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CONTACT

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31

Nicola LeFanu Master Musician: an Impregnable Taboo?

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21 *English Experimental Music 1* Dave Smith, 'The Piano Sonatas of John White'; Michael Parsons, 'The Music of Howard Skempton'; Keith Potter on Bead records

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24 *Music in Eastern Europe* Adrian Thomas, *Jeux vénitiens*: Lutosławski at the Crossroads'; Fritz Hennenberg, 'Who Follows Eisler? Notes on Six Composers of the GDR'; Margaret McLay, 'Experimental Music in Hungary: the New Music Studio'; Susan Bradshaw on John Buller; Roger Wright on James Dillon

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Nicola LeFanu Master Musician: an Impregnable Taboo? 4

Kevin Volans and Hilary Bracefield A Constant State of Surprise: Gerald Barry and 'The Intelligence Park' 9

Paul Mounsey Music in Brazil: Willy Corrêa de Oliveira and Gilberto Mendes 21

Controversies Incorporated 27
Andrew Ball Bridging that Gap
Ivan Moody The Mystic's Point of View
James Ingram The Notation of Time: a Reaction to Richard Barrett's Reply

Christopher Fox Reflections from a Slow Country 31

Robin Freeman Darmstadt 1986 35

Richard Toop Travelling Hopefully: Recollections of a Festival-Crawl (Autumn 1986) 38

Contributors to this Issue 45

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Nicola LeFanu

Master Musician: an Impregnable Taboo?

The original version of this article was read as a paper at the Waterloo Room, South Bank Centre, London as part of the 'Women in Music' weekend, 6-8 February 1987.

I never thought it would come to this. If the music student I was twenty years ago could see me now, she would be horrified. 'Women composers' instead of just 'composers'? Back to that?

I grew up secure in the belief that discrimination against women in music, such as had beset my mother's generation, was a thing of the past. I began my career in a city that was called the musical capital of the world, and I was intoxicated by the diversity of opportunities, by the marvellous range of concerts. I could never have imagined for a moment the effects of the oligarchy of the 1980s.

I came to London's concert halls as a young woman and heard The Fires of London playing Gillian Whitehead, the Allegri Quartet playing Jennifer Fowler, Jane Manning singing Erika Fox, the CBSO playing a new orchestral work of mine . . . . I believed, in my naivety, that this was the beginning of the good times: that all that Elisabeth Lutyens, Priaulx Rainier, my mother Elizabeth Maconchy and the other women composers in that generation had stood for and struggled for was finally bearing fruit.

In 1973 I had an orchestral commission for the BBC Promenade Concerts; there were four commissions that year, and three went to women. (The other two were Thea Musgrave and Rainier.) In the same year I went to the United States on a Harkness Fellowship, and there I came across musicians in the Women's Movement for the first time. I was very smug when asked if anyone had yet started a Women in Music group in England. Oh yes, I said, someone had started the Society of Women Musicians in 1912, and it had just closed down with a triumphant diamond jubilee concert celebrating the achievement of its aims.

So here I am, in 1987, decked out with statistics on gender bias and ready with the jargon of affirmative action. What has happened? I'm going to try and indicate something of the changing circumstances which have led me to a radically different position. In particular, I want to get across what I feel to be positive about the act of singling out women composers.

Aspirations and statistics

I believe, though I don't really have the vocabulary to speak of it, that through the arts, and most particularly through music, we reflect not only the structure of the world as it is, but also the world as it might be. I believe, with Margaret Mead,[1] that any art is much richer, much stronger if it is practised by both sexes. If music has anything to offer this destructive, divided society of ours, won't it need to spring from both men and women, rather than continue to reflect patriarchy back at itself? A musical culture of breadth and diversity: that would seem to be a natural goal for all of us, male and female alike. The means by which we move towards it are, however, not so obvious. In Australia the Arts Council has adopted a special policy on behalf of women musicians; in the United States there are positive discrimination laws. In England such moves are regarded with great suspicion. We distrust them; we think we don't need them.

Most people believe that music transcends gender, that you can't tell if a composition is by a man or a woman. I know, however, that my music is written out of the wholeness of myself, and I happen to be a woman. I'm not bothered by whether I compose better or worse than a man, because I take both possibilities for granted; but I am interested in what I can do that is different. In my thoughts and actions there is much that is similar to those of a man, and much more that is different. Can it really be otherwise in my music? Could there be a music which did not reflect its maker? If we continue to have a musical culture which only draws on the creative talents of one sex, what kind of musical perspective shall we have?

During the spring of 1987, the BBC Singers had a series which offered us a chance to experience a more balanced perspective. In four concerts which contained eleven pieces by women and eight by men, the BBC was celebrating women's music without segregating it. How much I look forward to the time when in all concert programmes of four pieces, two are by women and two by men; in an opera season, three operas by women, three by men. Isn't it crazy that this sounds an impossible idea? It's true, it may not come in my lifetime. But it isn't crazy: I'm only describing what is just beginning to happen in the literary world, so that I can go into a bookshop and have a choice of living writers with men and women more equally represented. Readers, male and female alike, have come to recognise and value the breadth and diversity of a literary culture to which as many women contribute as men. Could music be in this position? I'd say, yes, in a hundred years' time, but only if we begin now.

Whatever way you count the number of composers working in this country, about 15% are women.[2] Since those Prom commissions in 1973, the BBC has given some 40 Prom commissions, and only one has gone to a woman (Maconchy).[3] Between 1978 and 1986, the Arts Council of Great Britain gave out £160,000 in major bursaries to composers, of which just £7,000 went to women: £5,000 to Rainier and £2,000 to Diana Burrell.[4] It also gave 72 minor bursaries, of which four went to women (Alison Bauld, Margaret Lucy Wilkins and two to Lutyens). Over the last five years, it has given 360 commissions, of which women received 22. Statistically, this means that women had 4% of major bursaries, 5% of minor bursaries and 6% of commissions. Similar statistics apply to the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network, which between 1972 and 1986 toured works by 186 male composers and eleven female. An additional factor here is that no British women composers have been toured in the last ten years; their moment, such as it was, occured in the mid-70s. The 1986 Almeida Festival boasted '100 performances'. Were fifteen of the pieces by women? No – none. There were none in the 1987 festival either.[5] 'Music of Eight Decades' was a prestigious new-music series on the South Bank for several years: I did not hear a single woman's composition played in it.[6]

The London Sinfonietta is Britain's leading new-music ensemble. I tried to calculate how many hours of live music I could have heard, just in London, just in its own promotions. It seemed to me that over the last ten years it would be about 250 hours, probably more. So how much time can it make for the woman composer? Certainly not the 15% figure of 37 hours. 25 hours? 15? 10? 1? Sadly, I found only fifteen minutes.[7]

These are shameful statistics. Is this what equal opportunity means in 1987? Composers develop through hearing their music played. How are women composers to develop if they are denied access to the leading professional outlets? if every substantial piece they write is ignored? or if, at best, it is played once and then dropped; at worst, refused a hearing? What a complacent, self-satisfied musical establishment we must have to allow such prejudice to flourish unchecked. Have the forces of reaction come to permeate the artistic world as well as the political one? Clearly, one of the dangers of the present conservatism is its insidiousness: people who would be the first to decry Mrs Thatcher, her divisive policies and Victorian values, haven't realised the implications of their own unthinking conformism.

Prejudice and patriachy

It seems to me that we're up against two kinds of prejudice. First, the overt discrimination of the misogynist. Second, systemic discrimination: the way the system is loaded against women. This is the stumbling block for almost everyone, because it's the nature of such discrimination that it's all around us, and we don't see it. No doubt you are genuinely sure it's a thing of the past. Our musical institutions, each aspect of the fabric of our musical life, everything that combines to create what we call musical taste: all these, in their way, reflect the fact that our society is still patriarchal. In the other arts this question has been explored again and again: by Germaine Greer on female artists, for instance;[8] or in literature, by a host of writers from Virginia Woolf onwards. Not so in the world of music, where you still have to begin by explaining what patriarchy means.

All the BBC Controllers of Music have been men. All our major orchestras are run by men. Every Professor of Music in this country is a man, as are all the Principals of our music colleges. Think of the entrepreneurs, agents and festival directors who shape concert policy; think of the conductors. Not all these people are male, but consider what proportion is. To be quite clear, I'm not accusing any individual of prejudice: this is simply a list of musical positions which wield power and a look at the gender of the people holding power.

We could also look at this the other way round. You couldn't have heard my voice on the BBC in 1986, but you could have heard it about every eight weeks on the ABC in Australia. I've worked with some six different music producers there, and they have all been women. After reading this paper in February 1987, I was contacted straightaway by four BBC producers, all women. Which professional ensemble in this country has commissioned and performed more women composers than any other (I suspect more than all the others put together)? Lontano, whose musical director is the composer Odaline de la Martinez. I think the Society for the Promotion of New Music has a better than average record as far as playing women's music goes, and I'm sure this relates to the fact that they have always had women on their executive. Indeed, in 1987 they have a female President, female chair and female administrators. Am I suggesting that everything would be fine if women were in charge? No, of course not; we can thank Margaret Thatcher for saving us from that naive idea. Power corrupts women as well as men. I'm talking about balance, about proportion.

What about critics, and books on music, since this is a crucial area in shaping taste and fashion? Not all the daily music journalism is by men; maybe 90%. But in the field of new music, when you start looking at the books available, the percentage is more like 99.

In theory, there's no reason to suppose that this will lead to prejudice against women. In practice, women do not appear in men's histories of music. A striking case to take is that of a 12th-century composer, the Abbess Hildegard van Bingen: according to Ian Bent in the *New Grove Dictionary*,[9] Hildegard was the most remarkable composer of her time. But I went through a thorough medieval musicology course at Oxford without there ever being a mention of her. I was brought up on that well-known tome *Man and his Music*: aptly named, since although its sub-title purports it to be 'The Story of Musical Experience in the West', its text includes not one single reference to a female composer. I do find it distasteful that, in such a book, the only reference to Clara Schumann should be in connection with Brahms:

> When Brahms brings strings and piano together he expresses all the dynamic power and lyrical passion of his romantic youth and of his love for Clara Schumann.[10]

I would not myself make any particular claims for Clara Schumann as a composer. I know, however, that she was one of the most gifted musicians of the 19th century, and I have a fair idea of the factors which prevented her composition from developing.

In 17th-century Italy, some twenty female composers published their works. Composers like Francesca Caccini and Barbara Strozzi were famous in their own day, their music was praised by the leading authorities, they had distinguished patrons, they earned money by their music and they appear to have been treated as equals by their male colleagues. Yet they have vanished from our tradition. For reasons at which we can only guess, male historians to this day have chosen to ignore the contribution made by women.

It is not widely known, for example, that Mendelssohn's sister Fanny Hensel composed 600 pieces, including nearly 300 songs. If you are confident that you don't know them because they aren't worth knowing, then go to Mendelssohn's own op.8 and op.9 and pick out the six songs which are by Fanny, not Felix. They were not published under her own name because of the attitude of her family. Even though he was proud of her great musical gifts, this is what her father wrote to her on her 23rd birthday:

> I will, then, tell you today, dear Fanny, that in all essential points, all that is most important, I am so much satisfied with you that I have no wish left. You are good in heart and mind. 'Good' is a small word, but it has a big meaning, and I would not apply it to everybody. However, you must still improve! You must become more steady and collected, and prepare more earnestly and eagerly for your real calling, the *only* calling of a young woman – I mean the state of a housewife.[11]

I would urge anyone with an interest in the history of music, whether as a teacher, student or general musiclover, to become acquainted with the growing body of scholarship devoted to women composers. Thanks to people like Jane Bowers, Carol Neuls-Bates, Judith Tick and many, many others, we now have a new perspective.[12] Women are no longer isolated footnotes in history or mere anecdotes in the lives of their illustrious male contemporaries. But I have searched in vain among recent books on 20th-century music for any acknowledgment of the strong tradition of women composers in this country. Even in the 1980s we are invisible. I tried Paul Griffiths' *New Sounds, New Personalities: British Composers of the 1980s.*[13] This book is a set of interviews with twenty composers (who are, by the way, not so much British as white English). How was it that none of the twenty chosen were women? The list of those included is as follows: Goehr, Benjamin, Maxwell Davies, Bainbridge, Harvey, Knussen, Ferneyhough, Casken, Matthews (both D. and C.), Tavener, Holloway, Osborne, Souster, Oliver, Bryars, Muldowney, Maw, Saxton, Birtwistle. Griffiths does not claim that these are a 'top twenty', although it is inevitable that they will be seen as such; rather he says that he wished to include 'as wide a variety of styles and personalities as possible'. Why Maw rather than Musgrave? they are not dissimilar in stance. Why was Judith Weir not included when her contemporaries like Simon Bainbridge were? As far as women go, there is just one brief reference to Lutyens (a warm tribute from Robert Saxton) and one reference to Rainier in David Matthews' interview when he says:

> I would have liked to study with Tippett, but I gathered that he didn't take pupils and that he recommended either Priaulx Rainier or Anthony Milner. So I studied with Milner for about three years, just showing him things I was writing: he didn't make me do exercises.[14]

If we assume that all this is prejudice on the part of Griffiths and Donald Mitchell, his publisher, I think we're in danger of missing the point. What I think they were doing was trying to reflect current taste accurately. The book is a fine example of how patriarchal values perpetuate themselves, but it also leads to the question: why are men composers more successful than women?

What constitutes 'importance'?

This was the question that used to disturb me all through my childhood. Why was the music of William Alwyn, Arthur Benjamin, Benjamin Frankel and Edmund Rubbra played more than that of my mother? Or Constant Lambert, Alan Rawsthorne, Humphrey Searle: why were they preferred over her? How did all these men come to be regarded as more 'important'? Her symphonic suite *The Land* enjoyed a startling success at its Prom première in 1930 and had the championship of Henry Wood and Donald Tovey; why has it been neglected ever since? William Glock, Robert Ponsonby and John Drummond have all refused to revive it at the Proms. The SPNM revived it on 1 March 1987; at the performance, the audience rose to give the composer a standing ovation.

One of the answers to my question is a simple one. Our society is very slowly coming to terms with the idea, and practice, of men and women working together as equals. But it has the greatest difficulty in accommodating itself to the next step: men and women working in an unequal relationship, where the woman may be the boss and the man the subordinate. Music, in the classical traditions of the West, is very far from being an art practised by equals. Consider the hierarchy of an orchestra: rank and file players, section leaders, leader, all at the beck and call of a conductor and all, conductor included, submitting to the authority of the score – that is, all at the service of the composer. Small wonder that of the various taboos which our particular society has imposed on women's practice of music, the taboos on conducting and composing are proving hardest to shift.

What about the not-so-simple answers? I can imagine that while some may be shocked by the London performance statistics I have given, others will want to condone them. If, the argument runs, there were a woman composer who was a major figure, of course she'd be included in the Almeida Festival or 'Music of Eight Decades' or whatever, but there isn't.

What constitutes a 'major figure'? How does a composer become 'important'? It may be more helpful at this moment to invert the question. What happens to the large number of undoubtedly talented young female composers that come to attention during their school and university days? For anybody of talent, man or woman, there is a series of hurdles to be cleared, hurdles which in themselves are not related to musical ability but to the ability to manipulate the social structures of the musical world. Some of these hurdles are peculiar to women, and therefore it is necessary to enlarge on what they are.

Succeeding on a man's terms

Schoolgirls are not presented with models of female composers. Student women composers say they find the male-dominated world of university music oppressive. (I know of only two women composers in British university posts, Rhian Samuel and myself, and only one in a London music college, Melanie Daiken.) Most competitions, invaluable for their opportunities for professional performance and exposure, are for composers in their twenties and early thirties. This effectively excludes those women composers who choose to have their families at the most natural time. These women re-enter the profession in their late thirties or forties and find it almost impossible to gain a place other than on the periphery, since our society puts such value on the norm of early success. In this position, they are unlikely to obtain influential commissions and performances. (I use the word 'influential', since one success generally leads to another, and recognising this is a part of the answer to the question of what constitutes 'importance'.)

For those women composers who do achieve early success, there is the question of how to sustain a career. Lutyens used to say, 'What I need is a good wife'. It is true that many highly successful male composers are managed by their spouses. I can think of no example of a woman composer whose husband is her agent (as well as her cook and secretary). What a remarkable man it would be who was sufficiently free of conventional ambition that he could fulfil such a role.

It may be the case, and it's certainly widely accepted, that it is a male trait to be ambitious for oneself, for one's individual power, whereas the female trait is to be less egocentric, more concerned to get on with the job itself. There are certainly more men than women for whom career status in itself is important. However you view this, it's easy to see that men do fit each other into the stereotype 'major figure' or 'master musician', where for women such a concept isn't a very useful one.

Suppose that a woman possessed in equal measure the talent, the genius if you like, of Stockhausen, and suppose she behaved as he does, acting as if he were a simultaneous incarnation of Beethoven, Krishnamurti and von Karajan? Would she be lionised, or would she be laughed at? Can we even imagine a woman wanting to be like that? If a woman were asked, 'What is your present attitude to your works of the 1960s and 1970s? Do you have an urge to go back and revise?', can we imagine her replying:

> With me this has never once been a successful enterprise – largely because each work is so firmly embedded, for good or ill, in its particular biographical and stylistic context that any attempt to create a latterday 'creation myth' for it synthetically is pretty absurd.

as Brian Ferneyhough once replied?[15] Ethel Smyth is one of many women who have wanted to succeed on a man's terms in a man's world. Why is she represented as a figure of fun? Was she really, or was it because ridicule is the traditional weapon against someone who challenges sexual stereotypes?

If we can show up some of the taboos which are hedging in our concert life, it will benefit male composers just as much as female. To my mind, that's how it should be. For me, the inspiration of the Women's Movement comes not from any sexist standpoint but from the vision it offers us of radical changes to society. Patriarchy is bad for men. It has always seemed to me, in any case, that people who choose to live their lives as creative artists tend to be androgynous: people in whom male and female principles may be differently balanced than the norm. Rigid stereotypes will not allow us to develop that balanced culture I mentioned earlier. I value music by men which is as much 'yin' as 'yang'; I am bored by a concert diet of music by little boys.

Maybe the people who need the protection of the 'master musician' taboo will be around for a few generations yet. Never mind, let's leave them for now, on the grounds that like dinosaurs they will look after their own extinction, overtaken by all those insignificant warm-blooded creatures. What of the person who says, 'I would love to play more women's music, but I can't seem to find suitable scores for our programmes.'?

Suitable scores: does he, if this person is a man, mean that the ones he looks at are in some way amateur or unskilled, perhaps exhibiting a lack of professional concert experience? No: there is no shortage of fully competent scores by composers who happen to be women. Does he mean that he literally can't find them? Quite possibly. Consider publishing: among the established publishers, Novello has a fine record, publishing Bauld, Musgrave, Weir and myself, and just now taking on Judith Bingham. But this is not typical; if you look at publishers' catalogues you will find, once again, that the number of women composers represented is disproportionately small. Most women are forced to tackle the problem of marketing for themselves.

Take the case of Erika Fox. Here is a composer of strong, original, highly individual music, a mature musical mind whose orchestral music we should be hearing, who should have the opportunity to compose her projected opera with Ruth Fainlight, but who instead is consistently rejected, a classic case of systemic discrimination. How will she come to the notice of our well-meaning promoter? He won't find her in Griffiths' book, or any other book, because she didn't have the prestigious performances which would have warranted her entry. How will she get them, and thus escape from this vicious circle?

Any woman who enters a profession in which very few of her sex are represented is by definition a non-conformist, whether she likes it or not. Whether she is a judge or a mountaineer, a mechanic or a minister, she has to have remarkable tenacity to stay on a path which her society thinks odd, and she has to contend with being appraised not just for how she does her job, but how she does it as a woman.

Individuality

If I compose out of the wholeness of myself, surely some of that tenacity, that non-conformity, will be reflected in my music? One of the things I value in women's music is its individuality, its freedom from the fashions of the day. At its best, when it's most itself, women's music has an idiosyncrasy which seems to me a crucial reason why my hypothetical male can't find suitable scores. What he finds doesn't fit his idea, or current received ideas, of how the music should be. How else should I explain the position of the many women composers whose music I admire? Where are the performances of Melanie Daiken? What happened to Helen Longworth? Julia Usher's orchestral music is played by youth orchestras, so why not by professionals? Why is Jennifer Fowler treated as if she'd just flown in from Perth, when she has been living and working here for almost twenty years? Suppose, from the women whose music I like, I single out one I specially admire, Gillian Whitehead? Or if I say that out of all the younger composers working today, male and female, Helen Roe is the one whose promise I trust the most? How can we relate these statements to the accepted canons of today? If their music is not in the repertoire, how can you begin to discuss my opinions, let alone judge their music for yourself?

How else should I explain my own position? In 1986 I had over 30 professional performances, but not one of them was in London, even though I've always worked here. How should I react to that kind of experience? Should I live with what Lutyens said of herself, 'If I wrote a masterpiece tomorrow nobody would notice.'? Should I be self-assertive and ask, 'Is there a piece by Oliver Knussen which is a finer work than my monodrama *The Old Woman of Beare*?' That doesn't get us anywhere, does it? Who am I asking? Who are the arbiters of quality?

Should I wait for that golden age, that culture of breadth and diversity of which I spoke earlier? No, I can't wait for any golden age, as I find that it has already arrived, and women are not included. I quote from Michael Vyner in *The Times* of 16 January 1987, under the headline '. . . a new golden age':

> The music being written now is even more wonderful than before. We've entered a phase of the most ravishing diversity: Brian Ferneyhough, James Dillon, Simon Holt, Mark-Anthony Turnage, Oliver Knussen, Nigel Osborne, Colin Matthews, Robert Saxton, Chris Dench, Michael Rosenzweig . . .

If we are going to break the stranglehold of what, in new-music circles, has come to be known as 'the mafia', then we must begin by opening our eyes and ears to all that music by women, but also by men, which at present only circulates in *samizdat* manuscripts or tapes. We must alert ourselves to the discriminations of a system which we all foster, willy-nilly, by acquiescence; a system which is claustrophobic for men as well as for women.

In February 1987 a group of men and women organised a special weekend festival in London celebrating women composers, which gave a glimpse of the wide variety of fields in which women are working. We adopted the name 'The Hidden Sounds' in the knowledge that a substantial literature exists which has been denied breathing space. Since then, the response has been greater and more constructive than I dared hope. Everyone was taken aback by the statistics I gave earlier, and which were widely reported by the media. Several bodies took immediate action to ensure better representation for women, and an organisation called 'Women in Music' has begun. Equally important, there has been general recognition that these are as much issues for men as for women. As I have emphasised throughout, no-one benefits from a culture which is narrow and conformist.

I wonder what the future holds. When we look at the other arts, I think we can take heart: who, ten years ago, would have predicted the stunning success of Virago and The Women's Press? Music is a social art and a performing art, and as such it poses us a quite different challenge, I suspect a far more difficult one, than that which faced the women writers and publishers. Nevertheless, we can learn a lot from their example, not least the courage to challenge the *status quo*. For it is still the case in 1987 that in the musical world it's men who call the tune. But it's not necessarily men who write the best tunes.

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[1] Margaret Mead, *Male and Female* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962; first published in the USA, 1949).

[2] Statistic based on the holdings of the British Music Information Centre, London.

[3] Statistic from BBC Information Services, London.

[4] All Arts Council statistics taken from information held at the library of the Arts Council of Great Britain, London.

[5] Information from Almeida Festival brochures.

[6] Information from BBC and London Sinfonietta publicity material.

[7] Information from London Sinfonietta publicity leaflets. I am grateful to Sophie Fuller for supplementing my own holding, so that I had a complete ten-year set.

[8] Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg, 1979; Pan Books, 1981).

[9] Ian D. Bent, 'Hildegard of Bingen', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, vol. 8, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp.553-6.

[10] Alec Harman and Wilfrid Mellers, *Man and his Music: the Story of Musical Experience in the West* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1962), p.696.

[11] Quoted in *Women in Music: an Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Carol Neuls-Bates (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1982), p.146.

[12] For example, the already-mentioned *Women in Music*; also *Women Making Music: the Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, ed. Jane Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986; London: Macmillan, 1986).

[13] Paul Griffiths, *New Sounds, New Personalities: British Composers of the 1980s* (London: Faber Music, 1985).

[14] Ibid., p.94.

[15] Ibid., p.69.

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Kevin Volans and Hilary Bracefield

A Constant State of Surprise: Gerald Barry and *The Intelligence Park*

Less than a week before the paste-up of this issue of Contact, *Adrian Jack, Director of the MusICA series at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, announced that 'after one postponement of our production [of Gerald Barry's opera* The Intelligence Park] *originally intended for later this year, it is evident that we still cannot guarantee the necessary funding for a run in April 1988, so I have cancelled the project'. Jack has also tendered his resignation as Director of MusICA.*

> We looked down the list of prices in the [Irish] Arts Council shopping basket for new works. The most money you got was for an opera, so we decided we'd write an opera.[1]

Thus says Gerald Barry of the beginning of his collaboration with his librettist Vincent Deane, and after some six years of intensive work between them, without any definite commission, the opera, *The Intelligence Park*, is now nearing completion and was due to have been performed at the ICA in spring 1988.[2]

This contradiction between an ostensibly cavalier attitude and great personal commitment – an apparent gap between intention and execution – illustrates a trait in the composer's work which emerged in his student days in Cologne. Barry was born in County Clare in Ireland on 28 April 1952. He graduated with a BMus degree from University College, Dublin, in 1973 and then studied for just over a year with Piet Kee (organ) and Peter Schat (composition) in Amsterdam. After completion of an MA at University College, Dublin, in September 1975 he moved to Cologne, at that time a city of immense musical activity. The dominant figures at the Musikhochschule were Stockhausen and Kagel; Barry studied with both. But this small city boasted some 150 composers and a vigorous concert life in which, beside the normal concert repertoire, there was a strong representation of contemporary American music, as well as European medieval, Far Eastern and African musics, all regularly performed by resident or visiting groups. In addition, a minor stylistic revolution – later to be misnamed the New Simplicity – was incipient among several young composers (Michael von Biel, Kevin Volans and Walter Zimmermann among others). It was a place in which a student of composition could easily lose his way.

