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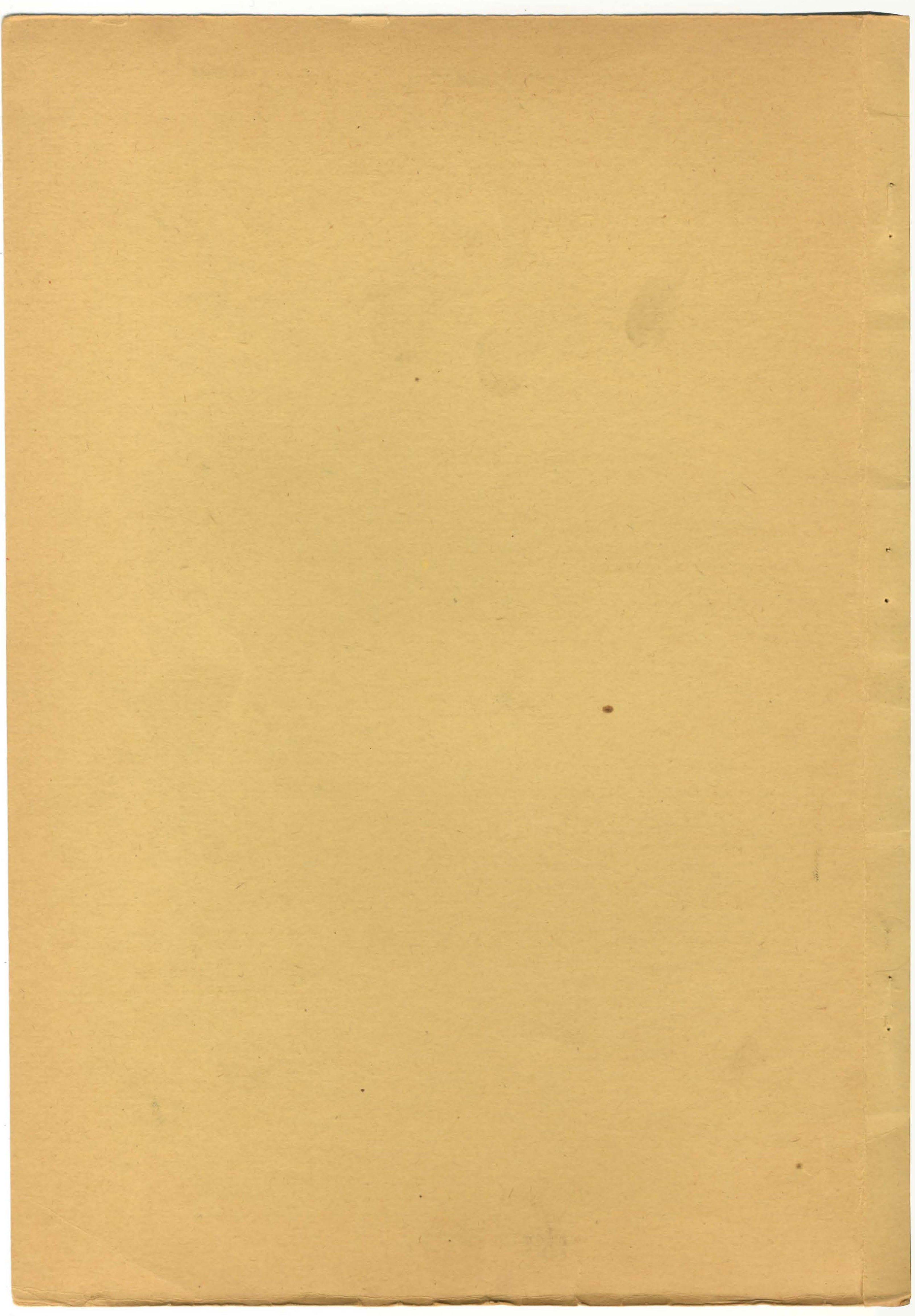
SPECIAL NORTH-AMERICAN ISSUE

Alan Gillmor	Canadian Music
Richard Steinitz	George Crumb
Lyndon Reynolds	Miles Davis
Dave Smith	Phil Glass
Carl Stone	New Music Collective
David Horn Peter Dickinson	Two American Music Centres

25p



CONTACT 11
SUMMER 1975

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NEW LOOK CONTACT

This issue is the first to be produced in our new, much improved format. We hope that it will do better justice to our contents, and to the aims of the magazine in general which remain the same: to promote informed discussion of all aspects of 20th century music with special reference to that of our own time.

CONTACT 12 (October 1975) will continue Alan Gillmor's survey of contemporary music in Canada, with discussion of the leading younger composers including Anhalt, Freedman, Garant, Hetu, Kasemets, Mather, Mercure, Morel, Schafer and Tremblay, and a review of contemporary trends in general. Other plans for future issues include:

interviews with Earle Brown, John Cage, Witold Lutoslawski and Tom Phillips

an article on Soviet music by Erik Levi

articles on rock and jazz

an article on the Musicians' Co-ops in Britain by Jan Steele

reviews of Jonathan Harvey's The Music of Stockhausen (Richard Toop)
the new, enlarged Style and Idea (Keith Potter)
the paperback edition of Boulez on Music Today (Richard Emsley)
Peacock and Weir's The Composer in the Market Place (Alan McGeoch)
BBC Music Guides on Bartók and Debussy (John Shepherd)
new scores including Maxwell Davies and the fifth edition of the Experimental Music Catalogue

special issues on Music and Society, electronic music and a second one on American music.

We envisage that CONTACT will now appear regularly each year in February, May and October. Copy date for all material, both editorial and advertising, will in each case be the first day of the month preceding that of the relevant issue, i. e. 1 January, 1 April and 1 September. No copy received after these dates can be guaranteed consideration for the following issue. All correspondence concerning both editorial and advertising matters should be sent to the editor at the address on page 1.

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ADVERTISING RATES

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ALAN GILLMOR 11

Contemporary Music in Canada - 1

In looking at the present picture of our music, it must be realized that we are actually the first generation of Canadian composers. Before our time music development was largely in the hands of imported English organists, who, however sound academically, had no creative contribution to make of any general value.[1]

It is supremely ironical that an article which purports to introduce a predominantly British audience to Canadian music should begin with a scathing denunciation of British academicism, a deadening and stifling influence which, it can be argued, has long hindered the natural growth of the arts in this broad Dominion. For those who, in the memorable phrase of H. G. Wells, choose to walk into the future backwards, Canada has long been an anachronistic haven, a 19th century country in many ways, as Marshall McLuhan is fond of telling us, a secure and comfortable perch from which one can view the swerving movements of the 20th century with smug complacency and an uncertain sense of pride.

Given the peculiar topography of the country, Canadian culture could hardly have taken a different course. Art, in most senses of the word, is primarily and fundamentally an urban phenomenon. As much as the Romantics despised, or pretended to despise, the labyrinth of the modern city - that great harlot which seduced man from nature and the paths of righteousness - the vibrant stimulation of the crowd was basic to their very existence. Thus, at different times, Vienna, Paris, London, New York became in effect vast stages on which were acted out the hidden fantasies of the nation. This much, it would seem, has not changed, and, at the risk of lapsing into a sociological half-truth, may in fact be put forward as an important ingredient in any attempt to explain the relative artistic inactivity of countries such as Norway and Portugal which exist on the fringes of the European continent, or like Switzerland remain ensconced in splendid xenophobic isolation behind a magnificent and timeless natural barrier.

Canada, too, exists on the fringe of a continent, its two or three cultural hamlets strung out over some 3,000 miles of territory precariously united by a vague and rapidly diminishing sense of 'Britishness', more concretely by a thin ribbon of railway and a trans-continental communications network. Hence, the flow of ideas across the nation, until relatively recently, has been sluggish in the extreme, a situation exacerbated by the presence of the American giant to the south, long an object of morbid fascination to the citizen of the north and a powerful magnetic force which manages to attract and repel at the same time.

The immediate post-war years seem to have brought about an acute awareness of the fact that Canada's musical house was in serious disorder. In 1954, Ettore Mazzoleni, then Principal of the Royal Toronto Conservatory of Music, painted a rather grim picture of the nation's musical life:

The existing facilities for the promotion and publication of Canadian music are far from adequate. There is no adequate library of Canadian music - in fact, there is no adequate library of music - and no central bureau of information. There is an almost complete lack of recordings of Canadian music and musical organizations. The concert stage is larely controlled by well-organized and powerful outside agencies. The country possesses few satisfactory concert halls. The crowding of the best professional musicians into the large centres is a threat to the rest of the country. There is no published history of music in Canada. Scholarships are inadequate, and no Canadian university offers postgraduate courses in musical research. Above all, there is no effective national organization

to represent the musical profession as a whole or to promote its interests both at home and abroad.[2]

The above remarks add up to a fairly accurate representation of the state of Canadian musical life in the year of Charles Ives's death, hardly the kind of environment conducive to the creation of enduring works of artistic genius. It does not take a great deal of imagination to conjure up a fairly clear vision of the musical products of such a society. A perusal of the critical literature of the period draws attention to the situation with distressing regularity:

In a recent symposium of contemporary music it was remarked of some Canadian composers that they seemed unaware of anything that had happened in music for the last fifty years. The relevance (or irrelevance) of such a remark as a critical reproach bothered me as I listened to Healey Willan's Second Symphony in the excellent performance that Ettore Mazzoleni conducted with the Royal Conservatory Orchestra in Toronto. Here was a work that could have been written in 1910, full of Edwardian pomp and thick texture, combined with suggestions of English or Celtic folk-songs: an obvious relative of Elgar and early Vaughan Williams. If it had been written in Canada in 1910, it might be accepted now and revived as a classic of Canadian music. Being written today, its chances for survival are far less, despite the enthusiasm with which it was received.[3]

And later the same evening:

On the same program Mr. Mazzoleni played Godfrey Ridout's Two Etudes for String Orchestra. Although the texture is much sparer and the melody and harmony more angular than Dr. Willan's, Mr. Ridout's music is equally firmly based on English music forty years ago. The opening of the second etude suggests Elgar, and much of the material has been passed through the folk-song idiom of Vaughan Williams. Mr. Ridout obscures this basis by a veneer of modernism . . . which has only been partly assimilated.[4]

It goes without saying that not all Canadian composers active in the 50s looked to the Mother Country for models. A few hardy souls struck out in different directions in search of inspiration:

The Piano Sonata by Philip Nimmons of the Royal Conservatory belongs to . the world of the Rachmaninoff concertos. Loose, atmospheric, and expansive, it combines an occasional charm and vigor of invention with a tendency toward padding and smudgy virtuoso work. This padding sounds like background music without the script which can give it meaning. Yet, despite many amorphous and excessively atmospheric passages, the material is worth tidying up. The opening theme of the last movement . . . is excellent, and the middle section of the slow movement has a Rachmaninoff-like charm, although a little more old-fashioned than rests easily on the rest of the sonata.[5]

Every British school child is familiar with the dedicated work of Cecil Sharp and the folksong revivalists who, through the genius of Vaughan Williams and a few others, managed to revitalise the music of Das Land ohne Musik in the early years of this century. Likewise Bartók and Kodály in Hungary, Ives and Copland in the United States, Pedrell, Albéniz, and Falla in Spain, Janáček and Martinů in Czechoslovakia, Chávez and Revueltas in Mexico - the list is almost endless. It would seem for all this that an intensely nationalistic phase is the first step towards musical independence, that without a healthy infusion of the traditional values of the soil, a nation is doomed to remain encapsulated by an immediate and alien past. Where, then, are the Canadian nationalists?

The assumption must be that a nationalist music can only succeed in a country where the roots of folk culture lie strong and deep. The fact is that Canada is a country of many cultures, all of which have come together to create a characteristic mosaic. In this, the Canadian experience differs markedly from the American. A homogenising process has created in the United States a distinctive blend of cultural attitudes which are recognisably American, occasional regional variants notwithstanding. In order for a nationalist art form to be

meaningful as a conscious expression of a particular culture group, it must somehow plumb the collective psyche of that group, a process which cannot develop in the absence of a rich community of experience.

Canadian society is fragmented into dozens of ethnic groups, each tending to retain, with a tenacity bordering on cultural schizophrenia, a firm grip on its (mostly) European roots. It is this very fragmentation, encouraged by a common yearning for old ways and customs and maintained by an isolation and insularity born of broad spaces and great distances, that more than anything else has contributed to a definition of the Canadian character. And although the mosaic is beginning to crack under the post-war pressures of massive urban growth, one cannot yet speak of anything resembling a unified community of experience. Mainly for these reasons, an intrinsically Canadian folk music is virtually non-existent, outside of the indigenous Indian and Eskimo varieties which, however, cannot be expected to signify very much to most Canadians, certainly not as a rich source of inspiration for the musical folklorist in search of a 'Canadian' identity. Consequently, the various attempts to extract musical sustenance from the native soil have resulted in frightfully parochial inspirations which of necessity reflect only a tiny facet of the mosaic.

Early examples of the genre are the Two Sketches on French Canadian Airs (1927) for string quartet or string orchestra by Sir Ernest MacMillan (1893-1973), from 1931 to 1956 conductor of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and Dean of the Faculty of Music of the University of Toronto until his retirement from academic life in 1942. MacMillan's Two Sketches are charming miniatures which, characteristically, bear a closer resemblance to the bucolic aspect of Vaughan Williams than to French-Canadian folk song. Nonetheless, if MacMillan is remembered at all as a composer it will be most assuredly on the strength of unpretentious and skilfully wrought genre pieces such as these rather than his grandiose setting of Swinburne's England, a cantata in the best Victorian academic tradition with which the composer gained the degree of Doctor of Music from Oxford University.

Although MacMillan's contemporary Claude Champagne (1891-1965) has left several works of substance, such as the darkly lyrical Symphonie gaspésienne (1945), the String Quartet of 1951, and the powerful symphonic poem Altitude (1959), he is perhaps best remembered for his many lively and picturesque evocations of French Canada, most notably the Suite canadienne (1928) for choir and orchestra and the exuberant Danse villageoise (1930).

The list of folk-inspired compositions in Canada is long but ultimately of limited importance. Such characteristic works as the Red Ear of Corn (1948-49), a ballet based on a peculiar blending of French-Canadian and Indian folk styles, by the Toronto composer John Weinzweig (b.1913), the Miramichi Ballad (1954), an orchestral suite based on three New Brunswick folk songs, by McGill University's Kelsey Jones (b.1922), and the Indian-inspired Algonquin Symphony (1957-58) by the Saskatchewan composer Murray Adaskin (b.1906), have a certain faded period charm which reflects not only a post-war urge on the part of many Canadian composers to find a national voice, but also a curious ignorance of, or indifference to, the richly varied avantgarde trends emanating from France, Germany, and the United States.

A nationalistic phase undoubtedly made it possible for countries such as England, the United States and even France to break the Germanic hegemony of the last century, to rediscover their musical souls and re-emerge with refurbished artistic personalities liberated from the oppressive weight of a solid but alien tradition. For reasons which have been outlined, this route has not been conspicuously open to the Canadian composer, and continuing effort in this direction will do no more than perpetuate a kind of picture-post-card aesthetic, what Donald Mitchell has called "a folkish mask imposed on an eclectic face."[6] Few Canadian composers of the generations trained before 1950 have explored new modes of thought and feeling; and if they have in any way shown us a dim reflection of ourselves, it is at best a cameo portrait, tiny, monochrome, incomplete, and two-dimensional.

When the chronicle of Canadian music in the 20th century is known in full, the decades 1955-1975 will be viewed as a period of rich and varied creative activity. These are, to borrow a phrase from Roger Shattuck, Canada's 'banquet years', an era of fresh discovery and vibrant creativity sparked in part by the general unwillingness of a new generation of composers and musicians to remain ensconced, safe and secure, in the dreary and torpid confines of the organ loft, a symbol of musical colonialism and reactionary academicism to a new breed of young artists in search of a brighter, cleaner, more intellectually bracing atmosphere. Since the mid-1950s, when all but the most blindly optimistic educators echoed Ettore Mazzoleni's rather depressing diagnosis of the country's musical ills quoted above, Canada has witnessed an impressive upsurge of cultural activity on all fronts.

Performers such as Glenn Gould, Maureen Forrester, and Jon Vickers are known and respected throughout the world; the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the National Ballet of Canada, and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, established in 1939, 1951 and 1952, respectively, have gained considerable critical acclaim in recent years beyond the borders of Canada; and at least three orchestras - the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra based in Ottawa - can be considered world-class musical organisations. Accompanying this rapid growth on the performance level has been a dramatic expansion of music education in recent years. Major electronic music studios have been established at the University of Toronto (1958) and at McGill University (1964), with many other institutions rapidly following suit. Doctoral programmes in musicology exist at the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia, soon to be followed by the University of Western Ontario. Many other institutions, including McGill University and l'Université de Montréal, have long offered the master's degree in all branches of music instruction, and new doctoral programmes in performance, ethnomusicology, and music education are in the planning stages at several Ontario universities.

As a result of this enrichment of educational opportunities at home, many young Canadian scholars are taking an unprecedented interest in Canada's music, although to date the three most important and comprehensive books on Canadian music have been written or edited by European-born scholars: Helmut Kallmann's A History of Music in Canada 1534-1914 (1960), Aspects of Music in Canada (1969), a symposium edited by Arnold Walter, and Music in Canada 1600-1800 (1975) by Willy Amtmann, a professor of musicology at Carleton University in Ottawa. Along with these general historical studies, several important journals have appeared in recent years, beginning with the now defunct Canadian Music Journal (1956-1962), followed by three active publications, The Canada Music Book (since 1970), the Journal of the Canadian Association of University Schools of Music, which appeared in 1971, and the recent (1973) Canadian Folk Music Journal.

