# CONTACT

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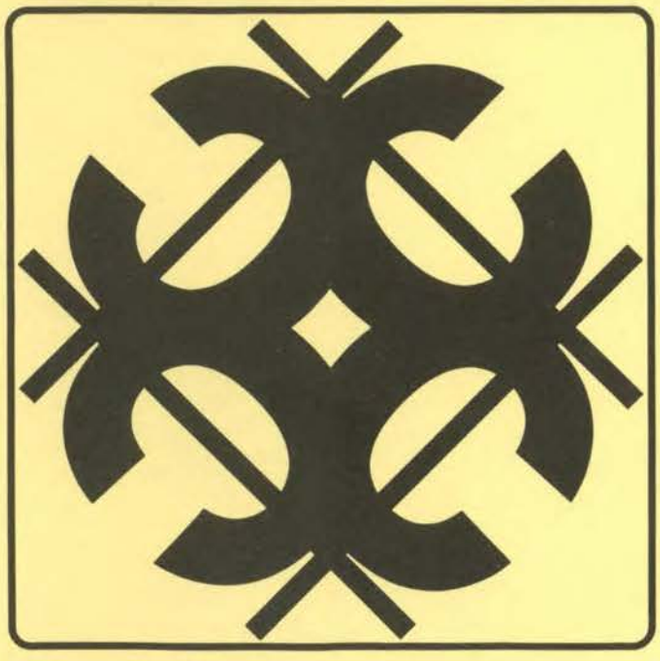

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## CONTACT 20

Apologies again!! The editors of *Contact* are bound to offer considerable apologies for the continued, and this time inordinate, delay between issues. This is due to a number of factors, one of the most important of which has been our continuing problem of considerable commitments, on the part of all of us, to things besides *Contact*: chiefly, of course, the earning of our livings.

This situation is, I assure you, as intolerable for us as for our long suffering readers, contributors and advertisers and we are doing everything we can to see that matters improve quickly. We are extremely grateful for the sympathy and concern for *Contact* which has been shown to us by so many people who would have had good reason to react very differently. If we needed any proof that the magazine fills a need and that it's actually *wanted* rather than simply tolerated, we now have it; it means a great deal to us.

The present situation has led, inevitably, to a large backlog of review material. Some we have sadly simply had to reject. A good deal of what we feel are the most important reviews appear in this issue, though it was impossible to come fully up to date and the backlog will be made up finally next time.

In addition to a large range of reviews which will include special features on Cage, Stravinsky and Dutch music, *Contact 21* will have English experimental music as its central focus, with articles on or by Gavin Bryars, Howard Skempton, John Tilbury and John White. *Contact 22* will be a special Satie issue. We trust that you'll keep reading!

# CONTACT
## No 20 AUTUMN 1979

Edited by Keith Potter, Hilary Bracefield, David Roberts, John Shepherd



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# Brian Ferneyhough

## INTRODUCTION
### KEITH POTTER

'A SERIES? After all that neglect, a *series*?!' Thus one of my editorial colleagues on slightly misconstruing my plan for a group of short articles on various pieces by Brian Ferneyhough, to be written from different points of view: not only from a wider perspective than just the committedly 'pro' (though there's nothing wrong with that in its place, of course), but from the angle of the performer as well as that of the analyst or critic.

It became clear that some kind of explanation was necessary: some kind of apologia for my idea as well as some kind of apologia for Brian Ferneyhough. Who is he? What has he done that has provoked first neglect and then, more recently in this country, a small wave of almost total admiration that began, I suppose, roughly three years ago and rather than quickly subside, seems to have accelerated its growth rate in the last twelve months or so and shows few signs of diminishing in at least the near future? And why, apart from bandwaggoning, should *Contact* expend so much space on him? Let me try to answer these questions briefly and in turn.

Ferneyhough is a British composer. He was born in Coventry in 1943. He first studied at the Birmingham School of Music and (just a minute while I find my Brian Ferneyhough brochure put out by his publishers, Peters Edition) 'later with Lennox Berkeley at the Royal Academy of Music in London. On completing his studies there he won the Mendelssohn Prize which enabled him to continue his studies in Rome and Amsterdam. While there he won a Gaudeamus Prize in 1968 with his "Sonatas for String Quartet", the same prize the following year with "Epicyle" and the same prize the third year running in 1970 with his "Missa Brevis". In that year he obtained a scholarship to study with Klaus Huber at the Basel Conservatoire, and has lived in Switzerland since then. In 1974 he won first prize in . . .' But hang on a minute. What was that about living in Switzerland? Do you mean to say that this composer, British born and educated (at least in part), the winner of three Gaudeamus prizes in a row and a good few others since then, clearly highly valued (at least by those who award the prizes in Gaudeamus competitions) . . . that this composer isn't living in this country any more? isn't being regularly commissioned by the BBC, by Britain's leading orchestras, ensembles and soloists? hasn't had articles written about him regularly in Britain for at least the last ten years, even in *Contact*? And that we're not even sure of how to pronounce his name?

Yes: I do mean to say all that. Now, *why*? Ferneyhough's music isn't easy to play and it isn't easy to listen to: these facts should become amply evident in the articles below. In fact it's very *difficult* music, from almost all points of view. Ferneyhough's mind works in a very complex way and in a very European way, it would seem. And despite Glock, despite Boulez and despite (because of?) Keller, we in Britain find the complex European musical mind baffling, inscrutable, incomprehensible sometimes. We don't go in droves to listen to complicated, highly intellectual music. In fact most of us don't go at all, ever: so we don't give it the chance. We've already decided that it's not for us: after all, Schoenberg is quite bad enough. We react to the charge that we're insular and small-minded (in at least two senses) by saying that these Europeans who say they *do* understand this stuff are at best deluding themselves, at worst out-and-out charlatans. And jolly narcissistic to boot: there aren't that many of them, after all. And when we hear the stories — which we always *do* manage to hear somehow, even though we never hear the music — of the players (poor toilers in someone else's fields of sorrow) who failed to pick up the right sort of clarinet or played their part upside down (either accidentally or on purpose; we'll never know) *and no-one (not even the composer) noticed*, then . . . well, I mean: what *are* we supposed to think of the music?

This attitude is all wrong, of course, or at least mostly wrong. Now if we were actually willing to take a composer's work seriously, and to expect to work at it, just as he has had to, in order to start to appreciate its rewards, then we wouldn't be so narrow and blinkered, so shamblingly arrogant in the face of such an important cultural advancement, crucial to any understanding of the art of our time. It's only because our cultural mandarins don't understand these matters — or, worse, refuse to understand them — that British public musical taste isn't educated towards an understanding of the complex art of a composer like Ferneyhough; it's only because our music education system and our cultural apparatus in general (and specifically the running of our major orchestras) doesn't encourage, even actively discourages, young musicians with the inclination and abilities to take this music seriously and play it as well as anyone is capable of playing it that those stories take on the importance which they have — *even if they're true.*

Now hang on again a minute. You might perhaps be forgiven for thinking that I've been talking to Ferneyhough: collecting his views for this article. Well, I usually like to meet the composers I write about and I believe it an important part of my business to make their acquaintance. But on this occasion I haven't: I've never met Ferneyhough and never talked to him, not least because he lives abroad (though he's been coming to Britain more frequently for musical reasons in the last three years, I think). No: the above isn't a Ferneyhough paraphrase, and I wouldn't, for his sake if for no-one else's, want anyone to even assume that he'd necessarily agree with all of it.

From what I understand of his attitudes he might at least be critical of that bit about educating public musical taste. Ferneyhough appears to be a very esoteric figure. I'm not saying that he deliberately courts the kind of mystique that inevitably surrounds a composer of complex serial music when at least someone thinks he's good. But I don't *think* he believes that the 'musical masses' are ever going to come to terms with his music, or indeed that he (or, presumably, anyone else, for that matter) should work specifically to bring that impossible end a little nearer. I'm not saying that he's the only composer who doesn't 'write down' to his audience: no

good composer does that and there are quite a few other good composers around even today. But Ferneyhough is as uncompromising in his attitude to the promotion and dissemination of his music as he is in his actual composition processes themselves. And not, like some good composers, because of a lack of ability with words: he has, I understand, a formidable ability to discourse with complex eloquence in several languages. Ferneyhough actually seems to believe that his music can *and therefore should* only be appreciated by a tiny minority and that all else is irrelevant. I do hope he'll find the time to tell me if I'm wrong.

It may by now have become apparent that though they are not *necessarily* an accurate representation of Ferneyhough's views on these matters, my earlier comments on the nature of conservative, uncomprehending musical Britain were not made without my tongue being at least occasionally in my cheek. I don't believe that they represent the whole story, even if they represent an important aspect of that story. There are cultural forces at work on the opposite side of the channel which are just as resistant to the supposedly 'complex European' type of musical thinking I have attempted to categorise. The facts of Ferneyhough's 'rise to fame' confirm that his music needed the special pleading of the Royan and Venice Biennale festivals in the mid 70s, despite the equally indisputable fact that he was better appreciated (appreciated at all, that is) in Europe generally before that than he was here. And that his thinking is very much in line with certain post-Webernian and post-Adornian ways of thinking which have their origins in, particularly, the German-speaking countries and which thus form a natural part of the cultural matrix in a way which they do not (cannot?) here. But let's be clear about one thing. The numbers of people to whom this cultural matrix is a living thing are small indeed. The specialist new music festivals in Europe, by their very existence as well as frequently by their actual nature, help to prove this.

So why have I chosen to expend so much space on Brian Ferneyhough? Well, the phenomenon of 'the prophet without honour in his own country' is an interesting one from several points of view, for a start, especially when coupled with the problems I have tried to sketch above. I also find Ferneyhough interesting as a representative, not only of certain European trends, but of one which I believe is taking a firm root in this country and may well prove a significant development in the 80s: British composers like, in their very different ways, Michael Finnissy, Oliver Knussen, Stephen Reeve and Nicholas Sackman might be take as illustrations of this.

But most important of all is that, despite the fact that my personal predilections in new music lie very far from Ferneyhough's, I find his music fascinating to listen to and to attempt to understand. Part of this is no doubt due to an intellectual need to investigate something which in many respects baffles me and for which I may frequently question the need. But at least an equally important reason is that I find Ferneyhough's sounds and processes extremely musical, so that I usually enjoy the actual experience of listening to his music, even for the first time. There can, for me, be no better reason to discuss a composer's music than this.

*A Checklist of the material under discussion*

Sonatas for String Quartet
Peters Edition, P-7118 (£9.50)

Cassandra's Dream Song
Peters Edition, P-7197 (£2.30)

Unity Capsule
Peters Edition, P-7144 (£5.25)

Time and Motion Study I
Peters Edition, P-7216 (£5.50)

Transit
Peters Edition, P-7219 (£28.00)

Sonatas for String Quartet. Berne String Quartet; RCA Red Seal, RL 25141 (£3.99)

Transit. London Sinfonietta/Elgar Howarth and soloists. Decca Headline, HEAD 18 (£4.50)

*A Selective Bibliography of articles on or by Ferneyhough in English*

Andrew Clements, 'Brian Ferneyhough', *Music and Musicians*. Vol. 26, No. 3 (November 1977), pp. 36-39. The best general introduction to the composer I have read.

Brian Ferneyhough, 'Aspects of Notational and Compositional Practice', Catalogue for the exhibition 'Scritture musicali', Academie de France, Rome (June-July 1978), pp. 36-41. A valuable adjunct to the composer's score forewords concerning his attitude towards notation.

Jonathan Harvey, 'Brian Ferneyhough', *The Musical Times*, Vol. CXX, No. 1639 (September 1979), pp. 723-728. A more technical article than Clements', concentrating on the *Sonatas for String Quartet*, *Cassandra's Dream Song*, *Unity Capsule*, *Time and Motion Study III* and, in particular, *Transit*.

Peter Heyworth, 'A Venice Discovery', *The Observer Review* (Sunday November 14, 1976), p. 27, and 'Vivid Voice', *The Observer Review* (Sunday November 20, 1977), p.30. These two reviews, of the 1976 Venice Biennale performances and the 1977 QEH performance of *Transit* respectively, are by one of Britain's leading critics.

The two records listed above also have important sleeve note articles by Harry Halbreich and James Erber respectively.

Ferneyhough's most recently completed work, *La terre est un homme*, a BBC commission, received its premiere at a Musica Nova concert in Glasgow by the SNO under Elgar Howarth on September 20 and a further performance in London on September 30 by the LSO under Claudio Abbado. It will also be heard in Donaueschingen in October and in performances by the Chicago SO under Abbado in the USA next February.



# SONATAS FOR STRING QUARTET
## KEITH POTTER

SOME WRITERS — notably Harry Halbreich, one of the European new music cognoscenti who has been most partisan in his support of the composer (he was responsible for the performances at Royan in 1974 and 75) — have divided Ferneyhough's output so far into two parts, 'separated', as Halbreich puts it in so quintessentially 'European' a way in his fascinating sleeve note to the recording of the *Sonatas*, 'by two years of quasi-silence' (roughly 1972-73). Following this suggestion, we may confidently put the *Sonatas for String*

*Quartet*, composed in Vienna and London between August and December 1967, into the first category: indeed Halbreich calls it 'Ferneyhough's earliest work worthy of being called a masterpiece'.

It's therefore a very useful work with which to begin this survey, for apart from the obvious advantages of chronology, there is at least one way in which the *Sonatas* are a great deal easier to grasp than, say, *Transit* (1972-75). The works of Ferneyhough's 'second period' introduce him in the role of what I think he himself describes as 'sceptical mystic', questing for 'the positive nature of doubt'. Presumably partly as a result, they are even more complex than those of his first period. This is hardly to say that the earlier pieces are exactly simple, of course, as even anyone totally ignorant of Ferneyhough's music who has read this far will no doubt realise. Halbreich describes this first period as showing 'a complete assimilation, then an overcoming of post-serial thinking in the sense of an extreme radicalisation of the mainstream European tradition of this century': again, a less uncompromising not to say less comprehensible way of putting it than it might have been, though I think we all get the point. But at least we know that in the case of the *Sonatas* we can largely or even completely ignore the more recent 'mystic' dimension and concentrate on the notes, the sounds and textures, the form, structure and style of what's put before our ears and eyes by the record and the score.

I always find 'getting into' a work of this kind difficult: I should admit that at once in order to make my position as partly outlined in my introduction even clearer. I (therefore?) assume that at least some other people have some of the same problems, and what I want to do in this article is to illustrate at least some of the ways I have found helpful in reaching what limited understanding I have of the *Sonatas* and to give a few instances of such insights, if such they be, to which these processes have led me. A sort of 'listener's guide', if you like.

In a broadly 'post-Webern-plus' sound world such as the one inhabited by Ferneyhough's *Sonatas* (the work's Webernian starting point was apparently not the twelve-note but the early, pre-1914 atonal music; and the composer does not in fact like to be described as a serialist), it's usually hard to know quite *how* to listen. Should one, for example, be listening for thematic material and its development and recapitulation in some way? The very title of the piece might lead us to suppose this; but before we jump to any more preconceived conclusions, we should observe that the work falls into 24 sections which Ferneyhough himself apparently regards as constituting a single movement with 'no major unambiguous subdivisions' (actually Halbreich's words once again) between the individual 'movements'. No sonata form then, presumably. But what about the role of 'material' and its unfolding on a less 'traditional' canvas?

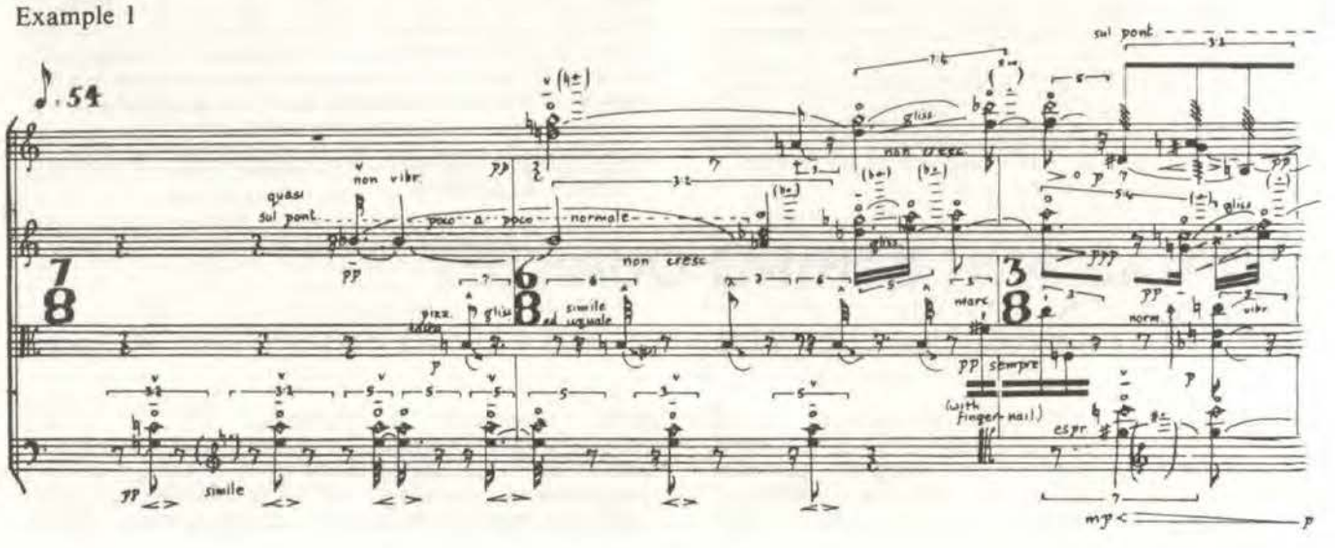
My recipe for 'getting into' a work like Ferneyhough's *Sonatas* seems on the surface to presume at least some kind of 'working out' process applied to some kind of 'material'. I will certainly listen to the complete work at least twice at the outset, though the *Sonatas*' 42 minutes make this a daunting initial prospect. It's perfectly possible that, apart from a vague idea of the general shape of the piece, not much will result from this first stage. The music won't in any real sense be 'known', still less 'understood', except in once crucial way: the *listening* itself should at least help to determine exactly what kind of listening process might then be adopted in order to understand the music or understand it better, aside from all the paraphernalia of programme notes and articles like this one.

The real process of getting to know the *Sonatas* only began when I began to take it apart. Not just by looking at the score (what we normally call 'analysis') but aurally: listening, in this case, to the first section several times over, then the first two sections several times, then the first three and so on. The score in this particular instance has been a valuable aid to me from the outset, as it happens; partly, I think, because there are only four instruments playing and so the thing is at least *followable*. But with other pieces by other composers with which I've tried this process of cumulative or 'accretive' listening (Boulez' *e e cummings ist der Dichter*, Carter's Double Concerto) I've either not had a score or, at least in the first stages, the sheer mechanics of following it has taken up so much of my concentration that I really *have* missed the music. If in doubt I'd advise: listen first, 'follow' afterwards.

The purpose, the advantage of getting to know the opening moments, sections, minutes or whatever really well by constant repetition lies, of course, in being able to recognise them again easily and gradually to start to recognise them when they appear in different guises. In the case of Ferneyhough's *Sonatas*, the 24 sections make a readily usable means of division for this purpose.

So what is the nature of Ferneyhough's 'initial material' if there is any? It's not 'thematic' in quite the usual sense of the word, certainly. The ear will probably latch on quite soon to prominent features of pitch or rhythm in the work's opening stages, and these will still be useful in understanding the piece's structure to some extent. A conventionally trained, 'analytical' sort of pair of ears like mine will be naturally attracted by such things. A tendency to suppose the primacy of pitch — and therefore, perhaps, of thematically organised pitch material — is frequently a disadvantage in listening to contemporary music of many kinds, but here it doesn't seem to me to do quite so much harm. But the less, shall we say 'hardened' listener's more natural first impressions are likely to lie in the area of timbre and texture, and this is

Example 1



where Ferneyhough himself comes to our aid:

> The point is that the form is not unitary, "monolithic", but essentially *discursive*. The total is generated by the gradual accretion of forms (extensions, variations, metamorphoses) of the initial relatively anonymous basic elements (or rather, "articulation classes"): "pizzicato", "glissando", "chord", "repeated note", etc., all present in the first section of the work in various combinations. Like paths through a forest, the development of these elements is *linear*; they run parallel sometimes, at other points disappear into the undergrowth, re-emerge later, wider or narrower, flow into one another and move apart again. Each of them has a part of the work in which "its" main climax occurs, after which it withdraws once again into the background. There is, therefore, no *single* climactic section, and anyone looking for it will be grievously disappointed! Once one has grasped this essential point, the seemingly meandering course of the piece, as well as its length, will be more readily appreciable, I think.

Let's see how far this quotation from a letter to Halbreich gets us in conjunction with my 'method' of listening.

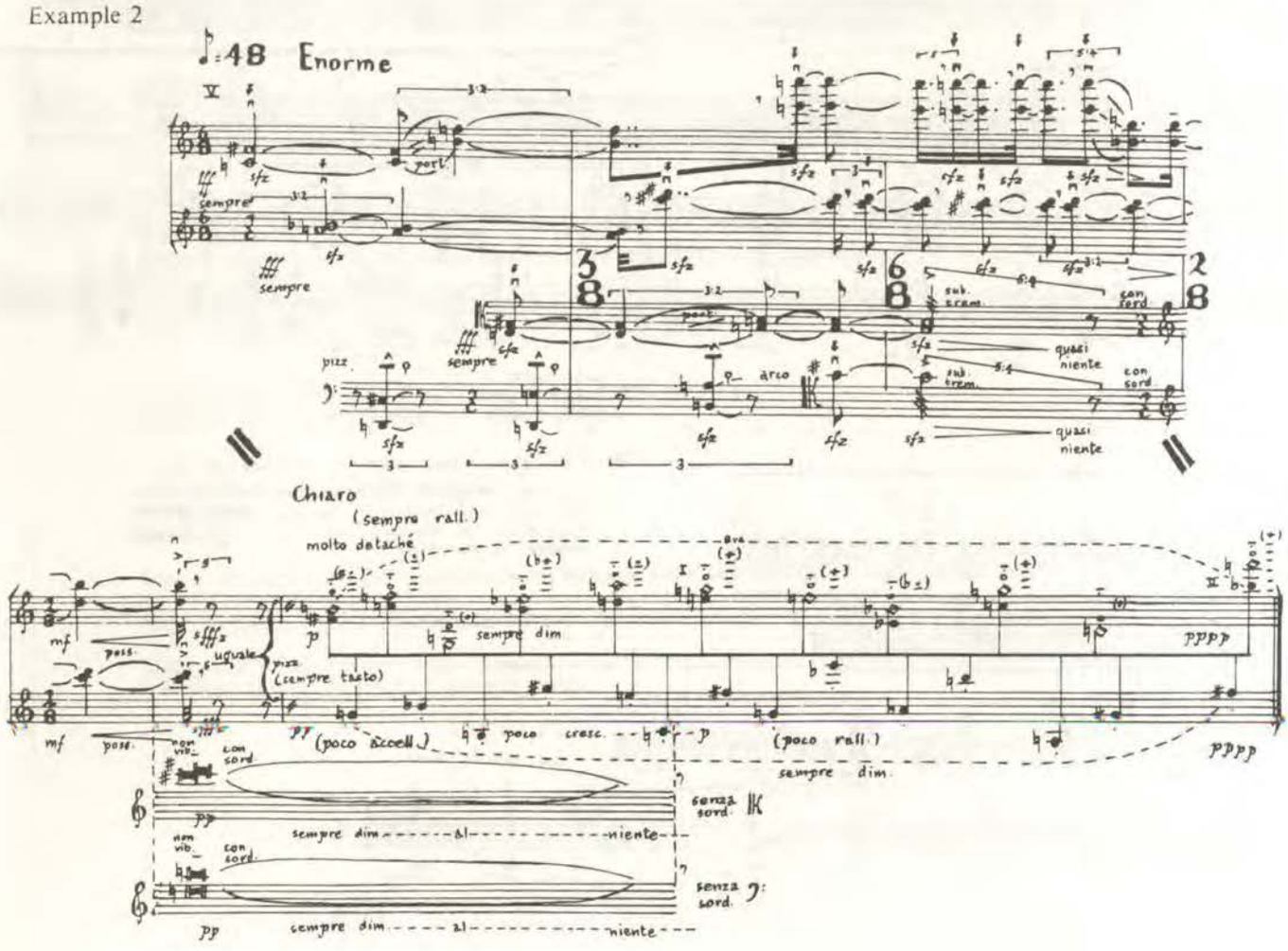
The important point seems to me to be the notion of 'initial relatively anonymous basic elements' or, as the composer also calls them, 'articulation classes'. Basic material, and some of it pitch based, certainly: but all of it *so* basic that it's really reducible to types of texture, methods of playing, an overall harmonic quality, or whatever. This apparent 'looseness' is clearly of value to the first time listener since this kind of 'Ur' material is more easily 'understood', less easily missed if also less easily 'grasped' in the conventional sense; it's simpler to spot a general type than a particular brand even if you're not completely sure of what you're looking/listening for. My examples of these 'basic elements' or 'articulation classes' and their role in the structure of Ferneyhough's *Sonatas* are just that: some first and second thoughts which will doubtless be much modified by the subsequent hearings for which I hope I will find the time.

The three music examples, taken from the beginning of the work, the end of Section 12 (Ferneyhough actually uses letters of the Greek alphabet to mark sections, but I find it much easier to use numbers) and the end of the whole piece, illustrate several 'basic elements' and their transformation. Timbrally, the use of string harmonics is an important feature: an 'articulation class' of which the composer makes considerable use in the *Sonatas*, which indeed range over virtually the entire gamut of string techniques. The slightly suspended quality of the regular rhythms (at first in the cello: almost the first thing you hear) appears during the piece at intervals; both the later examples have it in some measure, but the final transmutation coupled with the glissandi which are likewise a strong 'basic element' in the work, should also give some idea of the dramatic and beautiful, even 'romantic' quality of the piece.

The pitch content of the opening bars presents just one of the basic pitch elements that emerge and help to structure the work. The more easily identifiable ones tend to be chordal and sometimes introduce a new section (the openings of Sections 7 and, to a less clear extent, 22, for example, use the first pitches of Example 1; a different but equally important chord opens the sequence of slow chords at the start of Section 4 and then provides the link between that section and the next); the melodic contours of Examples 2 and 3 are, however, also relatable to the work's first section.

The 'linear' development of the basic elements from which the work is, literally, composed often make their role in the structure at any one point hard to describe. The 'role' of what I have come to call the 'tranquil "double chord"' and the material which surrounds it at its first

Example 2

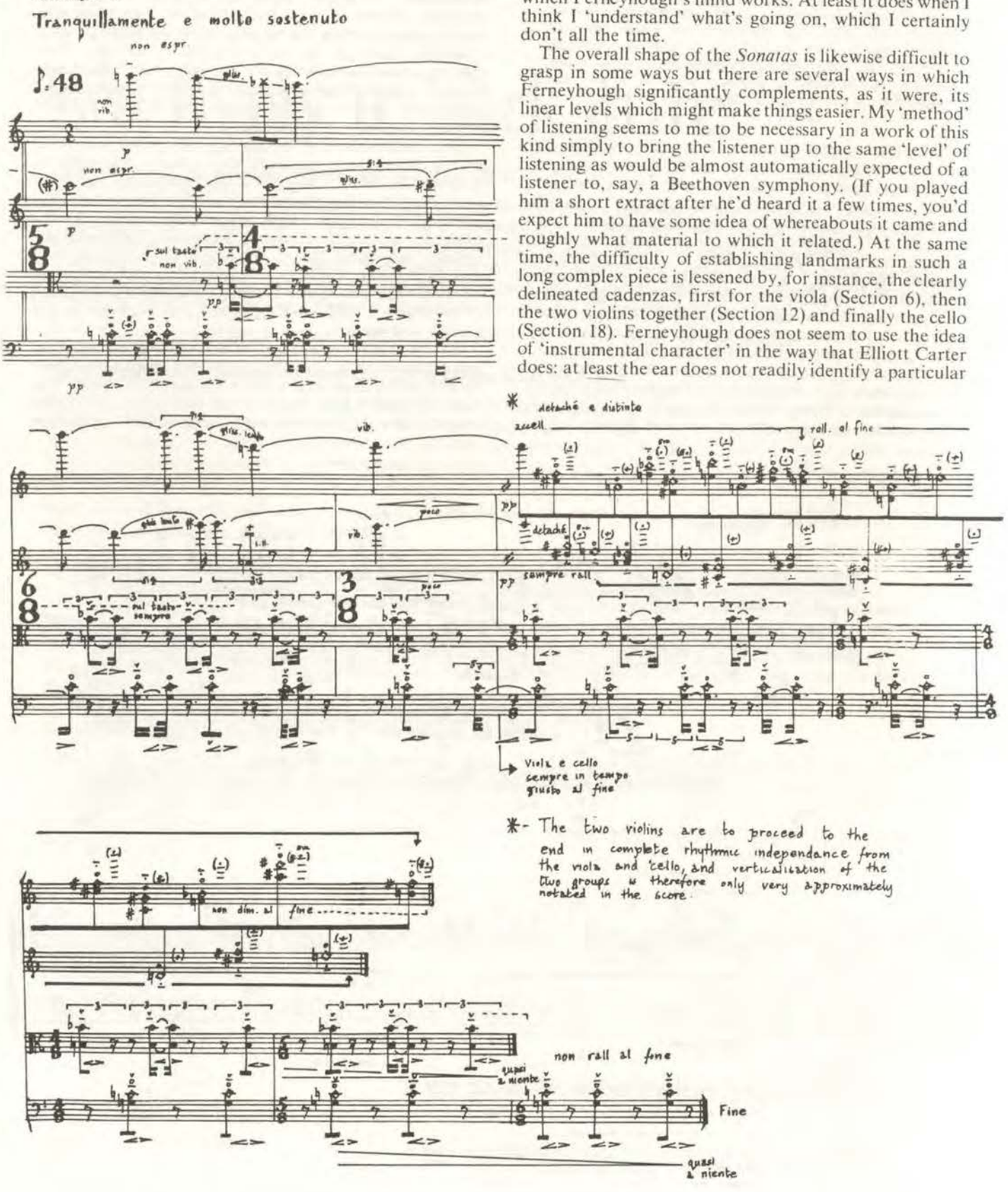


presentation (Section 2, bars 57-59) is difficult to unravel, but the dramatic and emotional importance which this ethereal (and non vibrato) moment has here is somehow confirmed when it returns, though using different pitches, at the start of Section 15, shortly after a big climax (violins very high) at the end of Section 14, but followed by a 'repeat' of some of the material which had followed it in Section 2.

It's typical of Ferneyhough that what he calls the 'climax' of each 'articulation class' should not in fact be always easy to identify. There's no point in the *Sonatas* in which the composer indulges in *just* harmonics or *just* pizzicati, though some of these elements do have a more obvious moment of predominance than others: e.g. I would put the pizzicato 'climax' in Section 21. The 'linearity' of Ferneyhough's thinking results in a complex state of flux, but there are, I have found, many aspects of this which the ear and the memory can sort out with repeated and 'accretive' listening more easily than the mind can find a simple way of putting them into words. This may seem a 'get out' to some, but it doesn't to me (at least at the moment), since it seems to be proof of the musical as opposed to 'extra-musical conceptual' way in which Ferneyhough's mind works. At least it does when I think I 'understand' what's going on, which I certainly don't all the time.

The overall shape of the *Sonatas* is likewise difficult to grasp in some ways but there are several ways in which Ferneyhough significantly complements, as it were, its linear levels which might make things easier. My 'method' of listening seems to me to be necessary in a work of this kind simply to bring the listener up to the same 'level' of listening as would be almost automatically expected of a listener to, say, a Beethoven symphony. (If you played him a short extract after he'd heard it a few times, you'd expect him to have some idea of whereabouts it came and roughly what material to which it related.) At the same time, the difficulty of establishing landmarks in such a long complex piece is lessened by, for instance, the clearly delineated cadenzas, first for the viola (Section 6), then the two violins together (Section 12) and finally the cello (Section 18). Ferneyhough does not seem to use the idea of 'instrumental character' in the way that Elliott Carter does: at least the ear does not readily identify a particular

Example 3




*- The two violins are to proceed to the end in complete rhythmic independance from the viola and 'cello, and verticalization of the two groups is therefore only very approximately notated in the score.

'thematic' or 'articulation' strand with one instrument consistently rather than with another. But these cadenzas fulfil an important character role as well as being dramatic and simple structural points of reference that, for example, make early complete hearings a good deal easier.

The pitch aspect of the *Sonatas* will continue to occupy me for some while. Ferneyhough does seem to have acquired a very distinctive harmonic vocabulary and it would be fascinating to discover more about how he has achieved this. I have already mentioned the importance of certain chords at structurally important places in the *Sonatas*, but I have not discussed the very important role of something which is much easier to hear: the tritone, the clear statement of which at, for instance, the opening of Example 2, is by no means untypical of how he uses it elsewhere (and often C to F sharp).

I had already written the bulk of this article and started to draw the perhaps at first somewhat simplistic-sounding conclusion that parts of the *Sonatas* were serial and parts were not, when I obtained Jonathan Harvey's *Musical Times* article which has recently appeared. This reveals that originally Ferneyhough wrote two movements, 'one in the strict total serial style, the other in an intuitive, expressionist style reminiscent of pre-serial Webern. Sensing, perhaps, that the drama of the historical moment lay in their interaction, rather than in their successiveness, he chopped the movements up and dispersed the fragments throughout the 24 sections, allowing them to affect each other, allowing the more fertile "intuitive" music eventually to form its own laws of renewal and burgeon in a manner denied to the hermetically-sealed totally serial music.' The importance of this for aspects other than pitch is clearly also important.

In the historical context in which Harvey acutely places this fact, this is indeed fascinating. It is also significant for the way one actually listens to the piece, for once this information has been vouchsafed, it is easy to start to relate it to the 'dialectic' that seems to emerge when trying to follow what at first does seem an extraordinarily sectionalised piece. The 'putting back together again' in some sense of the 'original' two methods of composition (which, incidentally, casts more light on both the Webern connection and Ferneyhough's unwillingness to be thought of as a serialist which I mentioned earlier) will be a beautiful exercise in 'accretive' listening which I look forward to doing with the aid of the excellent recording by the Berne Quartet.

# CASSANDRA'S DREAM SONG & UNITY CAPSULE

## KATHRYN LUKAS

THE AGE OF the musical tightrope walker is still with us. The circus of the concert hall is yet filled with hordes witnessing daring feats, cheering in ecstasies at the successes but secretly waiting, almost hoping, for the performer to fall. It is an atmosphere in which speed, brilliance and technique are everything; after all, a sense of perspective, contemplation and growth does not dazzle the crowds.

In current traditional musical circles these values continue to make good box office sense. Similar attitudes exist in the contemporary music world where the resurgence of the virtuoso performer/composer has perpetuated old concert habits. There is something irresistably hypnotic about watching physical feats of balance and agility, even more than grappling with complex ideas or surrendering to lush sounds. All listeners, including critics, other performers and the general musical public, are subject to it. We have become familiar with the work of Holliger, Globokar and a whole host of double bassists. As for the flute, the United States seems to have been particularly prolific regarding flautists who are extending the frontiers of technique. Robert Dick, Thomas Howell, Patrick Purswell and Harvey Sollberger are the most prominent. Robert Dick is even now developing a flute at IRCAM which will, he hopes, allow for an even greater range of chords and microtones than is possible with the present standard flute. The compositions of these performers reflect their respective accomplishments and interests. However, none of them, to my knowledge, have presented pieces which are beyond the limits of execution. Their pieces are not for all players, but they are playable.

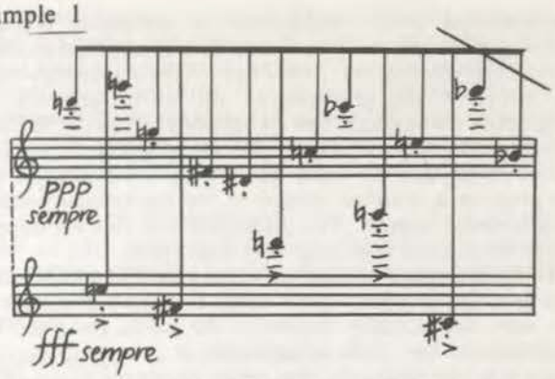
In recent years, though, there have been some composers who have used a singular idea to challenge the new virtuosi: to write a piece which is ultimately impossible to play but which nevertheless must be attempted. For example, Stockhausen's *Spiral* is a philosophical exercise in surpassing one's musical limits (both technical and conceptual) each time one attempts its performance, and Xenakis's *Evryali* for piano or his recent solo cello piece *Kottos* are impossible to play exactly as written.

Brian Ferneyhough has composed two solo flute pieces, the express purpose of which is to pose such a challenge. It would perhaps be helpful to quote the whole of the 'Remarks' section of the instruction sheet for *Cassandra's Dream Song* (1970), in which Ferneyhough states his attitude towards notation and the way in which the piece must be approached:

> This work owes its conception to certain considerations arising out of the problems and possibilities inherent in the notation-realisation relationship. The choice of notation in this instance was principally dictated by a desire to define the quality of the final sound by relating it consciously to the degree of complexity present in the score. The piece as it stands is, therefore, not intended to be the plan of an "ideal" performance. The notation does not represent the result required: it is the attempt to realise the written specifications in practice which is designed to produce the desired (but unnotatable) sound quality.
>
> A "beautiful", cultivated performance is not to be aimed at: some of the combinations of actions specified are in any case either not literally realisable (certain dynamic groupings) or else lead to complex, partly unpredictable results. Nevertheless, a valid realisation will only result from a rigorous attempt to reproduce as many of the textural details as possible: such divergencies and "impurities" as then follow from the natural limitations of the instrument itself may be taken to be the intentions of the composer. No attempt should be made to conceal the difficulty of the music by resorting to compromises and inexactitudes (i.e. of rhythm) designed to achieve a superficially more "polished" result. On the contrary, the audible (and visual) degree of difficulty is to be drawn as an integral structural element into the fabric of the composition itself.