Barry made his choices rapidly and sure-footedly. He rejected the dogmatism of serialism with its heavy diet of Germanic diligence and prepared surprises, but also mistrusted what he interpreted as the minimalists' bland pursuit of predictability (while noting the usefulness of transparency and clarity of texture). So, pausing only to gather a handful of techniques for generating musical material (pitches in particular), he headed for the theatre.

Reversals and inversions

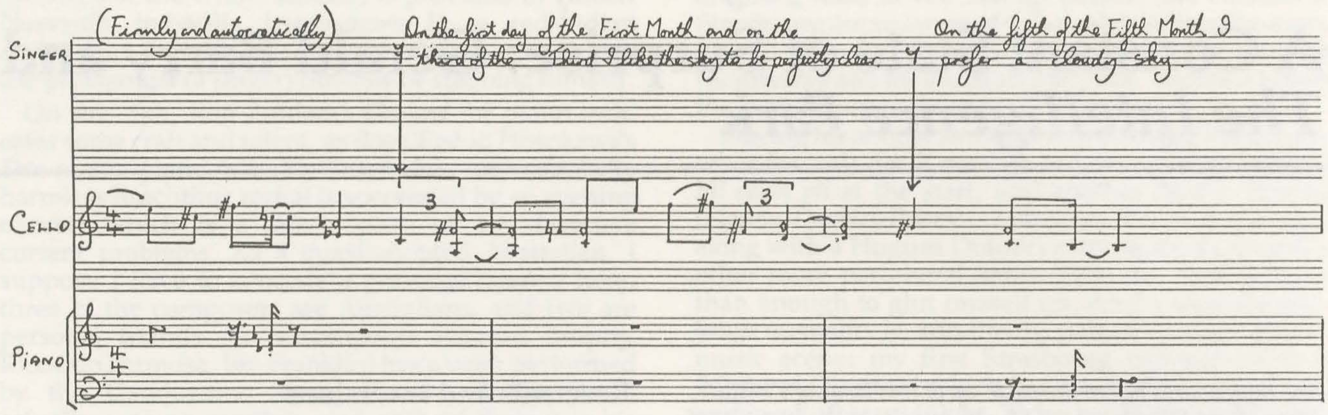
Here he developed his own techniques of what might be called unpredictable reversals and inversions. Some of his first efforts were effective, but perhaps patchy. For example, the piece *Beethoven WoO 80* of 1976 for five singers and three pianos is a veritable catalogue of reversals: a set of theatrical cameos based on Beethoven's C minor Variations for piano. It begins with the curtain calls: sopranos, tenor and basses, in full costume, come on and take their bows in elaborately choreographed opera-house style. What could be silly turns out to be a surprisingly fresh parody of the tripping contrary movement of the first few variations. Later on, the mezzo-soprano is discovered singing literally upside down: less subtle, but nevertheless disturbing.[3]

But inversion is perhaps more of a literary than a visual device, and it forms, moreover, the basis of a great deal of Irish wit. Witness the story of the people seeking permission to climb the hills on a farm who were told by the farmer's wife: 'Sure, you may as well. They've been idle long enough.'

So it is not surprising that Barry's first mature music-theatre piece had a literary base: not, as one might expect, Irish, but Japanese. For *Things That Gain by Being Painted*, a virtuoso *tour de force* for soprano, cello, piano and concealed speaking voice written in 1977, Barry extracted passages from *The Pillow Book* by Sei Shōnagon. This is a collection of short texts ranging from the poetic to the comic, the subtle to the ridiculous, and expressing opinions on every subject under the sun; it was written by a lady-in-waiting at the court of the Emperor of Japan towards the end of the 10th century AD. It provided Barry with a perfect vehicle for his own musical wit.

Mock orientalism is all but banished from the start – perhaps the only trace to be found is in the speaker concealed behind a screen – and Barry plunges us straight into the piece: the soprano, impersonating Shōnagon, is engaged in a (spoken) tirade against parents who encourage their sons to waste their talents by becoming priests. (In one performance the shock effect was heightened by this being delivered in a raw Texan accent, in another in a broad Dublin brogue.) Yet the real Shōnagon was no fishwife: her work is regarded as a pinnacle of refinement in Japanese literary style. Barry presents the divergent qualities of her writing separately: what appears at first to be a melodrama is, in fact, the polarisation between the soprano's 'hard hat' spoken delivery on the one hand and the serene and elegant instrumental music on the other. The cello plays a high flowing chromatic line; the piano accompanies it with restrained staccato triads –

Example 1 *Things that Gain by Being Painted*, bars 11-13


(Firmly and autocratically)
On the first day of the First Month and on the third of the Third I like the sky to be perfectly clear.
On the fifth of the Fifth Month I prefer a cloudy sky.
Singer
Cello
Piano
3
3

little more than dotting the 'i's' and crossing the 't's' (Example 1). In a sense, Barry has set content against style.

But further surprises are in store. The soprano suddenly starts to punctuate her spoken narrative with high A's and D's. As these sung notes proliferate and become entwined with the instrumental parts, one gains a converse impression: that of a *coloratura* soprano who is prevented from singing by having too much to say. From being mistress of the situation, she gradually takes on the quality of a ventriloquist's doll, subject to the control of the mysterious voice behind the screen who announces the topics on which she is to comment. This Svengali-like part gains ascendency; at one point the soprano merely mouths a long passage spoken from behind the screen, on another occasion she sings a sustained note while being verbally attacked in a text originally written by Shōnagon's arch-rival at court, Lady Murasaki. Further struggles for supremacy are evident when the piano bursts forth in a virtuoso cadenza, only to be shouted down by the singer. But wit and good humour are never far beneath the surface and, as in all Barry's music, theatricality is prevented from degenerating into 'staginess' by the sheer vitality, elegance and inventiveness of his handling of the material.

With *Things that Gain by Being Painted* Barry had settled into some of the general features of his compositional style: a learned wit, a narrative but unpredictable sense of structure and an original handling of tonal material. What started as simple inversion (as in *Beethoven WoO 80*) has become a more subtle form of double reflexive statement, as, for example, in Shōnagon's sole comment on the subject of trees – 'Trees. I shall say absolutely nothing about the spindle tree!' – which tells us a great deal about Shōnagon's wit, but is tantalisingly enigmatic. Equally enigmatic is Barry's comment on two-piano music, the piece with the non-verbal title *ϕ* (1979). This title is teasing enough, but the most remarkable feature of the piece is that the pianos play identical material throughout. Is this an 'orchestral' piece for two pianos, or is Barry ruthlessly pointing out a major drawback of two-piano music? Two pianos can never play exactly together and they're never exactly in tune: if they could and if they were, it wouldn't be two-piano music. (One is reminded of the student defending his use of note rows to Morton Feldman: 'You can't make something out of nothing', and Feldman's reply: 'I don't know about that . . .').

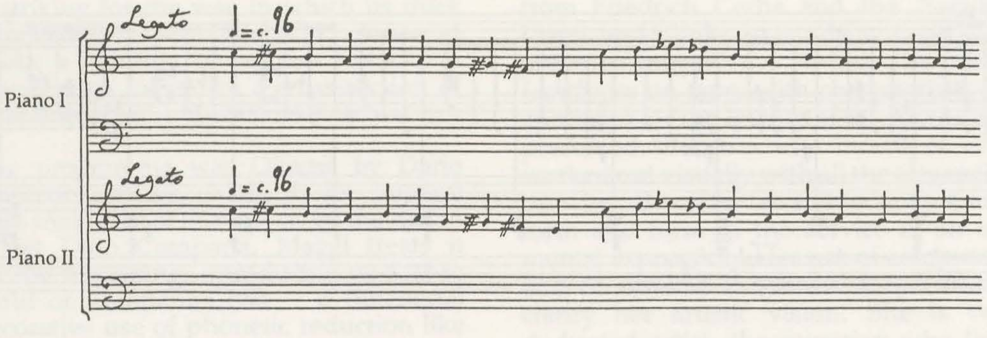
The handling of pitch material

Barry's developing sense of the original in handling tonality is also evident in the pitch material of *ϕ* . The pianos play a single line throughout, which is articulated in three different ways, as shown in Example 2. The pitches of this line are derived from the Irish folktune *Bonny Kate*. As Deane has shown,[4] Barry takes the original tune and adds on either side of each note two pitches, a tone above and below, thus producing a new melody in which the original is buried unrecognisably (Example 3).

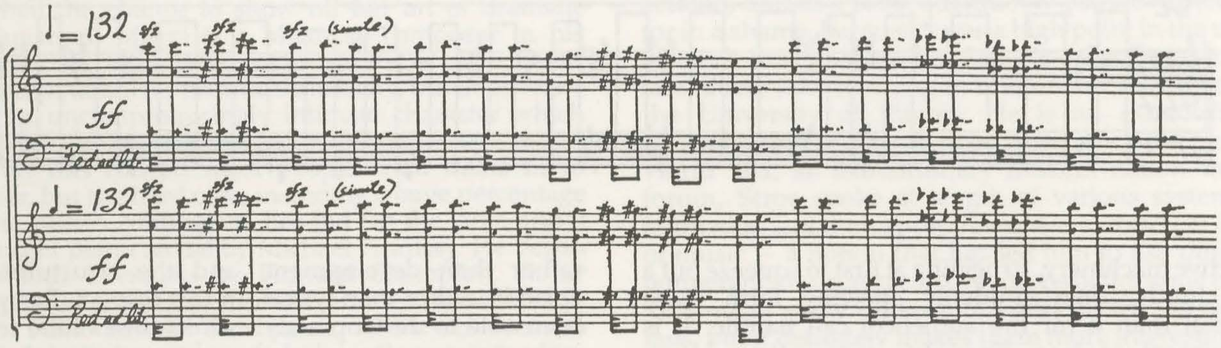
It would be easy to read political meanings into Barry's use of an Irish folktune, but (as in his later use of passing chords from Bach chorales in *The Intelligence Park*) this kind of derivation is simply a device for generating appropriate pitches with which to work. The key word here is 'appropriate'. The new tune created by the addition of new pitches provides Barry with just the right kind of meandering line, with fluctuating harmonic suggestions, long arches and (implied) delayed cadences. This is not fortuitous and, furthermore, the technique is not mechanically applied: note the semitone step to D sharp in the fifth group of Example 3, which avoids undue emphasis on the important note E too early in the constructed line, as well as adding to the attractively undulating quality of the new melody.

Barry has also used this same set of pitches in other works. It was used for the orchestral score of the ballet *Unkrautgarten* (1980), written for the German choreographer Reinhild Hoffmann, and as a basis for the virtuoso piano piece *Sur les Pointes* (1981) which derives in part from the ballet. The title *Sur les Pointes* (On points) is, of course, a ballet term, but it could just as well mean 'on your toes'. The briskly poised *staccatissimo* rhythm of the opening stumbles occasionally with the addition of a half-beat rest. The tonality is alternately established, then undermined, by every second or third chord. (Barry's facility for harmony, along with his preference for parallel chords and parallel instrumental doubling, could be ascribed to his training as an organist.) The light eccentricity of the opening gives way, however, to a more menacing leadenness, which precedes a manic outburst of rattling octaves and extremely rapid repeated chords. The demands on the pianist (at one point beating out some 60 notes per second) can really be met only by a machine, and indeed a pianola was a source of inspiration for the piece. But the image is more of eccentrically

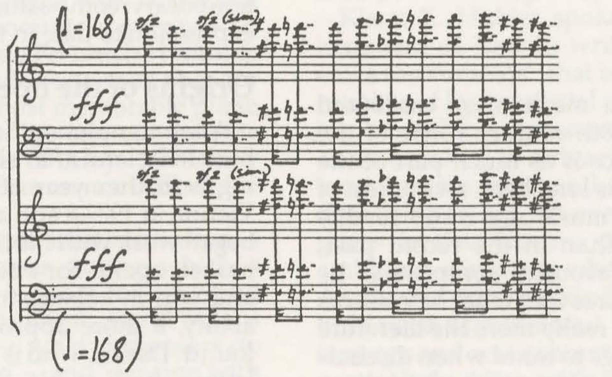
Example 2(a) ϕ , page 1 (extract)


Legato
♩= c.96
Piano I
Legato
♩= c.96
Piano II

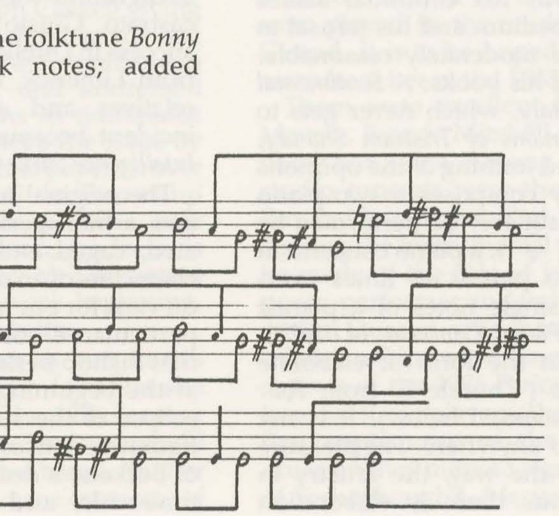
2(b) ϕ , page 6 (extract)


♩= 132
sfz
(simile)
ff
Ped ad lib.
♩= 132
sfz
(simile)
ff
Ped ad lib.

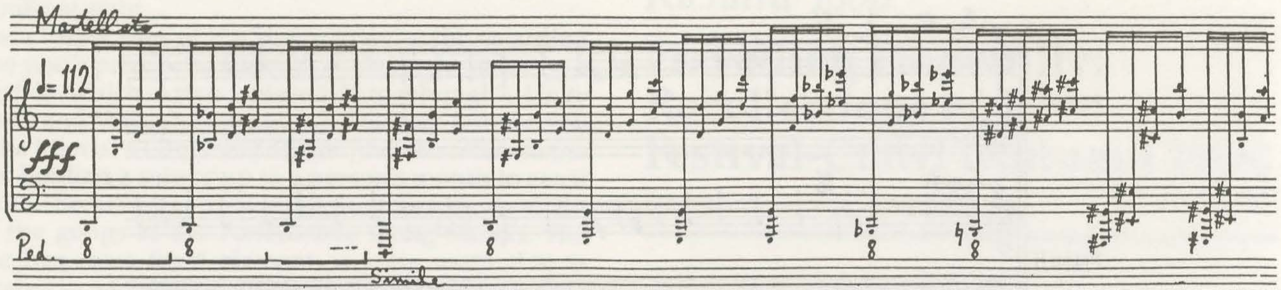
2(c) ϕ , page 9 (extract)


(♩=168)
sfz
(sim.)
fff
sfz
(sim.)
fff
(♩=168)

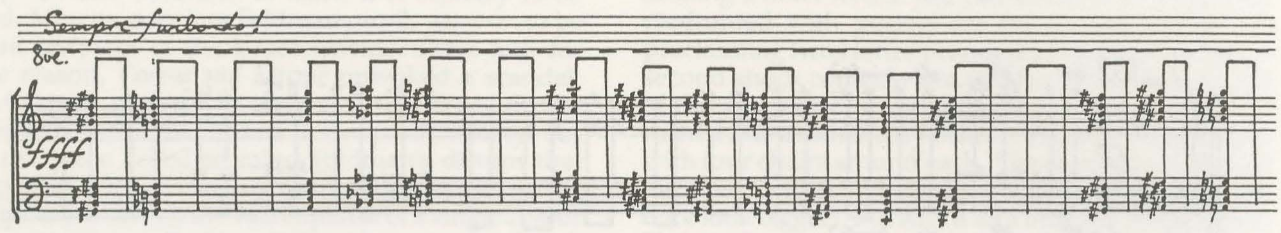
Example 3 Pitch material for ϕ . The folktune *Bonny Kate* is written in black notes; added pitches in white



Example 4(a) *Sur les Pointes*, page 6 (extract)



4(b) *Sur les Pointes*, page 13 (extract)



defective machinery, struggling at first to squeeze out a few chords, then suddenly spewing forth more material than it (or the audience) can handle. It is reminiscent of Jean Tinguely's automatic painting machine, which on its début was powered by too energetic a cyclist, with the result that the audience was engulfed in yard upon yard of freshly painted paper (Example 4).

Individuality of style

The world of clockwork mechanics, cardboard cutouts and in general an 18th-century sense of the theatre, in which overt artifice is as much part of the charm as genuine illusion, has long been an interest of Barry's. Precedents for his music are more readily found in the 18th century than in the recent past. Handel is one of Barry's favourite composers: he admires his transparent textures and what he calls his 'passion of abandon'. But it is really more the literature of the 18th century that springs to mind when discussing Barry's work, and the writings of the Irish-born Laurence Sterne in particular. The parallels one could draw with Sterne are legion: his intolerance of stuffiness or pretension, his wit, his continual sallies beyond the bounds of the medium and his refusal to do the obvious or even the moderately reasonable. Take only the titles of two of his books: *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, which never gets to Italy, and *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, which tells little of the life and nothing of the opinions of its hero. Similarly, Barry composes a two-piano piece which could more reasonably be performed by one player at a single piano (ϕ), a piano concerto in which the soloist's virtuoso part is at times overwhelmed by the *fortissimo* single notes of a pianist within the orchestra (*A Piano Concerto* of 1977), or narrative pieces, often in the form of elaborate *crescendi*, that lead nowhere ('Chorale II' from *Four Chorales* of 1984, further discussed below). It is not necessary for the music to 'go' anywhere. The pleasure lies in the conversation on the way, the artistry in handling the language. Thus there is elaboration rather than development, and the structures are episodic rather than lyrical. In this respect, Barry has been able to develop a style which owes little to the main streams of musical thought we have inherited from the 19th century. By constructing a musical style which relates to the traditions of Hiberno-English literature, he has made a unique contribution to contemporary composition; this style is given its fullest expression to date in the opera *The Intelligence Park*.

Origins of the opera

After completing *Sur les Pointes* in 1981, Barry, now back in Ireland after six years on the Continent (including a further year of study with Friedrich Cerha in Vienna in 1977-8 and another period back in Cologne), began work with his librettist Deane on the 'shopping-basket' opera. For a composer so interested in allusion and wit, in balance and clarity but also in unpredictability, a more appropriate librettist could hardly be found. Deane, who is best described as an Irish man of letters, had as his starting-point 'a series of visual images: static figures bathed in the inhospitable clear light of the 18th-century Enlightenment'.[5] Part of the background was the true story of the famous Italian castrato Giusto Tenducci, who after considerable success in Dublin in 1766 absconded with a young lady from Limerick, only to be pursued by her outraged relatives and eventually flung into prison. This incident became the germ of the actual plot of *The Intelligence Park* which is set in 1753.

The original meaning of an 'intelligence park' is a zoo, a menagerie: an exhibition of nature domesticated, caged and catalogued. So, of course, are the characters of an opera imprisoned in its setting and put on view for our inspection. Deane says that there is no particular reason for the opera to be set in 1753 except that Bishop Berkeley, the Irish-born philosopher, died at the beginning of the year, and that there was an eclipse of the sun at its end. Death in its literal and figurative senses is a theme of the opera; the mention of Berkeley's death at the beginning helps to give it a time-scale, and the solar eclipse accompanies the climax of the last act, which also includes a death. One may also note that 1753 was the second year of Britain's new-style calendar and thus the 'beginning' of the 'modern era'.

The plot and its arrangement

The slight story of Tenducci is used as a basis for the plot, but is extended with the addition of more characters. The first scene is set in the home of Robert Paradies, a composer (baritone), who has arrived back in Dublin from travels abroad with his companion d'Esperaudieu (tenor) on account of the death of his father, whose estate he cannot inherit until he has married. Work on his opera – with its two characters Wattle, a warrior, and Daub, an enchantress – has come to a dead stop. The scene changes to the house of a wealthy magistrate, Sir Joshua Cramer (bass-baritone), where Paradies, a reluctant suitor, has come with d'Esperaudieu to meet Cramer's daughter Jerusha (soprano). A chorus of 'dummies' discourses on the Dublin scene. Jerusha can only think of her next music lesson with the celebrated visiting castrato Serafino (counter-tenor), who eventually enters with his companion Faranesi (sung by a mezzo-soprano). Paradies rises to leave, having decided he cannot go through with the marriage; on hearing Serafino sing, he appears to fall in love with the beauty of his voice. As he and d'Esperaudieu journey through the Dublin streets, Paradies finds that his muse has returned, and back in his room he begins writing again. His characters Wattle and Daub come to life (sung throughout by the same soprano and counter-tenor respectively); Wattle is, like his creator, bound in love to an enchanter.

In Act 2, some months later, a game of blind man's buff between Serafino, Faranesi and Jerusha at Cramer's house suggests a growing attraction between Serafino and Jerusha, though Cramer is still planning her marriage to Paradies. Paradies himself can think of nothing but the writing of his opera and of Serafino. After Cramer has burst in on him with news of the disappearance of Serafino and Jerusha, Paradies breaks down.

Act 3 opens with a prelude: a series of dislocating visions or tableaux in which the events of the story and their consequences (yet to happen) are swiftly depicted. D'Esperaudieu reminds Paradies of his now considerable debts; Serafino sings in prison; Cramer appears from a coffin planning to entrap the elopers; Serafino is abducted (in dumb-show). In the first scenes of the act, we find that Cramer's ruse of pretending to forgive Serafino and Jerusha has worked; Serafino is imprisoned and Jerusha sent to relatives in the country. Paradies goes to Cramer to plead for the pair, finding him and the 'dummies' at a feast, during which there is an eclipse of the sun. As the eclipse happens, Cramer sickens and dies of an apoplexy. He attempts to leave all his wealth to Paradies, who cries that he wants no part of it. As Paradies prepares to leave Dublin, Serafino and Jerusha are transformed into Wattle and Daub. They, too, must part. The opera is over.

Deane arranges this scenario in three classically balanced acts: Act 1 moves from morning to noon to night; Act 2 takes place halfway through the year; and the action of Act 3, at the end of the year, is a mirror image, a shadow, of that of Act 1. The libretto also balances set-piece scenes with exchanges between two or three characters and solo sections. Some of the latter are obviously suitable for setting as arias, including three actually labelled as 'ice-cream arias', after the 18th-century convention of a song sung during a refreshment break. The formal arias of Serafino are in Italian, as is the 'internal' opera of Wattle and Daub, thus setting it against the 'external' one. The apparently simple narrative, although still retaining a hard-edged clarity and economy of means, is clothed in rich language, full of imagery, allusion, quotation, wit, anachronism and anagram.

It is perhaps important to point out that despite the 'historical' setting, neither Deane nor Barry had any intention of writing an opera in a pastiche 18th-century style. Indeed for Barry himself, the plot and setting were of minor importance. Nonetheless, one can see that he would be attracted to a story that focuses on a composer in the throes of composition, and a libretto that dwells on such themes as patronage, creativity, inspiration and obsession, and delights in ambiguities about love, sex and death, and the nature of the creative act.

With such richness to set, Barry could easily have allowed the libretto to overwhelm the music. His own musical integrity, however, never allows this to happen. Rather as Merce Cunningham and John Cage prepare dance and music for a performance separately and then let the conjunction work as it will, Barry pursued his own musical invention for the opera, then let the text join the music as suitably as it might. This could have led to problems. 'People may accuse me of not setting the libretto but attacking it', he says. But his attitude to the text is in line with the need in Barry to keep himself, as he says, 'in a constant state of surprise', dealing with each moment as it comes. For him, as his earlier works already show, it is more fun to travel than to arrive. But the libretto in any case contains the sort of allusion and surprise that he needs, and both composer and librettist have the same goals of coolness of style and transparency of texture. In fact, given a text that can be studied with pleasure in its own right and music that is written to stand up on its own, it will be interesting to see how the further impact of designer, director and cast on the pre-existent material will add to an already heady brew.

The pre-existent material they have is a chamber opera, with six singers and an ensemble of thirteen players: flute + piccolo, oboe, two clarinets + bass clarinets, bassoon + contrabassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass. With these resources, Barry cleverly covers every range of vocal and instrumental timbre, while allowing for interesting parallel doublings and chords. By keeping the number of singers to six, he has to double the parts of Serafino and Jerusha with those of Wattle and Daub in the 'internal' opera. This, though, serves to add to the ambiguity of all four characters, as well as mingling the life of Paradies, the composer (or 'puppet master', as he refers to himself at one point), with that of Wattle, the hero in his own opera, through the medium of his hoped-for interpreter, Serafino. Equally pragmatically, Barry turns the impracticality of using a chorus in the two big set-piece scenes in Cramer's house to good effect by deciding to use mute dummies on stage and by pre-recording the chorus music using the voices of the six soloists. Once having introduced the device, he inserts taped sections in other places with considerable effect. A further pragmatic solution to practical problems occurs when the musical line Barry wants moves out of the compass of the given singer. The composer's response is quite simply to allow another suitable voice to help out for a few notes. This is, however, an extreme solution: he already demands considerable virtuosity from the singers and instrumentalists he has at his disposal.

