the most dynamic in the world, that this session must surely be the first of many, that no one composer or style could ever 'represent' American music in all its richness, and that we should all increase our efforts, energies and enthusiasms to secure the future of new music whenever we have the chance. For me, then, a remarkable experience, and any reader who turned down the chance to go should not do so again! For many of us, of course, the Seminar will not end in Salzburg, but will go on through the friendships we have made.

SPNM TENTH COMPOSERS' WEEKEND JULY 16-19, 1976

ANDREW BENTLEY

This year's Weekend, directed by Barry Guy and Richard Orton with the assistance of Peter Aston and Paul Patterson, kept to much the same format as in previous years, with, however, perhaps more emphasis laid on formal lectures and seminars. The Weekend gives its participating composers, many of whom do not benefit from contact with the kind of stimulating environment found in, say, a university community or the London scene, the valuable chance of sampling rehearsals and performances of a wide range of music written for the available two small instrumental ensembles. This year these consisted of clarinet, violin, cello and piano, with or without double bass, and flute, trombone, guitar and harp.

The confessed aim of the Weekend — and even this was called into question this year — is to provide the composer with this sort of professional ensemble for which he can write a specific work, and with which he can rehearse and discuss it. This format, of course, necessarily does not attract the famous, but the advance notice of the instrumentations available is short enough to inhibit the slow worker. As in last year's session, there was an opportunity late each evening to hear tapes of performances of participants' works, of which there was no shortage. The importance of these occasions can certainly not be overemphasised.

A concert of Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* and Barry Guy's *Games (for all ages)* opened the Weekend's evening concert series. The Guy piece came out the stronger from performers who were in obvious need of an ensemble feeling which the *Quartet* was inclined to disperse and diversify. The performance of *Games* underlined the value of a sincere, non-cynical and, more important, a personal approach towards playing new music, which had already been implicit in James Fulkerson's workshop performance of a graphic score by Paul Johnson earlier in the day. Fulkerson sorted out ambiguities in the ensuing discussion as efficiently as those in the score itself. Sheer confidence of this sort helped to raise the standard of comprehension and conversation for the whole Weekend.

Though a lecture entitled 'Criteria in Contemporary Music', given by John Marlow Rhys, and a seminar of criticism following it, led by Hans Keller, promised to be the central verbal event, it failed as such, and attention slid away to the sideshows. These included host-professor Peter Aston talking on the composer and the church, Richard Orton cataloguing and connecting different activities all over the world under the umbrella of 'environmental music', Roger Marsh giving a suitably theatrical account of his own music-theatre works, and Peter Wiegold applying his editorial

'It is most exciting to discover an important composer'

ALAN MANDEL Piano Quarterly (USA), Spring 1976

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expertise to sorting out some of the notational problems and anomalies of scoring new music. Denis Smalley offered otherwise inaccessible ideas derived from Pierre Schaeffer's research into the morphology and typology of sounds. He sent many composers away with at least some common vocabulary to apply to the compositions using tape that were aired over the Weekend: Lyell Cresswell's *Drones III* and Richard Orton's *Ambience* (both for trombone and tape), Bernard Parmegiani's *De Natura Sonorum* and John Schneider's *Voyage* amongst them.

Discussion-rehearsals accelerated towards a concert of participants' works — but with the spectre looming ahead of the collapse of the London concert (which customarily follows the Weekend), due to the unavailability of the performers. For those who had sacrificed rehearsals for lectures the concert produced pleasant surprises. Michael Maxwell drew superb mixtures of sounds from the ensemble of flute, trombone, guitar and harp, which tended to draw attention in a new way to the individual instruments used, outside the identity of the group. Henry Brown asked for his instruments and players to portray characters from Gogol's *Diary of a Madman* and pulled it off without a hint of simplicity. Edward Shipley's *Seventh Enochian Key* was a work inflated to almost epic proportions from a small ensemble and relatively few material resources.

