

# contact

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Editor: Keith Potter

Associate Editors: Hilary Bracefield  
David Lloyd Roberts

## EDITORIAL

Since Contact celebrates its "second anniversary" with this issue it may be as well to inform readers once again of our aims and how the magazine was started.

Contact's basic intentions - set out fully in the first issue, dated Spring 1971 - are to promote informed discussion of 20th century music in general and the music of our own time in particular. The founders of the magazine - Chris Villars, a philosophy student, and myself, at the time a second-year music undergraduate (both at Birmingham University) - were especially concerned that pop, jazz and contemporary folk music should play a part in our scheme. We have continually sought for good writing in these fields from the beginning, as well as the contributions on "serious" music which, inevitably - and, perhaps, at the moment rightly - have occupied the major part of each issue.

Our hope was that we would do a little towards bringing these different fields together and some of the people involved in them, in addition to "making contact" with those unacquainted with, or unsympathetic towards, modern music in general - and, especially, many contemporary styles of "serious" music.

After Chris Villars left Birmingham, Hilary Bracefield - a postgraduate music student from New Zealand - took over much of his side of the work. Now that I have also left the university we have, from this issue onwards, acquired another new member of the "editorial board" - David Lloyd Roberts, a research student in music who comes to Birmingham from Manchester University. Contact's basic intentions remain the same.

I should like to once again thank Jean Bourne, our typist, and Birmingham University Musical Society for its financial support. I must also thank David Roberts and Jo Burton for their art work.

Contact 7, due out in the summer, will continue our survey of the Experimental Music Catalogue, with the addition of a supplement containing a number of pieces from it. It will also include an article on electronic music studios by Peter Manning.

All contributions, subscriptions and enquiries should be addressed to:  
Keith Potter, 13 Dudley Road, Ashford, Middlesex.

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I would like to thank Jean Brown, our typist, and Birmingham University Musical Society for their financial support. I must also thank Gavin Bryars and David Lloyd Roberts for their contributions.

Our survey of the experimental music scene in the UK is the subject of our survey of the experimental music scene in the UK. It includes a number of pieces of music which have been written in the last few years. It also includes an article on electronic music studios by David Lloyd Roberts.

All correspondence, subscriptions and enquiries should be addressed to: The Editor, The Journal of Music, 11, St. John's Street, London, E.C.4.

THE VIOLIN FANTASY - SCHOENBERG'S SERIAL SCAFFOLDING

ABBCCD    ABBCCD    ABBC CD ABBC BA  
DADADA    CDDA    BC DA

Does this collection of thirty-eight letters make any sense?  
There are four distinct elements - A, B, C and D - which rotate and oscillate in an alphabetical sequence. This sequence is broken only at the end when the expected BC or CD is replaced by BA (no musical laws are broken by the presentation of AB in retrograde at this point).

A	B	C	D	A	bar
P-0 + I-5	I-1				1
	P-9 + I-2				21
		P-6 + I-11			25
			P-11+ I-4		26
			P-3 + I-8		27
			P-11+ I-4		29
P-0 + I-5					32
	P-5 + I-10				34
		P-2 + I-7			52
		P-10+ I-3			60
			P-7 + I-0		77
P-4 + I-9					85
	P-1 + I-6				102
	P-9 + I-2				110
		P-6 + I-11			117
			P-3 + I-8		135
P-0 + I-5					143
	P-5 + I-10				161
P-0 + I-5					162

When we expand the alphabetical sequence in terms of the pairs of sets used by Schoenberg in his Fantasy for violin with piano accompaniment op. 47 (1949) we can see that repetition of a letter does not mean repetition of an identical set-form. P-0, P-4, I-0, I-4 and I-8 are all described by the letter A. There are five sets described by the letter B, six by C and another six by D. The only reason that A and B do not have six each is that Schoenberg does not use P-8(A) or I-1(B) in the work.

When analysts discuss Schoenberg's combinatorial technique in his later serial works they inevitably give the greatest emphasis to the fixed association between P-0 and I-5, P-1 and I-6, and so on. It thus becomes self-evident that if the composer can be shown to be using P-0, I-5 will not be very far away (in op. 47 the two are combined from the very beginning). Nor is there any problem about why Schoenberg combined or juxtaposed these two particular set-forms. As far as the Violin Fantasy is concerned the reason can be expressed as follows:

P-0:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
I-5:	10	7	8	12	9	11	2	3	5	1	6	4

This shows that the order-numbers of the first hexachord of P-0 recur reordered in the second hexachord of I-5, and vice-versa.

What is less often discussed is why in this case Schoenberg should have followed P-0 + I-5 (A [rea] -0, to adopt David Lewin's convenient shorthand) with A-9 (P-9 + I-2) rather than with some other pair of transpositions. The change actually takes place in the middle of bar 21, shortly before the change of tempo in bar 25 which is an important stage in the thirty-nine bar first section of the Fantasy. The change of set-pair thus anticipates changes in other aspects of the music.

From the analytical summary presented above we read that I-5 (from Area 0) and P-9 (from Area 9) are both sets of type B, which means that the third trichord of each has the same pitches (in different order):

I-5:	10	7	8	12	9	11	2	3	5	1	6	4
P-9:	6	11	1	9	12	7	3	2	5	8	10	4

Schoenberg gives the adjacent statements of these two trichords to the violin (bars 20 and 23 respectively) and lays them out as follows, with significant differences and similarities:

Ex. 1:

An example of a similar process from later in the work may be seen in bars 74 - 78 of the violin part where the (type D) sets involved are I-3 and R-7:

Ex. 2:

*calando*

CAGE AND MUSIC

By way of justifying his use of chance operations to determine the structure of many of his pieces, John Cage has put forward the view (in his book "Silence") that by so doing he is "letting the sounds be themselves". This means he imposes no organization on a work.

The pitches of the invariant trichords (in whatever order) are as follows:

- Type A: A flat, C, E
- Type B: F, A, C sharp
- Type C: F sharp, A sharp, D
- Type D: G, B, E flat



Is this structural feature likely to have arisen accidentally?  
 Can it be heard?  
 Did Schoenberg want it to be heard?

If the use of these related trichords has been correctly identified the logical sequence of rotations set out at the start of this essay could hardly have arisen accidentally: the chances of the sequence being broken are too great.

Once we are aware of it, and can identify its occurrences, then it can be heard with significant frequency and clarity, though there are naturally degrees of disguise which must be penetrated, especially when a vital aspect of Schoenberg's technique at this time was that the order of pitches within hexachords was variable. He could therefore, if he chose, separate the three pitches in question from each other.

It seems probable, however, that whether Schoenberg wanted the invariant trichords to be heard or not, he used a scheme of set-succession in which such invariants are a prime factor. Of course the 'non-audibility' of twelve-note procedures has often led to the method being designated 'unnatural'. It may well be that pitch permutations are aurally intractable: but pitch invariants are much less so. It follows that the most important invariant in this work is not the P-0/I-5 combination, but the scaffolding of augmented triads which provide a background as lucid and logical as the foreground is 'fantastic' and dynamic.

ARNOLD WHITTALL.

#### CAGE AND MUSIC

By way of justifying his use of chance operations to determine the structure of many of his pieces, John Cage has put forward the view (in his book "Silence") that by so doing he is "letting the sounds be themselves". This means he imposes no organisation (or, at most, a bare minimum) on the perceived sound. And yet, at the beginning of the same book he has defined music as the "organisation of sound". This apparent contradiction can, I think, be resolved if we consider John Cage's conception of "sound".

Cage often lists the essential characteristics of sound as he conceives it, naming them as pitch, duration, timbre and dynamic. The first point to observe is that this is precisely the list of sound

characteristics given in textbooks on physics or acoustics. If, secondly, we remember that physics is a branch of abstract thought and begins by objectifying its subject matter, we may be led to suspect that music, which relies essentially on the subjective perception of sound, makes use of other, non-physical, characteristics of sound. And, indeed, this is so.

For the purposes of musical composition the essential characteristic of sound is the immediate impression it makes upon a listener. We might call this the "affective-tone" of the sound. The physical magnitudes of pitch, duration, timbre and dynamic all influence the affective-tone of the sound heard. In fact it is only by virtue of this secondary relation to the immediate impression that these characteristics have any relevance to musical composition at all, and indeed, one can be a composer and know nothing whatsoever of them! To be a composer it is only necessary to have an impression in one's mind of a sound, whether from memory or by actually hearing it, and to put this sound together with other sounds.

