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Contact: A Journal for Contemporary Music (1971-1988)

<http://contactjournal.gold.ac.uk>

Citation

Fox, Christopher. 1983. 'Walter Zimmermann's Local Experiments'. *Contact*, 27. pp. 4-9.
ISSN 0308-5066.

Christopher Fox

Walter Zimmermann's Local Experiments

In the summer of 1982 I went to Darmstadt for the Ferienkurse. One of a number of reasons for going was a curiosity about the German composer Walter Zimmermann, who had been invited to give a concert and to lead an *atelier* (effectively to be a composer-in-residence) during the course. My curiosity was founded on a little knowledge of his music¹ and an awareness that his Beginner Studio is the only regular venue in Cologne for improvised and experimental musics; I had also heard of, but not been able to find, *Desert Plants*, his book on American experimental music—all evidence to suggest that Zimmermann might be an example of that rare breed, the German experimental composer. What follows is intended as further evidence to support that suggestion.

Experimental music can perhaps be defined as occupying the territory between Cage's 4'33" and 0'0"; at one extreme music open to every sound, at the other music of extraordinary restriction. Common to both is an aesthetic that requires that sounds be heard as themselves rather than as elements within composerly constructs, an aesthetic that requires composers to distance themselves from the sounds that constitute their music.

Of course, if 4'33" and 0'00" represent the ultimate experimental music, all other experimental music must involve more composerly elaboration; the 'emptiness' (to use Michael Nyman's word)² of 4'33" is at some remove from, for example, Gavin Bryars's version of Tom Phillips's *Irma* or Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*. Nevertheless, all share the same characteristically experimental distancing of creative will from created sound—as the convoluted compositional games described on the sleeve of *Irma*³ and the remorseless processes of *Einstein* ensure—and all reject the possibility of music as a direct and immediate outpouring of the creative will, striven for by composers such as Wolfgang Rihm. If Rihm's strivings are perhaps typically European (and particularly German) then the experimental attitudes of Cage, Bryars and Glass may be seen as typically American, and Zimmermann's *Desert Plants* can be seen as the account of a journey of clarification, undertaken to establish the degree of interconnection between the freedom and openness of the experimental tradition and the freedom and openness (in constitutional spirit at least) of America, and eventually to determine whether, and how, an authentically European experimental music might be produced.

Zimmermann went to the United States in 1975 to talk to American composers, 'at least to find out what they have in common besides being different',⁴ and it was to John Cage he went first. Cage gave him names and addresses of subjects for further interviews and so *Desert Plants* became, like Nyman's *Experimental Music*, a book about 'Cage and beyond'. In order of appearance the composers involved are Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, John Cage, Philip Corner, Jim Burton, Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Robert Ashley, Alvin Lucier, Joan la Barbara, Pauline Oliveros, David Rosenboom, Richard Teitelbaum, Larry Austin, James Tenney, Conlon Nancarrow, La Monte Young, Charlemagne Palestine, Charles Morrow, Garrett List, Frederic Rzewski, John McGuire, and Harry

Partch. Partch (who died in 1974 and to whose memory *Desert Plants* is dedicated) is represented by Ben Johnston's reminiscences of him, and (since Zimmermann's trip was financed on a shoestring) Nancarrow, who lives in Mexico, is discussed by J. B. Floyd, while La Monte Young—who wanted money before he would talk—is represented by a photograph of his front door and a transcription of the brief telephone conversation in which he refused to be interviewed. Similarly, the record of a phone-call to James Tenney in California has to stand in place of a projected but abandoned trip to the West Coast.

For anyone interested in American experimental music, *Desert Plants* is invaluable, a uniquely extensive survey. Of course, the Cage interview covers some ground familiar to readers of *For the Birds*,⁵ the Lucier interview cannot offer as comprehensive an account of his work as *Chambers*,⁶ Lucier's book of scores and interviews with Douglas Simon, and Steve Reich had time only to jot down the same remarks as constitute the sleeve note of *Music for 18 Musicians*.⁷ But much of the rest of the book provides information found nowhere else, not even in *Source* or *Soundings*.⁸ Zimmermann also includes a number of the composers' pieces—Wolff's song *After a Few Years*, three pages from Cage's *Songbooks*, Oliveros's 'ceremonial opera' *Crow Two*, and others—as well as copies of sketches by Ives, Nancarrow, and Feldman.