By making such demands, one assumes that Ferneyhough is ensuring against 'easy' virtuosity. Certainly in *Cassandra* he is well aware of what he is asking the played to do. He has brought into play virtually every aspect of flute technique, especially the many varieties of attacking a note (from no attack to violent lip pizzicato) and producing vibrato and flutter-tongue. This is not remarkable in itself; it is the way in

Example 1

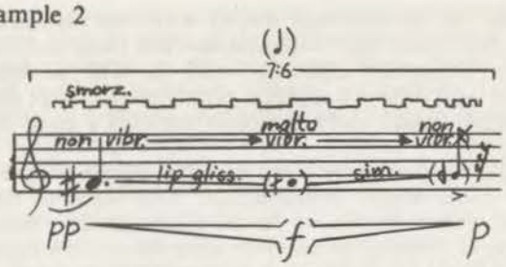



which he combines them which constitutes the problem.

Example 1 illustrates the kind of dynamic grouping problem to which he refers. Normally it is easy to play loud in the high register and soft in the low register. The difficulty in this case lies in the choice of the range of notes in either dynamic and their rapid alternation. Simultaneous vibrati occur in Example 2: one must play lip vibrato from fast to slow and diaphragm vibrato from nothing to very fast, while at the same time bending a note with the lip and making a crescendo with the diaphragm. In fact, neither of these fragments is impossible played slowly or in isolation. What makes them difficult is their speed and context. Having learned all the fragments thoroughly, one can 'realise' them, but only at half the speed that the composer suggests. It is the compression of time that makes an 'ideal performance' impossible and produces the 'desired (but unnotatable) sound quality'. The rigorous attempt to conform to Ferneyhough's demands is, in fact, what gives the performance of the piece a special taut quality. It will be interesting to chart the progress of successive performances of the work by the same flautist: will the performer become so adept at surmounting the difficulties that he she will render the composition ineffectual?

Perhaps Ferneyhough wanted to guard against such an eventuality, for he has written another, more complex work, *Unity Capsule* (1976). In comparison to *Unity Capsule, Cassandra's Dream Song* should stand next to Varèse's *Density 21.5* and Berio's *Sequenza I* as a part of the 20th century classic flute repertory. Whereas Cassandra's 'song' is almost entirely virtuoso flute writing (the voice appears only three times), *Unity Capsule* has a virtuoso voice part. It is a flute line articulated literally by means of vowels and consonants spoken into the flute. The flute part also has an extended array of microtones,

Example 2



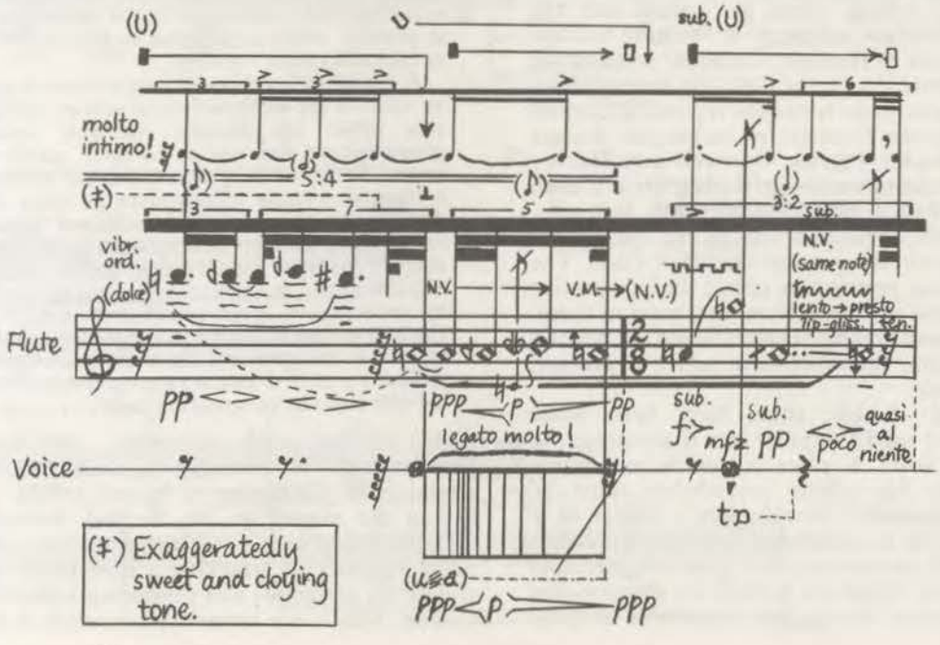

chords and embouchure tensions and positions. These techniques, together with the voice part, result in a shimmering succession of sounds which bear little resemblance, for two-thirds of the work, to normal flute tone. There is a central section which is played more conventionally, and when this mode returns towards the end of the work, Ferneyhough suggests it be 'played with "normal" technique (almost exaggeratedly so: as if with almost hysterical relief . . .) Only lightly parodistic!' This section leads to a final frenzied voiced passage, and the piece concludes with the player drawing in the maximum quantity of air and holding it to bursting point: literally a breath-taking finish.

There are other directions in the score specifying the removal and application of the flute to playing position, which gives the piece a dramatic, if not genuinely theatrical quality. The performance notes in this piece do not imply any philosophical position, but merely state that the 'basic tempo is as fast as possible whilst adequately executing all specified figures'. The philosophy is left to the performer, who has to decide whether to accept the task of deciphering the notation in order to execute the piece.

Example 3 shows one of the more complex fragments from the 20 pages of the score. Reading from top to bottom, one line at a time, the notation refers to: position of instrument, embouchure tension, accentual rhythm, tone quality, note rhythm, quarter-tone pitches, vibrato speeds, flute dynamics, vocal utterances, voice dynamics. All of these are possible, alone and in combination; all that is necessary is the time to practice. This is no longer the composer's, but the performer's concern.

In my view there is nothing wrong with Ferneyhough's notation; it is precise and clear. It works as a road map to his music, not as a barrier. It is only a barrier to sight-reading, not to music-making. It points out more dramatically than traditional notation the contract that exists between the performer, the composer and the piece, regardless of historical period. Notation makes it possible

Example 3



for an idea in sound to be transmitted where learning by rote does not or cannot exist. If the composer makes his contribution in intelligently writing down his ideas, then the performer has the responsibility to do what is necessary to bring those ideas to life. Unfortunately, in our present musical society, only 'easy notation' pieces are rewarded by performance, because the others are far too costly. It is an accepted fact that musicians engaged in processing difficult music, whether realisations of pre-1800 or contemporary scores, do so virtually without remuneration. They must subsidise this work with more conventional means of support, by teaching or playing sight-readable music. It is to be hoped that these musicians will carry on and perhaps eventually reap the benefits of the circus world by becoming our next generation of virtuosi.

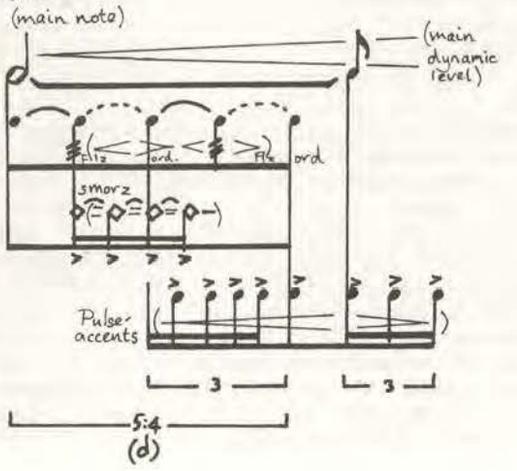
# TIME AND MOTION STUDY 1
## KEVIN CORNER

FERNEYHOUGH'S *Time and Motion Study I* is a virtuoso piece written for the Dutch bass clarinettist Harry Sparnaay, the winner of the 1972 Gaudeamus performers' competition. Like other works composed for Sparnaay, this *Time and Motion Study* exploits many of the newer techniques for his instrument and also his ability to give clear definition to extremely rapid figuration. However, the work poses many unnecessary problems for the interpreter, not the least of which is the near illegibility of what is admittedly a beautiful-looking score. The problems here are a result of frequent 'over-notation' and also, of course, of the extremely florid nature of the music itself.

*Time and Motion Study I* was originally written for an ordinary B flat clarinet in 1971 and recomposed for the bass clarinet in 1977. In the original only the 'overall form, certain materials, and general expressive ambitus were determined'. In the notes which accompany the score, Ferneyhough says that in the course of re-composition 'no attempt was made to recapture the spirit of the original . . . the opposite was aimed at; a new and independently conceived matrix of proportions was superimposed upon the partially ordered pre-existent material'. In this way the original material was destroyed but remained to form ' "archaeological substrata" in and through which the *a priori* structuration of the subsequent compositional activity would . . . "hear itself spoken" '.

For much of the work's duration the material is still of an extremely basic nature, consisting of tremolandi and ostinati with added notes and accents emerging from the texture. In addition to normal, orthodox articulation (including flutter tonguing and a 'throat flutter'), Ferneyhough requires two further kinds: 'slap tongue' — a hard attack with no sustaining, and 'pesante' — a hard attack but also sustained. These are notated in the manner usual for Sprechstimme: an arrowhead replacing the normal note head and a cross added to the note tail. In themselves these articulation devices present little problem and occur in the works of other composers. In *Time and Motion Study I*, however, both 'slap tongue' and 'pesante' are required in passages where, played at the indicated speed, the average note length is in the region of one fortieth of a second!

Example 1




Further to this, Ferneyhough adds staccatissimo markings to the 'pesante' indications: a strange contradiction, especially considering the demanded speed. He often makes use of superimposed articulations, however, to produce a complex sound structure which can be very effective. Example 1 is taken from the accompanying notes to the score, not from the score itself.

Ferneyhough uses four different types of note head to indicate tone colours. In addition to 'normal' tone, he requires a hard, bright tone, a breathy indistinct timbre (but with the pitch of the note still fully audible) and a tone which contains a high degree of breath sound with pitch as such scarcely identifiable. The notations for the three departures from 'normal' tone are given in Example 2. In themselves they are not really that distinctive anyway, but in conjunction with the normal note heads and the other notations for different types of articulation mentioned earlier, the problem multiplies.

Example 2

= hard, bright tone production

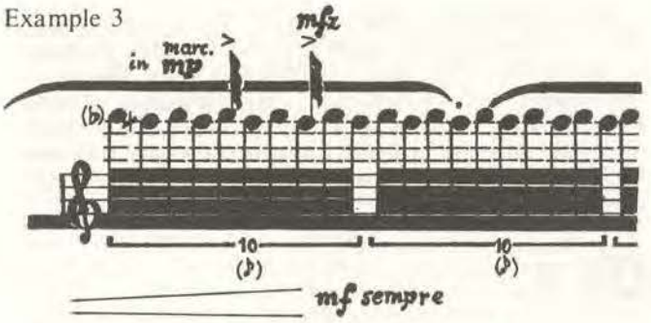
= rather breathy, indistinct timbre (but still with fully identifiable pitch component).

= high degree of breath sound, with pitch as such scarcely identifiable, or audible merely as timbral modification.

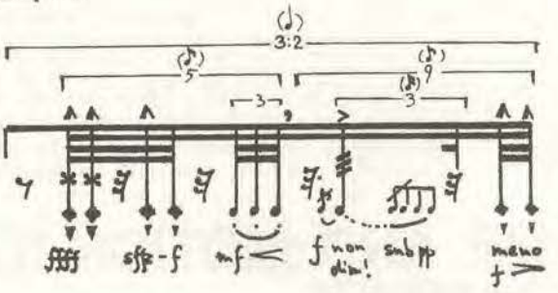
In a similar way Ferneyhough makes life unnecessarily difficult by using symbols for $^3/_4$ tone sharp and flat as well as $^1/_4$ tone sharp and flat. Surely this could have been avoided, especially as in his introduction the composer says that he realises these notes will probably be out of tune anyway because of the characteristics of individual instruments.

Rhythmic complexity is, of course, a problem both composers and performers will take for granted, and in this respect Ferneyhough's use of superimposed subdivisions within single beats is not exceptional. Where it does become a problem, however, is again in the sphere of clarity and legibility. The work opens with one of the recurring ostinato passages, the basic ♪ = 60 being divided into between eight and 14 𝅘𝅥𝅯 subdivisions and most of the pitches being at the bottom of the instrument's range. The numerous ledger lines involved tend to run into one another because they are so close together. And as the note tails are extremly thick the stave is completely obliterated, with the result that the actual

Example 3




Example 4




pitches are effectively obscured. Example 3 shows this, while Example 4 gives some idea of the rhythmic complexity involved in the score.

*Time and Motion Study I* also makes demands upon the performer's breath control: not only in terms of phrase lengths (on two occasions Ferneyhough asks for a passage of some 50 seconds' duration to be played without taking a breath — effectively demanding double breathing techniques) but also in terms of dynamics (all possible levels from pppp to fffff coupled with practically every conceivable dynamic combination of accent, e.g. sffz, ffpp.

The pitch range required by the score is unexceptional: some four and a half octaves from low written C. Ferneyhough in fact offers alternatives for the lowest notes or allows for their octave transposition. Apart from a few orchestral instruments, however, surely no player now has a bass clarinet without this 'extension': certainly no-one who may have any inclination to attempt Ferneyhough's virtuoso work! (What a pity that the same cannot be said of the lower 'basset' extension to the normal clarinet. Alan Hacker's example and pioneer work have been largely ignored, with the result that many British composers have to suffer the transposition of their basset clarinet parts or modify them.)

Having discussed *Time and Motion Study I* with some dozen composers and half a dozen performers, I have gained the general impression that both composers and practitioners feel that Ferneyhough has over-notated the work. While the actual look of the score leads one to expect total clarity, far too much of the score is confusing or simply redundant. The impression has also been that the score is really far too demanding and should perhaps be realised electronically.

# TRANSIT
## MALCOLM BARRY

THE PERFORMANCE of *Transit* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in November 1977 brought a rare moment of critical agreement. Here was a composer of obvious gifts who was receiving, perhaps belatedly, some recognition via a whole concert with the London Sinfonietta and, subsequently, a broadcast of that concert and a commercial recording of the work. The critical approbation was general, as was a feeling that Ferneyhough's works were extremely difficult both for performers and listeners.

The impression of complexity is maintained on subsequent acquaintance with both score and record, but this complexity repays a great deal of scrutiny whether at the structural level (briefly but convincingly outlined by James Erber in his notes accompanying the record) or at the foreground: an almost Boulezian concern with the beauty of sound, often busy within a static background. The work does not yield its secrets easily, although a few clues are provided by the composer towards the end: what follows is intended merely as a description of some aspects of the piece.

Ferneyhough seems intent on preserving the dramatic aspects of music as well as the sensual features hinted at above. The work builds to a climax just before its conclusion, and traditional concepts of drama in orchestral music are satisfied, albeit in a language in which pure structure and texture have taken the place of pitch relationships in communicating this. Complementing the drama is the attractive quality of the sound, and the six solo voices contribute much to this in a continuum of vocal resource that ranges from the delicacy of the opening to the violence of the close.

Both these aspects, together with the disposition of the forces and the progress of the music, have an extra-musical significance. The score calls for six 'circles' of performers arranged in an amphitheatre effect, each circle symbolising one of the spheres of the cosmos. The score is prefaced by a '19th century pastiche' of a Renaissance woodcut depicting the penetration of the various spheres of the cosmos, and each section of the music has a programmatic as well as a structural function.

The six voices and three solo woodwinds (representing 'the human element') are deployed in the first circle and all nine have individual amplification. The composer is quite precise as to the amount of amplification: never intrusive but sufficient to make the quieter passages audible. The singers have auxiliary percussion — claves and maraccas — which they are required to play while singing as well as separately. The solo flute, oboe and clarinet are required to play various members of their respective family of instruments and both sets of performers make full use of the possibilities available to them: from the gargle through speech to bel canto in the case of the singers, and from vaguely pitched keywork through harmonics to orthodox techniques for the woodwind. The texts (by three Greek writers and including one forgery) are embedded within the texture and emerge clearly only twice towards the end of the piece: 'eternity maketh the cosmos' marks the most operatic entry from a solo voice, while just before the final climax 'O, Death!' is very audible. The latter might stand as another comparison with Boulez' *Pli selon pli.*

The second circle ('the stars') consists of three trumpets, three percussionists (a great array of instruments), two harps, guitars (electric and acoustic), cymbalom and two keyboard players, one on piano doubling amplified harpsichord, the other on piano doubling celeste. The techniques required here are also exhaustive rather than orthodox: particularly impressive in this regard is the sound of the amplified harpsichord and the cymbalom, the latter becoming a percussion instrument with a vengeance.

Ferneyhough's use of very short durations and a plethora of pitches at the foreground level mean that his music seems to aspire towards the condition of percussion. It contains an intricacy and precision that, were they not allied to a fine structural sense, would be in danger of descending into whimsical fussiness, and the composer walks this tightrope with astonishing accomplishment, bearing in mind that *Transit* is (presumably) still an early work (1972-75). The difficulty for performers (in the intricacy of the demands and the notation) and listeners (in the teeming foreground) is doubtless balanced by the difficulty for the composer in actually writing the music down.

These difficulties are as marked in the third circle ('the darkness between the spheres'): a group of 16 strings dominated by six cellos and four basses. The strings form the most purely textural level of the piece (that is still how it sounds after a few hearings), although this group's material seems once or twice to become of more pronounced structural importance.

Of undeniable importance in this respect are the six pedal timpani (three players) which form the fourth circle. Ferneyhough requires plastic skins and is very precise as to the position of attack, harmonics, etc. The timpani are the first pitched instruments to sound and give the first impressive indication that here is music in which aural/dramatic and intellectural/structural aspects are going to be held in a fine balance.

The fifth circle ('the music of the spheres') consists of eight brass players used for overwhelming power at the close, while the sixth circle adds to this impression: the three trumpeters from the second circle are placed surrounding the ensemble for greater effect at this point. Such perambulation is not unique to the trumpeters, for the timpanists of the fourth circle are the percussionists of the second.

The disposition of the circles seems to represent a continuum from intricacy and precision to dynamic power as well as the programmatic element. This is not to say that the brass parts are not precisely notated, merely that their precision *seems* less than that of the instruments of the first circle. This is balanced, however, by dynamics and the care Ferneyhough takes over these in all the circles.

One of the composer's many achievements in the work is that of welding together successfully many different kinds of writing: Boulez' polyphony of ensembles and ensemble of ensembles here come to a fruition, as well as allying a fine structure with a 'programme' which, however impenetrable, was keenly felt by Ferneyhough. Another achievement, as I have indicated, is the balance between form and surface, while a third is that, despite an apparent complexity, listeners will gain from the repetitions *within* sections a sense of the smaller scale form as well as an overall conception of the piece from a couple of hearings of the work. Ferneyhough thus demonstrates his knowledge of and zest for the *craft* of composition and it is thus that his music stands as a magnificent challenge to the infantile posturings of much of what passes for contemporary music.

*Transit* is sectional but progresses in a cycle of types of section as follows:

Vocal Model
Tutti 1
Voices 1
Verse 1
Voices 2
Tutti 2
Voices 3
Verse 2
Voices 4
Verse 3
Intonatio/Transitio

The Tuttis make use of Circles 1 (woodwind), 2 and 3. In the first the music is completely notated and read in the conventional way and it features a contrast between the woodwinds, percussion and strings. The second takes the idea of polyphony of material further by providing a background where the pitch material is free, although serially-organised durations and modes of attack are specified, into which are placed two 'inserts' of totally determined material. Ferneyhough is thus providing compositionally a polyphony of ensembles (in this case, of types of writing) to complement the polyphony of ensemble (of sound) that will be apparent to the listener.

The Voices sections feature different types of vocal usage: unorthodox vocal techniques against a 'textural' background of homophonic strings in the first, tremolando female voices accompanied by 'melodic percussion' (including harp and guitar) in the second, homophony with various ensembles in the third and sustained pitches in the fourth. These sections are clearly sectionally organised with an analagous scheme of organisation.

The Verses, too, share a common formal pattern:

A B1 B2 C1 C2 C3

Within the 'repetitions' there are many changes in pitches, instruments used, etc: although enough remains in common for them to justify the repeat marks and double bars that Ferneyhough indicates. The basic durational patterns are treated with added and subtracted values, as in the timpani contribution to the Vocal Model, so that Ferneyhough at once has regard for the structure qua structure, its micro-structure and the possibility of communicating both. Each Verse features a woodwind instrument and each contains a certain latitude: the clarinettist, for example, may choose from different paths through the material.

The Vocal Model has two sections. In the first, two ensembles proceed completely independently. The singers start from a model and subsidiary pitches and work through six lines of durational material arranged and performed like a 'simultaneous' round. There is some choice allowed in pitches and manner of performance. The timpani read conventionally a totally determined and strictly serial section within a band of tempo ranging from ♩ = 56 to ♩ = 62. These two ensembles come together for the second section and take the music into the first Tutti.

The 'Intonatio/Transitio' is tri-partite. The first of these parts is itself divided into three sub-sections of which the titles are "Intonatio Aeternitatis", "Intonatio Temporis" and "Intonatio Gencartionis". Such titles and the further sub-division clearly and carefully marked in the score (e.g. 5 'phases' are specified in the last 'Intonation') suggest that, from the durational aspect at least, this is the core of the work. This is further supported by the immediate appearance of the second part of the Coda: "Transitio 1" in which independent ensembles in free tempo are contrasted with totally notated tuttis, and "Transitio 2", the through composed climax of the work. Ferneyhough's almost obsessive concern with balance suggests that the intellectual and dramatic peaks of the piece might be juxtaposed. Even within "Transitio 1" the senza misura sections are balanced between themselves and characterised by different performing forces, all making a logical complementary relationship.

Such a cursory description cannot do justice to the sound of the work or, indeed, its phenomenal construction. The sub-divisions and symmetries therein at once invite and repel analysis: a fuller account of the forces used and the tempo relationships within and between sections would reveal something of this symmetry, but the durations and pitches chosen are far more complex.

The pitch class sets chosen do not immediately suggest

an easily grasped patterning. The Vocal Model at the start is 6-Z48 (contrasted with 4-2 and 8-21 of the first four timpani bars) and Ferneyhough seems to favour non-equivalent sets[1] where a vocal verticalisation is segmentable.

For example, the vocal insert in Tutti 2 forms 6-Z26, the sustained chord at the opening of Voices 3 forms 6-Z37 and at III of the same section 6-Z15. Voices 4 is formed as follows:

6-Z47 + 5-24 = 8-11
4-Z15 + 4-16 = 5-28
6-15
4-Z15

The recurrence of 4-Z15 can scarcely be fortuitous, although the presence of non Z-related sets together with the high likelihood of Z related sets of cardinal 6 militates against a glib assumption of the symmetries that doubtless lie within the pitch organisation of the work.

The tempting idea that Ferneyhough chose Z related sets for the vocal writing and not for the instrumental, or the related possibility that he uses a contrast in types of set to differentiate ensembles in instrumental sections, disappears when the opening of Verse 1 is considered. Here the pitches are arranged as follows:

Trumpets: 7-11 7-20 = 11-1 ⌒ 5-4; 6-Z13 etc.
Vibraphones: 6-Z13; 10-1; 5-1 ⌒

Additionally 6-Z48 recurs at the climax of the piece on the brass instruments while the vocal parts there are based on 4-2 and 8-21: a reversal of the situation at the opening. Nor do his 'melodies' for solo wind instruments in the Verse sections assist in this respect. The difficulties of segmentation are pronounced, the more so given the extensive use of grace notes to elaborate an already florid style.

Towards the end of the work the parlous concentration on verticalised sets present at certain points disappears entirely in favour of a linear writing that, in itself and in its complexity within the polyphony of ensembles, defies an easy segmentation other than the most arbitrary. The relative clarity of the durations and the complexity of the pitch material being juxtaposed in this way are perhaps another example of Ferneyhough's concern for a symmetry (or several simultaneously). The clearer durational patterns occur in the 'Intonatio' sections, where serial patterns within multiples of three beats are presented in quick succession: earlier rhythmic complexities derive from *superimpositions* of durational cycles.

The extra-musical aspects of the work are no less impenetrable: why, for example, derive the text from a forgery (albeit an Ancient Greek deception)? Why, further, use a *pastiche* of a Renaissance woodcut? Ferneyhough does not provide many clues, although one is quoted in the notes accompanying the record.

The record itself, by the London Sinfonietta under Elgar Howarth, is a fine piece of production. *Transit* is unquestionably a work made for quadrophony, and even on the humbler stereophonic level recording enables many of the details to be heard which are lost in a live performance. The balance, so crucial in this work, is exemplary, enabling the woodwind instruments in the Verse sections to sound 'non solo' as directed, while the impression (voices close, percussion far back) of the recording mirrors the directions of the score.

The two are not wholly consistent, however. While the studio enables a greater accuracy, Ferneyhough seems to have changed his mind in at least two particulars: the notated relationship between clarinet and guitar in Verse 2 and the length of one section within 'Transitio'.

As well as accuracy and balance, recording enables, by repetition, a greater variety of colours to impress themselves on the listener, and as this is the most immediate aspect of this piece this is all to the good. *Transit* stands as a positive achievement (the beliefs in structure and communication), and as with the best of these its properties of negation are as necessary: negation of the flight from thought and the negation of regression with which contemporary music is confronted. It is simply one of the most impressive works of the 1970s.

[1] Z-related sets have the same *total* interval class content.

## SCORES AND BOOKS RECEIVED

**Leslie Bassett**
Echoes from an Invisible World (Edition Peters)
Of Wind and Earth (Edition Peters)

**Xavier Benguerel**
Set (Wilhelm Hansen, Frankfurt)

**Geoffrey Burgon**
Three Nocturnes for harp (Chester)

**John Cage**
Cheap Imitation — violin version (Edition Peters)
Second Construction for percussion quartet (Edition Peters)

**Brian Chapple**
Cantica (Chester)

**George Crumb**
Lux Aeterna (Edition Peters)

**Peter Maxwell Davies**
A Mirror of Whitening Light (Boosey & Hawkes)
Five Klee Pictures (Boosey & Hawkes)
Points and Dances from Taverner (Boosey & Hawkes)
Renaissance Scottish Dances (Boosey & Hawkes)

**Werner Egk**
Polonaise, Adagio und Finale (Schott)

**Brian Ferneyhough**
Time and Motion Study II (Edition Peters)

**Wolfgang Fortner**
Triptychon (Schott)

**Harald Genzmer**
Concerto for flute and orchestra (Schott)

**Charles Griffes**
De Profundis for piano (Edition Peters)

**Paul Hindemith**
Rondo for two guitars — arranged and adapted from the original edition for three guitars (1925) by Wilhelm Bruck and Theodor Ross (Schott)

**Gerald Humel**
Arabesque (Schott)

**Charles Ives**
Quarter-tone Chorale — reconstructed for strings by Alan Stout (Edition Peters)

**Barbara Kolb**
Rebuttal for two clarinets (Edition Peters)

**Erich Wolfgang Korngold**
Marietta's Lied zur Laute and Tanzlied des Pierrot from the opera Die tote Stadt (Schott)
Quartet No. 3 (Schott)

**Colin Matthews**
Toccata, Nocturne and Scherzo for piano (Faber Music)
Un Colloque Sentimental (Faber Music)

**Arne Nordheim**
Signals (Wilhelm Hansen)

**Roger Reynolds**
Fiery Wind (Edition Peters)
Only Now, and Again (Edition Peters)
Threshold (Edition Peters)

**Nicholas Sackman**
A Pair of Wings (Schott)

**Manfred Schmitz**
Jazz Parnass (Schott)

**Kurt Schwertsik**
Kleine Blasmusik (Boosey & Hawkes)

**Peter Sculthorpe**
Lament for Strings (Faber Music)
String Quartet No. 9 (Faber Music)

**Roger Smalley**
Accord for two pianos (Faber Music)

**Reginald Smith Brindle**
Guitarcosmos, Vols. 1-3 (Schott)

**Heinrich Sutermeister**
Consolatio philosophiae (Schott)

**Wladimir Vogel**
Musette for guitar (Schott)

**John Weinzweig**
Divertimenti Nos. 1 & 2 (Boosey & Hawkes)

**Charles Wuorinen**
Janissary Music for a percussionist (Edition Peters)

The Cathedral Organist 1977-1978 (J. B. Cramer)

Waltzes by 25 Contemporary Composers (Edition Peters)

**Geoffrey Brace and Ian Burton**
Listen! Music and civilization (Cambridge University Press)

**Benjamin Britten**
On Receiving the First Aspen Award (Faber Paperbacks)

**Monika Fürst-Heidtmann**
Das präparierte Klavier des John Cage ('Kölner Beiträge zur Musikforschung', Band 97, Gustav Bosse Verlag, Regensburg)

**Paul Griffiths**
A Concise History of Modern Music (Thames and Hudson)

**Douglas Jarman**
The Music of Alban Berg (Faber)

**Robert Leach and Roy Palmer**
Folk Music in School (Cambridge University Press)

**James Murdoch**
Australia's Contemporary Composers (Sun Books, Melbourne)

**Vincent Persichetti**
Twentieth Century Harmony: creative aspects and practice (Faber)

**Phillip Rehfeldt**
New Directions for Clarinet ('The New Instrumentation' series, University of California Press)

**Boguslaw Schäffer**
Introduction to Composition (PWM, Warsaw)

**Karlheinz Stockhausen, ed. Christoph von Blumröder**
Texte zur Musik, Band IV: 1970-1977 ('DuMont Dokumente', DuMont Buchverlag, Cologne)

**H. H. Stuckenschmidt, trans. Humphrey Searle**
Arnold Schoenberg: his life, world and work (John Calder)

**Igor Stavinsky**
Themes and Conclusions (Faber)

**Roman Vlad, trans. Frederick Fuller**
Stravinsky — third edition (Oxford University Press)

**Paul E. Willis**
Profane Culture (Routledge and Kegan Paul)

**Walter Zimmermann**
Desert Plants (Walter Zimmermann, Cologne and ARC Publications, Vancouver)

Catalogues of Australian Compositions (Australia Music Centre)
I Orchestral Music
II Instrumental and Chamber Music
III Keyboard Music
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Catalogo Generale '76 (Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, Milan)

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# Freedom from the Music:

# CUNNINGHAM, CAGE & COLLABORATIONS

A CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION presented by the Mayor of New York City to choreographer Merce Cunningham during his 1977 Broadway season praised him, among other things, for having 'freed contemporary dance from the tyranny of music'.[1] Only one of a multitude of similar references to this aspect of Cunningham's work, this particular statement poses many questions. Has music really been tyrannical? If so, in what way? Has dance in different ways perhaps been equally so? The implications are enormous, but this article seeks to concentrate on clarifying the role that music has played in Cunningham's own work, given that the revolutionary nature of his approach is widely recognised.

Pertinent and particularly ironical is that Cunningham made his breakthroughs, 'freed contemporary dance from the tyranny of music', largely as a result of his contact with the musical avantgarde, especially with John Cage and with composers such as Earle Brown, Gordon Mumma, David Tudor, Christian Wolff and La Monte Young, all of whom have been influenced by Cage and all of whom, through him, have been brought into contact with dance.

It is, however, Cage's music that Cunningham has used more often than that of any other composer. They first met in 1937 at the Cornish School in Seattle where Cage accompanied and composed for Bonnie Bird's dance classes. Their collaboration achieved early fruition in 1942 with their first series of concerts and has continued until the present. For many years Cage was musical adviser to the Cunningham company (formed in 1953), performing as well as composing for them, and he still provides music occasionally: for example, *Telephones and Birds* for *Travelogue* created for the 1977 Broadway season.

Such musical contacts as Cunningham made influenced not only his musical approach but also his attitude to dance itself. It is this attitude, the Cagean aesthetic revealing itself in dance terms, that first needs to be illustrated, for it sheds important light on how the new relationships between music and dance resulted.

That Cunningham espoused the aesthetic principles of John Cage is clear from his voicing of them. Like Cage, he abandons conventional artistic symbols associated with psychology, narrative or hierarchical structure:

> About the formal methods of choreography — some due to the conviction that a communication of one order or another is necessary; others to the feeling that mind follows heart, that is, form follows content; some due to the feeling that the musical form is the most logical to follow — the most curious to me is the general feeling in the modern dance that nineteenth century forms stemming from earlier pre-classical forms are the only formal actions advisable, or even possible to take . . . These consist mainly of theme and variation, and associated devices — repetition, inversion, development and manipulation. There is also a tendency to imply a crisis to which one goes and then in some way retreats from. Now I can't see that crisis any longer means a climax . . . . Our lives . . . are so full of crisis that one is no longer aware of it.[2]

> A thing is just that thing . . . . We don't . . . have to worry ourselves about providing relationships and continuities and orders and structures — they cannot be avoided. They are the nature of things.[3]

Cage considered time the most fundamental element in music, embracing pitch, loudness and timbre as well as silence. Cunningham says:

> *The dance is an art in space and time* . . . . More freeing into *space* than the theme and manipulation 'hold-up' would be a formal structure based on time.[4]

Just as Cage experimented in the 30s and 40s with fixing one musical element and varying the others (such as, for example, using fixed rhythmic patterns or note-row fragments), Cunningham preoccupied himself with the manipulation of basic dance elements. Carolyn Brown, for many years one of Cunningham's leading dancers, discusses methods Cunningham had arrived at by the late 50s:

> Merce worked with the stop-watch from the belief that rhythm comes out of the nature of the movement itself and the movement nature of the individual dancer. At times, he choreographed the movement, then asked, 'What time does this particular movement take, what time does this particular phrase take?' We would rehearse it repeatedly until it took its own 'inevitable' time in the designed space. It was then fixed and rehearsed in that time . . . .
>
> Accuracy of time is necessary to maintain the designed space. Change the time and the space, and the movement changes. Merce works with all these possibilities.[5]

From the 50s onwards, elements such as time and space would sometimes be determined by chance, or left undetermined: a feature of creative method that Cunningham again took from Cage and a reflection of the 'art is life, life is art' philosophy which admits not just the occasional everyday sign, gesture or sound but, more importantly, the complexity of life itself. Cunningham explains the philosophy in terms of the present and of audience response:

[1] Quoted in Noel Goodwin, 'An Appetite for Motion: Creations and Revivals by Merce Cunningham and Dance Company: Style and Content', *Dance and Dancers,* Vol. XXVIII, No. 5 (May 1977), p.28.

[2] Merce Cunningham, 'Space, Time and Dance', *Trans/formation,* Vol. 1, No. 3 (1952), p.150.

[3] Quoted in Carolyn Brown, 'McLuhan and the Dance', *Ballet Review,* Vol. I, No. 4 (1966), p.15.

[4] Cunningham, op. cit., pp.150-151.

[5] Carolyn Brown, 'Essays, Stories and Remarks about Merce Cunningham', *Dance Perspectives,* No. 34 (Summer 1968), p.35.

> One thing must not *necessarily* follow another. Or rather, anything can follow anything. We see it on television all the time.
>
> In the 20th century, this new continuity is part of the life we live. I was interested in the complexity, not the confusion, of our daily lives.[6]

> You can't concentrate on everything in life. You make a choice. So we make a situation in which multiple things go on and you have to make choices. If you saw it again it could be quite a different experience.[7]

Of course these aesthetic principles had been voiced before. Carolyn Brown mentions that in the early 1900s not only did Dadaists such as Duchamp, Tzara and Arp attempt to intertwine art and experience by using chance, but they also later discovered that scientists, philosophers and psychologists were facing the same problems at the same time, and these ideas have continued in art into the present day.[8] Yet Cage and Cunningham were the first to make important application of the chance concept to music and dance, and the manner in which they used it was innovatory.[9]

The working methods of Cage and Cunningham began to coincide in 1944, by which time both were employing time structures valid to both art forms. Cunningham's first piece of this kind was *Root of an Unfocus* (1944) which shared the time structure of Cage's accompanying music, but Cage had already made his first purely musical attempt in 1939 in *First Construction (In Metal).*

Likewise Cage, having come under the influence of the *I Ching,* began to experiment with chance in 1950, before Cunningham first attempted to use it (again to Cage's music) in 1951 in *Sixteen Dances for Soloist and Company of Three.* The dance as a whole had a time structure, but tossing a coin finally divided the precise sequence of the 16 sections. Three solos he made for himself in the 50s — *Untitled Solo, Lavish Escapade* and *Changeling* — represent the most extreme application of chance in Cunningham's work. He divided the body into parts, listed possibilities for each part and tossed coins to decide the juxtaposition of actions. Coin tossing and plotting of paper imperfections were among the chance devices Cunningham and Cage shared.

Both artists experimented with indeterminacy in performance in 1953, though Cunningham's pieces of the 50s restricted indeterminacy largely to the last-minute ordering of principal sections. *Dime-A-Dance* (1953), for instance, used the game idea of dancers drawing props from a basket, each prop indicating which dance was to be performed next. Any radical use of indeterminacy was reserved for *Field Dances* and *Story* (1963): both included opportunities for dancers to improvise, within limits, and in *Story* every aspect of the work was affected. Where, then, does the application of the aesthetic shared by Cunningham and Cage cease to be consistent?