The Bach pitch source

But the starting-point for Barry was the pitch material. A set of pitches from a new source was needed, capable of generating a large amount of music, as he relates in conversation with one of the authors of the present article:

> For some reason [Vincent and I] came independently to this idea of Lutheran music, chorales, and I always used to listen to the broadcasts on Radio 3 of Church of England services, and I just loved the whole ritual – so I decided that all the harmonies of the opera should be based on the passing notes of Bach's harmonisations of these chorales. You know what I mean – the chords formed by the passing notes. I extracted each chord, say in maybe fifty chorales, and I wrote out the chords, in series. And so I simply used them in all kinds of ways, horizontally, vertically, diagonally, etcetera – you know, the old Cologne techniques [laugh]. They're sometimes played extremely fast, flying by like the wind, as if Bach were flipping through a chorale book. It's also rather like a dizzy theological whirl, since in, say, about ten seconds, you might pass through forty chorales . . . it's probably safe to say that almost all of the harmony of the opera will have at some remove its origin in the original Bach, so from that point of view it's organic, held together.[6]

Barry has found this pitch material even more fruitful than he expected at the time of this interview in 1984. Though he will reluctantly leave the pitches aside for works he is planning for 1988, it is possible that he will find himself reaching for them again in the future, for they have not been exhausted. Not all the music of the opera is drawn from the Bach chords, but the composer's other sources are buried so deep within his compositional processes that they are virtually private wellsprings. Music by Arne, Buxtehude, Byrd, Dowland and Handel, among others, has been used as source material; but so, also, have the words of the 12.33 a.m. shipping forecast on BBC Radio 4 with its incantation of strange names and mysterious weather details (see below). But Barry's belief, in 1984, that almost all the material will have at some remove its origin in the chorale chords has been borne out. The number of ways in which the source pitch material can be used is almost limitless. There are two things to be said for the technique: one is that it gives the opera both a tangible and an intangible unity and through that a great musical strength; the other is that in Barry's hands it is never used mechanically. The set of pitches chosen for each section and the way that the pitches are used within it will be worked at until the result is musically satisfying; and to that end, any internal rule used to manipulate them can be broken.

The ways in which each scene or section of *The Intelligence Park* is then set are as diverse as Barry's forces allow. The opera opens with an unaccompanied solo voice; it ends with a unison chorus of all six soloists with chordal accompaniment from the full instrumental ensemble. Textures vary from the accompanying of a solo voice with one instrument in unison to the use of quite complicated chorale-like polyphony in several parts; from simple arpeggio-like instrumental writing to the opposition of hammering ensemble chords against soaring long notes in the voices; there are also instrumental interludes between scenes. The overwhelming movement is, however, homophonic, with voices and instruments moving in parallel motion. In many of Barry's works, this has had the effect of a constant baroque walking bass, but the tempi and the variety of rhythms are so multifarious in the opera that this will not be the dominant impression; the homophonic texture, together with the singularity of the pitch material, still, however, gives the work a musical style which is original, effective and homogeneous.

Musical materials and methods

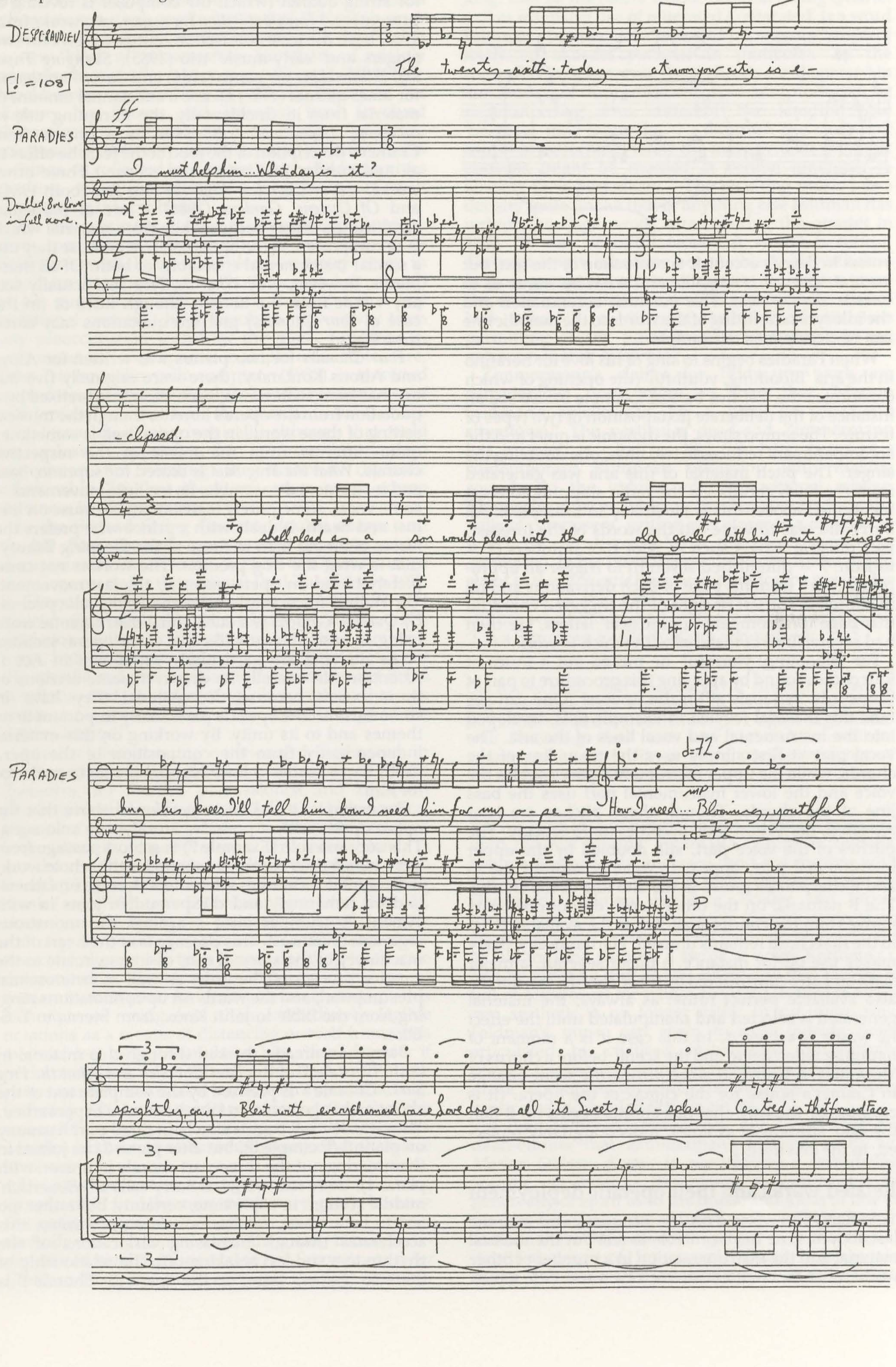
A representative illustration of the music of *The Intelligence Park* can be found in Example 5, a page from Act 3 Scene 2. It falls into two sections: the first busy and fast (bars 580-93), the second simple and slow (bars 594-8). This second section forms the opening of an aria by Paradies.

The scene has in fact begun at bar 534 with a long recitative-like passage for d'Esperaudieu, in which he informs Paradies first of Cramer's trap and then of the fate of Serafino and Jerusha: 'The baggage he despatches to some rustic relatives, your singer he has clapped in gaol there to languish with variety of wretchedness, till the flesh rot from his bones.' From bars 570-9 this is set to music which has the same pitch material, speed (crotchet = 108), metre (mainly simple duple and triple) and dynamic (*fortissimo*) as bars 580-93 in Example 5; but it is only when Paradies joins in at the beginning of the example ('I must help him . . . What day is it?') that the lowest instrumental line also enters, underpinning the change of singer and increasing the textural density. The anguish of Paradies – unable to work on his opera since the disappearance of Serafino, who has become his inspiration – is being transformed into action, as he decides to plead with Cramer for the singer's release. This whole stretch of busy music – from bar 570 when d'Esperaudieu begins to sing of the fate of Serafino to bar 593 when Paradies breaks off – reflects Paradies's inner turmoil, his move to action and the approaching climax of the opera, signposted by d'Esperaudieu's reminder of the forthcoming midday eclipse.

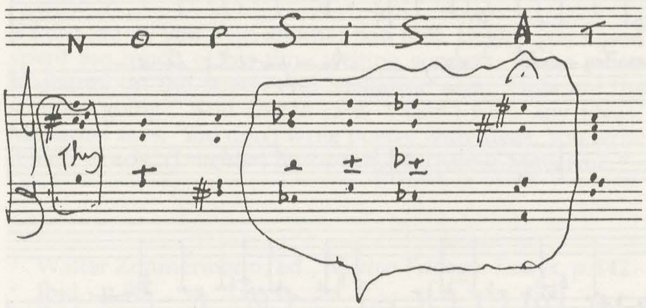
The music for both voices is based on material generated from the Bach passing-note chords, presented in the instrumental ensemble in a dense chordal texture which itself uses passing notes; the melodic line is selected from the ensemble pitches to suit the effect Barry wants. D'Esperaudieu must enunciate clearly his information about the eclipse, and so that word is emphasised by its rising melisma. Paradies's melodic line also rises to its climax ('I need him for my opera'), continuing in falsetto until it breaks off. It is these three falsetto pitches that form the link between this section and his aria which follows (one of the 'ice-cream' arias). There is no other preparation, and the aria uses a new set of pitches, but Barry has been able to relate one section to the next by the articulation of three notes occurring in both sets.

The bizarre, rather dislocated setting of the text here is typical of Barry's operatic method. His concern that the *music* should be strong and able to stand on its own may lead one to suspect that he has been at his most cavalier when putting the libretto to music. He deals with it ruthlessly, even brutally. But in this treatment – at times what the composer calls a 'smashing' of the text – he seems to feel that the words are transformed to produce the particular 'atmosphere' he wants. As Humpty Dumpty said in *Through the Looking Glass*, 'When *I* use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.' An element of surprise

Example 5 *The Intelligence Park*, Act 3 Scene 2, bars 580-98


DESPERAUDIEU
[♩=108]
The twenty-sixth today at noon your city is e-
ff
PARADIES
I must help him... What day is it?
8ve
Doubled 8ve lower in full score.
O.
-clipsed.
I shall plead as a son would plead with the old gaoler with his gouty finger
8ve
PARADIES
hug his knees I'll tell him how I need him for my o-pe-ra. How I need... Blooming, youthful
♩=72
mp
8ve
♩=72
p
3
spritely, gay, Blest with every charm and Grace Love does all its Sweets di-splay Centred in that formed Face
3
3

Example 6 Pitch material for *The Intelligence Park*



enters in Barry's eccentric accentuation of the text, but even at speed it is singable and what he wants us to hear is always clear. This eccentric accentuation and the idiosyncratic fitting of the words to the melodic line can be clearly seen in Example 5.

When Paradies begins to sing of his love for Serafino in the aria 'Blooming, youthful' (the opening of which constitutes the last five bars of Example 5), we see an instance of the deliberate juxtaposition of two types of texture. The tempo slows, the dynamic is quiet and the accompaniment reduces to two lines, one doubling the singer. The pitch material of this aria was generated from the Bach chords via the radio shipping forecast mentioned above; this is illustrated in Example 6. All Barry did was to write out the words of the forecast, use 'musical' letters such as A or E or numbers (1 = unison, 7 = diminished seventh) to trigger an appropriate chord from his page of Bach derivations and fill in chords to the left or right of the triggered chord on this page to accompany 'unmusical' letters. He then had several lines of material with which to work.

For 'Blooming, youthful' he picked out a series of four chords found by applying this procedure to part of the words 'synopsis at' in the forecast. One can see how this material (circled in Example 6) is developed into the instrumental and vocal lines of the aria. The vocal part at first simply uses the tenor line of the chords, while the upper instrumental part doubles the voice and the lower instrumental part uses the bass line of the chords. Though these pitches are later repeated, derivation soon becomes more obscure. The pitches of the voice part, still doubled by the upper instrumental part, appear to oscillate around the G and F sharp to be found in the alto line of the chords. The B naturals, on the other hand, do not obviously derive from the chords at all, while the available B flat in the first chord remains unused. Harmonically, Barry makes use of, for instance, a major seventh, a major sixth and an octave offered by these chords, but not the also available perfect fifths: as always, the material generated is selected and manipulated until the effect he wants is achieved. In this case it is a moment of haunting reflection to end the scene, before a chorus of 'dummies' is heard off-stage during the scene change to Cramer's house for the climax of the opera. (It is curious, by the way, that this chorus begins on B flat, the note studiously avoided, indeed arguably replaced, in the aria itself.)

Related works and their operatic deployment

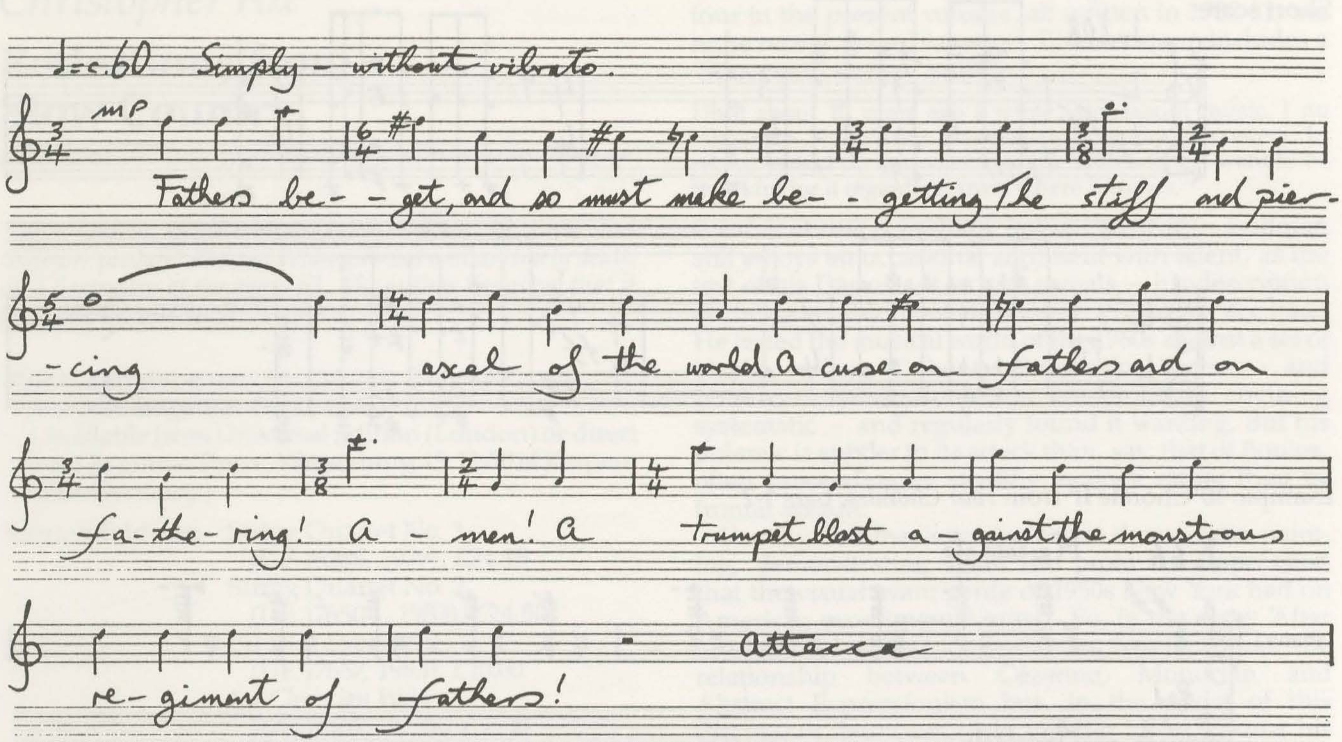
As Barry has worked on *The Intelligence Park* over the last six years, he has been able to test out the musical material and the instrumentation in a number of other works, all in fact written between 1984 and 1987, which have some relationship to the music of the opera. *Cork* for string quartet (which the composer is revising at present) and *Fouetté et Ballon* for organ, two works from 1985, have the least connection, but *Sweet Cork* for two singers and 'early-music' trio (1985), *Swinging Tripes and Trillibubkins* for piano (1986) and *Sweet Punishment* for brass quintet (1987) all use a substantial amount of material from it. (Incidentally, the intriguing title of *Swinging Tripes and Trillibubkins* is a phrase from Cramer's description of the food at the feast he offers to all and sundry just before the eclipse.) Three other works – *Four Chorales, What the Frog Said* (both 1984), and *Of Queens' Gardens* (1986) – are of particular significance, either because they work material which is also important to the opera itself, or because they use a similar instrumental ensemble, or both. Of all these pieces, however, only *What the Frog Said* actually sets any words from the libretto, though titles or (in the case of *Four Chorales*) prefixed quotations may come from it.

Four Chorales for two pianos was written for Aloys and Alfons Kontarsky; there were originally five but one has been withdrawn. Each chorale is prefixed by a quotation from the opera's libretto, though the musical setting of these words in the opera itself is sometimes quite different from the music of the respective chorale. *What the Frog Said* is scored for soprano, bass and instrumental ensemble. Its ten little movements – some vocal, some purely instrumental – muse on life, lust and death. It deals with a prince who prefers the kisses of an old man to those of the Sleeping Beauty: that is what the frog predicts. The work is not completely based on opera material; the last movement, 'Sir Walter', for example, uses the *Bonny Kate* pitches. *Of Queens' Gardens* is a substantial instrumental work using an ensemble very like that of the opera; sections of its material are particularly prominent in Act 1. Attention can usefully be drawn to some sections of these pieces because the material they have in common with the opera is particularly important to its themes and to its unity. By working on this material independently from the composition of the opera itself, Barry seems to have highlighted its importance for him.

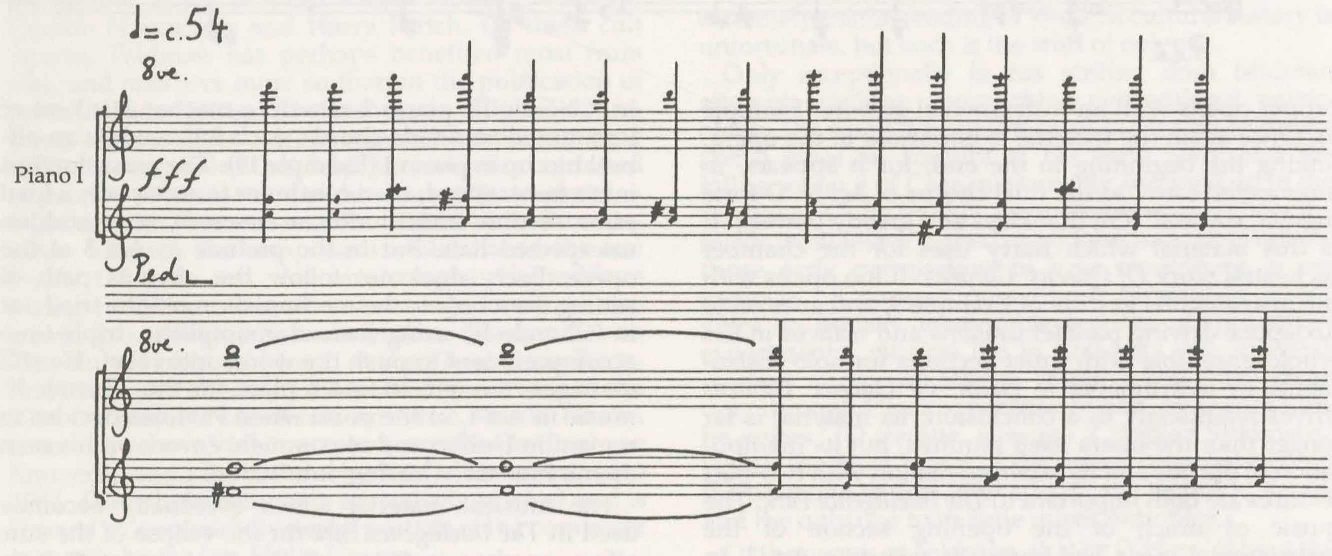
For example, it has been mentioned above that the opera opens with a prelude, an off-stage solo song. This soprano solo (Example 7) is set to a passage from Act 1 which thus becomes a motto for the whole work. In Scene 1 it is Paradies who utters 'A curse on fathers/ and on fathering!', and d'Esperaudieu joins in with 'Amen! A trumpet blast / against the monstrous regiment of fathers!' This passage is at the heart of the machinery of the story; it can, of course, relate to the creative process of the artist as well as heterosexual presumption, and the words set up connotations ranging from the Bible to John Knox, from Sterne to T. S. Eliot.

Barry has already worked through this material in both 'Chorale I' of the *Four Chorales* and *What the Frog Said*. 'Chorale I' is prefixed by the complete text of the above exchange between Paradies and d'Esperaudieu. The chorale itself begins slowly in three-part harmony on piano 1 (Example 8), but after piano 2 has joined in (hammering out the three-part chorale in unison with piano 1), there follows what Barry calls a 'Wienerisch' middle section: in triple time, certainly, but rather too fast to be a waltz. Always remaining *pianissimo*, this accelerates through increasing dislocations of the rhythm to a sudden breaking-off. The relationship of the solo 'Fathers beget' in the opera to 'Chorale I' is

Example 7 *The Intelligence Park*, Prelude to Act 1, bars 1-16


♩= c.60 Simply – without vibrato.
mp
Fathers be- -get, and so must make be- -getting The stiff and pier-
-cing axel of the world. A curse on fathers and on
fa-the-ring! A - men! A trumpet blast a-gainst the monstrous
re-giment of fathers!
attacca

Example 8 'Chorale I' from *Four Chorales*, opening

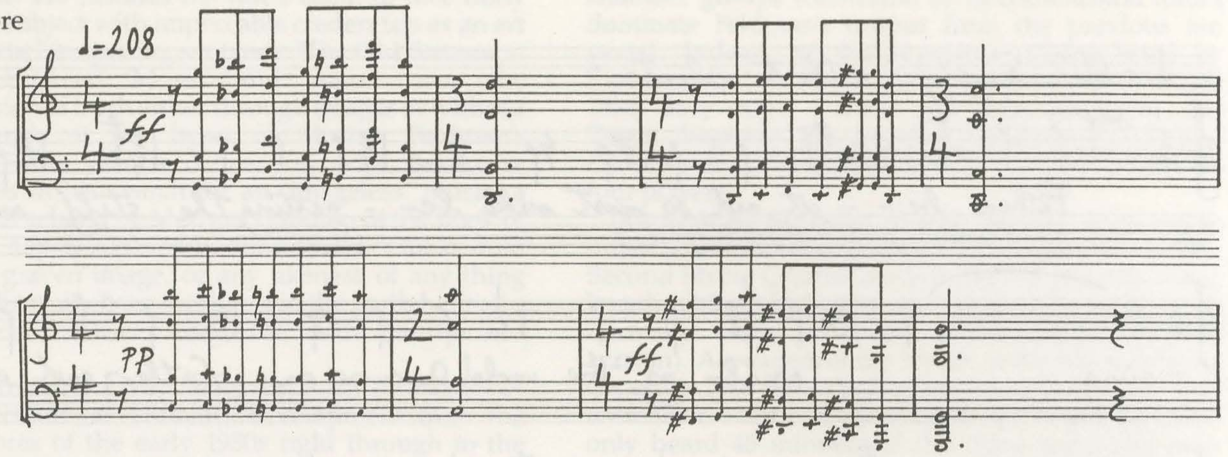

♩= c.54
8ve.
Piano I
fff
Ped.
8ve.

revealed if one follows the upper line of the lower stave of Example 8 where the complete solo is articulated as the music continues. *What the Frog Said* actually begins with the complete solo (set to the same words), and follows this movement with a second one which is an ensemble version, complete, of 'Chorale I' of the *Four Chorales*, the solemn opening three-part passage similarly accelerating to destruction. (Barry enjoys offering differently scored versions of existing material: *Sur les Pointes*, for example, exists in several, ranging from piano solo, to orchestral, to choral with orchestral accompaniment.)

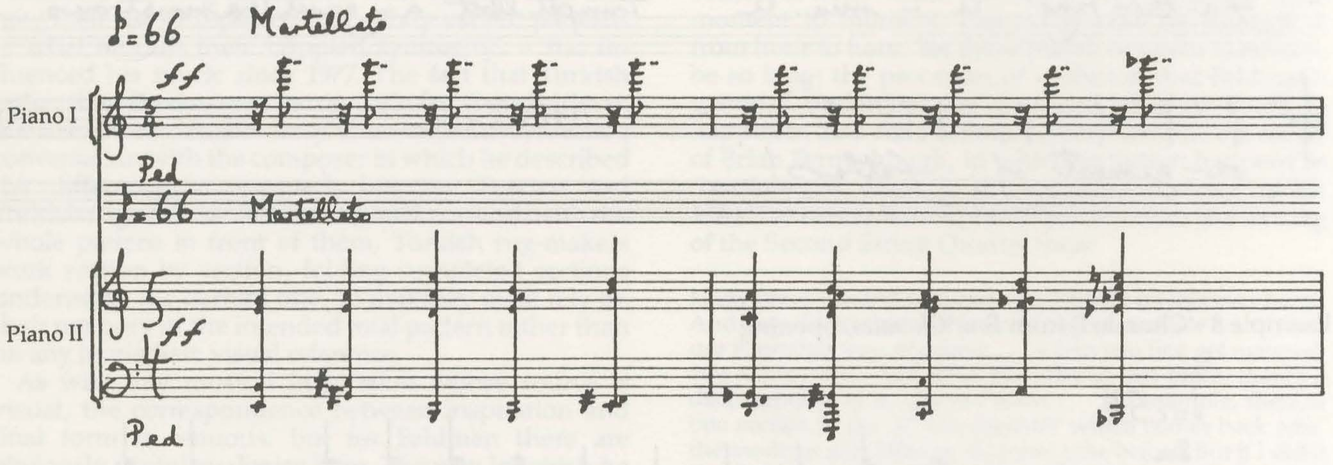
The opera's opening off-stage soprano solo is, in fact, an exact reproduction of the solo as it appears in *What the Frog Said*. In addition, Act 3 opens with an ensemble version (similar to that of *What the Frog Said*) of the opening section of 'Chorale I', the three-part harmony of Example 8, thus linking Acts 1 and 3. Though Paradies's actual articulation of the words when they come in Act 1 Scene 1 is different, Barry returns to his original chorale material for d'Esperaudieu's reply. And there are echoes of this material elsewhere in the opera, such as the affecting 'Wienerisch' duet of Serafino and Jerusha in Act 3. Thus this particular musical material is not only well worked out, but seems to permeate the opera on several levels.