Zimmermann's approach is refreshingly unjournalistic (though there may be some who would describe it as irritatingly unprofessional); his usual technique as an interviewer is to begin by seeking information about specific pieces or performances of which he already knows something, before going on to discuss the ideas that lie behind the music. But because he is interested not only in drawing information out of the composers but also in testing his own ideas about music, many of the interviews develop a momentum that draws them away from the classic model for the in-depth interview. In place of patient, carefully researched questions provoking the composers to give an account of themselves, one finds real conversations full of digressions, misunderstandings, sometimes even disagreement. Nor have the interviews been tidied up for publication: Zimmermann says:

I know that the realistic transcriptions of the dialogues, leaving in the background sounds, the 'ums', 'ahs', 'likes', the coughs and the laughs sometimes makes it harder to understand what we want to say. However it strengthens the attention to far more interesting things, namely allowing the reader to follow the flow of CONSCIOUSNESS. [pp.x-xi]

Robert Ashley says to Zimmermann:

You know, if you record conversations with fifty composers in the United States about their ideas, and if you get into each conversation deeply, then at the end you'll have one about me and one about Steve and one about Jim Burton, and so on. But you'll have fifty about yourself! [p.127]

Coming to *Desert Plants* with a knowledge of what followed—*Lokale Musik*—the truth of this prediction is borne out and one of the underlying motivations for the book becomes even more apparent. As Zimmer-

mann writes in his introduction: 'Meeting all these people made a lot clear in myself, about my view of American musicians and what I'm going to do as a musician returning to Europe.' [p.xi] In particular, the book shows him exploring ideas about the artist's relationship to his culture and the extent to which it is possible or useful for an artist to rid himself of his cultural inheritance or to adopt ideas from another culture. Early on Philip Corner says:

You can accept being one hundred per cent where you are, but that single place where you are both geographically and in your consciousness, radiates out ... you're only an American as a kind of localized aspect of a consciousness which ... doesn't see America or Germany ... as a boundary, but like a place from which you look out. [p.91]

Later, Garrett List expresses a similar idea when he says:

The only way for a one-world kind of feeling is where each nationality, each locality, has its own strength. So that people don't have a need to take from another place, but can have what they need where they are. Then exchange really does become possible. [p.297]

But it is in Zimmermann's conversation with Frederic Rzewski, the one that comes nearest to developing a real dialectic, that these ideas are most extensively discussed. Rzewski is anxious to expose the political dimension of a thesis that has previously been debated in abstract, almost metaphysical terms, while Zimmermann is equally anxious to distinguish between his developing idea of the use of a cultural locality as the basis for new music and a politically motivated rejection of the internationalism of the post-war avant garde. Their arguments sometimes seem to be at cross-purposes, the conversation sidestepping from a discussion of jazz as an international music to a spirited defence by Rzewski of Cardew's *Thälmann Variations*; but the exchange once more confirms Zimmermann's belief in 'the necessity now to again find out more about the music where you yourself geographically come from', as he puts it to Rzewski, to which comes the reply: 'I think if you did something like that you would probably find that this music that you're talking about is not dead at all ... I bet you'd find it if you went to Bavaria, especially to small villages and so on.' [pp.315-16]

If then, as Ashley suggests, *Desert Plants* can be read as 23 conversations about Zimmermann, it is clear that by the end of his American journey he had formed a definite idea of how to proceed as a composer. It is also clear that *Lokale Musik*, written between 1977 and 1981, is a realisation of that idea. Indeed Rzewski's remark comes remarkably close to prophecy, since it was to his native Franconia, a district of Bavaria, that Zimmermann turned for material for *Lokale Musik*, exploring existing collections of the region's traditional dance music. But in one respect Rzewski's prediction was wrong—the music had died, at least insofar as it no longer survived as a developing art form in the community in which it originated; the tunes and their arrangements had either become fixed and formalised or had been commercialised in what Zimmermann describes as 'awful beerhouse music'.⁹

Lokale Musik could not, then, be an essay in the adoption and extension of a living musical language, but had rather to attempt to create a new music out of fossilised material. Zimmermann's approach is quite close to that of composers such as Vaughan Williams, Holst, and Grainger, but whereas they simply imposed on their borrowed material the current European art music practice, Zimmermann sees his treatment of Franconian dance tunes in *Lokale Musik*

as an attempt 'to open up this locality to the whole planet'.