NONDO RECORDINGS/EVENTS

D. & E.D. Panton (*Music*)
9 The Hawthorns, Woodbridge Road, Birmingham, B13 9DY

DAVE PANTON

The Birmingham Alternative Arts Co-operative (See *Contact* 12, pp. 30-31) was a non-starter as a political movement because of non-co-operation. Reluctance to use an umbrella title, pay out-of-pocket expenses or contribute to hire fees, lack of effective liaison and in some cases artistic incompetence — a blasphemous criticism to those convinced that 'everyone is an artist', I am not — led us to operate individually as agents for others. Three events resulted. Then Stoke Arts Centre — an attempt to put the idea that 'everyone is an artist' into practice — finally crumbled. This leaves Nondo.

Nondo is the recordings/events concern of D. & E.D. Panton (*Music*), now a publisher member of the Performing Right Society Ltd. (registered no. 1943875) — and (to remind you) concerned about:

- exposure of various avantgarde/experimental musics via recorded/live events (the latter as agitating agent, not promotion);
 - composers'/musicians' royalty/fee rights from such events.
- At the same time, we aim to avoid the trappings of commercialism (letterheads, labels, etc. being hand-printed or duplicated), in order to allocate the maximum of an already tight budget to the above concerns.

Fundamentally things centre on my personal project, One Music Ensemble, a collection of audio/visual sources (rather than people) e.g. piano, saxophone, scores, visuals etc., with a marked comic flavour. It ignores demarcation lines like music/theatre, improvisation/composition, art/life, to remind one, perhaps, that it's a game — even when taken seriously; but the project often involves or beomes involved with others, sometimes without their knowing. The Arts Co-op, then, has shifted its emphasis from politics to the working together (blending) of various artistic activities.

Although low funds prevent the financing of recording other than personal projects or publishing compositions in printed form (only recorded works of which the copyright has been assigned or is owned by us are registered with the PRS), anyone able to raise the cost of processing, pressings etc. is welcome to take advantage of the label/publishing mechanism. As this subject is too involved to go into here, anyone interested should send a stamped addressed envelope for details to the above address.

RECORDINGS:

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MUSICS

Editorial address: 48 Hillsborough Court, Mortimer Crescent, London, NW6

HUGH DAVIES

The idea of starting a new magazine took shape after a three-way telephone conversation between Evan Parker and Mandy and Martin Davidson. A number of people from various musical backgrounds responded to the idea of a magazine devoted to new (primarily improvised) music and new ideas on music, and met to discuss how such a publication could take shape.

It was agreed from the beginning that the only way to produce the magazine with the limited financial resources available was to type, print, collate, staple and distribute it ourselves. Otherwise there would be a long period of preliminary fund-raising (and possible compromise). We each contributed £4.00 to provide the initial funds. If there is enough money in our bank account we increase the print-run (currently 800).

As for content, *Musics* takes shape from the material sent to us and the ideas of the people willing to work on it. Each issue is edited by a different editor or editorial group and is sometimes devoted to a single subject (No.5: *Music/Context*, edited by David Toop; No.7: *Dutch issue*, edited by Peter Cusack and myself). The June/July issue, No.8, edited by Steve Beresford, Paul Burwell and John Russell, was followed by an issue on Performance Art edited by Tom Puckey.

Subscription rates (six issues per annum):

UK £2.40

International: surface £2.40

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BRISTOL MUSICIANS' CO-OPERATIVE

Information from Ian Menter, 36 York Road, Montpelier, Bristol 6; tel. Bristol (0272) 559226, or Steve Mulligan, 18 Church Lane, Clifton Wood, Bristol 8

IAN MENTER

Although the Bristol Musicians' Co-operative has existed for about 18 months (see *Contact* 12, p.30), it is about a year since it started promoting a regular music scene in Bristol. What follows is no more than a condensed list of the Co-op's achievements and experiences during that time and an outline of our current aims and concerns. On nearly every Wednesday evening since August 1975 the Co-op has put on a performance at a Bristol pub. Many different kinds of music have been played by many different groups. We have been thrown out of one pub because the beer takings were not high enough, but we are currently installed at the Bristol Flyer (Gloucester Road).