After the off-stage soprano 'motto' solo, the opera

Example 9 *The Intelligence Park*, Act 1, bars 17-24
Short score



Example 10 'Chorale II' from *Four Chorales*, bars 1-2



proper opens with an instrumental gesture (Example 9). Once again the material is important to the opera, linking the beginning to the end, for it appears, in augmented form, as the final chorus of Act 3: 'O forte ingrata, e avara!' (Oh thankless and greedy power!). It is this material which Barry uses for the chamber orchestral work *Of Queens' Gardens*. It too opens with the instrumental gesture of Example 9, and goes on to juxtapose driving parallel unisons and octaves in the whole ensemble with quiet sections for solo instruments or instruments in pairs. *Of Queens' Gardens* drives relentlessly to a conclusion; its material is far longer than the opera itself requires, but its manipulation of pitches and its experimentation with two-part textures are both important to *The Intelligence Park*. The music of much of the opening section of the instrumental piece has found its way into Act 1, in which Barry contrasts the accompaniment of solo voice by one instrument with passages accompanied by the full ensemble.

Barry's delight in mechanistic music is seen in the second of the *Four Chorales*. It is prefixed with words from the first tableau or 'station' in the prelude to Act 3 of the opera, in which d'Esperaudieu appears, which were used there to set the final moves into action:

> Nature inanimate moves to its own Time:
> A secret tremor on the tautened wire,
> The spheres wheel round,
> The silver world awakes.
> Spring whirrs to blossom; lubricated buds
> Unfurl; birds click and chirr; from painted skies
> unfolding clouds release a scented rain.

In 'Chorale II', piano 2 sets up a mechanistic beat of hammered *martellato* chords, each followed by an off-beat hiccup in piano 1 (Example 10). The music lurches into a faster speed, then continues to accelerate; a final *piano* section comes, after a *crescendo*, to a sudden unexpected halt. But in the prelude to Act 3 of the opera, Barry does not follow the obvious path of setting the words to the mechanistic music he tried out in 'Chorale II', using instead a simplistic, triple-time accompaniment to push the words into relief. He still manages, though, to find a place for the 'Chorale II' music in Act 1, at the point when Paradies decides to remain in Dublin and re-commence work on his own opera, himself 'whirring' into action.

The musical material which eventually becomes used in *The Intelligence Park* for the eclipse of the sun offers another instance of the potency of Barry's musical ideas. 'Pallid the sun/ & turbid grows the air:/ Thy soul's imperilled;/ Man, for death prepare . . .', sings the chorus. The frisson of horror one feels as light is sucked from the world is exemplified in a ghostly chorale in two-part counterpoint. It was, in fact, inspired by a solo aria by Buxtehude, which has an accompaniment of unusual bowed string *tremolandi: Klagelied* (BuxWV 76/2), music written for the funeral of the composer's father. Barry uses this material in 'Chorale III' of the *Four Chorales*, in the third movement of *What the Frog Said* (in a chilly version for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, piano and *tremolando* strings) and then in the opera itself, the tune at first buried in a homophonic quartet of Faranesi, d'Esperaudieu, Paradies and Cramer at the moment of eclipse, but emerging in its full version (as in the two related works) in a ghostly song sung, from afar, by the imprisoned Serafino. Again, Barry's previous workings of the material seem to establish how he can use it within the opera, and again it seems to assume some importance and effect when it appears.

The examples discussed above are, however, only illustrations of the diversity of material that *The Intelligence Park* contains, welded together by the underlying unity of the Bach chords and Barry's predominantly homophonic textures. One might expect that the opera will suffer from a bland uniformity; that this seems unlikely to be the case is due to the rhythmic intricacy, subtle harmonic changes, and apt vocal and instrumental colouring already perceivable in the score itself. Moreover, each act has been constructed as a whole, sections or scenes either flowing into one another or, even where apparently unrelated, connected motivically or by the use of identical or related pitch sets. Above all, Barry leaves an impression that his reaction to the story of a composer losing, then re-discovering, his inspiration has resulted in music of power mixed with tenderness and passion.

The works of 1977 to 1981 show Barry developing an individual musical style that, in the chamber works he has continued to write up to 1987, has now become well-established. In *The Intelligence Park* he has been able to apply his musical techniques, his love of the theatrical and his enjoyment of allusion and artifice to a large-scale work in which they create 'a constant state of surprise'. As Paradies, the composer of the opera-within-the-opera, finds when he hears Serafino sing in Act 1, it is by paradox, by an unexpected event, that the creative process can begin:

> That voice has silenced silence. I grow blind
> With light and colour, passion is restored me.
> My January blood begins to thaw
> And flows. And flows.

Selected Works

This list includes all works which Barry still acknowledges. His compositions are published by Oxford University Press.

1977	Things that Gain by Being Painted, soprano, speaker, cello, piano
1977-8	A Piano Concerto, piano and orchestra
1979	———, 3 clarinets (2nd and 3rd + bass clarinets), 2 violas, 2 cellos, piano + harpsichord
	ϕ , two pianos
1980	Sleeping Beauty, 4 performers, 5 bass drums, tape
	Unkrautgarten (Weed Garden), ballet, orchestra (on tape)
1980-1	Cinderella, music-theatre piece, 3 mime artists, tape
	Snow-white, music-theatre piece, 2 mime artists, tape
1981	Au Milieu, piano
	Sur les Pointes, piano
1981-7	The Intelligence Park, opera, soprano, mezzo-soprano, counter-tenor, tenor, baritone, bass-baritone, flute + piccolo, oboe, 2 clarinets + bass clarinets, bassoon + contra-bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, piano, violin, viola, cello, double bass
1984	What the Frog Said, soprano, bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, piano, violin, viola, cello, double bass
	Four Chorales, two pianos
1985	Cork, string quartet
	Sweet Cork, soprano, bass, treble recorder, viol, harpsichord
	Fouetté et Ballon, organ
1986	Of Queens' Gardens, flute + piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, marimba + glockenspiel, piano, violin, viola, double bass
	Swinging Tripes and Trillibubkins, piano
1987	Sweet Punishment, brass quintet

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[1] Kevin Volans, *Summer Gardeners: Conversations with Composers* (Durban: Newer Music Edition, 1985), p.8.

[2] The work was eventually commissioned by the ICA with funds from the Gulbenkian Foundation and the Arts Council of Great Britain.

[3] *Beethoven WoO 80* has been withdrawn by Barry from his list of works available for performance.

[4] Vincent Deane, 'The Music of Gerald Barry', *Soundpost*, no.2 (June/July 1981), pp.14-7.

[5] This and all succeeding unacknowledged quotations come from conversations Hilary Bracefield had with Gerald Barry and Vincent Deane in June, July and August 1987.

[6] Volans, op.cit., pp.6-7.

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OXFORD MUSIC

Gerald Barry

Au Milieu
for piano solo

Five Chorales
for two pianos

A Piano Concerto
for solo piano and orchestra

Sign
for two pianos

Of Queen's Gardens
for chamber orchestra

Cork
for string quartet
(20 mins)

String Quartet
(20 mins)

Things that gain by being painted
for singer, speaker, cello and piano
Text from the Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon

What the Frog Said
for 2 solo voices and ensemble
Ensemble: soprano, bass, fl, ob, cl, bn, pno, vn, va, vc, db

The Intelligence Park
An opera in 3 acts

Sur les Pointes
for orchestra

Handel's Favourite Song
for clarinet and ensemble

Line
for ensemble
3 B♭ cl (2nd and 3rd+b cl)
2 va, 2 vc, pno (+hchord)

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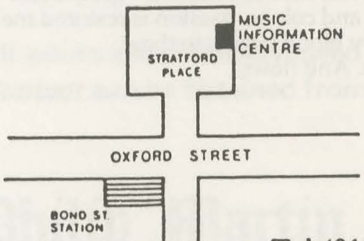

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Paul Mounsey

Music in Brazil: Willy Corrêa de Oliveira and Gilberto Mendes

To many foreigners, Brazil conjures up visions of Copacabana, Ipanema, sun, samba and, of course, Carnival, but for most Brazilians the reality is startlingly different. First, a few facts. Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world, taking up 8.5 million square kilometres, i.e. almost half of the Latin American continent. With a population of 135 million and a GDP of $280 billion, it is the eighth largest economy in the West. Among developing countries, Brazil is number one. It is the world's largest coffee exporter, the second largest soyabean producer, the biggest sugar producer and the second biggest cocoa producer. It is also the world's second largest cattle producer and the second largest producer of iron ore.

In spite of all this, Brazil is not yet the economic power it could so easily be, due mainly to the corruption and unbelievable incompetence of its government. Instead, it constitutes the biggest single threat to the stability of the world's financial system, with a foreign debt of around $110 billion. Two years after the fall of the military régime (which had lasted for twenty years) and the birth of a fragile democracy, the country is in the grip of its worst-ever economic crisis. Inflation is out of control and the gap between rich and poor continues to widen. Many workers are trying to survive on a minimum salary of £30 a month, thousands of homeless children wander the city streets begging, and vast numbers of people are driven from the barren north to the southern cities (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro), only to find themselves living in one of the *favelas* (shanty towns) without a job. In 1960, 55% of Brazilians lived in the country and 45% in the cities. Today 72% live in the cities and 28% in the country.

And so, with this in mind, what is happening in Brazilian music today? Indeed, what has happened to Brazilian music since the death of Heitor Villa-Lobos in 1959? For reasons of space alone, I am unable to give a comprehensive account of the last 28 years but, by offering a brief historical survey and by concentrating on two major composers – Willy Corrêo de Oliveira and Gilberto Mendes – I believe that I can give some idea of the developments that have taken place during that time. Although this will mean omitting a number of distinguished composers – such as Jorge Antunes (b. 1942), Marlos Nobre (b. 1939) and José Antonio de Almeida Prado (b. 1943), all of whom are internationally renowned – not to mention those interesting creative figures working in the sophisticated jazz/pop world (Arrigo Barnabé, Egberto Gismonti, Hermeto Pascoal and Naná Vasconcelos, for example), I would maintain that de Oliveira and Mendes are two of the most important individuals to emerge from the post-Villa-Lobos era.

The first appearance of the avant garde in Brazil came thirteen years before the death of its most famous composer: a manifesto known as 'Música Viva' formally introduced the theories of Schoenberg into the country in 1946.[1] The composers involved with the manifesto were the German Hans Joachim Koellreutter (b. 1915), the leader of the group, Eunice Catunda (b. 1915), Cesar Guerra-Peixe (b. 1914), Edino Krieger (b. 1928) and Claudio Santoro (b. 1919). The manifesto called for a more 'universal' music, attacking 'false nationalism . . . which exalts sentiments of national superiority and encourages egocentric and individualistic tendencies which divide men, creating disruptive forces'.[2] It was the first official break with nationalism, a movement which had dominated Brazilian music for the previous 60 years. Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) was still alive and already a national institution, but he did not intervene in the polemic which arose. This mission fell to the composer Camargo Guarnieri (b. 1907) who, unlike Villa-Lobos, had systematised nationalism into a sort of school which eventually produced 'Little Guarnieris'. Guarnieri took the role of defender of Brazilian values against the Grupo Música Viva, advocates of a rather suspect universalism. This reached a climax in 1950, when Guarnieri published his 'Carta Aberta aos Músicos e Críticos do Brasil' (Open letter to the musicians and critics of Brazil), in which he called Koellreutter's ideas a 'heinous formalist and anti-Brazilian infiltration' and referred to twelve-note music as 'a refuge for mediocre composers'.

Soon after the Guarnieri-Koellreutter battle, those members of the Música Viva group who were also members of the Brazilian Communist Party (communism was later made illegal when a military coup on 1 April 1964 placed the army firmly in control) received an order from the Party to the effect that they should adhere to a 'national' music. The Party, sympathetic to the struggle of the USSR against the USA in the Cold War which had just begun, became the defender of Brazilian national values as the United States began its long and systematic invasion of the whole of Latin America. Nationalism seemed to be the only answer to imperialist intentions. Guarnieri suddenly found himself side by side with his former enemies.

In the 1950s, under the government of Dr Juscelino Kubitschek (who was responsible for founding the new city of Brasilia which has been the country's official capital since April 1960), Brazil began its massive industrialisation programme; as a consequence, the country became a prime area for multinational companies to set up their subsidiaries. It was here that the second wave of the Brazilian avant garde entered the scene, just as some large advertising agencies opened business to answer the needs of the multi-national conglomerates. It was in the demand for industrial production that the constructivist poetry project was born in São Paulo, the largest and most industrialised city in Latin America. And following the example of the 'concretistos', a group of musicians later published the 'Manifesto música nova' in 1963.[3]

The influx of foreign capital brought with it an influx of foreign aesthetics, and the concrete poets (represented mainly by the brothers Haroldo and Augusto di Campos and Dessia Pimentare) were the first to grasp such areas as semiotics, information theory, cybernetics and structuralism. The musicians who were drawn to the 'concretistos' were those who felt frustrated by the narrow-mindedness of the nationalists, who were concerned only with music and ignored other important matters such as architecture, literature, cinema and urbanisation, and whose musical techniques were already worn out. The four protagonists in the new group were Damiano Cozzella (b. 1930), Willy Corrêa de Oliveira (b. 1938), Rugério Duprat (b. 1932) and Gilberto Mendes (b. 1922). The idea of forming a group came at the fifth Bienal de São Paulo in 1961, when all four had works performed in the same concert and realised that they had little in common with other composers of the day. The formation of the new group also marked the return to Brazil of serialism which had been abandoned in the early 1950s: no longer, however, the twelve-note serialism of Schoenberg, but that developed by Webern, Boulez and Stockhausen.

In 1962 the four composers went to Darmstadt to find out at first hand what was really happening in total serialism, and were shocked to discover that Europe had moved on. This shock appears to have been too much for Cozzella and Duprat, who returned to Brazil completely disillusioned and eventually abandoned 'serious' music altogether. De Oliveira describes the situation in the early 1960s as follows:

> We were copying the gestures rather than the structures, because we didn't really know what total serialism was. We soon found out, and we all started importing all the books we could find on the subject. We learned about serialism from books and magazines – the writings of Stockhausen, Boulez and the like. And we thought: 'Well, it must be like that – culture is that.' So we studied it very deeply and went off to Europe in 1962. I remember that I had written a piece that was structured within the five elements – all the possible combinations – but when I arrived in Darmstadt, I saw that they were not doing that anymore. I was a little upset: for us the truth was serialism. But after that, when we saw that reality was not confined to the books we had read but to what we had seen in Darmstadt, we began to relax our serialism. In a certain way, we came back to the gesture, instead of the real structure. Part of the reason why Duprat and Cozzella left the group – and contemporary music – was that very shock of finding ourselves so behind our European counterparts. Gilberto and I continued to have faith in the 'structures', in the lessons which Europe was teaching us. But it was too much for Duprat and Cozzella to go to Europe firmly believing in total serialism and to find everyone there turning to Cage; we didn't even know who Cage was at that time.[4]

The four composers returned to Brazil and published their 'Manifesto música nova'. The departure of Cozzella and Duprat soon followed, however: Duprat to pursue a distinguished career in popular music as an arranger and conductor. Mendes and de Oliveira continued, developing their personal techniques. They were no longer writing serial music and became more and more involved with the concrete poetry movement and less dependent on Europe.

Willy Corrêa de Oliveira

De Oliveira was born in Recife in the north of Brazil. After travelling around the country for a while, he eventually ended up in Santos (the port of São Paulo, an hour's drive from the city) and stayed with Mendes. Like the other three members of the 'Música Nova' group, he studied composition with Olivier Toni; later he worked in Europe with Henry Pousseur, although he was also especially influenced by Berio, with whom he became friendly. Many of his works are difficult, abstract, intellectual exercises, and they range from piano pieces (*Two Preludes, Impromptu para Marta, Five Kitschs, 3 Instantes*) to chamber works (*Phantasiestücke, Ouvir a Música*) to works for orchestra (*Signus* and *Divertimento*), not to mention numerous electronic compositions. Most of his choral works are based on, and structured by, concrete poems for a reason de Oliveira himself explains:

> The concrete poets were interesting for me because they were interested in structures, not poetry, and I was interested in structures, not music. I was concerned with experiment more than with art.

Quite early in the sixties he started writing music for films, television and jingles: 'anything that came along – I needed the money'. In 1966 he started to direct films for the advertising agencies and stopped writing the music for them. He became a director of J. Walter Thompson and soon afterwards became director of the film and television department at Salles, one of the biggest Brazilian agencies. In 1969 he suffered a nervous breakdown and left:

> My departure from publicity was wholly for political reasons. I could no longer face the contradiction I was living. This division is so set up within us in a bourgeois society that we can be on the left and at the same time work in advertising and publicity. I was always on the left in my political views; and there I was, working with the waste of the capital system. I was going to quit everything and go off to Europe when I received an invitation from the University of São Paulo to go and teach there.

He accepted the invitation and is still there today. His personal crisis seems not to have affected his music, although he gave up composing with the onset of his second nervous breakdown in 1981. Indeed, his politics and his art have led quite separate lives.

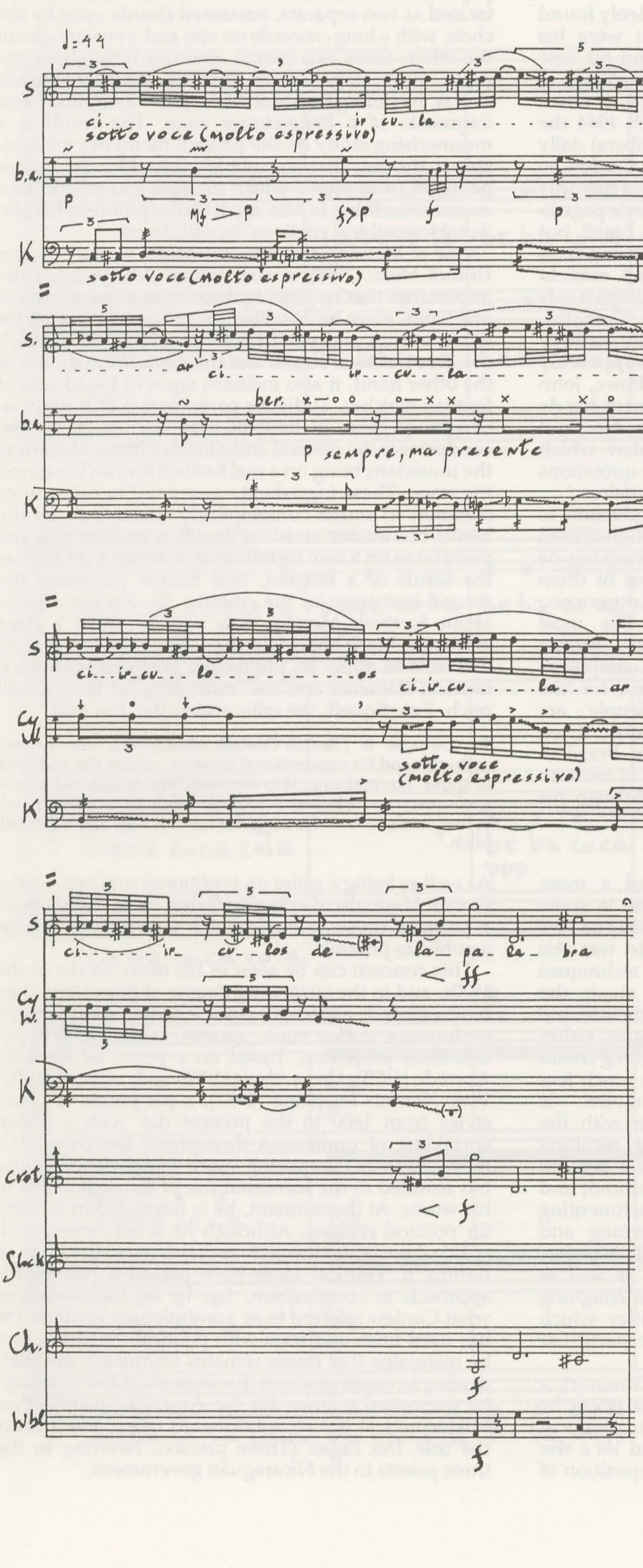
In 1965, de Oliveira had become interested in semiotics, and this interest was soon to take on the nature of something approaching religious devotion, resulting in the publication of a book on Beethoven which is also a fascinating introduction to musical semiotics.[5]

> The Beethoven book was a kind of manifesto about the syntactic level of music . . . that this was the only salvation for music itself . . . that it be structural, that the structures be very clear, even though this may appear complex. I used semiotics to prove a number of theories on music and art, and I did it with a faith that would move any mountain.

Not long after this, in 1981, his faith in C.S. Peirce, Umberto Eco and the other leading figures of semiotics started to weaken. He discovered Hanns Eisler and started reading various Marxist writers on culture. At the same time he began working with a group of priests in the poverty-stricken industrial suburbs of São Paulo. He stopped composing and attending concerts and began spending more time among the workers and their organisations.

One of his last works is *Materiales* for soprano and percussion (1980), an extract from which is reproduced in Example 1. There is nothing in this setting of a poem by Héctor Olea to suggest the total break with composing that was to come shortly afterwards; in

Example 1 Willy Corrêa de Oliveira *Materiales*, pages 5-6 (extract)


♩= 44
S
ci. cu. la
sotto voce (molto espressivo)
b.a.
p
mf > p
f
K
sotto voce (molto espressivo)
S.
ar ci. ir. cu. la ar en
ber.
b.a.
p sempre, ma presente
K
S
ci. ir. cu. lo. os ci. ir. cu. la ar en
cy w.
sotto voce (molto espressivo)
K
S
ci. ir. cu. los de pa la bra
ff
cy w.
K
crot
glock
Ch.
f
Wbl

s	soprano
b.a.	amplified berimbau
(ber.	unamplified berimbau)
cy w.	cymbal immersed in water
k	timpani
crot	crotales
glock	glockenspiel
ch.	chimes
wbl	woodblocks

Translation:

to circulate
to circulate in circles
to circulate in circles of the word

fact, *Materiales* is reminiscent of his earlier works, both stylistically and structurally.

Having abandoned 'art', de Oliveira suddenly found himself alone. Those whom he thought were his friends turned out to be hostile to him and his new position. He found a kindred spirit in the writings of Cornelius Cardew and has recently spent much energy promoting his ideas. On 11 March 1984 the music page of *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil's liberal daily newspaper) was devoted to an article about Cardew by de Oliveira. What is fascinating about this is not only that the *Folha* should give over its entire music page to Cardew, a composer hitherto unknown in Brazil, but also the fact that de Oliveira's article is a detailed shot-by-shot account of a film that does not, in fact, exist. In order that he might have the greatest impact, de Oliveira invented the documentary 'Cornelius Cardew', a homage to the composer allegedly made by the 'Roman Karmen Movie Team', which supposedly consists of Rod Eley, Tim Mitchell, Keith Rowe, John Tilbury and Rose Zetkyn. The film is imaginary, but de Oliveira's narrative is faithful to his subject's ideas, and he puts nothing into the mouth of Cardew which Cardew himself did not utter; most of the quotations come from the book *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*.[6]

The article stands as a very good introduction to Cardew and his philosophy, and its publication caused quite a fuss. A whole series of articles attacking de Oliveira and Cardew was published: most of them used the usual, worn-out middle-class arguments; some even warned of neo-Stalinism. The most interesting of these was by de Oliveira's former colleague, Duprat, who took exception to composers 'coming down from on high' to write music for 'the people' when, he maintained, 'the people' are perfectly capable of writing their own music. Even though de Oliveira has withdrawn from Brazilian musical society, it seems he still manages to exert an extraordinary influence on that society, through his work at the University and in his writings.

Gilberto Mendes

Mendes, on the other hand, has had a more straightforward career. Born in Santos, he is some years older than his 'Música Nova' colleagues and was regarded as the leader of the group. He was the pioneer in Brazil of many contemporary techniques such as indeterminacy in music, concrete music, the use of microtones, new notations, music-theatre and 'visual music' (scores intended for looking at, rather than for performing). Although he is a life-long friend and colleague of de Oliveira, his music is much less cerebral. Indeed, his primary concern is communication, and his long association with the concrete poets has been a most fruitful one, resulting in some marvellous choral works. In the 1960s, he explains, 'there were a number of choirs around, and they offered us an interesting way of experimenting with "phonetic music" – the most exciting and creative thing to come out of that period'. Mendes' most experimental works are for voices: as well as *Nascemorre* (1963) and *Asthmatour* (1971), a coughing and wheezing 'advertisement' for a holiday which cures asthma, two other works deserve particular mention.