Lokale Musik consists of well over two hours of music, arranged in four cycles, with a prologue and epilogue;¹⁰ the instrumentation ranges from single instruments to large orchestra. In its entirety the work runs thus (the outline given here is Zimmermann's own for use with English-speaking audiences):

Prolog: Ephemere, for piano trio

Ländler Topographien, for orchestra

Phran

Topan

Tophra

An

Leichte Tänze

10 'Fränkische Tänze' sublimated for string quartet

25 'Kärwamelodien' substituted for 2 clarinets

20 'Figurentänze' transformed for 6 instruments (2 clarinets, trumpet, 2 violins and double bass)

15 'Zwiefache' transcended for guitar

Wolkenorte, for harp

Stille Tänze

Erd-, Wasser-, Luft-Töne, for prepared piano, trombone and rubbed wine-glasses

Riuti—clearings and abandoned places, for percussionist

Keuper—nameless dances, for string quartet

Epilog: Der Tanz und der Schmerz, for 11 instruments

The composer describes the music as following a 'cycle of transcendence', from the relatively straight account of the originals given in 'Ländler Topographien' to music in which all trace of folk melody has disappeared in 'Keuper'. A similar process of transcendence occurs within each large section of the work, most evidently in the 'Leichte Tänze', where Zimmermann's description of each set of pieces ('"Fränkische Tänze" sublimated', and so on) indicates the different stages of this process and the type of dance tune used. In this development Zimmermann intended to create a musical analogy for a gradual extension of consciousness from existence within the confines of a single culture to an apprehension of the all-embracing 'multi-versal'.

Zimmermann's strategy for achieving this sense of progressive transcendence is to feed the dance melodies into compositional filters from which they emerge in ever more unfamiliar form. Thus, in 'Phran' the melodies retain their pitch and rhythmic identity and are played by an orchestra rich in timbres characteristic of Bavarian town bands—a large wind section including saxophones, E-flat trumpet, and baritone horn, and a collection of tuned metal percussion; but the detail of the orchestration is determined by an elaborate process that involves assigning two or three pitches to each of a group of instruments, which can then 'scan' an eight-bar melody containing these pitches. The result is a series of intricate *Klangfarbenmelodie* arrangements, using a sort of hocket technique which, as Zimmermann says, 'is a very basic and elementary form of polyphony, of making music together—you find it from Africa to Java, all cultures of high or folk art have this technique because it's a very elementary social form'.

Hockets occur again in the 'Fränkische Tänze', but now the music is predominantly monophonic and the strings are transformed by *scordatura* tunings that allow all the pitches of the ten dance tunes to be played as natural harmonics (Example 1). One of Zimmermann's aims here is to create a situation in which the players cannot 'control the sounds too much'. He describes the use of harmonics as a

Example 1 'Fränkische Tänze', section VII

technique of 'non-control' since the player cannot 'intonate a sound and form it and control it and give it emotion... so he becomes someone who just lets the instrument vibrate and doesn't project himself onto it'. An almost inevitable consequence of this total reliance on natural harmonics—and Zimmermann requires the higher, more precarious ones—is that mistakes are made; but he argues that since the term 'mistake' implies a failure to achieve control, and since his aim is 'non-control', unintended notes are not mistakes. The use of harmonics lends the music a tentative, hesitant quality, not unlike that produced (albeit by quite different performance requirements) in Christian Wolff's *Exercises*.

In his notes on *Lokale Musik*¹¹ Zimmermann suggests that the 'Leichte Tänze' are concerned with a confrontation between culture and nature, exemplified in the 'Fränkische Tänze' by the suppression of the tempered tuning of the original melodies and its replacement with the natural tuning of the overtone series. This exploitation of natural acoustic phenomena continues in the 'Kärwamelodien', where the melody is articulated by the difference tones resulting from two-part clarinet writing. Like the natural harmonics, some difference tones sound more strongly than others, so that the resulting 'shadow melody' comes and goes, its intensity depending on the interaction of variables such as dynamic level and the acoustic of the performance space.