Cunningham has always been interested in the opening up of new possibilities by chance, but never at the expense of using it flexibly if he so chooses:

> My use of chance methods . . . is not a position which I wish to establish and die defending. It is a present mode of freeing my imagination from its own cliches and it is a marvelous adventure in attention.[10]

During his experience with *Lavish Escapade,* he realised that some movements found by chance proved impossible to perform and, in the case of indeterminacy in performance, he foresaw physical danger if it were used beyond the ordering of sections. His most indeterminate piece, *Story,* was dropped quite quickly from the repertory, and he has used indeterminacy less and less since. He also discovered that, when improvising, tired dancers tended to fall back on old habits and, in any case, it is said that Cunningham took his cue for using indeterminacy in individual movement sequences from other younger avantgarde choreographers, notably from Yvonne Rainer. However, he differed crucially from many of them in requiring greater movement complexity in the first place. Cunningham, because of the nature of dance, has always been as preoccupied with practicality as with philosophy, not only recognising the danger element, but also the facts that a dancer must have rest rather than dance continuously, that a dancer may be injured and unable to perform, that performing spaces differ considerably, and so on. Much more than his composers, Cunningham has worked from the angle of the performer: Carolyn Brown's discussion of his working methods quoted above emphasises this priority. Marcia Siegel has also noticed that his recent works appear much less intellectual than earlier ones, stressing physical dependence between dancers.[11]

Some writers have even referred blatantly to an element of 'expression' in work which Cunningham would vehemently deny had any expressive intent. According to Cunningham's own book, *Changes,* the three solos to piano music by Christian Wolff made in the 50s were all 'concerned with the possibility of containment and explosion being instantaneous' even if their unmistakable dramatic intensity should be allowed to happen rather than forced,[12] and Earle Brown verifies this in saying that all the pieces he saw to music by Wolff were 'very strange, seemingly psychologically oriented'.[13]

Cunningham has rarely explained his pieces in such a fashion. Yet the fact is that writers have recently been struck by the dramatic quality in Cunningham's work, absent in the output of many avantgarde choreographers today who share his influence. Carolyn Brown cites the extreme case of *Second Hand* (1970) in which Cunningham referred to a distinct programmatic image taken from music. Because performing rights were withheld for Cage's arrangement of the chosen score, Satie's *Socrate,* Cage composed the first of three versions of *Cheap Imitation* following Satie's phraseology. At the dress rehearsal and subsequent performances Cunningham assumed an anguished expression at the particular point in the original score when Socrates is preparing to meet death.[14] Michael Snell goes further to suggest an explicit connection between the personae of Socrates and Cunningham and between each section of the dance and the text of *Socrate.*[15] Presumably Cunningham had his reasons for withholding the original programme from the audience.

[6] Quoted in Anna Kisselgoff, 'A Dance Revolutionary on Broadway', *The New York Times* (January 16, 1977), 'Arts and Leisure' section, p.2.

[7] Cunningham in interview with the author, February 1975.

[8] See Carolyn Brown, 'On Chance', *Ballet Review,* Vol. II, No. 2 (1968), pp.11-14.

[9] Note, however, that indeterminacy in *performance* was first realised in Morton Feldman's graphic scores, the *Projections* series, in 1950-51, before Cage began to use this application of chance procedures, and that Earle Brown's *Folio* collection was put together in 1952-53.

[10] Quoted in Brown, 'On Chance', op. cit., p.24.

[11] Marcia Siegel, *Watching the Dance Go By* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p.281.

[12] Merce Cunningham, *Changes: Notes on Choreography* (New York: Something Else Press, 1969), unpaginated.

[13] From an article by Earle Brown in James Klosty, ed., *Merce Cunningham* (New York: Saturday Review Press, 1975), p.76.

[14] From an article by Carolyn Brown in James Klosty, ed., op. cit., p.25.

[15] Michael Snell, 'Cunningham and the Critics', *Ballet Review,* Vol. III, No. 6 (1971), pp.32-33.

Cage, on the other hand, carefully draws a distinction between his 'intentionally expressive' output up to 1951 and his later work into which the audience is free to read what qualities it wishes.[16] Possibly the very presence of the human body encourages, to a certain extent, the presence of clear images and psychological overtones in dance and, certainly, it is not surprising that a work with very strong images of a particular kind should speak similarly to a large number of people.

Where Cunningham has worked quite separately from any developments in music is in the line of Events of which he has composed a long series over the past few years. Here, by putting together chunks from existing works and new material in different combinations, he fragments the material in order to shake it out of its old contexts, thereby making the statement that each section of the material can be seen for what it is, appearing new as it reveals itself in new situations. The order of movement sequences in Events remains indeterminate until immediately before each performance. The new 'look' of the materials is further encouraged by introducing new music each time, and with the constant change in both dance and music, a continually new audience experience is ensured.

Indeed, it is in his use of music with dance that Cunningham has proved most radical of all, for in the momentous advances, far-reaching in their effect, that he made (or rather, made *with* Cage), he has no precedents at all. The early time structure experiments contained later ideas in embryo. Cunningham and his composer (usually at this stage Cage, who invented the time structure), would decide on a time structure in advance, or Cunningham would use the time structure of an existing piece. As both were conceived metrically, music and dance would coincide emphatically at the ends of time units, but each would run independently inside each unit: in other words, there was no attempt to match dance and melodic gesture or musical rhythm and step pattern. From the point of view of creating music for dance, this was a mathematical ordering of events in time, an extension of the customary method in modern dance that required music composed according to the haphazard phraseology and dictates of the dance.

Other choreographers had worked in time spans before, either consciously or not: Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un faune* is cited as a breakthrough work for this reason, and Antony Tudor is renowned for using this approach. Yet the mathematical ordering of time in advance of creation so that the proportion of small sections matched that of larger ones took these ideas much further. Cunningham and his composers enjoyed the freedom that resulted:

> A use of time structure . . . frees the music into space, making the connection between the dance and the music one of individual autonomy connected at structural points. The result is the dance is free to act as it chooses, as is the music. The music doesn't have to work itself to death to underline the dance, or the dance create havoc in trying to be as flashy as the music.[17]

The arrival of complete independence between music and dance is logically the next stage of development, as any focal points provided by time structures gradually become disguised and dissolved and as chance is assumed as the structuring device. Very soon Cunningham was, as he is now, rehearsing his pieces in silence, counting and working with a stopwatch (by this time his music was often non-metrical) and waiting until the first performance before he brought music and dance together. After all, as soon as indeterminate elements appear in either music or dance, no cueing system can exist between the two. Quite frequently composers emphasised their independence at this stage by providing different titles for their scores. Cunningham had discovered, with Cage, that *'au fond*, music and dance have nothing arbitrarily in common but custom, and that their combination was . . . a logical choice which could be fruitfully reversed.'[18]

Cunningham's instructions to all his collaborators now remain minimal, presumably in order to ensure artistic independence. Some ask for further information but many do not see any of the dance before creating their part or even, indeed, before the first performance. Sometimes Cunningham uses an existing piece of music; on other occasions he finds a piece of music after he has finished choreographing a work: thus Wolff's *Burdocks* was used for *Borst Park* (1972) and Alvin Lucier's *Vespers* for *Objects* (1971). Clearly, though, Cunningham's choreographic method does not depend on how or when he finds his music, and when indeterminacy is involved the distinctions break down even further.

Such independent relationships between music and dance constitute a deliberate acknowledgement and pointing up of the fact that music and dance colour one's interpretation of the other. The fact that music can affect dance in dramatic ways was discussed much earlier by the modern dance pioneer Doris Humphrey in her choreographic primer *The Art of Making Dances*.[19] But she was attempting to point out subtleties of expression to students. Cunningham turns her ideas into an artistic statement, which is quite new.

A remarkable freshness can occur when music and dance operate independently. The spontaneity of occasional coincidences is mysteriously communicated. Wolff mentions how in the original music that he wrote for *Rune* (1959), a striking trumpet solo accompanied a long, distinguished dance solo.[20] Wolff did not see the piece but an impressed spectator reported the event to him. Likewise, I enjoyed a moment in *Event No. 116* to music by Robert Ashley (February 8, 1975) when Cunningham danced a sprightly solo to a Spanish tango which a musician happened to tune into on a radio. In early rehearsals, *Place* (1966) impressed its dancers as a lighthearted, spirited piece. No one, including Cunningham, foresaw when he added the menacing score by Gordon Mumma (as well as lighting and choreography for himself) that the tone and weight of the piece would change violently.[21] Carolyn Brown suggests that some of the unique theatrical intensity in Cunningham's work is a result of the dancers' conflicts and tensions in dealing spontaneously with new situations, in decor as well as in music.[22]

It is, of course, quite obvious that Cunningham's decision to work with music in the way he does represents yet another facet of the philosophy that dominates his work. Not only does it show Cunningham at his most radical but it is also possibly one of the most consistent aspects of his work. Only a mere handful of works to music by Satie represents a return to previous practice.

Yet is Cunningham really as rigorous and strict in allowing casual coincidence of music and dance as one is given to believe? In the Events where, to all appearances, the ultimately casual relationship of music and dance is encouraged, Wolff suggests that artistic judgements do in fact come into play. He cites a 1976 *Event* for which he

[16] *John Cage* (New York: Henmar Press, 1962), p.5.

[17] Cunningham, 'Space, Time and Dance', op. cit., p.151.

[18] Cunningham quoted in Snell, op. cit., p.23.

[19] New York: Grove Press, 1959, pp.79-80.

[20] In interview with the author, December 1977.

[21] See Calvin Tomkins, 'An Appetite for Motion' in M. H. and C. G. Nadel, eds., *The Dance Experience* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p.282.

[22] From an article by Carolyn Brown in Klosty, ed., op. cit., p.28.

supplied the music, including several American Labour Movement songs above an instrumental background that bore little obvious relation to them. Such writing represented a new stage in Wolff's career. For that evening, Cunningham performed movements that appeared to many as having consistently intense, serious overtones. For the majority of those present, including Wolff and Cage, the collisions of mood were unhappy and the *Event* consequently unsuccessful. Wolff suspects that Cunningham had selected dance sequences according to an image of the type of music Wolff had produced earlier in his career.[23] Ironically, if the evening's dance had not been preordained (and I am assuming that this was the case) the *Event* might have worked better. But the result also suggests that a composer working outside the Cunningham aesthetic is more likely than one within it to stretch the aesthetic to its limit, if not to provide an Event that is considered unsuccessful by a large proportion of the audience. An *Event* with the composer Charlemagne Palestine is known to have disturbed Cunningham himself.[24] Palestine provided a series of abusive remarks about the dance, thereby making a caustic statement about the philosophy rather than working within it.

Some of Cunningham's dance pieces to music that does work within his aesthetic have revealed interdependence at other levels. Quite frequently composers are invited to be visible to the audience, thus becoming a part of the visual event, and the unique quality of each performance is emphasised when properties of the auditorium space are themselves used for musical effect. Pauline Oliveros, who composed *In Memoriam Nikolo Tesla, Cosmic Engineer* for *Canfield* (1969) explains:

> The compositional problem was to include, extend, expand, explore, compare, store, and manipulate the auditory space within Cunningham's philosophy, which allows a natural rather than an imposed relationship to arise between the music and the dance.[25]

There is also the notion of dancers as musicians to consider, a feature introduced in *Variations V* (1965; score by Cage) and *TV Rerun* (1972; score by Mumma). In *Variations V* vertical antennae projecting from the floor react to the location of the dancers on the floor by sending electronic signals to the musicians; so do a system of photo-electric cells which respond in light intensity as the dancers move past them. The musicians respond by manipulating dials on a variety of electronic sound producers, though chance methods negate any recognisable link between music and dance: a strategy of the aesthetic being used to disguise such an association. As Gordon Mumma says:

> This work established at once a co-existence of technological interdependence and artistic independence.[26]

In *TV Rerun* dancers wore elastic belts that contained acceleration sensors and radio transmitters: these translated their movements into sounds that were manipulated by electronic equipment handled by musicians.

So far, Cunningham has not made a dance sequence dependent to any extent on sounds, undoubtedly because he does not consider such a degree of indeterminacy is suitable to the dance medium as he uses it. But then, Cunningham's acceptance of an aesthetic is constantly affected by his own interpretation of it for dance. Sometimes problems of practicality determine this; at other times personal choice, though rarely admitted as such, comes into play and we see that Cunningham does not share the aesthetic objectivity of, for instance, Cage. But the fact that an aesthetic voiced initially by the musical world influenced dance to reach this point is undeniable. That it has radically served and affected the course of post-Cunningham dance per se is self-evident, as is the fact that it has affected the musical outlook of many choreographers to choose from a wider variety of sources, to use music more sensitively and with more freedom, to devise sound collages and even to use no sound at all. Cunningham points to all these possibilities.

One must not forget too that he has also served music in providing an important platform for many avantgarde composers who, amid hostility elsewhere, found that dancers appreciated and welcomed what they were doing. His recent Event series, for instance, has provided opportunities for about 40 avantgarde composers to work with him. Cunningham was also the first important choreographer to use musique concrete (excerpts from *Symphonie pour un homme seul* by Pierre Henry and Pierre Schaeffer were used in 1952) and purely electronic music (Wolff's score for *Suite by Chance* in 1953).

Yet the development of new ways of combining the two art forms is certainly a shared effort rather than the property of Cunningham alone. In the light of the role that Cage and other composers have played in Cunningham's achievements, the somewhat emotive suggestion that Cunningham 'freed contemporary dance from the tyranny of music' is perhaps misleading. Certainly it leaves much unsaid.

[23] Wolff in interview with the author, December 1977.

[24] Ibid.

[25] From an article by Pauline Oliveros in Klosty, ed., op. cit., p.79.

[26] From an article by Gordon Mumma in Klosty, ed., op. cit., p.66.

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# Stockhausen – 1: Stimmung

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION FOR THE LISTENER
GREGORY ROSE

IN THIS INTRODUCTION I would like to give you some hints on what to listen for in *Stimmung*, and to give you some thoughts on this work from the performer's angle. *Stimmung* offers sounds and ideas even those familiar with contemporary music may not have heard before. Some of these ideas are closely related to the so-called 'filtering' systems used in electronic music. But there are only six solo voices used in the entire piece, with no electronics or synthesisers.

Throughout the waking hours you experience sound. John Cage was one of the first Western thinkers to proclaim that there is no silence. Wherever you are you hear rich, variable noises: sometimes identifiable, sometimes anonymous. These sounds are omnipresent: even if you are locked into a totally sound-proof studio, your pulse and body sounds become more and more audible, and replace the externally produced noises of normal life outside. The remarkable thing about *Stimmung*, for all its complexity of plan, is that its sound-source is used in its most simple form: the human voice not only reduced to its primary elements of note and overtone, but produced in such a way that individual overtones of a note are isolated. This procedure was virtually unknown in Western music until recently.

The voice, just like any other instrument, has a method of sound production based on the overtone series.[1] Western singing techniques have developed in ways that tend to obscure these overtones. Forward production and vibrato have evolved steadily from the days of oratorio, opera and lieder, and although overtones are still present in Western classical singing, they are less perceptible. *Stimmung* is the first piece in recent Western music to use overtones as a *primary* element, and in order to achieve these overtones, singers have to learn a special technique. Firstly, they must reduce the volume of sound. That is, they must not project their voice from one end of the concert hall to the other. They also withdraw all vibrato. They then start work on clarifying overtones.

In *Stimmung*, all *basic* notes (of which there are six) spring out of a very low unsingable note (B flat). As overtones of this fundamental note (see Example 1), each of these six notes in turn becomes the fundamental or bass note of its *own* harmonic series. In this way the 'basic instrument' of the piece is formed. Each basic note is produced by the voice, and each overtone is achieved by a shortening of the sound chamber in the mouth by the tongue, and through the use of various lip positions.

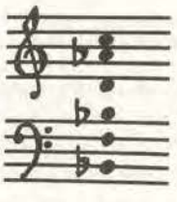
This process of clarification is aided by the use of microphones. Microphones are essential for three reasons. Firstly, they ensure that the singers do not attempt to project their voices, thereby using the upper cavities in the head and behind the nose. Secondly, since microphones act to a certain extent as filters, they help focus and clarify the overtones even further. Thirdly, the microphones enlarge the delicate sound so that a wider area of the hall can be reached. It should be stressed that the purpose of amplification in this type of music is not to make the singers sound louder, but to carry the small volume of sound further: a sound extension rather than a sound expansion.

The way in which the overtones are produced in the mouth and through microphones is akin to the filtering systems used in electronics, where you can add or subtract overtones with a filter dial. There is also an affiliation with the structure of words and language, which is indeed how the overtones are articulated. Stockhausen used 21 vowels from the *International Phonetic Association Handbook*, and made a table indicating which vowels corresponded to which overtones with which fundamentals. Vowels, like the overtone series, are a mixture of basic sound from the voice, plus tongue and lip positions. All the rhythms of *Stimmung* are the result of placing rhythmic vowels on the basic notes.

In addition to the rhythmic matter, there are what Stockhausen calls 'magic names': that is, names of gods from East and West. These have to be incorporated into the changing rhythms of the piece (these are discussed later in the Introduction), and the piece's mood has to alter according to what kind of god has been announced: from the ferocious American Indian Sioux 'Watantanka', the thunder god, to the little sun-goddess, 'Atum-ra', from Ancient Egypt.

Stockhausen uses consonants as well as vowels and magic names. Sometimes these consonants are linked to various words, such as 'Haleluja', 'Maria', 'Vishnu', and sometimes to the days of the week in German and English. In addition to these words and the magic names there are four poems of differing lengths written by the composer. These poems have many double meanings and alliterations. On the whole the double meanings have sensuous and sexual connotations more commonly found in ancient Arabic and Chinese writings than in the more

Example 1



prudish European texts of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The most important poem is 'Langsamen', spoken in the Singcircle Version of *Stimmung* by the baritone. 'Langsamen. Mein Hahn ist meine Seele, wenn ich Dich versenke. Ganz vorne in der Spitze sitze ich (ich meine wirklich, wenn ich sage "ich", mein grosses ICH) in meinem Ein-Mann-Torpedo-Bug.' A man about to make love thinks of his phallus as being both his soul about to enter another body, and a torpedo ship. Another poem, spoken in the Singcircle Version by the tenor, speaks of a woman's breasts. 'Meine Hände sind zwei glocken. Binge bung . . .' Another, spoken by the bass, 'Diff, daff', contains the image of a huge bird in flight, flying high with long, broad movements.

The passing on of material is what performers of this

[1] For a succinct explanation of the 'overtone' or 'harmonic series' see, for example, Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 41.

piece find hardest to put into practice. A leader announces some material — a rhythmic vowel pattern — and other singers gradually absorb it. For example, about 45 minutes into the Singcircle Version of *Stimmung* the bass leads. Only the tenor picks this up, as all the other singers are occupied with previous material. When the tenor himself announces a new model, the bass continues with the previous one. It is left to the baritone to transform into it from two models previously — a model which was faster in tempo. The problem is always how much the singers can gradually transform their material from one section to another, slowing down and speeding up as the case may be.

The singers have to concentrate for about 75 minutes in this piece, breaking what I believe some psychiatrists reckon to be a 50-minute concentration barrier. They do not have to sing all the time by any means, but often, during the periods when the composer directs that they sing around the notes of the leading singer, they improvise while looking at one another, and it is possible to feel the crossing over of ideas. In Singcircle we have tried not to be too introvert about the presentation of the piece. This is a danger when both rehearsal and performance of the work is such an intimate affair. We have found *Stimmung* very calming to come to each time we have met: sometimes in three's, sometimes in four's, and sometimes altogether. In a way, it is a strange mixture of a religious meeting of transcendental meditators and a meal in a Western household.

In *Stimmung* we find a work in which the sound structure is new to Western ears (although it has often been said that similar overtone techniques have been practised by Tibetan monks over many centuries); where the structure of development through the work, largely dependent on improvisatory techniques, is not yet common in Western music (although this situation is slowly changing); and where the overall shape of the piece is a fascinating mixture of static and moving forms.

# PART 2: NOTES TOWARDS AN ANALYSIS
## SIMON EMMERSON

THIS PART OF THE ARTICLE will not attempt an in-depth analysis of *Stimmung*, but is intended to aid further discussion by placing on record the basic plans and differences in choices made between the two versions so far presented publicly in Britain: those of the Collegium Vocale of Cologne ('Paris Version', 1968) and the British group Singcircle ('Singcircle Version', 1977).

It has all too often been the case that Stockhausen's 'mobile' compositions — that is, those whose 'moment form'[1] is in principle realised — have only been presented in one version. We can, however, glimpse in the two recorded versions of *Momente* (1965, and the completed version of 1972)[2] the striking changes in effect which can be generated when 'moment group' orders are changed, in this case reversed. It seems, furthermore, that the real individuality of a 'moment' can only be manifest in its mobility. By hearing it in its several possible environments its special characteristics will be highlighted. For example, in *Momente*, the M(m) moment has such different functions in each version: a shattering and sudden focus which launches the 1965 version, and an apotheosis which concludes that of 1972!

But the problem remains that it is all too easy to follow the recorded (and officially sanctioned and accepted) versions of these works in mounting a new performance. As is well known, the composer himself has unfortunately sought to influence the 'oral tradition' of his music by preparing for publication the 'Paris Version' of *Stimmung*,[3] complete with the numbers of repetitions, transformations and so on which the original group had *evolved* painstakingly over many months of rehearsal. One hears rumours, too, that transcriptions of the recorded versions of the *Aus den Sieben Tagen* works — 'text compositions for intuitive music' — might be made. While perhaps valuable for analysis, they should remain *descriptive* rather than *prescriptive*!

It is against this background that Gregory Rose decided in 1976 to work on a new version of *Stimmung:* without at first any reference to the recorded version made by the Collegium Vocale of Cologne.[4] Amazingly, he and the singers did not listen to this until after the first four Singcircle performances. This totally unfettered approach is evidence that the score *in itself* does indicate sufficiently the directions for performance.[5] While modifications have subsequently been made (both by comparison with the recorded version and after consultation with the composer), the individuality of the choices remains striking, as does the detached ability to criticise the earlier version in a way not possible had it been used as a model.

The only advantage in having a published 'Paris Version' will be that we shall be able to see the modifications to the original score which this embodies. As with many of Stockhausen's works, the recording was made before a major tour that would have ironed out some of the problems: in this case after only a handful of presentations which were followed within a few years by over 150 performances (75 at the Osaka World Fair in

[1]'Each Moment, whether a state or a process, is individual and self-regulated, and able to sustain an independent existence . . . the moments are not merely consequents of what precedes them and antecedents of what follows.' (Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte Band II: zur eigenen Werken; zur Kunst anderer* [Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1964], p.250, translated and quoted by Roger Smalley in 'Momente: material for the listener and composer — I', *The Musical Times*, Vol.115, No. 1571 (January 1974), p.25).

[2]The 1965 version is on Nonesuch 71157 and Wergo 60024 (this is the same recording). The 1972 'Europa' version is on DG 2709 055.

[3]Nr. 24½ 'Pariser Version', Universal Edition (forthcoming).

[4]DG 2543 003.

[5]With one exception! Note 13B in the Introduction lays out a 'vowel square' which combines individual vowels with the number of the overtone to be accentuated. Now vowel overtones work according to formants: frequency regions of reinforced overtones which remain relatively constant and largely independent of the fundamental. The pairs of numbers assigned to each vowel in the square, as in the models (being in the ratio 2:1), can therefore only refer to two fundamentals an octave apart — the two B flats. Thus for the higher D, A flat and C, new numbers need to be written into the models. The statement 'the number above the vowel applies to high male voices and low female voices (for example, on the pitch 285 Hz)' is thus incorrect, since if the lower note is 114 Hz the upper number can only apply to 228 Hz. For the other upper notes the numbers will be different: even changing a model during rehearsal requires a complete change in the vowel numbers if the note is changed. This took Singcircle many hours of investigation and has subsequently been accepted by the composer.

1970 alone). The 'Paris Version' was surprisingly uniform. The two performances I heard, in London in 1971 and Birmingham in 1972,[6] were remarkable for their steady refinement of an almost unaltered version. I believe they substituted 'Donnerstag' for 'Barbershop' at a well-known point in the work! The director of the Collegium Vocale, Wolfgang Fromme, recalls performances as short as 62 minutes 'when tired', and as long as 82 minutes 'on good days'. Thus the record is a criticisable realisation of the original score, with only some refinements and modifications to that score's demands.

Singcircle's first performances likewise followed Stockhausen's directions too literally. The spoken poems, for example, were declaimed in the rhythm of the model in which they occurred, and the 'magic names' were shouted with a profligacy and gay abandon which

Example 1(a): *Choice of Model Sheets*

| SINGCIRCLE | COLLEGIUM VOCALE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Soprano 1 | Soprano 1 | — | 'Frauenstimme Modelle' | 'Male is basically an anymale' |
| Soprano 2 | Mezzosoprano | — | | 'Ruselralkrusel...' |
| Mezzosoprano | Soprano 2 | — | | 'Wednesday' |
| Tenor | Bass | — | 'Mannerstimme Modelle' | 'Nimm dich in Acht' |
| Baritone | Baritone | — | | 'Langsamen' |
| Bass | Tenor | — | | 'Diff daff...' |

*The sheets are not numbered in the score, so I have identified them above by prominent poems or models.*

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Example 1(b): *Choice of Magic Name Sheets*

| SINGCIRCLE | COLLEGIUM VOCALE | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Soprano 1 | Soprano 1 | — | Ancient Greek |
| Soprano 2 | Bass | — | Australasia, Africa, Amerindian |
| Mezzosoprano | Baritone | — | Aztec, Toltec |
| Tenor | Tenor | — | Arab, Far East, India |
| Baritone | Soprano 2 | — | Near East, Egypt |
| Bass | Mezzosoprano | — | South America, Polynesia, Eskimo |

*This example represents six sheets, each containing eleven names of gods in regional or continental groups*

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Example 1 (c): *Choice of Model Order (Collegium Vocale/Singcircle)*[7]

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Bass (1/5) | 2 Mezzo (4/5) | 3 Sop 2 (7/7) | 4 Sop 1 (3/1) | 5 Bar (7/6) |
| 6 Tenor (7/2) | 7 Bar (2/8) | 8 Sop 1 (7/5) | 9 Bass (6/7) | 10 Sop 1 (1/3) |
| 11 Bass (4/6) | 12 Tenor (4/9) | 13 Bar (3/2) | 14 Sop 2 (1/2) | 15 Mezzo (5/1) |
| 16 Bass (9/1) | 17 Sop 1 (6/8) | 18 Tenor (1/1) | 19 Bass (2/3) | 20 Sop 2 (6/6) |
| 21 Bar (4/4) | 22 Mezzo (1/8) | 23 Bar (8/5) | 24 Sop 2 (4/8) | 25 Mezzo (2/2) |
| 26 Sop 1 (2/4) | 27 Mezzo (6)/ Tenor (6) | 28 Bass (3/4) | 29 Sop 2 (2)/ Bar (1) | 30 Sop 1 (8/6) |
| 31 Mezzo (3/3) | 32 Bar (9/9) | 33 Sop 2 (5/5) | 34 Sop 1 (5/7) | 35 Bass (7/2) |
| 36 Tenor (2/4) | 37 Mezzo (7/4) | 38 Bar (6)/ Sop 2 (3) | 39 Tenor (3)/ Mezzo (7) | 40 Bar (1/3) |
| 41 Bass (8/8) | 42 Bar (5/7) | 43 Tenor (9/5) | 44 Bass (5/9) | 45 Sop 2 (8/1) |
| 46 Tenor (6/8) | 47 Sop 1 (4/2) | 48 Mezzo (8/6) | 49 Tenor (8/7) | 50 Sop 2 (3/4) |
| 51 Tenor (5/3) | | | | |

*The above chart is of necessity in code and can only be used by someone wanting to create a new version or to compare existing ones with the aid of the score. There are 51 combinations in the work. The two figures in brackets indicate which model on the sheet the singer uses. These are numbered 1-8 or 9, left to right, row by row. The first figure is that model chosen in the Collegium Vocale version, the second that in the Singcircle Version. These two numbers are not necessarily from the same sheet, but refer to the models on the sheet that particular singers in each version have in front of them. Singcircle swopped two pairs of leaders – but not the pitches – of the formscheme as indicated: 27 with 39, and 29 with 38.*

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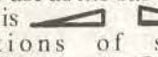
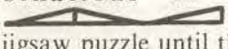
[6]English Bach Festival, St. John, Smith Square, London, April 29, 1971; Contemporary Music Network, St. Paul's Church, Birmingham, October 20, 1972.

[7]I am indebted to Gregory Rose for permission to publish this chart.

resulted in some cluttered textures. On both these points the 'Paris Version' was obviously more controlled. Singcircle, both from direct comparison and through experiencing the same processes of self-criticism as the Cologne group, have modified their approach accordingly. This preliminary phase covered five public performances: at the Round House and the BBC Concert Hall late in 1977 and in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Nottingham early in 1978. Gregory Rose and I visited the composer in April 1978 for two exhaustive and enlightening sessions on the 'Singcircle Version'. This resulted in some slight structural alterations which have a direct bearing on the notion of choice in these mobile works.

*Stimmung* has a fixed 'formscheme' which defines the pitches that each singer uses for each of the 51 'models'. It also indicates which singer 'leads', that is, introduces each model. Male singers have nine models each, female singers eight. The order in which the models are introduced is determined by the singers among themselves, and each model is used only once. In principle a singer may enter with any of his or her nine or eight models. Indeed, the score stipulates the possibility of making this choice *during* the performance. The composer's approach assumes that choices of ordering will be made with some very traditional criteria of overall shapes and forms in mind. In the 1970s he is talking once again of 'characteristic shapes' which the performer should use as the basis for a version. An example of such a shape is  . It is possible to make combinations of such shapes as follows:  . The version is then built up like a jigsaw puzzle until the mobile units, the models, are all used up. General considerations such as the distribution of the poems and the processional or meditative nature of the first and final models lead to a much reduced scope for spontaneous fantasy, but much greater structural coherence and direction. However much the principles of 'moment form' seek a retrogradable non-directional notion of time, Stockhausen has never escaped the basic principles of goal-orientated musical processes. Nevertheless, the differences between the 'Paris' and 'Singcircle' versions can clearly be seen within these constraints.

A comparative summary of the two versions is set out in Examples 1(a), (b) & (c). To this comparative summary are appended some general comments towards an analysis of the work.

## 1: THE FORMSCHEME

A complete analysis of the formscheme is beyond the scope of this article, but some preliminary points may be noted which illustrate clearly the basic conflict of regularity and fantasy in many of the composer's works. During our discussions with him, Stockhausen emphasised his abhorrence of uniformity: clothes were not to be uniform, seating should not be in male-female pairs and the order of entry should be likewise irregular. Males have nine models, females eight, thus making 17 for a pair. The work is therefore made up of 51 models (3 x 17). However, while referring in the Introduction to the three sections of the piece, it turns out that there is a subtle non-uniformity: the 51 models are divided into units of 17, 18 and 16.

To analyse the formscheme, let us call the bass voice number 1, and continue upwards so that the first soprano becomes voice number 6. Taking the overtone chord (see Example 1 of the previous article), the (unsung) B flat is the fundamental, the (sung) low B flat the first overtone, F the second, upper B flat the third and D the fourth. Now we *label* A flat the fifth and C the sixth as the next *available* overtones (they are of course the seventh and ninth *harmonics* of the fundamental).[8] So if we assign a pair of numbers to each of the 51 combinations (to represent the voice leading and the predominant overtone of that voice) we obtain Example 2. Groups printed in bold type represent collections of all available six overtones without repetition, while groups printed in italics are made up of five overtones. Brackets show those areas of the score in which the voices use 'their own' overtone pitches (e.g. the bass, the low B flat; the baritone, the F, and so on). Square brackets over the combination numbers indicate those areas during which the singers are in unison and the 'variations' (note 5 of the score) are executed. Here again there are six groups, of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 combinations in length. As can be seen, these reinforce the subdivisions just mentioned. The division after number 35 is not as total as that after number 17. It is more of an interlocking with the '1 3' in common between the two groups of the six overtones.

Example 2: *Analysis of Formscheme*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Combination: | [1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | [8 | 9 | 10] | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| Overtone: | (**1** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **2** | **3** | 2) | 4 | 3 | 5 | (1 | **3** | **2** | **5** | **4** | **1** | **6**) |
| Voice: | (**1** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **2** | **3** | 2) | 6 | 1 | 6 | (1 | **3** | **2** | **5** | **4** | **1** | **6**) |
| Combination: | [18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23] | 24 | 25 | 26 | [27 | 28 | 29 | 30] | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 |
| Overtone: | **2** | **4** | **6** | **1** | **5** | **3** | (5 | 4 | 6) | 4 | 2 | 3 | (6 | **4** | **2** | **5** | **6** |
| Voice: | 3 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 | (5 | 4 | 6) | 4 | 1 | 5 | (6 | **4** | **2** | **5** | **6** |
| Combination: | 35 | [36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40] | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | [50 | 51] |
| Overtone: | **1** | **3**) | **2** | **5** | **6** | **4** | (1 | 2 | 3 | *1* | *5* | *3* | *6* | *4* | 3 | 5) | 4 |
| Voice: | **1** | **3**) | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | (1 | 2 | 3 | *1* | *5* | *3* | *6* | *4* | 3 | 5) | 3 |

*There are 51 voice 'combinations' into which the 51 'models' are slotted.*

[8]The score uses the term 'overtone' incorrectly! The low (unsung) B flat below the bass stave is the *fundamental,* which may also be termed the first *harmonic* or the first *partial,* but *not* the first *over*tone which is the octave above! All programme notes and some texts have followed this slip, so often that it is now in common speech. It is always better to refer to 'harmonics': the seventh harmonic is seven times the fundamental in frequency, but it is not necessarily the seventh overtone. For a fuller explanation of these relationships see John Backus, *The Acoustical Foundations of Music* (London: John Murray, 1970), p. 96. My numbering of the overtones uses the term correctly.

## 2: WORDS AND REFERENCES IN THE MODELS

(a) Days of the week are used as the basis for seven models. The English form is used: perhaps because of the rich '—(d)ay' diphthong, although the German and Germanic forms are often spoken. 'Monday', 'Tuesday', 'Wednesday' and 'Friday' are in the female singers' models, the others in the male singers' models.

(b) There are at least three examples of onomatopeia (see Example 3).

(c) No magic names may be shouted in those models which include the spoken texts. With one exception, however, these models already *contain* magic names at their root (see Example 4).

(d) Other models (without texts) also contain magic names (see Example 5).

(e) Three other names and two words of praise (one from the East and one from the West) which form the basis of models are shown respectively in Example 6 (i-iii, and iv & v). Interestingly, the words of praise accentuate the same overtones (5/2)!

## 3: SOME REFERENCES IN THE TEXTS

In 'Langsamen' the two sentences 'Ganz vorne in der Spitze ich . . . in meinem Ein-Mann-Torpedo-Bug' and 'Und ich steuere — Himmelfahrtskommando — durch Dein Silberwasser' refer to the suicide manned warheads that were increasingly used by Germany and Japan in the final stages of the Second World War. The pilot was placed in the tip of the vessel to guide it to its (orgasmic) annihilation.

A clue to 'Ruselralkrusel. . .' is to be found in the third volume of Stockhausen's *Texte,*[9] where the text is headed 'Kala Kasesa Bau'.This is a reference to the Trobriand Island ritual[10] in which women were initiated — after a period of instruction from the older women — through an exhausting dance, the audience of which demanded that each show her clitoris. The reference also appears extensively in *Momente.* The form of the poem is a reference to playing with a woman's pubic hair, and contains monosyllabic allusions to obvious words, to the Trobriand text and to 'Ka' and 'Ma' which (again elaborated in *Momente*) symbolise 'Karlheinz' and 'Mary' (Stockhausen's second wife). The work is dedicated to her, and her surname 'Bauermeister' contains the 'Bau' of the Trobriand syllables which in turn contain the 'Ka' of Karlheinz!

Example 3: *Onomatopeia*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | Doves ('guru') and cows ('muku') | (Both versions: Bass No. 6) |
| (ii) | Screech Owl ('komit') | (Both versions: Soprano 1 No. 3) |
| (iii) | Horses ('hoch wiehern wie ein Pferd') | (Singcircle version: Tenor No. 5) |

Example 4: *Magic Names in 'Text' Models*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | 'Pi peri pi pi' | model contains | 'Yoni' |
| (ii) | 'Ruselralkrusel . . .' | model contains | 'Oziafu' |
| (ii) | 'Nimm dich in Acht' | model contains | 'Kala' |
| (iv) | 'Langsamen' | model contains | 'Hator' |
| (v) | 'Meine Hände' | model contains | (Exception) |

Example 5: *Magic names in Other Models*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | 'Mulugu/Uvoluvu' | (Singcircle version: Tenor No. 7) |
| (ii) | 'Vishnu' | (Singcircle version: Soprano 2 No. 7) |
| (iii) | 'Nemesis/Artemis' | (Both versions: Baritone No. 7) |
| (iv) | 'Maui' | (Singcircle version: Soprano 2 No. 4) |

Example 6: *Names and Words of Praise*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (i) | 'Phoenix' | (Singcircle version: Bass No. 7) |
| (ii) | 'Helena' | (Singcircle version: Bass No. 2) |
| (iii) | 'Maria' | (Singcircle version: Mezzosoprano No. 6) |
| (iv) | 'Aum' | ('Nimm dich . . .' Singcircle version: Tenor No. 6) |
| (v) | 'Haleluja' | (Both versions: Bass No. 8) |

[9]Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Texte Band III: zur Musik 1963-70* (Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1971), p.360.