These are *Motet em Ré menor* (Motet in D minor), a hilarious anti-jingle, written in 1966, on a poem by Décio Pignatari based on the various permutations of the words 'beba coca cola' (Example 2) and *Vai e Vem* (Come and go), a relentlessly exciting composition of 1969 for choir, pre-recorded tape, record player, and a paper and comb. The two words 'vai' and 'vem' are treated as two separate, sustained chords sung by the choir, with a long *crescendo* on one and a *diminuendo* on the other; these two chords alternate throughout the piece. Superimposed on this are various musical events, including bursts of the 'Jupiter' Symphony and fragments of a Renaissance song. The result is a mesmerising study on the present moment's relationship to the past. In many of his works, Mendes quotes passages from pieces which he likes and which have meant something to him at particular points in his life: 'autobiographical citations' he calls them.

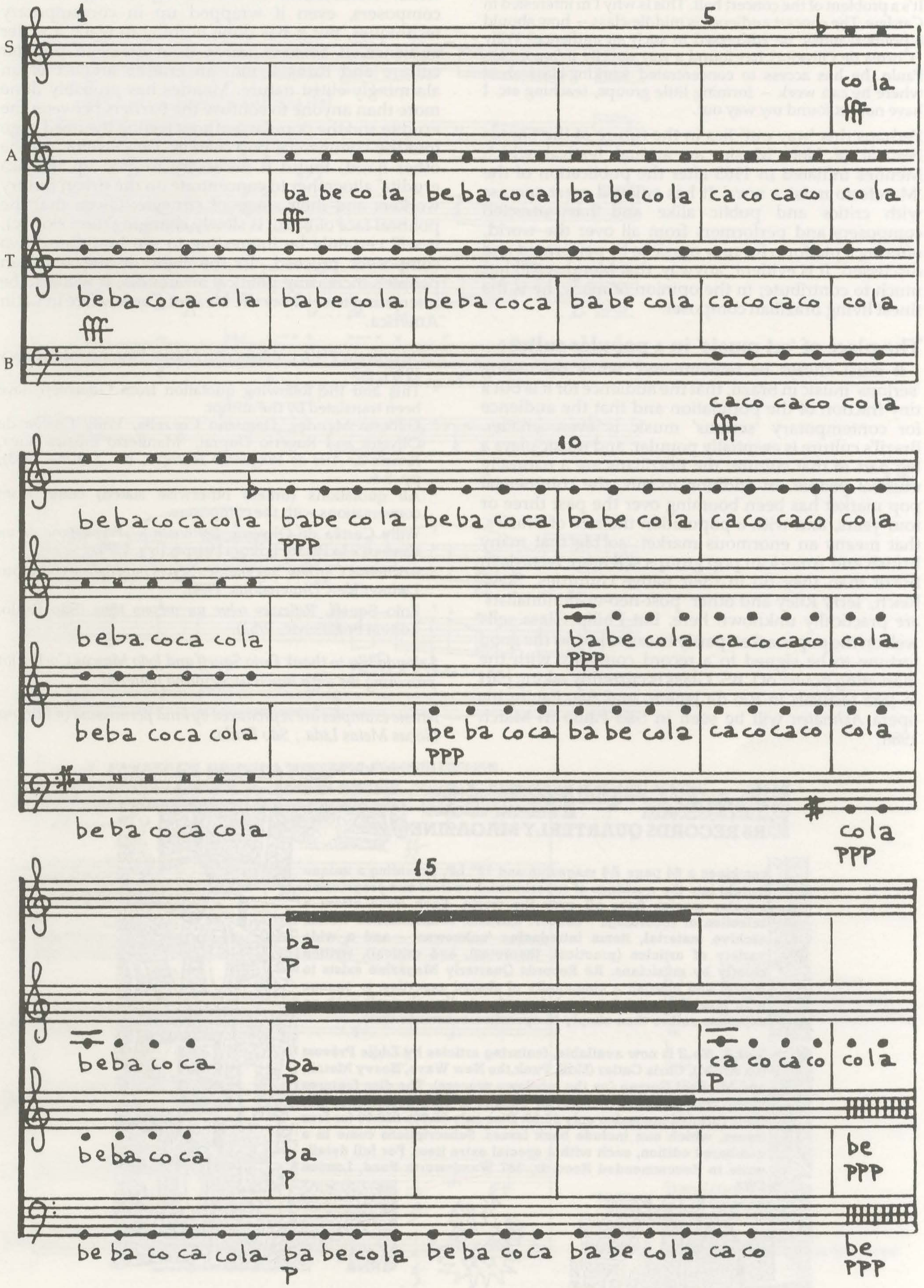
One of Mendes' finest experimental works is *Santos Football Music* (1974), a work which clearly shows the importance that he gives to direct communication. On one hand, it can be described as an ambitious work for wind, strings and percussion: an atonal piece which involves blocks of sound and their transformation. On the other hand, it also includes tapes of broadcasts of football matches, audience participation as it plays an imaginary game of football with the orchestra (the conductor is the referee) and a kind of music-theatre as the musicians bring on a real football and kick it round the stage. These ingredients may point to procedures common to much contemporary music but, in the hands of Mendes and in a Brazilian concert hall, the piece takes on a new significance. Football in Brazil has the status of a religion, and Santos possesses the second-best team in the country. By writing a piece about football, Mendes was sure to reach a large audience. More important than this is the fact that he was able to allow an interaction between traditional musical elements and the 'musicality' of the football pitch. Enio Squeff, the critic and writer, has said:

> To compose it [*Santos Football Music*] for conventional orchestra and for conventional theatres, asking the audience to shout, boo and sing, is to contradict the traditional idea of a concert . . . placing a football pitch in a concert hall corresponds to transforming the concert hall into a football pitch.[7]

As well as being a satire on traditional concerts, *Santos Football Music* also displays Mendes' desire to compose a 'popular' music, a music which can speak to as large a public as possible.

This concern can be seen in his other works of the 1970s, and in the surprising degree of popularity they have enjoyed: especially *Pausa e Menopausa* for three performers, coffee cups, spoons, medicine dropper and slide projection, based on a poem by Ronaldo Azeredo (1973), *Opera Aberta* (1976) and, more recently, *Vento Noroeste* for piano (1982), a pot-pourri of piano styles from 1800 to the present day with a liberal sprinkling of quotations throughout the piece. His move towards composing more instrumental music has resulted in the increased use of tonal elements in his works. At the moment, he is interested in tonality for political reasons. Although he is concerned with political music, he has not, as yet, come to the point of writing it. Political ideas have played a part in his approach to composition, but he is dubious about what Cardew referred to as 'revolutionary content'. He has used titles and texts with political overtones, but he maintains that music remains obstinately abstract, dealing in vague gestures. For example, a few years ago he composed a tango for the American pianist Yvar Mikhashoff; it is a straightforward tango, but it bears the title *Tres Padres* (Three priests), referring to the three priests in the Nicaraguan government.

Example 2 Gilberto Mendes *Motet em Ré menor*, page 1


1
5
S
A
T
B
cola
fff
ba be co la be ba coca ba be co la ca co ca co cola
fff
beba coca co la ba be cola be ba coca ba be cola ca co ca co cola
fff
caco caco cola
fff
10
bebacocacola babe cola beba coca babe cola caco caco cola
PPP
bebacoca cola babe cola cacocaco cola
PPP
beba coca cola be ba coca babe cola cacocaco cola
PPP
bebacocacola
cola
PPP
15
ba
P
bebacoca ba cacocaco cola
P P
bebacoca ba be
P PPP
be ba co ca cola ba be cola beba coca babe cola caco be
P PPP

Mendes has described his present position as follows:

> It's a problem of the concert hall. This is why I'm interested in Cardew. The concert audience is middle-class – how should a political music be addressed to such an audience? Willy [Corrêa de Oliveira] has found a way out. By living in São Paulo, he has access to concentrated working-class areas where he can work – forming little groups, teaching etc. I have not yet found my way out.

Perhaps this 'way out' lies in the future of the Santos Festival of New Music, an annual festival which Mendes initiated in 1963 after the publication of the 'Manifesto música nova'. It has enjoyed great success with critics and public alike and has attracted composers and performers from all over the world, offering a platform for new music to be performed and discussed. It is evident, anyway, that Mendes still has much to contribute; in the opinion of many, he is the finest living Brazilian composer.

The place of 'art music' in a popular culture

It must always be remembered, when discussing 'serious' music in Brazil, that the audience for it is but a tiny fraction of the population and that the audience for contemporary 'serious' music is even smaller. Brazil's culture is esentially popular, and music plays a big part in that culture; the Brazilians are a naturally musical people. In addition to this, the commercial pop market has been booming over the past three or four years, and with a population the size of Brazil's, that means an enormous market: so big that many British and American pop groups sell more records in Brazil than they do in their native countries. Steve Reich, Terry Riley and other 'post-neo-ex-minimalists' are practically unknown here, but Philip Glass sells well on the pop market, partly because he has the good fortune to be signed to a record company with the marketing power of CBS. Glass is currently taking part in jazz festivals in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo; his opera *Akhnaten* will be seen in São Paulo in March 1988.

What place, then, for 'art music' in a country where a large percentage of the population can neither read nor write? Nationalism is still strong among Brazilian composers, even if wrapped up in contemporary techniques, but it has done nothing to reach a wider audience. It borrows much from Brazilian popular culture and turns it into an erudite artefact of an alarmingly elitist nature. Mendes has probably done more than anyone to confuse the barriers between the erudite and the popular, without feeling the need to go into the commercial pop market. De Oliveira, on the other hand, found it necessary to give up 'música erudita' altogether to concentrate on the urban factory workers and their songs of struggle. Given that the political face of Brazil is slowly changing (*very* slowly), it will certainly be interesting to see how these two composers proceed, in the light of the Brazilian people's increasing political awareness. It will also be interesting to see how the ideas of Cardew fare in Latin America.

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[1] 'Manifesto 1946', published in *Música Viva*, no. 12 (January 1947), p.3.

[2] This and the following quotation from Guarnieri have been translated by the author.

[3] Gilberto Mendes, Damiano Cozzella, Willy Corrêa de Oliveira and Rugério Duprat, 'Manifesto música nova', *Revista de Arte de Vanguardo Invenção*, no. 3 (June 1963), pp. 5-6.

[4] All quotations (unless otherwise stated) come from conversations with the composers.

[5] Willy Corrêa de Oliveira, *Beethoven – Proprietario de un Cerebro* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1979).

[6] Cornelius Cardew, *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism* (London: Latimer New Dimensions, 1974).

[7] Enio Squeff, *Reflexoes sobre un mesmo tema* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1982).

I should like to thank Enio Squeff and João Marcos Coelho for providing me with much background material.

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Controversies Incorporated

The following three short articles are responses to material previously published in Contact. *The first two offer replies to Roger Heaton's 'The Performer's Point of View'* (Contact 30 *(Spring 1987), pp. 30-33). The third is a rejoinder to Richard Barrett's 'The Notation of Time: a Reply'* (Contact 30, *pp. 33-4) from the author of the article which had provoked it (James Ingram, 'The Notation of Time'* (Contact 29 *(Spring 1985), pp. 20-27). Further responses to these debates are invited; contributions must be received by the editors at the Goldsmiths' College address on page 3 by 4 January 1988 if they are to be considered for* Contact 32.

Andrew Ball

Bridging that Gap

Roger Heaton's article 'The Performer's Point of View' has an importance beyond its actual content. The gap which has opened between composer and performer threatens in many cases to become an unbridgable chasm, and the necessity for those of us involved in the performance of new music to articulate our views clearly and publicly becomes vital. I, for one, am certainly tired of the familiar post-concert scenario. In one corner of the pub the players sit in a morose and defensive huddle, trying to dispel their dissatisfaction with the evening's unfulfilling activity by telling anecdotes varying the well-worn theme called 'Catching the Composer Out': that is, either first-hand or apocryphal examples of composers unable to hear what is going on in performances of their own pieces. In the other corner the composers and their cronies have an equally dispirited air, uncertain whether the unsatisfying effect of the first, and quite possibly last, performance of their work is due to their own or the performance's shortcomings; self-esteem usually demands an answer in favour of the latter. Between the two groups flits a critic or two, ears open for items of gossip which can be transformed overnight into a definitive judgement on the concert, while from any members of the audience present the usual tentative, uncertain adjectives come wafting over the clink of glasses – 'interesting', 'disappointing', etc. And so it goes on, that of which they all speak: an apparently never-ending conveyor belt of human activity, often to a large extent wasted because composers and performers will not communicate at a serious level. Regrettably, these days composer and performer have become quite separate animals (a situation unheard of in earlier centuries), and we must now put all our energies towards making the relationship between the two a more trusting and fruitful one.

Bearing this in mind, it is not only what Heaton's article says which is important: it is also the fact that he wrote it at all. My main worry is that his often understandably contentious stance may simply provoke alternating barrages of unconstructive hostility from both sides. If anything is to be achieved, performers and composers must share ideas and experiences, not pursue vendettas. It is important that the dialogue does not simply become an attack on certain schools and movements, and it is perhaps unfortunate that Brian Ferneyhough and the New Complexity loom quite so large in Heaton's article. Although in some ways this is an extreme point in the composer/performer schism, much wider issues are at stake; and, ironically, one of the most complex and 'impractical' of British composers, Michael Finnissy, is a virtuoso exponent of his own, and others', music.

I would like to describe two recent experiences of my own – one positive, one negative – to illustrate different facets of the composer/performer relationship. Chris Dench's piano piece *Tilt* was commissioned by the Brighton Festival for a recital I was giving in May 1985. It is a work of extreme difficulty, horrifically complicated and posing immense problems of pianistic athleticism. I am fairly certain that if I had received it through the post as a '*fait accompli*' I would have refused to learn it. However, before any decision was made as to whether the commission would go ahead, Dench arranged a meeting with me, during which he outlined his general musical tastes, his specific compositional preoccupations and his ideas for the new piece. At once I felt a sense of being able to orientate myself within a particular musical personality. As composition of the work proceeded, Dench was meticulous in keeping me abreast of the way the piece was taking shape and even of the problems and vicissitudes he was encountering. Extracts of musical material were sent, advice on questions of keyboard practicability was sought. This was both helpful in terms of gradually communicating the whole aura of the piece and also very sound psychology: if the question 'I don't suppose it would be possible to do this on the keyboard?' was posed, the implied challenge led me suddenly to agree to attempt things which I would have otherwise dismissed as impossible. (In one or two cases they actually *were* impossible.)

The total result of this communicative activity was that when the score arrived, a bare month before the first performance, my reaction on viewing the welter of notes was one of excited anticipation and enthusiasm, rather than of horrified shock. Above all I had a vision of the end-product I was seeking; this is absolutely vital for a performer before he or she starts to sort out the countless details that make up a piece of music. (Of course, if composers have no vision or image of what they are searching for, they will find it very hard to communicate anything useful to the performer.) With this conception of the piece in my mind, and with the interest and enthusiasm engendered by the abundance of pre-natal reports, I was amazed at how soon even the most intractable passages began to achieve a recognisable feel and shape, in my fingers and in my ears; and the feeling of knowing the spiritual geography of the piece built up a momentum which, I think, carried me through passages which at the first performance were still technically very insecure. I would differentiate this experience very clearly from Heaton's 'improvisational inexactitude'; there is nothing more soul-destroying for a performer than to try to make sense out of nonsense, to attempt to improvise something which bears even passing resemblance to an impossible technical demand.

Of course, personal contact with a composer is not a pre-requisite, or even a guarantee, of a committed performance. But composers must remember that today's performers are being confronted by scores of a bewilderingly demanding diversity, both technical and stylistic, and a breakdown in the lines of communication between composer and performer can have disastrous effects, as demonstrated in the second experience I want to describe. The work concerned was a very early piece of chamber music by a now established composer, Kurt Schwertsik. The piano part, mainly inside the instrument, was extraordinarily difficult and impracticable: and, indeed, as I worked on it, I became gradually convinced that it was quite impossible. It was the opposite situation to that of Dench's *Tilt*. There, a feeling of collaboration and insight into the conception of the piece had, as it were, carried one over the difficulties. Here, the impossibility of contact with the composer until just before the performance led to a mounting sense of frustration and to alienation from the piece. When it was finally played to Schwertsik, the situation became unconstructively confrontational, and eventually it was agreed to abandon the performance.

Not an earth-shattering tale, perhaps, but what stuck in my mind was something the composer said in a rather heated moment of discussion. As I went through my catalogue of complaints about the impracticability of the piano writing, he shrugged his shoulders and said, 'So why play it, if you dislike it so much?' There are of course dozens of reasons, not all of them economic, why one sometimes plays music one dislikes or with which one has no affinity or sympathy. But the performer of new music must beware, because the experience, if it happens regularly, is a demoralising and ultimately a spiritually deadening one. I believe it affects much of the performance of contemporary music in this country. For myself, this second experience, though rather traumatic at the time, has proved in retrospect unexpectedly productive and thought-provoking. It is salutary to be reminded that one is not simply a 'note-processing machine'. Performances in which the performer is not caught up in the imaginative world of the composer ultimately do no-one any good.

Therefore, my final plea is: to performers, do all you can to resist performing vast quantities of new music – we must make every concert an act of commitment; and to composers, resist the feeling that any performance is better than none – you have somehow to infect the interpreter with some of the driving force and creative energy that led you to write the piece, otherwise it is better left unperformed. Above all, let us try to bridge the gap that has grown between composer and performer by establishing more honest and fruitful lines of communication – 'only connect' . . .

Ivan Moody

The Mystic's Point of View (or a Byway of Post-Modernism)

Roger Heaton's stimulating article provokes me to endorse his observations on the stylistic (as well as the technical and notational) polarities of the great wealth of new 'art-music' and its relation to the performer. I also wish to add a few words concerning a particular sort of post-modernism that does not come within the scope of what he discusses, but which sheds an interesting sidelight on composer-performer-musicologist relationships and upon the aesthetic attitudes of the western 'art-music' tradition.

This other 'post-modernism' is practised by three composers in particular: Henryk Mikołaj Górecki, Arvo Pärt and John Tavener.[1] All three have in common with the minimalist composers an economy of means and a directness of effect; what distinguishes them is purpose – they are motivated by deep religious conviction, manifesting itself as a conscious asceticism and spareness. It is an extra-musical dimension determining the function of the artistic product as a means to an end, in exactly the same way as ecclesiastical statuary or an ikon.

From the performer's point of view, there is usually little enough on the page. (In this respect there is a connection with overtly 'experimental' composers such as Howard Skempton.) Pärt's scores often consist of page after page of 'white notes': minims and semibreves in even rhythm. This is particularly the case with his recent vocal pieces such as *De profundis* or the *Two Slavonic Psalms*. Like both Górecki and Tavener, he has been increasingly drawn to the human voice as the best and obvious means of projecting a religious text. Such writing, equipped with the bare minimum of 'interpretative' markings (dynamics, etc.), leaves a good deal up to the performer, more than is the case with a composer who writes with more consciousness of stylistic concerns and questions of musical vocabulary. The performer is, after all, required to experience and convey at least a part of the spiritual import of the music. This is something neither necessary nor desirable in music of another kind. (This is not to say that with other kinds of music the performer should not be conscious of the composer's philosophical or spiritual intent, and should not attempt to project it, if that is what the composer requires.)

One participates in such music in the same way that one would participate in a religious ritual. Indeed, some of these pieces *are* religious rituals. Both Pärt's *St John Passion* and Tavener's *Vigil Service* come into this category. If one performs these works (or sections of them in the case of the Tavener) outside the liturgical context, then one is inevitably by-passing the chief aspect of their *raison d'être*. This does not, of course, invalidate performance in a context other than the liturgical unless the composer expressly forbids it, but it does mean that performers have a responsibility to be aware of the music's proper function over and above that of a concert piece.[2]

Even instructions in scores designed to assist performers can imply the necessity of further research. Some of Tavener's directions particularly are far from conventional: at one point in his *Ikon of Light* he requires the music to be 'transfigured with the Light of Tabor', which is hardly an excessive demand in a work that is in essence an invocation of the Holy Spirit, but which is strange and potentially mystifying to a concert artist in a way that '*nobilmente*', say, or '*con malizia*' (to choose two rather idiosyncratic directions from other music of this century) are not. One could argue that this kind of written direction fills in gaps left by the notational simplicity of this music: that it becomes part of the music itself. This is again true of other music; it is simply that in the instances under consideration there is a larger leap of faith for the musician to undertake.

Górecki uses less esoteric performing directions, but his music can still require enormous spiritual empathy on the part of singers and instrumentalists. It is not immediately evident, for instance, why a composer should choose to set the single word 'Amen' to form an entire piece for unaccompanied choir (Tavener has also written a one-word piece, *Dhoxa*, setting the Greek word for 'glory'). Indeed, I do not claim that there is a single explanation of this that would make it 'easier' for a choir to understand or sing, but it must certainly help if one knows something of Górecki's religious, political or aesthetic concerns as they affect the performance of spiritual music in a secular ambience. Oddly enough, this then means that we have the same situation as with the 'music of great complexity and impenetrability which seems to require a privileged intellectual training' to which Heaton draws attention as being at the opposite pole from 'a music of naivety and banality verging on the mindless'. These three composers, however, do not write for an élite, nor even for a specifically religious audience. After all, if one were so concerned that non-believers would be misinterpreting one's spiritual intentions, one would give up composing and live in a monastery. A prayer can affect an agnostic or an atheist just as much as a Christian, even sometimes more. Nevertheless, it is a paradox that music of such enormous simplicity can make such demands on its exponents in their search for something 'beyond the notes'. Then, too, this music is 'mindless', in that it is selfless, concerned with the Creator rather than the created.

There is also a connection with Ferneyhough's view of the function of a score as 'a visual representation of a possible sound' (quoted by Heaton) and of the performance as an approximation. Though Ferneyhough obviously holds the view that the score may be many other things besides, Tavener and Pärt (and even Górecki) would probably join him in saying that it is a visual representation both of a possible sound and of something apart from that sound. In other words, it is an ikon. (Tavener has frequently compared his music to an ikon, and Pärt, who is also Orthodox, has spoken of music as a poor relation to prayer.) This could alarm performers who do not wish to become monks!

Some other composers have also become committed to an aesthetic or spiritual simplicity that does not necessarily relate directly to an adherence to Christianity. David Bedford and Giles Swayne have both written works in recent years that demand a simplicity of spirit from the performer. In Swayne's case, it derives from the refreshment of his work with the study of indigenous African music. In some respects, too, Horatiu Radulescu (to whom Heaton refers as having found a successful path through the jungles of complexity and banal naivety) and Giacinto Scelsi exploit a degree of simplicity, but their work is less theologically transparent, more orientated towards the western 'art-music' tradition than Pärt's, Tavener's or Górecki's. The same is true of the post-modernists in Christopher Fox's definition as quoted by Heaton (i.e. their concern with 'autonomous, regular structures' as in Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*), though I believe certain examples of this kind of writing have come very close to the overtly ritualistic aspects of Tavener or Pärt. Glass's *Akhnaten* in particular is an intensely ritualistic work, even though it is actually far more successful as an opera than his other stage works have been. There are also para-liturgical works from the overtly religious composers approaching the secular by way of the sacred, the inverse of attaining the ritual via the minimal. (In this category I would place Górecki's Third Symphony and Tavener's *Akhmatova: Rekviem*.) Stockhausen has been interested in cosmic meditation for years: the jump from *Stimmung* or *Atmen gibt das Leben* . . . to Pärt is but small.

From an educational point of view, it might seem that we all need to go to seminaries to penetrate such clearly religious music. (This would bring a fourth element into the eternal triangle of composer, performer and listener (or musicologist!).) But then this is probably no more necessary than studying with Réné Char in order to understand Boulez. Performers and listeners must each decide for themselves how far they wish to enter into a work, how long they need to meditate. Perhaps if the composer writes *less* on the page he implies that there is actually more work for the performer and listener to do: because composers like Górecki, Pärt and Tavener write less, they are 'more than composers'. Like Camus, if they were to become no more than writers, then they would cease to write. Probably the monasteries would gain three former musicians, and the concert-halls would lose three monks.

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[1] For recent articles devoted to these composers see Adrian Thomas, 'The Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade', *Contact* 27 (Autumn 1983), pp. 10-20 and 'A Pole Apart: the Music of Górecki since 1965', *Contact 28* (Autumn 1984), pp. 20-33; Susan Bradshaw, 'Arvo Pärt', *Contact 26* (Spring 1983), pp. 25-8; Peter Phillips, 'The Ritual Music of John Tavener', *Contact 26* (Spring 1983), pp. 29-30.

[2] Tavener's *Vigil Service* has in fact been issued on disc (Ikon Records IKO 16/17).

James Ingram

The Notation of Time: a Reaction to Richard Barrett's Reply

Apart from being pleasantly surprised to discover that my article on the notation of time had not after all sunk without trace, my immediate reaction to Richard Barrett's reply was that he was simply perpetuating several widely held misconceptions which I thought I had effectively demolished. His main problem is that he does not understand my central thesis, which was an attack on the following dualism:

$$\underbrace{\overset{\text{(notation)}}{\text{absolute world}} + \text{expressivity} =}_{\text{dualism}} \overset{\text{(experience)}}{\text{real world}}$$

Barrett's précis of this is simply wrong.