The music most immediately called to mind here is Cage's work of the late 1940s and early 1950s—an influence acknowledged by Zimmermann—where in pieces such as the String Quartet and the *Six Melodies* for violin and piano there is a similar limitation of the gamut of available sounds and a

similar exploration of *scordatura* and harmonics; and, just as Cage's use of proportional rhythmic structures served to distance him from the music, so Zimmermann's use of existing melodies gives his work comparable anonymity. In particular, the 'Quodlibet' finale of Cage's Quartet has a robust vigour very close in spirit to that of the 'Figurentänze' and the 'Kärwamelodien' (Example 2).

Cage's influence is also evident in the fourth cycle of *Lokale Musik*, especially in the solo percussion piece 'Riuti'. As the name 'Stille Tänze' (Silent dances) implies, the dance tunes are now filtered out of all recognition; in fact 'Riuti' is based on place names rather than melodies, the vowels and consonants having instrumental equivalents established so that the names can be transliterated into percussion sounds. Like the messages instrumentally articulated in the music of Vinko Globokar,¹² the litany of names in 'Riuti' is incomprehensible to the innocent ear. Zimmermann says, however, that it is not important to hear the words behind the sounds, but suggests that 'It's a bit like a talking drum—you don't really know the meaning but you have the sense that there's a message'. In effect, then, the words become, like the melodies elsewhere in *Lokale Musik*, a grid in terms of which a restricted range of instrumental sounds can be ordered, a compositional device.

Although the most audible reference that *Lokale Musik* makes to the Western art music tradition is to Cage's work of the late forties and early fifties, it is nevertheless possible to hear references to a number of other composers. In particular, 'Wolkenorte', the solo harp piece that comprises the third cycle of the work, seems close to the world of Christian Wolff's music of the 1970s, not only because the harpist must sing¹³ as well as play (like the pianist in Wolff's *Accompaniments*) but also because the predominantly chordal writing inhabits a harmonic world which—like that of Wolff's *Braverman Music*—is neither tonal nor atonal. In both, this ambiguity is achieved by superimposing tonal phrases without apparent regard for the harmonic product of the superimposition. But whereas Wolff's music is politically motivated (the source of its tonal material is the German anti-Nazi resistance song *Die Moorsoldaten*) Zimmermann's has an essentially spiritual purpose: the 3:4 numerical proportioning that determines the superimpositions of the various melodies symbolises the relationship between heaven and earth (recalling the medieval equation of

Example 2 Opening of 'Kärwamelodien'

triple time with the divine Trinity and duple time with Man) (Example 3).

'*Wolkenorte*' lies at the heart of *Lokale Musik*, at the point where the Franconian melodies are poised between their shadowy existence in 'Leichte Tänze' and their dissolution in 'Stille Tänze': like *Lokale Musik* as a whole, it lies halfway between art music and folk music. As Zimmermann says:

It's like John Cage said once about the comparison between him and Harry Partch, when he said 'Harry Partch tries to make folk music into art music and I try to make art music into folk music.' I worked with these two concepts, on the middle ground at the meeting of folk music and art music.

However, although *Lokale Musik* is an extraordinary achievement, it cannot really be seen as a final solution to the problem with which Zimmermann confronted himself in *Desert Plants*—the development of a new music from his own culture—simply because the traditional music of that culture is, as Zimmermann admits, 'no longer a living art'. His next project, the *Schalkhäuser-Lieder*—two song-cycles, of which the first, *Freunde*, was completed in 1981—addresses this problem anew. The musical locality chosen here is described by the composer as 'an ambiguous combination which goes into many corners . . . a rock band but not a real rock band'. The ensemble consists of Zimmermann (piano and vocals), a harpist, an electric guitarist, and a drummer, and the title *Freunde* has a double significance, referring both to Zimmermann's friends in the ensemble and to the friends he portrays in the music, through settings of letters and conversations. Whereas the physical locality of *Lokale Musik* was the whole of Franconia, that of *Freunde* is Zimmermann's circle of friends in Cologne.