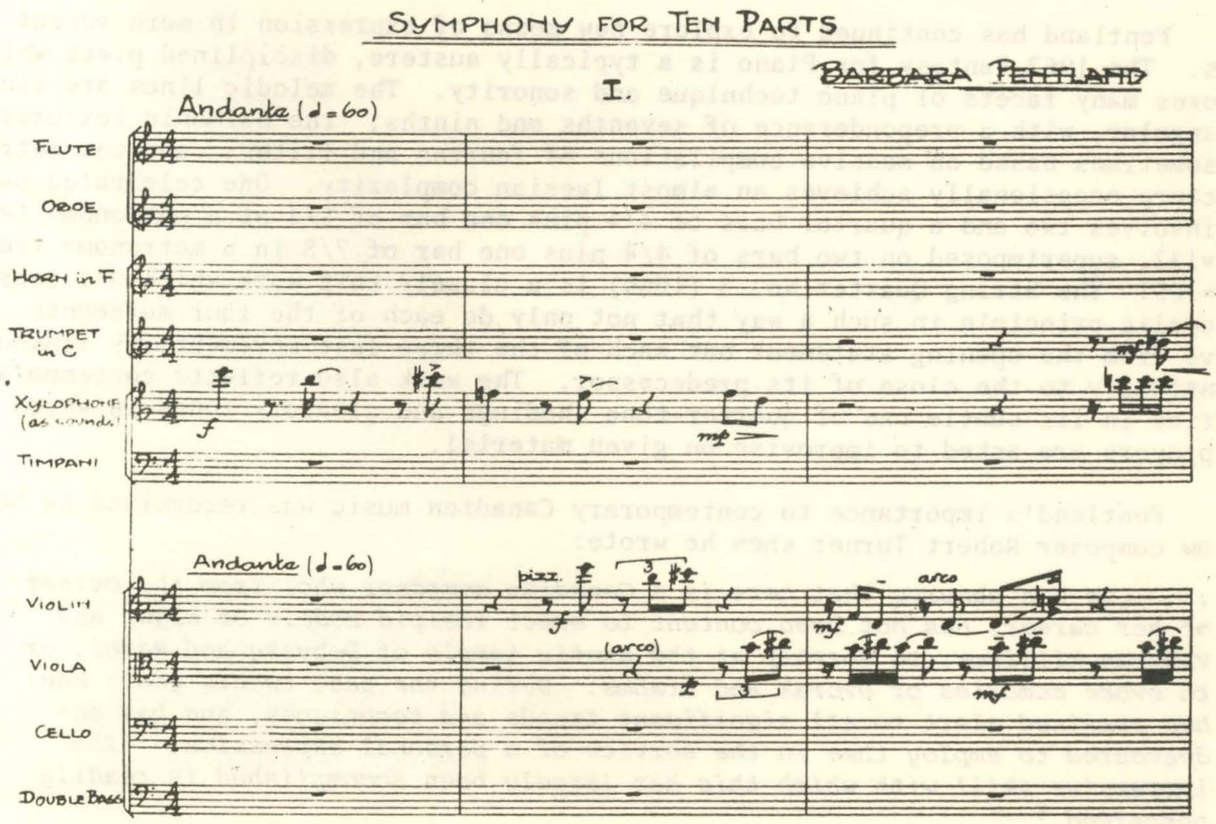
The years leading up to the Second World War saw the first signs of a shift away from the eclectic aesthetic ideals of the Willan-Champagne 'school'. A new generation of Canadian-born composers reaching artistic maturity at this time managed to widen greatly the scope of Canadian composition, largely through a somewhat belated discovery of such established European masters as Schoenberg, Bartók, and Stravinsky. Barbara Pentland (b.1912), John Weinzweig (b.1913), Alexander Brott (b.1915), and Jean Papineau-Couture (b.1916) are probably the most important of Canada's first 'modernists', and in their various roles as performers, conductors, propagandists and pedagogues, they have significantly enriched the fabric of Canadian musical life, providing in their works valuable models for yet another generation of young composers intent on taking their place in the larger world community.

Barbara Pentland received her advanced musical training at the Schola Cantorum in Paris with Cécile Gauthiez, a pupil of d'Indy and a staunch Franckist, at the Juilliard School of Music in New York with Frederick Jacobi and the Dutch-American composer Bernard Wagenaar, and at the Berkshire Music Center in Massachusetts, where her principal teacher was Aaron Copland. Predictably, a great deal

of her music reflects certain aspects of the neo-classical 20s, with echoes of Prokofiev, Stravinsky, and her teacher Copland. Writing in the late 1950s, John Beckwith, one of the most balanced observers of the Canadian musical scene and an important composer in his own right, characterised Pentland's musical style as "firm in its structural aspects, fresh in melodic quality, [and] lean in texture",[7] all of which implies an adherance to neo-classical concepts of classical form, clarity of line, and economy of material. Among the composer's many works in traditional forms are four symphonies, a set of orchestral variations on a theme of Boccherini, concertos for violin, organ and piano, and numerous chamber works, including a piano quartet, three string quartets, two violin sonatas, and a piano trio, as well as a considerable number of works for piano solo.

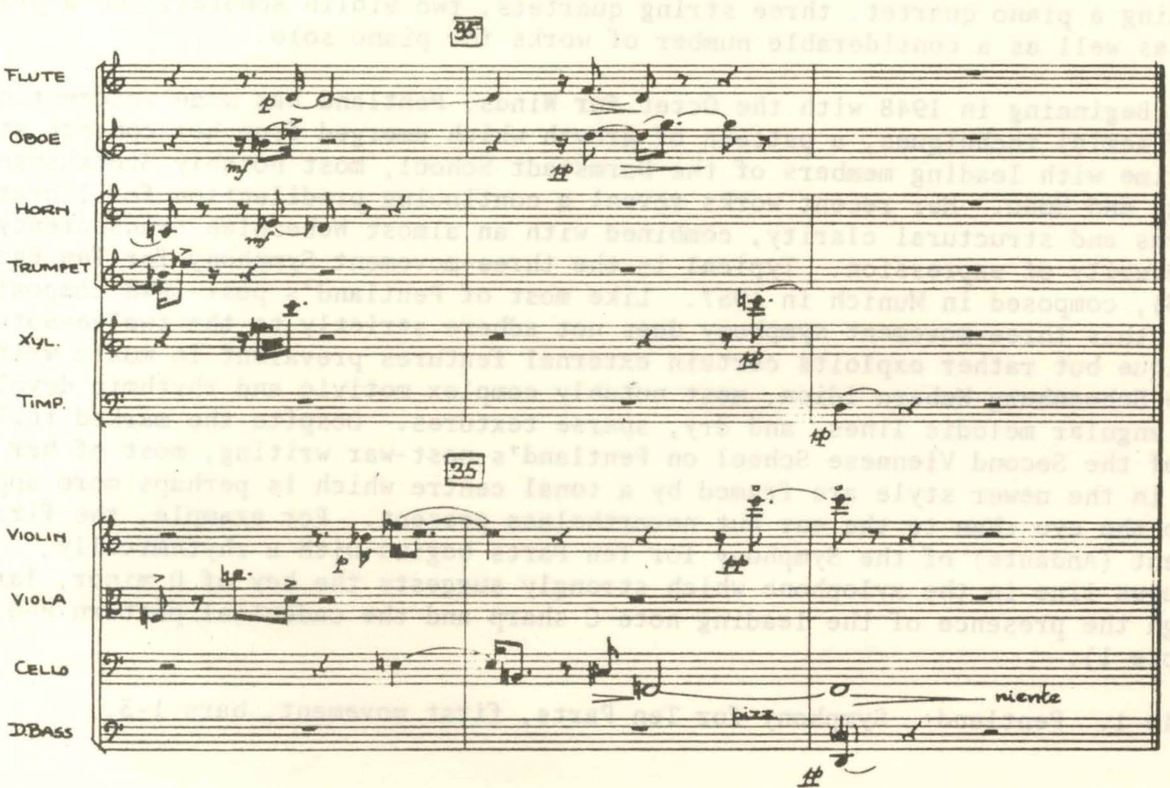
Beginning in 1948 with the Octet for Winds, Pentland has made interesting use of serial techniques, a pattern of growth which emerged from her contact at that time with leading members of the Darmstadt School, most notably Stockhausen, Boulez, and Nono. Her recent works reveal a continuing predilection for linear textures and structural clarity, combined with an almost Webernian transparency and severity of expression. Typical is the three-movement Symphony for Ten Parts (No. 3), composed in Munich in 1957. Like most of Pentland's post-1948 compositions, this three-movement symphony does not adhere strictly to the twelve-note technique but rather exploits certain external features prevalent in music written in the Schoenberg-Webern idiom, most notably complex motivic and rhythmic development, angular melodic lines, and dry, sparse textures. Despite the marked influence of the Second Viennese School on Pentland's post-war writing, most of her works in the newer style are framed by a tonal centre which is perhaps more apparent to the eye than to the ear but nevertheless present. For example, the first movement (Andante) of the Symphony for Ten Parts begins with a rhythmically ambiguous line in the xylophone which strongly suggests the key of D minor, largely through the presence of the leading note C sharp and the cadential pattern F-D (Example 1):

Example 1. Pentland: Symphony for Ten Parts, first movement, bars 1-3.



Despite the tonal ambiguities resulting from the highly chromatic language of the movement, the D minor tonality persists and is ultimately confirmed in the final cadence. Here the cello states a rhythmic variant of the initial xylophone motive, falling on to a sustained F which is then resolved by a single pizzicato D in the double bass, making an unambiguous case for D minor despite the gentle dissonance produced by the high E violin harmonic (Example 2):

Example 2. Pentland: Symphony for Ten Parts, first movement, bars 34-36.



Pentland has continued to explore new means of expression in more recent works. The 1962 Fantasy for Piano is a typically austere, disciplined piece which explores many facets of piano technique and sonority. The melodic lines are taught and angular, with a preponderance of sevenths and ninths; the harmonic textures are sometimes based on massive compilations of fourths and fifths; and the metric structure occasionally achieves an almost Ivesian complexity. One celebrated passage involves two and a quarter bars of 4/4 plus one bar of 5/4 at a metronome tempo of ♩=132, superimposed on two bars of 4/4 plus one bar of 7/8 in a metronome tempo of ♩=109! The String Quartet No. 3 (1969) is a closely knit work which utilises the cyclic principle in such a way that not only do each of the four movements evolve from the opening statement but each of the three last movements is linked thematically to the close of its predecessor. The work also reflects contemporary practice in its subtle use of quarter-tone shadings and aleatory zones in which the players are asked to improvise on given material.

Pentland's importance to contemporary Canadian music was recognised by her fellow composer Robert Turner when he wrote:

> *. . . we can observe that here is a Canadian composer who, from the outset of her career, has not been content to erect insipid models of Elgar and Vaughan Williams, to worship at the exotic temple of Debussy and Ravel, or to evoke memories of Dvorak and Brahms. During the past twenty years she has remained alert to all significant trends and techniques, and has endeavoured to employ them in the service of a personal expression. The impressive skill with which this has largely been accomplished is readily perceived.*[8]

It is generally accepted that John Weinzweig was the first Canadian com-

poser to employ serial techniques in his writing, giving him something of a pioneer status in this country. It is also generally accepted that Weinzweig is something of an elder statesman of Canadian music, a composer who, largely through his long affiliation with the University of Toronto (since 1952), has created something perilously close to a Weinzweig 'school', numbering among his students a good many of the brightest hopes for the future of Canadian musical creativity.

After a solid academic grounding under Leo Smith, Healey Willan, and Ernest MacMillan at the University of Toronto, Weinzweig journeyed, in 1938, to the Eastman School of Music in Rochester where he came under the influence of Bernard Rogers, a most remarkable teacher who made a lasting impression on the composer.

It is symptomatic of musical conditions in Canada at the time that Weinzweig was, during his student years at the University of Toronto, effectively sheltered from the 'dangerous' influences of the European avantgarde. Before 1938 his musical world was bordered by Wagner, Chopin, and Liszt. It was not until he got to Rochester that his eyes were opened to the newer worlds of Berg and Stravinsky, two composers in particular whose music caused a radical shift in Weinzweig's perspective. Like Pentland, Weinzweig has not slavishly imitated Viennese serialism, and his music strikes one as a happy and highly individualistic mixture of modified dodecaphony and Stravinskian neo-classicism, to which one could add, according to John Beckwith, the influences of Bloch, Bartók, Copland, and Prokofiev.[9]

Weinzweig's work is rich and varied, so that it becomes difficult within the confines of a brief survey of contemporary music in Canada to develop anything resembling a coherent and meaningful analysis of the man's achievement. Of his large-scale works it is necessary to single out the neo-classical Violin Concerto (1954), a work of controlled intensity which seems perfectly to unite the Apollonian and Dionysian elements of the composer's personality, and the deeply-felt Wine of Peace (1957), two dramatic songs for soprano and orchestra which perhaps most clearly reveal what might be described as a Hebraic warmth and emotionality in the artist's make-up.

In his usual felicitous manner, John Beckwith has captured a dominant trait in Weinzweig's musical personality when he speaks of "a mimetic quality, a playfulness, an almost distinct outline of body gesture in the music".[10] Pursuing this line of thought, it would seem, despite the composer's assured handling of the large forms, that his most endearing and perhaps characteristic qualities are found in works of more slender proportion and less serious intent, such as the series of five divertimenti for solo winds and small orchestra composed between 1946 and 1968.[11] Here are found in abundance humour and wit, scintillating jazzy rhythms, and a kind of Gallic verve and lyrical charm which tend to belie the fact that each of the works is serially constructed. In keeping with the spirit of these delightful pieces it is wickedly tempting to refer to Weinzweig as a kind of dodecaphonic Jean Françaix, at the risk of committing an injustice against both composers.

The Divertimento No. 1 for Flute and String Orchestra, which also exists in a version for flute and piano, provides a good example of the composer's unique assimilation of serial technique. Like Pentland, Weinzweig has managed to absorb twelve-note elements into an almost classical scheme of tonalities, mainly through a telling use of triadic harmonies. The central slow movement of the First Divertimento is based on the first five notes of a twelve-note set (B - B flat - F - A flat - E flat), a group characterised by successive falling fourths, which is first heard in sustained flute notes. What follows is simply a triadic harmonisation of these five notes which in its course reveals the remaining seven notes of the complete set of twelve: [E - G] [G flat] [D - D flat] [A - C]. The strong root movement of the progression suggests unmistakably an E-flat tonal centre, a conjecture which is immediately reinforced by the rapid reiteration of the E flat growing out of the last of the five chords (Example 3):

Example 3. Weinzweig: Divertimento for Flute and Piano, second movement, bars 1-11.

In view of the tortured expressionism and the cerebral sterility that has marked an enormous quantity of music drawn from the Schoenbergian well, it is eminently satisfying to witness the technique put to use in such a forthright and unaffected manner as this. At the same time, Weinzweig's music confirms the manifold possibilities inherent in the once dreaded 'system'. To close this brief discussion of John Weinzweig, it is revealing to quote a portion of a conversation the composer once had with his pupil and colleague Harry Somers. He told Somers:

> *There's no point in writing music for myself. If there was I'd just write for the piano so I could play it myself. You must be thinking of an audience as soon as you get to doing things for an orchestra, thinking of a response. Those who deny it are defending themselves from criticism. There's no point in writing unless it has a social purpose.*[12]

Of the remaining two composers classified as the most important of Canada's first 'modernists', Alexander Brott is the more difficult to characterise. Opinion seems to be strongly divided on the merit of his music, though none would deny that his activities as a conductor and teacher deserve unstinting praise. After study at the McGill Conservatorium and the Juilliard School of Music, Brott began his career as concertmaster of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. At a very young age he became assistant conductor of that orchestra and while still in his 20s went on to create the McGill Chamber Orchestra which, over the years, has functioned as a kind of personal laboratory for the composer's compositional activities. Brott is a free-ranging eclectic of a conservative bent whose music generally lacks a distinctive profile. He is by temperament, one suspects, a romantic who is happiest when dealing with an external stimulus of some kind. A good deal of his music is written for string orchestra, and almost all of it carries a programmatic title. Characteristic examples in this medium are: Lament (1940), Laurentian Idyll (1940), Ritual (1942), Lullaby and Procession of Toys (1943), Three Astral Visions (1959), and Circle, Triangle, 4 Squares (1963). In addition, Brott has

written about a dozen works for full orchestra, a Concerto for Violin and Chamber Orchestra (1950), a considerable amount of chamber music, including one work, Critic's Corner (1950), for the unusual combination of string quartet and percussion, several choral works, a handful of songs for high voice and orchestra, and a very few piano pieces of which the composer himself has singled out the Vignettes en caricature. Very little of Brott's music has been published.

In a recent interview, Brott revealed something of his aesthetic position when he said:

> *There are only two means of making music, either one stops (to say nothing new), or continues (to embroider the old). The judicious balance between the two pervades all forms. Form and means relate to function and use. When either disappears, they are of interest only in the historical sense, in either museum or concert hall.*[13]

A brief quotation from the second movement (Andante) of the Three Astral Visions will demonstrate one aspect of Brott's essential eclecticism. Here the influence seems to be Bartók, as is suggested vaguely by the convoluted conjunct melodic lines, the mirror-form passage in the second violins, and the muted note clusters in the violas. The entire movement generates an atmosphere reminiscent of Bartók's characteristic 'night music' (Example 4):

Example 4. Brott: Three Astral Visions, second movement, bars 5-8.

The indefatigable John Beckwith, who has sacrificed enormous amounts of his own time as a composer promoting the music of his colleagues, sees four, possibly five, stages in the stylistic development of the important French-Canadian composer Jean Papineau-Couture. He defines these as (1) neo-classical (1942-48); (2) semi-dramatic (1948-50); (3) transitional (1951-54); (4) dodecaphonic (1956-); and (5) church music as a special category.[14]

Papineau-Couture, a Boulanger student, is a gifted craftsman who may be considered the chief representative of the post-Sacre Stravinsky aesthetic in Canada. Like Stravinsky's post-World War I compositions, Papineau-Couture's music is compounded of clean, often angular, lines, dry rhythmic and melodic ostinatos, and a remarkable sensitivity to tone colour. He is at heart a contrapuntist, and in his ingenious pursuit of new solutions to old formal problems (fugue, sonata,

concerto grosso, etc.) he shares with Stravinsky the characteristic 'problem-solving' approach to musical composition.