[10]See Bronislaw Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages in Northwestern Melanesia: an ethnographic account of courtship, marriage and family life among the natives of the Trobriand Island, British New Guinea* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1929; third edition, 1968).

As the above notes indicate, *Stimmung* cannot be tied up in terms of a few formulae. As with most of Stockhausen's other works, the stricter elements have been allowed to embrace a freely composed element which contains the multi-layered meanings in which he rejoices. In some ways the Singcircle Version plays down the quasi-oriental trappings of the earlier one by the Collegium Vocale of Cologne. This has not been done intentionally, but is a result of intervening history (San Francisco 1967: don't bother to be nostalgic . . .) and of the singers' different backgrounds. I find this a strength, and believe that the Singcircle Version of *Stimmung* will join the ever increasing number of 'second generation' Stockhausen performances which will — sometimes for the first time — exploit the potential of the works as originally conceived.

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# Stockhausen – 2: On writing about Stockhausen

IF THE PURPOSE of a review were merely to assist a book in making its first steps in the world, or alternatively to kill it at birth, there would be little point in my writing about Robin Maconie's *The Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976): it has been at large for some two years now and has successfully established itself as the biggest and best available study of Stockhausen's work. There's a great deal it leaves unsaid, of course, especially in terms of technical procedure and, more surprisingly, artistic motivation: using a favourite formula of Stockhausen's, one might say that there's plenty of What, but not so much How or Why. (The Why in the book is mainly on Maconie's terms, which are often at a tangent to Stockhausen's.) Still, it's probably too soon for a book of Newmanesque proportions: at this stage one can only hope that the sheer dimensions of Maconie's book won't prove an obstacle to the further production of more modest volumes which might usefully fill in some of Maconie's gaps.

When the book first came out, I suspected that some of Maconie's more seductively phrased philosophical excursions, though intriguing enough to those who already know the basics of Stockhausen's outlook, might lay some perilous traps in the path of the innocent reader. A couple of years of ill-advised student quotations from Maconie's book have convinced me that my fears were justified: it's one thing for Maconie to assert that 'Like *Zyklus*, *Refrain* is a parable of time: of the experience of time as an expression of mortality, and a reconciliation with the transitory nature of human existence'; but when a student makes the same assertion (albeit as an acknowledged quotation) to an understandably bemused seminar group, and then wilts in the face of a simple request to explain what the phrase means, it's clear that the book has its dangers. The more so because when one looks in Maconie's text for a simple exposition of what *Refrain* is 'about', as opposed to elegant metaphysical conceits, one doesn't find it: fact and fancy are inextricably linked. The moral is, of course, that when dealing with music one should look at scores and listen to performances first and read books afterwards. But not every reader has ready access to Stockhausen scores, and any book that is intended as an introduction to unfamiliar works should take care to delineate the wood before conceptualising about the foliage of the trees.

Don't imagine from this that I am opposed to 'interpretation': that is, to the unfolding of an artist's inner life or to the explanation of an artist's work in terms of his driving compulsions or his socio-political environment. Once an artist's work has been authentically documented, it is even admissible for other writers to use him as a touchstone for self-discovery. In this context, Boulez quotes Michel Butor: '"Some people," he [Butor] writes, "consider that, while seeking to write about Baudelaire, I have succeeded only in writing about myself. No doubt it would be more valid to say that it's Baudelaire who is talking about me. *He is talking about you.*" ' I have no objection to Maconie using Stockhausen to talk about himself (for at times that's what it comes to . . .); it's just that Stockhausen is also an interesting topic for conversation, and that Maconie, writing at a time when Stockhausen's own motives have been the subject of relatively little sympathetic discussion, is too often guilty of reducing him to a mere pretext. Maybe this is because Maconie's own aesthetic frames of reference are so patently Gallic (hence all the references to Messiaen, Pierre Schaeffer and, by extension, 'le Jazz'); readers will need little persuasion that Stockhausen's 'world view', on the other hand, is more Teutonically inclined.

What is it that makes Stockhausen tick? In a phrase, fanatical dedication to the belief of the moment. For a long time this belief was Catholicism, and in a way, despite Stockhausen's later theological voyages to the India of Sri Aurobindo and the Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan, and subsequently *per ardua ad astra* (i.e. to a trans-galactic theology, with the Urantia Book as a transient Faustian heresy), Stockhausen's religious modus operandi — especially his insistence on the impotence of reason against belief — remains essentially Catholic. In an earlier review for this magazine,[1] I pointed out that for Stockhausen in the early 50s total serialisation was an attempt to reproduce an image of Divine Perfection in acoustic terms: 'the more complete and consistent the organisation, the nearer it was supposed to come to the divine model'. Stockhausen's letters of this period are full of anguished theological debate, and the consequences drawn are sometimes extreme: in the same letter that I quoted in that earlier review, Stockhausen, with only two months of marriage (to a wife he genuinely adored) behind him, wrote: 'Yesterday, at Mass, I became calm and humble once again. Recently I have thought a lot about Matthew Chap. 19, verses 10, 11 and 12, and Chap. 19, verses 21 and 29 — I've come to it too late. May God show me the true way — I shall do nothing but make myself ready'. The verses referred to (quoted in part) are as follows:

10. His Disciples said unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

[1]Of Jonathan Harvey's *The Music of Stockhausen*, see *Contact 12* (Autumn 1975), pp. 45–46.

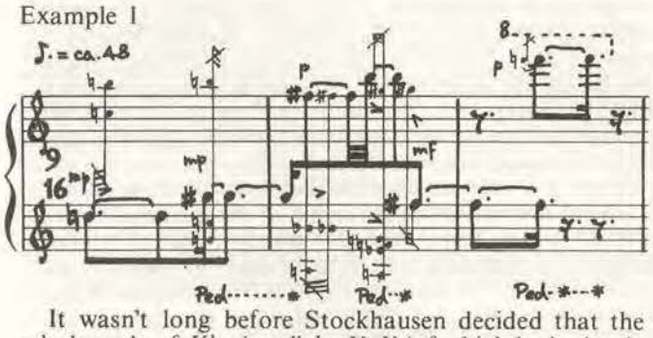
12. ... and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

29. And every one that hath forsaken house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.[2]

The young Stockhausen's persistence in the face of implacable opposition is, in itself, one of the minor miracles of music history, all the more so in view of Stockhausen's relentless self-criticism. At this period the concept of each new work as an indivisible whole was sacrosanct to him: to criticise details of a composition was to question its entire raison d'etre, and rather than touch up a few defective details of a new work, he typically preferred to rewrite the whole composition. *Kontra-Punkte* was subjected to a complete rewrite; the original structures of *Zeitmasze* and *Gruppen* were torn apart by drastic insertions; *Klavierstück VI,* the most complex of all the Piano Pieces, was radically rewritten several times over. Like all its predecessors, Maconie's book reveals no trace of this compositional turmoil; like them, it remains overawed by the myth of Stockhausen the Systematist. Stockhausen, the least Marxist of the contemporary avantgarde, is (or was) the exemplification of Marx's single but celebrated utterance on the subject of Art Music: 'Composition is damned hard work.'

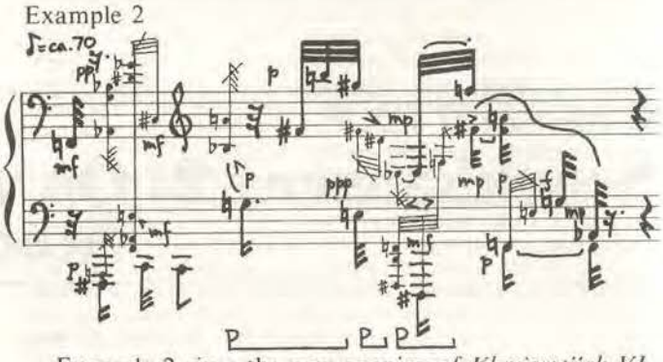
By way of example, let's return to *Klavierstück VI.* In its original form, it was a discreet miniature lasting scarcely more than a minute. The opening is shown in Example 1.[3]

Example 1



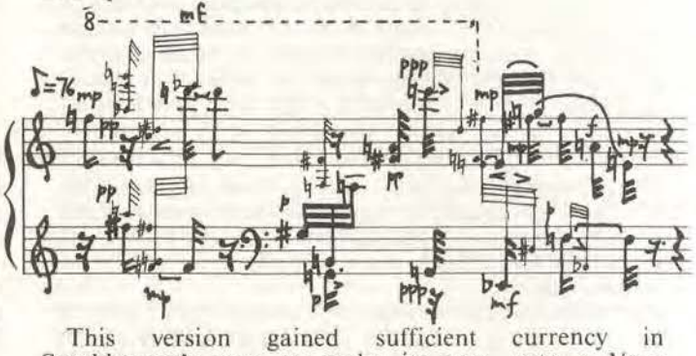

It wasn't long before Stockhausen decided that the whole cycle of *Klavierstücke V–X* (of which he had only completed nos. *V-VIII)* needed expansion and that *Klavierstück VI,* as the 'baby' of the cycle, was the prime candidate. Using a variety of serial criteria which probably derive from preliminary work on the wind quintet *Zeitmasze,* he began a drastically revised and expanded version of *Klavierstück VI,* the starting point for which was the same set of serial tables that had engendered the original miniature version. The new version was finished on about December 3, 1954. A couple of days later he wrote to Pousseur: 'Excuse my not having answered; I haven't looked to right or left,[4] I've just worked on my piano piece, which has grown to 14 pages and has been finished for 2 days. Phew! that took 3 months . . . I believe it's quite acceptable. I had to hurry terribly, because Tudor still wants to play it in New York with the others on 16.12.[5] He told me that he could still study the piece if he had the manuscript by the 8th. That seems impossible to me. Perhaps it's all right for Cage's music, where it doesn't matter so much because there's much more scope left for ambiguities. Well, we'll see'.

Example 2




Example 2 gives the new opening of *Klavierstück VI.* Contentment with this new version didn't last long; within a few months Stockhausen had decided that the harmony was not sufficiently 'sauber' ('clean') and rewrote the whole piece once again. In the process the register position of the opening was almost totally inverted (see Example 3).

Example 3




This version gained sufficient currency in Stockhausen's eyes to make its way onto a Vega 'Domaine Musical' recording played by David Tudor, and the opening at least corresponds fairly closely to the printed score. But this version, too, was substantially recomposed by Stockhausen in 1960, shortly before *Klavierstücke V–X* were finally submitted for publication to Universal Edition, and the second half, submitted for publication to Universal Edition, and the second half, in particular, was decked out with a plethora of additional arpeggio figures that occasionally recall Stravinsky and even Skryabin.

Now one can write a perfectly good book on Beethoven without so much as acknowledging the existence of sketch-books, and simply treating each published work as a fait accompli. The same is true of Stockhausen, and yet it seems to me that in both cases there's at least one dimension missing if one doesn't make a distinction between what a work started out as and what it became. This is particularly true of Stockhausen, whose initial concept of a work is always very clearly defined, yet who frequently manages to stray a sizeable distance from his original concept during the course of composition. The *Klavierstücke V–X, Gruppen, Zeitmasze* and many other works from the 50s underwent drastic transformations, and these revisions aren't 'exceptions' within Stockhausen's compositional make-up: they are an integral part of it. Maconie's book, as he says in his own preface, is 'a speculative view of the whole of

[2]Stockhausen's subsequent reputation, as being at least an 'homme moyen sensual', should intensify the substance of these thoughts rather than detract from them. Still, if these notions recall Wagner's assertion that 'chastity works miracles', cynics might be forgiven for remembering Nietzche's response: 'Wagnerus dixit princeps in castitate auctoritas'.

[3]In his Appendix of uncompleted and/or unpublished works, Maconie says that what I have provisionally described as Piano Pieces 5½ and 6½ relate to *Klavierstücke V* and *VI*; they actually relate to *VI* and *VII.*

[4]Aloys Kontarsky, who first got to know Stockhausen around this period, says that it was precisely Stockhausen's remorseless singleness of vision that was so striking and, ultimately, persuasive.

[5]The others being *Klavierstücke V, VII* and *VIII,* the first two pieces being at this stage very different from the published versions.

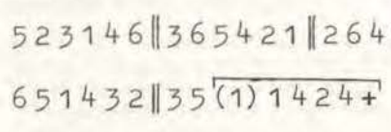
Stockhausen's creative development to the present time'; it's a pity, perhaps, that his speculations don't extend to the creative process itself.

And it's a pity, too, that the necessity to deal with over 60 works individually in about 300 pages, many of which are already taken up with musical examples (not that I have any complaints about that: it's one of the book's exemplary features), precludes much analytical examination of the works, or even a clear description of their formal outlines such as one would expect to find in any book on the classical, sonata-form orientated repertoire. The Stockhausen literature as a whole leaves much to be desired in this respect; there are plenty of articles and chapters dealing with technical details but few that describe an audible *form*. Yet whatever their technical complexities, most of Stockhausen's works do have such a form, and this audible form is not necessarily at odds with the conception of detail.

Let's take an example: *Kreuzspiel*. As Maconie rightly observes, the piece falls into three main sections. In the first the pitches start out in extremely high or low registers, gradually fill out a seven-octave range evenly and then retreat back to the extremes, with the six pitches that started out at the top finishing off at the bottom and vice versa. The second section reverses the process: the pitches start in the central octaves, expand to the full range of the piano and then come back to the centre. The third section, somewhat less audibly, combines the two processes. Maconie never really gets round to describing these basic formal processes. Moreover, he doesn't mention the reason for using a couple of wind instruments alongside the piano, which is that the wind instruments have a a narrower range than the piano (more concentrated on the central octaves) and that their increased use in the composition is always a sign that the middle octaves are being incorporated into the register form. By the nature of things, Part II, which starts off in the middle register, is dominated by the wind instruments. Maconie doesn't explain this; instead he writes: 'In this section, Stockhausen's gift of evoking an atmosphere of quite touching melancholy . . . is clearly apparent.' Naturally, chromatic melodies written within a range of one or two octaves are likely to be more 'melancholy' than those distributed boldly over seven octaves. But the function of these melodies is a severely formal one; if they happen to be 'touchingly melancholy' that's a more or less inadvertent by-product of the serial organisation (whereas in later works of Stockhausen, expressive effects are more consciously sought — and achieved).

Similarly, if Stockhausen uses number tables, it's for a purpose, and if one is going to mention these tables at all one should at least show why they are there. Talking about *Klavierstück I*, Maconie produces the table given in Example 4 and comments: 'The piece is constructed first of all on a series of time proportions, expressed in crotchet values, 1, 2, 3,. . . 6. . . . Each note group is distinguished by its number of attacks, number of notes, their range . . .' etc.

Example 4

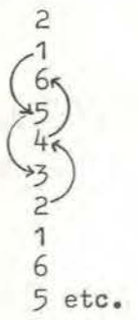



On the positive side, Maconie has (for the first time, as far as I'm aware) drawn attention to the 6×6 construction of the piece. On the negative side, though, I can't help remarking that:

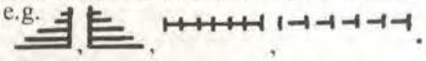
(1) the serial square (which isn't presented as a square, though (it should be) is wrong; the correct square is shown in Example 5(a). The origin of which is clear enough; reading down each column, one always gets the sequence 1 5 3 2 4 6, i.e. Example 5(b).

Example 5(a)


(b)

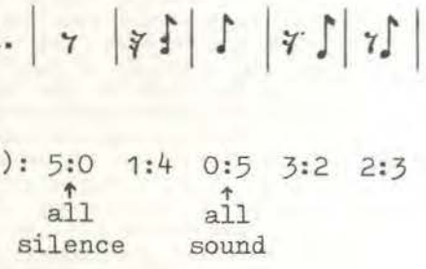



(2) What the duration groups *do* (apart from creating awkward succession of time signatures) is not explained. In fact, the 'phrases' created by the series follow the same kind of *modal* structure that Stockhausen had used in the *Konkrete Etude* and was to use in many other works written in 1953-54, e.g.



The first bar, for example, belongs to the first type (notes enter successively, end together); the second bar, with its five silence plus sound divisions, belongs to the fourth category (Example 6).

Example 6




The almost terrifying technical complexity of some of Stockhausen's pieces from the 50s has yet to be revealed in print. Maconie describes *Klavierstück VIII* (1954) as being 'principally organized around a scale of dynamics'. In fact, the organisation of *Klavierstück VIII* rests on at least a dozen simultaneously operative serial levels: two for pitches (grace notes and 'main notes'), and the others for such things as number of superordinate groups (groups of groups) per section, number of groups per superordinate group, number of attacks per grace-note group, number of notes in each grace-note attack, dynamic level of the grace note groups, and an even larger number of specifications for the main notes.

As is inevitable in a pioneering book of this size, there are a number of factual errors. I don't have space to correct them here, and I should prefer to point out, in Maconie's defence, that very many of these errors are the result of Stockhausen's distinctly hazy recollections of the early years, rather than negligence on Maconie's part. (The discrepancy between Stockhausen's published reminiscences of the 1951–55 period and evidence provided by surviving letters from these years would, in itself, furnish a pretty hefty article.)

At a distance of two years I find myself concentrating on the flaws and omissions in Maconie's *Stockhausen* rather than its many sterling virtues. In fact it is a very good book, maybe an indispensable one. But as far as the Stockhausen literature is concerned there is still a lot to be done. Allons-y!

# Reviews and Reports

**AN IVES CELEBRATION** edited by H. Wiley Hitchcock and Vivian Perlis
University of Illinois Press, 1977 (£8.40)

**IVES** by H. Wiley Hitchcock
Oxford University Press, 1977 (£3.25)

HUGH DAVIES

Many neglected creative artists get their last chance during the centenary year of their birth. Since we celebrated the centenary of Charles Ives in 1974, he has begun to become established over here as a major figure. It has been possible to obtain records of most of his compositions and to buy many of the scores, and the BBC has continued to programme his songs and chamber music fairly regularly. However, the orchestral works are still far too little played; enthusiastic Ivesians like myself will be happy when they are played as often as those of Stravinsky and Bartók. The number of books published about Ives is rapidly growing (with some unusual contributions printed in *Soundings'* special issue 'Ives, Ruggles, Varèse').[1]

Ives' fellow-countrymen have recognised his importance for rather longer. A five-day Charles Ives Centennial Festival-Conference was held in New York and New Haven in October 1974, and the papers and panel discussions from it have now appeared in book form. *An Ives Celebration* is a rich feast of new ideas about and approaches to Ives; of its contributors only the work of Frank Rossiter and Peter Dickinson has previously been available over here. It is hard to think of any other composer who would come off so well and in so great a depth from such a heterogeneous set of contributions. As a book this *Celebration* is far more than the sum of its parts and forms a valuable addition to the existing literature on Ives, yet at the same time delineating substantial areas for fruitful future studies. The multiple dimensions of Ives' music, life and personality enable everyone to draw conclusions that relate to their individual interests, and make him into a personal 'symbol'. Lou Harrison's 'refrain', discussing his work of editing various Ives scores, could well be applied to Ives research as a whole: 'This marvelous playground in which we will all be making beautiful things for the rest of time.' This phrase also embodies the warmth of appreciation and affection for all aspects of Ives' life and work that comes through strongly in this symposium.

*An Ives Celebration* is a handsome volume, well produced and edited (I spotted only two tiny printing errors, both in the very technical paper by Allen Forte). I was surprised and pleased to find that it has an index. It also includes as appendices the programmes of the seven concerts which were given during the Festival-Conference (one of which, 'Ives and Friends', included not only the three Bs and Carl Ruggles but also Stravinsky's 'take-off' *Greeting Prelude*) and 14 'Essays by Foreign Participants', reprinted from the Festival-Conference programme book. The main body of the *Celebration* is divided into five sections: 'Ives and American Culture', 'Ives Viewed from Abroad', 'On Editing Ives', 'On Conducting and Performing Ives', and 'Ives and Present-Day Musical Thought'.

In "Charles Ives: Good American and Isolated Artist" Frank R. Rossiter expands on certain aspects of Ives' personality and inner motivations which he has already discussed in his illuminating book,[2] including the function of his wife and his business partner in encouraging and protecting him in two roles which allowed him to escape adult responsibility, those of prankish boy and aloof visionary. Robert M. Crunden relates Ives to his contemporaries, the radicals of what is known as the 'Progressive Era' (exactly coinciding with Ives' creative years) in the fields of politics, society, religion, economics, business and education.

The final contribution to the first section is Neely Bruce's "Ives and Nineteenth-Century American Music". He divides this into two kinds: music of the people, and other 19th century American composers (plus the musical 'classics'). While Ives rejected these American composers because of their sentimentality and effeminacy, some of his songs are nonetheless directly related to such music. Bruce draws parallels with one of these composers whom Ives admired, Stephen Foster. Some of these are rather far-fetched. For example, Foster apparently wrote *one* song which uses quotation, which I would take to mean the reverse of Bruce's conclusion: namely that he was one of the few composers of that time who was basically *un*interested in quotations. He later mentions other Americans of the time who did use quotations, and in quite an 'Ivesian' way; over on our side of the Atlantic one could make a similar list, involving folk tunes, student songs, B-A-C-H motives and the Dies Irae plainsong just as a start. I would similarly dispute Bruce's claims for Foster's rare use of self-quotation, which is commoner in popular than in classical music (taking this to include refurbishing a song with a new text). Bruce points out many characteristics of 19th century American composers which we now think of as being typically Ivesian. It is interesting to realise how little, at least until very recently, American musicians have known the full perspective of the history of their country's music, even from only a century ago (and who were the pre-Ivesian 'Second New England School', mentioned by a questioner in the subsequent discussion?).

Two sessions consisted of discussions between participants: one ('Ives Viewed from Abroad') between the foreign participants (mainly composers), the other (included in 'Ives and Present-Day Musical Thought') featuring five American composers (Roger Reynolds, Charles Dodge, Lou Harrison, Salvatore Martirano and Gordon Mumma) who each presented a work of their own which they felt was relevant. These presentations included four-channel tape and slide projections. Since none of them knew in advance what the others were going to do, there is a freshness in their discussions which is very evident. Reynolds points out that Ives' method was more one of 'incorporation' than of just quotation. Collectively they conclude that Ives embodies a very American approach, 'Use what you've got' (Reynolds), which William Brooks, in a separate paper, compares to Lévi-Strauss's metaphor of 'bricolage', doing-it-yourself with the materials and tools that are at hand. From the previously submitted essays by the foreign participants, here are three snippets: Peter Dickinson compares Ives with James Joyce (covering the same ground as in his *MT* article)[3]; Hans G. Helms refers to American college students around 1970 reacting to some of Ives' songs in the same way as to protest songs; and Louis Andriessen ends with the description of Ives as 'one of the few composers who thought music more interesting than himself'.

There were two sessions under the heading 'On Editing Ives'. One of these featured three of the principal editors of Ives' scores, the other spotlighted three realisations of the four pages of material which is all that Ives wrote down for *Chromatimelodtune*, with illustrations of all the material and samples of these versions made by Gunther Schuller, Gerard Schwarz with Keith Brion, and Kenneth Singleton. In the first session John Kirkpatrick describes the history of each movement of the *Concord* Sonata and the revisions made by Ives after the first printing of the score in 1921. As always, Kirkpatrick is very illuminating about Ives' working methods. (I hope that his meticulous devotion to Ives' manuscripts has not prevented him from documenting many more of his personal reminiscences of Ives for posterity, such as those illustrated in Vivian Perlis's *Charles Ives Remembered*.[4] Such self-effacement can occasionally be somewhat self-defeating. In addition, one of the

appendices in Kirkpatrick's edition of the *Memos* consists of an annotated list of compositions made by Ives around 1949;[5] unfortunately he has not added to it any other complete surviving works which Ives omitted. Some are cited in his footnotes or in annotations elsewhere in the *Memos*, others (including several that have subsequently been published) do not appear at all. Doubtless this information, as well as details of lost, destroyed or incomplete works and an analysis of all the different versions of works which were adapted at later dates, can be found in Kirkpatrick's unpublished *Temporary Mimeographed Catalog*,[6] but few of us have even seen a copy of this, whereas *Memos* is now also available in a paperback edition.) The other two editors were Lou Harrison, who had written to Ives out the blue as a teenager and received a *crate* of photocopied scores, and was later particularly involved in editing the First Piano Sonata, and in preparing the Third Symphony for its first performance) which he conducted; and James Sinclair, who discusses his reconstruction of the original version for full orchestra of *Three Places in New England*, mentioning how Ives added dissonances in the revisions that he made during the 1920s and 30s.

There were also two sessions 'On Conducting and Performing Ives', with seven conductors from different generations and three violin and piano duos. I'll quote one gem from each. A questioner from the floor asked Sinclair, who had recently edited the *Second Orchestral Set*, if he had considered a choral passage used by Stokowski in the *second* as well as in the last movement; following the reply that Ives had not indicated it, the questioner revealed that he himself had written it for Stokowski! The violinist Daniel Stepner made several very thoughful comments, including one on bowing the violin sonatas: 'Often, at ends of movements, there's that open-ended feeling which I think can be enhanced visually and in sound with an upbow. It's hard, in a sense, but it has a kind of tension which I think a downbow doesn't have.'

The final section, 'Ives and Present-Day Musical Thought', includes the discussion of the five composers already mentioned and papers by Robert P. Morgan, Allen Forte and William Brooks. Morgan's 'Spatial Form in Ives' considers the ways in which Ives negated the traditional elements that give rise to a temporal flow in music: harmonic stasis, quasi-circular forms, disruption of expectation (especially with quotations), fragmentation, multilayering, etc., obtaining a more spatial dimension in the music — and not merely in those works which require the musicians to sit in different groups that are spatially separated. He also puts Ives' use of serial procedures into a proper perspective (Schuller mentions 'twelve-tone' on three separate occasions during the *Chromatimelodtune* discussion), showing that the durational series are if anything more important than the pitch ones. I would have thought that their *isorhythmic* aspect was more significant; more of this later.

Allen Forte applies set theory in "Ives and Atonality". I am not competent to judge such an analytical method; while it shows *some* of Ives' pitch procedures more clearly, I feel that they are probably not those that are most important to us or were to Ives himself. This method seems to be more appropriate to the music of the Second Viennese and Princeton schools; with Ives the layout of pitches in a chord is often a much more important element than with serial music, and it is precisely this element that set theory totally ignores. Morgan contradicts Forte's rigid distinctions between tonal and atonal: 'In Ives' music tonality loses its historical context; it is neutralized and can be treated much like nontonal music — with the same kinds of compositional techniques and with similar sonic results.'

Finally William Brooks, in an intriguing survey of 'Ives Today' in which he makes some telling comparisons with Buckminster Fuller (born only 21 years after Ives), deals with the question 'What is there about the way we structure our world today that draws Ives' work to our attention?'. There is much to mull over here, making one look forward to his book on Billings, Ives and Cage, and I quote his final statement: 'We are engaged in a pressing search for tools to aid us in a self-transformation which will align that which is recursive in our thinking with cyclic rather than linear processes. In Ives' music we hope to have found such a tool.'

One of the editors of *An Ives Celebration*, and the president of the Charles Ives Society which is supervising carefully edited editions of Ives' scores, is H. Wiley Hitchcock, who is also the author of an analytical study of Ives' music in the Oxford Studies of Composers series. This is lavishly illustrated with specially engraved music examples, but at £3.25 for less than 100 pages is rather pricey. The works are treated under the following headings: 'Songs', 'Choral Music', 'Keyboard Music', 'Chamber Music' and 'Orchestral Music'. Hitchcock has produced a useful introduction to Ives' work with sufficient information about its background and context to satisfy both newcomers and those already familar with it.

Space was probably too restricted for a more general discussion of Ives' use of existing tunes, showing the different ways in which Ives applied quotations. It would have been valuable to have given a couple of more detailed examples of how Ives integrated elements of apparently randomly chosen melodies, following the work of Sydney Robinson Charles[7] and Dennis Marshall,[8] neither of whom is mentioned in the brief bibliography. Similarly, some of Hitchcock's statistics, which are frequent and informative, could have been slightly expanded: the version for strings of the quarter-tone *Chorale* has been recently reconstructed; of the approximately 15 incomplete or lost chamber works, about half survive in Ives' rearrangements or are incorporated into surviving works; and the same applies to the approximately 30 incomplete or lost orchestral works.

I am stimulated to two 'asides'. Hitchcock mentions d'Indy's *'Istar' Variations*, the reversed variation technique of which is similar to one that Ives often used. Investigating the first occurrence of this in the present book, with the 1919 song *Down East*, I see that in the *Memos* Kirkpatrick thinks that this song may have been derived from a lost *Down East Overture* (1897?). The (23 years older) French composer wrote his own work in 1896, so it is quite possible that Ives arrived at this idea at the same time quite independently. And only two pages further on I am intrigued by the violin part in Example 45, from the end of the last movement of the Second Violin Sonata (1907-10), and the fact that one phrase is to be repeated '2 or 3 times'. It is very similar to Irving Berlin's *Easter Parade* (1933), which is itself based on *Smile and Show Your Dimple* (1917). More research would be needed to see if these dates could be reconciled.

As I have already said, a few people seem to go out of their way to point out any 'twelve-note' pitch sequences which they find in Ives (or for that matter Mozart, etc.). Hitchcock also does this. But, in his favour, he is the only person to talk about isorhythm in the same context. There are many unaccountable 'respellings' of accidentals (perhaps by the publisher?) in Example 33, from the Three-Page Sonata. Some are clearer than in the original, others more confusing. One can be sure that Ives had a definite reason for the spellings that he wrote down. In the *Celebration* Kirkpatrick quotes Ives in a similar context: 'I'd rather die than change a note of that!'

I find Hitchcock's description of parts of the Second String Quartet somewhat misguided. He refers to a descending whole-tone scale in the first violin in bars 9-10 of the first movement, which is much more like part of a normal *major* scale. Hitchcock describes this as insignificant but the basis for later thematic development. However, it stands out in context because of its sudden slow, even notes. Further on there is a string of quotations. Hitchcock lists only three, one of which, from Brahms' Double Concerto, I cannot trace; perhaps the passage he has in mind is one which actually uses *Dixie*, making much more sense in the context of four other national and patriotic melodies. In the second movement he mentions *The Star-Spangled Banner* (the phrase in question is *not* a distortion of the last line of this song, but the beginning of *Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean*) and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, ignoring the passages on each side of it which contrast three of the earlier patriotic tunes plus a new one with fragments from Tchaikovsky's Sixth and Brahms' Second Symphonies in addition to the Beethoven. Some of these additional quotations contain scalar passages which are thus not Hitchcock's thematic links between quotations derived from the 'whole-tone' scale; in fact the quotations dovetail very neatly into each other without the need for transitional material.

A few errors: the song *Nov. 2, 1920* is also called *An Election*, not *The Election*; *On the Antipodes* involves piano duet and not two pianos (which Ives lists in error in his c. 1949 list of works); the statement that 'only a few' of the piano studies remain in complete form presumably covers

the three which he discusses and which have been published, but no mention is made of a further nine studies which are recorded on the set of Desto discs and must have been included in Hitchcock's earlier estimate of 'some forty keyboard works . . . that survive intact'; the hymn tune quoted in the duple time second movement of the Third Symphony (Example 57b) is the duple time *Naomi*, not the triple time *Woodworth* (their melodic outlines are identical here but not subsequently, even though Ives *does* occasionally change a tune from duple to triple time or vice versa). I also find the reference to *God Save the King* (the tune that Ives knew as *America*) a bit quaint!

To continue with the Third Symphony (the Second is surprisingly dismissed in two sentences, though there is much of interest to be said about this stimulating work, as in the analysis by Charles mentioned above): the confusion of *Naomi* with *Woodworth* means that the latter, with *Azmon*, actually only occurs in the first and third movements and not in all three (as stated on p. 81). This is much more Ivesian, with a symmetrical balance between the outer movements and a thematically linked hymn tune in the second. In fact *Woodworth* only appears once in the first movement, and the quoted hymn tunes there which are 'developed integrally' are *Azmon* (as Hitchcock indicates) and later *Erie* (which also makes appearances in the other two movements). In the second movement, prominently superimposed at a faster tempo above *Naomi* in Example 57b, is *Cleansing Fountain* (are readers expected to recognise it from its presentation on p. 26?), and this is the major quoted tune. The third movement is, as stated, based on *Woodworth* and *Azmon*. It seems as if Hitchcock doesn't know his hymn tunes very well (or perhaps even the actual symphony?). The song derived from its last movement, *The Camp Meeting*, features *Woodworth* more substantially than the hymn he mentions, *Azmon*. It would be very interesting to see a detailed analysis of this symphony. Another typically Ivesian feature is the similarity of one line of *Erie* to one of *Azmon*. The latter is little known over here and should have been included among the hymns that are given in the music examples, where there would have been plenty of room for it on p. 82, especially as it is one of the hardest tunes to trace in the old hymn books that one can find in this country. It is immediately recognisable, however, due to the three successive descending thirds, with each note repeated, in the third line, the very line that relates to *Erie*.

None of my criticisms are of great importance for most readers, as they deal with aspects of Ives research that have little direct bearing on listening to the music. I am sure that many people will find Hitchcock's book a helpful aid in coming to grips with this wonderful body of music. Meanwhile a much larger analytical book on Ives is still needed.

NOTES:

[1] *Soundings* (1974).
[2] *Charles Ives and His America* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1976).
[3] 'A new perspective for Ives', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 115, No. 1580 (October 1974), pp. 836-838.
[4] New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.
[5] New York: W. W. Norton, 1972.
[6] *A Temporary Mimeographed Catalogue of the Music Manuscripts and Related Materials of Charles Edward Ives, 1874-1954, Given by Mrs. Ives to the Library of the Yale School of Music, September 1955* (New Haven: Library of the Yale School of Music, 1960).
[7] 'The Use of Borrowed Material in Ives' Second Symphony', *The Music Review*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (May 1967), pp. 102-111.
[8] 'Charles Ives's Quotations: Manner or Substance?', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol 7, No. 1 (Spring-Summer 1968), pp. 45-56.

**NOTATION** by Virginia Gaburo
Lingua Press, 1977 ($13.95).

*Obtainable from P.O. Box 1192, La Jolla, California 92308, USA*

STEPHEN MONTAGUE

Lingua Press began a couple of years or so ago in La Jolla, California, with the issuing of Collection One, a beautifully printed collection of 40 works by Kenneth Gaburo, one of America's most interesting composers and the director of the excellent extended vocal techniques ensemble, NMCE IV. Collection Two has recently become available, and contains some 38 works by other interesting composers, writers and artists, primarily American, who as yet are not well known in Britain. One of the works available in this latest series is Virginia Gaburo's book *Notation*, 'a lecture to be performed by solo speaker to attentive audience'.[1]

Virginia Gaburo holds a B.A. in literature and a Masters degree in piano performance from the University of Illinois and has been active for many years as a soloist and ensemble performer in North America. She has recently made a recording of contemporary piano music (issued in the autumn of 1978 by Lingua Press) and, in addition to her book on notation, is the author of a forthcoming volume entitled *Who is Bruce Simonds?*

*Notation* (now available from Lingua Press by direct order) is one of the results of Virginia Gaburo's experience as a teacher and performer, grappling first-hand with this thorny subject in both contemporary literature and earlier music. The book is the handsomely printed text of an illustrated lecture/performance first given by her in 1977 at the San Diego State University before an audience of musicians. The book contains instructions for the 'performance' of this interesting lecture, including the making of slides for both the verbal quotations and the musical examples sprinkled throughout the text. Both as a book and as a lecture/performance it is an attractive presentation. The author approaches the difficult subject methodically and with a good deal of insight in her attempt '. . . both to qualify and to expand the concept (one holds) to be represented by the word notation'. The lecture unfolds in a kind of dialectical manner, carefully picking its way through many interesting and provocative areas such as analogies between music as a communication and verbal language, attempts to define 'Western art music', improvements to the communicable ability of notation, historical problems in notation, the expansion and flexibility of the term 'notation', notational innovation and standardisation and a performer's view on notation. The lecture concludes with a nice touch when a slide of a planet in deep space is projected while a pre-recorded excerpt from Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* is played.

On the whole *Notation* is effective, stimulating and certainly provides many points for audience discussion, one of which might be the whole idea of a performer (speaker) presenting someone else's thoughts on a subject in a kind of mixed-media theatre environment. What I found a little difficult as I read the text was the density and sometimes complexity of the material and ideas which the author presents in a rather brief space of time. This, coupled with many wonderful, pithy quotations inserted at the appropriate points in the text, sometimes made the book more difficult to grasp than if it were read straight through without the quotational sidetrips. I liked both very much, and that was the problem. Each really necessitated contemplation and a different period for thought processing. The advantage of reading the book is obvious. In the live lecture presentation, pacing would undoubtedly be of the utmost importance.

I was surprised that, since this work is presented both as a book and a lecture, there were no references for most of the verbal quotations. This seems to me a real oversight on the part of the author. Take, for example, Cage's lovely definition of notation: 'The omission of all that one's familiar with (compare conversation among old friends)', or Stockhausen's wonderfully narcissistic: 'I think the ultimate goal of a creative person is to transform his whole existence as a person into a medium that's more timeless, more spiritual . . . I'm commissioned so to speak, by a supernatural power to do what I do.' Either of these quotations might surely prompt some people to further reading or perhaps even to investigate its context. Nevertheless these are only minor points. *Notation* is a different look at a familiar term, and in both forms, book or lecture, it has much to offer. It is certainly recommended for live performance, private study and the libraries of musicians, music colleges and universities in English speaking countries.