Other factors than these physical characteristics influence the affective-tone of a sound. One factor which is very important as far as music is concerned is the context of other sounds in which the sound is heard. A sound with the same physical characteristics will in fact sound quite different in different contexts. Furthermore, whereas in accordance with the laws of physical acoustics the physical characteristics of a mixture of sounds will be the predictable sum of their individual physical characteristics, it is evident that the subjective impression of a mixture of sounds is something quite unique and no mere sum of the individual impressions involved. This fact is the basis of harmony in music, both vertical and horizontal. Indeed it seems to me probable that harmony - understood as the unique effect of sounds "sounding together" with other sounds, whether simultaneously or in succession - is the essential characteristic of sound without which music would be impossible.

Thus we see the poverty of Cage's conception of sound. For him a sound is completely specified when we state its pitch, timbre, duration and dynamic. That he is quite wrong in this is clear from the above, for a sound is strongly dependent on the context in which it is heard and especially on what immediately precedes it and what other sounds are heard simultaneously.

We can also see now why there is really no contradiction between Cage's claim that music is the organisation of sound and his use of chance to effect that "organisation". For Cage sound is the sum of its four physical characteristics and these, being measurable, are susceptible to being ordered in any mathematical way. From this point of view,

chance, as a mathematical technique, has as good a claim to be used as any other. It is only when we consider the fuller nature of sound, its immediate impression, that a contradiction between organisation and chance arises. It is a matter of fact that randomly to arrange the physical characteristics of sound generally creates an impression of no organisation whatsoever. The ancient laws of harmony, which can also be used to structure mathematically the physical characteristics of sound, are better than chance in this respect in that they do create an impression of organisation in the perceived sound; though, without variation, it is a stereotyped impression and most composers today find that the strict use of these laws does not create the effects they wish to achieve.

Music is the organisation of sound, but the sound organised is not the abstract physical sound but the living subjective impression, and the organisation is no mere mathematical ordering of measurable, physical characteristics but the creative combination of sound impressions to achieve expressive effects.

CHRIS VILLARS.

#### DEAD ROOTS

With all the diversification of current developments it's easy to forget that rock music is little more than fifteen years old, and as the average lifespan of most bands is relatively short, links with the roots and traditions of rock are often hard to notice. The history of rock is now a prime subject for serious study, and in fact some writers treat it with an almost obsessive reverence, yet what seems to be lacking in the actual music these days is a true synthesis of the various elements from which rock is derived. Many bands seem intent on severing all links with the past, crashing headlong into the uncharted regions of electronics, while others try to create, from the past, a kind of derivative pastiche. Unfortunately these attempts to bring about an authentic revival of the styles of the late 50's and early 60's are based on a false notion of what rock music is about. To resurrect the hallowed sounds of those early days either as a way out of the burden of creativity being forced on rock musicians or in a vain attempt to 'get back to the roots' is almost bound to lead to the eventual stagnation of rock; it will be stuck in a kind of limbo in which the past has been obliterated by continual exploitation, and the future holds little promise of anything more

than the relentless churning of a mediocre, commonplace music.

However the position isn't completely hopeless. There are a few bands today who have been together for long enough to have not only a history of their own, but also firm links with the roots of rock. One of these is the Grateful Dead.

The Dead are without doubt the archetypal San Francisco band, but they're rare visitors to this country, having made only two previous visits in recent years. Although they have a large following in the States and are appreciated by growing numbers here, they've never achieved the kind of commercial success of groups like the Doors and the Jefferson Airplane. For example the Doors have at least five gold discs for their LP's, while the Airplane rank second to Elvis Presley in terms of sales for the RCA record label. In spite of this the Dead are in many ways the most important band playing rock today.

They are, first of all, a band that has never lost touch with its roots, and, because of this, successive LP's give us a unique example of the way that rock music develops. The Dead have in fact precisely documented how influences are absorbed, re-fashioned, dissected and synthesised (although this has probably not come about consciously). But this doesn't only include the traditional fore-runners of rock, like the blues and white country music, but involves the re-statement of the band's own music. For instance, the studio version of St. Stephen, which appears on their third LP Aoxomoxoa (1969), is simply a rehearsal, a probing of certain ideas and themes, for the magnificent 'live' version found on their next LP Live/Dead (1969). The first take is muddled, it lacks that feeling of spontaneous drive which characterises their best music. But what makes this so interesting is that one can see exactly how the music has been re-shaped using the basic idea defined in the first attempt.

Live/Dead really shows why the Dead are the finest band in rock today. All the musicians are first rate improvisers, and it's on a kind of collective improvisation that their music largely depends. Of course there are times when it just doesn't work, when the threads don't tie up, but this isn't uncommon in live, improvised music - especially in jazz. And the musicians of the Dead have the kind of empathy that one normally only finds among jazz players. This is what makes Live/Dead such a masterly piece of work.

It's a curious type of record - a 'live' studio recording, in which characteristics of a live situation, with a wildly enthusiastic audience specially imported for the session, have been combined with

all the technical sophistication of the recording studio. In this kind of open-ended situation the musicians can explore freely, linking the basic elements of 'composed' music with passages of rehearsed and spontaneous improvisation. Often these are lengthy detours which take us well away from the original themes of the piece; as in many of the performances of Cream, these original themes are little more than jumping-off points for explorations which follow. In The Eleven, from Live/Dead, for instance, one can actually hear how ideas are passed from one musician to another. It's a complex system of musical signals which can only work because they are able to draw on the experience of six years playing together. The ease with which they move between rhythmic patterns of 8/8, 12/8 and 11/8 is quite extraordinary.

One of the most surprising features about the Grateful Dead is that seven musicians from such different musical backgrounds should be able to form a successful band at all. The musical situation in America in the early 60's, as far as rock was concerned, was one of almost total stagnation. The first fires of rock and roll had burned themselves out, and while there were minor pockets of interest such as folk music, blues and bluegrass music, there was nothing on the scale of rock into which the many young, talented, but slightly disillusioned musicians could move. This situation changed drastically with the appearance of the Beatles' film A Hard Day's Night.

Phil Lesh, the Dead's bass player, maintains that this roughly coincided with Kennedy's assassination and "things looked pretty down. And then all of a sudden here was the Beatles' movie. It was very high, and very 'up', you know. And high and up looked better than down and out, really." This explanation may seem simplistic and unconvincing, but it does convey the spirit of the music that was to follow. Lesh himself was a classically trained musician who had studied under the Italian composer Luciano Berio, whilst lead guitarist Jerry Garcia had been an itinerant bluegrass banjo player. Second guitarist Bob Weir came from the coffeehouse centres of folk music and drummer Bill Kreutzmann was a competent jazzman. And Rod McKernan, the legendary Pigpen, had been playing and singing blues since he was about 14 years old. But all these musicians had something in common. They lacked not only an audience, but also fellow musicians with whom they could play. They had all grown up in fairly isolated surroundings, and they have always been an evasive band. In fact it's now rumoured that they have become part time recluses; having occupied a ghost town they spend much of their time living out the myths of the West, brawling and gambling.

Although there are a great many influences in the Dead's music it often seemed to be completely dominated by one particular type. It 'happened' in 1968/9 when they were very much preoccupied with electronics, with sound and the sheer volume of the music. Here the American tours of Cream had a great impact. Many of the American bands were becoming very sophisticated by 1967. Cream made them stand up and take notice, for they were also getting mildly complacent about their position at the top of the hierarchy of rock. The influence of Cream made the Dead play harder and louder. Eventually this trend was to produce the masterpiece Live/Dead in 1969. But at the end of this LP there is a crucial change of direction. After eight and a half tortuous, even torturous, minutes of Feedback, a piece of purely electronic music created by feedback between the group's instruments and amplifiers, one hears an unearthly melody, extruded like a thread from the mass of sound by Jerry Garcia. After the agonising music that has gone before, this is a vision of calm, and as the music ends the band begin to sing unaccompanied:

"Lay down my dear brothers,  
Lay down and take your rest"

It's an uncompromising final moment, but for the Dead it's also a beginning. Having dragged us through those minutes of nerve-wrecking visions the Dead don't leave us gasping, but offer a way out, a breath of air. This breathing space is the prelude to a new phase in their music, represented by their two subsequent LP's: Workingman's Dead and American Beauty. It appeared that they had abandoned the electronics and lengthy improvisations for much simpler forms which owed much to bluegrass music and the legacy of Woody Guthrie.