It is interesting to note that among Papineau-Couture's most idiomatic compositions are five works entitled Pièce Concertante. In each of these pieces, patterned on the baroque concerto grosso principle, the composer cleverly exploits a particular constructional device. Pièce Concertante No. 1 (1957), subtitled 'Repliement' ('Folding-back'), is formally a single large cancrizans structure, while the second Pièce Concertante (1959), subtitled 'Eventails' ('Fans'), is based on short retrogradations plus a process of constant expansion and contraction of note lengths and harmonic density. The third Pièce Concertante (1958-59), scored for a concertino group of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and harp with string orchestra ripieno, consists of a theme, ten variations, and a fugue. Pièce Concertante No. 4 (1959) for oboe and strings is constructed on a proportional expansion of note values, and the last Pièce Concertante (1963), in keeping with its subtitle, 'Miroirs', is a study in mirror devices.

Quite obviously Papineau-Couture approaches musical creativity in a classical mode. That is to say, he is more concerned with underlying form than with surface appearance. As a result, his music, like much of Stravinsky's, lacks an element of poetry and fantasy. Compensating for the emotional restraint, however, is the kind of cerebral pleasure that comes from participating in the creative process itself, that allows one to observe, as it were, the creative mind in action. As Andrée Desautels has noted: "A work of art, according to [Papineau-]Couture, is nothing but an order imposed on time, autonomous in form and free of purely human concerns".[15]

There are, to be sure, many other Canadian composers of the generation born in the first two decades of the century who have made solid contributions to Canadian musical life, and omission of their names from any discussion of contemporary music in Canada can only serve to obscure and distort the larger picture. By general agreement, however, we do tend to approach the past in a way that quite automatically places the 'radical' at the fountainhead of 'progress', and since the past is viewed as a process of continuous and inexorable change, it is the prime instigator of change who most readily captures our imaginations and commands our attention. All this is an admittedly clumsy way of trying to say that we, at least as historians if not as participants, value the Schoenbergs more than the Rachmaninov's. On these grounds there is little need be said about skilful but essentially conservative composers such as Murray Adaskin (b.1906), Keith Bissell (b.1912), Graham George (b.1912), Maurice Blackburn (b.1914), Eldon Rathburn (b.1916), Oscar Morawetz (b.1917), William McCauley (b.1917), Lorne Betts (b.1918), Godfrey Ridout (b.1918), Gerald Bales (b.1919) and many others, some considerably younger. Most of these composers have made valuable contributions as performers, teachers, and scholars, and some of them - Morawetz and Ridout, for example - have produced scores which are deservedly popular and merit occasional hearings. But few of these musicians have introduced us to new modes of thought and feeling. Therefore we value them less.

* * * TO BE CONTINUED IN CONTACT 12 * * *

PART II: THE AVANTGARDE AND BEYOND

NOTES:

[1]Barbara Pentland, 'Canadian Music, 1950', Northern Review, III (February/March 1950), p. 43.

[2]Ettore Mazzoleni, 'Music in Canada', Queen's Quarterly, LX (Winter 1954), p. 489.

[3]Milton Wilson, 'Canadian Music', The Canadian Forum, XXX (July 1950), p. 87.
Healey Willan (1880-1968) was born near London and educated at St. Saviour's Choir

School, Eastbourne. In 1913 he arrived in Canada to head the Theory Department of the Toronto Conservatory of Music. For 50 years the composer was associated with the University of Toronto, first as lecturer and examiner and later as university organist and professor. In these capacities, Willan became one of the dominating personalities in Canadian music, occupying a position not unlike that of Sir Hubert Parry in England a generation earlier. Willan's Symphony No. 2 in C Minor (1948), dedicated "to Ettore Mazzoleni with gratitude and affection", was recently recorded by the late Karel Ancerl and the Toronto Symphony (CBC Radio Canada SM 133).

[4]Ibid., p. 88. Godfrey Ridout, born in Toronto in 1918, was a student of Willan's at the Toronto Conservatory. Still very much active as a composer and lecturer in the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, Ridout continues to espouse an aesthetic firmly rooted in the early 20th century British tradition. He has a particular affection for Holst, Walton, and Elgar, and, more so than any other composer, he has attempted to perpetuate the worn and faded ideals of his mentor. The Two Etudes for String Orchestra date from 1946.

[5]Milton Wilson, 'Canadian Music', The Canadian Forum, XXX (August 1950), p. 114. Philip Nimmons was born in British Columbia in 1923 and educated at the Juilliard School of Music and at the Royal Conservatory, Toronto, where his principal teachers were Arnold Walter and John Weinzweig. In addition to the 1949 Piano Sonata, Nimmons has composed several small works for orchestra, a string quartet, and a handful of songs. In the past 25 years it is fair to say that the composer has made little impact on Canadian music, except perhaps in his newer role of jazz musician.

[6]Donald Mitchell, The Language of Modern Music (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1966), p. 110.

[7]John Beckwith, 'Music', in The Culture of Contemporary Canada, ed. by Julian Park (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), p. 150.

[8]Robert Turner, 'Barbara Pentland', The Canadian Music Journal, II, No. 4 (Summer 1958), p. 24.

[9]See John Beckwith, 'Composers in Toronto and Montreal', University of Toronto Quarterly, XXVI (October 1956), p. 47ff.

[10]Ibid., p. 49.

[11]No. 1 (1946) for flute and string orchestra; No. 2 (1948) for oboe and string orchestra; No. 3 (1959) for bassoon and string orchestra; No. 4 (chronologically No. 5, 1968) for clarinet and string orchestra; No. 5 (1961) for trumpet, trombone and wind band.

[12]Quoted in Peter Such, Soundprints: Contemporary Composers (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Company Ltd., 1972), p. 18.

[13]Alexander Brott, 'A Portrait', Musicanada, No. 17 (March 1969), p. 11.

[14]See John Beckwith, 'Jean Papineau-Couture', The Canadian Music Journal, III, No. 2 (Winter 1959), p. 9.

[15]Andrée Desautels, 'The History of Canadian Composition 1610-1967', in Arnold Walter, ed., Aspects of Music in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), p. 120.

Music examples reproduced by kind permission of BMI-Canada Ltd., (Barbara Pentland: Symphony for Ten Parts); Boosey and Hawkes Ltd. (Canada) (John Weinzweig: Divertimento for Flute and Piano); Canadian Music Centre (Alexander Brott: Three Astral Visions).

₵ RICHARD STEINITZ **11**

The Music of George Crumb

The eternal silence of infinite space terrifies me (Pascal)

George Crumb, now in his mid 40s, is becoming an increasingly significant American voice. Like earlier compatriots, Ives, Partch and Varèse, Crumb has evolved a style which, while it may draw upon the music of others, is fundamentally set apart from any 'schools', be they the conservative symphonic tradition or the various paths of the avantgarde. His self-contained idiom has, admittedly, a certain narrowness, but it also has impressive strengths: a powerfully imaginative vision, an unmistakable identity, a sureness of intent as well as of technique.

What makes Crumb unlike other American composers of his generation is that he is an unashamed poet, little concerned with experimental attitudes, ideology or systems. His music is lyrical and evocative - displaying an almost Schumannesque response to external stimuli and an undercurrent of expressive allusion - vivid, surrealist, exotic, wistful and elegiac, intense in feeling, rich in metaphor, symbolism and ritual. It represents the very antithesis of, for instance, Elliott Carter's intellectually-questing idiom, whose entirely musical processes tend to encounter such complex relationships that the resulting whole may risk being less than the sum of its admirable parts. Crumb's style is, on the contrary, often slender and vulnerable, suggesting more than it states and implying more than music. Sensuous it may be, but it also contains some of the most startling and enriching explorations of timbre made by any composer.

Despite its orientalism, the music springs from a broad-based contemporary awareness. It poignantly records the cleavage between technological ambition and spiritual yearning, and a turning away from the achievements and consequences of Reason towards a rediscovery of the hidden depths of human consciousness and of the original spiritual and magical properties of music. Recurring preoccupations are with a lost state of innocence, death, time, evil, threatened species, and the troubled soul of Man voyaging, as never before, among the stars.

The quotation from Pascal is made in Crumb's foreword to his recent Makrokosmos: 24 Fantasy Pieces after the Zodiac (1972/3) for amplified piano. Over almost a decade, however, Crumb has repeatedly identified his own artistic impulses with those of the Spanish poet, Federico García Lorca (1898-1936), whose work he has set or alluded to in no less than ten compositions. The affinity with Lorca is strong. In his introduction to Ancient Voices of Children (1970) the composer writes: "I have sought musical images that enhance and reinforce the powerful yet strangely haunting imagery of Lorca's poetry. I feel that the essential meaning of this poetry is concerned with the most primary things: life, death, love, the smell of the earth, the sounds of the wind and sea." And in citing Lorca's lecture on the genesis of his poetry, Crumb could be thinking of the source of his own inspiration: "This mysterious power that everyone feels but that no philosopher has explained is in fact the spirit of the earth . . All one knows is, that it burns the blood like powdered glass, that it exhausts, that it rejects all the sweet geometry one has learned . ."

Born in West Virginia in 1929, George Crumb followed the conventional stages of American academic achievement through Mason College in Charlestown and the universities of Illinois, Michigan, Colorado and, finally, Pennsylvania which is now his home. He studied with Ross Lee Finney and then with Boris Blacher both in the United States and Berlin. Since 1955 he has been the recipient of an enviable number of grants, commissions and awards, and his music is now beginning

to be better known outside America through more frequent, but not always adequate, performances.

His first mature works, the Five Pieces for Piano (1962) and Night Music I (1963) reveal the European influences of Debussy, Bartók's eerie 'night' music, and a Webernesque brevity and pointillism enriched by a fascinated involvement with timbre inherited from Cage. Subsequently Crumb has been drawn to Mahler, especially the potency of innocent material distorted through a haze of nostalgia. Less sentimentally, the wind and brass 'circle music' in Echoes of Time and the River (1967) recalls the crystalline melodic cells of Varèse:

Example 1. a) Crumb: Echoes of Time and the River, second movement, clarinet.

Example 1. b) Varèse: Intégrales, five bars after Fig. 18, tenor trombone.

whilst passages of Makrokosmos remind one of Messiaen's massive, gong-like piano clusters and scintillating, asymetric 'oiseaux' - their plumage now transformed into the luminous, tossing mane and star-etched feet of a rampant, zodiacal 'Leo'! New attitudes to structure and to electronic sound media also make themselves felt, notably in Black Angels (1970) for 'electric string quartet'.

However, it is the presence of Debussy that is most abiding. The incantatory Syrinx hovers above much of Crumb's music, revealing itself, as in the third section of Night of the Four Moons (1969), in a love of flute tone, often monodic thought, rhythmic fluidity and non-diatonic scales. So it is hardly surprising that, like other Americans, he has found a growing source of inspiration in primitive and asiatic music. In several pieces oriental qualities have come to predominate, affecting melody, rhythm, instrumentation and the whole aesthetic. Lux Aeterna (1971) is a case in point: the performers, masked and wearing black robes, sit in lotus position and in near-darkness around a lighted candle; sung phrases of the Requiem text alternate with a refrain for sitar, recorder and tabla during which (the composer suggests) a solo dancer may perform. In the sung sections bass flute and numerous bell and gong resonances, ingeniously made to glissando and vibrate, accompany the soprano; the music revolves timelessly in wholetones until released into chromatic ecstasy by a sforzando cluster of bells. During the refrains vibraphone, recorder, and the soft singing of the percussionists are gathered into the trance-like music of sitarist and tabla-player, whose trembling melodic inflexions and rhythmic drone (a repeating 9/8 ♩ ♪ ♩ ♪ ♩ ♪ ♩.) seem utterly asiatic.

Clearly, Crumb's music may fit uneasily in a conventional concert environment. Ideally it is for silent places and the alert stillness of night. Apart from the early Variazioni (1959) and the more recent Echoes of Time and the River for orchestra - the latter in any case thoroughly unconventional in its attitude to the concept of an orchestra - most of his music requires an intimate and sympathetic atmosphere in which its elusive qualities of supplication and ritual can

be fully sensed. In every work the composer has carefully indicated stage positioning, taking into account dramatic relationships between the performers as well as mere convenience. Not infrequently performers are asked to move, in a symbolic gesture, to excite sound from each other's instruments. A telling instance occurs in the pounding, chilling 'Song of the Rider' in Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death (1968) when the two percussionists suddenly invade the territory of double-bass and guitar, rapping out percussive ostinati on their open strings with hard vibraphone mallets.

The theatrical and the visual are frequently important factors in Crumb's works. In Eleven Echoes of Autumn (1965) they take the form of a suggested lighting, deep blue "at the beginning; then very gradually (almost imperceptibly) brightening until reaching a fiery red at the beginning of Eco 8; then very gradually dimming until reaching total darkness at the beginning of Eco 11". Echoes of Time and the River requires groups of orchestral players to process on, off, and about the stage using steps of various lengths synchronised with the music - a "spatial projection of the time continuum". Not surprisingly, this seems to have been abandoned in most (possibly all) performances so far!

A simpler relationship of on- and off-stage music occurs in Ancient Voices of Children and, even more beautifully, in Night of the Four Moons. Towards the end of this lovely, meaningful piece (inspired by the Apollo 11 moon-mission and using uncannily apt Lorca texts), the off-stage music - a Berceuse in 'stilo Mahleriano' and aglow with the human warmth of F-sharp major - is made to emerge and fade from hearing like a distant radio signal. The audience, left with the strangely disembodied, ethereally high harmonics of a lone cello ('Music of the Spheres'), sense the human music as if from far outside. With exquisite economy Crumb conveys the image of a tiny, belittled earth lost in the vastness of interstellar space; every phrase seems inevitably right and apt, yet spare, fresh and unexpected.

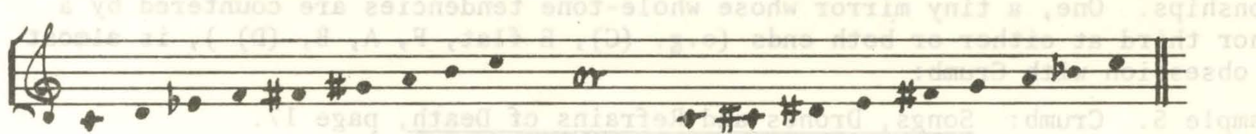
In this and other works there is a delicate synthesis, the artistry of which lies in the bringing together of dissimilar fragments in revealing conjunctions. Crumb's expressed "urge to fuse unrelated stylistic elements and juxtapose the seemingly incongruous"[1] leads him from the harmonic radiance of the Romantic lied, via gamelans, viol consorts, flamenco, tribal drumming, expressionism, pointillism, plainsong, microtones, electronic treatments and the recorded voices of whales, to a monodic timelessness uniting the oriental and the medieval. Parody and quotation have become, for him as for other composers, a means of exploring relationships between past and present. The direct quotations from Bach, Schubert or Chopin, heard through his strange and unworldly soundscape, acquire an amazing aura of distance both cultural and temporal. Surrealist museum exhibits, their mumified beauty seems utterly remote, like a childhood memory of warm, homely security.

Collage, dramatic stance and ritual are the principal elements behind Crumb's block, strophic and cyclic structures. Details of the musical material operate without the aid of any complex system, unity arising instead from the use of a repertoire of kindred scalic, timbral and ornamental types, rhythms, phrase shapes and so on. More rigorous order-making devices occasionally appear - isorhythm in Madrigals Book III (1), the retrogrades of Madrigals Book IV (1) ('Why was I born surrounded by mirrors?'), the numerological symbolism governing pitch and durational values in Black Angels - but these are more part of the dramatic furniture than genuinely generative forces. There is little in the music of harmonic progression, still less of contrapuntal continuity. This leaves us, therefore, with an essentially monophonic (and occasionally heterophonic) course of events akin to the music of the non-European cultures to which Crumb is attracted, and ultimately dependent on a wide vocabulary of melodic and timbral subtleties. When, however, this is layered into a sort of aleatoric counterpoint, as in the 'Dance of the Sacred Life-Cycle' in Ancient Voices, the result is indeed stunning.

Melodically, it is astonishing what a wide range of expressive shapes Crumb

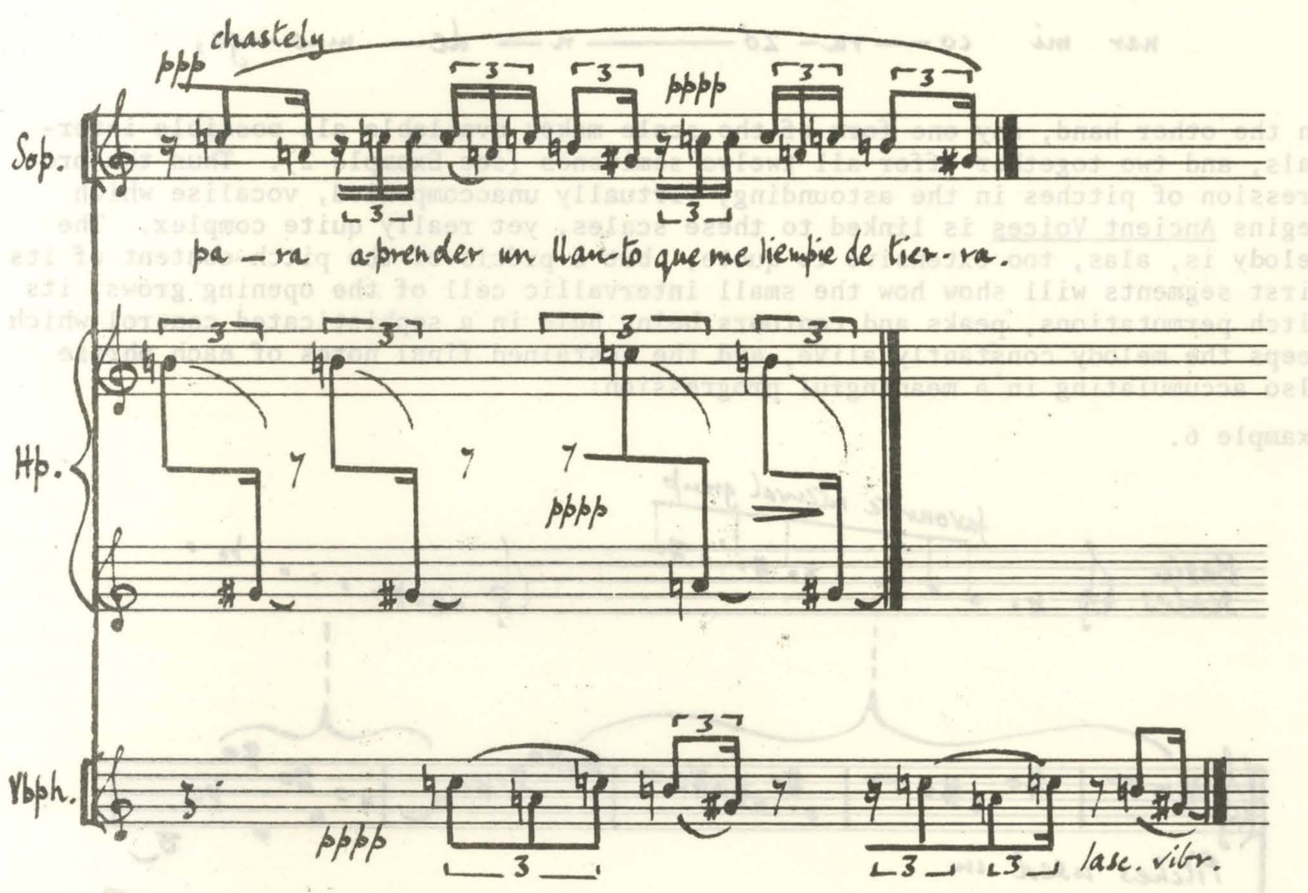
produces from a basic scale (familiar to Debussy and Bartók, not to say Messiaen) of alternating tones and semitones:

Example 2.