NOTE:

[1]There will be further reviews of Lingua Press material in future issues of *Contact*. (Ed.)

**NEW DIRECTIONS FOR CLARINET,** by Phillip Rehfeldt (Volume 3 of 'The New Instrumentation' series, edited by Bertram Turetzky and Barney Childs)
University of California Press, 1978 (£10.50)

IAN MITCHELL

The period from the mid 60s to the early 70s was an exciting time for a clarinettist in England with an interest in contemporary music. The instrument seemed to be surging forward on the crest of a wave. Good, demanding music was being written to extend the player, and the player was developing new techniques for composers to take up and exploit. Then the bubble burst and The Player began turning more and more to 18th century boxwood clarinets. One or two had matched The Player squeak for squeak whilst neglecting to develop their own individual squeaks; some lived in The Player's shadow (and still chase it); others talked of gimmicks and continued to practise their 19th century orchestral parts.

This curious and mixed state of affairs seems to have passed away. Sure, most people can manage some sort of multiple squawk and almost flutter tongue in case some 'contemporary' job comes in, but the heart isn't in it. Even the new generation of composers-to-be seems to have lost any inquisitiveness and sense of adventure in writing for the instrument. The so-called gimmicks have generally not been pursued and integrated into the musical language to any great extent. They are kept as special effects imposed on the music like bad 17th century ornamentation.

However, do not despair. All is not lost, thanks to the driving force of many jazzmen (jazzpersons). After all, most 'new' techniques came from jazz anyway. Has anyone heard the gliss to top C ending Artie Shaw's Clarinet Concerto? Goodman's growls? Dolphy's multiphonics? Herbie Mann's vocalising? William O. (Bill) Smith's compositions of the early 60s? It's all there.

Much of it is also there in the 'straight' American scene, thanks partly to the fight for survival and recognition that goes on in academic circles where most performers seem to want/need to be. The maxim 'publish or perish' has thrown up a few worthwhile dissertations on performance techniques, and the contemporary clarinet scene is reasonably healthy in the hands of some determined players and — more importantly — player-composers.

Phillip Rehfeldt, one of the determined players and a leading contemporary music performer with an academic post, has gathered together in a compact book (135 pages) most of the innovative, post-1950 clarinet techniques. And, despite the unfortunate drawing of an obsolete clarinet on the front cover, this monograph is a thoroughly worthwhile addition to the shelves of players and composers alike.[1]

A third of the book is taken up with chapters on 'monophonic fingering possibilities' and 'multiphonics'. The former includes 15 pages of fingerings and in fact catalogues many of the 'dodges' used by players to vary intonation and dynamics, putting them forward as valid alternatives for coloristic variety or microtonal variation. Parts of the anatomy — e.g. ankles, knees, thighs — are brought into use which, although producing the required effect (flattening notes), might raise some questions in the minds of the audience. It must be remembered that many microtonal fingerings give a very uneven sound quality, and a quarter-tone scale, for instance, is impossible with any uniformity of tone colour. Composers must also remember that many of the 'fingerings' (squeeze bell between thighs, for example) need time to be manipulated. But effects such as the opening of Berio's *Sequenza VII* for oboe are equally possible on the clarinet.

The chapter on multiphonics takes us much further than Bruno Bartolozzi's pioneering and in some ways infuriating book.[2] Rehfeldt divides them into eight categories, which although not always distinct, are useful; there is also a section for bass clarinet. The categories include: 'good at all dynamic levels with all articulations — speak immediately'; 'generally can be attacked accurately but extremely soft';

'need increased pressure, generally shrill'. The fingering charts are mostly very reliable. I tried all the author's mono and multiphonic fingerings on a clarinet quite different from his and found the results generally to be pretty close. The main reason for this is that, unlike with Bartolozzi, the multiphonics are for the most part obtained purely by fingerings, not by strange embouchure changes. Thus they tend to be less affected by personal ability and physique. However, you do need to have good diaphragm control. Again it must be remembered that many fingerings are complex and some need time to speak: e.g. category 2 often needs time for upper pitches to accumulate.

The catalogue of additional effects briefly mentions a number of other techniques: glissando, portamento, pitch bends, vibrato, smorzato, flutter tongue, slap tongue, throat tremolo, vocal sounds (while playing), breath sounds, hand pops, mouthpiece alone, mutes, key rattles, etc. They are, on the whole, neatly described, although the lengthy differentiation between glissando and portamento falls down when the examples for each both use the word glissando for Rehfeldt's definition of portamento . . . I was also slightly confused by his statement that an improved glissando could be achieved by 'lessening the pressure of the jaw on the reed while increasing the grip on the mouthpiece'.

There is a useful chapter on electronic amplification and auxiliary devices. Clarinet with electronics is much more exploited in the States than here. Of 45 pieces listed, 42 are from the USA and one each from England, Canada and Japan. The two can be very well integrated as in Roger Hannay's *Pied Piper,* where in the opening section electronic-sounding multiphonics are deliberately chosen in order to blend with the taped sounds. Of course one drawback for us is the lack of access to equipment frequently available to the academic performer in America.

The appendices include thorough and extensive multiphonic charts by William O. Smith which he began to compile in 1960. There is an extensive bibliography of works with a strong bias towards American music, which I found very interesting and informative. We have difficulty keeping abreast of repertoire from the other side of the Atlantic, and this catalogue is a good starting point.

This soft cover, spiral-bound book (which can by the way, sit comfortably on a music stand) retails here at £10.50 and is good value with an abundance of useful music examples. But there are some careless oversights. An annoying feature is that, despite the author's laudable intention to name keys by the note they produce in the lowest register, this does not always happen: the Smith charts are particularly bad for this, sometimes reverting to numbers of which there are varying systems. Some fingerings are actually wrong and one has to assume that a key has been missed off the fingering. The fingerings in the music examples have not been brought into line with the author's policy and we therefore have quite a muddle of numbers. Key 14 means two different things, only one of which is (wrongly) explained by the author. Keys 1 and 2 are found at the top of the instrument in one example and key 3 at the bottom in the next, etc.

The floppy, seven-inch record supplied with the book is square and hence alarming to place a stylus on. 33 brief examples are squashed on one side, several given wrong references in the text, and the multiphonic on band 14 comes out as a fourth (G — C) whereas the chart shows it as a fifth (F sharp — C sharp ). Which is wrong? Perhaps some of the effects which I couldn't obtain are similarly mistakes in the chart. Side Two contains a dreadful piece called *All Things Fancy* which purports to demonstrate many (seven) of the techniques and devices in the book (over 25). If it was excluded the examples on Side One could be usefully extended.

Despite these criticisms and some others (high notes should not produce a painful lower lip: a more relaxed lip and a firmer diaphragm is needed the higher you go; extensions to low C for bass clarinet are for musical, not acoustical, reasons), I think the book accomplishes its aims in presenting, in compact form, the latest information on the new techniques required of a clarinettist. This is done in the usual thorough American way, leaving few fingerings uncatalogued (did you know the pitches obtained by putting the mouthpiece on the lower joint, or the range of the mouthpiece without the rest of the instrument?) and I would recommend it to all who are seriously interested in the subject.

NOTES:

[1]Rehfeldt's book is part of a series which has so far also produced books on the double bass (by Bertram Turetzky) and the flute (by Thomas Howell). For reviews of these see *Contact 12* (Autumn 1975), p. 43 and *Contact 13* (Spring 1976), pp. 43-44. (Ed.)

[2]Bruno Bartolozzi, trans. Reginald Smith Brindle, *New Sounds for Woodwind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

**THEORY OF HARMONY**, by Arnold Schoenberg, translated by Roy E. Carter
Faber, 1978 (£22.50)

MICHAEL MUSGRAVE

Schoenberg's *Theory of Harmony* is a book which has always been known more by repute than by content. With the exception of ideas which have percolated through his other writings and those of his pupils — some, admittedly, of considerable significance — the work has been known outside the German speaking world only in the violently truncated translation by Robert D. W. Adams of 1948.[1] Although Schoenberg's reaction to Adams' work is not apparently recorded, it can certainly be guessed from his attitude towards the model on which it was based: Erwin Stein's 'Practical Guide to Schoenberg's Theory of Harmony'.[2] Schoenberg had himself prompted Stein's work, realising that the extent of the speculative content of the original would hinder its dissemination amongst a wide public of students and teachers; equally, however, he realised that the severing of practical examples from the fundamental thoughts which lay behind them would completely destroy the essential value of the original. Thus he wrote pointedly to Stein in 1923: 'For my part this "Guide" . . . is an attempt to make even the remaining quarter unnecessary . . . . One need only work diligently through, forthrightly taking what little is worth keeping; that way one can leave my entire "Theory of Harmony" alone, unchanged.'[3] (The remaining part is actually nearer to a third of the whole.)

It was not until 1971 that an attempt to compensate for these omissions appeared in the form of an article by John F. Spratt, neatly summarising the chief themes of the original.[4] The present translation was completed at about the same time and submitted for a doctoral degree at Florida State University in 1970; copies have not been made available due to the pending Faber publication. Now, though late, the integrity of the whole has been restored and the work provides a crucial addition to Schoenberg's writings in English, one which will inevitably add momentum to the developing interest in Schoenberg as Theorist.

To those acquainted with Schoenberg's later theorising, the themes are familiar, Especially his hostility towards scholars, aestheticians, theorists (whom he invariably admits never to having read properly): any who pose as formulators of musical laws but are not themselves 'artists', learning by experience and free of a priori assumptions. He makes it immediately clear that he is not concerned with aesthetics, but rather with the acquisition of skills such as those of a carpenter; indeed, he denies that he is writing a 'Theory' in the accepted sense at all, merely providing a systematic presentation. Yet if Schoenberg is at pains to deny the validity of the absolute assumptions on which traditional theories of harmony have been built and to argue that, unlike those of nature, 'the laws of art consist mainly of exceptions' (p. 10), the book is, as ever, full of theorising in the deeper sense of 'searching'. Given the significance of his subject, it inevitably led him to pursue his ideas on 'more complex relationships . . . on the similarities and relationships between artistic creation and other human activities, on the connection between the natural world outside ourselves and the participating or observing subject' (p. 17).

If the style is familiar, however, the work's historical context gives it a unique atmosphere. Here is a teacher and composer who has explored a wide range of harmonic practice within a central tradition, up to and beyond the

'frontiers of tonality', with highly perceptive and creative pupils whose influences he freely acknowledges. Schoenberg was by nature as unable simply to forget the past as to ignore the future and the book therefore occupies a fascinating position in his development; it was, as Wellesz recalls, 'to the conservatives . . . too audacious in its setting aside of authority' whilst 'to others it offered too little advice on "modern" compositions'.[5] Although Schoenberg had been increasingly preoccupied with new chordal configurations in his own music and that of others, he was unwilling to discuss the subject in any but the broadest terms since 'our lack of distance . . . gives us only a bewildering view' (p. 407). Equally, however, a conventional theorist would have found little in common with the scope of the ideas which accompany the examples. Given his profound understanding of the 'older music' — which he rightly held to be greater than that of most of his critics — and his instinct for the new, he could concern himself with asking why harmonic conventions were as they were, and what basis the answers might provide for the establishment of new conventions. The material which is only briefly summarised in the first part of *Structural Functions of Harmony*[6] is here outlined step by step and provides an essential preface to the contents of the later work. Of the numerous facets of interest presented by the *Theory of Harmony*, greatest attention naturally attaches to the way in which Schoenberg approaches the concept of tonality.

At first sight the *Theory of Harmony* would seem considerably removed from *Structural Functions*. Quite apart from its different format and didactic aims, it lacks any reference to the distinctive concept of the later work, that of 'Monotonality', whereby 'every digression from the tonic is considered to be still within the tonality'.[7] If, however, this concept is never mentioned, it is implicit in his broadening attitude towards tonality, as well as his regular use of the attendant idea of 'Regions', not as yet given conceptual status, however, nor included in the index. The work shows a crucial transition in Schoenberg's view of 'tonality'. His first definition arises in relation to traditional examples: 'Tonality is a formal possibility that emerges from the nature of the tonal material, a possibility of attaining a certain completeness or closure by means of a certain uniformity.' (p. 27) Soon, however, this definition is applied more broadly: 'A piece may also be intelligible . . . when the relation to the fundamental is not treated as basic, with its telling sequel that 'it may be perhaps that we simply do not yet know how to explain the tonality, or something corresponding to tonality, in modern music' (p. 128). Finally, he can accept the chromatic scale as a basis, although only in the second German edition of 1921 did he really clarify the point in relation to the vogue term 'atonal'. 'The word "atonal" could only signify something entirely inconsistent with the nature of tone. Even the word "tonal" is incorrectly used if it is intended in an exclusive rather than inclusive sense. It can be valid only in the following sense: Everything implied by a series of tones constitutes tonality, whether it be brought together by direct reference to a single fundamental or by more complicated connections.' (p. 432) Thus the principle that had ensured coherence in traditional tonality could also sustain a new tonality.

Schoenberg's observations on harmonic unity focus particular attention on his attitude to Schenker, and the book serves to highlight the similarities and differences in their approaches; their relationship has not been sufficiently stressed in the past. Both drew on the same tradition of harmonic practice and were absorbed in the analysis of the same music; both, faced with the constant enrichment of keys, yet without implying modulation, framed concepts of tonality which were similar in breadth. Although Schoenberg took issue with Schenker's term 'Tonicalisation' on grounds of his usage, he freely admitted the parallels in their thinking (p. 428). Yet if their attitudes towards traditional tonality have much in common, their view of the individual chord is crucially different. Whilst all dissonances are ultimately passing for Schenker, for Schoenberg 'there are no non-harmonic tones . . . . Non-harmonic tones are merely those that the theorists could not fit into their system of harmony.' (p. 318) This view is a direct consequence of Schoenberg's attitude towards the overtone series: or, perhaps, even the other way about. There is for him no absolute distinction between consonance and dissonance, only one of degree, as in the overtones. Thus whilst Schenker could see no logical system beyond that of late 19th century tonality, Schoenberg found in it the basis for coherent structure in the future. Perhaps the time will come when his later writings can be so collated as to give us as clear an impression of his view of the new tonality as of the old.

The presentation of Schoenberg's book is worthy of its content. His often problematical mode of expression is made clear throughout and his original terms are always cited where necessary. The translator's preface and the many footnotes provide much valuable information, especially as regards the relationship between the first and subsequent editions. This translation is based on the third, best known edition, completed in 1921 and published in 1922, which included some important revisions reflecting his changing views over the period from 1911 when the first edition was published. The price is in line with that of *Style and Idea*, given three years of inflation, yet without its generous format and print for those hard of sight. This will, however, hardly deter the libraries for whom the tome is chiefly intended.

NOTES:

[1]Arnold Schoenberg, trans. Robert D. W. Adams, *Theory of Harmony* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948).
[2]Erwin Stein, *Praktischer Leitfaden zu Schonbergs Harmonielehre: ein Hilfsbuch fur Lehrer und Schuler* (Vienna: Universal Edition, n.d.). (Stein's preface is dated March 1923.)
[3]Ibid., p. 3, as translated and quoted in Carter's new edition, p. xiii.
[4]John F. Spratt, 'The Speculative Content of Schoenberg's "Harmonielehre" ', *Current Musicology*, Vol. XI (1971), pp. 83-88.
[5]Egon Wellesz, trans. W. H. Kerridge, *Arnold Schoenberg* (Great Yarmouth: Galliard, 1971), p. 48. (This translation first appeared in London: J. M. Dent, 1925.)
[6]Arnold Schoenberg, ed. Leonard Stein, *Structural Functions of Harmony* (2nd revised edition, New York/London: Norton/Benn, 1969; the first edition was published in 1954).
[7]Ibid., p. 19.

## FOREIGN MUSIC MAGAZINES

HILARY BRACEFIELD

We last looked at some of the foreign music magazines that have come to our attention in *Contact 15*; since then, two of those mentioned (*Analog Sounds* and *Numus-West*) have ceased to exist. Ephemerality is always a feature of the 'little magazine' of course, but here are notes on a variety of publications with which *Contact* is in touch, and which will have some interest for our readers.

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AMC NEWSLETTER
American Music Center, Inc.
The Official United States Information Center for Music
President: Leo Kraft
Executive Director: Margaret F. Jory
Quarterly
Subscription: $5.00 a year

*Obtainable from AMC Newsletter, 250 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019, USA*

The AMC appears to be trying to expand its activities and, by holding a charter (for which they are applying), to gain governmental recognition of the status they already feel they have. The Center would have to gain more credibility and support on the West Coast than a perusal of its news columns suggests it has, for its claim to be 'the official U.S. Information Center for music' to hold true. In this country the *Newsletter* comes nearest in scope to *Composer* magazine in being a mouthpiece for its composers, but has no pretensions to being a commercial undertaking. A recent issue (Vol. 20, No. 4, Fall 1978) includes two short articles: one by Jon H. Appleton on prospects for electronic music in the 1980s, and another on a development in the

commissioning of new works in the USA by William Mayer. The latter has been reprinted from *Horizon*: the reprinting of useful articles seems a policy of the *Newsletter*, which has more recently, in its Spring issue, reprinted Dick Witts' article in *Contact 18* on IRCAM — unfortunately without updating and without acknowledgement. The rest of the magazine is taken up with news of composers, first performances, publications, recordings, competitions, awards and prizes from which some useful information and addresses can be gleaned.

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BRILLIANT CORNERS
Editor: Art Lange
Three times a year
Subscription: $5.00 a year (individuals);
$10.00 a year (institutions)

*Obtainable from Brilliant Corners, c/o Art Lange, 1372 W. Estes #2N, Chicago, Illinois 60626, USA*

Art Lange is a well-known poet, a leading exponent of the Chicago school of poetry, who has a long-standing interest in music. His music criticism pops up in other journals, such as *Parachute* (mentioned below). His idiosyncratic magazine of the arts is in a small offset-litho format, fat (up to 100 pages) and clearly printed. *Contact* has seen Nos. 1, 2 and 7-9 (Summer 1978) since Keith Potter last wrote about the magazine in *Contact 17* (p. 34). The issues include a large amount of poetry, prose and experimental creative writing, mainly from Chicago and New York writers. There is some art criticism, and discussion of and dabblings in multi-media ideas. Interviews, however, seem to reflect Lange's interest in music, for nearly all of them are with musicians. The interviews provide some fascinating and useful material, which makes a subscription well worthwhile.

No. 1 has an interesting article on Feldman's work of the 1950s by the poet Frank O'Hara. You may be able to buy a photocopy of a conversation with the influential saxophonist and composer Anthony Braxton by Peter Kostakis and Art Lange. This appeared in a 1976 issue (No. 3 or 4), now out of print.

This interest in jazz-orientated musicians continues with the reprinting of important articles on Thelonious Monk by Jef Langford. These articles are taken from *Jazz Journal International* and appear in Nos. 7 and 9. They provide a very full discussion of that controversial artist (and, in case you're wondering, the composer of the piece which gives the magazine its title). No. 9 also has an interview with Gunter Hampel, who like Anthony Braxton crosses the barriers into experimental music. Ned Rorem is the subject of the Art Lange interview in No. 7: some interesting views of other composers are voiced. No. 8 has an article on John Cage.

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EAR
Editor: Bob Davis
Bi-monthly
Subscription: US (individual) $6.00 a year;
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*Obtainable from EAR, 3357 Kiwanis Street, Oakland, California 94602, USA (subscriptions)*
*Editorial address: EAR, 517 Cortland Ave, San Francisco, California 94110, USA*

EAR is a lively newspaper-size magazine with lots of information on the Californian new music scene: a sort of *Musics*. The advertisements may be just as interesting to the British reader as the editorial matter itself. We have Vol. 6, Nos. 3 and 4 (May-June and July-August 1978). There are lots of reviews, some quite extensive, and regular columns (such as that by David Doty: on just intonation and gamelan music in the numbers we have), actual pieces (*On Noh Music* by David Simons in No. 3), interviews (e.g. with Lou Harrison) and even a free Jell-O-Disc with two pieces. The magazine is well worthwhile if you would like to keep up with West Coast activities.

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EAR MAGAZINE
Editor: Beth Anderson and others
Approximately 10 issues a year
Subscriptions: US (standard) $10.00 a year;
US (artist, student, unemployed) $6.00;
Overseas (air mail) $15.00

*Obtainable from New Wilderness Foundation, 26 Second Avenue, Apt. 2B, New York, NY 10003, USA*
*Editorial address: Ear Magazine, New Wilderness Foundation, 365 West End Avenue, New York, NY 10024, USA*

Beth Anderson was co-editor of EAR (West Coast) for some time and founded EAR MAGAZINE (East Coast) when she shifted to New York in 1975. We have Vol. 4, No. 7 (November 1978). It seems more concerned to publish ideas and pieces than news. This issue has pieces by John Melcher and Annea Lockwood (who has worked in England), views by Rhys Chatham, Peter Gordon, Michael Sahl and Eric Salzman among others, an interview with Ernest Gisella on the use of music in video art and some contributions which I was not sure were pieces, views or poems.

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INTERFACE: JOURNAL OF NEW MUSIC RESEARCH
Publishers: Swets and Zeitlinger BV, Amsterdam
Editors: Jan L. Broeckx (Ghent) Gottfried M. Koenig (Utrecht) Herman Sabbe (Ghent) Frits C. Weiland (Utrecht)
Quarterly
Subscription: No details given

*Obtainable from: Swets & Zeitlinger BV, Publishing Department, 347B Heereweg, Lisse, The Netherlands*

The history of this Belgian/Dutch periodical is rather confusing. The journal arises from the collaboration of editors in Ghent and Utrecht and combines two previous publications: the *Yearbook* of the Seminar for Musicology in Ghent and *Electronic Music Reports* of the Institute of Sonology in Utrecht. The Seminar for Musicology also put out an occasional series of modern works in score: *Documentae Musicae Novae*.

*Interface* began as a twice-yearly publication; it is now quarterly. Its aim is scholarly: the 'discussion of all questions which fall into borderline areas between music, science, and technology including specialized musicological and technical problems'. Most contributions are in English or have an English parallel text or summary. *Contact* has at present only Vol. 4, No. 1 (November 1975) which contains the report of the International Conference on New Music Notation held in Ghent in 1974. I have gleaned from EAR (see above) that the September 1977 issue includes a number of articles on electronic music, and that the December 1977 issue has one on multiphonics.

Devotees of electro-acoustic music and advanced European analysis may find it worthwhile to investigate the earlier *Yearbook*. No. 6 (1969), for example, has an article in French by Henri Pousseur on polyphony, with special reference to Schoenberg's Op. 31. The *Documentae* publish music of composers who have some Belgian/Dutch affiliation. The work of Karel Goeyvaerts and Luis Goethals predominates; No. III contains the score of *Cantate aux Alentours* by Pierre Bartholomée, and No. V, handsomely produced in bright red, *Répons avec son Paysage* for actor and seven instrumentalists by Michel Butor and Henri Pousseur. It would be best to enquire about these publications from the Seminarie voor Musicologie, 45 Muinkkaai, 9000 Ghent, Belgium.

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THE NEW MUSIC NEWSPAPER
Editors: Warren Burt and Les Gilbert
Bi-monthly
Subscription: $4.00 Australian a year

*Obtainable from: Les Gilbert, Monash Avenue, Olinda, Victoria 3788, Australia*

By the time you read this, the *Newspaper* will be defunct, but you may like to send for the back issues. Relying on subsidy from wellwishers at the Universities of Melbourne and La Trobe, Warren Burt and Les Gilbert have set out to

produce an unpretentious forum for the new music scene in Australia, drawing largely on activities in Melbourne. The *Newspaper* was a much needed venture, and one hopes it may find the funds to re-start. Any future editors should canvass for more support and interest in the rest of Australasia. Anyway, Nos.1-3 (up to January 1978) were received by *Contact*. They have news and reviews (largely of concerts and events), lively letters to and from prominent people on the music scene (just as nasty to each other as sometimes happens in *Musics*), reproduced pieces and short articles.

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PARACHUTE
Directors: France Morin, Chantal Pontbriand
Music Editor: Raymond Gervais
Quarterly
Single issues: $2.50 Canadian
Subscription: $9.00 (one year), $16.00 (two years), Canada; $15.00 (one year), $25.00 (two years) Europe

*Obtainable from: Parachute, C.P.730 — Succursale N, Montréal, Québec, Canada H2X 3N4.*
*English agent: Nigel Greenwood Books Ltd, 41 Sloane Gardens, London SW1*

*Parachute* was reviewed in *Contact 15* (p. 34) and *Contact 17* (p. 35) Keith Potter. It still provides articles and information on such aspects of the arts as film, dance, the visual arts and music. This is done without any overwhelming Canadian bias. *Parachute*'s information section is also very extensive.

Articles may be in French or English without parallel text, and most recent issues have had an article on music. In No. 8 (Autumn 1977) Alvin Lucier is interviewed by Douglas Simon after a performance of his piece *Music on a Long Thin Wire* (1977). In No. 9 (Spring 1978) John Tilbury talks after a concert in Montreal to Ramon Pelinski, speaking very frankly about the avantgarde of the 60s and his present standpoint though his interview is apparently very inaccurately transcribed. No. 10 is a special film issue, while in No. 11 (Summer 1978) Art Lange's *Brilliant Corners* interview with Gunter Hampel turns up again. There is also a huge collage in words: *La musique et la mer* by Raymond Gervais.

## RECORDINGS FROM THE 21st INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
WARSAW, SEPTEMBER 1977

JOHN SHEPHERD

*Contact* was unfortunately unable to send one of its intrepid correspondents to cover the Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1977, though there will be a comparative review of the 1978 and 79 festivals in the next issue. We were, however, lucky enough to be sent a copy of the five-disc set which the Polish Composers' Union produces as a record of the Polish element of the festival. This set, of course, reveals nothing of the truly international flavour of the occasion, nor can it give a feel for the particular atmosphere which each festival develops as it goes on. Further, not all the Polish works performed are put out on disc. All that can presumably be claimed for the records is that, given the usual difficulties of putting on a festival such as this, they give some general idea of the state of Polish composition at the time.

The overall impression gained is that, notwithstanding the undoubted abilities of the individual composers, Polish composition as a whole has become a little stagnant. Colourism and minimalism appear to have been worked to a point where the strengths and weaknesses of this particular 'school' of writing are almost totally known. So although, on the one hand, there is not a single weak work to be found on the discs, there are, on the other, few that leave a lasting impression. It seems as if many of the composers have completed their composition studies adequately, and reached the level of competence required to mine perpetually the Polish musical vein without necessarily having anything original to say.

Some of the composers represented on the discs cannot be brought under this rubric, however. Zygmunt Krauze is easily identifiable among Polish composers, and his Piano Concerto (performed by the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Zender, with the composer as soloist), demonstrates why. Krauze has for some years had an interest in the instruments of folk music, as well as in older instruments in general. This interest is reflected in the concerto. The texture of the piano writing is frequently reminiscent of piano rolls, for example, while the use of an harmonica creates the impression of an organ grinder at work. On another level it is not difficult to hear the clichés of classical piano writing trying to break through in full cry from their transmogrification into a 'timeless' mosaic.

Three other pieces for solo instruments are also of interest: Zbigniew Wiszniewski's *Pezzo Concertante* for alto flute and percussion, Norbert Mateusz Kuźnik's *Anophora* for trombone solo and Witold Szalonek's *Musica Concertante* for double bass and orchestra. The sonorities of the Wiszniewski are in many ways predictable: split notes, harmonics and breathy effects from the flute and opposing emphases on dry and liquid sounds from the percussion. However, together with well managed developments from one sound cluster to the next, the work displays a good sense of proportion. The handling of the rattling, clicking and rasping sonorities which open the piece is singularly impressive. The Kuźnik is similarly predictable, blatant raucousness being opposed by the insinuating smoothness that only a trombone can achieve. Yet again, the skilfully juxtaposed sound clusters and carefully delineated proportions resulted in attention being maintained. Of particular note are the vocal 'sympathisations' emanating from the larynx of the soloist Stanislaw Pierożek.

Szalonek's *Musica Concertante* differs from the two works just mentioned in that, while exploring the wide range of sounds which can be coaxed out of an instrument, in this case the double bass, it is also conversational in tone. Para-linguistic squeaks, grunts, whines and groans punctuate an orchestral background in a way that is unsettling. Only towards the end of the piece is there any sense of resolution or answer: this conveyed through a flowing, high flute solo. Nevertheless the work ends by asking a final, haunting question. Although it seems structurally safe, there is little doubt that conviction is added to the piece through the authoritative playing of the soloist Bertram Turetzky.

Of all the soloists to appear on these discs, the soprano Stefania Woytowicz is easily the most memorable. Listening to her sing 'Baa, Baa Blacksheep' would quite conceivably be a moving experience. The work she performs on this occasion plumbs the depths a little more, however. Meyer's *Polish Chants* for soprano and chamber orchestra (the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra excellently conducted by Jerzy Maksymiuk) is a serially-informed piece of elegiacally intense proportions that at times seems to overstretch itself. Yet there are some convincingly restrained moments of aggression, as well as some elegant, more melismatic passages. Both these give full rein to Stefania Woytowicz's formidable talents.

The seriousness of Meyer's *Polish Chants* is matched by that of Tomasz Sikorski's *Sickness Unto Death,* a setting of a Kierkegaard text for reciter, two pianos, four trumpets and four horns. Monotonous, out-of-phase hammerings on the pianos alternate with internally changing, long-held brass chords to give the impression of a steely and icy confrontation with death. There is no hint of acceptance, refutation or discussion: merely a simple presentation of deathliness. Another similarly powerful work is Zbigniew Bujarski's *Domestic Music* for 18 strings (performed by the Polish Chamber Orchestra, again well directed by Jerzy Maksymiuk). Unlike the Sikorski, *Domestic Music* is much more of an essay, a lot of emphasis being placed on high string textures which attain a surprising degree of depth.

That most works of interest on these discs feature solo artists might seem to suggest that colourism and minimalism work best when there is an easily identifiable focal point to maintain the interest of the listener. Given the apparently stagnant state of these media, blandness becomes more obvious when there is nothing obvious to latch on to. That this need not be so is demonstrated by Serocki's *Ad Libitum,* which consists of five pieces for orchestra alone. Serocki has a reputation for being one of the more original colourists, and this is borne out in this long work (it occupies one complete record). There is a

sense of proportion, structure and direction (this not linear or 'purposeful', however), as well as a bold and bright handling of sonorities sadly lacking in many of his colleagues' work. With Serocki, the 'Polish School' would still appear to have a future. How far this is generally true would, on the evidence of these records, seem to be subject to question.

## CHRISTIAN WOLFF'S LONDON CONCERTS
MARCH-APRIL 1978

DAVID CUNNINGHAM

I should say at the outset that I did not really enjoy much of the music in the Wolff concerts to which I went (but what do I mean by enjoy?). I liked the ideas in the experimental aspects of the compositions, but they seemed to have one important failing: that the experimental elements were used with a preconceived result in the composer's mind — not, perhaps, as explicit a result as with straighforward composition, but nevertheless reducing the experimental element to only a kind of closely controlled indeterminacy. From a purist experimental point of view that is an implicit criticism in itself, but for the moment I will advocate the above as an approach to composing, particularly in view of more recent 'abrasive'[1] works by other experimental composers.

'What do I mean by enjoy?, comes in here. I tend to think that there are basically three primary ways of 'enjoying' music: sound, concept and context. I (and I would assume others too) can enjoy a piece if it operates in a subjectively interesting fashion on one of these levels, but preferably on all three: 'Art serves the whole man'.

Inherent in what I am putting forward is the idea that 'sound' is interesting in itself regardless of context, heritage or whatever. In the past what I have seen as being the most successful experimental music has tended to have a very strong and often very attractive sound, and in many cases this has a lot to do with non-experimental decisions taken by the composer or performer about instrumentation and to a lesser extent presentation. For instance, in Steve Reich's *Drumming* the basic piece has been presented in a (by experimental standards) climactic fashion, the sound becoming less sparse and more lush and vibrant at each stage. I am convinced that the basic attractiveness of the sound has played a major part in its success. The same goes for Glass, the Obscure records and, of course, for Terry Riley.

I found most of the Wolff pieces using indeterminacy interesting on an 'ideas' level. However, this interest tended not to generate sounds that were subjectively interesting, stimulating and strong. There were exceptions to this — some very beautiful moments indeed — but generally the pieces lacked any kind of decisive use of the (in many cases large) range of instruments and textures available. This was due in some measure to a tendency on the part of the ensembles to play the pieces in an 'avantgarde' style, taking advantage of the free dynamics to turn some potentially pastoral moments into a bit of 'plink-plonk' music. This perhaps represents an attitude *more* experimental than the one to which I am inclined.[2] However, I think that one of the crucial things about playing from scores is deciding in advance how to approach them to the performance's advantage.

The concert at Goldsmiths' College on March 7 presented what I see as two contradictory approaches to composition from Wolff. From *Exercises and Songs* (1974), exercises 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 14 were played, interspersed with four songs: *Teacher, Teacher* (from a blues text) and *After a Few Years of Prosperity* (from a text by Rosa Luxemburg) by Wolff himself, and *Dark as a Dungeon* and Woody Guthrie's *Union Maid*. The contradictory side (as I see it) was represented by *For Prepared Piano* (1951), *Tilbury 2* (1969), *Exercises 15 1and 16* (1975) — all played by the pianist John Tilbury — and *Dark as a Dungeon* (1977), a virtuoso clarinet piece derived from the song and played by Ian Mitchell.

The latter pieces I found very difficult to listen to in any kind of constructive way: they appeared to (merely?) expose virtuosity. I did not find that kind of virtuosity very interesting. Taken as a whole, the pieces did not sound very attractive. There were too many 'avantgarde' bangs, burps, squeals and thumps which sounded as if they had been deliberately introduced to correspond to some kind of aesthetic which demands that any piece should have a huge dynamic range, no matter what else the composer is trying to do. I have had plenty of opportunities to ask Wolff why he writes like this, but it is so alien to my interest in music that I cannot think of a way to ask him without causing some total misreading of my question. I also did not want to appear rude. Despite the fact that I disliked these pieces intensely, a lot of other people did enjoy them very much. There is the possibility that I totally failed to understand this music, and am very wrong about it. However, that possibility would seem to smack of more than the usual elitism.

But now for the good news: the exercises, played by a ten piece ensemble including the composer,[3] were (mostly) mellifluous and delicate, introducing textures from the occasionally unorthodox instrumentation with a unique although sometimes weak flavour. The exercises consist of little scores in only one unmarked clef, which can be read as either treble or bass (or, I suppose, a C clef or anything else). The scores are read and played in a kind of shaky unison, and the material is all based on little invented scales. This gives the performance a melodic, up and down feel. The important thing about the scoring for unison is the verbal instruction to treat unison as 'a point of reference'[4] rather than as a fixed relationship. Each phrase is very short, so within the phrase individual musicians can speed up or slow down on their own initiative without disturbing the piece 'too much'. This lends the music the 'shaky unison' mentioned above. What comes out is a systematised extrapolation of the synchronism of the Portsmouth Sinfonia, although in that case the error was often more extreme. The synchronism of the Portsmouth Sinfonia was achieved by imprecise interpretation of what I suspect was dubious conducting; Wolff's technique requires that there is a gap of slightly uncertain length between each phrase (the phrases are actually marked off in the scores) so that the players cannot settle: '. . . what's involved is a kind of group activity with just that turn in it that allows it to move freely'[5].

No dynamics are specified in the scores, and I felt that the concert would have benefited from a more restrained approach on the part of the musicians. Wolff gave a talk at Goldsmiths' earlier that day in which he mentioned the oral tradition of experimental music: the way in which pieces are given what become 'definitive' performances (the most obvious example would be *4' 33"* done at the piano). I felt that there was an attempt made in the performance to give the piece a 'sound' that could be described as partially avantgarde (the dynamics), partially experimental (the instrumentation's overall weakness as a texture), and that these failings are attributable to that very oral tradition. I tend to think that the music could have been given a radically different, very restrained interpretation, and a very dense texture through judicious choice of instrumentation. I am thinking, really, of possibilities in the work which were hinted at during the performance. Some of the combinations of cello, tuba and piano (among others) were very interesting; not so the assorted percussion. This was usually of a home-made variety and sounded very insipid (apart from Dave Smith's collection of curious little pieces of metal).

The exercises were interspersed with the songs which I found less interesting. While they could be seen as a gesture in the direction of the revolution, I found such a gesture in such an environment fairly meaningless.

Most of the criticisms I have made of this concert are of contradictions inherent in the pieces. In Wolff's terms, these contradictions are not faults. To some extent their exposure and consequent demystification are part of the purpose of the music. I do not find that kind of bare exposure adequate justification for what Wolff is doing. His readiness to leave gaps with the contradictions showing is all too convenient a solution when faced with a compositional dilemma. As a result, the compositions suffer from an apparent defeatism.

And so to the Air Gallery on March 22, where I listened to a concert of music by Christian Wolff and William Brooks. Wolff's works were *Bread and Roses* (1976) and *Braverman Music,* Parts One and Two (1978). William Brooks played *Bread and Roses* at the piano: first the original song version, in which he sang the text, and then the Wolff re-write. I

suspect that it is the combination of the piece itself with Brooks's playing that made me absolutely hate it.