Again Zimmermann's intention is to open the chosen locality to other cultures, and in so doing he establishes a parallel with Cologne itself, since musically the city is distinctly cosmopolitan. Kagel's music-theatre class at the Hochschule für Musik is as notable a mecca for composers today as Stockhausen's composition course there was in the sixties and seventies, and the influx of composers from the rest of Europe and America is matched by a similar influx of players. There is, then, a high proportion of immigrant composers working in Cologne, a relative freedom from the dead hand of neoromanticism, and an openness to innovation in fields as diverse as computer music (Klarenz Barro, for example),¹⁴ electroacoustic music (the Feedback Studio composers), minimal/systems music (John McGuire), music theatre (Chris Newman), and ethnic music (Zimmermann and Kevin Volans). There is also a fascinating cross-fertilisation of ideas: Zimmermann's rehabilitation of Franconian dances, for example, provided Barlow with material on which to base his research into metric cohesion.¹⁵

The 18 movements of *Freunde* are:

- 1 Muckn-Blues (text by Fitzgerald Kusz)
- 2 Carol's Dream (Carol Byl)
- 3 Ami-Schicks (Gabriele Schreimel)
- 4 Geburtstagsgrüsse (anonymous)
- 5 Die Gitarre blieb liegen (Zimmermann)
- 6 Drums weg (Zimmermann)
- 7 Der Aztekenstein (Herbert Henck)
- 8 Miss TL (Zimmermann)
- 9 Über das einzelne Weggehen (R. D. Brinkmann)
- Interlude: 40 Chords for Jon
- 10 Krikel-Krakel (Zimmermann)
- 11 Sang (anonymous Dutch poet)
- 12 Quasi-Swazi (Zimmermann)
- 13 Zwischen den Stühlen (Zimmermann)

Example 3 Ending of 'Wolkenorte'

30 4/4 (♩ = 75) EPILOG (nach Worten von MEISTER ECKHART)
 → VERSION (B) (mit Synthesizer) VERSION (C) (ohne Synthesizer)

- 14 Kein Tanzbär mehr sein (Zimmermann)
- 15 Thumbstrasse 68 (Zimmermann)
- 16 lich moch di fei immer nu (Godehard Schramm)
- Coda: Kehraus Galopp (Hassidic Rabbi)

The music is, if anything, even more open than *Lokale Musik*. 'These are portraits of my friends', Zimmermann says. Each of them is very different and so this was a challenge for me to produce all kinds of styles and juxtapose them.' The styles range from the utterly unadorned 'Drums weg' (the text of which is intoned on a single note almost throughout, with an accompanying piano chord for each syllable) to the boogie-based 'Ami-Schicks' (a recycling of the chord sequence from America's hit, *Horse with no Name*), from 'Kein Tanzbär mehr sein', which has a grand rhetorical sweep reminiscent of Jacques Brel, to the *musique concrète* postlude to 'Sang'. The music also draws further on Zimmermann's Franconian researches—covertly in its creation of another form of shadow melody, where the rhythmic identity of a folk tune is preserved but its intervallic contour inverted, and openly in, for example, the use of the tune *An der Saale hellem Strande*¹⁷ as a whistled postlude to 'Krikel-Krakel'.

The lyrics are equally diverse: from the jive babble of 'Ami-Schicks'—'I got my shit grouped/ that ain't no shit man/ that shit don't cut it/ that shit don't get no fly high'—to a summary in 'Quasi-Swazi' of Kevin Volans's recent compositional manner—'No more chromatic scales/ legato/ fast repeating pp chords/ extended major/minor/ . . . African extravagance with European harmony.' The settings of these lyrics once more recall Cage's and Wolf's treatments of text, for they are far from conventionally elegant: one has the sense of music and words pursuing independent courses, despite the fact that one is sung to the other. Only occasionally does Zimmermann resort to the mimetic devices of traditional word-setting.

Nor do these songs receive conventionally elegant

vocal performances, for, like the singer-songwriters of the French *chanson* and German *Liedermacher* traditions, Zimmermann sings his own material, in a voice whose nearest English equivalent is perhaps that of Robert Wyatt. Just as the untrained idiosyncrasies of Wyatt's voice are equally appropriate to *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* and *I'm a Believer*, so Zimmermann's voice lends to *Freunde* a quality that locates it (like *Lokale Musik*) on the middle ground between folk and art music.

Zimmermann's full exploitation of his vocal range and colour, from a husky baritone to a clear falsetto, is matched by the great variety of timbres he extracts from his instrumental ensemble. The potential of piano, guitar, and drums as a rock line-up is obvious, but there are also some very unexpected effects: the interplay of guitar and harp in their upper registers in 'Ami-Schicks' is an attractive device, and elsewhere the harp is used as a bass instrument. The drummer doubles on glockenspiel and the guitarist on concertina, so the ensemble can sound like a mid-Atlantic rock group in one song and a Bavarian folk band in another.