But this change of direction was simply the exploration of one particular area in the Dead's music. It didn't in any way imply that their music was deteriorating into banal country and western. One writer mistakenly noted that "the adrenalin has gone out of the Grateful Dead". It certainly wasn't the sound we were used to hearing from the band, but this diversion - the expansive use of one particular influence, namely white country music - was definitely necessary, as their most recent live double LP, called simply Grateful Dead, seems to affirm. It would be difficult to imagine them succeeding with a piece like Wharf Rat without the knowledge and techniques gleaned from Workingman's Dead, with its sumptuous harmonies and beautifully developed melodic lines.

In fact this new LP gives us a panoramic view of the Dead's music. In many ways it is for the Dead what the 'white' double LP of 1969 was for the Beatles: a complete summing up of their music, and of the styles of popular music in general. Like the Beatles, the Dead seem to have isolated and resynthesised their roots and influences once again, and it's all documented on this record. At one extreme there's the simplicity of Chuck Berry's Johnny B. Goode, which is brief, restrained, but definitely works. The Dead aren't tempted to make a vast improvisation out of the song with flashy virtuoso guitar-playing: they keep it roughly in its original form, with brief instrumental breaks, just as Chuck Berry himself would have played it. However when we come to Buddy Holly's Not Fade Away, the music literally bursts as if the musicians are unable to contain their natural tendency to extend and elaborate the music. And so this song is full of rhythmic shifts and jabbing improvisatory phrases.

At the furthest extreme from this is The Other One, which is itself a remake of early Dead material from around 1968. This extends their musical techniques almost to the limit, and it's a synthesis of all the different elements to be found on the LP. The texture of the music is much less dense than that of Live/Dead, partly because the Dead have reduced their number from seven to five. The individual lines are more complex than ever, yet they're held together so delicately that often it seems the whole structure is going to collapse. Each time, though, it is reinforced from within. It's unquestionably their finest music to date.

DAVID MABEY.

INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE COLE

The 25-year-old English composer was interviewed recently by Keith Potter.

I believe you originally intended to go to Edinburgh University to study science but switched to music before eventually deciding not to go anyway.

Yes. I think I decided to do the music course because I'd already started playing the piano again and improvising and scribbling things down.

That was when you were, what, 19?

Yes, But there wasn't a dramatic jump from science to arts; things overlapped quite a bit.

What did you do between 1965 and 1968 before going to the Academy?

That was when I freelanced as a mechanic and toured playing piano in a rock group while doing sociology A level on and off.

So that was your first major outlet - playing pop music?

Professionally, yes. I did that for several months.

And then.... why the Royal Academy of Music? How far had you decided that you wanted to be a player, or to do anything in particular?

I think I'd decided to be a player, really. But I wasn't particularly worried which way round it was - piano or composition.



So you then had Harrison Birtwistle as second study tutor for composition and changed to first study after a term.

Yes. You see, studying with Harry is a much more relaxed business anyway. We'd generally go to his house and spend an afternoon there. So I was getting much more than a normal second study.

Did you choose Birtwistle?

No. I didn't know he was teaching at the Academy when I applied. I don't think many of the administrative staff knew he was there either. He ran a new music group with Alan Hacker but they found it difficult to keep going.

It seems to have been a very gradual process - you taking up writing. It wasn't a sudden thing - that you suddenly decided you wanted to write, or could write?

No. By comparison with most of the other students I started writing very late. I mean, there were other pupils of Harry's who were writing serial canons at the age of eleven. When I was that age I was still riding around on my bicycle with a catapult..... It just hadn't occurred to me to write anything.

So you started from basics with Birtwistle?

Absolutely. I just wrote pieces and a technique built up from there.

Did you have a very wide knowledge of the contemporary repertoire?

Yes, but not a very detailed knowledge. I think some of the first pieces I analysed with Harry were Webern's Op. 11 pieces for cello and piano.

Can you tell me something about how he teaches? Is it just based on what you write or does he do much analysis with you?

Yes, he does do analysis, but one is left very much to one's own devices - both technically and in an analysis class. These classes tend to get rather... well, undetailed. So one has to do the work oneself. I've done some serial analysis.... Webern, Schoenberg. But since serialism was never a thing of mine anyway it rarely came into a lesson with Harry. His basic attitude is that one should simply find out the thing for oneself rather than accumulate vast areas of knowledge and then extract things from it. So one is building in a straight line.

Who were the composers who appealed to you most?

Webern, Debussy and Mozart were the three composers I'd analysed the most - I'd say from whom I've learnt the most. With Harry and before, too.

So nothing really changed - you just deepened your knowledge of music you were already enthusiastic about.

Well, partly..... but after five or six lessons with Harry there was analysis on the one hand and the pieces I was writing on the other. Prior to that I had thought of them very much as a unit.

In retrospect, do you think that he didn't change you so much, but that you were pretty much on the same wavelength to start with?

I think that was the case. I remember being very taken with things like Linoi and Tragoedia, and for ages everything I wrote for the clarinet sounded like Linoi. This got pretty serious: at the extreme point I stopped going to concerts of his music.

Yes, it does seem to me that some of your clarinet works in particular - Eclogue for Cerberus for three clarinets and the clarinet writing in a piece such as Caesura - do have obvious affinities with Birtwistle's style.

Yes. Caesura is really the first piece that I acknowledge. It's actually the result of a fairly gruelling lesson with Harry in which he tore a lot of sacred cows of mine apart.... The title comes from the Latin verb "to cut"; this is what the piece is concerned with: cutting in a

film sense. It has nothing whatever to do with internal development, although there are, of course, correspondences between sections.

It seems to be in a kind of refrain structure.

Yes. There are really three types of music in the piece: *tuttis*, solos or duets, and the refrain, or, perhaps more accurately, the point of departure - which is just a group of notes which return throughout the piece in somewhat different contexts. Thus the piece is a series of apparent repetitions - but it's really a kind of mirroring process going on.

This seems to have close connections with serial methods: using inter-relations of groups of notes; the same yet different.

Yes, except that this piece isn't really about the notes, it's about the passages which contain the notes. I think it is potentially very dangerous to get tied up with pitches as an abstract.

Abstract as regards the notes in themselves without any outside reference - this is surely justifiable?

Well, I mean "abstract" in the sense of a piece which is simply about its own terms of reference. If all the piece describes is itself, or rather, if all the pitches describe are themselves, then the whole thing becomes a circular process.....

Surely about themselves and the relationships between them?

Yes. You see, I can't think of music which works in a straight line: the "Bach chorale mentality". I mean gradually putting things - chords or whatever - end to end and "getting somewhere". I can neither compose like that nor think like that. To draw an analogy with art: there's never a back to any of Picasso's objects. What he has done is to take three dimensions and reduce them to two, so you see all possible views of the object at once. In music you're simply starting with the one dimension of time; but given the materials that music has to offer you can theoretically move things around. Again, the best medium for this is the film. I suppose I see myself as a kind of "music editor" - I mean in the way an editor edits a film. The making of a film - for someone like Eisenstein - exists in the editing and cutting, not in the actual story-line per shot. I think I've learnt more from reading Eisenstein than from analysing music, actually.

Do you mean that you write much more than you eventually include in the piece?

No, I don't write music like "footage". But the actual business of composition happens when I'm thinking of juxtaposing the contents of a piece rather than actually dealing with the notes individually.

Do you feel this has any kind of relationship to pop? Do you think you've taken anything over from it?

I think the only thing I've taken from pop music is the electric guitar in my theatre piece Pantomimes. Though I still write rock numbers occasionally.

Do you see pop and "serious" music as two different worlds?

Yes I do, but I don't think they're as irreconcilable as the bad attempts at reconciliation would suggest.

If you're doing different things when writing, say, pop music on the one hand and Caesura on the other, do you think you're writing for different audiences?

No, I don't see a distinction between audiences at all. I think the best situation would be one in which you could play Webern on the village green and have the Stones in the Elizabeth Hall, followed by a Schubert song recital. That's ideal, but it's ideal as far as the audience is concerned. I don't feel you should make a point of putting them together because there's no point to be made. But there's no reason, from an audience's point of view, for things to be so pigeon-holed. And really, I find it depressing that the biggest outlet for pop music is the record. All pop should be live. I'd like to see facilities equal for all types of music. But it's up to the people who make the music to make the gesture. I'd like to see the Fires of London playing at the Marquee and Rod Stewart renting The Place for a week. It's not up to the audiences to trail round.

Surely this is a question of the function of various types of music. Do you see yourself as fulfilling any particular "function" as a composer?