Two activities which have folded up since last autumn are the weekly improvisation workshops run by Co-op members — one at a community centre and open to anyone, the other for children at a comprehensive school. Lack of regular support was the basic cause of the termination of these sessions. However, since July of this year the Co-op's financial situation has improved considerably due to the award of a £500 grant by the regional arts association, South West Arts.

Immediate use of this money is being made to support the scene at the Flyer, and, regardless of attendance each week, a flat rate for every musician performing is guaranteed. Although this sum is only £2, an important principle has been established: the equality of 'value' of musical performances regardless of commercial standards. Some of the grant may also be spent on putting on concerts with visiting musicians playing opposite our own groups. We are keen to get groups from other organisations such as ours to play, either at such concerts or at the regular Wednesday sessions, preferably on a reciprocal basis, i.e. they arrange a performance for one of our groups in their home town.

Very briefly, other achievements in the past year have included a commission for one of our members by the local art gallery, the Arnolfini. This work was performed by a specially formed Co-op group, Wind and Fingers. Various musicians have played on local TV and radio programmes, and we have established contacts with the local press and with magazines such as *Contact* and *Musics*. We have a representative on the national committee of the Musicians' Collective, the recent formation of which we regard as very encouraging.¹ With the support of a local record shop which has already been helping in our publicity, we are hoping to produce some records during the next year.

Perhaps our overwhelming priority at the moment is the search for a permanent base which can be used for rehearsal and performance. Once we find this we will immediately recommence regular music workshops, which we feel are essential in keeping the doors of the Co-op open to new people. In general terms the educative function of the Co-op is fundamental. We must always be providing opportunities for people to hear and understand new

kinds of music, as well as providing opportunities and contexts for musicians to experiment and to expand their techniques and relationships.

Over the past year we have certainly changed and probably enhanced our own perceptions of the place of the committed new musician in a provincial community. The strength of collective action has been politically, intellectually and artistically rewarding and, we have no doubt, will continue to be so.

We publish a monthly calendar which gives details of all sessions organised by the Co-op as well as other performances in which members are involved. Monthly discussion meetings are held which are open to members and non-members alike. These usually cover routine planning and programming as well as consideration of basic policy matters. If we can help you, or if you can help us, or if you would like our calendar posted to you, then contact either Steve Mulligan or me at the addresses above.

NOTE:

'It is hoped to include information on the development of this in a future issue of *Contact*. (Ed.)

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC NETWORK

ANNETTE MORREAU

The fifth season of the Contemporary Music Network begins in October and will run through to March. 99 concerts will take place, given by 13 different performing groups.

The Contemporary Music Network, established in 1972, is a touring scheme of the Arts Council of Great Britain. The Network was set up to provide high quality concerts of contemporary music relatively economically. The subsidy is generous (the Council covers fees and travel expenses), and promoters wishing to present Network concerts are obliged to accept a programme package. The choice of performing group is made by the British Section of the International Society for Contemporary Music, which is a Committee of the Council's Music Panel. The programmes are 'negotiated' with the groups, the Committee frequently choosing a group in order that some key work can be performed. An example of this was the choice of the London Sinfonietta to perform Berg's

Chamber Concerto which toured in October 1975 with György Pauk and Paul Crossley.

Where possible London performances are linked to tours, although early planning by promoters outside London often means that a London performance emerges as a result of plans for a tour. The Network tries to provide promoters with a wide choice of contemporary music, so jazz, electronic and improvised music, music-theatre and conventional instrumental music is offered. The Council does not promote the concerts, this being left to the individual promoters. Inevitably there have been successes and failures in attracting audiences, which is to be expected in a scheme so new. The number of groups toured is related to the number of concerts that promoters feel able to take on, and so far this number is limited. The opportunities for performing contemporary music outside the scheme are regrettably small, and the Committee is faced each year with the problem of selecting or rejecting groups whose survival may depend to some extent on a Network tour.

Although the scheme predominantly presents British performers, there is no hesitation about programming good foreign works. Foreign performing groups, such as Les Percussions de Strasbourg, Steve Reich and the Philip Glass Ensemble have been invited to tour, offering a repertoire that would not otherwise be heard in this country. Collaboration with the BBC has been important, and it is hoped that in the future some commercial recordings of works toured will emerge.