Wolff's *Bread and Roses* is a very grim, avantgarde improvisation on the original, and Brooks played it very aggressively. It is fragmented, as with most of Wolff's music, stopping and starting in an uneasy pattern, as well as dragging out and playing around little bits of the tune. Some may say that this is exactly the function of the piece, but I was annoyed throughout by the contradiction of all these composers and students sitting around in an art gallery listening to a corruption of what they think is workers' music. This brings into question the assumption in Wolff's working principle: that demystification is a natural result of the exposure of a dilemma. You cannot really 'expose' a dilemma unless you actually create the situation that brings it about. In Wolff's position all you can do is to change the context in which the dilemma is seen sufficiently to disable whatever functional relationship the components of the dilemma were in, and thereby unmask it. Analysing it in this way (as opposed to Wolff's approach) seems to show that the exposure of a dilemma can be seen as a negative action, an undoing rather than a doing. I tend to see *Bread and Roses* as an undoing.

Happily, *Braverman Music* is easier on the ear and holds promise[6] as a very nice piece of music (given a very restrained if large ensemble to play it). The Keele Contemporary Chamber Players[7] played the piece very well, but with a touch of the avantgarde empty climax, thus giving it dynamics it could easily do without. The dynamics in the score are left free: I do not see why.

Harry Braverman was an American worker who wrote a book called *Labor and Monopoly Capitalism*. *Braverman Music* is a work in two parts. The first part is a series of little pieces rather similar to the *Exercises* in shape, but not using Wolff's single stave notation or the device of pauses between phrases. This gives the part a richer and more melodic sound, more sustained and, I should think, to many ears more confident. The second part is a song (this originated in the concentration camps during the last war) followed by a variation. The variation is treated in Wolff's fragmentary style, similar in concept to the way he treats *Bread and Roses*, but altogether more coherent than that piece. The writing is strong and economically dynamic, the wind instruments forming a unison backdrop to the punctuation of piano and marimba. Rhythmically, the music is fairly interesting, developing into some concise but rich contrapuntal structures.

Wolff's other appearances during his stay in London from October 1977 to April 1978 were a lecture at the ICA on April 12 and a major concert at Riverside Studios on April 27. It is interesting to compare what was said in the lecture directly with the concert. Wolff uses quotes such as Charles Seeger's 'Art is always and inevitably a social function . . . it is propaganda . . . the better the propaganda the better the art is.' The comparison shows an obvious correlation and also major contradictions, but again this seems to be a position Wolff is quite happy to hold.

At the ICA Wolff used the Seeger quote, and also quoted from Hanns Eisler, Raymond Firty and Cornelius Cardew. He coherently pointed out the logic in much of both Cardew's and Frederic Rzewski's thinking, and re-stated his general position in terms of these people, again talking about exposing contradictions and turning them to useful ends. Again, I cannot see this as being adequate; again, the contradictions are being exposed and, again, very little is happening to turn those contradictions to useful ends.

The concert began with Ives' Piano Trio and then continued with a sequence of three solo pieces: two versions of *Bread and Roses*, the piano version from the Air Gallery concert and a violin version (1977), and the first performance of *Cello Song Variations — Alleluia I'm a Bum* (1978) which starts as a Baptist hymn and disintegrates into a bit of virtuoso avantgarde cello playing.[8] The whole of the second half of the concert was taken up with *Changing the System* (1972).[9] This piece presents four different kinds of activity from, in this case three, quartets playing four-note chords together, passing notes around from player to player inside the group, playing chords on a variety of percussion instruments or speaking a text by Tom Hayden about the need to change the political system. This way, in theory, the groups provide an overall sound of melody and accompaniment. The internal cueing in the 'swopping notes' sections is interesting, depending on the players' alertness as much as anything.

However, there is a contradiction inside this piece between potentiality and actuality, the former being drifting chords set inside two differing slow rhythms from the other two groups, the latter an avantgarde string section working against the small collection of instruments which made up one of the other groups. Weaknesses were exposed in both, but not in an interesting or unusual way. One mistake was the use of a well-defined traditional sound which was very strong (the tried and tested combination of violin, viola, cello and piano) with what was in this situation a much less well-matched group of instruments (including electric organ and accordion), a group that could be very interesting outside this context. The combination of the groups tended to prevent them mixing. Again, as with much of Wolff's music, the dynamics (as played) had a broad range, something that tended to fragment the playing inside each group and to obscure the process. The trills and pizzicatos from the 'string section' were very annoying: and as I am of the opinion that this performance was a failure, I would point to those fragmentation aspects that the performers introduced (rather than those prescribed by the score) as the source of the weakness.

The percussion group seemed to have more idea of what was actually happening to the piece during the performance. Led by Brendan Major, who 'talked' them through a couple of false starts, they began to bang out a steady if oblique rhythm on a noisy collection of percussion instruments. They were uninhibited, it seemed, and at least made the concert memorable even if not on a musical level. *Changing the System* proceeded through various permutations of instrumental playing, speaking and percussion playing until it finally trickled to a halt. It was a rather unsatisfactory way to end this series of Wolff concerts. I felt that careful choice of musicians and instrumentation could have improved the performance of the pieces to a level that would have fully realised the potential within the scores. As it was, I did like much of *Exercises*, *Braverman Music* and something I have not mentioned yet, from the ICA lecture: a tape of *Wobbly Music* (1975) which interested me because of the sound as much as anything. There seemed to be real difference between the use of the instruments and their treatment here and the music featured in the concerts, but I do not know the details behind this recorded performance, so I will leave it at that.

Wolff's music leaves us, then, on the horns of a few compositional and socio-musical dilemmas, but with little real clue as to how to disengage from that position. At least Wolff puts his music where his mouth is, and one cannot help but admire him for that. However, the music does not seem to be getting anywhere.

NOTES:

[1]From an Air Gallery press release for the old Campiello Band (now the Michael Nyman Band). The word 'abrasive' is important.
[2]*More* experimental if the performers were doing this from a no rehearsal, semi-improvisatory interpretation.
[3]The members of the ensemble were Christian Wolff, Jeremy Peyton-Jones, Hugh Davies, Dave Smith, John White, Andrew Poppy, Keith Potter, Paul Robinson, Ben Mason and Alexandra Robinson.
[4]Christian Wolff, quoted in the concert's press release.
[5]Ibid.
[6]According to the Air Gallery press release *Braverman Music* is a 'work in progress'.
[7]The Keele Contemporary Chamber Players were Peter Sargent, Sue Miller, Rob Nash, Adele Zalicks, Jane Hacker, Mike Roach and Mike Evans.
[8]The musicians were Douglas Young (piano), Elizabeth Perry (violin) and Rohan de Saram (cello).
[9]The musicians were Elizabeth Perry, Hussain Mohamed, Rohan de Saram, Douglas Young, Christian Wolff, Dave Smith, Keith Potter, Howard Skempton, Jill Box-Granger, Julia Eisner, Chris Fitkin and Brendan Major.

## BRITISH SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
APRIL 1-4, 1978

CHRISTOPHER SMALL

Question: What's an account of a sociologists' jamboree doing in this journal of 'today's music'? Answer: The inclusion of music as one of the topics under discussion at the conference, the overall theme of which was 'Culture', as well as the presence of a group of musicians who were invited to take part in a workshop on 'The Sociology of Music': John Shepherd (who led the group), Graham Vulliamy and Trevor Wishart (three co-authors of *Whose* Music?)[1] and myself (as the author of another book on the same subject).[2] Dick Witts was also expected but, alas! did not arrive.

Fine: it is always good to see a professional association trying to let in some air and widen its perspective. But what exactly was meant by 'Culture'? At no time did I encounter any real attempt to define the word, which has been described by Raymond Williams as 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language', and by default, as it were, a definition seemed to emerge which looked very like 'Culture is what people do when they're not earning a living'. That this seemingly unexamined assumption should persist is a pity, since it perpetuates the very divisions of our lives and thus of our culture so deplored by Marx (and Marxists were well in evidence at Brighton) and later thinkers; to find that sociologists, who of all people should be questioning such distinctions, are continuing to separate some activities off as 'cultural' is disappointing. What goes on on the factory floor or in the office, while driving a car or doing the shopping, are all part of the culture and should be considered as such. In fact it could be argued that the term 'sociology of culture' is in itself a tautology, since if sociology is not about culture, what the hell *is* it about? I pause for no reply, since I am aware that as a musician I was a very naive observer and that there are no doubt subtleties that escape me, and accept, under protest, the definition. But even within that definition, the balance of topics was curious: many papers on literature, TV and film (that these particular media should be special growth areas of interest among sociologists may have something to do with their clearly definable verbal content which facilitates verbal discussion: unlike, say, music), a little on theatre, something on music, *nothing* on dance (whose explosive growth in the last few years is surely a matter for remark), sport (what about skateboarding?) or any other of many 'cultural' activities. Against this there *were* papers of admirable breadth, such as 'Popular Culture', 'Cultural Imperialism' and 'Working Class Ideologies' (I amused myself when bored by counting the occurrences of the word 'hegemony' and its barbarous adjectival derivative: 1978's sociological in-word).

I cannot but mention, also as naive observer, other apparently unexamined assumptions underlying much of the discussion, against which one might expect that the training and discipline of sociologists might have put them on guard. The assumption that art is a *thing*, a commodity as it were, rather than an activity, something people *do*, pervaded and bedevilled much of the discussion; one heard the phrase 'production and consumption of art' frequently, as if art and, say, cars were subject to essentially the same social processes and economic laws. The two are *not* the same (I am not here claiming any neo-Arnoldian 'sacred' status for Art); the purpose of making a car is to have a car, while the primary purposeof painting a picture is to paint, and the finished picture is in a sense a by-product. It must be said clearly and often: art is an activity performed within society, and what we call its techniques are simply the ways in which that activity is carried out. Once this simple fact is grasped, many of the difficulties facing the sociologist about whether he should remain 'aesthetically neutral' (yuk!) or study 'high' or 'popular' art, 'good' or 'bad' art and so forth simply cease to exist, and all art and artistic technique become perfectly accessible to study within the social context. Not all, I know, will agree with me: but again, one would have hoped that a sociologist considering art from any viewpoint, Marxist or conservative, liberal or anarchist, would perceive that there is an issue here. I could find no awareness that it so much as existed.

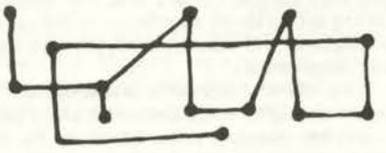
Also strange to me was the absence of any reference to the experience of cultures other than our own; nowhere did I hear voiced the idea that there might be something to be learned on the important questions facing our society from the experience of Chinese, or Africans, or Eskimos, for example. All questions were considered, so far as I heard, exclusively within the context of the modern industrial West. Significant here too is the word 'modern'; I was equally surprised by the lack of historical perspective in much of the discussion: the historical background of rock music, to take just one example. A sociologist might reply that his study was sociology, not social anthropology or history. Fair enough, but it could be that sociology's answers (and even its questions, without which there can be no good answers) are the poorer for it. The spectacle of eager young graduates announcing age-old human concerns as if they had just invented them, or describing, without apparent embarrassment, the failure of a piece of research, the absurdity of whose premises should have been patent after five minutes' application of common sense without positivistic blinkers, or describing 'in-depth' interviews with posh art dealers whose self-assessment is accepted without question or the mildest critical assessment: all these are not without their funny side, but might give ground for concern to senior members of the profession.

It was the largest such affair that I have ever attended: some 600 participants, I was told, and 70 sessions over the four days. It was clearly impossible to attend everything; there were at peak times as many as eight sessions going on together, and the uninitiated had to find his way through them as best he could. This necessitated some painful choices: did one go to hear John Berger on 'Images and Words', for example, or do one's duty to one's art and go to 'Rock and Sexuality'? (I did my duty.) Music was not strongly represented; apart from the workshop on 'The Sociology of Music' there were only two sessions on rock and an account by Michael Robinson of the sociological factors behind the decline of British music between 1750 and 1800. I missed the latter in favour of 'Popular Culture', since one of the contributors, Robert Colls, was the author of that excellent book *The Collier's Rant: song and culture in the industrial village*,[3] but was disappointed in that music was scarcely mentioned: though much of the discussion *was* of interest.

Of the two papers on rock, the first, 'Rock and Theories of Mass Communication' was more problematical. One of the two speakers, Dave Laing, gave a brief account of the ways in which the study of rock has so far been approached [8] Hayakawa's analysis of the content of lyrics, Willis's and others' study of its audience, Adorno's attempt at a comprehensive theory in terms of the late development of capitalism — and rightly dismissed them as incomplete (but where was Greil Marcus? or Carl Belz? or even Tony Palmer?). But Phil Hardy's subsequent attempt to place rock simply as part of the post-war growth of the leisure industry seemed so hopelessly inadequate that I began to wonder if I was missing the point, until later discussion over tea reassured me. It is a commonplace that record companies are in business to make money, but to propose such a bromide as a comprehensive account of such an important musical phenomenon is to fall into economic determinism of the crudest kind, and to ignore all the features that make it interesting to the musician and the student of society alike. The account of the packaging and marketing of Kate Bush was not without its grisly fascination, but left entirely out of account the fact that the young lady is clearly an artist of promise (to put it no higher) and gave no hint as to why her music takes the form it does, or why people seem to like it. My own experience confirms the point later made from the floor: I heard her voice and her song and liked it long before I ever knew who the hell Kate Bush was, or learnt of the massive publicity campaign which sought to create her an image.

Angie McRobbie and Simon Frith on 'Rock and Sexuality' took a rounder view of rock, acknowledging the contradiction that, on the one hand, it is highly sexist both in its music and lyrics and in its business organisation, and on the other that through its sheer energy and drive it can be a liberating force from the rigid sexual controls of our society, for male and female alike. The speakers characterised two main, though overlapping, streams of rock (while ignoring, as did the previous speakers, the difficult question of a definition of rock — it seemed to me that there was some

# PERSPECTIVES OF NEW MUSIC



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*Moments Musicaux* for Roger Sessions (in celebration of his plus 80 years) Compositions by Andrew Imbrie, Robert Helps, Paul Lansky, David Diamond, Carlton Gamer, Milton Babbitt, J.K. Randall, Miriam Gideon, Leon Kirchner, Edward T. Cone, Benjamin Boretz, Vivian Fine, Richard Swift, David Lewin, Peter Westergaard, Hugo Weisgall, Claudio Spies.



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confusion there): 'cockrock', with hard driving beat, aimed at male concepts of their own sexuality as dominant, aggressive and collective; and teenybop, aimed at girls and emphasising female passivity and isolation. In both cases the making of the music is almost entirely a male-dominated activity and nowhere is there any point of identification for girls in successful performers. Angie McRobbie pointed out that the magazine *Jackie,* aimed at teenage girls, presents music to them in such a way as to exclude them from any part in the creative process; it contains no record reviews or help in developing critical awareness, no advice on breaking into the industry, no help in learning to play an instrument: only 'romance', as the girls are intended to gaze at the centrefold photo of the latest teen idol (male of course), read cosmeticised accounts of his private life and follow the fashions. All true enough; it is clear that rock, like any other music, is not an autonomous form growing and developing according to its own inner laws alone, but is a social phenomenon, influenced profoundly if not crucially by social forms, by other media, by money (of course) and by concepts of individual identity and especially sexuality: and in turn shaping the listener's perception of these matters. But still unconsidered is the nature of the music itself, and the questions why it sounds as it does and how the musicians make the music. Paul Willis's homology, pooh-poohed by Dave Laing, drawn between the long flowing lines of hippy hair and the melodic lines of West Coast rock, is, despite its over-simplicity and musical naivety, at least an attempt to consider the music itself. The fact that in our society today music is packaged and sold like any other capitalist commodity should not blind us to the essential nature of the creative activity we call music.

These considerations hung in the air around the workshop which, although I discuss it last, was actually the first session of the conference. (Had it been later in the weekend, I for one might have had a clearer idea of how sociologists approach their subject: at one stage I was obliged to admit that I didn't know what sociology was, which raised an (unintentional) laugh since, as I found out later, it is a sociologists' in-joke that *no-one knows.*) My recollection of the discussion among the 20 or so people present is less than total. I remember that there was much attention given to notation, in which a useful distinction was arrived at between two functions: the first, as used mainly by vernacular musicians, mnemonic, a reminder of music already made in sound, and treated only as rough guide and springboard for the musical performance (as Billie Holliday, for example, used the musical texts of popular songs); and the second, the actual medium through which composition takes place, controlling the performance as completely as possible and forming an image of the music as performed. The relation between the nature of the notation and of the music it notates was explored.

There was also a recurrent argument as to whether the music itself could be made the subject of sociological study at all, or only the circumstances of its production and consumption; one member of the group, who admitted having read neither of the two books on which discussion was purportedly based, took us to task for not having studied music's production and consumption. There are, of course, a number of excellent studies of this, that of Paul Henry Lang, for example, and the two books of Henry Raynor, but the trouble is that they stop short just at the point where the matter begins to be really interesting: at the social meaning of the act of making music and of the ways in which it is made. (Trevor Wishart threw out the challenging idea that Bach's Mass in B minor could be regarded as a social treatise, but there were no takers.) With hindsight, I realise that the discussion was hampered once again by the persistent concept of music as a thing rather than as an activity. From this point to the sexism of rock in general, and Abba in particular, seems a long stride, but it seems we took it. I do remember replying to someone who asserted that rock was 'mind-destroying rubbish' by suggesting that it might be possible to view the great classics today, even the great Bach and Beethoven, as mind-destroying rubbish through the use to which the music is put. Again the idea was greeted with blank incredulity and merely provoked an accusation from the floor that I was a Marxist (I must get around to reading Marx to find out why).

The final, plenary, session on 'The State, Culture and Patronage' produced some ideas of interest. There were four platform speakers, the first being Nicholas Garnham, Head of Media Studies at the Polytechnic of Central London, who made the following points:

(1) State patronage currently operates on unquestioned assumptions concerning the nature of art and of 'cultural production'; institutions like the Arts Council are inevitably conservative simply because they assume the nature of art to be 'given' and their own function as simply to fill the gap left by the decline of private patronage.

(2) The Arts Council works on the idea of art as a commodity and assumes that it is beneficial to make this commodity available to as wide a section of society as possible. This inevitably affects the nature of its patronage and of the art it causes to be made.

(3) This idea fails to take account of the class-relatedness of the very concept of art, and the failure of the Arts Council to 'bring art' to large segments of the population is related to the failure of the education system to assist precisely those same segments.

(4) The Arts Council's assumption mentioned in (1) ignores the difference between state patronage and that of the private patron, who, because he has only himself to please, places a strongly personal imprint on the work done under his patronage. The impersonal nature of a committee working under the unexamined assumptions of (1) and (2) produces a very different kind of patronage, and thus a very different kind of art.

The second speaker, Peter Brinson of the Gulbenkian Foundation, suggested that the Gulbenkian is in fact more like a private patron, in that it is not accountable to anyone in the way it spends its money — a seemingly paltry £¾ million compared to the Arts Council's £49 million, but by no means negligible, since once one subtracts from the latter sum such annually committed expenses as Covent Garden and the National Theatre there is not so very much more left to dispense on an ad hoc basis than the Gulbenkian has (it seems that nobody felt the need to question the massive subsidising of these institutions, the dinosaurs of the present-day artistic scene). Money had in fact been given by the Gulbenkian Foundation for the present conference, and although Mr Brinson was emphatic that he had had no say in its planning, he did have some comments to make on its organisation which are worth recording:

(1) Its definition of culture was one-sided, favouring some cultural activities at the expense of others (he mentioned dance as one neglected art-form).

(2) There was a huge gap between theory and practice of the arts: not enough practising artists had been present who might have rooted theoretical discussion firmly in artistic practice (I might add that I felt not enough use was made of those who *did* attend). With our culture in its present state of crisis, sociologists need artists no less than artists need sociologists (rather more, I could not help thinking).

(3) There had been much discussion of theoretical problems of sociology, but not enough attention paid to the problems of workers on the ground: the nature of Arts Council funding, for example, or the issues raised by the recent cutting-off by a Conservative local authority 'somewhere in the North' of the subsidy granted by their predecessors to a leftist theatre group. He pointed out that an important function of the old patronage had been the protection of artists from ideological control. Artists today are much more vulnerable to the attentions of ideological pressure groups than formerly, a matter to which sociologists might devote some attention.

He was followed by Sue Beardon, Administrator of the feminist theatre group The Monstrous Regiment, who described her dealings with the Arts Council in obtaining a subsidy: the labyrinthine channels through which one had to pass, and above all its obsession with 'standards' and the difficulty of finding out what it meant by this, or even of engaging in discussion on it. Alan Fountain, Film Officer of the East Midlands Arts Association, who spoke last, pointed out that bodies like the Arts Council were, however, by no means monolithic but contained within them wide divergences of opinion. He advised artists and groups working outside establishment concepts of art to try to engage in a dialogue with funding institutions, to seek out people within the institutions who might be sympathetic, and work to change them. In the open session that followed, the old chestnut was raised of whether the radical artist (in this case, a theatre group) was compromising himself by

accepting funds from the Arts Council, Gulbenkian, or indeed any other establishment body. The questioner was put neatly in his place by Sue Beardon, but the larger question of the advisability of subsidies for the arts at all was again left untouched. Graham Vulliamy commented on the Gulbenkian report on the training of musicians and drew attention to the notable omission from it of any reference to the problems encountered by popular musicians, but had his guns spiked by Peter Brinson, who admitted comfortably that this was a serious weakness of the report (it was clearly not the first time he had had to face this criticism) but one over which the Foundation, as mere sponsor, had had no control. End of discussion: a pity, I thought, since it might had given rise to what would have been the only discussion at this conference of the social stratification of music in our society. With discussion running otherwise along predictable lines, I made an excuse and left.

The issue of *New Society* in the week following the conference described it as an 'anti-capitalist field day (with disco)'. I missed the disco, but can see what the writer meant. He also says: 'All too often in British sociology the individual — who has choices, interests and an intelligence — vanishes. She or he becomes the pulp of some sub-Adorno interpretation of the world as wholly manipulative. . . . If sociology itself could let a little more air into its closed room — and let a concern for individuals in too – it might hang together more.' It seemed to me that in this conference the BSA was in fact attempting to let in a little air, but that so far the aperture was very small and the room large and still inclined to be stuffy. But I wouldn't have missed it for the world. Who's afraid of sociologists? Not me: not any more.

NOTES:

[1]John Shepherd, Phil Virden, Graham Vulliamy and Trevor Wishart, *Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages* (London: Latimer New Dimensions, 1977). This will be reviewed in the next issue of *Contact*. (Ed.)
[2]Christopher Small, *Music-Society-Education* (London: John Calder, 'Platform Books' series, 1977). This book is now also available in paperback. For a review see *Contact 18* (Winter 1977-78), pp.34-36. (Ed.)

## ISCM WORLD MUSIC DAYS, STOCKHOLM AND HELSINKI

MAY 6-14, 1978

STEPHEN MONTAGUE

Once each year since 1923 (except during World War Two) the International Society for Contemporary Music has held its World Music Days festival in a major cultural centre in Europe or the United States. This year the festival was shared by two cities: Stockholm (May 6-8) and Helsinki (May 9-14). The programme consisted of 15 concerts in which 69 works were performed, and, in addition, a three day computer symposium held in Stockholm, as well as the ISCM delegates' conference held in Helsinki.

The works performed during the festival were compositions selected by an international jury (Einojuhani Rautavaara — Finland, Brian Ferneyhough — Britain, Sten Hanson — Sweden, Almeida Prado — Brazil, Witold Szalonek — Poland, and Charles Wuorinen — USA) from evidently hundreds of scores submitted by the participating nations. Most of the compositions submitted were screened first in each country by a local jury (the members of the British Jury were Ronald Lumsden, Michael Nyman, Guy Protheroe, Tim Souster and Arnold Whittall), who then submitted five or so works to the International Jury for consideration. Composers who were not selected by their national jury for whatever reasons had the option of submitting directly to the International Jury for consideration. It was by this latter means that four of the five works finally chosen to represent Britain were submitted. This left one with the feeling that perhaps this year's British Jury was a little out of touch with the International Jury's criteria.

The works selected by the International Jury for performance in the festival were: Jonathan Harvey's *Inner Light III* (1977) for orchestra and four-channel tape (which was the only piece selected by the British Jury to be performed); Jonty Harrison's *Q for Five* (1976) for solo soprano saxophone and chamber ensemble; Nigel Osborne's *I am Goya* (1977) for baritone and chamber ensemble; Michael Finnissy's *Tsuru-kame* (1973), a chamber opera; and my *Sound Round* (1973) for large orchestra and live electronics. For technical reasons, Finnissy's piece could not unfortunately be performed. For similar reasons my orchestral work had to be replaced by another, smaller piece, *Inundations II: Willow* (1976) for soprano, piano and tape.

### The Computer Symposium

The Symposium on Computer Music was held during the first three days of the festival in the excellent facilities of Stockholm's Electronic Music Studio (EMS).[1] The symposium was open to anyone who was interested in the most recent developments in this field, and about 30 to 40 of us attended. It was directed by a panel of leaders in the field which included Jon Appleton (USA), William Buxton (Canada), Jean-Claude Risset (France), Barry Truax (Canada) and resident composers at EMS, Stockholm: Tomas Ungvary (Hungary) and Tomas Sjoland (Sweden). The agenda was as follows:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Saturday, May 6 | 13.00 | general introduction to computer music by William Buxton |
| | 14.00-15.45 | Demonstration of music language POD by Barry Truax |
| | 16.15-18.00 | Demonstration of EMS Interactive Music System by Tomas Ungvary and Tomas Sjöland |
| Sunday, May 7 | 10.00 | Seminar on the present situation of computer music: Jean-Claude Risset |
| | 11.00-13.00 | Demonstration of digital instrument: Synclavier by Jon Appleton |
| Monday, May 8 | 09.00-13.00 | Demonstration/concert of compositions introduced by William Buxton |
| | | Summary and panel discussion with Appleton, Buxton, Risset and Truax |

The computer symposium was extremely interesting and, for me certainly, one of the most profitable aspects of the festival. Since I have not been actively involved in computers since the early 70s, it was interesting to see some of the developments that have taken place. In former times a composer desiring computer assistance practically had to be an engineer in the field before he could use it effectively as a compositional tool (and certainly from listening to the arid music of that period, it does seem that they *were* mostly engineers). At any rate, it was interesting for me to see that now much of the work in the computer field is finally directed at making programming and equipment much more accessible to those composers with little other expertise than a good musical background.

Bill Buxton's introduction to computer music was an excellent synopsis of what is currently available to today's composer. He discussed the various systems and their advantages, disadvantages, flexibility, cost-effectiveness and ease or difficulty of programming. It emerged that there is no totally ideal system because of certain 'trade offs' between the advantages and disadvantages inherent in each system. The choice of system, in Buxton's phrase, '. . . is largely user/application dependent.'[2] (Around computer people one cannot escape the computer jargon which seems 'continuously programmed for real-time analog output of the user', no matter what the context. . . .)

In the following descriptions I will attempt to keep the terminology to a minimum, and to give a layman's explanation of the subjects discussed by Bill Buxton both in his presentations and in his excellent article[3] sent to us for perusal before the symposium. Later some of the technical aspects of a new digital instrument (called the Synclavier) will be discussed in more specialised technological terms

for those interested. According to Buxton, the three main areas of computer composition available today are: (1) digital synthesis; (2) hybrid systems; and (3) mixed digital systems.

(1) Digital Synthesis

Very simply stated, digital synthesis means that every sound pattern can be converted to a series of numbers to represent, for example, pitches. The reverse is also possible: a series of numbers can be arranged (by a composer, for example), typed into a computer equipped with a special gadget called a 'digital-to-analog converter' (numbers-to-sound converter), and the numbers changed into sound. The sound is then recorded on a normal tape recorder just as one would take the sound from a synthesizer or other sound producing device. This method is the so-called 'classical technique' of making sound on the computer (sound synthesis), and was developed by Max Mathews in the 1960s at Bell Labs in the USA. It is also the technique used in his computer music programmes MUSIC IV & V (1969) — together with their derivative programmes which include MUSIC 4B & 4BF by Howe and Winham (1975) and MUSIC 360 by Barry Vercoe at MIT (1973 and 1975). Digital synthesis is also the basis for the systems of CEMA Mu of Xenakis, the IRMA system of Clough (1971) and the POD system of Barry Truax (1973).

The computers usually employed for this kind of sound synthesis are the large, general purpose ones such as the IBM 360 or IBM 370. These are often used by big institutions such as oil companies and large universities. What this generally means is that using these machines can be very expensive. You must share the system with other users, 'turn around time' is slow (you often have to wait until the next day before hearing what you have programmed), and generally you have to work in 'batch'. This means punching thousands of cards for the card reader. However, Stanford University, Buxton told us, has made improvements on many of these related problems.

Since the computers used for this kind of composition are very large, the possibilities are likewise enormous. However, these must usually be realised by some rather sophisticated programming. Though certain composers thrive on these systems, many have found this a rather unmusical and constraining approach. I know my own attempts at MUSIC 4B, MUSIC 4BF, MUSIC V and MUSIC 360 created a frustrating compositional environment which made me long for doodling on a synthesizer, collecting concrete sounds and writing for traditional instruments. Barry Truax's POD system, however, seems to be a much more accessible one and, while it is less flexible than MUSIC V and some of the others, it seems to encourage a more traditional 'musical approach' to the compositional process.

(2) Hybrid Systems

A hybrid system is a combination of computer and synthesizer. The actual sounds are produced by an instrument like a synthesizer oscillator (the sound producing device), but controlled by the computer. The names of some of these systems are: PIPER (Gabura and Ciamaga, 1968); GROOVE (Mathews, 1970; Mathews and Moore, 1970); the Yale Synthesizer (Friend, 1971); MUSYS (Grogono, 1973); and the EMS, Stockholm (Wiggen, 1972). The main advantage of this system is that a smaller computer can be used since it only has to control the sound, not produce it. In systems such as the GROOVE and EMS1 the composer specifies a sound and the computer plays it back to him: whereupon he can change or modify it if he wishes, as Buxton points out, 'analogous to the conductor's role in orchestral music'.[4] Smaller portable systems such as Ed Kobrin's HYBRID IV (Kobrin, 1975; Smith and Kobrin, 1977) and systems commercially available from Donald Buchla Associates (California) were created for live performance situations. The appeal of these hybrid systems, Buxton points out, is the ability to perform compositions in real time using complex control and timing functions, as well as patching sequences. The disadvantage of the systems is that since they use smaller computers which are attached to an analog source like a synthesizer, they are limited to the range and quality of that analog apparatus.

(3) Mixed Digital Systems

A mixed digital system is the same as a digital system, except that instead of having to wait for any period of time between programming and hearing the result, this process is immediate or, as it is known in computer parlance, 'in real time'. (This is made possible by converting an appropriate computer programme [software] into an appropriate solid apparatus [hardware]). These systems have the best of both worlds. They have the speed and convenience of an analog hybrid system and the accuracy and stability of digital synthesis. Buxton sees this type of system as 'perhaps the most promising in terms of the future of interactive computer music systems'.[5] Some of the mixed digital systems currently in use are Peter Zinovieff's VOCOM system (1972), the Dartmouth synthesizer (Alonso et al, 1975), the University of Illinois system (Beauchamp et al, 1975), VOSIM (Tempelaars, 1976), Chamberlain (1976), the IRCAM system (DiGiugno, in press) and the New England Digital Corporation's new Synclavier (Jones, Alonso, Appleton, 1978).

One of the most interesting lectures during the symposium was Jon Appleton's demonstration and talk about the last mentioned instrument, the Synclavier. The instrument itself looks not unlike some of the small portable keyboard synthesizers currently on the market, but functionally there is, of course, absolutely no comparison. It is a very sophisticated digital computer, versatile and relatively cheap: only about £7500, which is nothing in terms of some computer prices.[6] It is quite easy to operate and can be used in live performance situations as well as in studios for composition. The following is some technical data taken primarily from New England Digital's publicity material which was presented to us during the symposium.

**The Synclavier**[7]

The Synclavier is the result of a five-year effort by Cameron Jones, Sydney Alonso and Jon Appleton (Dartmouth College, USA) to produce a versatile instrument for both live performance and studio composition. The Synclavier system includes a high-speed 16-bit digital computer plus a 16-channel digital synthesizer with frequency modulation and arbitrary wave capability. A 61-note polyphonic clavier with a 96-button control panel makes the system complete.

The 16-bit processor which is used in the system is of their own proprietary design. Cameron Jones, one of the co-inventors, explains in the publicity material that they needed a 'high speed processor that could support a wide range of asynchronous I/O devices. 8-bit microprocessors start to choke when computing complex waveforms and sampling both the clavier and the control panel. The most important consideration, however, was the 16-register architecture available in the Model A,[8] the designated name for their processor. The Synclavier is configured with 32,768 bytes of static semiconductor memory and two mini-floppy diskette drives. The main memory can be expanded up to 114,688 bytes, all of which are directly addressable. In addition to the main instrument, New England Digital also offers a line of analog-to-digital and digital-to-analog converters which can be added to the system. These additional units may be used to process 'live' signals from microphone, or to connect the computer to existing analog equipment.

The synthesizer uses Schottky digital technology to generate 16 independent channels using one multiplexed circuit. Their frequency generator (patent pending) provides 1000 steps per octave of frequency resolution. Frequency modulation is accomplished by using the output of one channel to modulate the phase of the second channel. Both the modulator and carrier waveshape may be complex functions with up to 256 harmonics.

The synthesizer can also do 'circular frequency modulation'. This is explained by Jones: 'Our digital synthesizer includes a special feature that allows the modulated output of one channel to in turn modulate the output of a third channel, and so on. The output of the fourth channel to be modulated in this manner can be used to modulate the original modulator channel. This circular arrangement of modulated channels provides an interesting feed-back effect that can be used to produce complex but quite controllable sounds.'[9] Frequency modulation techniques can be used to generate an

interesting class of sound with complex timbres and time-varying harmonic spectra. By changing the index of modulation, the 'richness' of sound can be varied either slowly or rapidly over the duration of the event. The index of modulation is one of the parameters that is used to control the amount of modulation in a sound. Jones goes on to say that 'digital techniques can be used to create virtually any sound the composer or performer can call to mind'.[10]

The Synclavier has a special control panel which is used in experimenting with new sounds. The control panel includes a four-digit LED numerical display that is used to set each of the different musical parameters. The current value of any parameter may be displayed by pressing one button on the panel. Resolutions of one millisecond and .1 Hertz are provided. By turning the control knob, the selected parameter may be varied over a wide range to determine the appropriate setting.

A second mode of operation is also available. High level language programmes may be entered into the computer from a hard-copy or video terminal. The 'software' is called Real Time XPL which is a subset of PL/I programming language. XPL is a modern computer language which incorporates new techniques of 'structured programming'. It is easy to use and is claimed by New England Digital to be more powerful than the popular language BASIC. 64-character variable names, floating point arithmetic and advanced logical functions (DO WHILE, etc.) are included in the language. Special statements in XPL can be used to control directly the digital synthesizer, the diskettes and other devices.

### A Summary of the Symposium

In addition to Appleton's demonstration of the Synclavier there were also very interesting talks and demonstrations by Tomas Ungvary and Tomas Sjöland about what EMS Stockholm are doing, and about their interactive music system. Barry Truax had just finished installing POD in the EMS computer and gave a demonstration of the language's capabilities (and its limitations). Jean-Claude Risset talked about the current situation of computer music and the work that is under way (slowly) at IRCAM (Paris), where he is involved in the development of their computer facilities. The final day was devoted to a kind of mini-concert of computer pieces selected by Bill Buxton to demonstrate the variety of work being done in the field. The programme included G.M. Koenig's very Germanic *Übung für Klavier* (1970), Jon Appleton's rather disappointing new work composed on the Synclavier, *Syntrophia* (1977), the first of John Melby's *Two Steven's Songs* (1975), William Buxton's *For Dance* (1975), Tomas Ungvary's interesting *Akonel II* (1977) for flute and tape, Bill Schottstaedt's very funny one-and-a-half-minute *New Music Liberation Army* (1977), his less amusing *Death by Drowning* (1977) and an excerpt from Joe Olive's kitsch computer opera, *Mar-ri-ia-a* (1974).

What I found disappointing in the works of this programme and find, in fact, in most of the computer works I know, is a rather similar and predictable 'sound' and timbre. There seems to be a very definite and unmistakable 'computer sound' and, like the 'synthesizer sound' of the 60s and 70s, it has quickly acquired its own repertoire of cliches. The computer is toted as being able to produce any sound imaginable, so perhaps all I am really saying is that I just have the misfortune of knowing lots of composers with similar imaginations. It also seems that in most cases the technology still directs the aesthetic too much, at least for my taste. One gets the feeling that most of the computer composers have not yet really mastered the subtler regions of their instrument, and certainly none have yet plumbed the deeper depths of the technology they are exploring.

For me the only interesting music I have heard recently in this field is by Tomas Ungvary and Jean-Claude Risset. In the past few years their work has resulted in some important music, not just important computer music. However, with continuing easier access to this tremendous compositional tool for composers with perhaps less technological interest and background in computers (but greater musical talents) the computer field is becoming much more interesting, and the club is expanding rapidly. I would agree with the composer David Behrman who once pointed out in a lecture[11] that the computer is the sleeping giant of new music, and its future. The 1978 Symposium on Computer Music held in Stockholm was an excellent report on its progress.[12]

### The Stockholm Concerts

The main concerts began on Saturday night after a wonderful reception dinner in a chandeliered hall of the Stadshuset. We were transported to an island at the end of Riddarfjärden which is one of the many large expanses of water around which Stockholm is built. The evening's concert consisted of just one large work: a gigantic environmental composition called *Stockholm Fireworks & Water Music 1978* composed and organised by Lars-Gunnar Bodin, Sten Hanson, Bengt Emil Johnson, Arne Mellnäs, Jan W. Morthenson and Leo Nilson, with the aid of the Stockholm Police Force and various departments of the city government.