The prominent minor thirds, especially those overlapping a semitone apart (e.g. G sharp - B, A - C), have obvious potential:

Example 3. Crumb: Madrigals Book III, No. 2, page 4.



Minor thirds and adjacent pitches in this scale form the beginning of the poised 'God Music' aria for amplified cello in Black Angels (made even more striking through the colour and harmony of its accompaniment on tuned crystal glasses):

Example 4. Crumb: Black Angels, page 7.

although this chromatically inflected pentatonicism is soon intensified by a further compression of the tones, via semitones, into quarter-tones.

The scale shown in Example 2 suggests a certain quality of interval relationships. One, a tiny mirror whose whole-tone tendencies are countered by a minor third at either or both ends (e.g. (C), E flat, F, A, B, (D)), is almost an obsession with Crumb:

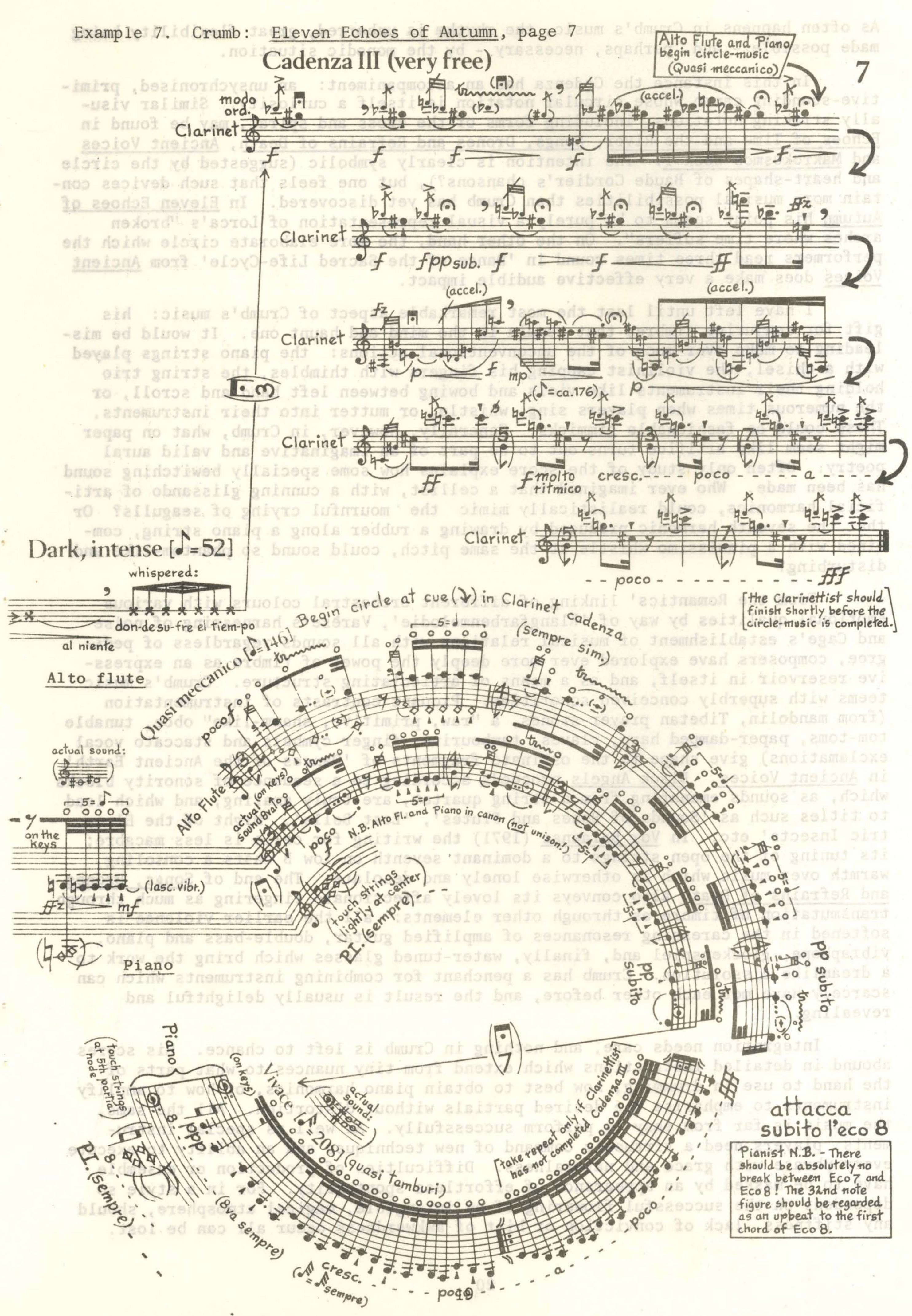
Example 5. Crumb: Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death, page 17.

On the other hand, any one form of the scale makes available all possible intervals, and two together offer all twelve semitones (see Example 2). Thus the progression of pitches in the astounding, virtually unaccompanied, vocalise which begins Ancient Voices is linked to these scales, yet really quite complex. The melody is, alas, too extensive to quote; but a précis of the pitch-content of its first segments will show how the small intervallic cell of the opening grows, its pitch permutations, peaks and contours being held in a sophisticated control which keeps the melody constantly alive, and the sustained final notes of each phrase also accumulating in a meaningful progression:

Example 6.

This summary hides some of the line's most important characteristics: obviously its rhythmic intricacy, but also the incantatory patterning of hypnotic ostinati, repeated notes, numerous expressive inflexions and contrasts of colour and articulation. Some idea of the effect of these, applied to a limited range of pitches, but producing a sense of spontaneous improvisation, may be gleaned from Example 7 (part of Eleven Echoes of Autumn)

Example 7. Crumb: Eleven Echoes of Autumn, page 7



As often happens in Crumb's music, the rhythm is unbarred, great flexibility being made possible - and, perhaps, necessary - by the monodic situation.

In this instance the Cadenza has an accompaniment: an unsychronised, primitive-sounding canon whose circular notation is itself a curiosity. Similar visually striking notations, including forms of the cross and spiral, may be found in Echoes of Time and the River, Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death, Ancient Voices and Makrokosmos Book I. The intention is clearly symbolic (suggested by the circle and heart-shapes of Baude Cordier's chansons?), but one feels that such devices contain more musical possibilities than Crumb has yet discovered. In Eleven Echoes of Autumn his point seems to be purely a visual representation of Lorca's "broken arches where time suffers". On the other hand, the more elaborate circle which the performers read three times round in 'Dance of the Sacred Life-Cycle' from Ancient Voices does make a very effective audible impact.

I have left until last the most remarkable aspect of Crumb's music: his gift for conjuring timbres that remain in the mind and haunt one. It would be misleading to make over-much of the unconventional actions: the piano strings played with a chisel, the violinist capping his fingers with thimbles, the string trio holding their instruments like viols and bowing between left hand and scroll, or the numerous times when players sing, whistle, or mutter into their instruments. These could be fashionable gimmicks. Generally, however, in Crumb, what on paper might seem like artifice turns out to be part of an imaginative and valid aural poetry. Often only study of the score explains how some specially bewitching sound has been made. Who ever imagined that a cellist, with a cunning glissando of artificial harmonics, could realistically mimic the mournful crying of seagulls? Or that the seventh harmonic produced by drawing a rubber along a piano string, combined with a pianissimo whistle at the same pitch, could sound so phantom-like and disturbing?

From the Romantics' linking of different orchestral colours with various emotional qualities by way of 'Klangfarbenmelodie', Varèse's harnessing of noise and Cage's establishment of musical relations with all sounds regardless of pedigree, composers have explored ever more deeply the power of timbre as an expressive reservoir in itself, and as a means of articulating structure. Crumb's music teems with superbly conceived sonorities. Piquant contrasts of instrumentation (from mandolin, Tibetan prayer-stones, a "raw, primitive, shawm-like" oboe, tunable tom-toms, paper-damped harp, claves, tambourine, finger cymbals and staccato vocal exclamations) give shape to the ostinato fragments of 'Dances of the Ancient Earth' in Ancient Voices. Black Angels proceeds according to a sequence of sonority blocks which, as sounds emanating from a string quartet, are truly amazing, and which lead to titles such as 'Sounds of Bones and Flutes', 'Lost Bells', 'Night of the Electric Insects' etc.. In Vox Balaenae (1971) the writing for cello is less macabre; its tuning of the open strings to a dominant seventh on low B casts a consoling warmth over music which is otherwise lonely and desolate. The end of Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death also conveys its lovely affectionate lingering as much through transmutation of timbre as through other elements: all the earlier violence is softened in the caressing resonances of amplified guitar, double-bass and piano, vibraphone, glockenspiel and, finally, water-tuned glasses which bring the work to a dreamlike dissolution. Crumb has a penchant for combining instruments which can scarcely have met each other before, and the result is usually delightful and revealing.

Integration needs care, and nothing in Crumb is left to chance. His scores abound in detailed instructions which extend from tiny nuances to what parts of the hand to use in drumming, how best to obtain piano harmonics, or how to amplify instruments to emphasise the desired partials without distortion. All the same, the music is far from easy to perform successfully. As well as special instruments, players need a virtuosic command of new techniques and an ability to execute every phrase with grace and naturalness. Difficulties of production or ensemble have to be masked by an appearance of effortless spontaneity. For in a style so dependent on the successful flowering of an intangible, magical atmosphere, should any stiffness, lack of conviction or hint of awkwardness occur all can be lost.

This touches on the music's weaknesses. Sometimes, it must be admitted, one wishes for more substance, a more elaborately woven texture, more dynamic growth and inter-involvement of all the elements. There are places where the material seems dangerously slender for its given time span, or when (as in the sitar music of Lux Aeterna) the composer appears to have adopted too superficial semblances of another musical culture missing its real essence. Perhaps Crumb is overbent on looking for an identity outside himself, just as his performers, with curious frequency, find themselves acting the part of another: the cellist as a seagull, violin quasi mandolin, string quartet imitating the sound of prayer-stones, flute the voice of the humpback whale, instrumentalists playing percussion, percussionists singing, singer and double-bass 'neighing' like horses, violin, flute and clarinet sounding "ghostly, hushed, like the gentle rushing of the wind".

But it is still early. Already in less than 15 years as a mature composer Crumb has produced music both powerful and unforgetable, which radically enlarges the vocabulary of the traditional instrumental ensemble, which is aware and relevant, yet original. The tenuous threads and meditative reposefulness of his music are also virtues. In being so uncluttered, so open and childlike, it speaks directly to the spirit.

NOTES

[1]From the composer's own comments on Ancient Voices of Children on the record sleeve (H-71255).

List of works and discography

1954 String Quartet

1955 Sonata for Solo Cello

1959 Variazioni for large orchestra

1962 Five Pieces for Piano

1963 Night Music I for soprano, piano, celesta and percussion (CRI S-218)

1964 Night Music II for violin and piano (MS 5016)

1965 Madrigals Book I for soprano, vibraphone and string bass

Madrigals Book II for soprano, flutes and percussion

Eleven Echoes of Autumn for alto flute, clarinet, piano and violin (CRI SD-233)

1967 Echoes of Time and the River for orchestra (Lou S-711)

1968 Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death for baritone, electric instruments and percussion (Desto 7155)

1969 Madrigals Book III for soprano, harp and percussion

Madrigals Book IV for soprano, flutes, harp, double-bass and percussion

Night of the Four Moons for alto, alto flute, banjo, electric cello and percussion (Col M-32739)

1970 Black Angels for electric string quartet (CRI SD-283)

Ancient Voices of Children for soprano, boy soprano and seven instrumentalists (H-71255)

1971 Vox Balaenae (Voice of the Whale) for three masked players: electric flute, electric cello and electric piano (Col M-32739)

Lux Aeterna for five masked musicians with optional dancer

1972/3 Makrokosmos Volumes I and II: 24 Fantasy Pieces after the Zodiac for amplified piano (Vol 1: H-71293)

All the records quoted above are at present available from Henry Stave, Dean Street, London W.1. Only Ancient Voices of Children is in the March 1975 issue of The Gramophone Classical Catalogue.

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¢ LYNDON REYNOLDS

Miles et Alia

The list of musicians who have played with Miles Davis since 1966 contains a remarkable number of big names, including Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams, Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul, Jack de Johnette, Dave Holland, John McLaughlin and Miroslav Vitous. All of these have worked successfully without Miles, and most have made a name for themselves whilst or since working with him. Who can say whether this is due to the limelight given them by playing alongside Miles, the musical rewards of working with him, or Miles's talent-spotting abilities? Presumably the truth is a mixture of all these.

What does Miles's music owe to the creative personalities of the musicians working with him? This question is unanswerable in practice, for one cannot quantify individual responsibility for a group product - assuming that is what Miles's music is. It is obvious that he has chosen very creative musicians with which to work, and yet there has often been an absence of conspicuous, individual, free solo playing in his music since about 1967. It would appear that Miles can absorb musical influences without losing his balance. What we find then, is a nexus of interacting musicians, centring on Miles; that is, musicians who not only play together in various other combinations, but influence each other as well. Even if the web could be disentangled (I know not how, save with a God's-eye-view), a systematic review of all the music that lies within it would be a task both vast and boring. Instead, therefore, I would like to examine a limited area of the nexus, consisting of closely related figures, especially Miles, Joe Zawinul and Tony Williams.

A good place to start is the album Miles Smiles which was recorded in 1966-7, and employs a quintet consisting of Miles (trumpet), Wayne Shorter (tenor sax), Herbie Hancock (piano), Ron Carter (bass) and Tony Williams (drums). The music hovers on a boundary of styles: between the classi modern jazz style, and a style that was soon to become characteristic of Miles. Pieces like 'Orbits' and 'Dolores' are well within the classic style: instruments take solos in turn, zooming and pattering in improvisations originating from a main tune which serves as both introduction and ending and is played or part-played between solos to tie the piece together. During the next couple of years Miles and Shorter abandoned this style of playing for reserved and economical styles, Miles employing short and fairly simple phrases, with great emphasis on perfect and polished tone, and Shorter playing long flowing melodies on soprano sax.

Tracks like 'Circle' and 'Ginger Bread Boy' depart much more from the classic style, and sound a little like Filles de Kilimanjaro, the album of 1968. The total effect of this music is much more restained and coherent. Repeated piano chords and chord sequences take up a punctuating and articulatory role, and the same chord may be repeated again and again. In 'Ginger Bread Boy' bass riffs, with variations, are repeated throughout the piece; here there is also a superb piano solo in which the chordal structures are overlaid with lingering, whispy, curvy, chromatic lines.

On all the tracks of this album Williams provides rapid drumming that acts as a backdrop to the other parts; yet despite its rapidity his playing is always clear, precise and nicely articulated, giving the overall sound a nervy, insistent quality. In subsequent work with Miles, Williams is much more sparing and reserved, corresponding to the changes made by Miles and Shorter. It is here that the careful articulation of rhythm and timbre becomes really essential. There are actually some foretastes of later styles on Miles Smiles, for example the crisp drum rolls on 'Orbits' or the taut cymbal work with carefully varied timbre on 'Circle'.

Filles de Kilimanjaro is complete perfection of its kind. The salient features of the style have already been described in connection with 'Circle' and 'Gingerbread Boy' on Miles Smiles, and here the style blossoms to produce something very cool and rather chic. A characteristic use of electric piano illuminates the linking that was to arise between Miles and Joe Zawinul, the electric pianist who joins Miles for Zawinul's own composition 'In a Silent Way' on the 1969 album of that title; Zawinul's conception of the electric piano, judging by his own recording of the piece on his first album, Joe Zawinul (1971), is close to that of Miles. The soaring solo of improvisation plays no part in Filles de Kilimanjaro. Typically, after the theme tune is played in duo by trumpet and sax, various phrases of alternating piano chords and repeated bass riffs split off to provide, with Tony Williams's extremely subtle drumming, the real structure of the piece. Trumpet, sax or piano improvise in a reserved way, merely giving birth to what is already intrinsic in the ongoing musical texture of drums, bass and piano. The soloist doesn't have to belt along with an involved self-demonstrating improvisation; he can even shut up altogether and the music is still there. But although the result is relaxed and timeless it is far from dispassionate and keeps one as involved as does the headiest of rock music: a perfect combination of calmness and electrifying tension. Within the space provided by this, all sounds, because of their economy, are equally important and nothing is taken for granted.