One of the problems with using this scheme for ordering one's thoughts on notation is that it is very easy to feel that one is being logical while one is in fact losing touch with reality. This is precisely Barrett's problem when he advocates '. . . a hypothetically accurate realisation . . .' and the use of more and more distant tempo relations. As I have pointed out, experiencable tempo relations are limited by human short-term memory. Barrett's absolute world, on the other hand, is that in which tempos are directly related to the physical configuration of machines. If he wants to hear his pieces accurately performed, then he should realise them mechanically. Should this be the case, he would be better off not using the standard notation at all, since it contains restrictions deriving from its having to be read in 'real-time'.

Another area of misunderstanding is that of 'tempo'. My position is not that I deny its existence, but that I don't think it is a *necessary* part of music. I also believe that the single tempo of reference, which co-ordinates music written in the standard notation, should not be confused with the complex feedback mechanisms which co-ordinate the parallel processing in biological systems. I have nothing against reintroducing symbols for tempo relationships ('subdivisions' or 'irrationals') or criteria such as that bars should add up, providing that the relationships are simple enough to be experiencable.

Barrett tries to defuse my criticism of the standard notation by pretending that the notation which results from that criticism is only the product of my own stylistic requirements. However, in contrast to composers of the 1950s and 60s, I was not designing a notation *separate* from the standard notation, but removing those parts of the latter which are related to tempo in order to isolate a core of notation which can be used in situations where (simple) tempo relations do not exist. The 'Ingram notation' is not an *alternative* to the (supposedly untouchable) standard notation in the way that, for example, Christian Wolff's notation, from the late fifties and early sixties, is.[1]

The world of experience is far more subtle than any absolute world we might like to devise, and Barrett's preoccupation with accuracy (with respect to some absolute standard) is therefore misplaced. In a 'real-time' notation at least, style is not notatable, and the lack of absolute meanings for symbols means that composers are increasingly having to work closely with particular performers, or to be content with giving them a larger share of responsibility for the result. (The former case requires a certain humility on the part of the players, the latter that the players accept the responsibility!) I am myself quite happy to write pieces designed for players who have developed a strong style of their own.

The era (which began in the 18th century) in which composers could take performance practice more or less for granted is rapidly coming to an end. (Electronic music studios have always resembled the monasteries of the Middle Ages in that local performance practice has to be learned before a composer can think of starting work.) It seems to me, however, that the increasing importance of 'local style' is a not unwelcome development. Apart from anything else, the currently raging information and media revolution makes criteria, other than those simply based on quality, boringly totalitarian. The structure of music publishing and management, the meaningful curricula for practical music courses and the nature of international superstardom are all changing . . .

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[1] See, for example, Christopher Fox's excellent article 'Music as Social Process: Some Aspects of the Work of Christian Wolff', *Contact 30* (Spring 1987), pp. 6-14.

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Christopher Fox

Reflections from a Slow Country

The following review-article was written in June and therefore predates Morton Feldman's sad and untimely death on 3 September at the age of 61. The author has asked that it be published unaltered.

Walter Zimmermann, ed., *Morton Feldman Essays*
(Kerpen: Beginner Press, 1985), £19.15
[Available from Universal Edition (London) or direct from Beginner Press, Wasserburg 13, D-5014 Kerpen, West Germany]

Morton Feldman, String Quartet No. 1
(UE 16385, 1979), £24.15
String Quartet No. 2
(UE 17650L, 1983), £24.50
Crippled Symmetry
(UE 17667, 1983), £10.00
For Christian Wolff
(UE 1766L, 1986), £17.00
[All available from Universal Edition (London)]

For the past decade and more, the West German new-music scene has worshipped at the shrine of American music: of what used to be known as American 'experimental' music in particular and, specifically, before the altars of John Cage, Morton Feldman, Conlon Nancarrow and Harry Partch. Of these cult figures, Feldman has perhaps benefited most from this, and nowhere more so than in the publication of his collected writings. The composer Walter Zimmermann's labour of love draws together for the first time virtually every word that Feldman has ever committed to print – 23 essays and eight shorter 'Statements' – together with three essays about Feldman by Zimmermann himself, the composer's writer friend the late Frank O'Hara, and the musicologist Heinz-Klaus Metzger (all three long-time devotees). There are also transcripts of Feldman's contributions to a seminar on 'The Future of Local Music' at the Theater am Turm, Frankfurt, in February 1984 and of his lecture at the 1984 Darmstadt Ferienkurse für Neue Musik. Finally, there is a very full bibliography (compiled by Paul van Emmerik) and a list of the complete Feldman output to 1984. The whole volume is attractively printed and is fronted by a splendidly fleshy portrait of the composer in profile by the late Philip Guston.

The volume is not, however, without its curiosities. Feldman has evidently been less than assiduous in maintaining his archives, and five of the essays could not be traced in their original English versions: these appear in German only (having been translated from Italian, Swedish and French!); otherwise all Feldman's words appear in English with German translation alongside. The transcription of Feldman's drawl from the recording of his 1984 Darmstadt lecture yields a few marvellous mishearings, one resulting in the invention of a new author, Stan Dell – a snooker star, perhaps? – for *Le rouge et le noir*. But these mishearings are a not inappropriate addition to a lecture which spends some time discussing Beckett's use of re-translation as a working method.

Most of Feldman's essays (as opposed to the shorter 'Statements') were written in the period 1962-72; only four in the present volume, all written in 1980-81, are more recent. As explanation, Zimmermann includes a 'Statement' written in 1975:

> Until about 10 years ago I wrote often about music. I no longer do. The writing was usually polemical in content. In recent years I do not want to argue with talent. I want to be thankful for it regardless from where it comes.[1]

If some of this is perhaps not strictly true – Feldman still enjoys an occasional argument with talent, as the text of his Darmstadt lecture reveals – his description of the general tone of the earlier writings is accurate. He tested the musical world of the 1960s against a set of ideals – Cage, Debussy, Stravinsky, Varèse – and phobias – professionalism, academicism, anything systematic – and regularly found it wanting. But his polemic is subtler in its attack than, say, that of Boulez, often proceeding by stealthy analogy rather than by frontal assault.

Usually, Feldman's analogies are drawn from painting, demonstrating again the profound impression that the visual avant garde of 1950s New York had on American experimental music. So, in the essay 'After Modernism' (1971), he talks at length about the relationship between Cézanne, Mondrian and Abstract Expressionism but, in the midst of this discussion, launches two crushing blows against his musical colleagues in Europe: 'just as the Germans killed music, the French killed painting';[2] 'only in Europe do you find men like that – men who make a whole revolution, guillotine anybody and everybody who disagrees with it, and then change their mind'.[3] That both these blows draw their weight from an extremely partial reading of Western cultural history is unfortunate, but such is the stuff of polemic.

Only exceptionally in his writing does Feldman attempt anything approaching conventional musicology. The essay 'An autobiography: Morton Feldman' (1962) gives an account of his early work and the influence on it of Cage, memorably summed up in the sentence, 'Quite frankly, I sometimes wonder how my music would have turned out if John had not given me those early permissions to have confidence in my instincts'.[4] 'Conversation without Stravinsky' (1967) gives an equally memorable account of mid-sixties experimental musical life in London; 'any direction modern music will take in England will come about only through Cardew, because of him, by way of him', he writes.[5] (*O tempora, o mores!*) 'Crippled Symmetry' (1981), the most recent of the essays collected here, is the only one to deal with specifically technical details and the only one to include music examples.

Of the essays *on* Feldman, that by O'Hara, 'About the early work', is probably familiar to Feldman fans: it first appeared in 1962 as a sleeve note for the Columbia record 'New Directions in Music 2'.[6] This appears in both its original English and in German translation; the essays by Metzger and Zimmermann are published in their original German only. Metzger's 'String Quartet – Über das Spätwerk' was first heard on Hessischer Rundfunk in 1984 and is a characteristically thoughtful piece of cultural cross-referencing, linking Feldman's First String Quartet (1979) to the Kabbala as well as to the radical experimentalism of Cage, and comparing it to contemporary European quartets by Luigi Nono (his *Fragmente-Stille, An Diotima*), Gilberto Cappelli and Mathias Spahlinger.

The most provocative of these introductory essays, though, is Zimmermann's 'Morton Feldman – Der Ikonoklast'. He justifies his title's claim (a nice irony here for a subject with impeccable credentials as an art historian) in his opening sentence: 'The Old Testament dispute between Moses and Aaron over the transmission of truth either through images or without them stands at the heart of Morton Feldman's aesthetic.'[7] He sees a connection with Feldman's Jewishness in his search for an 'imageless' music, a connection echoed by Metzger's citation of the Book of Exodus, Chapter 20 Verse 4: 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.' (Authorised Version)

Zimmermann's essay takes the form of a chronological account of Feldman's development from the graph scores of the early 1950s right through to the fully notated scores of the late sixties onwards and, at greater length, to the music of 1977-84. He describes Feldman's growing fascination with Turkish rugs and how their use of repeated, but subtly varied, patterns – what he calls their 'crippled symmetry' – has influenced his music since 1977. The fact that Turkish rather than Persian rugs particularly fascinate Feldman is also explained in this essay. Zimmermann recounts a conversation with the composer in which he described the difference in approach between Persian and Turkish rug-makers: Persian rug-makers work with the whole pattern in front of them, Turkish rug-makers work section by section, folding completed sections underneath the current one, so that they must rely on their memory of the intended total pattern rather than on any immediate visual reference.

As with any musical inspiration whose source is visual, the correspondence between inspiration and final form is tenuous, but for Feldman there are obviously useful analogies here. The way in which he organises his material in time can be compared with the memory-based, rather than strictly schematic, Turkish approach to rug-making, and his elaboration of small repeating patterns into extended compositions is clearly related to the artisan's visual motifs within the larger frame of the rug. Zimmermann has attempted to reinforce this analogy by producing a 'Muster Teppich' (Rug Pattern) based on Feldman's Second String Quartet (1983). On a square grid he allocates an equal space to each of the score's 124 pages and, using different visual symbols to represent each different musical pattern within the piece, demonstrates how these patterns are deployed through the six hours of the quartet.

Feldman regards his 'rug' period as beginning with *Why Patterns* (Instruments IV) for violin, piano and percussion (1978; a version with the violin replaced by flute doubling alto flute dates from 1979, and it is actually this one which the composer cites and quotes in his 'Crippled Symmetry' essay); Zimmermann, on the other hand, suggests that characteristic concerns of the 'rug' period are also evident in *Piano* (1977). To my ears, however, it is in the music from 1978 that the really significant change occurs with the introduction of tiny, obsessively repeated groups of pitches, varied by octave displacement, by slight dynamic changes or by minimal shifts in rhythmic organisation. Over the course of a piece a number of these patterns will occur, usually succeeding one another without any form of transition, and then re-occur, usually somewhat altered but never changed beyond recognition. The other immediately apparent development in the 'rug' period is the shift away from large ensembles to chamber groups (orchestral or near-orchestral forces dominate Feldman's output from the previous ten years). Indeed, of the seventeen pieces listed by Zimmermann as being composed between 1978 and 1984, only three – *Violin and Orchestra* (1979), *The Turfan Fragments* for chamber orchestra (1980) and *Clarinet and String Quartet* (1983) – are for more than four players.

But perhaps the most striking feature of the recent music is its time scale: these are all *long* pieces, with the Second String Quartet carrying off the prize for sheer length (although the Kronos Quartet makes cuts and normally plays a short, four-and-a-quarter-hour version). As readers of my review of the Second String Quartet's 1984 Darmstadt première in *Contact 29*[8] may remember, I left that piece after two hours; in 1986 I only heard 45 minutes of the three-and-a-half-hour flute and piano piece *For Christian Wolff* at *its* Darmstadt première. My response to this music is therefore that of someone who, while finding it very beautiful from moment to moment, cannot actually sit through it from hour to hour. Yet these pieces do seem to need to be so long: the processes of evolution that Feldman's material[9] undergoes are slow and must be heard to happen in 'real-time' (compare, for example, the music of Brian Ferneyhough, in which evolution happens in 'fast-forward' time). In the verbatim transcript of his 1984 Darmstadt lecture, Feldman describes the writing of the Second String Quartet thus:

> Many times I would turn and say, 'Didn't I do this over here?' And I would go over and look through it and use it and then use it another way, of course . . . when you first get material, you're idealistic. And what happens in this piece, there's a disintegration of it, like in Proust . . . For example, there is one section in the *'II. Stringquartet'* which comes back now, the modules are different than any time before. But if I did it the first time, it would be less acceptable for your ear. As it becomes saturated and saturated, you accept it more and more and more. You're less idealistic. You are less willful [*sic*]. You just let it happen. You hang loose, so to speak, artistically. You just let it happen without trying to be deterministic.[10]

And at the same time,

> . . . as the piece gets longer, there has to be less material. That the piece itself, strangely enough, cannot take it . . . there's less going into it, so I think the piece dies a natural death. It dies of old age.[11]

But perhaps this is no longer music for the concert hall; it is, rather, a music for other kinds of space, other kinds of listening. Certainly nothing about this music is stranger than the fact that its composer should be content for us to experience this new sense of time within the uncomfortable constraints of an institution originally devised for the diversion of the 18th-century bourgeoisie. At the London performance of the Second String Quartet in the 1984 MusICA series, it was suggested that the audience could physically (as well as mentally) come and go during the piece, but this approach seems to misunderstand the nature of Feldman's work. This is not ambient music, in Brian Eno's sense of the word, but music with a beginning, middle and terminal demise, all of which should be experienced.

My own reservations about Feldman's recent work stem, in fact, as much from a dismay at the composer's attitude to its presentation as from the spinal pain caused me by the presentations I have heard so far. If the recent long pieces are a new kind of musical phenomenon, then surely it is part of Feldman's work as their composer to concern himself with developing a new kind of presentation for them. Certainly composers of similar phenomena (Cage in *HPSCHD*, Stockhausen in *Sternklang*, La Monte Young in *The Tortoise, his Dreams and Journeys*) have involved themselves in attempts at new kinds of physical relationship between audience and sound; in his writings, as collected by Zimmermann, Feldman gives no hint, when discussing the long pieces, of even considering this problem.

But this particular divorce of compositional activity from performance practicality is not unique in Feldman's work. In the 'Crippled Symmetry' essay, in which he discusses rhythm (both local and structural) in his music from 1978 onwards, he states that 'my notational concerns have begun to move away from any preoccupation with how the music functions in performance'.[12] The specific example referred to here, from *Trio* for violin, cello and piano (1980), is awkward as performance material only in its idiosyncratic use of accidentals (I cannot hear the interval G flat-B sharp until I translate it enharmonically, although that could be my loss, I suppose) and in ignoring the standard convention for notating the irrational rhythmic relationship 7:6, but there are other more arcane instances in the quartets.

In the Second String Quartet, double sharps and double flats abound: a notational practice which Zimmermann traces to the version of *Cheap Imitation* that Cage made for the violinist Paul Zukofsky in 1977. In *Cheap Imitation* the violinist is expected to interpret double flats and double sharps as subtle pitch gradations within Pythagorean mean-tone temperament, but, as Zimmermann says, for Feldman it is not the specific and precise microtonal inflections of these notations that is interesting, but rather that, as enharmonic variants, they 'represent the edge of the note's identity'.[13]

Another disorientating notational device occurs in the First Quartet and in the piece itself entitled *Crippled Symmetry*, for flautist, percussionist and keyboard player (all with doubling) of 1983, in which the vertical alignment of the parts in the score bears little relation to simultaneity in performance. This inconsistency is not the result of a desire to allow the players some freedom in the speed at which they move through their music (as in Feldman's *Durations* pieces from 1960-61), since here rhythms are precisely notated; on the contrary, it occurs simply because Feldman drew vertically aligned bar lines before deciding to allocate different time signatures or different numbers of repeats to each part. As a compositional strategy, this technique of using less than immediately legible notations as a means of distancing oneself from one's material has clearly stimulated him, but I wonder if performers find its retention in the final form of the performance material unnecessarily distracting. Certainly, as a score-reading listener, I find that the score of *Crippled Symmetry* makes very little sense as a notation of the sort of ensemble music that the piece involves.

Despite these notational vagaries, it is the First String Quartet that I find the most satisfactory: partly because the quartet medium itself affords an infinitely richer timbral and dynamic range than the bland flute-dominated combinations of *Crippled Symmetry* and *For Christian Wolff* (the piece even has an *ffff* section); partly because, at 90 minutes, it is not *so* inordinately long. Like all the recent works, the First String Quartet makes extensive use of reiterated ('reiterated' is a word Feldman prefers to 'repeated') patterns and of reiterated chordal patterns in particular. As the composer says, however, these chords are 'dispersed in an overlay of four different speeds' (produced by superimposing four different bar lengths); the 'irregular time intervals . . . diminish the close-knit aspect of patterning; while the more evident rhythmic patterns might be mottled at certain junctures to obscure their periodicity'.[14] The resulting music has a density quite unlike that of anything else Feldman has written; as Cage wrote, after hearing the quartet in 1980, 'It was beautiful *because* it wasn't beautiful. Through length it became not an object.' Nevertheless he, too, goes on to comment that 'it would have given the same impression if instead of captive the audience had been in a different architectural situation permitting at any point in time or space exit and entrance, that is, at home'.[15]

Zimmermann's claims for Feldman's work are considerable, none more so than that 'Morton Feldman's music can be a cure for dead-end situations'.[16] The particular dead-end Zimmermann has in mind is what he, like Feldman, views as a contemporary European obsession with making sounds do the bidding of compositional *schema*. Zimmermann sees Feldman 'freeing sounds from the wills of composers', getting ever closer to a position in which he can discover 'what the *sounds* want' (my emphasis). In his 1984 Darmstadt lecture, Feldman laid claim to the *authentic* European tradition by tracing his education to the 1940s and the European emigré culture which flourished on the American east coast. 'I'm a European intellectual', he announced:

> Did Boulez study with Schönberg? No. Anybody in Paris at that time study with Schönberg? No. Anybody teaching in Darmstadt studied with Schönberg? . . . John Cage *studied* with Schönberg. And that's why his work is continual variation. His whole life is based on the teachings of Schönberg, gone another way.[17]

But his is an idea of Europe that is no longer in accord with the real Europe: Feldman's Europe is 'outside' history, hermetically enclosed, and his dispute with the European avant garde is really directed at the *old* Darmstadt tradition. For him, Boulez and Stockhausen are still the main targets (Stockhausen is an especial *bête noir* – even in 1984 Feldman found it hard to talk for long without a swipe at 'crazy Karlheinz'), and he gives no hint of any awareness that Europe is full of composers for whom the old Darmstadt *tabula rasa* aesthetic is no longer valid. In the same way, Feldman's music can seem to exist outside time: articulated by civilised instruments, respectfully played, its language using an hermetically sealed 'art-music' vocabulary on which the changing, expanding musical world has left little or no trace.

If then Feldman's music may not be the cure for dead-enditis that Zimmermann believes it to be, *Morton Feldman Essays* is nonetheless a stimulating volume, as much a monument to Zimmermann's generosity of spirit as to the music and ideas of one of modernism's last great raconteurs. It would be foolish to claim that Feldman's writings have the coherence or depth of insight of, for example, Cage's writings; too many of these 'essays' are really *pièces d'occasion*. But, like Cage, Feldman is a composer whose writing illuminates his music while rarely seeming to deal with it directly:

> If I can annoy you with another bon mot. Dégas, you know, spent too much of his time writing sonnets. So he meets Mallarmé on the street, and Mallarmé says, 'How are the sonnets going?' And Dégas says, 'I don't have any ideas.' Mallarmé says, 'You don't write poetry with ideas. You write it with words.' (*Laughter*) European, you know, Mallarmé.[18]

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[1] Walter Zimmermann, ed., *Morton Feldman Essays*, p.142.

[2] Ibid., p.98.

[3] Ibid., p.101.

[4] Ibid., p.37.

[5] Ibid., p.58.

[6] 'New Directions in Music 2', Columbia Masterworks ML5403 (1962).

[7] *Morton Feldman Essays*, p.10 (my translation).

[8] Christopher Fox, 'A Darmstadt Diary', *Contact* 29 (Spring 1985), p.45.

[9] I use the terms 'material' and 'process' here, conscious of the fact that, on p.209 of *Morton Feldman Essays*, a 'young English boy' (me) is taken to task for 'talking about his material in relation to his process'. Feldman continues, 'Evidentely [sic] we wouldn't agree on what material is!'.

[10] *Morton Feldman Essays*, p.206.

[11] Ibid., p.203.

[12] Ibid., p.132.

[13] Ibid., p.19 (my translation).

[14] Ibid., p.130.

[15] John Cage, *For the Birds* (London and Boston: Calder & Boyars, 1981) p.149.

[16] *Morton Feldman Essays*, p.10.

[17] Ibid., p.189.

[18] Ibid., p.202.

For more on Feldman's late works, see Robin Freeman's review of Darmstadt 1986 which follows.

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Robin Freeman

Darmstadt 1986

33rd Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Darmstadt, 13–30 July 1986

The 1986 Darmstadt Ferienkurse were larger than any of their predecessors, both in the number of participants and in the number of guest performers and composers. The opening day was, however, marked by two significant absences: none of the invited Rumanian musicians actually living in Rumania was present – their government would not grant them exit visas; and Michaël Lévinas, the French pianist-composer who was to have directed the piano seminar, had cancelled because of 'organisational difficulties'. Consequently, Miryam Marbé, Calin Ioachimescu, the Bucharest String Quartet and Anatol Vieru – the last of whom was to have lectured on 'La nouvelle technique modale' – had to stay at home; Lévinas's non-appearance left the dilemma of the post-Kontarsky period unresolved for another two years.

Vieru's lecture had been scheduled for the opening day of the Ferienkurse. The other scheduled lecture was by Helmut Lachenmann, whose presence brought a spirit of detachment and an enviable professionalism to private and public Darmstadt alike. His subject was 'Über das Komponieren' (On composing) and, typically, he was one of the few composers who talked about composing in general, rather than just about his own. For Lachenmann, music – true music – is born of an act of self-awareness in which the composer takes a radical view of his art: surveying the field, as it were, to see where a new campaign might be useful or necessary. Lachenmann's essentially anti-expressionist musical thought – for him 'the composer himself has nothing to say' – is worked out in the midst of allusions to poetry, philosophy and the music of the past. Of one thing he is certain: that discipline is all important, that the flight from structure and the richness it makes possible leads to a false Utopia.

In the first evening concert of the Ferienkurse, given by the Ensemble Modern under Bernhard Kontarsky, Lachenmann's *Mouvement (vor der Erstarrung)* was played, as was Brian Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione I*: both must stand among the truly successful ensemble works of recent years. Ensemble Modern's programme was also to have included the first performance of the opening three scenes of Robert HP Platz's *Verkommenes Ufer*, but the indisposition of the soprano Sarah Leonard – well replaced at short notice by Nicole Tibbels – meant that less than ten minutes of this could be presented. These were enough to show that however much he may avoid the word in print – a 'scenic composition' is how it was styled in the programme book – Platz's version of Heiner Muller's play is a real opera. The musical language is his own, but the grain is reminiscent of the Strauss of *Capriccio* and *Intermezzo*, in which the voice is heard through a complex and diversified musical texture. Platz returned later in the Ferienkurse to conduct his *Flötenstücke*, with Pierre-Yves Artaud as the flute soloist, in a midnight studio concert before an audience so enthusiastic that the piece had to be repeated.

Darmstadt's first day to be devoted officially to the activities of IRCAM came hard on Artaud's birthday and the Fête Nationale. This co-operation between the Internationales Musikinstitut and IRCAM fits neatly into the context of the Franco-German Friendship Treaty, although IRCAM represents only one aspect of French music: something that the absence of Lévinas, a founder member of the group L'Itineraire, served to underline. Artaud is the director of IRCAM's Atelier de Recherche Instrumentale, and the morning session drew heavily on the Atelier's Quatrième Stage, held at IRCAM the preceding December, with presentations based on published dossiers by Artaud himself (flute), Jean-Luc Mas (guitar) and Benny Sluchin (trombone). In addition, Claudy Malherbe, with Michèle Castellengo and Gerard Assayang, described new computer techniques. All those concerned spoke in French, but unfortunately no-one in either Paris or Darmstadt seemed to have thought about the problem of communicating with the considerable majority at the Ferienkurse who could not follow spoken French, and what was potentially one of the most interesting sessions faded away without a question. The absence of simultaneous translation is undoubtedly part of Darmstadt's philosophy of informality, but in the case of the very formal reports of the IRCAM personnel an exception perhaps should have been made.

The afternoon was given over to Emmanuel Nunes' composing workshop, another transplant from the Quatrième Stage. Nunes is fast establishing himself not only as one of Europe's leading composers but as one of its leading composition teachers as well. The evening concert included music by Nunes himself (*Grund* for flute and tape), Philippe Manoury (the 'pocket' version of *Aleph* for bass flute), an exceptional performance of Giacinto Scelsi's *Three Pieces* for saxophone by Pierre-Stephane Meugé, and Malherbe's *Nonsun*, a piece which demonstrates his research on the rational integration of multiphonics into complex harmonic sequences. And Mas was able to show us what an electric guitar can do when it is placed in imaginative hands, though some of the German contingent seemed more shocked than impressed. Alessandro Melchiorre's *A Wave* received an exquisite performance by the young German viola player Barbara Maurer.