The work took place over a large triangular area of water, each leg of which was nearly a mile long. Two giant speakers were placed on the islands to our right and left, so that it was like sitting in a gigantic concert hall with the 'stage' a couple of square miles of water and the stereo separation over a mile. Bonfires lit the speaker locations in the far distance. Suddenly the piece began with some thundering electronic sounds booming across the water. The volume level was shattering and, considering the distance, absolutely amazing. Fireworks exploded along the various banks and in the water, daylight flares illuminated the skies, rockets shot across the bay and steamship whistles blew in the harbour. A dancer on a sea barge performed like a tiny water bug out in the middle, and a large balloon attempted lift-off while a gigantic organ behind us blasted chords out across the bay. The piece should have been fantastic, but unfortunately not everything happened as it should have. The co-ordination problems and lack of rehearsal time with the hundreds of people involved were evidently too great. It was a pity, because in spite of many misfires (for example, only about a third of the fireworks exploded), it was nevertheless an exciting spectacle. The real marvel for most of us, though, was the tremendous sound system. Hanson and Nilson told me that it consisted of two sets of large speakers with specially built exponential horns which amplified the signal to between 60,000 and 80,000 watts! Nilson told me later that they were planning to make a similar system embedded in ice for a 'performance' in one of the echo canyons of Lapland in the winter. One can scarcely imagine what an experience that will be (or what it might do to the environment).

The first indoor concert was held in the Kulturhuset the following afternoon and was broadcast live throughout Scandinavia. The programme included the Canadian Micheline Coulombe Saint-Marcoux's *Miroirs* for harpsichord and tape, which was totally destroyed by the malfunction of the right speaker and no amplification for the harpsichord; the Finn Paavo Heininen's nondescript *Discantus III* for solo saxophone; and my own *Inundations II: Willow* for soprano, piano and tape. I would have stopped this performance because of the faulty speaker. However, it was a live broadcast and after a few minutes I finally did manage to get a mono signal through both speakers. After the interval there was the Swede Mikael Edlund's trite theatre piece for chamber ensemble called *The Lost Jugglery* and the Frenchwoman Graciane Finzi's *Toujours plus* for harpsichord and organ: which hardly came off as the '... psychological study of note-alterations to rediscover the emotional relationship existing between the major and minor keys without ever returning to a music which is tonal' which her programme note proclaimed.

The Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra's concert that evening was much more interesting and the performance level certainly higher. The excellent young Finnish conductor and composer Leif Segerstam gave the four composers on the programme well-rehearsed, first-rate performances and directed the orchestra with precision, charm and insight. The two pieces in the first half were the Frenchman Gerard Grisey's delicate *Partiels,* which ended with an elegant touch of theatre beautifully executed by the conductor, and the Finn Herman Rechberger's *Consort Music* for recorder and orchestra, beautifully played by Claes Pehrsson with some nice intertwining of live and pre-recorded recorder sounds. The second half of the programme consisted of the set of romantic *Love Charm Songs* for voice and orchestra composed by the Finnish Salvador Dali look-alike, Järmo Sermila (excellently sung by Iwa Sörenson), and Jonathan Harvey's complex 28-minute *Inner Light III* for orchestra and four-channel tape.

Although I felt that Harvey's work could have used about a five-minute cut in the first third of the piece, it had a kind of insistent drive that made it galvanising when it began to move toward the tremendous climax at the end. It is always a shame that everyone cannot sit in the middle of the space when there is a four-channel tape. Sitting on the periphery must surely have changed many people's perception of the work.

The final concert in Stockholm was held the following afternoon at the performance media centre, Fylkingen. The programme began with the American William Hellermann's meditative 'Debussy-Terry Riley-twelve-note' piece (if you can imagine what that sounds like), *Row Music: Tip of the Iceberg,* nicely played by the German pianist Kristine Scholz. The Frenchwoman Nicole Lachartre's charmless chamber work *Il y a mille et mille soleils* was next, followed by a video composition, *The Poem* by Barbara Syke, Tom Defanti, Drew Browning and Bob Snyder (all from the States), which Fylkingen added to the festival as an example of current video work. I never seem to be able totally to get into video because of the primitive means of showing it: TV monitors with their everyday tics, distortions and crummy little speakers. What an awful way to entertain an audience in a concert hall! It is like listening to the *Hammerklavier* on a studio upright. Anna Maciejasz-Kaminska from Poland followed the video piece with her violent little theatre work *Mobile* for a groping cellist/contortionist. The final work on the programme, *Inharmonique* for soprano and computer tape by Jean-Claude Risset was, however, beautiful even though it was sung none too securely by the soprano Kerstin Stahl.

With the afternoon concert over, we all boarded buses and were transported to a luxurious Baltic Sea ferry for a lovely overnight cruise with dining and dancing as we sailed through the picturesque islands to Helsinki. In the morning a band in full uniform played as we disembarked. It was wonderful.

NOTES:

[1]Electronic Music Studio, Kungsgatan 85, S-111 43, Stockholm.
[2]William A. S. Buxton, 'A Composer's Introduction to Computer Music', *Interface* Vol 5, No. 2 (June 1977), p.65.
[3]Ibid., p. 65.
[4]Ibid., p. 68.
[5]Ibid., p. 68.
[6]When I was recently in New York I spoke with David Behrman about the system he was building using a new very inexpensive mini-computer called the KIM I. It retails for only about £110.
[7]The Synclavier is the trade name of the new digital instrument manufactured by New England Digital Corporation, P.O. Box 305, Norwich, Vermont 05055, USA, tel. (802) 649 5183.
[8]New England Digital Corporation. This is publicity material available from the above address.
[9]Ibid.
[10]Ibid.
[11]David Behrman, 'The Brains, the Brawn and the Booming of New Music', lecture delivered at The Ohio State University faculty lecture series, March 30, 1972, Columbus, Ohio, USA.
[12]For a discussion of the First International Conference On Computer Music which took place in conjunction with the 1976 ISCM Festival in Boston, see Stephen Arnold's review in *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), pp. 35-37. We hope to publish regular commentary on the computer music scene in the future. (Ed.)

## ISCM WORLD MUSIC DAYS, STOCKHOLM AND HELSINKI

MAY 9-14, 1978

NIGEL OSBORNE

The second part of the 1978 ISCM Festival, organised jointly by the Swedish and Finnish sections, took place between May 9 and 14 in Helsinki. There is a strange dislocation of the calendar in that part of the world: a combination of Arctic winds and summer light blended well with six days of contemporary music in its own seasonal limbo. The concerts had their moments of bleakness, but also high points of charm and interest. There was certainly no all-embracing sense of purpose or identity in the programme, unlike the ISCM festivals of the 50s and 60s which seemed at times to be expressing a common theology. Instead there was an intriguing variety of style and approach, of invention and anachronism, a quiet retreat into the ear and intuition, and an almost liberating uncertainty.

In this situation common threads of quite a different kind emerge. One of these trends, for example, was what one might call a 'back to roots' movement: composers seeking resources deep in their own culture or experience. A memorable work of this type was *Hirmos* by the Greek composer Michael Adamis. The resource in this case was Byzantine music. The text is drawn from John Damascene, and the pitch system is derived from the tetrachords and microtonal formulae of the Byzantine tradition. Adamis's powerful melodic invention, expressed in simple monophony and then woven into clusters of close polyphony, is a rare example of a genuinely contemporary inspiration within an ancient form. Jacob Gilboa's *Bedu* on the other hand, was an attempt to frame and express a very personal musical experience. The origin of the work was Gilboa's memory of hearing the lonely and haunting call of the Bedouin across the Jordan valley. The call itself, with its sinuous line and microtonal inflexions, transcribes beautifully for unison strings, but the interruption of expressionist piano writing is a rude linguistic shock. Similarly organum embellishment of the melody and the literal quotation of Bedouin drum rhythms seem to shoot off into space either side of the experience the composer wishes to communicate. Nevertheless this is in many ways a courageous and deeply-felt work.

Hifumi Shimoyama's *Breath* for soprano, percussion and piano was also founded on mixed metaphors. The marriage of traditional Japanese music and the European avantgarde is now a familiar one, but once again the expressionist rhetoric of the instrumental writing seemed to detract from the fascinating linguistic elements, delicate nasal quality and grace of the vocal line. The Canadian composer Donald Steven's *Images* for electric flute, electric piano, electric bass and percussion represented a return to roots of a different kind. Steven's first musical experience was in the field of popular music, and this set of seven miniatures is reminiscent of the sonority and structure of more abstract tendencies in rock music of the late 60s. It is as if the often formless and cheap-sounding surface of this music were tightened up and injected with a clearer and fresher timbre. Only the fifth section disappointed, with a seemingly gratuitous pointillism. Rudolf Maros's *Sirato* was an exercise in eloquence and simplicity. One imagines that Kodály and Bartók had the last word for some time to come in the use of Hungarian folk material in contemporary music. Maros's work, however, convincingly transposes the idea one step further into the context of a more contemporary language, and is a gentle assertion that there is still more to say.

Classicism is a recurrent theme in the 20th century. It is surprising, however, to find a composer like the Frenchman François-Bernard Mâche abandoning the rich imagery and vitality of his tape works (the earlier pieces are now classics in their own right) for an austere and 'absolute' instrumental form. His Octet, Op. 35 is an impressive work, but it is creatively rather bleak, over-distilled, born of a self-conscious restraint rather than the usual exuberance of Mâche's earlier output. The rhythmic structure is mid-way between the motoric repetitions of the composer's later instrumental works and a classical symmetry. The pitch structure is disconcerting: traditionally shaped polyphonic lines are cast adrift on a sea of microtonality. The result is aural dislexia: side-stepping movement reads as Wagner, suspensions and sequences as out-of-tune Corelli. The work remains, however, a linguistically interesting and quite intriguing milestone in the work of this important and underrated composer.

Another surprising stylistic turn was evident in Zygmunt Krauze's Piano Concerto. Up to the composition of this work, Krauze's technique has been dominated by the so-called 'unistic' philosophy, or principle of no dramatic contrast; folk music has also played an important role for him in the articulation of this principle. The Piano Concerto, however, gives the impression of being a purely intuitive

and spontaneous exploration of a number of ideas which the composer found aurally interesting, cast in a form which has a certain kinship with the Romantic concerto. The piano writing has some links with the 19th century: the opening material seems almost like an extension of Chopinesque ornamentation, driven forward with marcato articulation and a new dynamic pianism.

The Krauze work formed part of one of the two orchestral concerts in Helsinki. It was noticeable that more radical approaches to the orchestra were in general less successful than more traditionally scored works. The Iranian composer Iraj Schimi's *Topo Ostinato* began promisingly with incisive brass writing and developed into an hilarious game of passing percussion instruments around the orchestra. But somehow the sense of the theatrical timing was missing. The uncompromising nature of the material and the composer's modest objective of leading the ear with visual stimuli were lost in a failure to engage thelistener along the simplest dimensions of time and action. Dieter Kaufmann's *Concerto 7* is a strong work for violin and orchestra. It must be by far the most romantic-sounding of this Austrian composer's output, but the solo part contains real Bartókian fire and the orchestral writing, which is formed from a series of mobiles, has a good full sound, clarity and surprise.

Two Scandinavian works in the orchestral concerts showed the continuing influence of the Polish school in larger instrumental forms. The Dane Bent Lorentzen's *Tide* presented a drive towards a single climax, much in the manner of Lutosławski's second movements but with more detail and development within individual parts. The Norwegian Arne Nordheim's *Spur* for accordion and orchestra is based on a received vocabulary of clusters and sound blocks, but despite a rambling form, the work is consistently absorbing, and the writing for solo accordion, masterfully played by Mogens Ellegaard, is quite a revelation.

One of the most impressive large-scale works, however, was Joji Yuasa's *Time of Orchestral Time,* a sharp piece of orchestral scoring with an interesting transition from a stable, static architecture to a situation of flow and movement. This work seems to represent a significant change in this Japanese composer's technique. In contrast to the timbre-dominated world of earlier works like *Chronoplastic,* a far more harmonically-inclined ear was noticeable. Heinz Holliger's *Atembogen* was also a memorable high point. The sound material of the work contains a number of unusual devices, including 'white noise' effects of breathing and page turning, which take their place in a sound image of subtlety and imagination. The composition as a whole, however, remains somehow hidden and withdrawn. Understatement at times gives way to no statement. But perhaps this is what Holliger wanted.

The weakness in some of the more radical orchestral music reflected a general pattern: the more experimental works in this year's programmes tended to be disappointing. The 'Intermedia and Music Theatre' concert was a disturbing study in the isolated and egocentric world some new art has come to inhabit. *Penetrations VII* by the Argentinian Alcides Lanza, usually an interesting composer, suffered by attempting to tackle a problem beyond its own creative capacity. The work, which is for vocal solo and tape, is intended to reveal in an instant all the suffering of mankind. It begins well with an introduction which has certain magic. The culmination of the piece, however, is a bout of hysteria from the soloist, which seems a sadly primitive resolution of the central crisis, and this so many centuries after Sophocles.

The same concert featured Ulrike Trüstedt's *Synchrone Klänge aus dem Rauschen,* one of a series of works exploring technology in a way which seems to connect with this West German composer's background in fine art. This piece, which includes holograms and various sound-action systems, is really a demonstration rather than a composition, and herein lies a problem. Marshall McLuhan, writing in the 60s, was dangerously wrong: the medium is not the message. Trustedt's work deserves attention because it is helping to communicate a number of possibilities, but it in no way shapes or even extends musical experience. This is the crux of a general misapprehension which inhibits work in this important and exciting field, and could easily lead to an early creative bankruptcy.

In contrast the chamber music concerts contained some interesting material. Theo Loevendie's *Six Turkish Folk Poems* with its instrumental brilliance and lively harmonic ear, was clear confirmation of the important contribution this Dutch jazz musican has to make to new music. The American Marc-Antonio Consoli's *Music for Chambers* displaced instrumental groups in three different rooms. Despite the complexity of texture there was a clear impression of overall control of the experience, with a satisfying balance of blend and counterpoint between the ensembles. Jukka Tiensuu's *Sinistro* is modest in scale, being scored for a duet of accordion and guitar, but is impressive for its ascetic purity and the synthesis of intuitive and formal approaches to composition which this intelligent and inventive Finnish composer achieves. The chamber music concert given by the Stockholm Percussion Ensemble had a particularly strong programme, with works by Torstensson, Zbigniew Rudzinski, Matsunaga, Kobashi and Ptaszyńska; I saw the scores but was unable to hear the performances.

The British music in the programme was on the whole well received. Jennifer Fowler's *Voice of the Shades* is a work of lyrical and sustained simplicity. Each note is carefully felt and sensitively placed in an arch-shaped form which is both relaxed and spacious. Jonty Harrison's *Q for Five* is a tightly composed work which presents a single, clear musical image to the audience. It is a very accomplished exercise in the continuous development and reworking of a limited number of melodic and harmonic ideas and leaves a strong, unambiguous impression in the ear. It was a pity that administrative problems prevented Michael Finnissy's *Tsuru Kame* from being performed. It is an important statement from a composer who really understands music-theatre and would have helped to clarify the rather confused picture of this medium which the festival presented.

In the mirror on the wall, however, we look for what we want to see. If there is something we prefer not to see, we can always pretend it is not there, and the ISCM is rather like that. It is a reflection of contemporary music which may seem far from ideal and for some is unacceptable. But in the last analysis it represents a certain reality about new music, with its strengths and its frustrating weaknesses, which it is important to be able to assess and also necessary to acknowledge.

## FOUR DAYS OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC, ATHENS
SEPTEMBER 19-23, 1978

SIMON EMMERSON

The Hellenic Association for Contemporary Music, with assistance from the National Tourist Organisation of Greece, once again organised some 'Days of Contemporary Music', which took place last year on 19, 20, 22 and 23 September in the Theatre on the Lycabettus in Athens.[1] The music was performed by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Lorraine conducted by Michel Tabachnik, who had been invited by the French Ministry of Culture to found this orchestra, based on Metz in North East France, as recently as 1975. The orchestra is funded in equal proportions by the central government, the municipality of Metz and the regional government of Lorraine. For an orchestra outside Paris to promote so much contemporary music in a tight schedule, which also includes opera and operetta, is an adventurous policy with many more or less obvious risks. This was the first opportunity I have had to follow an orchestra through four days of rehearsal and performance, and to talk to some of its members about the problems of presenting such programmes: that is, the juxtaposition of premières and classical masterworks.

To put the problem in general terms: the symphony orchestra as it exists today is essentially a 19th century phenomenon in which intonation and perfect ensemble are of the utmost importance. Good intonation is a product of both ability and practice. Thus problems arise when a fair proportion of an orchestra's repertoire involves idioms far removed from romantic music. However staunch a supporter I may be of the inclusion of such works in concert programmes, their simple juxtaposition with the romantic or lyric can strain a player's facility in ensemble. There are

at least two solutions. One may be that of, say, the London Sinfonietta: to mount mostly contemporary programmes with only the most occasional excursions into the baroque, hardly ever the romantic. The other is to alternate programmes of carefully chosen content in which the various problems are isolated. In Athens the compromise of having one classic in each programme was exacerbated by the tough schedule of four different programmes in five days, so that it would have been better to have omitted them, I felt, or included them in a separate programme.

The first concert presented two Greek works, one already well known in Western Europe. The other, the world premiere of the Symphony in One Movement (1975) by Alkis Panagiotopoulos, showed clearly the influence of Xenakis but with the addition of strange modal sections for the lower strings. Xenakis himself was present to hear the performance of his *Erikhthon* for piano and orchestra. The soloist was Claude Helffer, whose part was in many ways similar to the solo work *Evryali,* both works being based on an 'arborescence' idea, in which a line moves and branches (according to controlled chance principles) in much the same way as a bush. This is more difficult to hear in the piano writing as the line has to consist of repeated notes, as against the sustained orchestral glissandi. *Erikhthon* is a frantic, energetic work, for the listener a perpetual excitement until the last note is cut off in mid flight. An additional contemporary bonus in this concert was the inclusion of Tadeusz Baird's *Elegy for Orchestra,* under a scheme for the exchange of scores organised by the ISCM. It was short, well made and unpretentious.

On the second evening the two Greek works presented were of considerably different types. Anestis Logothetis now lives in Vienna and is well known as a composer who has developed an idiosyncratic style of graphic notation. *Dynapolis* is written on a single page, based on an architectural idea for a dynamically evolving city. The score, which calls for a large orchestra, gives detailed instructions as to the realisation and is divided in a circle into ten sections, including a central 'free' zone to which reference can be made. The conductor controls the timing: a fixed duration of twelve minutes is specified. This is not the place to discuss the problems of graphic notation, but I was surprised and gratified at the discipline combined with the experimentation of sound resource which was elicited from the orchestra. Contrasted to this was Jani Christou's *Six Songs on Poems of T. S. Eliot* (1955-57). Although performed soon after its composition in the version for voice and piano, this was the first performance of the full orchestral version. Written before Christou's move into more mystic and cataclysmic works,[2] this presents an almost Bergian palette: shades of the *Altenberglieder* but with many post-war innovations in orchestration. This parallel is heard, too, in the ostinati which often accompany the more extended vocal writing, here beautifully sung, especially in higher sustained lyric moments, by Alice Gabbai for whom it was written. Bartók's First Piano Concerto, with Claude Helffer again the soloist, completed the concert.

After a day's break the third concert took place in suddenly colder and wetter conditions, as the rainy season was threatening ten days too soon and unfortunately depleted the audience a little. Opening this concert was a veritable find which London heard later in the season: Anton Webern's early *Im Sommerwind,* described as an 'Idyll for large orchestra', and, written in 1904, dating from his earliest studies with Schoenberg. It is cast in the lushest Wagnerian–Mahlerian terms, but without any hint of the excessive 'post-Tristan chromaticism' of his teacher's early works. The only possible hint at things to come — it is so difficult to determine to what extent this is said in hindsight — is the use of fragments of melody passed from one instrument to another, to an even greater extent than in the works of Mahler. This was followed by a performance of Yannis A. Pappaioannou's Violin Concerto (1971) with Tatsis Apostolidis as soloist. Although finely constructed, its five movements did not appear to be very differentiated or to develop substantially what was some interesting material. Pappaioannou is one of Greece's leading composition teachers and has exerted considerable influence on the younger generation of Greek composers. The concert continued with George Couroupos' *Affrontement* (1972) for two pairs of two soloists, soprano-oboe and baritone-horn, with orchestra and tape. There were several levels of confrontation: the two pairs of soloists (most of the time in virtual unison with closely imitated material between the two) had a sort of conversation or argument, in turn opposed to the orchestral background; finally the orchestra was 'overcome' by a tape of street and environmental noises, abandoning the platform hastily to leave the soloists ro run out last. In some respects a better idea than its elaboration, but it was certainly presented with great panache by its vocal soloists, Eve Brenner and Spyros Sakkas. The concert concluded with Ravel's *Mother Goose* Suite.

The final concert of the four opened with Yannis Ioannidis' *Metaplasis A,* a short, concise work which won second prize in the 1969 Panamerican Contest. Although it finished just as I thought it was getting going, it was pleasantly unambitious, using ideas related to those of Xenakis (clouds of sounds) but without sounding imitative.

Skalkottas' works are one by one receiving belated world premieres and some degree of recognition. His First Piano Concerto was completed in 1931 at the end of his period of study with Schoenberg and bears some relation to Schoenberg's contemporary Orchestral Variations and his Piano Concerto of eleven years later. To say that the Skalkottas anticipates this later concerto is not to be entirely complimentary, as both Schoenberg's major concertos are cast in an academic mould, especially with respect to rhythmic elaboration. While sharing some of these problems, common in all fairness to much music of the interwar period with the possible exception of Varèse, the Skalkottas work came out with some memorable ideas. The solo part was tackled with obvious sensitivity by George Hadjinikos. The concert and the series concluded with Debussy's *La Mer.* Perhaps because someone was conscious that the presentation of such a French masterwork was probably an important gesture, extra rehearsal time had to be allotted to it, which in the event lifted this performance above those of the other classics.

The 'Four Days' was another valuable contribution to Greek contemporary music, for which the festival organiser, John G. Pappaioannou (not related to the composer), must be given considerable credit. Audiences were smaller than on my previous visit: a combination of colder weather and perhaps that it came at the tail end of the main Athens Festival and clashed with some elements of it. It would be true to say that the same programmes could quite easily be presented with small modifications in Metz. Indeed, combined with contemporary French orchestral music, of which very little is heard outside the exclusively 'avantgarde' festivals, some programmes of universal interest could be created.

NOTES:

[1]For Simon Emmerson's review of the June 1977 'Days' see *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), pp. 38-40. (Ed.)

[2]See the comments on *Anaparastasis III: The Pianist* in the above mentioned review.

**CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL, HUDDERSFIELD**
OCTOBER 13-17, 1978

JOHN SHEPHERD

It was the week of 'l'affaire Boycott'. The Cricket Committee of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club Committee (a tautology I shall never really fathom) had suddenly announced that The Greatest Right-Handed Batsman In The World would cease to captain Yorkshire. Michael Parkinson's brow became furrowed. The honour of Barnsley was at stake (must get our Geoffrey on the show so that he can defend himself). There were imputations of disloyalty to Yorkshire Cricket on the part of the Great Man. Up and down the Holme Valley (where I happen to live) pints were drunk, sleeves were rolled up and arguments of great moral persuasion were brought to bear. I started to draw comparisons with Dreyfus. 'Who's he? the cry went up. I muttered something about centre-forward for England in the 1930s.

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What I needed was some Culture, a breath of cosmopolitan fresh air. As luck would have it, there was a festival of contemporary music just down the road at Huddersfield. So I removed myself from my haven in 'the spectacular woollen district of the Pennines' (as the publicity blurb would have it) to 'grimy industrial' Huddersfield (an image, we were assured, that had been 'dispelled by the cleaning of numerous buildings').

The Festival was to have been built round three major attractions: the first visit to Britain, in a professional capacity, of George Crumb, two concerts by the Gaudeamus Quartet and one by the Warsaw Music Workshop. In the event, the Gaudeamus Quartet became fogbound in Amsterdam and two replacement concerts had to be arranged at very short notice. The first (on the evening of Saturday, October 14) was given jointly by Rohan de Saram (this a very noble gesture, since this cellist had already given a demanding recital in the morning, of which more later) and Alan Hacker and friends (clarinets). In the first half Rohan de Saram played Kodály's unaccompanied Sonata for cello with great panache and then, with Douglas Young (piano), proceeded to give an interesting account of the recently unearthed and published *Melancholia* by Sibelius. *Melancholia* (1902) is essentially episodic, alternating on the one hand between piano and cello passages and, on the other, between dry pizzicato chords and an elegiac questioning: a questioning which towards the end of the work is given a lilting, sardonic answer. The first half of the concert closed with a repeat performance (from the morning recital) of George Crumb's Sonata for cello.

The second half was less prepossessing. The performance of an ancient Delphic Hymn (138 B.C.) and music from the Greek/Turkish folk clarinet tradition holds, one would have thought, minimal interest for contemporary music aficionados. William Sweeney's *Nine Days* (1977), which concluded the evening, was a statement motivated by the nine days of the 1926 General Strike. It consisted of variations on different Scottish (or pseudo-Scottish) folk melodies above a drone bass: hypnotic perhaps, solemn and even dire, but hardly presenting any philosophical or political depth. The second replacement concert (on the Sunday morning) was given by the Lindsay Quartet and consisted of Elizabeth Maconchy's Eleventh Quartet and Hugh Wood's Third. Neither can be recommended as an aperitif.

The concert which stayed longest in the memory was that given by Dreamtiger (director, Douglas Young) with Peter Hill (piano) on the Sunday evening. The first half consisted entirely of works by George Crumb. Crumb had given a lecture on Saturday afternoon on 'My vocal settings of Lorca's poetry'. He is hardly the ideal lecturer: diffident, difficult to hear and conveying, in a gentle, unassuming way, an anti-academicism which prevents him saying anything of great substance. The basic message was clear, however. The words used by the Spanish poet inspire the timbres (often fragile) and so, in Crumb's case, much of the form that underlies the American composer's musical language. That language came across instrumentally in the evening in the initially troubled and subsequently serene *Night Music II* (1964), in the delicate fragrance of the slightly overstretched *Dream Sequence* (1976: this performance was a European première) and in the exquisitely beautiful *Vox Balaenae* (1971). This last piece was inspired by the singing of the humpback whale and seeks to symbolise the powerful, impersonal, timeless yet rhythmic forces of nature. To say any more about the work would be to go totally against its ethos (and that of most of Crumb's music). It has to be heard to be believed. The second half of the concert contained a cheeky, fun piece by Douglas Young *(Lignes,* 1978) for piccolo and claves that lasted at least 45 seconds, and an excellent performance by Douglas Young and Peter Hill of Stravinsky's two piano version of *The Rite of Spring*.

Following close in terms of memorability was the recital given on the Saturday morning by Rohan de Saram and Douglas Young. It began with the Debussy Sonata (as much for piano as for cello), proceeded through an unscheduled performance of the 1896 Delius *Romance* to Janáček's *A Fairy Tale* (which again gave Douglas Young equal exposure), and thence to George Crumb's Sonata for solo cello (1955). This is a student work which betrays the influence of Bartók and Hindemith. The first of the three movements frames an impassioned and expansive melodic arch within sombre pizzicato chords, and with its continuing rising quality seems to pose a question. The second, conversation-like movement discusses this question which is then answered in the third. This is heralded by a slow dramatic 'call to action', which precipitates an allegro vivace of powerful momentum.

The remaining two works in the recital were Xenakis's *Kottos,* an intense piece, the rapid ostinati of which — symptomatic of musical branchings and re-branchings — led to a tight ending, and Frank Bridge's Sonata for cello and piano (1914-17). Bridge's Sonata was written at a turning point in his career, before the influence of the Second Viennese School on him began to be fully felt. Yet the second of the three symphonic-like movements (played without a break) is complex in structure and sonority and has clear allegiances with Schoenberg. It was a fascinating piece to end a recital throughout which the playing of both soloists was committed, energetic and convincing.

The Festival contained within it the last stage of the Yorkshire Arts Association's Young Composer's Competition. The principal public forum for works reaching this stage was a concert given by the Aulos Ensemble (directors, John Casken and Philip Wilby) on the Monday evening. Three pieces by young composers were included: *Scales, Sets and Filters* by Christopher Fox, *A Dialogue from Faustus* by David Morris and *Aware* by Michael Parkin. *Aware* (1978) describes 'a mood or moment of crisis between seeing the transience of the world and its inherent timelessness'. The pointillistic structure of this piece at times allowed it to slip into over-statement and to get caught up in its own powers of expression. Given the Japanese inspiration for the work, the mood sometimes came suspiciously close to betraying a Western agony of self-consciousness. Nonetheless, the writing was impressive and the serenity of *Aware's* coda was appropriately static and impersonal.

The three young composers' works were interspersed with another three by rather more established figures: John Buller (*Spaci,* this a British première), John Casken (*Music for a Tawny-Gold Day*) and Philip Wilby (*Surrexit Christus,* another British première). *Music for a Tawny-Gold Day* (1975) recommended itself most. For this piece the Aulos Ensemble was divided predominantly into two: piano on the one hand and viola, alto saxophone and bass clarinet on the other. The screaming and buzzing of the three wind instruments was subtly punctuated by the piano to create a highly evocative aural equivalent of the warmer, richer hues of autumn.

So to the Warsaw Music Workshop, which gave the final, Tuesday evening concert of the Festival. There was the tentative, fragmentary opening and increasingly dense textures of Edison Denisov's *D-S-C-H* (in honour of Shostakovich), the gentle introspection of Ivana Loudova's *Matinata,* the gradual disintegration and clever stylistic juxtapositions of Tilo Medek's *Stadtpfeifer* and the frustrating, everyday musical humdrumming of Gorecki's *Musiquette IV*. There was also Serocki's *Swinging Music* for clarinet, trombone, piano and cello, an engaging allusion to jazz which used no percussion instruments, but nevertheless retained a steady stress on beats 1 and 3! The leader of the Workshop, Zygmunt Krauze, had two works performed: *Soundscape* (1976) for amplified instruments and objects (with an accompanying tape of human sounds) and *Idyll* (1974) for 32 folk instruments.

Krauze's affair with folkery caused reflection on the implications of putting on a festival of contemporary music in a place such as Huddersfield. A great number of today's composers and musicians are involved in a self-conscious retraction from what they see as the evils of industrial society into a more integrated, organic and peaceful world. Such involvement is evident in the albeit different approaches of Krauze and Crumb. Despite the encroachment (and subsequent gradual decline) of the textile industry, West Yorkshire has always remained measured, underlyingly rural and certainly close-knit in its social organisation. Yet the links between the parochial concerns of a close-knit society (the deadly serious business of Yorkshire cricket provides an example of one such concern) and the self-conscious preoccupations of members of touring contemporary music circuses seem tenuous. This tenuousness was reflected in the opening concert of the Festival (given on Friday evening by the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble and the pianist Roger Woodward) when the brass group slipped in a quick, unscheduled

performance of Matthew Locke's *Music for Charles II*. This received more hearty applause from the denizens of Huddersfield than any other piece on the programme.

Perhaps the answer is that that which is genuinely organic and integrated in our culture exists within the predominating, superimposed framework of industrial, capitalist society. Although this framework can be interpreted as being oppressive economically and politically, it nevertheless provides a measure of familiarity and safety. Those who live within it and can be seen as being oppressed by it therefore tend to support and champion it. The people of these parts will consequently prefer the functional tonality of brass band music to the 'stranger' products of contemporary composers. Those who are 'politically aware' among such composers may, on the other hand, wish to criticise and attack the *entire* social status quo by invoking alternatives based on models (such as the 'folk') of more egalitarian mutuality.

The Festival at Huddersfield was important because it provided a forum for the performance and discussion of contemporary music in an area where such things seldom occur. Music students for miles around will clearly benefit from it, for example. It is therefore good that the Festival will continue. The 1979 one (to be held from October 25-31) is bigger and will doubtless be better. There are to be 16 concerts (including several British and world premieres), as well as lectures (Richard Rodney Bennett will introduce his *Sonnet to Orpheus*), workshops and master classes. The performers include Acezentez (from Yugoslavia), the Fitzwilliam String Quartet, Gemini (directed by Peter Wiegold), Vinko Globokar, Alan Hacker, the Halle Orchestra, Howard Riley, Frederic Rzewski, Rohan de Saram, Heinrich Schiff, Denis Smalley, Harry Sparnaay, John Tilbury and James Wood. The Yorkshire Arts Association Young Composers' Competition will again reach its climax during the Festival.

But the Festival might become important for more long term reasons. A contemporary music festival held in a big metropolitan centre (London, Manchester or Leeds, for example) sits quite easily. There does not seem anything inherently incongruous between event and environment. A small centre such as Huddersfield does not allow such complacency. There is an uneasy disparity between the stolid workaday environment and the more cosmopolitan air of the Festival: between an actual integrated culture and those who might wish, through music, self-consciously to create models of integrated culture as an alternative to the predominant mode of social organisation. Such disparities can hardly help but sharpen the many issues facing contemporary music today.

## PHILIP GLASS

DAVE SMITH

Although Julian Silverman advised prospective listeners to have 'nerves of steel, a brain of concrete and the patience of a plastic duck',[1] Philip Glass's solo organ concert in St. John's Smith Square on October 19 turned out to be a rather docile affair. Those who expected the full-blooded energy of his early ensemble music doubtless left disappointed.

Glass evidently preferred to use a pipe organ rather than an electric instrument. Despite, or indeed perhaps *because* of, the venue this seemed inadvisable and a strange decision for a composer who has stressed the importance of volume in his music. The specially hired instrument seemed incapable of attaining a decent mezzo forte and, more annoyingly, it produced a soft-centred, smeary timbre reminiscent of an inferior church organ: this impression was reinforced by the over-use of high harmonics.

Glass began with *Music in Contrary Motion*, an 'early' piece dating from 1969 but less convincing than its contemporaries written in parallel motion. The 'double-mirror' construction of each module would not be very apparent after the early stages if the system of elongation used in the piece were not accentuated by two changing drones in the bass. These drones, however, tend to obscure the rhythms thrown up by the melody, so that the total effect seems flat when compared with the vigorous jerkiness of *Music in Similar Motion*.

Since the period of these early pieces, Glass seems to have lost interest in developing structures and has become more concerned with creating agreeable sounds around harmonic movement. *Music in Twelve Parts* (completed in 1974) saw the beginnings of this process, but *Another Look at Harmony, Part 3* and the *Suite from Einstein on the Beach*, both performed on this occasion, did little to convince me that Glass is treading new and fruitful pastures.

*Another Look at Harmony* seemed, in fact, a pretty old look, based as it is on a repeating sequence of major chords (F, E, D, C, D and E). The phrase lengths and the left hand arpeggios remain unchanged throughout, and the right hand material seems too weak to justify the repetitions. The fragments from *Einstein on the Beach* were also disappointing, sounding as they did on this occasion dangerously like the doodles of a church organist. Perhaps they are fairly unimportant interludes from the opera: if so, why bother to present them as concert music?

Glass finished with the even more recent *Fourth Series, Part 1*, which seemed to redress the balance a little. This is based around a few fairly sparse but well differentiated blocks of material which, while structurally developing very little, are nevertheless effective in juxtaposition, recalling the similarly engaging effect of Satie's *Danses gothiques*. Perhaps, however, Glass did not plan this effect, although his respect for Satie is well known. Another impressive feature of this last piece was the composer's ability to play quite difficult polyrhythms (5 against 6 against 8). Maybe this will turn out to be a fruitful interest in the future.[2]

NOTES:

[1]In *Time Out*, No. 443 (October 13-19, 1978), p.59.
[2]For further on Philip Glass see Dave Smith, 'The Music of Philip Glass', *Contact 11* (Summer 1975), pp.27-33 and Keith Potter and Dave Smith, 'Interview with Philip Glass', *Contact 13* (Spring 1976), pp.25-30 (Ed).

## NEW MUSIC DIARY

BRIGITTE SCHIFFER

### Friday November 3

By scoring her latest piece, *Between Ourselves*, for a chamber ensemble of seven players without a conductor, Judith Weir intended to take up the challenge presented by Susan Bradshaw, who complained in a recent radio talk [1] about the now widespread practice of small ensembles appearing with a conductor. No doubt she took great care in the layout of her piece, which is as easy on the ear as it is on the eye. It should pose few problems to reasonably experienced performers, as it is strongly derivative and could as well have been called 'Homage to Debussy'. It could serve a useful purpose with young players in training, but at its first performance it was easily eclipsed by the Partita of Sebastian Forbes which, although written twelve years ago, sounded newer, less predictable and more rewarding for as excellent a group as the Lontano Ensemble and their conductor on this occasion at the Wigmore Hall, John Carewe.

### Wednesday November 8

When Erika Fox decided to set to music texts from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Duineser Elegien*, she must have been unaware of the tight and complex structure of the cycle, because otherwise she would have realised that it is absolutely inconceivable to take any 'fragments' from these poems, let alone 'alter the original order of the words' as she did. Whatever she attempted to achieve — whether the 'reconciliation between the striving of man' (represented by the singers) and 'the impassive and immovable face of nature' (represented by the instruments), or the expression of the inexpressible, the 'innermost life' — her attempt was doomed to failure from the very start. To let the angels speak through the voices of Jane Manning and Stephen Varcoe and allow the instruments to take care of the rest

seems a singularly naive approach, though Erika Fox's score, in every other aspect, is anything but naive. The instrumental writing sounded skilful enough and the Contrapuncti Ensemble, conducted by Michael Lankaster, seemed to have done full justice to the work. However, it would need many more hearings before it would be possible to decode the piece and find 'la clef pour cette parade sauvage'. At the first performance in the QEH the work left the audience bewildered and perplexed.