EXPERIMENTAL ARTS PRODUCTIONS

2 Cleeve House, Calvert Avenue, London, E2 7JJ

STANLEY HAYNES

I formed Experimental Arts Productions in 1975 to promote performances of contemporary music and related art forms. In its first season Stockhausen's *Hymnen* was produced at the Round House in a new version which I prepared with the composer during 1975, for quadrophonic tape with four instrumental soloists. *Kontakte* was played in nine cities including London (the Queen Elizabeth Hall), and a series of concerts was also given in Scotland.

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Dr Whittall is Reader in the department of music at Kings College, University of London.

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Music in Transition 1890-1920

JAMES SAMSON

An account of the crucial decades in the development of music from the 1890s to 1920, devoting chapters to such key figures as Scriabin, Schoenberg, Berg and Webern and includes a discussion of the twelve-note method of composition. The book will be of special interest and use to students of one of the most important periods in the history of music.

Dr Samson lectures in the department of music in the University of Exeter.

Illustrated throughout with music examples, about £6.50

DENT

E.A.P. is soon moving to new premises in Kenton, where it is to be set up as a non-profit-distributing limited company.

The 1976-77 season opens with another performance on November 8 at 7.45 p.m. Once again a double concert has been arranged, and at 6.00 Ronald Lumsden (piano) and myself (sound) will present a programme of works for piano solo and piano with electronics. This will include Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro*, a selection from Book II of Debussy's *Etudes*, Boulez' Third Piano Sonata, French composer Luc Ferrari's *Und so weiter...* for amplified piano and quadrophonic tape and the first performance of my *Pyramids* for piano, filters and modulators.

Several further concerts are planned, the first of these being an Anglo-American concert to be held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on November 21. Among the items to be performed are Babbitt's *Composition for Four Instruments* and Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet*. The second, a concert of Anglo-French electronic music which takes place in the Round House in February 1977, will include a new piece by Gilbert for mezzo-soprano and five instrumentalists, Iannis Xenakis's *Mikka* for solo violin and pieces by Jean-Claude Risset and Radulescu. In the same month the group Triquetra (Irvine Arditti, Charles Hine and myself) will be presenting a concert/demonstration at the Tower Hamlets Music Library. This is intended as an introduction to electronic music for those who are unfamiliar with it, and it is hoped to arrange further small-scale concerts in other London boroughs.

In April 1977 a concert of Anglo-German music is to take place, featuring the Arditti Quartet in the first British performance of Mauricio Kagel's String Quartet directed by the composer. The programme will also include the first British performance of the duet 'Laub und Regen' from Stockhausen's *Herbstmusik*, a completely revised version of my *Rendezvous* for violin and tape and the first London performance of Paul Patterson's *Shadows* for clarinet and tape. Before the concert Kagel will give a talk. A concert of Anglo-Jewish music is also planned for this series and will include Schoenberg's *De Profundis*, Kagel's *Hallelujah* (for 16 voices and organ pipes) and the first performance of my *Shemah Yisroael* for cantor, choir and electronics. Outside London there will be a performance of Stockhausen's *Kontakte* at the Holywell Music Rooms in Oxford by Ronald Lumsden (piano), Charles Hine (percussion) and myself (sound projection).

On account of the increased number of promotions this year, funds are needed to set up a new office, to establish E.A.P. as a limited company and to provide part-time secretarial assistance. It is hoped to raise these funds from industry, since, through its association with electronic music, E.A.P. is closely connected with new developments in advanced computer and electronic technology.

For further information about E.A.P. please write to the above address.