No. No more than I think of a bus-conductor fulfilling a function as a bus-conductor. One thing that depresses me is the kind of "seminar situation" which you get with so many composition students - the kind that seems to promote endless discussion about musical procedures. It only ever seems to have two results: either boring music or, worse still, no music at all. Basically one is better off just getting on with it. There's a terrible tendency to gestate for nine months and then say "Here's another opus, folks!" I think that, as a composer, one should concern oneself with creating music, not with producing masterpieces. You're not filling up the Tate Gallery, you're a composer. It's for the people who run the Tate Gallery to fill it up. I can think of composers who feel that a piece is something to be put on a shelf - and you're compiling a set of them. Each one is..... well, I won't say very sacred because I think one should regard one's pieces as being individually sacred, but this shouldn't become a syndrome where each new work is seen as a finite thing - like climbing mountains. One ought to look at the view from the summit rather than just finding another mountain.

How do you see a work when it's done? Do you see it as self-expression, or something that is a part of you in any way, or just something that's done, and you put it away and that's that?

Well, on one level it's something that's completed, to which one can relate again in retrospect. You see, I'm not sure that a new piece is really a new piece. I think one does eventually reach a point - though I haven't reached it yet - at which every piece is more an extension of the last one. Both Harry and Max Davies have reached this point now. But it's also rather more than an extension.....

Do you feel each piece is a new departure for you at the moment? Looking at your music from the outside I would say that this was more likely to be the case, because all the pieces sound so different.

Well, I think that at the stage I'm at you're starting, as it were, from the centre of a wheel and exploring the spokes one by one. But one can get to a stage where each different piece is an aspect of something - simply an aspect of oneself perhaps. Rather than this idea of putting pieces on shelves. One is simply covering similar ground, perhaps the same ground, or perhaps different ground in the same way.

Do you write because you have to write, because you need to write - for yourself? Would you write if you didn't get performed?

Well, I have written pieces which I knew stood very little chance of being performed. It's a difficult thing to imagine - you see, right from the beginning at the Academy everything we wrote as pupils of Harry was performed somehow, somewhere.

Do you feel that a piece is finished when you've finished writing it, or only when you've heard it?

Neither, actually. I think it's only finished when an audience has heard it.

So you're writing for communication, then?

Yes, with reservations. I think it's terribly dangerous to say that one is communicating something. You can't live up to the Romantic ideal of pouring out one's feelings in art. You can't write a piece that is consciously something, because then it won't be consciously anything, it'll be self-consciously something. No, ultimately I think it's a question of a salesman and a customer, really. I don't think there's much point in writing music unless people hear it. But then again, if I was living on an uninhabited island for ten years I'd still be writing music.....

Continuing with this idea of communication: your two music theatre pieces - Harlequinade written for the Finchley Children's Music Group and Pantomimes for the Fires of London - these were both written at the same time, weren't they? How did that come about when nearly all your earlier pieces had been instrumental?

A lot of it has to do with the way I always thought of music theatre anyway: that it wasn't so much an accompanied action, but music which is accompanied. So that ultimately you've got a piece of music which is accompanied by theatre, rather than theatre which has incidental music.

So it's the music that's important to you?

Yes, though when Harlequinade came along I'd been chewing over

the idea of Pantomimes for some time. And I'm still chewing it over now, a year afterwards.

Did you start by wanting to compose a piece of music accompanied by theatre or did you start with an "idea" which needed to be put in theatrical terms?

I think it's always a bit suspect when music theatre pieces start in either way. I don't think you could seriously sit down and say "I'm going to write a music theatre piece".

No. But was there an "idea" behind Pantomimes that you can put into words?

It depended on which stage of evolution Pantomimes was at. It started off as a sort of exercise piece at Dartington Summer School - which was actually a clarinet solo.

So it started from purely musical beginnings?

Yes. And the electric guitar: well, I was supposed to be writing an electric guitar piece for somebody and somehow it got incorporated into this theatre piece I was writing. And then Die schöne Müllerin came along at the same time. Thinking of all the various aspects of Pantomimes on their own it seems to be a fairly random selection of sources: commedia dell'arte, Schubert, electric guitar.

From what I remember of the first performance it was all rather confusing.

Well, there were production problems. I'm revising the piece at the moment too. Both text and music have changed considerably and it's acquired a circus clown - Mark Furneaux - who's also going to be the producer.

So you're trying to express the ideas more clearly?

Yes, though when Pantomimes came along I'd been chewing over

I think what needs to be done is to extract the most important aspects of the piece and then underline them in visual terms. I suppose that Pantomimes really started as a six-verse electric guitar work which acquired characters. While I was writing it I saw a copy of "La Vie de Scaramouche" in Cambridge University Library, which has a six-verse song in it that was reputedly sung by one of the first actors to portray Scaramouche at the court of Louis XIV. This song had a refrain which was six lines long, the last line of which consisted of a six-note group; ut, re, me, fa, sol, la. And this got grafted onto the electric guitar work, together with the whole mythos of Scaramouche and Harlequin and various theatrical routines which are described in this book. There was also a suicide scene in which Harlequin takes up a guitar and sings his own funeral oration. But this comes from a traditional commedia text I called "Harlequin and the Eagle". Things started accumulating, although the six-verse structure was retained, and I have now transferred a lot of the action to puppets, rather than using instrumentalists in costume.

Can you tell me something about your most recently completed piece, A Spray of Dead Arrows?

This isn't a theatre piece - it's a chamber work for soprano, clarinet, violin and piano on a text by Pablo Neruda, the Latin American communist poet who's at present living in Cuba. Most of his poems are compounded of two very obvious elements. One is the political element, the other is basically the love-sonnet.

Which side of his work are you drawing from, or are you using both?

I suppose, firstly, the political side, which is very unusual for me.

Is this in any way intended to be a political work, a socially relevant work?

Oh no.



Do you see things in these terms at all?

Basically, I feel, anything which can be expressed in political terms is better expressed in those terms rather than in music. I mean, I'm not at all convinced that one can write a political piece of music. One can set a political text, but not in a political way. Ultimately one is simply setting words.

Is there any connection between Pantomimes and A Spray of Dead Arrows: in the type of idea that you're putting over? Or isn't it like that at all?

There's certainly no conscious ideological connection between them. Pantomimes is working on a much more abstract level anyway. I think one thing it does indicate is that I'm moving out of a purely abstract area: I'm using texts which are in fact about something - as opposed to Autumn Cicada, which is based on four Japanese texts. That piece just sets texts which aren't "about" anything at all, although obviously the image of the cicadas is significant for the Japanese.

Do you see your own music in a very different way from the way you see other music? Are you contributing to something which you can then look on and say: well, there are two pieces of music; one happens to be by me and the other happens to be by someone else?

No, not really. It's that thing about specialisation: lots of people digging holes, and the holes get deeper and narrower the more people there are digging. At this stage I'm still really burrowing.

# experimental music catalogue

Over the next two or three issues we aim to provide a comprehensive survey of the scores currently contained in EMC. The Catalogue is the most important single source of experimental music in this country and is also starting to gain a reputation abroad.

Below we begin with an introduction to the Catalogue by Gavin Bryars, one of the members of the editorial board (the others being Chris Hobbs and Michael Nyman). Then reviewers discuss some of the music contained in the Catalogue.

Later issues will contain lists of anthologies and some of the individual pieces which are available separately, together with prices, further reviews and supplements of selected pieces from the Catalogue.

A full list of the scores currently available, and the scores themselves, can be obtained from: Experimental Music Catalogue, 208 Ladbroke Grove, London, W.10.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Experimental Music Catalogue was formed in 1969 to provide a service to the growing number of young English composers, based mainly in London, and to distribute their scores over as wide a field as possible. The work was initiated by Chris Hobbs who obtained scores from friends and associates to photocopy so that, hitherto, local and private collections could be better known. For example, the pianist John Tilbury had an enormous number of pieces, some written for him to play, which were not published and existed only in manuscript form. From time to time friends like myself or Chris might have borrowed these, and he might have borrowed pieces from us, but few people outside that circle would know where to obtain these pieces or information about them. Tilbury gave these to Chris who collated them with pieces given by others, as well as pieces obtained direct from the composers. In this way the first edition of the Experimental Music Catalogue was compiled. The results were advertised in the Musical Times and copies of the pieces were sold by mail order at a price related to the cost of duplication plus postage.

The EMC continued in this way until early 1972, when Chris was preparing the fourth edition and found that the work was becoming more than he could handle: not only the orders that were waiting to be fulfilled, but the work involved in obtaining scores from composers once they had been promised (still a problem). For a time the EMC seemed likely to cease its activities until Cornelius Cardew called a meeting to discuss a document he'd drawn up, pointing out the merits of the EMC as a focus for composition (outside the Scratch Orchestra, for example) and giving a possible economic base on which it could work. A meeting of most of the composers took place, who more or less accepted many of the points but did not accept that Cornelius should run it. After the meeting Michael Nyman, Chris Hobbs and I met and offered a basis for running the EMC on a new, expanded footing. This the composers accepted.