At various points in the cycle, Zimmermann introduces extraneous material on tape either as an ostinato behind live instruments and voice or, more often, as the introduction to a song. In both cases the relationship of tape to live performance is simple but effective: 'Die Gitarre blieb liegen', for example, the lyrics of which are about a guitarist whose arm is broken when he is hit by a truck, is preceded by a conversation in Zimmermann's car in heavy traffic; at

the end of the conversation, during which the accident is described, one of the passengers in the car plays a chord sequence on guitar, which is then taken up, live, by the harp. The effect of this switch from the informal, but frozen, guitar playing on the tape to the formal, but alive, harp playing in concert is fascinating; it recalls the moment in *Hymnen* when Stockhausen interrupts the piece by interpolating a recording of a conversation with his assistant in which he discusses how next to proceed. At the same time, one is also reminded of the studied informality of *Desert Plants*.¹⁸

There is, of course, no shortage of composers in search of fame, fortune and an acceptable alternative to the insularity of the new music scene.¹⁹ But, unlike so many others, Zimmermann has not turned back to tonality as a way out of the élitist world of the post-war avant garde. The genuine accessibility of *Lokale Musik* and *Freunde* is the result of a carefully considered exploitation of the associative resonance inherent in particular musical cultures; but at the same time, the music retains the objectivity of approach to sound that characterises the experimental tradition.

WALTER ZIMMERMANN list of works 1975-1984

- ANFÄNGER SEIN (to be a beginner) 1975/1979-81
 1 Beginner's Mind (for one pianist)
 2 Freunde (friends) 17 songs (for voice with piano)
- EPHEMER (for piano trio) 1977/81
- LOKALE MUSIK (local music) 1977-81
 1 Ländler Topographien (for orchestra)
 2 Leichte Tänze 2.1 10 fränkische Tänze (for stringquartet)
 2.2 25 Kärwa-Melodien (for 2 clarinets)
 2.3 20 Figurentänze (for 6 instruments)
 2.4 15 Zwiefache (for guitar)
 3 Stille Tänze 3.1 Erd-Wasser-Lufttöne (for trombone, piano,
 3.2 Riuti (for one percussionist) glassspiel)
 3.3 Keuper (for stringquartet)
 4 Wolkenorte (for harp)
- FLECHTWERK 1982-84
 1 Glockenspiel (for one percussionist)
 2 Klangfaden (for harp, glockenspiel, contrabassclarinet)
 3 Lieder Weben (for voice, percussion, flute-quartet)
 4 Ghiordes-Knoten (for 4x9 instruments)
 5 Saitenspiel (for 18 instruments)
- VOM NUTZEN DES LASSENS 1982-84 -nach Meister Eckhart-
 1 In der Welt sein (for tenorsax)
 2 Loslösung (for viola, cello, contrabass & baritonesax)
 3 Abgeschlossenheit (for piano)
 4 Garten des Vergessens (for piano trio & altosax)
 5 Selbstvergessen (for sopranosax)

publications

- 1 books: DESERT PLANTS (Vancouver 1976)
 INSEL MUSIK (Köln 1981)
 Katalog FELDMAN (Bonn 1983)
 2 records: BEGINNER'S MIND (Köln 1977)
 LOKALE MUSIK -3LP-(Frankfurt 1982)
 Ländler-Topographien T1.1 (Bonn 1983)
 3 cassette: FREUNDE (Köln 1982)