SCORES AND BOOKS RECEIVED

Tadeusz Baird
Konzert für Oboe und Orchester (Peters)

John Becker
Symphonia Brevis (Symphony No. 3) (Peters)

Jean-Yves Bosseur

Anna Livia's Awake (Radio France)
Completely Sweet (Editions françaises de musique)
Le temps de le prendre (unpublished)
Lire Schubert (unpublished)

George Crumb

Night of the Four Moons (Peters)

Brian Dennis

Poems of Solitude 1 and 2 (Experimental Music Catalogue)

Morton Feldman

De Kooning (Peters)
Voices and Instruments (Universal Edition)

Aloys Fleischmann

Poet in the Suburbs (Oxford University Press)

Vinko Globokar

Dédoublement (Peters)
Echanges (Peters)
Notes (Peters)
Voix instrumentalisée (Peters)

Mauricio Kagel

Mare Nostrum (Universal Edition)

William Mathias

Elegy for a Prince (Oxford University Press)

David Maves

Oktoechos (Peters)

Roger Reynolds

Compass (Peters)

Toru Takemitsu

Green (Peters)

Chinary Ung

Tall Wind (Peters)

Malcolm MacDonald

Schoenberg, The Master Musicians series (Dent)

Robin Maconie

The Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen (Oxford University Press)

Graham Vulliamy and Ed Lee, eds.

Pop Music in School (Cambridge University Press)

Inclusion in this list does not necessarily presume a review in a later issue.

In addition, it is hoped to bring readers' attention to more foreign publications in due course, including magazines and other materials not generally available in this country. Editors of foreign publications concerned at least partly with contemporary music are invited to send material and suggestions for ways in which we can act together for the mutual benefit of our readers.

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This issue will include:

an article on new research into sound transformation techniques in electronic music by John Schneider

'Music and Society — 2: The Rise of Industrial Society and its Impact on English Folk Song' by Jim Sharpe

'Electronic Music Studios in Britain — 4: Goldsmiths' College, University of London' by Hugh Davies

many reviews of new scores, books, magazines and records, and reports of events both in Britain and abroad

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

John Shepherd Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Manchester Polytechnic, where he is initiating a research project concerned with arts in the community. Also completing a thesis on the sociology and aesthetics of music at the University of York.

Malcolm Barry Director of Music in the School of Adult and Social Studies, Goldsmiths' College, University of London.

Alan Gillmor Canadian musicologist and critic. He is an Associate Professor and Chairman of the Department of Music at Carleton University, Ottawa. Dr. Gillmor is an expert on Erik Satie and concepts of the avantgarde in the 20th century.

Peter Manning Senior Experimental Officer in Music at the University of Durham in charge of teaching, research and development in the Electronic Music Studio.

John Casken Composer. Lecturer in Music at the University of Birmingham.

Neil Sorrell Lecturer in Music at the University of York, specialising in Indian and Indonesian studies.

Richard Orton Composer, also singer. Lecturer in Music and Director of the Electronic Music Studio at the University of York. He has recently contributed to the newly instigated course 'Art and Environment' at the Open University.

Denis Smalley New Zealand composer specialising in electronic music. Lecturer in Music and Musical Director of the Electronic Studio at the University of East Anglia.

Tim Souster Composer, viola player and writer on contemporary music. Formerly Stockhausen's teaching assistant in Cologne and then composer in residence in West Berlin on the German Academic Exchange scheme. Now Leverhulme Research Fellow in Electronic Music at the University of Keele.

David Roberts Musicologist and flautist. Lecturer in Music at the University of Sussex. At present completing a thesis on the music of Peter Maxwell Davies.

Norman Josephs Lecturer in Music at the University of Keele. At present researching into the post-war American musical.

Andrew Bentley Composer specialising in electronic music. Has studied with Richard Orton at the University of York and is now in Helsinki working in the electronic music studio of Finnish Radio.

Dave Panton Composer/improviser working in Birmingham.

Hugh Davies Composer and instrument-maker. Formerly Stockhausen's teaching assistant in Cologne, he has worked in England for the last ten years and is Director of the Electronic Music Studio at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. He is a member of the editorial team of *Music's* magazine.

Ian Menter A founder-member of the Bristol Musicians' Co-operative.

Annette Morreau Music Officer at the Arts Council of Great Britain in charge of the Contemporary Music Network.

Stanley Haynes Composer. Founder of Experimental Arts Productions and now a Research Fellow in Electronic Music at City University, London.

The Editor Composer, performer and writer on contemporary music. Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. At present completing a thesis on aspects of 20th century musical notation. Member of a percussion duo with the composer David Jones.