The function of this three-man editorial board is to formulate policy, print the pieces, organise the catalogue of pieces, obtain pieces from composers, run the day to day business of the EMC etc. We wrote to all the composers asking them what pieces they wished to include in the catalogue and what they wished to remove from it. (One of the bases of the EMC has been that composers are encouraged both to submit new pieces and to withdraw old ones that don't reflect their current concerns - something alien to conventional publishing.) On the basis of these replies we organised a series of anthologies of related pieces as well as pieces by individual composers as a means of distributing the work more effectively - someone is more likely, we argued, to buy a string anthology containing an unknown composer's string quartet than that piece on its own. The anthologies currently printed are The Scratch Anthology, Keyboard Anthology, Rhythmic Anthology, Vocal Anthology, String Anthology, Nature Study Notes and Visual Anthology. Some composers also began to see the value of anthologising their own work (David Jackman and Bryn Harris); Christian Wolff sent us a set of new prose pieces which we have now printed with his earlier prose works; Cornelius let us have a revised version of the Great Learning paragraphs 1 and 2; John Gosling reprinted George Brecht's Water Yam (considered to be a primer of experimental music); Tom Phillips let us have all his currently printed work. Currently the composers represented are Robert Ashley, Richard Ascoug, George Brecht, Greg Bright, Gavin Bryars, Cornelius Cardew, Michael Chant, Ed Fulton, Phil Gebbett, Jon Gibson, Bryn Harris, Chris Hobbs, Ivan Hume-Carter, David Jackman, Terry Jennings, Chris May, Michael Nyman, Michael Parsons, Tom Phillips, Eddie Prévost, Richard Reason, Hugh Shrapnel, Howard Skempton, John White and Christian Wolff. A new edition is already being considered, including works by more non-English composers: Julio Estrada of Mexico, Alvin Curran - an American living in Rome, Takehisa Kosugi of Japan, a possible Australian anthology collated by David Aherne, plus one or two other American

composers presently being considered. Two or three young English musicians who were not included in the first edition are being considered for the next one - David Mason of Wigan, who sent a piece that may be possible in the projected anthology of education pieces, Stuart Marshall, a former fine art student who has been working in Massachusetts with Alvin Lucier, and David Toop who brought his bi(s)onic pieces to us. In addition Gavin Bryars and Chris Hobbs are preparing a set of writings on Satie's "Vexations" for publication.

The editors meet frequently to discuss new works that have been submitted and to prepare work for printing. Any piece that the EMC handles is unlikely to be considered by other publishers (that is one criterion for including it in the catalogue) and the composers themselves do not consider the EMC as a "stepping stone" to a conventional publisher. The composers accept the concept of renewable publication and will receive a share of whatever proceeds their works bring in. We do not actively encourage composers to submit works (i.e. those who are not already published by us) as several that we have looked at seem to be eminently publishable by conventional means and those that submit do so out of an examination of the types of work that we handle already. The EMC is not a static body as it reflects only the current concerns of its composers and actively encourages composers to remove pieces where there is any doubt - hopefully producing a more healthy organism than hitherto.

GAVIN BRYARS.

VOCAL ANTHOLOGY (£1)

Bryn Harris, ANTHOLOGY-72 (£1.25)

NATURE STUDY NOTES (£1.)

The EMC has changed quite a bit in appearance since its first edition - the original loose duplicated sheets have been replaced by a neat, printed booklet. Improved presentation for the scores too - those I am reviewing are attractively printed on good quality paper. Prices, inevitably, have risen - some have doubled since 1969. But as compensation, many of the pieces published by EMC have been collected into anthologies. A good idea all round - good for the customer, who gets more for his money and is almost certainly introduced to pieces of which he hadn't previously known - good for the composer, especially the less well-known, whose music gets a wider distribution.

One of the difficulties of reviewing typical EMC material is that traditional criteria are not relevant. It's no longer a simple case of asking, "Will this sound good in performance?" Better would be, "Does this material fire my imagination to produce interesting sounds?" Or even, "Will this be interesting for the performers? (We'll ignore the audience.)" Because there is a greater emphasis in this music on the making of sounds and a lesser upon the result. There is an implied political thinking behind it, but there's often plenty of muddled thinking too. The performer/audience barrier is being broken down, the performer removed from his pedestal and the audience shaken out of its traditional passive role. Well, that's the idea anyway - the muddle arises in carrying the idea into force - too often the effect is that an audience is left on the sidelines observing a ritual giving rise to rather dull sounds.

This problem is highlighted in the Bryn Harris collection of 17 pieces; the concept of several of these pieces is interesting, but none conjures up for me anything exciting as a performance. To illustrate what I have said about the ritual aspect with the emphasis upon the making, I'll take The Interpretation of Ordnance Survey Maps WITH ANSWERS which is a set of instructions for translating an imaginary journey plotted on any Ordnance Survey map into sounds. Now, putting this into action could well be fun for the performers, but it seems to me that there are heavy odds against a performance whose aural (I daren't say musical) ends justify the means. I concede that once in a while a performance might jell and produce something, but I'm not sure that this would justify the other, dull, performances. Most of the items in this anthology similarly use a non-musical idea to attain a musical end product, and I think that no matter how ingenious (e.g. Crosspiece, a musical crossword) or amusing (e.g. The Quick Brown Fox for 5 or more typists), these means to ends might be, their validity is bound to be dubious.

One recent attempt at removing the performer/audience distinction, which has met with encouraging results, makes use of the happy fact that most people can sing to a reasonable extent. Cornelius Cardew in particular has made use of untrained singers. One of his pieces appears in the Verbal Anthology, and it's one of the most exciting things I've seen in some time. Its full title is How should we interpret the word 'soon' in the statement 'there will soon be a high tide of revolution'? For unison choir with unspecified chorded accompaniment (chord symbols given), to words of Mao Tse Tung. It is firmly tonal, though some of the rhythms are a little tricky; there is an instruction permitting the omission of certain bars in community singing. It's so simple that I wonder at myself for being excited by it. Perhaps it's because of its complete success as a revolutionary worker's song. I can hear a lusty voice and giant, rolling chords.....

The two pieces in the Anthology by Michael Parsons, Mindfulness of Breathing and Mindfulness Occupied with the Body, both on texts from the Visuddhimagga by Buddhaghosa, are also designed to take in non-music-readers. Both employ simple musical means to build up a cumulative, hypnotic effect. The former requires about 10 bass voices with a range of low F to C; the latter, more complex, at least 40 singers plus 5 to 10 drums.

Bryn Harris appears again in this Anthology and is represented by two pieces. One, Mass Medium, in which the words of the Ordinary of the Mass are used as source material to be fragmented in different ways in each movement, is a verbal score. The other, Those Dancing Days are Gone (words by Yeats), is written in staff notation and has a difficult solo vocal part ranging over three octaves with piano and percussion accompanying.

The rest of the Vocal Anthology is taken up with 3 items by Christopher Hobbs and 2 by Hugh Shrapnel. Of these, Shrapnel's Sing is the only one for which I have a good word to say - it's so simple that it should come off. The others I pass over.

Finally, Nature Study Notes - not so much music, more a way of life. A collection of 152 'rites' compiled by members of the Scratch Orchestra. A rite is any activity invented with the intention of fostering corporate spirit among its participants and may or may not involve musical sounds. An audience in this context is particularly irrelevant, unless it observes the participants as a certain type of anthropological phenomenon. The rites are consistently ingenious, witty, and shrewd, and make delightful reading. As a sample I give you BHBR140 (by Bryn Harris), "Have a battle. (Try to avoid fatalities.)"

DAVID L1. ROBERTS.

#### STRING ANTHOLOGY

Henri Bergson, philosopher, provocatively described duration as 'the ever-changing multiplicity of interlocking states'. The relationships between duration and experimental time have since become a major talking-point in discussions about twentieth-century music, in particular that of the Webern-Stockhausen line. As we all know from non-musical experience, the number of events and their distribution within a given duration condition our experience of the passing of time. When we are busy time seems to pass quickly; when we have nothing to occupy our faculties time may seem to stand still. So in music, when

a duration consists of very few 'interlocking states' or events, one can reasonably expect (as a listener) to experience boredom. Perhaps John Cage explores one extreme in his 4'33", but, paradoxically, it is equally possible for a work seemingly full of events (witness Terry Riley's In C) to cause a similar boredom in the listener. The extreme similarity of one event to those before and after it, or in Bergson's terms, the extreme similarity between interlocking states, leads to a condition of monotony, or at least near-monotony, and it is with this that we associate boredom.