The tune of the title track is a rather lengthy melody. Zawinul, too, exploits long meandering melodies - in, for example his composition, 'In a Silent Way' - and this becomes, in a different guise, the main characteristic of Wayne Shorter's playing with the group Weather Report. Another feature of the Filles de Kilimanjaro album that links Miles with Zawinul is the open diatonic simplicity of the tunes, which use less blue notes than one might expect in a jazz context. One of Zawinul's techniques - found, for example, on his own recording of 'In a Silent Way' - is the surrounding of a melody of this type with a glittering array of scattered sounds. In Miles's own version on the album In a Silent Way (1969) the glitter is all there, but without the background-foreground contrast, being simpler and less splashy and more openly amalgamated with the total texture. Most of Miles's album In a Silent Way uses a moderately complex tapestry of clearly coloured sounds, including John McLaughlin's electric guitar. (This polyphonic technique, by the way, is carried much further in the album On the Corner (1972), where the music consists of monotonous, self-perpetuating, complex textures, unlike the clearly punctuated and tuneful playing of the In a Silent Way album.) Williams's playing is excellent on this album: for example, on 'Shh/Peaceful' the regular and simple cymbal rhythm (Example 1) is played so finely and with such subtlety as to make it a star part.

In a Silent Way features electric organ, three electric pianos and electric guitar. On Bitches Brew (1970) the trumpet is subjected to echo effects - and more recently to complete electrification including quasi 'Wa-Wa' techniques; in addition, Zawinul has taken to using a keyboard operated synthesiser as well as electric piano. In short, there is a marked tendency to electrify. I make no comment on this, save that the sounds used are always just right for the music.

On Bitches Brew an amalgamation with rock music becomes evident: for example there is the funky opening to 'Miles Runs the Voodoo Down' or the boogie guitar playing on 'Spanish Key'. By 1969 Williams had left Miles to start Lifetime, a group which began with a rock image and rock loudness. (Incidentally, John McLaughlin's best efforts, I think, were with Lifetime before several spoonfuls of divine sugar were added to his brew.) Weather Report, a group including Zawinul and Shorter, also exploits rock idioms in its own highly individual way. Because, on the whole, they arise quite naturally from tendencies intrinsic to the music anyway, the amalgamations sound quite natural, with no loss of balance. To illustrate the last point, listen to On the Corner which, despite its 'soul' sounds, is tuneless, complex and dissonant - all the features that soul music doesn't have.

Weather Report's first album, called simply Weather Report (c.1972), keeps to a conventional modern jazz style apart from its colour and texture: the com-

bination of electric piano, Wayne Shorter's flowing soprano sax, Airto Moreiro's additional percussion work - all sorts of apparently random but beautifully placed noises - and Miroslav Vitous's moderately fast but rhythmically steady bass playing gives the whole a special shine and polish. The use of Moreiro's noises in an otherwise tuneful and harmonious context is a typical contrast of the kind I have already mentioned in connection with Zawinul.

On the track 'Adios' on Weather Report's Sweetnighter (1973) the device is used again, and in a manner analogous to Zawinul's version of 'In a Silent Way' - only here the halo of starlight that surrounds the melody is provided not by the electric piano, but very effectively by a child's roller toy. On other tracks, for example 'Manolette' and 'Will', another kind of contrast is used: a slow soprano sax tune gradually unfolds before a background of rapid percussion work, consisting of complex, repetitive, interlocking Latinesque rhythms.

I have so far traced the theme of tensions, contrasts and union of opposites in the work of both Miles and Zawinul. Tony Williams with Lifetime exploits contrast too. On Turn it Over (1970) two tracks - 'Once I Loved' and 'A Famous Blues' (a McLaughlin composition) - are based on almost jarring tensions which are much less resolved than with Miles and Zawinul, so that the end result is far from calm enjoyment. 'Once I Loved' has three elements: a strand of high, piercing, organ notes, and some gentle broken chords on guitar accompanying the voice, which sings a lovable jazz ballad: "Once I loved, you were the world to me/Once I cried at the thought/I was foolish and proud and let you say goodbye/Then one day, in my infinite sadness, you came and brought me love again ...". The introduction to 'A Famous Blues' has serene vibrato organ chords, gentle guitar phrases and two sets of words, one whispered ("Stay wandering in the black abyss of your head/Stay searching in the murky corridors of your mind ...") and one sung ("Take me home with you/There's so much to do/Let's go to your house ...").

I have already noted that although Zawinul's music has a certain complexity in its total structure, his tunes - and indeed all those used by Weather Report - are fairly simple and quite diatonic. In Lifetime's work, on the other hand, there is a tendency to use more exotic, chromatic, twirling note sequences. A Weather Report piece like 'Boogie Woogie Waltz' or 'Sweetnighter' doesn't depend much on a tune at all, but more on simple riffs, so that the piece is much more of an automatic process than Williams's work. Indeed, nothing is less like this than the music on Lifetime's record Ego (1971). This group is now without McLaughlin, and has a new guitarist (Ted Dunbar) and two extra percussionists. The use of constantly repeated backing phrases, a standard pop technique, is very prominent, but the phrases tend to be evocative and chromatic, as for example in the introduction to 'Urchins of Shermese', where the organ Vox Organalis is something like Example 2. This is later replaced by heavy descending guitar chords, coloured in by cymbal work, based on the octave chromatic descent shown in Example 3 (overleaf). Instrumentation and timbre are strong and colourful, playing perhaps a greater structural role than in Zawinul's music.

I hope I have said enough to demonstrate that the music of Miles, of Joe Zawinul and Weather Report, and of Tony Williams and Lifetime are all very different, and yet seem to converge on the same virtual point, or at least run parallel in places. Their music is diametrically opposed in style to free jazz, although sharing a common source with it, and has generally been smooth, controlled, self-assured, a bit delicious and a bit decadent, although Miles's and Zawinul's work may now be departing from this description.

Some people are quick to associate these qualities with Miles's financial success and rich living, but, short of means-testing musical worth, this revelation can do no more than cause one to raise an eyebrow and go on listening.

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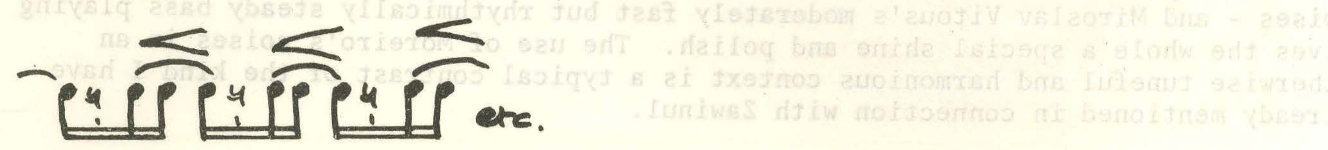
Example 1. 'Shh/Peaceful'



Example 2. 'Urchins of Shermese'

Example 3. 'Urchins of Shermese'

Discography

Miles Davis

Miles Smiles (1967)	CBS S62933
Filles de Kilimanjaro (1968)	CBS S63551
In a Silent Way (1969)	CBS S63630
Bitches Brew (1970)	CBS S64010 & 64011
On the Corner (1972)	CBS S65246

Weather Report

Weather Report (c.1972)	CBS S64521
Sweetnighter (1973)	CBS S65532

Lifetime

Turn It Over (1970)	Polydor 2425-019
Ego (1971)	Polydor 2425-070 B

Joe Zawinul

Joe Zawinul (1971)	Atlantic 2400151 & K40349

DAVE SMITH

The Music of Phil Glass

Few people in this country are, as yet, familiar with the music of Phil Glass. His name is associated with three other American composers (La Monte Young, Terry Riley and Steve Reich) who have concerned themselves primarily with sound-continuums which evolve gradually, often over long periods of time. The work of Riley and Reich is, by now, fairly well-known over here owing to easily available recordings and, in the case of Reich, tours with his group. The compositions of La Monte Young are at least known by repute, if not actually heard.

The distinguishing feature common to the music of all four composers is repetitiveness - many of their works contain little or no variance of pitch, speed, volume or timbre. The listener is invited to explore the quality of a slowly-changing sound and to focus with microscopic awareness on different aspects of it. For many, such intense concentration has induced mental states which have been likened to hypnosis, meditative trance, drug-influenced euphoria or even spiritual ecstacy. However, Young is probably the only composer for whom these psychological effects are a principal interest. Significantly, his music is devoid of pulse, being based upon combinations of drones. Much of Riley's music, on the other hand, consists of fast, continuous improvisatory patterns. Reich has explored the different ways in which a single rhythm can be set up against itself, and Glass uses rhythmic figures which increase or decrease in length as the piece progresses.

Glass was born on 31 January 1937, studied at the University of Chicago and later at the Juilliard School of Music. He won a Fulbright Scholarship to study with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, where he lived from 1964-6. By this time he was a prolific composer with about 20 published works to his credit - all these 'early' works have now been discarded.

A major turning-point occurred in the spring of 1966 when he was working with Ravi Shankar in Paris. Taking down his music from dictation, Glass was attracted to its cyclical rhythmic organisation, a concept different from anything he had encountered during his many years of study of Western techniques. Returning to New York early in 1967, he pursued this interest by studying tabla with Alla Rakha. By the end of 1968, he had established an ensemble of amplified instruments of mixed timbre for which he has composed most of his music.

All Glass's ensemble pieces are based on a structural system which may conveniently be termed 'additive process'. A simple melodic figure is established by being repeated a number of times at a fast speed. At a signal from the composer, all players proceed simultaneously to the next figure which is a rhythmic extension of the first, a process which is continued throughout the piece. Very rarely are new pitches introduced into the figure. There are usually between 30 and 80 melodic figures during the course of which a process of rhythmic subtraction may also occur and new voices may be introduced. Instrumentation is not indicated: Glass's group usually consists of two or three electric organs, saxophones and flutes. Instruments such as trumpet, cello and electric piano have also been used.

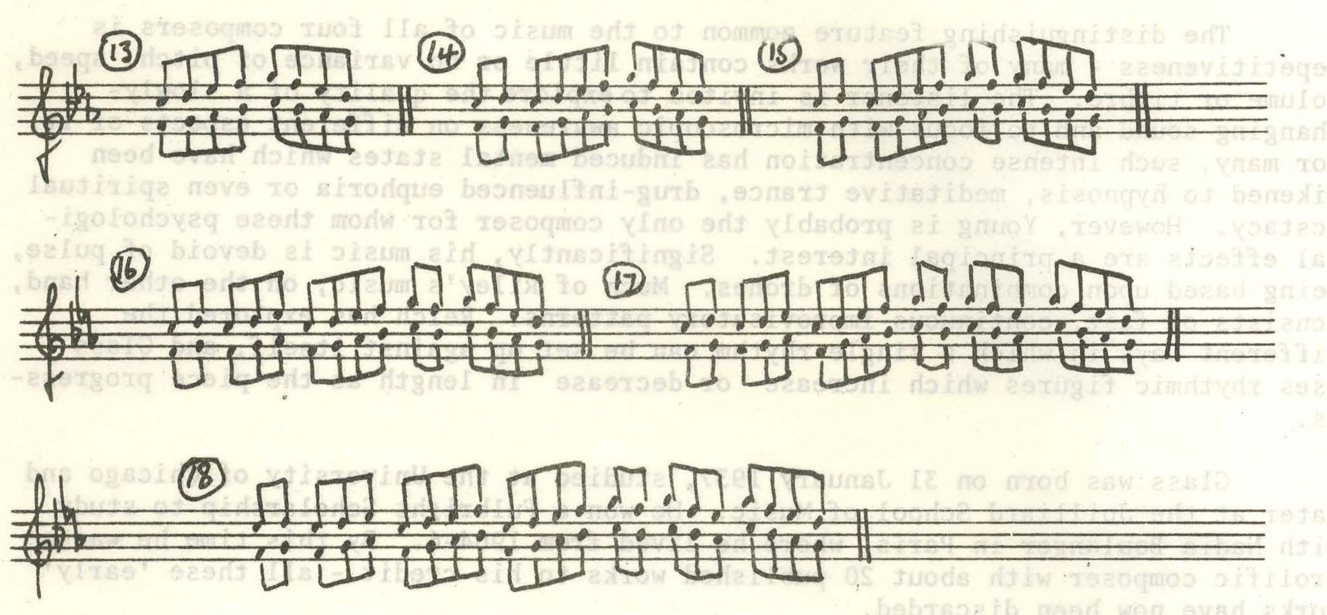
The first piece to use additive process was 1 + 1 (1968) for one performer tapping on an amplified table-top. This is realised by combining two rhythmic units (♫♩ and ♪) in continuous arithmetical progressions prepared by the performer. This concept was a development from Glass's study with Alla Rakha, when he spent some time learning a piece consisting entirely of regroupings of three rhythmic elements.

1 + 1 was followed by Two Pages (1969) which is restricted to one melodic

line throughout. Glass's subsequent works are written in two or more parts which, although played rhythmically in unison, move in parallel, contrary or similar motion in relation to each other. The titles of these works indicate a growing interest in texture: Music in Fifths, Music in Contrary Motion, Music in Eight Parts, Music in Similar Motion. In these later works, he became far more interested in the phenomenon of the sounds he was creating rather than the structures he was using.

Music in Fifths (1969) is written in two parts which move in parellel fifths throughout (in Glass's own recording the parts are doubled an octave lower). The first twelve figures are played only twice each and serve as an introduction to the main body of the work. Bars 13 to 35 grow gradually from an eight-note figure to a 210-note figure. At first they grow simply:

Example 1. Phil Glass: Music in Fifths



The scale-like figure of bar 13 (4+4) is extended by adding the first two notes of each group of four; then the first three notes as well; then the first four notes, and so on. At first the changes occur alternately in either the ascending or descending part of the figure. From bar 19 onwards the changes appear in both so that the second half of the bar is always an inversion of the first half. As the melodic figures become longer, notes are added in groups of six, seven and eight (these, incidentally, form the material of the introduction). In the later stages, longer groups are added, keeping the changes perceptible to the listener.

Like all of Glass's music, Music in Fifths is written out in continuous quavers. However, the appearance of the lowest and highest points of melodic figures may be heard as an irregular rhythm standing out from the continuum. The bare perfect fifths give the piece a stark, relentless and aggressive quality: "like a freight train" as Reich once aptly remarked. In comparison, Music in Similar Motion (1969) sounds much richer and gentler, although it seems rhythmically more accentuated. The principal reason for this is that it is written in four parts, one part being doubled in another octave to make a fifth. Whereas only an additive process is employed in Music in Fifths, a subtractive process also appears here. The individual figures never approach the length of those at the end of Music in Fifths, most of them consisting of between four and 41 beats.

The work is in four sections. Two parts are heard at the outset, an octave apart. Later, other parts are added: in bar 6 a treble part, in bar 12 a bass part and in bar 24 another (higher) treble part. Musically, these have the effect of creating varying modal centres - around G, C or E flat. Although figures gradually lengthen and then shorten, no two bars are ever the same. The simple foundation of the work can be discerned in the first few bars:

Example 2. Phil Glass: Music in Similar Motion

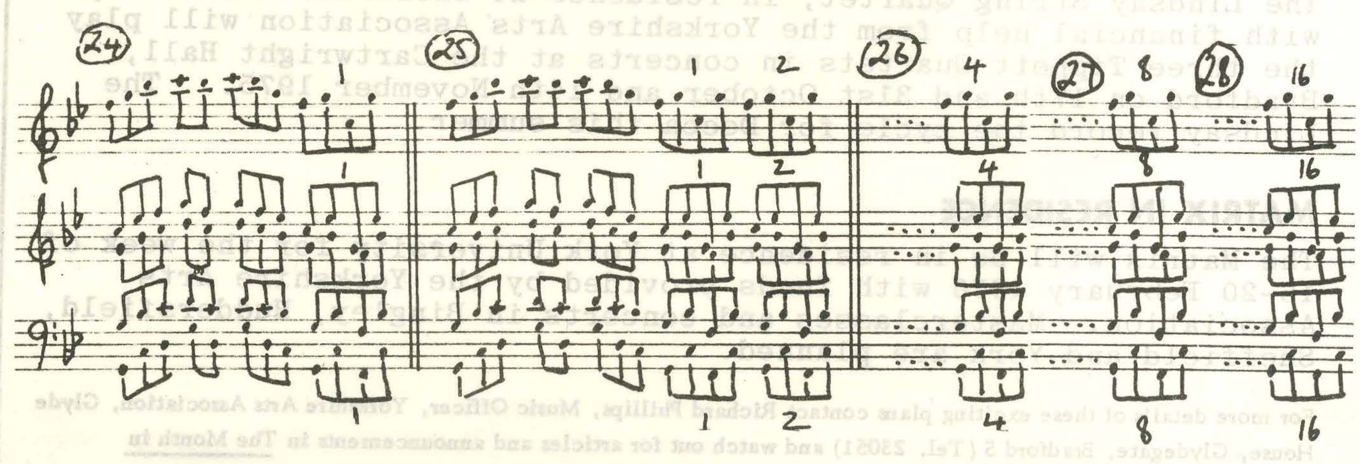
In bars 2 and 4 respectively, an ascending and a descending group of notes is added. In bars 4 and 5 an ascending group is subtracted.

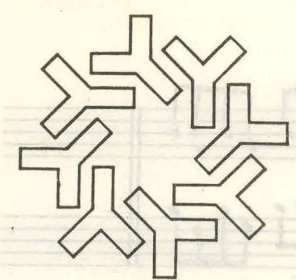
In Section 2 (bars 6-11), and early in Section 3 (bars 12-15), ascending and descending groups are added respectively. The remainder of Section 3 is devoted to subtraction, firstly with regard to the ascending groups and then the descending ones, until a twelve-beat figure is reached in bar 23.

The increased rhythmic effect mentioned above is due to two other factors. Although the general melodic outline is still scale-like in character, the absence of A's gives the G's unusual prominence. The independent group of four notes (introduced in bar 3) which remains unchanged until the last section, adds a certain 'snap' to the end of each figure. These seemingly insignificant features assume importance in repetitive music.

It should be borne in mind that when the ear has accustomed itself to a pattern, it comes as something of a surprise to hear one small element change. The more extreme and unexpected of these changes (for instance, the sudden adding of the bass part) can have a shattering effect. Another shock technique lies in delaying the expected. At the beginning of the final section of Music in Similar Motion, the four-note group becomes more prominent by increasing the number of its repetitions within a bar.