**Wednesday November 15**

The Australian Sinfonia (conductor, Patrick Thomas) opened their QEH season with the first performance of *Ring Out the Changes* for two sets of bells and strings by the Australian composer Jennifer Fowler (b. 1939). She set out to explore patterns and relationships and to establish series of durations and dynamics. The bells were so sparingly used that their 'dialogue' was sometimes hardly audible, but their echoes and reflections gave rise to some shining, shimmering textures which lingered in the mind long after the piece had ended. In the second part of the concert, the very charming and very French-sounding Concerto for two pianos and string orchestra by Malcolm Williamson was played by Moura Lympany and the composer, and accompanied with great gusto by the Australian ensemble.

**Sunday November 19**

Hans-Jürgen von Bose (b. 1953) is a young German composer hardly known in England. However, he enjoys considerable fame in Germany, and is the recipient of a number of prizes and scholarships. *Travesties in a Sad Landscape* was commissioned by the London Sinfonietta for a concert given at the Round House as part of the Goethe Institute events of 'London-Berlin — The Seventies Meet the Twenties'. It was most revealing to hear the new work after a Hindemith *Kammermusik*. When writing their music, both composers were attracted by old German folksongs, and some of the excitement created by Hindemith's folksong arrangements from the 20s repeated itself 50 years later with these *Travesties*. They are, in fact, travesties of an old song treated as a sort of cantus firmus, around which different layers or 'landscapes' are skilfully arranged, creating sometimes an impression of modern collage, at others of medieval parody. True, the 'electronic sound gestures' were lost on the listener, but there was enough variety in the dressing-up of the song and enough imagination in the alienation of the 'landscape' to arouse keen interest, show real talent and raise substantial hopes for the young composer. However, the boldness of the young Hindemith was nowhere matched, and the excitement was due rather to the nostalgia than to the daring of the new work.

**Tuesday January 9 — Thursday January 11**

The Australian Sinfonia's next concert at the QEH on January 10 featured the first performance of *Mirages* by the Australian composer Barry Conyngham (b. 1944). The 18-minute piece has much atmosphere but little substance, and this is as it should be with a mirage: so ephemeral, so changing. Unfortunately, the changes which occur are neither those of light and its reflections nor those of illusion. They are a set of eight variations that may well 'appear, shift and disappear, suspended or shimmering in a timbral haze', but that are nevertheless set in the most traditional frame. The 'slow unfolding of a song' by which they are accompanied is strangely alien to the soundscapes developed by the orchestra, and although, at a first hearing, *Mirages* yields some enticing sounds, it does not stand up to closer scrutiny and would certainly benefit from some cutting.

The concert clashed with one of the 'Young Artists and 20th Century Music' events of the Park Lane Group which take place every year and invariably come up with the discovery both of some talented young performers and some interesting works by young composers. It was just by luck that I was able to reach the Purcell Room in time to hear Frances Kelly, a most accomplished harpist, give a brilliant performance of *Harmony and Invention*, a piece written for her by Judith Weir which explores 'the harmony derived from a single pedal setting' and 'the large range of sounds to be made on the harp'. The three chordal and two invention sections are made to interact on each other, and Judith Weir displays a remarkable knowledge of the instrument and its possibilities. Just the same, I was at times reminded of a title once used by Darius Milhaud, who called one of his early song-cycles *Catalogue de fleurs*. What Judith Weir presented sounded more like a catalogue of devices than a consistent piece of music, but the devices were ingeniously put together and played by Frances Kelly with great subtlety.

Dominic Muldowney was one of the young composers whose new works raised the greatest expectancy, and it was gratifying to see that he was represented in two different recitals, one by the oboist Andrew Knights on January 9, the other by the percussionist James Wood on January 11. Obviously the time of the Chartres pieces is over. The sharp, contrasting sounds, elaborate rhythms and one-directional outlay of the early pieces are no longer to be expected, and the fact that, only a few days earlier, I had heard Muldowney conduct his own Double Reed Ensemble in the foyer of the National Theatre and had found precisely those sounds and rhythms was entirely irrelevant. What Muldowney is trying to achieve now is quite the opposite, a very homogeneous sound. *Three Hymns for Agape* for oboe, cor anglais and oboe d'amore achieves precisely that, but little else that I could perceive. Granted the melodic fifths gave the piece a slightly archaic character, but this impression was annihilated by the constantly swelling and diminishing dynamics, the soft romantic interludes and the impressionistic colouring.

There was also a certain lack of motivation which also prevailed in the other piece. *First Show* for percussion and tape starts in a very slow tempo with vibraphone and later marimba. These are joined by tape-delayed vibraphone and marimba, and as more tape sounds are gradually added the density increases without the piece gathering any momentum. The piece is set within a narrow frame of reference and strikes one as static and minimalist without being systemic, and without generating any of the excitement and hypnotism sometimes generated by that kind of music. The work lasts 15 minutes and it provided the soloist, James Wood, with some taxing and also rewarding demands. But as it meanders without direction through the different sequences, one keeps wondering what exactly Muldowney is aiming at.

**Monday January 22**

At the Wigmore Hall Suoraan, a new group consisting of four instrumentalists and one vocalist and 'founded for the performance of music composed in the last few years', gave three first performances of works by young British composers. James Clarke (b. 1957) has written an eight-minute piece for four instruments, *Aäneen/Out Loud*. It is well shaped, well scored and well proportioned, with a powerful climax in the middle, some virtuoso piano playing (from Claire van Kampen) in the first part and some lyrical flute playing (from Nancy Ruffer) in the second. There is as yet more skill than originality, but that should come at a later stage.

In *Mountainfall*, a piece for solo voice by Michael Finnissy commissioned by Josephine Nendick and inspired by a Noh play, an old woman is taken by two young relatives to a mountain top and left there to die. The work faithfully retraces the different stages of her fading away into the landscape, but not before some cries of acute anguish and suffering have been heard. This is not the first time that Finnissy has been involved with Japan. By incorporating into his new piece some of the ritual aspects of *Tsuru-kame* (a music-theatre piece also based on a Noh play and performed at the Gaudeamus Competition in 1973) and by developing at the same time his very personal melismatic style and extending his repertoire of new vocal techniques, he has considerably deepened his emotional range and widened his lyrical appeal. Singing, humming, moaning and whispering in turn, Josephine Nendick gave a moving performance of this difficult piece, which lasted ten minutes and left a deep impression.

The third new work of the evening was by Richard Emsley (b. 1951). A single sentence, drawn from the Book of Revelation, provides the entire material for *In the Days of the Voice of the Seventh Angel*. Emsley is certainly more articulate in his introductory notes than in his music. This piece lasted 16 minutes and made little impact. Between the new works there was a sharply defined rendering of

Xenakis's *Dmaathen* for oboe (David Powell) and percussion (John Harrod) and a technically most creditable performance of *Discantus I* for solo flute by the Finnish composer Paavo Heininen (b. 1938).

**Thursday January 25**

In a country where amateurism is held in such high esteem, it was gratifying to note the air of real professionalism displayed by the vocal quartet Electric Phoenix who here gave their third London concert, at St. John's Smith Square, and who, in a remarkably short time, have built up for themselves a reputation for high standards, good programmes and outright fun. Their astonishing achievement has set the imagination of young British composers rotating at high speed, but none of them has yet come up with ideas new enough to match the potential of this ensemble.

The evening started with *Micro-Macro* by the American composer John Anthony Celona (b. 1944). This piece was originally written for the Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble of the University of California, San Diego. As a matter of fact, the techniques extended just as far as Stockhausen's *Stimmung*, and although the Phoenix singers and their mixer, Terry Edwards, did their best, nothing much came out of the performance.

As for the new version of Paul Patterson's *Brainstorm*, it sounded as stimulating, the drive was as strong and the exploitation of the Phoenix's abilities as clever as in the first version, performed last year. The theatrical element has been tightened and the length reduced, but it still remains what Meirion Bowen called it then: 'A *tour de force* for composer and performers alike'[2] — no more, no less.

The *Lamento* by the Cuban-American Odaline de la Martinez (another first performance) was a long, drawn out, slightly melodramatic and over-repetitive essay in a kind of theatrical Sprechgesang on words by St. John of the Cross. The only composer who came up with some new ideas and succeeded in making use of the special brand of vocal techniques of this ensemble was William Brooks (b. 1943), another American composer. His *Four Madrigals* were both witty and clever: studies in new techniques, notation and persiflage, sometimes outright funny and the whole time extremely demanding on the performers. They sang and acted with authority, charm and great stage presence.

**Wednesday January 31**

In their QEH concert The Fires of London played two works specially written for them: *The Runes of a Holy Island* by Peter Maxwell Davies and *The Cloud of Unknowing* by John Hopkins.

*The Runes* were originally written for a Lunchtime Magazine programme of the BBC on Radio 4, and this was the first live performance of the work. It consists of five short pieces for an instrumental ensemble of six that evoke the composer's medieval past, his beloved island and his mystic leanings. Lasting just ten minutes, they may well be called trifles, but trifles of a very special kind: what the composer calls their 'picture-postcard qualities'. In their austerity the pieces belong very clearly to the Orkney period. Inspired by a seascape of cliffs and isolation, they vary from each other in tempo, percussion scoring and character, and the time-signature often changes from one bar to the next. There must be plenty of scholarly devices, but they remain hidden behind the drive and high spirits of these appealing little pieces.

*The Cloud of Unknowing* by John Hopkins (b. 1949) is a more robust piece, but it misses both the fibre and the fervour of *The Runes*. It is over twice as long, but much less substantial, and the rather sparse sound (so suitable to Davies's aphoristic little pieces) is ill fitted for a sonata movement concerned with dialectical processes and development. No doubt the work, based on early religious writings, contains some good ideas, but real motivation seems to be lacking, and with a duration of 25 minutes it considerably overstayed its welcome.

Between these two pieces Stephen Pruslin gave a neat and lucid performance of Elliott Carter's Piano Sonata. The second part of the concert was devoted to Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, sung by Mary Thomas. She sang it at the first concert of the group (then called The Pierrot Players) back in 1967 and has since become a specialist in this most famous classic of the Second Viennese School.

**Monday February 5 and Wednesday February 14**

The Redcliffe Concert of British Music at the QEH on February 5 featured two works by British composers. The first was *What Does the Song Hope for?* by Robert Saxton. This piece, written by Saxton when he was 21 and first performed at the Gaudeamus Competition in 1974 (when Saxton was acclaimed a kind of British 'Wunderkind') is an Orpheus cantata for soprano, ensemble and tape on words by Auden. The second work was *A Dream of the Seven Lost Stars* for six voices and ensemble by David Bedford. It was written in 1964, when Bedford was 27 and being hailed as a prodigy on which to pin great hopes. The piece is now over 14 years old. It sounded so pretty, was so well planned and so sensitively scored that one listened to the six voices on the stage (the Redcliffe Singers) and the instrumentalists hidden behind the curtain (the Redcliffe Ensemble, conductor Edwin Roxburgh) with a melancholy pleasure, thinking of what was going to come.

It came only a few days later, on February 14, at a London Music Digest concert entirely devoted to works by Bedford given by the London Sinfonietta. On the programme there were early pieces like *That White and Radiant Legend* for soprano, speaker and chamber ensemble (written in 1966, when his leanings towards 'pop' music were just starting), *Pentomino* for wind quintet (which the London Sinfonietta had commissioned and first performed in 1968) and Piano Piece 2 of the same year which (according to Malcolm Barry)[3] anticipated the sonority of the Oldfield works.

1968 was also the year in which Bedford started teaching at Queen's College, Harley Street. The two works written for and performed by the pupils of that school at the end of the evening (*Some Bright Stars for Queen's College* of 1970 for chorus and plastic twirly pipes or 'howlers' and a suite from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, an opera for young people written between 1975 and 78) had little to do with his former experimental work in schools with George Self in the early 60s or, for that matter, with straight 'pop'. They did, however, have everything to do with commercialism and sentimental popular taste. At a time when he was closely associated with Cornelius Cardew and John Tilbury his deliberate simplicity had a well-defined reason, but on this occasion, as he stood in front of his pupils, arms raised as if he were Bernstein preparing to conduct Beethoven's Ninth, the so-called simplicity left a nasty after-taste. There was, of course, prolonged cheering from all the numerous relatives of the young performers and from the still more numerous Oldfield fans who had come to applaud their idol. He, incidentally, played only a short obbligato in the last work, and so it turned out to be a happy event for some, a sad experience for others.

In the first part of the Redcliffe concert on February 5 (before the performances of the Saxton and Bedford) Alan Hacker played two works by Stockhausen: *Amour* and *Tierkreis*. *Amour* for clarinet consists of five short pieces, 'musical presents that I wrote with the wish that they should bring much happiness'. And that is exactly what they sound like: lovely little melodies, each one characterised by its own set of gestures. *Tierkreis*, on the other hand, is a series of twelve melodies connected with the twelve signs of the Zodiac and originally written for musical boxes. Each melody is 'composed with all the bars and proportions in keeping with the characteristics of its respective star sign'. They can be performed in any combination by a melodic and/or a chordal instrument. The version prepared by Alan Hacker and occasionally accompanied on the organ by Peter Seymour proved haunting and memorable.

**Wednesday February 21**

A chamber orchestra version of *Tierkreis*, prepared by the composer himself, was played by the London Sinfonietta at their QEH concert the following week. In this version the different characters were more sharply described and the details more closely focused. However, it missed the haunting qualities of the solo version.

The programme of this Sinfonietta evening had been designed with its twelve principal players in mind, and they were presented in different combinations of one, two and eight. The evening culminated in a work by Nigel Osborne (b. 1948), commissioned for the occasion and scored for the twelve players and a guest, the guitarist John Williams. The purpose of the concert was to dispense with a conductor,

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Further details concerning the degree courses above can be obtained from The Admissions Office, University of London Goldsmiths' College, New Cross, London SE14 6NW

# YORKSHIRE ARTS

# it's lively in Yorkshire

### Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival 25-31 October

Artists include **Gemini, Howard Riley, Acezentez, the Orford String Quartet, Vinko Globokar, Frederic Rzewski, Margaret Field, Harry Sparnaay, Keith Williams and Penelope Rowland, James Wood, Richard Rodney Bennett, Halle Orchestra, Heinrich Schiff, Douglas Young, Rohan de Saram, Alan Hacker, Fitzwilliam String Quartet, Northern New Music Players, John Tilbury and Denis Smalley.** Concerts include premieres of **David Blake's Clarinet Quintet** and **Douglas Young's Jeu d'eclair** and first British performances of **George Crumb's Music for a Summer Evening** and a new piece by **Mayuzumi Bunraku.**

Full details from Kirklees Information Office, Albion Street, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

### Fourth Yorkshire Arts Association Composers Competition

Selected works will be rehearsed by **Gemini (director Peter Wiegold)** and **James Wood** during the Huddersfield Festival. Works should be offered for instrumental quartet (flute/piccolo/alto flute, clarinets/ soprano saxophone, violin/viola, cello/ with or without soprano voice or solo percussion. Prize money may be offered but the emphasis is on rehearsing in workshops with the possibility of public performances for the best pieces.

Full details from Yorkshire Arts Association Music Officer, Richard Phillips, Glyde House, Glydegate, Bradford BD5 0BQ (Tel: Bradford 23051)

### Northern Contemporary Music Circuit 1979/80

Tours by **Whispering Wind Band, Fitzwilliam String Quartet and Alan Hacker, Yorkshire Imperial Metals Band, Sheffield University Piano Trio, Bruno Canino and Antonio Balista, Lindsay String Quartet and the Leeds Wind Quintet.**

Full details from Music Officer, Yorkshire Arts Association, Glyde House, Glydegate, Bradford BD5 0BQ (Tel. Bradford 23051)

### Contemporary Music Network in Yorkshire 1979/80

Concerts on tour by **Ian Carr with Nucleus, John Tilbury and Denis Smalley, Bobby Wellins' Sextet, Arditti String Quartet, Nash Ensemble, London Sinfonietta, John Alldis Choir, Elton Dean's Ninesense, Five Centuries Ensemble and London Jazz Composers' Orchestra.**

Full details from Music Officer, Yorkshire Arts Association, Glyde House, Glydegate, Bradford BD5 0BQ (Tel. Bradford 23051)

Yorkshire Arts Association

and this piece involved a special scheme of time and co-ordination.

Osborne describes the first movement of *In Camera* as a kind of give-and-take between the different instrumentalists. The second movement is very fast and elaborate and presents a high risk in performance which the composer does nothing to avoid. In the final movement — an accompanied solo-recitative for the guitar ('written with a sideways glance at Schoenberg': particularly at the last scene of *A Survivor from Warsaw*) — Osborne tries to penetrate to the very core or heart of the instrument. This exploration started in 1978 with a piece called *After Night*, commissioned by the guitarist Rose Andresier.

Osborne calls the three movements of *In Camera* nocturnes: dark pieces inhabited by cool passion and painted in sombre colours, with long silences and low dynamics. *In Camera* is a piece of real chamber music involving constant interaction and decision making. The twelve members of the Sinfonietta played with great determination and commitment, and John Williams gave a remarkable performance of his difficult and unspectacular part.

**Saturday February 24**

The performance of works by Stockhausen, Bedford and Saxton may have been a safe bet, but by presenting in their next programme, at the Purcell Room, a young composer never before heard in public, Redcliffe Concerts took a considerable risk. This is precisely what creative programme planning is all about. In 1978 — as he was embarking on his undergraduate life at King's College, Cambridge, after having spent a year in Paris at the Conservatoire — George Benjamin (b. 1960) wrote his Octet 'on the request of Francis Routh' and with a publisher (Faber) ready to print the finished product. The amazing skill displayed in the Octet can, no doubt, be traced back to Messiaen, his former teacher. However, this is not the case with the sound, which strikes one as being highly personal, or with the scoring, so transparent and so clear, purposeful and uncluttered. There is also a great freshness and a certain sense of humour which can be detected throughout, but nowhere as conspicuously as in the coda, a short 'leggiero' only five bars long, which comes after all has been said and done and the preceding allegro has died down. Piccolo combined with pizzicato in the high strings and a bourdon in the low strings and a flourish of the celesta all add the final touch of charm and high spirits to this attractive little piece and faintly evoke the last movement of Ligeti's Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet ('Is that all?' Alice timidly asked. 'That's all,' said Humpty Dumpty. 'Good-bye.').

The Piano Sonata that followed was written at an earlier date and showed less originality. It is the piece of an exuberant young virtuoso who has learned from Messiaen how to write for the piano and from Yvonne Loriod how to play it. He did so in a most spectacular fashion, with special attention to careful pedalling and resonances. In the second part of the programme some of the Redcliffe players gave a most creditable performance of Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps*.

**Sunday February 25**

A particularly interesting programme, which included the British première of Rolf Gehlhaar's *Camera Obscura* for brass quintet and the London première of Richard Orton's *Brass Phase* for twelve brass players, was presented at the Riverside Studios by Richard Bernas and his excellent Music Projects players. The music of Gehlhaar is not normally very endearing to the ear. In this piece, too, the sound is stark and sombre, except for those rare moments when a shaft of light falls on a corner of the 'camera obscura' which is then momentarily lit. Otherwise the music is dark and aggressive, and yet there is something irresistibly compelling about it. Just as in the music of Xenakis, there is something that makes one feel that every sound and non-sound, every sequence and every silence, is significant and essential. I must say that Gehlhaar's reference to relativity bypassed me completely, but then it would certainly have helped me if I could have heard the piece at least twice.

The work, Gehlhaar tells us, represents an attempt to create a musical structure in which all the parameters may be experienced as equally significant. In order to guarantee the uniqueness of every event, independent scales were set up for each parameter. The listener's attention is mainly focused on the gradual changing of timbres and durations, densities and articulations, and dynamics and registers. Great demands are made on his discerning ear and his analytical mind, but the result is intensely rewarding.

In *Brass Phase* by Richard Orton the players are given much scope to improvise. It is a piece in which the brass players have fun making fun of brass music, and the audience has a marvellous time watching the players perform their antics and listening to the 'variations' of a circus fanfare and a Salvation Army chorale. Audience participation may even have increased the effect, though it is difficult to see how this could have been achieved. But without it some of the events, such as an interlude played on different kinds of mouthpiece, still drove home the piece's point effectively enough and it was much enjoyed by all.

Elliott Carter's *A Fantasy about Purcell's Fantasy on One Note* for brass players was just the right introduction to the concert, and Robert Saxton's *Reflections on Narciss and Goldmund*, with its elaborate textures, provided a welcome contrast and relaxation after Gehlhaar's *Camera Obscura* and before Orton's *Brass Phase*.

**March: Four Friday Concerts**

March was the month of the 'Four Fridays'. Sir William Glock, chairman of the London Orchestral Concerts Board, succeeded in getting the 'Big Four' London orchestras to give a series of four concerts in the RFH on March 9, 16, 23 and 30, each of which included at least one contemporary work. This in itself must be a formidable achievement, and no matter what reservations or criticisms come to one's mind, Glock deserves wholehearted congratulations on having won his battle against extremely heavy odds: during one of the pre-concert talks he himself hinted at the considerations which had to be taken into account when arranging the four evenings. And although one may dispute the actual choice of works, one should not forget that every programme had to be negotiated with the governors of the respective orchestra. Whether one is in favour of mixing new music with works from the standard repertoire is another matter, but the attempt to avoid creating a contemporary music ghetto may well have coincided with an attempt not to antagonise the orchestral musicians beyond endurance. Glock must have displayed considerable diplomacy in his negotiations, and as long as this first enterprise is going to have a sequel (another similar series is planned for May 1980) one should welcome it unreservedly.

The series was opened by the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus who performed Cristobal Halffter's *Cantata Yes speak out yes* under the composer's direction. This was written in response to a commission from the United Nations to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1968 and it was first performed by the Minnesota Orchestra and Chorus in the UN General Assembly Headquarters in New York. The text, by the American poet Norman Corwin, is based very firmly on the articles of the Declaration itself. Halffter, who for the first time in his life had at his disposal unlimited resources and was therefore completely free in his choice of scoring, uses colossal forces to drive home his point and attempts to create an atmosphere of anguish which would add a new dimension to the text, even though this might bring about 'a slight loss of intelligibility'. In fact, and without any blame being attached to the eight excellent soloists led by Jane Manning and Michael Rippon, there was no intelligibility at all, only great waves of sound occasionally pierced by shrill screams of pain and despair. One could perhaps argue about a lack of balance, but the fact remains that the experience was full of frustration and disappointment.

On the second Friday the LSO under David Atherton gave the first British performance of Maxwell Davies's *Dances from Salome* in the only concert which drew anything like a capacity audience. Drawn from the two-hour ballet score which was commissioned for performance last year by the Danish choreographer Flemming Flindt and written within five months, the piece constitutes a symphonic work in its own right. It is quite possible to 'follow the purely musical argument rather than attempt to grasp the action' in the

way which the composer wants us to, although it is hardly possible to overlook the programmatic implications of the music. While the use of plainsong and magic square lend it an intellectual air, the music sounds anything but scholarly and in fact appeals to our imagination rather than our intellect: a fact which must have contributed considerably to its overwhelming success.

The contemporary music in the third Friday concert was shared between the John Alldis Choir and the LPO. Alldis conducted his choir in a very beautiful performance of Giuseppe Sinopoli's *Requiem Hashshirim*, underlining a perfection of form and sound which almost defeats its own purpose, having a shrilling rather than a moving effect. The LPO was joined by eight members of the Alldis Choir for a performance of Berio's Sinfonia, dating, like the Halffter, from 1968 but by now a recognised classic of modern music, which Walter Susskind conducted with great panache. The two works scored a considerable success.

At the fourth concert Wolfgang Rennert conducted the RPO in the premiere of Tavener's *The Immurement of Antigone*. In the past this composer has drawn on Latin and Byzantine chant, and myth and mysticism have been his main sources of inspiration. Greek tragedy is, however, another matter, and even when retold by Gerard McLarnon, Tavener's librettist, *Antigone* still remains the work of Sophocles and can be reduced neither to a tale of crime and punishment nor to the level of sacrifice, especially of Christian sacrifice. But this, strangely enough, is the context in which it is placed, the division of the entombment into three parts — from feet to loins, from loins to heart and from heart to head — allowing for a whole range of extraneous matter such as lost opportunities connected with the womb, sentimental losses connected with the heart and the identification of her father with God, the highest hierarchy being associated with the head.

The emotions range from fear and anxiety to panic and despair, but nowhere is there tragedy in the sense of Greek antiquity, nor does one feel a genuine dramatic impulse. This must also have been due to the soloist, Vivien Townley (soprano) who, while delivering her part in an impressive way, remained not only incomprehensible but also unmoved and unmoving throughout and whose costume and gestures did little to intensify the atmosphere. Rennert conducted with great authority and musicianship, but it was only Bruckner's Fourth Symphony in the second half which created a lasting impression.

**Friday March 2**

By strange coincidence the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra paid a visit to the RFH exactly a week before the first LOCB concert to play Tavener's *Palintropos* for solo piano, brass, percussion and strings, having given the premiere the previous night in their home city. *Palintropos* was written on the island of Patmos in 1977-78; it thus belongs to Tavener's 'Greek period' and is meant to reflect 'the extraordinary change of colours in the course of the day'. Elaborate textures are the most striking feature of the work. Abundant use is made of very rapid repeated notes on the piano, which have a tinkling effect and which, when supported by celesta, harp and handbells, are very reminiscent of the sound picture of a Greek island, especially on a Sunday morning when the wild sound of all the churchbells ringing at the same time fills the air and calls the inhabitants to the service.

Although the piano never actually takes over or even dominates, the work makes quite considerable demands on the soloist which were met by Stephen Bishop-Kovacevich with great virtuosity. There is plenty of imagery and colour and even occasionally a slight hint of bouzouki, but the music is so swamped by decorations that it is difficult to penetrate to its centre, let alone to find a hard core. The piece is in four sections, turning back on itself in the middle as the title indicates so that it finishes, as it began, with a single long held C on the double basses, a pivotal note of the whole work. A piano concerto in C major? Not quite, but almost.

**Wednesday March 7**

While orchestral concerts monopolised the attention in March, a number of very rewarding chamber music events also took place, regrettably often two on the same day. In the Lontano Ensemble's Westmoreland concert in the Purcell Room the two vocal items had to be dropped owing to the indisposition of the singer, Karen Jensen. As a result Ingrid Culliford (flute) and James Wood (percussion) were the undisputed stars of an evening which opened with a brilliant performance of Laszlo Sari's colourful and atmospheric *Sonanti No. 2*. Ingrid Culliford was also the soloist in Pawlu Grec's *Duo II* for flute and piano, a piece full of contrasts and conflicts which were thrown into relief by the pianist Odaline de la Martinez, the ensemble's director. Lontano also gave a very clear and transparent account of the intricate *Poems, Aria and Interlude* for flute, clarinet, violin and cello by Malcolm Stewart, and the evening ended with Stockhausen's *Zyklus* for solo percussion played by James Wood with an unfailing sense of time and texture.

Earlier the same evening the Contemporary Music Repertory class of the Royal Academy of Music presented three particularly demanding and interesting works. The concert started with *Ricercari in memoriam Luigi Dallapiccola* by the Scottish composer Edward Harper. The lyrical flow of the two outer ricercari is set off against the sharp, even slightly aggressive character of the middle part with its fanfare-like bursts and explosions. The writing is less polyphonic than the title would suggest, but a strong Italian flavour can be felt throughout, and if there are no direct quotations from Dallapiccola there are certainly strong reminiscences of the Italian master to whom the 15-minute work is dedicated.

The conductor John Carewe must be congratulated on including Maxwell Davies's extremely difficult *A Mirror of Whitening Light* in the programme. The haunting, obsessive quality of this fascinating piece was astonishingly well caught by the chamber ensemble of 14 young players who gave a committed and convincing performance.

The concert ended with the premiere of Heinz-Karl Gruber's *Photo-fit Pictures* 'on the track of a suspect theme.' This is a kind of musical hide-and-seek, very skilful and amusing, in which both performers and audience have to reconstruct the original theme from hints, short quotations and gestures which may as easily be hidden in a fleeting xylophone passage as in a short trumpet fanfare. The theme's 'contours' are mostly distorted, as they usually are in 'identikit' or 'photo-fit' police pictures, and from these and from 'characteristics' difficult to detect when removed from their context the piece is built up, until a final 'confrontation' confirms the initial 'surmises' and releases the suspense in a surprising way.[3]

**Wednesday March 14**

The East German mezzo-soprano Roswitha Trexler, a major exponent of political songs from the 20s and 30s, took part in two concerts of music by Hanns Eisler in London during March. The first was organised by the Anglo-Austrian Music Society and the Austrian Institute and given at St. John's Smith Square. In the programme notes Eisler was described as 'perhaps the last great representative of the Second Viennese School': a gross misrepresentation which raised wrong expectations and was all the more frustrating since no attempt was made to substantiate this preposterous claim. Neither the music of the suites, taken from long forgotten film scores of the Berlin years and competently performed by students of Trinity College of Music, nor the Brecht songs *(Die Rundkopfe und die Spitzkopfe,* for instance) or the *Zeitungsausschnitte,* marking Eisler's break away from Schoenberg, had the slightest connection with the Second Viennese School, and it was only through the Brecht sonnets on poems by Goethe and Schiller, written in the USA 'when Eisler retrograded and used serial techniques again' (!), that a link with Vienna could be established. Eisler the 'composer of the people', as he was also described in the programme, was represented by the *Solidaritätslied* of 1930 and the *Einheitsfrontslied* of 1934, two pieces of purely functional music which should never have been exposed on a concert platform. The programme at the ICA on March 18 — devised, as was the one at St. John's, by the Eisler pupil David Blake — was in every respect more informative.

**Wednesday March 21**

A sixth RFH concert to include a contemporary work was given by the BBC SO who gave the British premiere of Carter's *A Symphony of Three Orchestras.* The work is dedicated to Boulez, who conducted the first performance in New York and the European premiere in Paris, both in 1977. David Atherton conducted the London performance and displayed great insight and intelligence in disentangling the numerous strands of the work and in co-ordinating its many different levels.

The piece was inspired by Hart Crane's poem *The Bridge* which describes New York harbour. Before the start of the first 'movement' the high instruments of the orchestra are carried away in a vast sweep symbolising the flight of seagulls high in the sky. Their descent leads to an extremely virtuosic trumpet cadenza, one of the score's highlights, of which, alas! only bits and pieces could be heard at this performance. This introduction leads directly to the first of the twelve 'movements' in the sense in which Carter uses the term: individually characterised blocks of musical material distributed evenly between the three orchestras, each of which has its own tempi, rhythms, articulations and character. There is extraordinary fluidity in the functioning of these movements and in the interlocking, overlapping and superimposition of the orchestras, and although one is unable to follow the whole process in detail, there is something overpowering in the sheer richness and vigour of the thought, and on the intellectual as well as on the emotional level one is entirely involved and absorbed.

For conductor, performers and audience alike it is a difficult and demanding work which reveals new aspects at every hearing and doubtlessly still holds many discoveries in store. Such a work should be performed at regular intervals in order to give the public a chance to unravel its many mysteries, to penetrate deeper into its organisation and the better to enjoy its terrific impulse, power and complexity.

**Thursday March 22**

At the Royal College of Music the 20th Century Ensemble celebrated its tenth anniversary with an exceptionally ambitious programme devised by its director Edwin Roxburgh, who conducted the British premiere of Stockhausen's *Trans*. This contains a significant theatrical element, but the aural and visual aspects are wholly indivisible: 'all that you hear and see is integrated with the entire piece'. Rather than do without the curtain, pink gauze, proper steeped seating of the violins and precisely gauged balance between the string orchestra in the forefront and the invisible backstage brass and percussion, it may have been preferable to have limited the very long programme to the accompanying Varèse, Janáček and Bernard Stevens and to have let people listen to the DG recording, equally depriving them of the visual element, of course, but otherwise more satisfactory. The performance no doubt represented a noble effort, but the magic of *Trans* never materialised and Stockhausen's dream has yet to be revealed to British audiences. In the first part of the programme, conducted by Stephen Savage, the ensemble gave a vivid and pungent account of Varèse's *Octandre* and the first performance of Stevens's Second Symphony; the evening ended with Janáček's lively and enjoyable Sinfonietta.

**Tuesday March 27**

The 20s also found their way into this year's Camden Festival which featured another concert given by Richard Bernas and his Music Projects group which I heard in rehearsal. In addition to Weill's Violin Concerto of 1924 played by Beverley Davison, the programme included the *Ballet mécanique* by Weill's exact contemporary, the young Franco-American composer and pianist George Antheil (1900-59), originally scored for eight pianos, a player piano and assorted percussion including several doorbells and two aeroplane propellers. Bernas's ensemble did a reduced version for four pianos and percussion with electronically-synthesised propellers.

It may well be true that the ballet was 'conceived in a new form, that form specifically being the filling out of a certain time-canvas with musical abstractions and sound material composed and contrasted against one another with the thought of time-values rather than tonal values . . .', as the composer later claimed in a letter to Nicolas Slonimsky dating from 1936.[4] But at the work's first performance in Paris on June 26, 1926, it was taken for 'music of the new machine-age' and frantically applauded for the wrong reasons. At the Rosslyn Hill Chapel, Hampstead, Music Projects gave an electrifying performance of this youthful work in rehearsal which in the evening was again, whether for the right or the wrong reasons, apparently applauded with great enthusiasm and which, nearly 53 years after its premiere, sounded as provoking and exhilarating as it must have done then.

I took the opportunity of going to the rehearsal for this concert in order to be able to attend the final programme in the BBC's series of contemporary concerts in London music colleges which took place at the Guildhall School of Music the same evening. Elgar Howarth and Harrison Birtwistle conducted the Londn Sinfonietta who played works by Nicholas Sackman, Birtwistle and Stravinsky. Sackman (b. 1950) is a new and promising voice among British composers. His 23-minute *Doubles* for twelve winds and three percussionists, a BBC commission, was given its premiere. The title refers partly to the old variation form and partly to the presence of two separate instrumental groups which are engaged in a game of echo and pre-echo, image and mirror-image and other suchlike devices. The aural effect, however, is predominantly one of elaborate decoration alternating with extended and rather heavy-handed percussion episodes ill-suited to the dry acoustics of the hall, and in spite of the very personal scoring and some imaginative ideas, interest died long before the piece had ended.

Birtwistle himself conducted the performance of his *Prologue* and *Epilogue* which opened each half of the programme. Although several years separate the composition of these two monodramas, they have much in common. Both are scored for one male voice and seven instruments, mainly brass, and their durations are five and seven minutes respectively. In *Prologue* a setting of the 'Watchman's speech' from the Agamemnon of Aeschylus — a dialogue between an intensely expressive tenor (Neil Jenkins) and a bassoon, punctuated by furious and violent interjections from two trumpets — is heard against a many-hued background of horn, trombone, violin and double bass. In the *Epilogue* a setting of Ariel's 'Full fathom five' from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* — a hushed dialogue between baritone (Stephen Roberts) and horn, punctuated by the mysterious sound of six tam-tams (two players) — is heard against a background of four pianissimo trombones. Mysterious and powerful, with images of great distress and anguish as well as of hope and renewal, these two short pieces, in turn harsh and subdued, stark and tender, are very typical of Birtwistle's language, his pace and his unrelenting drive. For the performance of Stravinsky's *Canticum Sacrum* the London Sinfonietta was joined by the BBC Singers and the evening ended on a note of plenitude and religious fervour.

**Wednesday March 28**

Another Camden Festival offering this year was the British premiere of Henze's realisation of Paisiello's *Don Quixote* at the Round House. Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816) left some hundred opera buffa scores; Henze chanced on this one in the Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples and thought it suitable for a kind of popular entertainment at Montepulciano, the Tuscan village where he holds his annual summer festival.

Nothing could be more quixotic than Henze's attempt to bridge the gap between avantgarde and popular musics. In order to involve the local population in the performance, the opera was rescored for wind instruments, to be played by the village's brass band (in London pupils of the William Ellis School), and a highly sophisticated ensemble of eleven players including four different keyboard instruments played by one performer (here Valda Plunkett). Conducted by the gifted young Jan Latham Koenig, this provided a piquant accompaniment for Paisiello's recitatives and arias, giving a 20th century touch to an 18th century piece. The Phoenix Opera team presented an enchanting production which would no doubt have scored an even greater success if the proportions had been more in line with those of an 'entertainment'. As it was, the

performance lasted two and a half hours and boredom set in long before the end.

NOTES:

[1]Later published as 'Whatever Happened to Chamber Music?', *Tempo,* No. 123 (December 1977), pp.7-9.

[2]In his review in *The Guardian* (May 18, 1978), p.10.
[3]In his brief discussion of the piece in the course of an article on Bedford in 'Composers Today', *Contact 15* (Winter 1976-77), p.5.
[4]Quoted in Nicolas Slonimsky, *Music since 1900* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937; fourth edition, 1971), p. 351.

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**David Cunningham** Composes and records experimental music and has written music for a number of films. Co-manages the group This Heat, runs Piano Records, records and produces rock groups and writes for *Musics* magazine.

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**Nigel Osborne** Composer. Lecturer in Music at the University of Nottingham. Member of the Committee of the British Section of the ISCM.

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**Brigitte Schiffer** German music critic and writer specialising in contemporary music who has lived in Britain since 1964. Contributor to many journals in both English and German.