I have recently received and perused a sixty-eight page 'String Anthology' comprising, in all, nine pieces of recent vintage by eight composers. All these pieces are conventionally notated on five-line staves and could be performed with little technical difficulty. Some of the pieces display a wealth of ideas, others lamentably few. All ideas as such are rigorously controlled by their respective composers, most to the point of staticity, for there is little development or exploitation of the material, except in a repetitious kind of way.

The longest piece, both from an objective (the composer Terry Jennings envisages a total duration of 21'45") and from a subjective point of view, is written economically on only one page with seconds marked to show durations. Piece for Strings is for three violins and three violas playing without vibrato throughout in a dynamic ranging from ppp (with mutes) to p (without mutes). There is a total of 20 events, on average one per minute, although in actual fact they vary in length from 10 to 210 seconds. This total of events consists of eleven single or combined (i.e. chordal) note-beginnings and nine rest-beginnings. The longest non-event (for the purposes of this work to be considered an event) is a tutti rest lasting for 130 seconds. What more can one say?

Another similar piece, by Edward Fulton (Violin Music V) is for violin and piano and it is intended to last for about 12 minutes. It makes extensive use of a well-known Purcell ground bass and also Purcell's harmonic and melodic ideas, thinly disguised by the fact that the composer (Fulton) has decided that all this should be played at about a tenth of Purcell's original speed. This could have led to an interesting parodistic work, but as it stands it seems only to be an immature piece - despite the composer's inventiveness in his violin part which shows at least a textbook knowledge of the different modes of string attack. The other work in this collection to leave a sour taste in the mouth is African Melody by Howard Skempton. Written for cello solo (pizzicato and plectrum) this consists of 16 note-beginnings and precious little else. A desolate offering.

Chris May, in his short Piece for Three Cellos, shows considerably more enterprise. The music for each player is written on two staves and consists of either trilled or untrilled notes. There are occasional bar-lines and always at the beginning of each bar there is a trilled note on one of the two staves and an untrilled note on the other. Mr. May's canon is as follows:

'Begin anywhere, playing each note pp in one bow. Leave silences at will. At a dotted line, a choice is made, according to what your "cue" player is playing (1 follows 2, 2 follows 3, 3 follows 1). If he is silent, wait till he plays. If he is trilling, choose the line with a trill after the dotted line. If he is not trilling, choose the line without a trill after the dotted line. Stop when you have played all the notes in your part (you may be prevented from doing so).'

So from his quite simple beginnings there emerges a stimulating interplay of trilled and untrilled sounds with high spots when all three players are performing trills. I assume that when all the players happen to reach a 'dotted' bar-line together the piece is ended.

Richard Reason's two-page String Quartet is notated fairly precisely as regards the relative durations of the notes played by the different parts but unfortunately he only deigns to mark the score at the top with the word 'slowly'. The faint barlines in my copy seem to bear no relation to the music and should be disregarded as meaningless. The sounds in this three-movement work are all in diatonic relation to C (there being no accidentals whatever). Mode of attack and dynamics are unspecified which leads me to assume either that the composer wishes attack and dynamic to remain the same throughout or has given it no thought.

In the same anthology, Christopher Hobbs's Trio is 594 bars long (4/4, crotchet = ca.72) and consists of an interplay of long notes all to be played - again - without vibrato at a minimal dynamic or 'amplitude' as the composer likes to call it.

Of a completely different sort are the two pieces by Greg Bright: Coaxing the chandelier and Salts of Copper, both of which are full of bright jazzy rhythms and good humour. However, he errs on the side of repetitiousness, though not with such tragic results as those achieved by other composers in this anthology. Michael Parsons's



Highland Variations are also spiced with powerful rhythms (Scotch snap) and syncopations but one feels that his slow tenth variation is anticlimactic after the vivacity of the ninth (for solo violin). Again too much repetition and little enough variation to be satisfying.

My overall impression of the contents of this String Anthology is that these composers could all benefit from some vocal composition, since that would help them at least a little with their problem - as I see it - of enormous durations coupled with a sparseness of significant events. The anthology is, for your information, written neatly in one hand: surely a labour of love - or were all the pieces by one composer with seven other pseudonyms?

ALAN MCGEOCH.

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TIPPETT AND "THE KNOT GARDEN"

Operatic drama has been central to Michael Tippett's creative output since A Child of Our Time. As with many of Handel's, Tippett's oratorio is not far removed from theatrical expression. The operas - The Midsummer Marriage, King Priam and The Knot Garden - respectively embody the most crucial aspects of his development: regeneration from traditional precepts, exploration, and accumulation and synthesis. Each of Tippett's operas represents a culmination (the closest comparison that comes to mind is Busoni and Doktor Faust) but each also is a beginning and propagates smaller works employing similar techniques or developing central or related ideas. The Midsummer Marriage, completed in 1952, spawned the Piano Concerto and the Sonata for Four Horns (both 1955), King Priam (1961) the Songs for Achilles (1961), the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, the Second Piano Sonata (both 1962) and the Concerto for Orchestra (1963).

Tippett's other central concern has been abstract symphony/sonata and inevitably the products of this have overlapped with the chippings from his operatic workbench. The Second Symphony was the turning-point; the need for a change of style created by King Priam provided the impetus for exploration and the Second Piano Sonata and the first movement of the Concerto for Orchestra were the most radical outcomes of his experiments in formal procedures. Now, after The Vision of Saint Augustine (1965) - a work I believe it will be exceedingly difficult to assess properly for some time yet - we have The Knot Garden and the Third Symphony.

The recent Covent Garden revival of the opera (December 6), coming between the third (at the Proms) and fourth (BBCSO, RFH, Feb. 14) performances of the new symphony, has given us the chance to estimate the present state and relationship of Tippett's two fundamental concerns. Certainly the opportunity to do so could not have been improved on. Surely four performances within eight months must be something of a record for a major new symphonic work? Critics who care about such things have had an unprecedented opportunity to avoid a hasty judgement of the Third Symphony; the increasing confidence of the LSO and Colin Davis in the work indicated the success of concentrated attention. Amazingly, the BBC orchestra turned in an equally confident first stab at the piece on February 14 (only Margaret Kingsley disappointed to any degree), but of course they did have the indefatigable Davis in charge.

Davis is undoubtedly one of the stars of The Knot Garden. A striking feature of the revival was the wealth of orchestral detail that penetrated Tippett's dense textures. A great deal of that detail provides the musical underlining to the drama's psychological manoeuvring. However, what with one hand Davis winningly provides, with the other he sometimes takes away: singers' words were

occasionally over-powered by orchestral sound. The cast for the revival had generally improved (if that's possible) on their former excellence, and, probably thanks to a production 're-think' by Ande Anderson, seemed far more relaxed and consequently brought greater flexibility to the staging. The one newcomer, Katherine Pring, made Thea a more vulnerable yet (curiously) more positive figure than Yvonne Minton had previously. This, as has been remarked elsewhere, inclines to suggest Thea as the central character, though, with a different emphasis, the same might happen with any of the others.

Of course the kernel of The Knot Garden, the central 'problem', is the friction in Thea and Faber's marriage. It is resolved not in direct confrontation but by holding a mirror to the other characters' third act charades. As the psychoanalyst, Mangus, remarks, the others are merely pawns. Thea greets the resolution with a key aria, florid and almost ecstatically relieved.

Apart from Thea, the only other character to remain outside the Charade is Denise, Thea's sister, 'a dedicated freedom-fighter'. She could not have received stronger characterisation than she did, both musically and dramatically at Covent Garden, from the marvellous Josephine Barstow. Yet Denise, strongly characterised as she is, seems unlikely ever to become the central character. Nevertheless, there is a strong case for suggesting her, if not as central, then as the dramatic and musical catalyst, far more so than the obvious candidate, Mangus, turns out to be.

Denise is the last of the seven characters to appear. The others have reacted to each other until then simply in duos and trios, nothing larger and never concerted. Potential ensembles that would have released tension built up by the characters' interaction have constantly been thwarted. When Denise enters, 'half-majestic, half-sinister.... twisted or otherwise disfigured from the effects of torture....she entirely dominates the stage'. With her long, jagged and impassioned aria she dominates the music and drama as well, screwing the tension to the point of release for all except herself: the blues sequence that ends Act I in which each expresses his or her situation or dilemma. From that point on Denise is not a foreground figure, yet in Act II her strength influences Thea, Faber and Mel directly and Dov (through Mel) and Flora (through Thea and Faber) indirectly. Again, she precipitates tension (the Thea-Faber confrontation) and release (Mel's sudden remembrance of external identity amid personal confusion in Scene 7). Only once, in the charade of Act III, is her self-possession disturbed, when she becomes, momentarily, a character with a dilemma (Mel's homosexual relationship with Dov) rather than a catalyst. Her equilibrium and independence, it seems, are soon restored: at the end it is Mel who goes with Denise, not vice-versa.