Example 3. Phil Glass: Music in Similar Motion





Yorkshire Arts
Contemporary Music Network 1975 ~ 1976 Season

PROVISIONAL DATES:

Oct. 15 The University Leeds
NEW JAZZ ORCHESTRA

Oct. 21 Arts Centre York
LONDON OBOE QUARTET

Oct. 22 Mappin Gallery Sheffield
LONDON OBOE QUARTET

Nov. 15 The Polytechnic Huddersfield
FIRES OF LONDON

Nov. 19 Arts Centre York
PHILIP GLASS ENSEMBLE

Dec. 1 Theatre Royal York
BOURNEMOUTH SINFONIETTA

Dec. 2 Humberside Theatre Hull
SOS

Dec. 3 College of Music Leeds
SOS

Jan. 17 Middleton Hall Hull
CONTRAPUNCTI

Jan. 27 The Polytechnic Huddersfield
CONTRAPUNCTI

Jan. 29 The University York
ELECTRONIC MUSIC

Feb. 12 College of Music Leeds
SPONTANEOUS MUSIC ENSEMBLE

Feb. 23 Cartwright Hall Bradford
S.W.GERMAN WIND QUINTET

March 17 The University York
MANTRA

All these concerts except 23 February, are promoted with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Yorkshire Arts Association. 23 February is made possible through the generosity of the Goethe Institute.

PIERROT LUNAIRE TOUR

The Yorkshire Arts Association is organising a tour to take in Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Manchester and Halifax in November 1975. Alexander Goehr will conduct the Aulos Ensemble and Enid Hartle will perform Pierrot Lunaire.

TIPPETT QUARTET CYCLE

The Lindsay String Quartet, in residence at Sheffield University with financial help from the Yorkshire Arts Association will play the three Tippett Quartets in concerts at the Cartwright Hall, Bradford on 17th and 31st October and 14th November 1975. The Lindsay record the cycle for Decca this summer.

MATRIX IN RESIDENCE

The Matrix will be in residence at York University for the week of 16-20 February 1976 with funds provided by the Yorkshire Arts Association. Masterclasses and concerts in Bingley, Huddersfield, Sheffield and York are planned.

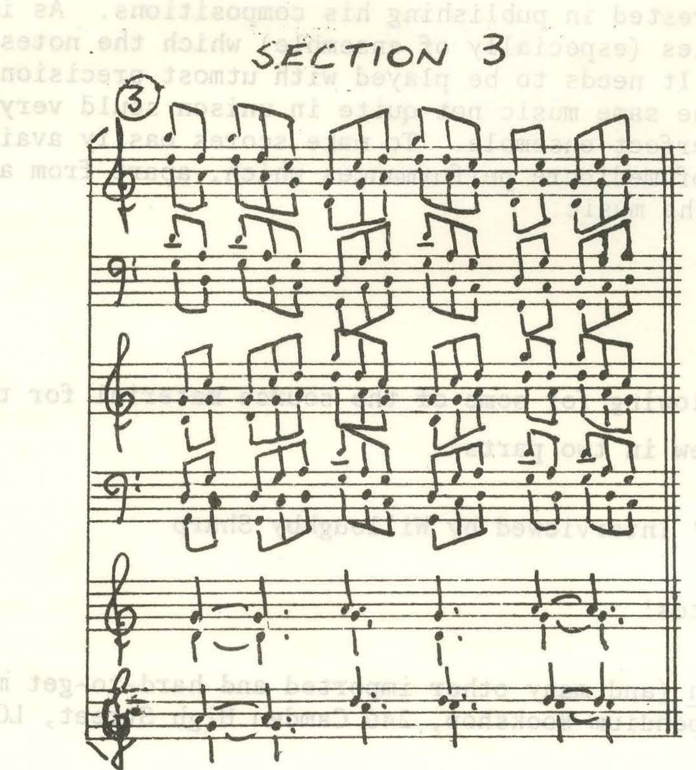
For more details of these exciting plans contact Richard Phillips, Music Officer, Yorkshire Arts Association, Glyde House, Glydegate, Bradford 5 (Tel. 23051) and watch out for articles and announcements in The Month in Yorkshire.

The repeated melodic crests become less and less frequent until they eventually disappear in bar 30. From here to the end, the four-note figure is extended to a six, eight, 16 and finally a 32-note figure. Unlike the rest of the piece, the rhythm is here organised in groups of two and four and therefore seems less irregular. Since the music in this section is at its most dense and most static, psychoacoustical effects (such as the appearance of drones, overtones and the illusion of voices singing) are at their stongest.

It was during the rehearsals of Music in Similar Motion that Glass became fully aware of these psychoacoustical effects. In Music with Changing Parts (1970) he indicated sections where players are free to contribute unspecified sustained notes either by playing or singing. Rhythmically he had no wish to advance on the ground covered in earlier works the first half only uses figures which consist of groups of two or four notes. But at certain points (called 'changing figures') the players are free to switch to another part, thus giving the music a continual textural and timbral development. Not surprisingly the duration of the piece (1¼ hours) is considerably longer than that of either Music in Fifths or Music in Similar Motion (about 20 minutes each). Completely different sets of notes are introduced at times; some are quite dissonant, but the sound is less hard-edged than in the earlier pieces due to the presence of six independent parts.

The most recent ensemble work of which I am aware is Music in Twelve Parts, an enormous work lasting about six hours. A glance at a single bar leads one to suspect that it would be difficult to pick out any one melodic strand: one is more likely to hear new patterns resulting from the combination of the parts, a phenomenon hinted at in the final section of Music in Similar Motion.

Example 4. Phil Glass: Music in Twelve Parts



It took some while before the ensemble could perform the work as a continuous whole. Before 1974, only two or three sections would be played at a time. The ensemble was due to make a six-record set of Music in Twelve Parts a few months ago.

Glass's fame, such as it is rests on these ensemble pieces. There are, however, some vocal works scored for a small number of female voices. Future plans include more vocal music and an extensive work for solo organ (two manuals and pedals) which Glass is writing for himself to play. Apparently this will be inten-

tionally left open-ended and performances will consist of excerpts.

Clearly Glass's totally determined music has more in common with Reich's than with the improvisatory continuums of La Monte Young and Terry Riley. Glass and Reich actually studied at the Juilliard School of Music at the same time. In those days they had little in common musically: Reich was writing in a free atonal idiom, whereas Glass's outlook was more conservative. Otherwise their backgrounds are different. Reich is sympathetic to the rhythmic aspects of African and Balinese music as compared with Glass's interest in Indian music. Incidentally, his music doesn't sound Indian, a criticism which is sometimes levelled against La Monte Young.

In Reich's music, instrumentation is fixed and relationships between two or more performers of the same (often percussive) instruments are explored. Of Glass's work, only 1 + 1 involves anything percussive. Apart from this work, however, instrumentation is never specified. John Lewis and I have been working with the possibility of performing some of Glass's music on two pianos. The resulting sound is, of course, very different to that of Glass's group, but a small room produces the acoustical effect that the composer would appear to be aiming at. Many of Reich's earlier pieces are involved with single modules of eight or twelve beats, whereas rhythmic alteration is fundamental to Glass's music. Reich is committed to structure, but accepts psychoacoustical effects as a by-product of his own music. Glass, as we have seen, has become less preoccupied with structure since Music in Fifths. Significantly, he envisages his music more as a 'total experience' for the listener, and therefore produces the sound as loudly and as clearly as possible (a similarity with rock music). Recorded performances are, for him, a poor substitute for the live event.

Glass is not interested in publishing his compositions. As in Reich's music, there are many difficulties (especially of ensemble) which the notes on the page don't begin to suggest. It needs to be played with utmost precision and evenness. Two performers playing the same music not quite in unison sould very different from two performers in perfect ensemble. To make scores easily available would result in a good number of mediocre performances which, apart from anything else, would be detrimental to the music.

I am indebted to the following for some of the source material for this article:

'Phil Glass - an interview in two parts'
Avalanche (Summer 1972)

'The Phil Glass Ensemble' interviewed by Willoughby Sharp
Avalanche (December 1974)

Phil Glass: 'Program Notes'
Interfunctionen 10

Avalanche, Interfunctionen (and many other imported and hard-to-get magazines) can be obtained from the Compendium Bookshop, 240 Camden High Street, LONDON NW1.

Discography

There are two recordings of Glass's group issued by Chatham Square Productions, Inc.:

Music in Fifths/Music in Similar Motion	LP 1003
Music with Changing Parts (double album)	LP 1001/2

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These are available for $5.00 and $9.00 respectively from Mary Boone, Bykert Gallery, 24 East 81st Street, NEW YORK, NY 10028, U.S.A. I experienced some difficulty in obtaining these by post: Music with Changing Parts took ten months to arrive. It's best to get a friend to collect them.

Music with Changing Parts is also available at DM 35 from Frau Ursula Wevers in Cologne. The address given in Interfunctionen (5 KÖLN 1, Roonstrasse 38) is no longer current, but at the time of going to press the new address was not to hand. Those concerned to obtain the records are advised to write to the editor of CONTACT who will hopefully be able to supply the correct address now, rather than trust the German Post Office to forward mail from the old address.

Readers in Britain will be interested to know that the Phil Glass Ensemble will be touring this country in the autumn on the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network scheme. Further details of the John Lewis/Dave Smith duo may be obtained through the editor.

¢ CARL STONE 11

The New Music Collective

The New Music Collective was founded in the spring of 1974 by four young composers who share common ideas and musical goals, and who wished to develop an alternative to the institutional nature of new music in the United States. Our activities include the operation of a studio for electro-acoustic music, the design and construction of electronic music equipment, the realisation of both individual and collective tape compositions, and a performing ensemble, the Negative Band.

All four members of the NMC studied at the California Institute of the Arts, using the tape studios and working with faculty members, especially James Tenney and Morton Subotnick. During that time, we discovered that we held in common views about the nature of contemporary music, as well as its social functions. It seemed to us that the centralisation of new music at educational institutions placed that music in an essentially counter-productive context, especially in the case of composition on tape, a medium demanding expensive equipment rarely available to private individuals. In order to free ourselves from the necessity of associating with an academic institution we formed the Collective, and set about making a self-sustaining centre for our work. After ten months of activity, we can report initial successes and prospects for the future.

To begin with, we are approaching completion of the first of two synthesizers to be built by the studio. An analog modular system is in the final stages of construction, and is already being used in the Negative Band. It utilises the latest integrated-circuit technology to achieve maximum versatility at minimum cost. In addition to this synthesizer, we are currently using a hybrid system comprising Buchla 100 series modules and studio-built equipment. This synthesizer will eventually be replaced by our own, similar in nature to the first. We are also in possession of efficient tape recording equipment to produce high-quality stereo recordings.

The Negative Band, the performing arm of the Collective, was formed in the spring of 1974 as an independent ensemble. At that time, it consisted of six members, including three of the NMC founders. In May of that year, the Band presented the West Coast premieres of three improvisatory works by Karlheinz Stockhausen; Kurzwellen, Set Sail for the Sun and Right Durations. Two of these pieces should now be available on an LP released by Finnadar records.

The ensemble presently consists of the aforementioned three members, and utilises two synthesizers and alto saxophone, as well as miscellaneous percussion. We are now performing only our own material, composed by individual members and by the group as a whole.

The Collective has also assembled a package of the four most recent tape pieces composed by individual members of the group: Distensions, Pt. I, Allbriton Bull, The Loud Piece and Concret IIIc. These pieces represent our personal efforts and musical concerns; they exhibit, perhaps, some common aesthetic criteria and decisions. Although we work individually, and in different areas at times, we all enjoy and respect each others' work; this respect is the essential base on which the Collective rests. We consider this appreciation and voluntary association to be the best foundation from which to compose music, better than the accretion of possibly unsympathetic personalities and aesthetics at a more traditional institution.

The members of the New Music Collective are as follows:

Paul Taylor, composer of The Loud Piece and synthesizer player in the Negative Band, is the member responsible for the design and construction of the studio synthesizer.

Earl Howard, whose latest work is Allbriton Bull, plays the alto saxophone in the Band and composes musique concrète.

Carl Stone, whose work has been played around the world, is the composer of numerous tape pieces and film soundtracks, among the former Distensions, Pt. I.

Jonathan Weisberger plays synthesizer in the Negative Band, composes musique concrète (Concret IIIc) and is beginning work on the second of the two Collective synthesizers.

The New Music Collective is now moving to New York City where it will continue its activities. We are currently negotiating with Finnadar for a second album, to consist of individual tape works. We are all currently working on tape compositions and several of us on works for other media. We hope to continue to design and build equipment for the realisation of our ideas.

We are interested in receiving questions and comments on our work, and anyone wishing to communicate with us, either with requests for information on any of our activities or with regard to obtaining tapes for performances of electronic music may contact us at this address:

The New Music Collective,
24700 MacBean Parkway,
Box RL 20,
VALENCIA,
California 91355,
U.S.A.

¢ DAVID HORN PETER DICKINSON

Two American Music Centres in Britain

AMERICAN ARTS DOCUMENTATION CENTRE AND AMERICAN MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EXETER

BY DAVID HORN

The Centre (Director, Mike Weaver; Associate Director, Mick Gidley) serves the immediate needs at the University of Exeter of a two-year specialist course in American Arts and Letters for the B.A. (Honours) degree in English, including the study of film, painting and photography, and postgraduate research for M.A. and Ph.D. degrees. The undergraduate course is somewhat unusual in that no attempt whatever is made to survey the relevant fields of interest, but concentrated projects are mounted on particular topics or themes, whether Emily Dickinson in poetry, Edward S. Curtis in photography, the western in film, or Chicago jazz and blues in music. However, especially given the limited musical expertise of the present American Arts lecturers, the formal lecture has not been abandoned; visiting speakers have included Wilfrid Mellers, Peter Dickinson, Henry Pleasants, Charles Fox and Paul Oliver, to give a representative selection. American Arts students are also entitled to benefit from the courses on American music offered by Jim Samson of the Music Department. The most recent music project was on Charles Ives and included talks by Professor Allen Koppenhaver from Ohio, a recital by Yonty Solomon, an exhibition mounted by David Horn in the University Library, the publication of Charles Ives and the American Band Tradition by Jonathan Elkus (60p or $2.50), and a number of other events.

Research is in progress on a wide variety of topics, and research resources, purchasing of which began seriously in 1970 after the award of an ACLS book grant, are housed in the University Library. The collections are most notable in film, the underground press, contemporary poetry, Black literature, and American music. An annotated catalogue of the music collection by David Horn (The Literature of American Music) was published in 1972. It describes over 500 items, including some scores and a representative sample of cultural background material. Since the catalogue was published, about 250 new acquisitions have been made, making this probably the strongest collection of its kind in Great Britain outside the copyright libraries. Coverage is extensive, and includes books on cultivated music from the Pilgrims to date; American-Indian music; Afro-American music (slave songs and spirituals, folk songs, Blues, ragtime, jazz, soul); Anglo-American folk music (including song collections); musical theatre and film; minstrelsy; popular song and country music and rock. The collection is particularly strong in material on the vernacular tradition. David Horn's revised bibliography will be published next year by the Scarecrow Press. There are also a number of periodicals, including sets of Old Time Music and of Source, and an almost complete run of Blues Unlimited.

The same broad coverage, with an emphasis on vernacular material, is a feature of the sound recordings collection, which was begun in 1972 under a £6,000 ACLS grant for audio-visual materials in the American arts. There are at present about 1,000 LPs and over 150 tapes (reels and cassettes). In the LP collection jazz is particularly well represented, and there is a good, representative selection of art music (about 20% of the collection). The outstanding feature of the tape material is a set of 47 tapes (to date) of pre-1942 blues and gospel records. This collection, on four-track tape, is based on the standard blues discography by John Godrich and Robert M. W. Dixon, Blues and Gospel Records, 1902-

1942 (Storyville Publications, 1969), which gives details of some 15,000 individual recordings. The Exeter collection at present numbers about 8,000 items. (Clive Cooper of Fulham is working in association with us to produce a comprehensive loose-leaf bio-discography of jazz, blues and gospel music; this enormous enterprise has now covered the letters A - CO.) All of the recordings are based in the Audio-Visual Unit of the Library, which is open from 9.30-5.30, Monday to Friday, and is equipped with all the necessary listening facilities.

Books, periodicals and recordings are all available for use in the Library by members of other educational institutions, and by interested members of the public. Any book or periodical may be borrowed via the inter-library loan service (although in the case of periodicals a photocopy of an article may be supplied). Any one interested should contact the inter-library loans department of their local library. Although the Library is not able to consider lending any recordings, it is willing to make copies of limited amounts of material in the public domain. It will be necessary to add a handling charge for this service, but exchanges can be considered.

Other aspects of the Centre's work include publication of the American Arts Pamphlet Series, providing information by correspondence for the public, especially on audio-visual materials (Audio-Visual Materials for American Studies: A Guide to Sources of Information and Materials is available at 65p or $2.60), mounting travelling exhibitions (one on Ives is projected) and organising conferences on film and music. Further information will gladly be supplied by any one of those mentioned above at:

American Arts Documentation Centre,
Queen's Building,
University of Exeter,
EXETER EX4 4QH.

CENTRE FOR AMERICAN MUSIC AT KEELE UNIVERSITY

BY PETER DICKINSON

The Centre for American Music at Keele is a venture associated with the new Department of Music from the outset. The programme arises naturally out of Keele's large and thriving Department of American Studies and the University's inter-disciplinary background. American music of all kinds in this century is of enormous importance, and there is an increasing demand for study and facilities in the field.

The Ives Choir was formed to present Ives in his centenary year and has already given concerts and broadcasts, including an appearance in the BBC TV film on Ives. There have been several other concerts of American music and lectures during the past season and in April 1975 the First American Music Conference, with the support of the United States Embassy, was held at Keele. Musik Circus of Keele University was formed - as its title suggests - to perform music theatre. Their production of Cage's Theatre Piece was chosen for the National Student Drama Festival and was invited to Belgrade, apart from its performances in London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Keele and elsewhere. All these activities will expand during the coming years and more students are arriving.

In Autumn 1975 there will be a few postgraduates working on theses supervised jointly between Music and American Studies, and in 1976 an MA course in American Music begins. This consists of three periods of American music ranging from mid-19th century New England to the avantgarde and including popular forms.

There is a further course in either American Literature or History, taken in the American Studies Department. A recital of American music may be given as part of the examination requirements.