An entire day at the Ferienkurse was dedicated to Scelsi, an act that amounted to official consecration of his rôle in the development of music in this century, although the results fell short in performance and programming of those achieved that summer in London at the Almeida Festival and at the Holland Festival. It was originally planned to present Scelsi's complete piano music with the composer there to comment and direct; what actually happened was rather less systematic and, due to a regrettable choice of soloist, probably led to the composer's decision to stay at home. Things got under way with a lecture by Martin Zenck, author of an article on Scelsi's string quartets in *Musik Konzepte*[1] and a man who has done much to make his music known in Germany. Zenck followed up Hans Rudolf Zeller's thesis that Scelsi's early music can be seen both as a preparation for his later, revolutionary style and also as an important contribution to the avant garde of its time. He also discussed the connection between Skryabin and Scelsi, though without venturing into the crucial field of aesthetic theory. Most interesting was his demonstration of the influence of Berg on the young Scelsi – the last of the *Quattro Poemi* is dedicated to Berg – and this affinity holds good for more than just his early music (one need only think of Berg's 'Invention on one note' in *Wozzeck* and Scelsi's more recent orchestral work *Four Pieces on a Single Note*, dating from 1959). Zenck's attempted comparison with Stefan Wolpe seemed more dubious: Wolpe's music from the 1930s strikes me as a kind of frenzied neo-classicism (witness the Passacaglia presented some while ago by Bayan Northcott on Radio 3), while Scelsi's ostinati have nothing to do with the baroque and (except for the early futurist ballet *Rotative*) little to do with the 'machine age'. This point seems especially appropriate in the light of the day's first concert, a piano recital by Geoffrey Douglas Madge. Madge played two of the *Quattro Poemi*, two of the suites (nos. 6 and 8), the almost familiar *Cinque Incantesimi*, and a piece by Wolpe – a chaconne, of all things, and as such impressively irrelevant. The problem is that Madge's consistent *martellato* style of playing, so well suited to the Russian futurist music of Mossolov and the young Prokofiev, is wholly unsuited to Scelsi's piano writing. In particular, the distant murmurs and bell tones that permeate the Eighth Suite 'Bot-ba' and help give it its contemplative atmosphere were simply not to be heard.

The early evening concert included the composer's *Hyxos* for alto flute and percussion, *Ixor* for solo clarinet and *Xnoybis* for solo violin. Aldo Brizzi conducted the ensemble piece *Pranam II*, which was repeated by popular demand, and *Riti per i funerali di Carlo Magno* for cello and two percussionists, in which the cello drifts in and out of the percussion textures. Then came *To the Master*, a piece for cello and piano beautifully misinterpreted by Friedrich Gauwerky, who took it for Scelsi's version of Fauré's *Après un rêve*. (The solo line is actually a transcription of an improvisation by an amateur cellist, Virginia Parr; something Rohan de Saram had understood and projected with artful naivety at the Almeida Festival.) The concert ended with *Rucke di Guck* for piccolo and oboe, outstandingly played by Laura Chislett and Dominique Voisin.

At this point Yvar Mikhashoff made a welcome appearance to introduce two more Scelsi piano works, the *Four Illustrations from the Life of Vishnu* and the Fourth Sonata – the latter a revelation in this day of revelations. In this early work, one sees more clearly than elsewhere how an art of subtle melodic inflection and a calculated use of overtones can suggest a sound world apparently beyond the piano's limited articulation and tuning. It was midnight before the German pianist Marianne Schroeder had her go at a Scelsi suite: no. 10. After all the fireworks which had gone before, I found a welcome transparency about her playing: a refusal of dramatic gesture, as if the music passed through her unresisted. The very best Scelsi performance of the Ferienkurse, however, had been given three days before by the cellist Frances-Marie Uitti, who devoted her seminar recital to the *Trilogia*: a work whose third movement, 'UGGHUR' – in which progressive *scordatura* helps suggest the flight of the soul as its ties with the body are loosed – is surely one of the great moments for her instrument. But six o'clock was not the right time for such an evocation, and not a few of those present drifted out to dinner apparently unaware of what they were hearing.

Of the three works by Morton Feldman played at Darmstadt this time, one – the recent piano piece *For Bunita Marcus* – suffered, like Scelsi's *Trilogia*, the accompaniment of rumbling stomachs and shuffling feet; another, the early *Durations II* for cello and piano, came so late at night that even the composer slept through it. Little did it matter. *For Christian Wolff* for flautist, percussionist and keyboard player (all with doubling), a piece lasting three-and-a-half hours and given its first performance by Eberhard Blum and Nils Vigeland, was *the* Feldman event that year and something not to be forgotten. It filled the Orangerie, and though instructions were given to those with normal attention spans to sit by the door and leave quietly, most people were still there at the finish. The four-hour-long Second String Quartet of 1984 had given the Darmstadt public an idea of what to expect, and the edge of scandal was blunted. My own experience was that the first 45 minutes were the very hell for settling down to listen with the proper sense of scale, but after that I could easily have stayed another hour. Some people felt refreshed and relaxed when it was all over and, though this is not of itself an argument in favour of the music, neither is it an argument against it. *For Christian Wolff* makes special demands on the players as well, demands that Feldman clearly understands; during the rare pauses, Blum would stretch out his arms and flex his fingers before taking up the flute again, a sight that gave an extra dimension to the music-making.

On a purely musical plane, the scale of the piece affects the way we hear each detail. Obviously a tiny flourish on the celeste with an hour of well-spaced single notes on either side of it will be an event, but Feldman doesn't try to make his material suitable to the length of the piece by making the usual effects last longer. There is nothing here that resembles the long melodic or harmonic constructions at the outset of Reger's Third String Quartet or the Piano Quintet of Florent Schmitt, which help us estimate the length of a piece from the way it begins. Ultimately Feldman's recent music is exploring not time but duration: he has simplified all other parameters to make more evident the effect that epic duration has on musical detail. Thus he insists that there is no point in introducing fine metrical distinctions until at least one hour has gone by; only then can we hear the changes as something that matters. In the interests of this new and 'other' complexity, the material must be simple, or must at least appear to be so; yet it has nothing to do with that minimalism which is the simplification of all aspects of music, with only the mechanism of repetition to serve as scansion. And a word about Feldman as 'wild talker'. The day before his new piece he announced that 'All these European composers are able to do is follow models'; the day after he said, 'Did you notice something about *For Christian Wolff*? I used Berg's Chamber Concerto as a model. Take the ending, for example': a sophisticated ingenuousness which is wholly in character.

British music was much in evidence at the 1986 Ferienkurse and was impressive both in conception and performance. An unfortunate programme change put James Dillon's *East 11th St. NY 10003* for six percussionists last on a late-night concert by the Freiburger Schlagzeug Ensemble, but listeners who stayed on through three German pieces full of 1960s nostalgia and little else were amply rewarded by this encounter with a musical space not only *in* which but also *across* which events take place. The first concert by Exposé included more Dillon (*Come live with me*), and music by Roger Redgate (*. . . of torn pathways*) and Chris Dench (*Shunga*). The last two composers were perhaps better represented in other concerts: Dench by his new string quartet *Strangeness*, which, now the Arditti Quartet is at home with it, reveals its full measure of Shandian wit; Redgate by *Ausgangspunkte* (for oboe) and *Ecart* (for cello), both brilliant and rigorous pieces well written for their instruments.

By contrast, Richard Barrett's *Coïgitum*, which Exposé also played, is a crucible from which much of his recent music seems to have emerged. His musical world has something to do with that of Jean Barraqué, and it is possibly this atmosphere of relentless, heroic pessimism which provoked the impression that Barrett gave, almost alone among his generation at Darmstadt, of hurdling rather than sidestepping the official avant garde. *Anatomy* for nine amplified instruments, given during Ensemble Modern's second concert at the Orangerie, confirms the gifts revealed in *Coïgitum* and is particularly striking for the way in which its thick oppressive textures achieve such effects of colour and shape: not unlike a painting of Jackson Pollock, in which each square inch looks like a cross-section of chaos but yields an overall impression which is uncannily serene.

On the same programme was *Olimpia* by Dario Maggi: connoisseur's music, both in its musical content and in its treatment of text, a lyric by the Italian existentialist poet Dino Campana. Maggi treats it phonetically at the beginning, introducing us first to the sound world of Campana's text – a functional rather than decorative use of phonetic reduction like an unmeasured prelude in a French baroque keyboard suite – and only then allowing the words to emerge in all their syntactic complexity. There is much subtle instrumental detail, and the vocal part gave Brenda Mitchell the chance to show off her art of dramatic declamation. Maggi is a Milanese composer in his early forties, too little known even in Italy. His music has a reputation for technical difficulty, but in my view it is its uncompromisingly intimate character which holds up public acceptance.

After this concert most people went home or to dinner, but the hard core, including a large percentage of the British contingent, headed for the Aula and a midnight piano recital by Michael Finnissy. He began with four *Eirenicons* by Howard Skempton, *Father Murphy* by Cornelius Cardew and Chris Newman's Third Piano Sonata. This music, which can seem so weak in ordinary circumstances, had a certain fascination in a half-empty room after a day of sophisticated activity. (Mice that come out to play when everyone else in the house is asleep . . . .). Finnissy ended with his own *English Country Tunes*, played with a dazzling variety of touch and enormous amounts of energy – so much so that he damaged a finger. Friedrich Hommel, director of the Ferienkurse, said afterwards that for him the concert was one of the most memorable piano events in the Summer School's history, comparable with the first Darmstadt recitals of Aloys Kontarsky and David Tudor and the first performance of Book I of Boulez' *Structures* for two pianos.

The Composers' Forum is a Darmstadt institution, a kind of musical Speakers' Corner during which a composer may describe what he is doing and why, and get any number of things off his chest. Kevin Volans spoke on 'dancing in the dark' – what composers do when they stay home composing – and 'dancing with the lights on', which is what they do when they arrive in a place like Darmstadt. He compared the grace of an African woman carrying water from the well with the stiffness of the percussionist Christoph Caskell giving a Stockhausen première, spoke of Ireland as the last refuge of pre-lexical English and of the inventiveness and spontaneity that this implies, and addressed himself to the problem of transitions in minimalist music. For Volans, Steve Reich sidesteps the issue by changing one note at a time, Philip Glass papers it over with a burst of energy, and John McGuire throws up his hands and writes a perfect cadence. The only composer to find a convincing solution, he feels, is LaMonte Young in his *Composition 1960 No.7* (the piece with the sustained B and F sharp): weak beginning, weak ending, but the rest couldn't be better.

Kaija Saariaho, a Finnish composer in her thirties living in Paris, spoke of her admiration for what she calls the great hierarchical forms of the 19th century and her unwillingness to imitate them. To do so would mean alienation and recourse to the banal. In her music, much of it for orchestra, she uses contrasts of bright/dark, clear/opaque, with lots of noise to colour and contain the pitch structures. Her style takes off from Friedrich Cerha and the 'Swedish' period of Ligeti, and it links up in a distant way with the Sibelius of the late tone poems. We heard her *Verblendungen* and *Lichtbogen* on tape, with characteristically scrupulous apologies for the quality of the reproduction. She also presented the structural model of one her pieces, worked out visually with all the elegance of a Feininger drawing. Saariaho talks of technique in the service of form and form in the service of an abstract monumental expression. Her use of computer programmes and of systems in general stops where they fail to clarify her artistic vision. She is very much the dedicated artist, the musician who lives for her art because nothing less will do, and as such she was one of the most impressive presences at Darmstadt.

Aurel Stroe was not given the Hörsaal for his forum session, and as a consequence few people turned out for it: a shame, because it was a high point in the midst of much that was routine. Stroe is a Rumanian in his late fifties, now teaching in Mannheim after a year at the University of Illinois. He is an extraordinary representative of what has become, since the Second World War, an extraordinary musical nation. In his forum, Stroe spoke at length of various systems of intonation and their appropriateness to different kinds of music – a notion that has led him to use different temperaments in successive sections of the same piece. This might make things more difficult for the musicians, but it definitely makes them more interesting for the listeners. As an example, he played music from his opera *Oresteia III*, in which the vocal soloists are accompanied by solo saxophonist and electronically manipulated saxophone sound.

Klaus K. Hübler spoke largely of notational problems and of how to write in 'der Nähe des Daseins eines Instruments': that is, of how to control the largest number of instrumental parameters (including breathing, something that some wind players evidently view as an invasion of privacy). Hübler's music is controversial partly because he is such a brilliant theorist, describing things not everyone finds in the music: my guess is that we are dealing with a talented and ambitious composer who is taking his time to mature. A case of a different kind is Yann Diederichs, who felt little need to talk about his music except in terms of strategy and was content to let it speak for itself. I was particularly taken with his *Fractales*, a chamber piece with a timbral finesse reminiscent of Maderna. One deserving young composer who was not asked to give a forum – despite the fact that two of her compositions were played in the studio concerts – was Suzanne Giraud. It is to be hoped that we will be able to hear more from her in the 1988 Ferienkurse.

There were excellent lecture recitals by Siegfried Mauser, Brenda Mitchell and Alexandre Ouzounoff to name but a few. Among the interesting pieces in the studio concerts were those by Yoko Kubo, Bernfried Prove, Uros Rojko, Rod Sharman and Mari Takano. Among the instrumental staff, special mention should be made of the rôle of James Wood, present as composer, performer and indefatigable teacher, and of the Arditti Quartet, whose taste, dedication and profound musicianship were one of the abidingly positive aspects of the 1986 Ferienkurse. Coming at a difficult time for these players (their studio concert marked the first appearance of the 'new' Arditti Quartet, an occasion they marked significantly with a performance of Ferneyhough's *Adagissimo*), they were nevertheless involved, both as an ensemble and as individuals, in an impressive array of music, much of it played virtually at sight.

The closing rites of the Ferienkurse – the awarding of the year's prizes and stipendia – were preceded by a recital in which Artaud played Ferneyhough's *Unity Capsule* and Varèse's *Density 21.5*. This was followed by Bunita Marcus's *Corpse and Mirror* (the title refers to the act of holding a mirror up to a person's mouth to see if he is still breathing), a new piece, written for solo violin and the gongs of the Ferienkurse Gong-Studio. The piece has, as a fixed element, a gong motif that is repeated in a fevered hush by the solo violin, which is situated in the balcony. Though the violin echo is dynamically constant, its actual audibility depends on the volume of sound produced at any given time by the gongs: on one occasion, at least, it is scarcely to be heard. Marcus, a former Feldman pupil, went on to be a joint recipient of the Kranichsteiner Prize but, for some reason, *Corpse and Mirror* provoked a scandal. One German newspaper suggested that the audience booed because of the music's 'naive predictability'. For me, the piece called to mind Feldman's dictum that composers should learn from painters: the gong background was like the vast expanse of a single colour we see in a mature Rothko picture; the gong motif with its violin echo was like a pattern etched into this background.

Looking back on it all in the midst of packing and goodbyes almost gave one a sense of vertigo, especially the closing burst of activity in which we heard over a hundred pieces in only three days. The vitality, resourcefulness and spontaneity of Darmstadt, qualities that few outsiders ever seem to associate with the place, had overcome all obstacles, or all but a few. Perhaps Darmstadt's one serious problem is that as the Ferienkurse become more open to tendencies hitherto excluded, and as more countries seek to participate, programming difficulties have inevitably increased. There were consequently some events which, however well intentioned, fell below what most Darmstadt veterans would consider an acceptable level of musical inventiveness. It is not that these events lacked interest, only that one kept asking oneself the question: why here, why at Darmstadt? One possible solution would be a Darmstadt Fringe, to be mounted in a tent on the lawn of the George Büchner School where the Ferienkurse are held. I am sure I would find time to visit that tent should it ever be pitched.

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[1] Martin Zenck, 'Das Irreduktible als Criterium des Avantgarde', *Musik Konzepte*, no.31 (May 1983), pp.10–23.

Richard Toop

Travelling Hopefully: Recollections of a Festival-Crawl (Autumn 1986)

for Genefer

Frankfurt, 29 August – 1 September

It's something of a shock to creep off a 24-hour flight from the Antipodes, stagger into the travel buro seeking a hotel where you can sleep off jet lag and be confronted with posters for the Frankfurt Feste '86 proclaiming two Henze premières that very evening. A second shock comes when you find that the main hall of the Alte Oper – the old opera house – has been turned into a rather cosy concert hall, full of little tables with four chairs around each. The result is delightfully informal (and an astute way of making a small audience look bigger), but isn't it all a little too bourgeois for Henze, the erstwhile Man of the Left? Not any more, it appears: the man Boulez once notoriously described as an 'oily German hairdresser' now looks more like a well-groomed and powdered company director, with the rosy complexion familiar from recent record covers much in evidence. And musically, too, the radical Henze has sunk without trace. The style of the two new 'concertante' works – a *Konzertstück* for cello and small ensemble, and *An eine Aeolsharfe* (To an Aeolian Harp) for guitar and fifteen instruments – is something like Lennox Berkeley without the tunes: aimiable but meandering and utterly lacking in memorable ideas. In comparison, the Second Violin Concerto of 1971 (in which the Ensemble Modern was augmented by an awesome amplification system suspended from the ceiling, looking like the forefront of a Martian invasion) sounds like a blazing masterpiece. Even if it's crudely put together in some respects, it certainly has some unforgettable moments, thanks not least to Thomas Zehetmair, a fabulous young violinist who seems to be a reincarnation both of E.T.A. Hoffmann's Kreisler and of the legendary Fritz.

The concert formed part of one of those epic 60th-birthday celebrations that seem to defy the natural limits of the calendar: of the other Henze events, I saw only a rehearsal for *Voices*, another example of his 'crude-but-very-effective' genre of the early seventies, which looked as if it was going to receive a decent but rather too tasteful performance under the meticulous direction of Ingo Metzmacher.

Good taste – or just plain tactfulness – dominates the press response to the other 'big event' of the season, Hans Zender's opera *Stephen Climax*, based jointly on Joyce's *Ulysses* and Flaubert's *Temptation of St Anthony*. No-one is prepared to hail a new masterpiece, but given Zender's evident seriousness, and his sterling contributions to new music as a conductor, there is clearly a reluctance to be too critical. Materially, everything is in his favour: the new Opera House has a big stage with excellent machinery, and the sound from the orchestral pit is remarkably clear, without overwhelming the singers. In fact, the opening of the opera is very impressive, with effective split-level staging, excellent orchestration and some decent music in Zender's standard 'textural' vein. Surely, one feels, 'some revelation is at hand'. But it doesn't happen, and after 45 minutes I find myself reluctantly foreshadowing my final impression: that on the evidence of this piece, Zender simply doesn't have the musical imagination or dramatic flair needed to sustain two-and-a-quarter hours of contemporary opera. The Simeon/Flaubert scenes are one-dimensionally static, and the Dublin/Joyce scenes almost equally relentlessly active – even the supposedly lurid brothel scene finds me straying into the vale of Morpheus, mainly because the cumulative effect of so many convulsive, almost asthmatic gestures becomes so excrutiatingly dull and undifferentiated. Particularly disastrous (and unnecessary) is the decision to let the entire opera run without an interval; there are two obvious places which could mark the endings of theoretical Acts 1 and 2, and far from gaining substance from its externally imposed 'unity', the opera simply suffers, along with its modestly-sized audience.

Florence, 2 – 6 September

Not a festival as such; for me, more a chance to catch the end of a rapidly fading summer and sip a last martini in the Piazza della Repubblica. But a characteristically chaotically organised series of new-music seminars does include what is billed as an 'Incontro con Sylvano Bussotti'. In the event, it's a 'meeting' *in absentia*: the 'piccolo maestro' doesn't appear. Instead, pianist Mauro Castellani gives a worthy but prosaic introduction to *Pour Clavier* (1962) and follows it with a worthy but prosaic performance for a slightly mystified audience which asks some singularly obtuse questions afterwards (such, in art, is democracy . . .). The main memory of the evening is of (presumably) a Party Official in the front row, who keeps glancing round during the performance: is this to impose a model of 'correct behaviour' or to see whether everyone else feels as uncomfortable as he does? At the grand neo-romantic outburst on p.19, he turns round again, this time with a beam of satisfaction: 'Ah yes, *that's* Bussotti!'. Yet it's fascinating to hear the pieces one grew up with in the sixties at such a distance. *Pour Clavier* is a strange piece (almost a masterpiece), its aesthetic torn, page by page, between Boulez and Cage. The real difficulty (not surmounted by Castellani) lies in giving coherence to the mainly chordal middle section – in ensuring that it doesn't sound like *Winter Music* with a student practising Boulez in the next room (or *vice versa*).

The full 'over-the-top' Bussotti phenomenon had been in attendance (along with the composer) at a concert a few days earlier in a (deconsecrated?) church located within a few metres of the Ponte Vecchio. Given his well-publicised erotic proclivities, it's little wonder that a soirée with the implausible title of 'La Donna nella musica da scena di Sylvano Bussotti' (The woman in the stage music of S.B.) attracts a big audience. Predictably, I suppose, Bussotti's vision of 'La Donna' seems to derive from a mixture of contact with ageing opera stars and Italian soap opera (with an archetypal Mum lurking in the background). The marvellous actress-singer Gabriella Bartolomei (whose very name evokes the world of the Borgias and the Medici) was the protagonist – tall, ravaged, pale, with scarlet dress and lipstick to match. Excerpts from *La rarità Potente*, *Giulia Round Giulia* (after Strindberg) and *Winnie, lo sguardo* (after Beckett) are, despite the collaboration of players like the cellist Libero Lanzilotta and the clarinettist Ciro Scarponi, vehicles for her talents, and for an evening of 'theatre under the shadow of Bussotti' (as an Italian review put it), rather than conventional 'music-theatre'.

Amsterdam, 8 – 13 September

The festival is called *Gaudeamus* (Let us rejoice). But rejoice about what? Of the original good intentions, what's left? In brief, the intentions, and not much else. Through a mixture of old habit and new economic hardship, the players are mainly too old, or too young. And listening to the jury selections, it's often hard to avoid the impression that Messrs. Per Nørgård, Franco Donatoni and Ton de Leeuw made their choices with a blindfold; or that, following an old academic tradition, they threw the scores on the ground and picked up the lightest ones . . .

Though the opening concert turns out, retrospectively, to be one of the best, it highlights some basic problems. Whatever one thinks of Richard Barrett's *Coïgitum* of 1983-5 (and I confess to strong feelings for *and* against), it is an impossible piece to present in a confined space like that of the Ijsbreker. Nothing balances: the singer is mainly inaudible, and once the percussionist cuts loose so is everything else. In principle the performance is good, yet it's only Michael Finnissy's piano playing that really stands out, notably in the ultra-athletic final cadenza.

As for Chris Dench's *Recueillement* for seven players (1985), the final rehearsal (with the Xenakis Ensemble) takes place without the clarinettist, which may explain why, in the actual performance, that player enters several bars early at one point and persists in error for some time afterwards, apparently without the conductor having noticed. In conversation, Dench concedes some weaknesses in the piece and foreshadows a revision, but is that any reason to perform it so shoddily?

Ron Ford's *Four Songs on texts of Dylan Thomas* for soprano and piano (1985) typifies the problems of the 'New Simplicity' faction: the composer's sincerity is unquestionable, but the desire to write melodies and strong rhythms really isn't, as of *anno* 1986, *that* innovative, and one needs invention as well as sincerity: it's no good imagining that all you have to do is adopt a praiseworthy stance, and the music will take care of itself. The same objection could be made to Mauro Cardi's *Filigrana* for string quartet: an impeccable act of allegiance to the Donatoni school, but where's the piece? The real success *and* disappointment of the evening is Kaija Saariaho's *Lichtbogen* for chamber ensemble and live electronics. For my taste, Saariaho is not only the most impressive of European women composers, but one of the very few really impressive young composers anywhere, and of either sex. Her orchestral work *Verblendung* was an outstanding piece; *Lichtbogen* shows remarkable technical expertise, but seems to embrace certain decorative/cosmetic elements which leave one wondering what the piece is really about: its substance or its surface. Still, hers above all is a name to watch.

The next evening, the same situation is presented in aggravated form. Flautist Harry Starreveld gives a nice account of Paolo Perezzani's Sciarrinoesque *L'ombra dell'angelo*, but a student string trio is left to wrestle with the only other interesting work of the evening, Michael Jarrell's *In te, animus meus, tempora metior* and clearly falls far short of what is necessary. Given that the composer has interrupted his honeymoon for this performance, it's not surprising that he's upset . . .

Unsuk Chin's *Canzone II* for piano starts well, but lapses into sub-Ligeti, while the nadir of the concert (perhaps of the whole festival) is provided by Robert Nasveld's imbecilic *Imaginations II*, a red-Indian melodrama (accompanied by the composer) in which the protagonist (a singer) finishes by stabbing himself.

On the 10th, Rob Zuidam's *Ground* for piano indicates some craft and talent, as does Toshio Hosokawa's *Dan-so* for piano trio. The next day, an essentially harmless lunchtime recital is succeeded by an evening concert which is a *mise-au-point* of Gaudeamus's current problems. As a quasi-adopted Australian, I suppose I have to concede a personal interest here: three of the composers are Australians, and two are personal friends. Each composer (Gerard Brophy, Riccardo Formosa, Jim Franklin) has a work performed by the Gaudeamus String Quartet (Formosa's is actually a piano quartet), and each of them has his work *butchered* by a group of alleged new-music specialists: rhythms may have been approximately accurate, but pitches and dynamics seem to have been subjected to chance operations. A good quartet by Mario Garuti – *E l'altro* – suffers the same fate; he at least is able to prove his case by producing a recording with the Arditti Quartet at a seminar the next day, whereas the others (two of whom are embarrassedly present) have no choice but to tolerate and then disclaim a travesty. If this was an uncharacteristically bad day for the Gaudeamus Quartet (which has been in existence for nearly 30 years), it simply owes the composers an apology. If it was typical of its current approach to the performance of new music, it should be disbanded forthwith.