I have developed this at length since it seems to me that Denise is Tippett's representative on stage. Her social conscience and personal experience move the others to self-examination in the Act I blues; all the time they have her high standards to live up to.

The blues she provokes is the most obvious link with the Third Symphony and its vocal finale for soprano solo. To my mind, the soprano soloist is Denise; just as Tippett seems to have found it necessary to develop Dov in Songs for Dov (he is certainly undercharacterised in the opera), so we see Denise's compassionate, care-worn view extended in the symphony's blues. Some commentators have seen little in common between the two works apart from the blues, but with repeated hearings of both works a large amount of cross-reference emerges. The most significant feature in common is this 'accumulation and synthesis' mentioned earlier. To match The Knot Garden's 'maggie' libretto, Tippett has accumulated a myriad of musical references, gleaned from his own development and from any stylistic element that suits his purpose or has special associations for him. The opera being a more suitable structure, the references are wider and more obvious than those of the symphony. Reminiscences and quotes of his own and other people's music in the opera have dramatic point and purpose. However, it must be said that the first act is entirely original, presenting characters with their important accompanying musical figures and creating a unique, personal blues idiom for the finale that jars not for musical reasons (except that it's over-complex) but only in its dated jazz language.

The most striking references occur in Act II which is the act most concerned with the characters' thoughts and fears; thus, free association is musically and dramatically appropriate. The significance of the instances I isolate here is not always clear (nor need there be any significance) but the strength and importance of these is that all are easily perceived after one or two hearings, particularly by someone acquainted with Tippett's other works.

The striking opening horn motif to the Second Symphony is recalled in the very first scene of Act II (Thea and Denise). The prominent strains of 'We shall overcome' pour warmly from beneath the rather Ivesian string texture of Scene 7, underlining Denise's convictions and moving Mel, it seems, to resolve his dilemma. Even more prominent is Flora's rendering of Schubert's 'Die liebe Farbe', magically 'translated' by Tippett as Dov translates; the wholesale lifting of a Schubert lied may offend some but it is difficult to deny its dramatic effect. Flora is still 'little-girl-lost', unsure of herself, a trifle unimaginative. Her 'party-piece' contrasts vividly with Dov the musician's original, outgoing, yet deeply personal song that follows.

Is it also too fanciful to suggest two, more tenuous, references in Act II? Dov's consoling of Flora after the mêlée of the labyrinth has subsided is surely a reminiscence of Ellen's plea to Grimes after his 'mad scene' in Act III of Peter Grimes; and am I alone in hearing the single piano chord (G major, first inversion) that punctuates the end of Dov's Schubert 'translation' as a peculiarly Beethovenian chord, straight out of the Fourth Concerto? (Or am I just remembering the influence of that concerto on Tippett's own?) The most substantial self-quotation is at the 'lights-up' confrontation with the audience by Mangus. The Tempest charades have been interrupted but they echo on in music from Songs for Ariel (written in 1962).

The world of the symphony is recognisably the same as that of the opera. To take just three instances: the opera's 'Dissolves' relate directly in technique and effect to the Ivesian third movement of the symphony with its simultaneous five different types of music; some of the harsh brass and percussion interruptions in Denise's Act I aria have more than a cursory relationship to parts of the symphony's first movement; and the rocking bass clarinet figure to which Dov comforts Flora in Act II reappears as underlay to the 'I gave him milk and kisses' refrain in the symphony's third blues.

Perhaps the greatest shock that the symphony affords to the system is the triple quotation from Beethoven's Choral. One can understand the extra-musical logic from Tippett's point of view and the coherence of the final blues is quite substantially achieved through that very exciting distillation of Beethovenian dialect. But there is a marked lack of musical logic about the use of Beethoven's discordant flourish as dismissive gesture to Tippett's first three movements.

Overall, from both opera and symphony, one is left with an impression of Tippett's work process as a collage or even a pyramid of images. This is inevitably the product of his trend towards more precise statement (especially dramatic statement), towards a more careful balance between idea and expression - both the result of a desire for greater ease of communication. Ironically, in this period of accumulation and synthesis Tippett may well alienate many listeners but in the end his music will be unquestionably richer still.

LESLIE EAST.

R E V I E W S .

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January 1973: POLISH MUSIC IN LONDON

People who attend concerts of contemporary music are usually divided into two groups: those who are genuinely interested, and those who go purely out of curiosity. For this reason it was so rewarding to be amongst the audience at Witold Lutoslawski's concert in London (QEH, January 20th), where the whole audience greeted the composer and his music with rare warmth and real interest and enthusiasm. In this programme Lutoslawski himself conducted the London Sinfonietta in four of his own works, including the first performance in Great Britain of Preludes and Fugue for thirteen solo strings.

This, his most recent work, was by far the longest in the programme - it lasted about forty minutes. While it is an exacting work to listen to, Preludes and Fugue has a clearly defined structural framework which helps the listener to realise the direction in which the music is travelling. There are seven preludes preceding the fugue, each with its own characteristic textures and ideas. The long fugue is a very substantial movement indeed, containing aleatoric music played 'ad libitum' and music in which the rhythms are strictly notated. Lutoslawski draws a parallel between the aleatoric passages (a static element used for the expositions) and strict rhythmical passages (a moving element used for the episodes) with single-keyed and modulatory passages in classical music.

The use of the word fugue is certainly justified in the use of the six subjects (again, each having its own characteristics) and different episodes. The expositions are not the type normally associated with the baroque fugue. Themes are presented on top of one another, yet each is made up of similar material so that the whole exposition is like a discussion on one specific topic. Consequently one feels that Lutoslawski has taken the traditional, rather hard-edged form of the fugue, and dissolved it into his own mould, the blurred lines coming in and out of focus, yet all containing the same perspective.

Indeed, the perspective of the work is one of the finest Lutoslawski has devised, but, as always, it has the formula of a long build-up of tension to the climax followed by a gradual winding down. The climax in this instance is the true culminating point of the whole work, where all six subjects appear simultaneously, creating a sonority which I found astonishing for thirteen solo strings.

The post-climax phase is extremely well measured, and the music is allowed to unwind completely before a quick outburst brings the work to a dramatic close.

Also heard in this concert were Funeral Music, Jeux Vénitiens and Paroles Tissées. The tenor soloist in this latter work was the excellent Peter Pears, who first commissioned the work, and who, in his interpretation, finely displayed Lutoslawski's intention that the voice should not intrude as a soloist, but should be an integral part of the texture, each strand contributing to the realisation of the dreaming, visionary qualities of Chabrun's poem.

The London Sinfonietta played extremely well throughout and obviously felt at ease under Lutoslawski's baton, and in Preludes and Fugue composer, conductor and orchestra were obviously in total sympathy,

As it was Lutoslawski's sixtieth birthday on 25th January, two other celebratory events were arranged in England. Peter Dickinson gave a well-planned and interesting assessment (BBC Radio 3) of Lutoslawski's development, playing examples of his music and including part of the Requiem of 1937 (played on the piano), illustrating the early influence of French music and particularly of Fauré. Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, on the actual birthday, conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in a concert including Funeral Music and the Concerto for Orchestra as a tribute to Lutoslawski.

The Warsaw Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra has been touring England recently; I chose to hear them in Huddersfield. Their programme included works by Mozart, Purcell and Janiewicz (arranged by Panufnik) as well as Górecki's Three Pieces in the Ancient Style (1963), and this mixture of classical and 'mildly modern' seemed to be representative of their programmes throughout the tour.

Górecki's work was surprisingly different from what I had expected. Certainly it was in this that the excellent string tone of the orchestra was shown at its best, but the piece itself, far from presenting a tough line (which is what we normally associate with Górecki - e.g. Scontri), is a rather tame set of variations on a theme of mediaeval origins. And yet the work strangely anticipates certain of Górecki's later techniques, used in such works as Refrain for Orchestra, in the gradual accumulation of tone-cluster chords. It is quite unlike other works based on mediaeval plainsong that I have heard: Górecki here seems to be determined to avoid

clichés and obvious 'effects', and the consistently low, sonorous string writing might almost be heard as a reaction against other recent developments in string technique.