Library facilities at Keele promise to be unusually good as a result of grants from American sources, including some publishers who are donating their catalogues. In Autumn 1975 there will be a Research Fellow in Electronic Music, supported by a grant from the Leverhulme Trust - another aspect which fits neatly into the special concern with American music. Already a large number of connections with the USA suggest new developments of an exciting kind. Americans have received the scheme with enthusiasm, but the predominantly British audience at the First American Music Conference showed how the subject is gaining support in this country. This should also be evident from the final Discussion Forum of the Conference, which was recorded by the BBC for transmission in the Bicentenary Year of 1976.

My article in The Musical Times (October 1974) for the centenary of Ives made clear that I regard the whole subject as one of international importance. Then I was claiming international stature for Ives, but it goes much further than this. In the USA there is a range of musical culture not found elsewhere, allowing for jazz, musicals and rock as well as all the so-called more serious manifestations. This mixture - its components and their interactions - is a fascinating and necessary study. Fascinating because it is all of our time and somehow all belongs to us. Necessary because if we want to know about our age we must study its diversity. There are plenty of gaps to be filled in our knowledge and there is a real contribution to be made by a venture such as the one we have started at Keele.

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THE FIRST AMERICAN MUSIC CONFERENCE at the University of Keele, 18-21 April, 1975

THE LITERATURE OF AMERICAN MUSIC, a fully annotated catalogue of the books and song collections in Exeter University Library, compiled by David Horn
The American Arts Documentation Centre in association with The University Library, Exeter, 1972
(no price given, few copies left)

CHARLES IVES AND THE AMERICAN BAND TRADITION: A CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE, by Jonathan Elkus
American Arts Pamphlet No. 4, The American Arts Documentation Centre, University of Exeter, 1974
(£0.60 or $2.50)

THE AMERICAN MUSIC HANDBOOK, by Christopher Pavlakis
Collier Macmillan, London 1974 (£12.50)
The Free Press, New York

KEITH POTTER

The articles on the work now being done for American music in Britain at the Universities of Exeter and Keele are intended to point up two facts. First, they give some guidance for the British reader about where he can go for information about American music, knowledge of which is still all too scanty and inexact over here. Secondly, as Peter Dickinson has already observed, these articles draw attention to the steadily increasing awareness of the importance of American music to us in Britain, for which centres like those at Exeter and Keele provide a focus.

Recently, the attention centred on Keele, where the First American Music Conference took place from 18-21 April, presented by the Music Department and its Centre for American Music, and the United States Information Service. Eleven speakers presented papers which ranged over a wide spectrum of American music, from that of the early 19th century Bohemian/American composer Heinrich, to the most recent available music of Christian Wolff.

Many of the speakers, and most of the audience of course, were British, but an international element was added to the conference at the very start by the young Danish composer, performer and writer, Karl Aage Rasmussen, who gave a fascinating paper on the use of quotation in music, bringing a continental European perspective to the subject which revealed a great deal about the problems of 20th century music as a whole, not just that of America. Jane Waugh gave a talk on aspects of choice and chance in the music of Lukas Foss, and Marc Capalbo launched an attempt on the analysis of Milton Babbitt's Second String Quartet.

Ives and Varèse, as the 'classics' of 20th century American music, were subjected to more extended treatment, with two views presented on each. David Wooldridge, an English conductor who now lives mainly in the States and whose book on Ives, From the Steeples and the Mountains, has just become available in this country (see the next issue of CONTACT for a round-up of recently published books on this composer), and the American composer and writer, Robert P. Morgan, presented different aspects of Ives: the first anecdotal, the second more philosophical and musical with some discussion of the use of space and spatial characteristics in Ives's music, not confining himself to their most obvious applications. Mr. Morgan is at present engaged in further studies in this field which should prove interesting.

Two views of Varèse were presented by David Harold Cox, who is writing a Ph. D. thesis on the composer, and Paul Griffiths, the former being illustrated by the performance of a recently discovered early song by Varèse (1906), which the composer seemingly chose to forget in compiling his list of surviving works.

Arnold Whittall, of University College, Cardiff, placed Elliott Carter in the European as well as American traditions, giving many insights into the music of this composer who is so often talked about - by other composers in particular - but about whose musical processes far too little is really known. Tim Souster spoke about the influence of 60s rock music on American composers, Michael Nyman introduced the music of Heinrich to a wondering world with the aid of Roger Smalley at the piano, and I gave a paper on aspects of political music today with special reference to the recent works of Christian Wolff. All the conference papers will be published in book form in due course, and will be available from the Department of Music, University of Keele, KEELE, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG.

Other events included the showing of the BBC TV centenary film on Ives and Harry Partch's film, Music Studio; performances of Cage's Theatre Piece and Satie's Le Piège de Méduse by the Musik Circus of Keele University; a concert of Ives, Carter, Copland, Cage and Feldman given by Meriel and Peter Dickinson and Roger Smalley and recorded by the BBC; a late night concert of Heinrich and Wolff (German names, but very American music), and the BBC forum which Peter Dickinson has already mentioned. A whole week's Second American Music Conference is planned for July 1976.

While Keele has only begun to build itself up as a centre for American music in the last year or so - Peter Dickinson, who is responsible for much of this, was appointed Professor of Music there in April 1974 - Exeter University's American Arts Documentation Centre has been amassing material for some time, as the music librarian David Horn's own article shows.

His compilation, The Literature of American Music, is a useful guide to what is available though, as Horn himself says, it is already out of date and is currently being revised and expanded to include not only the new additions at Exeter, but other literature as well. This new edition will be published next year by the Scarecrow Press and we hope to review this, hopefully extremely useful, volume then.

As revealed by the current edition, Exeter's collection is particularly strong on the vernacular traditions and pre-20th century music, areas which we are sometimes apt to forget in our concern for the contemporaneity of American music. But the work done at Exeter by, for example, David Mayor on the Fluxus movement, is proof of the collection's considerable scope. It is a source of which researchers, and all those interested in American music in this country, should be aware. As with the set-up at Keele, which has the largest Department of American Studies in this country, the links with those working in other areas of scholarship should be an invaluable aid to the progress of both creative work and research, as well as showing that these institutions are working examples of the fruitful breakdown of the barriers between art forms in this century.

Recently the American Arts Deocumentation Centre at Exeter has been publishing a pamphlet series at extremely modest prices: a check-list of the periodical publications of Sylvia Plath, a selected bibliography of Black literature, and associate director Mick Gidley's own catalogue of American paintings in British public collections.

The most recent addition to this series is the American composer and bandsman, Jonathan Elkus's useful monograph on Ives and the American band tradition, issued for the Ives centenary. The 16 pages of the main text are packed with information and informed opinion and there is also an introductory biographical note on Ives by David Horn, a checklist of Ives's published music for band and even four plates of music examples. More monographs of this type would fill many gaps in the existing literature admirably: Exeter should immediately commission some more on music to follow those currently in preparation on the American theatre on the London stage and John Ford's westerns. Orders for these pamphlets should be addressed to The Registry, Northcote House, University of Exeter, EXETER, EX4 4QJ.

The tracking down of information on American music both present and past is a daunting undertaking, even given unlimited time and money. The problems of researching into the present are not always sufficiently appreciated by scholars working in the past, who sometimes seem to imagine that all you need lies conveniently on the composer's or publisher's desk or on the other end of a phone - and that you can get it. That personal barriers can be greater than historical ones, and even more insurmountable on occasion, is known to all who've ever tried working in contemporary studies: what do you do when the man at the other end of the phone won't reply or when the American postal service (worse even than our own) fails you, or when anyone along your line of communication lacks the time or the urge to pass essential information your way? Or, conversely, if you're John Cage and fed up with the continual stream of letters and interviews which prevent you from working, what attitude do you take to the present and how much do you tell, never mind keeping an eye on the future? Of course, just like his counterpart in historical studies, the student of contemporary music just tries and tries again until all the leads are exhausted. But when those leads are covered up on account of the personal feelings of living people, justified or unjustified, the contemporary researcher can meet the kind of brick wall of which the historical researcher has little inkling.

These are the kind of reasons why students of American music, as well as a lot else besides, should be eternally grateful to John Vinton and his team for the work they have done in producing the Dictionary of 20th Century Music, which was reviewed in CONTACT 10. Never mind the mistakes and omissions (though we do mind really, of course) or the fact that inclusion has apparently simply depended upon what came into the office: 'erratic' rather than 'comprehensive' would seem to be the more appropriate description of the total compilation. There are still enough leads in Vinton's book to keep me happy for a good while to come yet, while I eagerly await a second edition which will hopefully contain a lot more material that the editor has received since the copy deadline.

Hard on Vinton's heels, though far less well publicised, comes Christopher Pavlakis's The American Music Handbook. The area covered - in just two more pages than Vinton but using a larger type face - is much wider, the aim rather different and the coverage of contempoary American composers and their music much scantier. Pavlakis's plan is "to bring together information on all areas of organized musical activity in the United States" and his book falls into 14 sections.

We start with organisations: "those serving music or which are related to music, wholly or in part, directly or indirectly", e.g. the first four entries are the Accordion Teachers' Guild International, the Acoustical Society of America, Inc., the Amateur Chamber Music Players, Inc., and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Addresses and an idea of the scope of activities are given as in all the appropriate succeeding sections. Then come sections on instrumental and vocal ensembles, opera and dance companies, plus those peculiarly American phenomena, the 'Music Tents' and the 'Summer Theaters'. Then performers (highly selective, of course) with an idea of their recorded repertoires; 205 American composers with dates of birth, university (if any), lists of works on record and publisher(s), and also including articles on 'The Status of the Composer', 'Compositional Diversity and Productivity', 'Copyright Registration: 1940-71', 'Copyright Registrations for Music' (both with tables), 'Composers and Employment' and a list of Pullitzer Prizewinners to 1972.

After this we have music festivals, contests and awards; 'Music and Education' including useful lists of universities and colleges offering music instruction with heads of departments named, music libraries, summer

music camps, degrees available and some statistics; radio and television including lists of stations; 'Music Industries', including record companies, hi-fi manufacturers, music publishers and those involved in the making and selling of instruments down to the wholesale level; music periodicals; concert managers; and, finally, a section on foreign festivals, competitions, awards and music publishers which cannot, of course, be aiming at completeness.

Quite a task for one man, that. Pavlakis has undeniably produced a useful reference volume of considerable proportions by the sweat of his own brow - and, apparently, out of the depths of his own pocket. His introduction, in which he tells of the problems that the undertaking involved and the amazing lack of co-operation, financial and otherwise, that he experienced from a good many unmentioned people, should make salutary reading for anyone who does not appreciate the implications of my earlier remarks.

So it might seem churlish to remark that The American Music Handbook falls somewhere between Vinton on the one hand and something like our own British Music Yearbooks on the other, neither a detailed scholarly tool like the former, or a ready-reference directory like the latter. It isn't always easy to find what you want and quite a lot of cross-referencing is sometimes necessary, though the index is helpful here. And Pavlakis's idea of what constitutes an area of "organized musical activity" does not appear to run to the realms of popular musics, jazz or anything much outside the Western concert tradition. This is a pity, but then, as with Vinton, who makes the same broad decision, the book would have become at least twice the size and probably completely unviable if the editorial policy became all-inclusive in this way.

While it is inevitably already becoming dated, as so many of the details with which he deals change so fast, Pavlakis's claim to have provided more permanent information that should make the book useful for several years would also seem to have some grounds: at least what I have described as the 'leads' remain for further investigation. That I have already consulted the book about a dozen times during the editorial work on the rest of this issue seems proof enough of its usefulness to me in my work, at any rate. And as a record of a specific period in American musical history it also, as the author says, has a certain value. Since it is CONTACT's policy to disseminate information about 20th century music of all kinds, I am pleased to recommend Pavlakis's labour of love to our readers as a highly informative source of general information about music and musicians in America today, and as an invaluable book for the record collector and for 'the trade'.

I hope that future issues of CONTACT will contain further information about where to get hold of American material, so that we may act more effectively in putting our readers in touch with the music.

* * * *

THE NEW OXFORD HISTORY OF MUSIC Volume X: THE MODERN AGE 1890-1960, edited by Martin Cooper
Oxford University Press, 1974 (£9.50)

DAVID Ll ROBERTS

I shall make it clear from the outset that I consider Volume X of the New Oxford History to be, at best, a work of indifferent quality. There is, I suppose, still sufficient room in the world for a few more mediocre surveys of 20th century music, but unfortunately NOHM X is not just a run-of-the-mill affair whose failings may be charitably allowed for. It is, after all, intended to be the definitive British work of scholarship on the period; the required reading of a generation of music students. Like any book with 'Oxford' in its title it goes out into the world with its circulation and status guaranteed. This pre-ordained importance makes imperative the maintenance of the highest standards for 'Oxford' books. 'Duty' is not a particularly fashionable concept at present, but nevertheless those responsible for this substandard volume have been negligent of a very real duty towards their readers.

However, to begin with the good news: one of the most fortunate features of the volume is the choice by the NOHM editors of 1890 as its terminus a quo. Histories of 20th century music have been inclined to take the '20th century' label too literally, regarding 1900 (or, for the finicky, 1901) as their legitimate opening date, with the result that the events of the critical previous decade are generally dealt with in a brief resumé - a summary of the state of play before hastening to get on with the game itself. Thus it is that the close attention which NOHM devotes to the period prior to the First World War is very welcome. The most valuable contribution which the volume has to offer to students of music history is Gerald Abraham's treatment of the years 1890-1914. This falls under two headings: 'The Apogee and Decline of Romanticism' and 'The Reaction against Romanticism', a division which works very happily without resorting to Procrustean methods, though it is inevitable that a number of composers should straddle the two. Abraham's account is lucid and his music examples are particularly full and aptly chosen.

To have covered the same period yet again in Martin Cooper's chapter on the 'Stage Works: 1890-1918' may be felt to be excessive. Opera and ballet do indeed form an important category during this period, but it is doubtful whether anything has been gained by their divorce from the context of the previous two chapters. Cooper's account is not, in any case, of a sufficiently high standard to justify its separate existence.

Mosco Carner's 'Music in the Mainland of Europe: 1918-1939' is by far the longest chapter in the book - over 150 pages. I am inclined to think its scope too wide for a single chapter: such a large number of composers, employing a wide variety of techniques and pursuing disparate ideals, have to be accommodated that the picture one gains of European musical activity of the period is very hazy.

Peter Evans's contribution, 'Music of the European Mainstream: 1940-1960' deals with what, by its nature, is a far neater topic: the widespread adoption of serialism during these years provided a closer approximation to a common language and aesthetic than had yet arisen in the century. It has inevitably been this chapter more than any other which has suffered from the protracted delay in the volume's arrival in print. The wide acceptance of Babbitt's terminology has made Evans's use of "Basic Set" and "Retro. Inv. transposed" as labels in his serial analyses seem curiously quaint and ad hoc. His generous footnote citations have also been made to look incomplete by the appearance over the last ten years of a number of important articles dealing with the period.

The remaining three chapter divisions have been made upon a geographical basis. Two of these - 'Music in the Soviet Union' by Gerald Abraham and 'American Music: 1918-1960' by Richard Franko Goldman (USA) and Gerard Béhague (Latin America) - are easily defended as separate categories by virtue of their cultural independence from the European mainstream. The third, 'Music in Britain: 1918-1960', is less satisfactory. I am sensitive to the obligations of NOHM as a British institution towards British music, but I cannot see that it is best served by being discussed in isolation from the rest of European music. Arthur Hutchings's account gives a prominent position to a fair number of lame ducks who would not stand up to serious scrutiny if examined within a broader context. His chapter is perhaps the most disappointing, making the least effort to come to a fresh assessment of its material.

The most manifestly absurd contribution, however, is Béhague's survey of the music of Latin America, which is little more than a breakneck scramble through a list of composers' names. Out of a total of exactly 700 pages of text, only four are given over to Latin America; Music in the Modern Age, edited by F. W. Sternfeld (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973) devotes 25 pages out of 421 to the same topic.

The editor of a history of 20th century music inevitably finds himself in a quandary when deciding upon his chapter divisions: the story of music in this century has been so involved that no single criterion - be it division by country, period, genre, or stylistic movement - will result in tidy, watertight compartments. However, the piecemeal compromise adopted by NOHM X of a mixture of all four of the above criteria has produced an extremely ill-balanced and unwieldy result. The more straightforward schemes adopted by Sternfeld and by Austin in his Music in the Twentieth Century (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966) assist towards a much clearer picture of the century: Sternfeld's is a country-by-country account with a separate chapter for the inconveniently cosmopolitan Stravinsky (Stravinsky suffers badly from the arrangement of NOHM X, spread through four chapters and receiving an uneven treatment); Austin's format is somewhat more complex, presenting a chronological arrangement centred upon a few key figures.

This major weakness in the structural planning of NOHM X is clearly the responsibility of the editor, and is just one of the ways in which Martin Cooper has failed in his responsibility. Clarity and consistency of thought are surely the first requirements in an editor, but these are qualities in which Cooper appears to be singularly lacking. Take the following sentence from his own chapter:

> *Already in Petrushka, and even in Zhar-ptitsa, Stravinsky had exploited with brilliant effect the clash of triads whose tonics lie an augmented fourth apart (C-F sharp) - a bitonal effect already used by Ravel for the cadenza of his Jeux d'eau (1902); in The Rite it is Stravinsky's methodical insistence, at the opening of the 'Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes', on a chord consisting of a dominant seventh on E flat and a chord of F flat (E) major, rather than the chord itself, that was novel.* (p. 199)

The quotation supplies an example of the clumsiness with which Cooper is capable of writing: the convoluted sentence structure, the mixture of tenses, and the repetition of the words "chord" (in two senses) and "effect" produce a result so confused that it requires several readings to uncover the intended meaning. And once that meaning has been absorbed, it becomes apparent that the muddle goes deeper. The superposition of a pair of common chords does not constitute "a bitonal effect" (except in such a very loose sense that no educated musician has any business using): one does not hear, for instance, the 'Petrushka chord' as a conflict of tonalities, but as an entity which derives its characteristic effect from the particular distribution of its pitches. The same C-F sharp polychord can be used in a context as remote from polytonality as a Gershwin song, Dere's a Boat dat's Leavin' where it occurs as a rather exotic supertonic chord.