The generally low level of performance at Gaudeamus is something the organisers – whose goodwill is not in doubt – need to ponder terribly carefully. It is clear that limited funding makes their position difficult and that they are simply not in a position to engage as many high-quality performers as they would like. Still, the poor performances encountered all too often at the 1986 festival serve no-one's interests: not the composers', not the performers', not the organisers' and most certainly not the public's. If lack of finance makes the maintenance of a decent basic standard impossible, it would be best for the Gaudeamus festival to bow out gracefully while its reputation is still intact. (It's probably significant that even the Xenakis Ensemble played much better in Strasbourg – where the composer was present – than at the Ijsbreker.)

Strasbourg, 16 – 27 September

If Gaudeamus now seems to be in decline, Strasbourg's Festival International des musiques d'aujourd'hui must be the success story of the eighties. How the festival has progressed since its municipally controversial advent in 1983! Who would have guessed that what started out as little more than an exchange programme with Rome would turn into one of the biggest new-music festivals in Europe? Yet compared to Amsterdam or Paris, or even London, the surroundings seem so implausible: a provincial town, whose most striking feature is its plethora of cinemas and maternity shops (is there, perhaps, some kind of back-row causality that links the two?). In fact, the Strasbourg festival is an extraordinary document of what sheer dedication and persistence can achieve, unprotected by the shelter of tradition and major institutions. In effect, outside 'festival time' there only seems to be a staff of about two people, who devote themselves to the planning of the festival and to ensuring that, in the run-up period, the citizens of Strasbourg are so aware of it that, almost literally, every second shop has a poster for it and that the concerts themselves are, for the most part, full. There's a lesson there for anyone who cares to learn it.

Staying for almost two full weeks (longer than at any other festival), I still manage to miss a performance of *Pli selon pli* at the start, and another Boulez concert (*Figures-Doubles-Prismes, Notations, Rituel*) at the end, along with a Hugues Dufourt extravaganza and many other more peripheral items. Even so, there is more than enough to glut oneself on. And a certain *grande bouffe* mentality is, admittedly, part of the French new-music scene: my first Strasbourg exposure is to a 'Night of Quartets' which begins at seven o'clock and ends well after midnight. Three separate quartets (the Arditti, Berne and Rosamonde, the latter a young group of former Paris Conservatoire students) play ten works: a panorama ranging from Bartók (1934) to Georges Aperghis (1986).

Frankly, the Ardittis win by a mile, even from a visual standpoint. They're a strange mixture. Irvine Arditti, the smallest and much the most assertive – always nervous, fidgety, attention-seeking – looks a bit like Tom Stoppard, but with a more 'sportif' jaw. The new recruit, David Alberman, looks almost disconcertingly fresh-faced next to the other seasoned pros – very 'serious', whereas Levine Andrade smiles benignly over the top of his viola, and Rohan de Saram, whose huge hands seem incapable of landing on the wrong millimetre of the strings, appears more 'artistic' and harrassed. And how well they play! In Amsterdam, a couple of young composers had discreetly suggested that they don't *always* play in tune, and it's true that Arditti sometimes plays virtuoso figurations in a *rasend schnell* manner that tends to obliterate a bit too much of the pitch content. But all the same! . . .

Most of the repertoire is familiar. Crumb's *Black Angels* (Berne) is under-amplified and a bit undercharacterised too, which tends to emphasise rather than suppress the somewhat gimmicky nature of the music. The Lutosławski String Quartet performance (Rosamonde) mirrors the work itself by starting tentatively and gradually gaining in assurance. As for the novelty of the evening, Aperghis's *Ten Pieces*, may our paths never cross again, Ardittis or not. Apparently, as with Janáček, it's an 'intimate diary'. So he leads a dreary life! O.K., *tant pis, je suis desolé* . . . but why should *I* suffer? And for 50 minutes! In the interests of objectivity, I should record that the piece's reception verges on the rapturous. But prejudices apart, I really do believe that there's more music in the two minutes of Brian Ferneyhough's *Adagissimo* (Ardittis again) than in Aperghis's 50. Or in the 25 or so of Giacinto Scelsi's Second Quartet (Berne): I still feel that the Scelsi phenomenon is somewhat exaggerated; and where others hear a genius 'discovering the inner nature of sound', I frankly don't hear much more than some inorganic dithering on single notes, with little trace of cause and effect. Berio's *Sincronie* (Arditti) – arguably his most anonymous piece – sounds quite absorbing after Scelsi, and the Arditti's reading of Ligeti's Second Quartet somewhere around midnight is equally impressive.

The chief disappointment of Ensemble Modern's concert with Heinz Holliger is the last-minute ditching of Donatoni's new *Sestetto*. Carter's *Triple Duo* is played efficiently but without much character, and Holliger whips through parts of Helmut Lachenmann's *Mouvement (– vor der Erstarrung)* (1984) simply too fast for clean articulation. His own *Übungen zu Scardanelli* (1978-85) (three of the eight studies were played) predictably receives more affectionate treatment, though the music is overly 'conceptual' (i.e. one-dimensional) for my taste. The third piece, 'Ad Marginem', with its spectral high and low tape drones, holds my attention for longest.

As in Florence, it's Bussotti who is in danger of stealing the show: this time with his opera-ballet *Le Racine*, based on Racine's *Phèdre*. It's super-tacky, but enormously stylish. A massive set depicts the decaying interior of a Riviera palace, its stained woodwork lit by the dull glow reflected from darkening mirrors. The palace houses a sort of gay harem, with an all-male ballet company practising backstage, a predatory trio of ballet-master, company owner and librettist (Racine) prowling up front and the statutory Wicked Woman – a ravaged tragedienne who once triumphed as Phèdre – who will be held responsible for the suicide of the ballet's resident Adonis (Hippolyte) and expiate her 'crime' in death. The libretto redisposes the words of Racine's play in a manner too labyrinthine to describe here. As for the music, there are four principal voices (Irene Jarsky and Jacques Bona deserve particular mention), deploying, as ever, a sort of Boulez-*con-amore* style which has its origins in *Le soleil des eaux* and *Le visage nuptial*. But Bussotti really does know his way round the human voice: every time there's a held note within the general acrobatics, it's in a good register and sounds well. Apart from a small pit ensemble, which provides intermezzi and a final 'lamento', the instrumental music consists of an Ur-Bussotti piano part, flamboyantly delivered onstage by Jay Gottlieb (as the ballet's composer-in-residence). The Strasbourg audience seems mystified, but I was sufficiently entranced to go back for a second performance.

Another highlight is the Xenakis Ensemble concert, with a broader range of repertoire than at Gaudeamus, a better venue and a higher standard of performance – possibly because the composer is there. As in Amsterdam, the harpsichordist Elisabeth Chojnacka plays *À l'île de Gorée*: a work which, considering its dedication to black freedom fighters of the past and present, comes disconcertingly close at times to Poulenc's *Concert champêtre*. A solo piece, *Naama*, is more characteristic of Xenakis's recent brutalist manner (as was *Thalleim* in Amsterdam) without quite achieving the intransigent stature of the earlier harpsichord work *Khoai*. Benny Sluchin's première of the trombone piece *Keren* (pleasant, but no show-stopper) is notable for a novel approach to inserting mutes without stopping playing – the mutes are set up on a sort of 'mute-tree', and the trombonist gently 'impales' his instrument on each mute in turn. But it's an old Xenakis classic, *Eonta*, brilliantly played by Georges Pludermacher, that stays in the memory. After 22 years it still sounds marvellous, and once the grand quasi-cadenza at the opening is out of the way, it is astonishing just how memorable much of the detail is. It makes you wonder if it isn't time for Xenakis to spend a bit more time with his old IBM 7090.

Two orchestral concerts are frankly disappointing. L'Orchestre de Strasbourg doesn't display anything like the finesse of sound or intonation needed to do justice to Ligeti's *Lontano*, and though it just about copes with Berg's *Altenberglieder* (which Jeanne Pilaud sings rather well), the *Three Pieces for Orchestra* are technically out of its depth. Henri Dutilleux's *Timbres, Espace, Mouvement* (1977) comes so close at times to clichés of sci-fi film music that one wonders when the bug-eyed monster is due to come vaulting through the ceiling of the concert hall. A few days later, the entire Orchestre National de France descends to play an utterly unappetising programme (suitably ill-attended) of Gerhard (the Fourth Symphony) Bernd Alois Zimmermann's early and unremarkable Violin Concerto and Dufourt's *Surgir* (1984). The latter is utterly misnamed: far from surging, it would be hard to imagine anything more flabby (and it comes after an equally ineffectual vocal piece, *La mort de Procris*, a few days earlier). The source of some reputations really is a mystery to me . . .

Yet there are some highlights too. A Boulez mini-marathon with the Ensemble InterContemporain is one of them: a first part of his early music (*Sonatine, Douze Notations, Structures II*), a second consisting of a new work for clarinet and tape (*Dialogue de l'ombre double)* and the third suddenly swelling to quasi-orchestral proportions for a remarkably affectionate performance of *Cummings ist der Dichter* and a more prosaic one of *Eclat-Multiples*. (I really wonder about the usefulness of 'rediscovering' the early *Notations*; they're harmless enough, but vastly inferior to Boulez's subsequent piano works, and the composer's decision to inflate at least four of them into grossly overblown post-*Turangalîla* orchestration exercises strikes me as a terrible error of judgement.)

Boulez sits at the mixing desk with arms folded throughout the *Dialogue*, looking utterly miserable, and does his utmost at the end *not* to acknowledge the applause. And indeed, there *are* problems with the piece (which has since joined the pantheon of works 'withdrawn for revision'). Of course it is enormously 'accomplished': there's no doubt about Boulez's 'knowing how to do it' – but as for knowing *what* to do? If it's just a matter of writing about eighteen minutes of super-Berio for Berio's 60th birthday (there really should be a moratorium on these endless birthday tributes), then the piece is a great success. But though it gains in substance as it proceeds, at the end it's still only a 'nice piece'. What happened to the great composer? Almost needless to say, Alain Damiens plays brilliantly, even when contending with an over-amplified pre-recorded clarinet executing high-speed figure-eight loops around the auditorium. And indeed, the performance level throughout the concert is exemplary.

Finally, a few words about a fairly devastating experience: Zimmermann's *Requiem for a Young Poet*, imported at presumably vast expense from Cologne, with the Cologne Radio Choir and Orchestra directed by Gary Bertini and a huge multi-track tape set-up, all of which seems to function perfectly. There are some pieces one's almost afraid to hear again after a gap of several years, in case the original overwhelming impression just isn't there any more. Well, for me the impression *is* still there. The *Requiem* is an astonishing piece, sociologically as well as musically: a funeral rite for the sixties, a premonition of the Baader-Meinhof era, if you like; but above all, superb music, dense, claustrophobic and vastly sombre: a masterpiece. After that, it was time to leave Strasbourg.

* * *

A brief visit to London led to more contact with composers than with their works. One-week impressions are, of necessity, superficial, but the 'scene' does seem to be steadily decaying. There's a fair amount of surface activity, to judge from forthcoming programmes, but very little reflection on content; parochialism seems to have taken over with a vengeance. Compared to a few years ago, people seem reluctant to say what they mean in public, unless it's of the most reactionary nature conceivable. And behind the scenes, they simply grow more divided and embittered. My only experience of 'live' music – 'alive' might be putting it too strongly – was the first half of Messiaen's cycle of organ pieces *Livre du Saint Sacrament*, composed in 1984 and given its British première by Jennifer Bate in Westminster Cathedral on October 7. I used to adore Messiaen's music (some of it I still do), but I find the recent work frankly distressing. To me, it sounds so old and sluggish – a faded recollection of glories long since past ('Les corps inglorieux' was a phrase that came to mind more than once during the new organ cycle). Apparently, such thoughts are not permissible in London these days.

Donaueschingen, 16 – 19 October

Since the première of Ferneyhough's *Carceri d'Invenzione* cycle at the Donaueschingen Musiktage was one of the main reasons for my being in Europe, I arrive a day early to attend some rehearsals. Fairly rapidly, three things emerge:
i) that Roberto Fabbriciani is an utterly astonishing flautist – probably the best new-music flautist in Europe today;
ii) that conductor Arturo Tamayo really isn't the man for the job; he is obviously enthusiastic about the music, but his beat isn't precise enough (some musicians are already complaining) for these super-intricate pieces, and the constant need to call for 'Ruhe!' (Quiet!) suggests a certain lack of authority (though I understand the studio recording has gone well);
iii) that the Ferneyhough had better be good, because the rest of the festival promises to be pretty dire (to judge, once again, from snippets of rehearsals, players' reports etc.).

Somehow, Ferneyhough has managed to get the whole cycle finished in time (apparently it was touch and go with Arditti's violin solo – just as well that he's used to achieving the impossible at 24 hours' notice), and the composer walks around the hall with a bound copy of the whole cycle proudly tucked under his arm. Of course, not all the music is unfamiliar: *Superscriptio* for piccolo and *Carceri I* for sixteen instruments have had some exposure; *Carceri II* for flute and chamber orchestra had a fairly abortive airing in Italy and a rather better one (so I'm told) in London; and the *Etudes transcendentales* for mezzo-soprano, flute, oboe, cello and harpsichord, in various stages of completion, has been doing the rounds for a couple of years. But the *Intermedio* for solo violin, *Carceri III* for fifteen wind instruments and percussion, and *Mnemosyne* for bass flute and tape are new, and so is the presentation of these works as a cycle.

The audience reception at the première is respectful rather than rapturous: a *succès d'éstime*. One can think of many reasons for this: the low-profile ending of the last piece, *Mnemosyne* (but then, the not-with-a-bang-but-a-whimper ending has been almost obligatory in Ferneyhough's work since *Funerailles II* – one *knows* the music will evaporate: the question is, *how?*); the sheer, unremitting density of the musical invention; and its distance from all the neo-romantic, neo-simplistic fashions of the current German festival circuit. But there are other factors: the question of whether the work can really be perceived as a cycle, rather than a collection of seven fascinating but separate pieces (I still feel rather ambivalent about this); the audibility, in a concert-hall situation, of the enormously refined microtonal writing; and at bottom, maybe, the whole notion of a latter-day *musica reservata* whose technical resources demand that it be presented in a hall too large for its accurate perception. *Carceri I* and *III*, along with the solo pieces, make a direct dramatic impact but *Carceri II* and the *Etudes* – arguably the 'core pieces' of the cycle – demand slow absorption through repeated hearing: a luxury not available at festival premières.

As for the rest of the festival, perhaps the less said the better. The dismal state of 'young composition' in Germany is such that the organisers are now forced to return to the *failures* of previous years in order to satisfy the Teutonic demand for continuity. As in 1983, Manuel Hidalgo confirms that whereas real Lachenmann can be enthralling (as witness the new piano-and-orchestra piece, *Ausklang!*), *ersatz* Lachenmann is usually pretty dire. This time he has a seconder in Mayako Kubo, another Lachenmannite. The difference between Hidalgo's *Al componer* and Kubo's Piano Concerto is – in brutal précis – that Hidalgo seems to know what the Lachenmann aesthetic is about but lacks the acuity of hearing and timing to recapture and project it, whereas Kubo is able to mimic the surface of Lachenmann's work without ever penetrating to its content.

Even so, these are honorable failures. Others (all ensemble pieces) are less creditable: Emmanuel Nunes' *Wandlungen* applies 30-minutes' worth of bland craftsmanship to bland harmonic material; Johannes Kalitzke (*Jardins paradoxaux*) doesn't seem to have realised that dressing like Stockhausen, and behaving like him at rehearsals, is no substitute for *being* Stockhausen; Enrique Raxach – in *Calles y Suenos* – produces fifteen minutes of competent kitsch that could easily have found its way into episodes of *Hawaii Five-O*; Simon Holt's best moment in . . . *era madrugada* is a slightly clumsy variant of Gershwin's 'It ain't necessarily so'; and the ultimate low-point (leaving aside Patricia Jünger's 'Hörstück' *Sehr geehrter Herr – ein Requiem* (Dear Sir, a Requiem), whose Karl Sczuka Prize can only be regarded as the outcome of snivelling tokenism) is provided by Reinhard Febel's utterly inept Symphony for large orchestra. Febel, who is already in his mid-thirties, has been hailed as a major talent. On the evidence of the Symphony, a good friend might usefully send him an orchestration textbook for Christmas.

Stuttgart, 1 – 4 November

The opening phase of the 'Music and Film' festival is an endless shaggy (Andalusian) dog story – that is, a sequence of reinterpretations of Dali/Buñuel's *Un chien andalou*. Personally, I think Buñuel got it right first time – a reconstruction of his original impromptu juxtaposition of *Tristan* and Argentinian tangos seems hard to beat. Certainly Josef Anton Riedl's all-purpose neo-fifties electronic score has absolutely nothing to add (and he always seems to write the same piece – would it make any difference if the commission was for *Bambi* or *120 Days of Sodom*?). Nor am I convinced by Wolfgang Rihm's *Bild* (1984), which the composer asks

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to have performed before or after the film, rather than during it. In an interview somewhere, Rihm said he didn't actually like the film. Fine – but then why accept the commission? Perhaps the one thing he has in common with Salvador Dali is Breton's 'Avid à dollars'? Not surprisingly, it's Kagel who produces the best 'new' score (*Szenario*, written in 1982); whereas Buñuel provoked by naming the film after a quadruped which never appears, Kagel provokes by restoring him on the soundtrack – in fact the 'dog obbligati' are among the highpoints of the score.

Kagel presents a recording of the score, along with the film of his *MM 51*, at a lecture, and just as well, since the live performance that evening by the Saarbrücken Orchestra under Dennis Russell Davies is atrocious, with poor rhythm and excrutiatingly bad intonation. In fact the whole concert (with film music by Michael Nyman, Virgil Thomson and Prokofiev)is profoundly unimpressive – only a solo piano performance of Satie's music for *Relâche*, combined with a showing of the film itself, gives any real pleasure.

Not everything is film music: one concert by young performers includes very decent performances of Lachenmann's *Klangschatten* and Holliger's *Dona nobis pacem* – (are the 'seventies revivals' coming already?), and a piano duo concert (Gunilde Cramer/Yukiko Sugawara) includes a Hidalgo work (*Les Pièces*) which shows him in a more favourable light than *Al componer*.

Metz, 20 – 23 November

Inauspicious beginnings: given the obscure venue – a side-street cinema – you'd think this was a concert the organisers of the 15th Recontres internationales de musique contemporaine wanted to hide. But in fact it's packed, with sweaty student bodies clogging the gangway. The music, though, is no great shakes: Aldo Brizzi's *Mi Ha-Sefer* for saxophone, percussion and tape has some terribly naive periodic rhythms and very banal percussion writing, while José Campana's *Insight* for the same forces, plus flute and bass, seems to be off on a cosmic trip à la Antonin Artaud. After the interval, some spotlights shine directly in my face; if this is meant to be a form of alienation, it succeeds brilliantly – I'm totally alienated. I hold out during Scelsi's pious pseudo-ethnological melodies (*Wo Ma*, with the bass Boris Carmeli), but faced with the prospect of Ivo Malec's 30-minute crash course in tinnitus acquisition (*Attacca* for solo percussion and tape), I head for the exit.

The first major concert is the première of *Evas Zauber* (Eve's Magic), the latest instalment of *Montag* from Stockhausen's *Licht*. Well, what can one say? It's a piece one is likely to find either charming or abominble, depending on one's outlook. It seems that Stockhausen has taken over from his teacher Messiaen the role of combining naivety and sophistication to an almost inconceivable degree. The stage spectacle suggests an alliance between Hansel and Gretel and Disney's *Pinocchio*: I don't think I've ever seen a new-music theatre piece that was so 'wholesome'. The Parisians in the audience have some unkind words for Suzanne Stephens' diaphonous green garment, or rather, for what is revealed thereby; what strikes me is how much Ms Stephens' stage presence has improved since the *Harlekin* days (and her basset horn playing, too, is quite remarkable). Flautist Kathinka Pasveer performed with her usual startling brilliance. What of the music? Again, the mixture of naivety and sophistication – it's *very* skilfully written for the two principal instrumentalists (one can easily believe Stockhausen's claim that he worked with each player for several hours a day over three months), but despite the intricacy with which the basic melodic formulae are elaborated, I really can't detect much substance in the results – who would have thought that serialism could become so pretty?

Xenakis's *Horos* (1986) is, for my taste, unacceptably crude in rhythm and opaque in sound, though it could be that the Radio Luxembourg Symphony orchestra under Michel Tabachnik doesn't do it full justice. At the same time, it lacks the sense of sheer excess that makes the new 'piano concerto' *Keqrops* so striking. Tabachnik also presented a one-hour 'excerpt' from his own *Le Pacte des Onze*, which curiously combines rather accurate reminiscences of Messiaen's *Liturgies* with a barrage of IRCAM electronics.

A rather sparsely attended concert by the Dutch Radio Choir and Orchestra under David Porcelijn starts with an early (1968) piece by Klaas de Vries for two pianos and orchestra (*Refrains*). It's instructive, because although very obviously influenced by late Stravinsky, it sounds so much better than the rest of the programme. In those days, even students were expected to select their notes carefully. Tomas Marco's *Pulsar*, on the contrary, exemplifies the current super-decline: about as dreary, unimaginative and orchestrally inept an exercise in periodic rhythms as one could ever hope to encounter. Ton de Leeuw's *Invocations* are undoubtedly sincere and competent, but most of the work really could have been written forty or more years ago, and would have belonged in the 'cautiously Stravinskian' camp even then. The procession of latter-day Symphony-of-Psalmists seems to be growing endless – but is there any reason why belief should be a substitute for musical invention? The same thought comes to mind later, listening to some rather turgid psalm settings by Marek Kopelent (*Cantus supplex*); what a relief it is when Michaël Lévinas asks the members of Groupe Vocal de France to 'couple' vocally through the orifices of horn mouthpieces and, by the look of things, kazoos in *Les Reciproques*! At last, some good-humoured effrontery!

It's good to hear a live performance of Steve Reich's *The Desert Music*, but – heaven help us – isn't it Stravinsky's *Les Noces* all over again, with an unwelcome dollop of Walt Disney thrown in? What happened to the hard-edged composer of *Music for Eighteen Musicians* (a piece pallidly recalled in both *The Desert Music*, and in *New York Counterpoint* which precedes it on the Metz programme)?

Kagel's concert is a late-seventies/early-eighties retrospective, of mainly lightweight items (though I imagine Kagel takes *Fürst Igor Stravinsky*, excellently performed by Carmeli and the Cologne New Music Ensemble, more seriously than I can). *Klangwölfe*, for ultra-muted violin and piano, is a favourite of mine, and a new TV film of *Dressur* for three percussionists is also enjoyable. Kagel's address before the film is a reminder that there are still *some* articulate composers around.

The final concert, in the freezing environment of the church of the Abbaye des Prémontrés (it must belong to an order of ascetics) is notable mainly for saxophonist Daniel Kientzy's wild rendering of Volker Heyn's *Buon natale fratello Fritz* and George Benjamin's very accomplished account of his own quite unbelievably trite *Three Studies for Piano*, which most of the audience seems to adore. Wasn't it Noel Coward who said something about the awful potency of cheap music? Time to go home . . .

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Andrew Ball Pianist; active as a soloist and ensemble player, in both contemporary and standard repertoire. On the staff of the Guildhall School of Music.

Hilary Bracefield Writer and broadcaster; Lecturer in Music at the University of Ulster and director of the Mushroom Group, which performs experimental and improvised music.

Christopher Fox Composer, performer and lecturer in art and design. A member of the Composers' Forum at the Darmstadt Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in 1984 and 1986. He is at present living in West Berlin as a guest of the DAAD Berliner Kunstlerprogramm and working on an evening-long cycle of pieces for Ensemble Köln and a piece for Philip Mead for electrically stimulated piano.

Robin Freeman A poet who prefers the company of musicians to that of writers. His interest in contemporary music dates from 1956 when he 'discovered' the Webern Symphony. He currently divides his time between Highbury and Rome and is engaged on several projects with composers, including a libretto for Nicolas Bacri.

James Ingram Composer and copyist. Studied with Harrison Birtwistle between 1969 and 1972 and has copied for Karlheinz Stockhausen since 1974.

Nicola LeFanu Composer and Senior Lecturer in Music at King's College, London, a post she shares with her husband the composer David Lumsdaine. Her music has been played and broadcast throughout most of the world; she has composed some 40 works, in all media. Her radio opera *The Story of Mary O'Neill*, a BBC commission, will be heard on BBC Radio 3 in 1988.

Ivan Moody Composer and writer on contemporary and early music. He studied with Brian Dennis and John Tavener. The première of his *Canticum Canticorum* motets was given in Munich by the Hilliard Ensemble in March 1987, and he has recently completed a large-scale cycle of Lithuanian poems for soprano and orchestra. His choir Voces Angelicae has performed music by Tavener and Pärt as well as his own works.

Paul Mounsey Composer and pianist. After growing up in Scotland and studying music in London, he first went to Brazil in 1983-4, moving to São Paulo on a longer-term basis in 1985. He has organised and performed in several concerts in São Paulo which have included works of his own as well as music by Cornelius Cardew and others. Now a composer of pop songs for CBS and jingles for TV commercials, he is also active as a record producer for EMI. A piece of his entitled *La cigale et la fourmie* was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 last May.

Richard Toop Musicologist and Head of the School of Musicology of the New South Wales Conservatorium of Music in Sydney.

Kevin Volans Composer in residence at Queen's University of Belfast. His just-completed Second String Quartet, commissioned by the Lincoln Center, New York for the Kronos Quartet, receives its première in December. A record by the Kronos Quartet, 'White Man Sleeps', which includes his work of that title, has just been released by Nonesuch Records.

PERSPECTIVES OF NEW MUSIC John Rahn, editor

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