all materials available through:
 BEGINNER STUDIO GOTTESWEG 52 5 KÖLN 51 FRG

- ¹ Herbert Henck played *Beginner's Mind* in February 1980 during the Goethe Institute's now sadly defunct Anglo-German Contemporary Music Series; Zimmermann and his Ensemble Beginner-Pool played most of the chamber music pieces from *Lokale Musik* in 1981 during the 1980-81 season of Adrian Jack's (gloriously undefunct) MusICA.
- ² 'the so-called silent piece ... is the most empty of its kind and therefore ... the most full of possibilities'. Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (London: Studio Vista, 1974), p.2.
- ³ Tom Phillips, *Irma* (Obscure Records OBS9).
- ⁴ *Desert Plants: Conversations with 23 American Composers* (Vancouver: A.R.C. Publications, 1977), p.xi.
- ⁵ John Cage, *For the Birds: John Cage in Conversation with Daniel Charles* (London: Marion Boyars, 1981).
- ⁶ [Alvin Lucier], *Chambers: Scores by Alvin Lucier, Interviews with the Composer by Douglas Simon* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1980).
- ⁷ Steve Reich, *Music for 18 Musicians* (ECM Records ECM 1-1129).
- ⁸ The American magazine *Soundings*, of course, not its Cardiff-based namesake. Incidentally, *Soundings*, no.12, pp.60-78, reprints the whole of the 'Fränkische Tänze' from *Lokale Musik*.
- ⁹ This remark, together with all other unattributed quotations from Zimmermann, is taken from a conversation I recorded with him in Darmstadt on 19 July 1982. All 'ums', 'ahs', and 'likes' (as well as the background sound of the Arditti Quartet rehearsing Xenakis!) have been omitted.
- ¹⁰ Despite its cyclical construction, Zimmermann does not object to performances of only a few, or even single movements from *Lokale Musik*.
- ¹¹ 'Lokale Musik: eine Projektsbeschreibung', *Insel Musik* (Cologne: Beginner Studio Recordings Press, 1981). *Insel Musik* comprises Zimmermann's collected writings to date, including *Desert Plants* in German and in English.
- ¹² I challenge any innocent ear to make sense of the texts embedded in pieces such as *Discours II* for five trombones (1967-8) or *Voix instrumentalisée* for amplified bass clarinet (1973).
- ¹³ Though Zimmermann states at the head of the score of 'Wolkenorte' that only Gabriele Emde, the work's dedicatee, may perform those sections of the piece that require singing: all other harpists must present an alternative voiceless version!
- ¹⁴ For Clarence Barlowe's numerous alter egos, represented by ingenious respellings of his name, see also my review of the 31st Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Darmstadt, 11-28 July 1982, in *Contact 25* (Autumn 1982), p.50.

- ¹⁵ Clarlow, *Bus Journey to Parametron* (Cologne: Feedback Studios, 1978), p.38.
- ¹⁶ I am indebted to my mother, Barbara Fox, for pointing this out (and for her help in translating the more impenetrable passages of the essay 'Lokale Musik').
- ¹⁷ The dedication of *Desert Plants* to Harry Partch reminds one that Partch, like Zimmermann in *Freunde*, composed

a number of pieces in which he set 'non-literary' texts: an example—a setting of a letter to Partch from a hobo friend—is printed at the end of *Desert Plants*.

- ¹⁸ This insularity was shown in the hostility that greeted the performance of *Lokale Musik* at Darmstadt. Zimmermann had also been invited to play *Freunde*, but, probably wisely, he turned down the invitation.

Chronology

- 1949 Born Schwabach, Central Franconia, West Germany
- 1968-70 Pianist in the Ars-Nova-Ensemble based in Nuremberg
- 1970-72 Studied composition with Kagel in Cologne; studied electronic music and the theory of musical cognition at the Institut voor Sonologie, Utrecht
- 1973 Studied ethnomusicology at the Ethnomusicologisch Centrum Jaap Kunst, Amsterdam; played in the Javanese gamelan of the Institut voor de Tropen
- 1974 Studied computer music at the Colgate University, New York
- 1975 Travelled extensively in the USA
- 1976 Recorded ethnic musics in Egypt and the USA
- 1977 *Desert Plants* published
- 1978 Started the Beginner Studio in Cologne
- 1981 *Insel Musik*, his collected writings, published
- 1982 Participated in the Music-Ecology Project in Manila; led an *atelier* at the Ferienkurse at Darmstadt; taught composition at the Conservatoire de Liège; toured North America performing *Freunde*

Works

Zimmermann's music is published by Beginner Press, Cologne.

- Akkord-Arbeit*, orchestra, 1971
- Einer ist keiner*, ensemble, 1972
- In Understanding Music the Sound Dies*, 1973
- Beginner's Mind*, piano, 1974-5; recording by Herbert Henck (Beginner Recordings R7709)
- Lokale Musik*, ensembles, orchestra, 1977-81; recording by Ensemble Beginner-Pool, Gabriele Emde (harp), Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra (Edition Theater am Turm)
- Schalkhäusser-Lieder, I: Freunde*, 1979-81; recording by Zimmermann, Gabriele Emde, Gerd Leibelung, Guido Conen (Beginner Recordings)
- Glockenspiel*, 3 percussionists, 1982
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