Another problem highlighted by this quotation is the language in which titles are given. This, of course, affects Stravinsky more than any other composer. It seems to me quite silly to talk of The Rite at one moment and 'Cercles mystérieux des adolescentes' at the next: 'Mystic Circles of the Young Girls' is equally evocative and far clearer. (Whichever language is preferred, the identification of the section is, in any case, entirely wrong: the section that opens with this particular polychord is 'Augurs of Spring/Dances of the Young Girls'. Later on the same page the 'Sacrificial Dance' is mistaken for the 'Glorification of the Sacred One'.) And I wonder how many readers immediately recognised Zhar-ptitsa as the Firebird? It is of course perfectly correct to give a work its original title at its first mention, but the use of the Russian at this juncture is needlessly obscure. What seems to me quite clear is that if a work originally had a Russian title, I do not think it is asking too much that it should appear either in Russian or English, but not French. Nevertheless,

The Rite and The Nightingale crop up in all three languages in various places in the volume. The Wedding appears always as Les Noces, with no mention of either the Russian or English titles. Indeed, on p. 216 a musical quote from that work is given with a French text underlaid, while the commentary (Carner's) discusses the syllabic setting of the Russian text! Reynard suffers similarly. (Incidentally, this plurality of usage extends even to within the English language: witness the forms Firebird, Fire-Bird, and Fire Bird which occur at various places.)

Stravinsky has been sadly misused in one way and another: Carner quotes several times from the Chronicle of My Life, with varying degrees of accuracy - the quotations on pp. 214, 218, 222 are all incorrect. Stravinsky's "everything should revolve about the melodic principle" is subtly perverted into "everything evolved round the melodic principle". The page-reference given to the quotation on p. 220 is wrong - p. 210 instead of p. 205; five pages difference may not seem a great deal, but it took me over an hour of diligent searching, in a book I know quite well, to locate the correct page. Furthermore, while the bibliography to the chapter gives the currently available 1962 (New York: Norton) edition of the work (re-titled An Autobiography), Carner makes his references to the out-of-print 1936 (London: Gollancz) edition, the pagination of which differs considerably from the more recent version. Nowhere is any indication made that Chronicle of My Life and An Autobiography are one and the same. Further bibliographical confusion reigns over the details of the Poetics of Music given on pp. 223, 708, 718.

Another relatively minor but extremely annoying error is the frequent misdating of works. To fire a parting shot at the Cooper quotation above: the date of Jeux d'eau is not 1902, but 1901, as correctly given by Abraham on p. 101. I cannot claim to have checked more than a small sample of dates, but it becomes clear that Arthur Hutchings in particular is extremely careless in this respect. His main blunder in dating is to give 1935 instead of 1934 as the year of Holst's death, and he has even credited him with writing the Scherzo for orchestra in that year. Roughly half of the dates he gives to works of Holst, Vaughan Williams, and Britten are incorrect.

None of this catalogue of small errors and inaccuracies is likely to lead to a major misunderstanding if one proceeds with caution, though this indifference to accuracy on the small scale does not inspire confidence in the more important judgements of the volume. Accuracy is simply the easiest target that a scholarly publication has to aim for: to standardise titles, to give accurate quotations, to provide correct dates, need cost no more in time, space, or effort than jumbled titles, distorted quotations, and incorrect dates - these are chiefly matters of courtesy. Where NOHM X fails most seriously is in an altogether more fundamental area.

Symptomatic of this failure is the index, compiled by G. W. Hopkins. Though not acknowledged as such it is an index of proper names only; in other words, there are no entries under atonality, caricature, electronic music, film music, neo-classicism, etc. This is an unaccountable departure from the practice of the other five volumes of NOHM that have so far been published, and a considerable impediment. But it does not require a very diligent search to discover that all but a handful of these proper names are those of composers. The implication, which is amply confirmed by the text, is that composers and compositions are the sole subjects of music history: performers, conductors, jazz musicians, popular-song writers, critics, instrument makers, musicologists, theorists, etc., are almost entirely ignored. Among the names which occur to me as those of people who have fundamentally shaped 20th century music into what it has been are: Louis Armstrong, Sir Thomas Beecham, Irving Berlin, Manfred Bukofzer, Pablo Casals, Arnold Dolmetsch, Duke Ellington, Wanda Landowska, Maurice Martenot, Charlie Parker, Cole Porter, Curt Sachs, Heinrich Schenker, Artur Schnabel, Cecil Sharp, Bessie Smith, Sir Donald Tovey. No room is found in the volume for any of these. One wonders if we have really progressed so very far from those execrable old-fashioned histories in which composers' names are printed in bold-face type.

If one were credulously to believe the account given by NOHM X, one would find that the importance of jazz has been solely as a source of ideas for straight composers, and would not discover that there had ever been such a thing as popular music. As for kulchur, the single feature which has most strongly characterised musical life in this century, setting it apart from past ages, is its awareness of and preoccupation with the music of other centuries; nowhere is this phenomenon paid serious attention to. NOHM X concentrates upon what is in reality an extremely narrow facet of musical activity and comes nowhere near answering questions like 'What is 20th century about 20th century music?' or 'How in this time of massive social and technological change does music reflect this change?' The view which the book presents, of compositions appearing out of a vacuum, would not be tolerated in a history of an earlier period, and, I sincerely hope, will soon be felt intolerable in histories of 20th century music.

If the objection is raised that all this is very well, but that the scope of the volume was limited by the space available, then I would reply that space is the last thing which the editor seems to have tried to save. I have calculated that one buys nearly 20 pages of space which has been left blank through miscalculation over the size of the music examples. This is quite beside the fact that the physical size (as opposed to length) of the examples fluctuates alarmingly, some being absurdly large. Moreover, the opportunity presented by the plates has been, for the most part, wasted. I remain to be convinced of the usefulness of black-and-white photographs of stage sets, and to have made a plate of Stockhausen's Zyklus (which is not referred to by the text) when it could have been

printed in the normal way seems quite pointless. The only pair of plates which tell at a glance what a thousand words could not are the theosophically-inspired cover to Skryabin's Prometheus and a poster for Tosca which neatly sums up the salacious sentimentality of Puccini.

All in all, a great opportunity squandered.

* * * *

SUN (CREATIVITY AND ENVIRONMENT), by Trevor Wishart and friends
Universal Edition, 1974 (£1.50)

JANE WAUGH

One of the major collapses during the past twenty years or so in Western society has been that of social communication. Our almost incredible change in general living standards seems to be the prime factor, and this has taken place in what I advisedly call the working class. For even today there are some who believe that this class still exists. It is apparently distinguished from other classes by a minimal standard of living, which includes, amongst other things, few possessions and a very delicate monetary situation. This statement of course immediately provides a situation for argument. The one thing which usually does emerge is that on average, even in the present financial crisis, our higher standards of living are being maintained.

I mention these points, because Trevor Wishart's book brings back very personal memories of early childhood in a mining community during the late 40s and early 50s. Life then was unnecessarily hard. Large families were prevalent, and children had to be self-sufficient from an early age. But they belonged to a very social community, based on their elders' appreciation of their fellow men. In times of trouble, one could always rely on the neighbour and for that matter almost anyone else in the community. A similar pattern also emerged on happier occasions, which were few. Everyone joined in the celebrations.

Creativity amongst the young was always actively encouraged, in any shape or form, although the surrounding environment did not exactly lend its charm to such activity. In his description of Carnival and Carnival Again, Wishart relates his finally successful, but initially difficult, task of organising a day's outdoor and indoor activities and entertainment on a modern council estate. Parents were encouraged to participate, and to help the children in their preparations for the occasion. The carnival included a procession of children in fancy dress, floats, open houses, displays of handicrafts, an art exhibition and a fete. The day ended with a children's party which took place in a social centre. Food was provided by parents, and in turn the children entertained them. Similar occasions often took place in our community, especially during the long summer holidays. But all that disappeared when the 'rows' were torn down, and concrete jungles of flats replaced them. Now the children prefer to watch TV and the Mums are too suspicious and envious of their neighbours to risk anything but minimal contact. Jealous competition instead of healthy co-operation is the main issue of the day.

But suspicion seems to lurk everywhere, as demonstrated most effectively by a policeman's response to the performance of Bicycle Music by Wishart and his friends outside a concert hall in Leeds during the Triennial Festival. Inside, Aloys Kontarsky was about to embark on a Stockhausen programme. Bicycle Music consists of creating musical sounds with as many different parts of a bicycle as possible. One obvious example is to pluck the spokes on the wheels.

The book, which is divided into two parts, consists of various creative projects devised and mounted by Wishart and numerous friends between January 1970 and July 1972. There are also essays at the beginning of Parts 1 & 2 and at the end of the book. Between Parts 1 & 2 are two pages which contain some of Wishart's poems, thoughts for projects which were eventually planned and mounted and designs for clothing which he made and wore. There is even a recipe for apple and cucumber pie which sounds most delectable, but unfortunately no oven temperature is given!

I would describe the projects as a series of multiperson co-operative games. I use the mathematical sense of the term: a series of events that occur one after the other, the next event always being dependent on the previous one and on the decision made by that player. A 'player' can be a person or a team. One finds this type of game occurring in many social customs of preliterate societies. Three contemporary comparisons from thirteen described in the book are Found Objects Music, Rain Music and Pied Piper.

In Found Objects the performers search around outside for anything on which they can create and improvise sounds. This can develop into a multi-media operation through the aural-visual situation. A performance can also be given inside a concert hall using similar techniques, and eventually the audience are invited to participate and to integrate with the performers. Rain Music in Part 2 is an extension of Found Objects. Here a constructed object is placed outside in the rain. Performers, with vessels of different shapes, sizes and moulds, try to obtain as many different sounds as possible with rain. They compare these sounds with those made by the object in the middle - the 'cantus firmus'. A version is also given for indoor performance (hose and water) with optional audience. Additional variations are also given, such as the use of electronics to amplify the sounds.

Pied Piper is an environmental game in which a 'public' musical instrument is constructed, placed on a derelict piece of land, performed upon, then left for the locals to use in any way they wish. A comparison can be made with the Australian aborigines' way of creating musical sounds. They are very mobile nomads, travelling light and covering vast distances. They prefer to make use of each new

environment for their everyday needs. Musically they have developed complicated rhythms which they beat on pitched logs. These logs can weigh up to 20 pounds, and they make new ones at every encampment. They could hardly load themselves with such heavy objects on their travels just because the pitches were acceptable!

The essays have the running theme of the stifling effect on creativity and social integration caused by our industrialised society. The urgent message is to convince man that creativity must be a natural function in his life. Audience and performer are one, not separate entities. I must add that these cries are not original. There have been numerous occasions in history when man has tried to create freedom of the individual through artistic freedom. Revolutions and wars have followed, but other hierarchic systems have always replaced the old ones. Perhaps this will always be the fate of both man and the world. Or can Wishart's sincere hopes and aspirations become at last a permanency in our various cultures? I think that whether one agrees or disagrees with the book, it is well worth reading, since it gives one much food for thought on our present life style.

* * * *

STOCKHAUSEN SERVES IMPERIALISM, by
Cornelius Cardew
Latimer New Dimensions, 1974 (£3.00)

TREVOR WISHART

To review Cardew's book is not an easy task for me, for a reason that the author himself makes explicit. For whereas this review will be masqueraded as an 'objective' critical assessment in the bourgeois tradition, it is quite clear that most people reading the book will be consciously or unconsciously deeply committed to bourgeois ideology. They will be looking at it with a view to finding sticks with which to beat Marxist critiques, or at least for some way to weaken Cardew's arguments and hence put their minds at ease.

So I must begin by saying that I feel the book to be immensely valuable, and its sociological analysis of contemporary musical activities and their relation to the current state of our society to be substantially correct. I must also state my admiration for Cardew's personal integrity. As I have discovered in attempts to teach sociological perspectives to music students, there is an enormous barrier when it comes to viewing their own activities. Most students and scholars of music (especially of contemporary music) are either consciously or (usually) unconsciously irretrievably bound by an ideology of music which refuses to locate it as a mode of social communication - an ideology which Cardew rejects. The questioning of this ideological orthodoxy is looked upon with amusement, disdain or disbelief. It is to Cardew's great credit that he has rejected the easy road to becoming a bourgeois art superstar by rejecting the very ideology on which this is based. The criticisms which I offer will hence be mere details in comparison with my overall acceptance of this book.

Even for the musician who has no sympathies with Marxist thought, the following issues which Cardew raises are of immense importance, as they have been swept under the carpet for far too long:

(i) That musical 'form' is not the diametrical opposite of 'content', but, on the contrary, that musical structure can consciously or unconsciously convey a composer's ideas or unconscious assumptions about social (and other) structures.

(ii) That contemporary music has been systematically dominated by visual-verbalisable conceptions, rather than by aural-musical conceptions.

(iii) That the musical avantgarde is an extremely tiny group, with a minute audience backed up by government and state funds in universities and broadcasting stations which make it 'a big noise' out of all proportion to the relevance of its content.

It might be added that relative 'success' among the avantgarde has been achieved by composers who are consciously aware of the expression of content through musical form. Stockhausen has expressed quite evident mystical ideas through his musical processes, and Cage very clear anarchist notions, both in compositional procedure and performance/realisation. Even so, the popular myth of form versus content remains. Cardew's political criticism of these ideas is hence quite in order, whether or not we agree with that criticism.

I read the history of the Scratch Orchestra which forms the opening chapter of the book, with interest, having been a member during the Cornwall and Anglesey tours in 1970. For about a year I had been trying to get together my own political ideas and musical activities. I was particularly concerned to communicate with audiences and had mounted the environmental event 'Landscape' in Hebden Bridge earlier that year, with a view to communicating with ordinary people in their everyday work and living situation. What most distressed me about the attitude of many Scratch Orchestra members was a complete disregard for the audience, as revealed in Rod Eley's description of the Dorset cliffs event. After a self-indulgent performance in a village hall to an audience of one, who left, Stefan Szczelkun, Psi Ellison, Greg Bright and I initiated a more participatory event on a village green for the following evening. This seemed to have little general effect at that time on the attitude of most of the orchestra members. Rod Eley's history reveals how attitudes towards audiences and content did gradually change through the accumulated experience of failures of communication, leading eventually to the formation of the Ideological Group in 1971.

The only logical development of this desire to communicate creative action to the audience was, for me, to initiate creative activities by others, which I was to do later in 1970 in the event Carnival, a

street carnival on a deprived housing estate. The ideological development of the Scratch Orchestra was, however, to lead towards the discovery of a revolutionary role for the musician as an artist-communicator in the conventional sense. The first prerequisite of this search is an acceptance that music can itself convey ideas, that there is no dichotomy between form and content, but only between experience of the score and experience of the music in sound. Cardew went on to join the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist), a party taking its lead from Mao Tse-Tung, and began to develop a clear ideological line in the criticism of society and musical contents expressed within that society. The content analyses of Stockhausen's Refrain and Cage's HPSCHD presented in this book exemplify this approach, as does the ensuing ideological argument.

My principal criticism of Cardew's current thinking is not of this type of content analysis, which seems to me to be valid and necessary. It in fact relates only indirectly to what is said in this book. It is a criticism of certain types of Marxist thinking. Whereas most Marxists are all too ready to historically locate and sociologically analyse the ideas of other thinkers, they are often unwilling to do so with those of Marx himself: the first failure of true dialectical materialist thought which can lead down the slippery slope to Stalinist authoritarianism. For such thinkers Marx's ideas are not only not criticised, but subsequent ideas which might cause us to modify a basically Marxist world view are automatically labelled as bourgeois-reactionary, and hence dismissed. This is particularly relevant to the case of music and musical communication.

Marx's philosophy is firmly rooted in the world of 19th century bourgeois rationality and materialism, even though his writings are revolutionary with respect to that world. However, such a world view cannot give a satisfactory explanation of musical communication, as it is rooted in verbal-rational conceptions. (McLuhan's over-view is undoubtedly mistaken and reactionary, yet I am not prepared to dismiss some of his insights.) Hence while I agree absolutely with Cardew that music is not in any sense 'a pure experience' (nothing can be: everything takes place in a social situation which gives it context and meaning), the 19th century verbal-rationalist view tends to see it as no more than its visual-verbalisable social function. My own view is that music is an alternative mode of communication to the word, that it can communicate very clearly and precisely (if skilfully handled), and that in its social context, or with the accompaniment of a few words, either in the music or in an accompanying text, its meaning can be made highly specific.

In this book, Cardew says, with respect to The Great Learning, that "these forms communicate non-verbally, they also communicate ideas", and in paragraph 63 of the copious notes he goes on to detail the ways in which the musical forms do communicate. This analysis of The Great Learning in fact illustrates the view of music I have put forward. However, in the more recent works for piano it would seem that the verbal-rationalist view has prevailed. These works are accompanied by copious programme notes whose ideological soundness is usually beyond dispute, but the attempts to write a parallel music in a popular idiom are unsuccessful. These pieces have only the external trappings of popular musics, which seem to be consciously placed there in accordance with the verbal-rationale of the programme, rather than felt through musically. The intent of the text is not felt through the music. Hence a successful communication in music is not achieved, even though the succession of musical events may be consciously perceived to follow the accompanying text. It seems to me that in this instance the verbal-rationalist bias of Marx's philosophy is overriding musicality; verbal-rational preconceptions of musical form are pre-empting musical communication as such.

If we seriously wish to use music, in itself, to convey ideas, revolutionary or otherwise, we must develop the ability to communicate musically. To the argument that the quality of the composition doesn't matter, but only its ideological content, we should retort that unsuccessful music has no ideological content: it is the programme note which has the content. Hence why not confine ourselves to communicating in words? This long digression on Cardew's recent music is particularly important since, as I have noted, there is a strong link between certain aspects of his Marxist thought and Cardew's current musical practice, and hence criticism of this music, at least from the view-point I have adopted, is not irrelevant to a critique of those ideas.

Having said this, I do not wish to reject the basic analysis of social relations and their relevance to musical practice which Cardew outlines in the book. My intention is rather to suggest approaches to writing better revolutionary music. Lastly, though, I would like to point out the possible dangers of any uncritical Marxist position. Just as the 'genius' image and 'mysticism' of Stockhausen are means of placing the artistic ego beyond criticism, so adherence to a 'correct line' can be the same thing for a Marxist artist. Correct Marxist political thought must not be used as a means to defend unsuccessful music against criticism.

* * * *

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¢ **COMPILED by DAVID and ROSEMARY ROBERTS** 11

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