But I thought it a pity that this orchestra had decided not to bring more exciting and dynamic pieces of Polish contemporary music, especially as it is the provincial cities of England that need to hear such music played by a disciplined and musical orchestra.

JOHN CASKEN

February 8th: Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol

#### GENTLE FIRE

The atmosphere in which Gentle Fire gave their performance of contemporary music at the Arnolfini Gallery was relaxed and informal. The players and their electronic equipment occupied the centre of a comparatively small room encircled by the audience, most of whom sat on the floor. The sale of glasses of wine and the tolerance of smoking was a further assurance against the all-too-familiar stifling effect of the typical concert hall.

Perhaps a little too carefree was the sotto voce introduction of items and verbal presentation of programme-notes, although this further divergence from the norm of musical performances was doubtless calculated in its effect. Much contemporary and avant-garde music brings into question such critical issues as the correct mode of listening to be adopted for a particular piece - in what way should one take this work, what should one listen for in another? Gentle Fire would seem to have adopted an approach directly opposite to that of Boulez, who makes a deliberate attempt to let the audience "in on the secret" by incorporating short talks or "open rehearsals" into each concert. Whether or not the absence of information presupposes familiarity with avant-garde concepts is not clear. Neither is the audience certain as to whether it must decide upon the "right" interpretation or whether it is expected to react personally to what it hears. One would hope that Gentle Fire's non-committal attitude signified the latter.

Such questions were invited less by the first two of the three pieces performed than by the last. The evening began with a composition by Stuart Jones, a member of the group, in which three



stringed instruments and a melodica each took as a starting point one of four notes, all of which were slightly "out of tune" according to the tempered scale. Each instrument then proceeded very slowly to notes belonging to the harmonic series of the initial note. All tones were electronically filtered so as to boost the audibility of the beats occurring between overtones. The result was of a similar type to Stockhausen's Stimmung. The idea was pleasing in the way it created a musical context in which the "natural" sounds of a stringed instrument - the overtones produced by inept bowing which the player of traditional music attempts to eradicate - were given a place in the overall concept.

The realisation of Stockhausen's Verbindung which followed also made good use of sound. The choice of instruments allowed for ample contrast of timbre within the very strictly controlled range of sonority. Particularly resourceful was the use of recorder, piano (keyboard and "inside") and a range of different-sized metal springs. The electronic sound equipment was used in an effective way, restricting itself mainly to a loud clattering sound: rather frightening in effect.

Since they instruct the players as to extra-musical rather than musical qualities, these "text pieces" by Stockhausen, of which this is one, are much less deliberate in their relation to time than are the more systematically controlled early works. Although the idea of periodisation is foreign to the concept of the "text piece" one could not help feeling that the introduction of some kind of time-formation, even a simple idea of movement or stasis, would have added to the interest and shape of this performance. Despite the occasional appearance of clear rises and falls of tension, the interest centred mainly on the short-range reaction of individual instruments to the background of long-held notes. The orientating effect of this "background" was, if anything, too apparent, each part having an individual, single-pitch polarity of quite extended permanence.

The final piece of the evening - a group composition by Gentle Fire - was the most problematic for the listener. The members of the group sat around a table, some speaking simultaneously through the PA system, others operating the sound equipment. After a lengthy "first section" which contained minimal variation on contrast; the pattern of sound was changed by adding taped distortions of a speaking voice, to be followed by further electronically manipulated developments of the sound material. One would have been glad of some indication as to the relative importance of the various elements making up the total experience - was the content of the read scripts of any significance, were the sounds symbolic or was the piece to be heard as pure sonority? None of the possible

interpretations recommended itself in any way, either by its projection from the overall pattern or by the attraction of one's attention to interesting detail or development. But if one abandoned all attempt at intellectual comprehension and relaxed in the hope of receiving some form of sympathetic resonance, the piece failed even to produce a response of antipathy - for it aroused no expectations which it could disappoint.

RICHARD EMSLEY.

February 28 and March 1 : Barber Institute, Birmingham

#### THE MATRIX

The Matrix plays music of our time. That needs qualifying; in these two concerts they played music spanning 2,000 years - the Matrix made it the music of our time. They have a remarkable way with old music. They have no interest in being the curators of museum pieces, but select that which suits their purposes and make it new again. Undoubtedly there is a negative side to this - as well as gaining in immediacy, subtlety is lost. The characteristic sound is hard, brilliant, even noisy, and rhythms are spiky and exaggerated. The Matrix make no pretence at "authenticity" - a Gabrieli canzone played on saxophones is more than slightly anachronistic. Yet it's a fine sound, right for the music - chunky and coarse or oily and smooth for contracted sections. The version of the Perotin Alleluia, raucous and extrovert, was probably completely unlike what the 13th century would have made of it, but it did present a miniature of the Middle Ages. Alan Hacker's rendering of the First Delphic Hymn on the first night took music about which we have only tentative knowledge and made something far from tentative - a hooting and shrilling clarinet solo.

Jazz, of course, with its improvisational format is also concerned with making old material new. The Matrix has the fine jazz player Tony Coe as a member. An original means of showing his talents was devised by playing two Gershwin Preludes "straight" on the piano (Ronald Lamsden) which sandwiched an unaccompanied sax solo by Coe. His soprano solo on the second night was superior to his alto on the first, but in both were the same breathy cascades of notes of amazing agility.

The pieces written for the group were Birtwistle's The Death of Orpheus and Elizabeth Lutyens's Vision of Youth. The Birtwistle is striking in its restrained use of the resources - pulsating held chords for three bar clarinets and simple patterns for piano (often plucked strings) and crotales formed the typical background to Jane Manning's vocal line which shifted rapidly between the various gradations between speech and song. The disturbing text by Peter Zinovieff is fully mirrored by the music - nothing much remained of Orpheus, just his skull, the music too is skeletal. A fine work.

The Lutyens work had its moments, particularly in the effective motto of 3 ascending, then descending triads which occurs throughout the first part and the gorgeous effect of the vocalise. But the second half, an evocation of the East, used a large battery of percussion and destroyed all that the beginning had built up with cheap chinoiserie.

Both the Birtwistle and Lutyens pieces used the three clarinets as equals. I wonder if this is a full exploitation of the Matrix's capabilities; the three clarinetists are, after all, very different in style - Francis Cristou has a conventional sound, Alan Hacker his own hard, bright sound with tremendous dynamic range, and Tony Coe a soft, deliberately breathy, jazz tone. I should like to see a work written for them which fully used these characteristics.

DAVID LI. ROBERTS.

Report by Bryan Woolstanholm on the performance of Eddie Prévost's "Spirals", Roundhouse, London, March 2.

At half time I was lucky enough to collar United's gong player in the bar. For reasons of personal hygiene he wishes to remain anonymous so to avoid confusion I shall refer to him as "Glynis" in the interview that follows. As usual I speak first....

Well Glynis, I understand the tactics in this piece represent a radical new departure in music today breaking all the laws of traditional technique and introducing ingenious psychological ploys to deceive the other side?

Well.....

(long pause)

Yes. I noticed several times you seemed to take on a sleepy distracted look. Were there times when you found you were really getting "in-deep" with those psychical spirals?

Well.....

(considerably longer pause)

I see. In the second half often Drums passed to Saxes and Basses tackled and got possession only to lose it to Gongs who quickly passed it inside to Drums again and ambled round to pick up a perfect pass back in centre field setting them up for a header to Saxes who shot and scored, did you think that goal should have been disallowed under an amendment to an obscure offside ruling dating from 1843?

Well Bryan..... (excruciatingly long pause, then)....  
I just banged me gong didn't I? I just banged me gong.

Well, there you have it, a Great Match, the referee playing on alone into injury time. United seem all set for the Cup this season!

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Arnold Whittall Musicologist, also composer. Senior Lecturer in music, University College, Cardiff and author of the recently-published BBC Music Guide on Schoenberg's chamber music.

Chris Villars Flautist and philosopher. Formerly co-editor of Contact.

David Mabey Writer, journalist etc. Author of a book on the Grateful Dead.

Gavin Bryars Composer and one of the editors of the Experimental Music Catalogue. Described as the most interesting experimental composer working in Britain today.

David Lloyd Roberts Graduate of Manchester University and at present researching on the use of parody techniques in 20th century music at Birmingham.

Alan McGeoch Postgraduate student at Leicester University working on social aspects of British music since 1945.

Leslie East Research student at King's College, London, working on Bernard von Dieren.

The Editor Postgraduate music student at University College, Cardiff.



