

# contact

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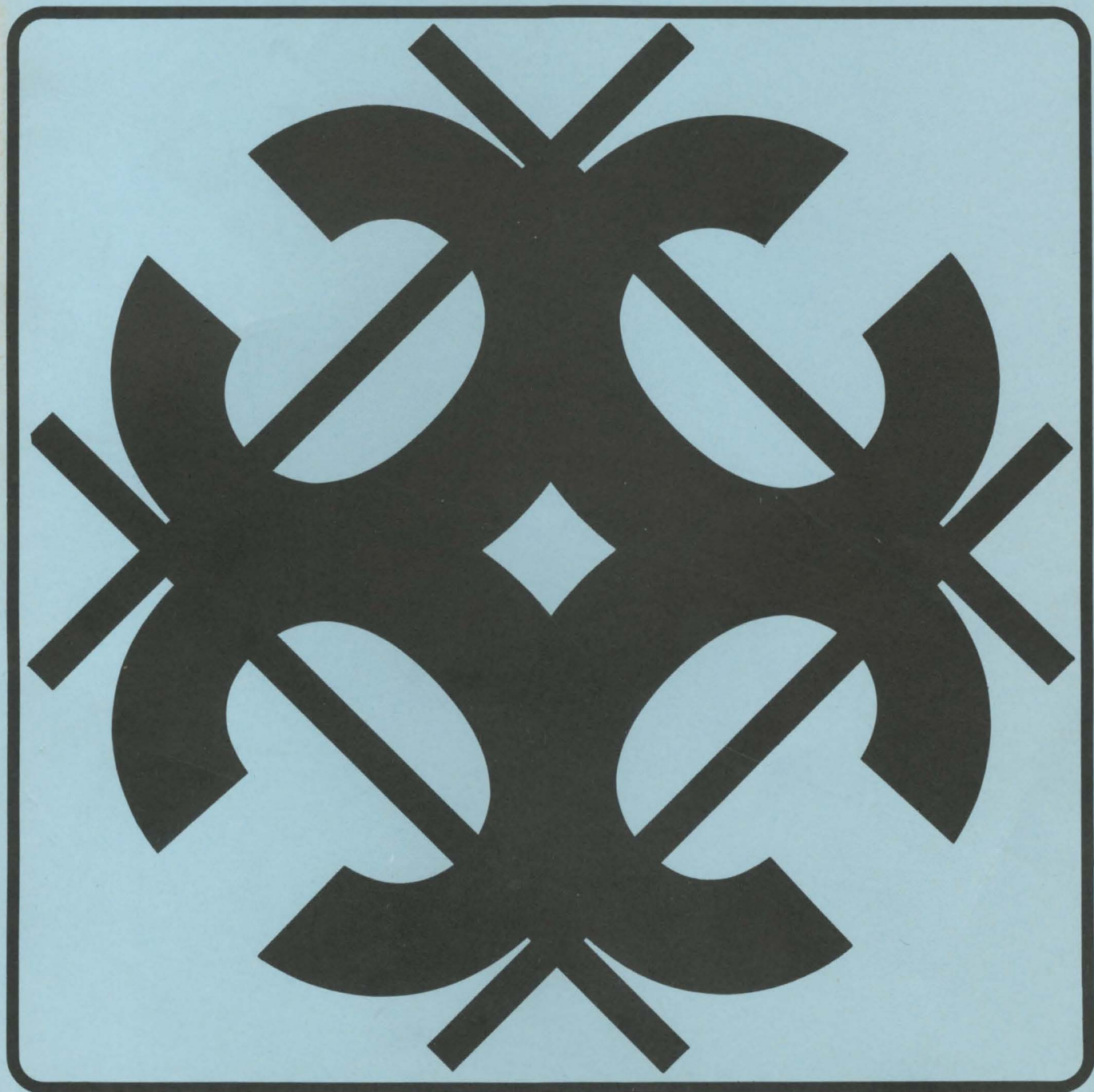
# CONTACT

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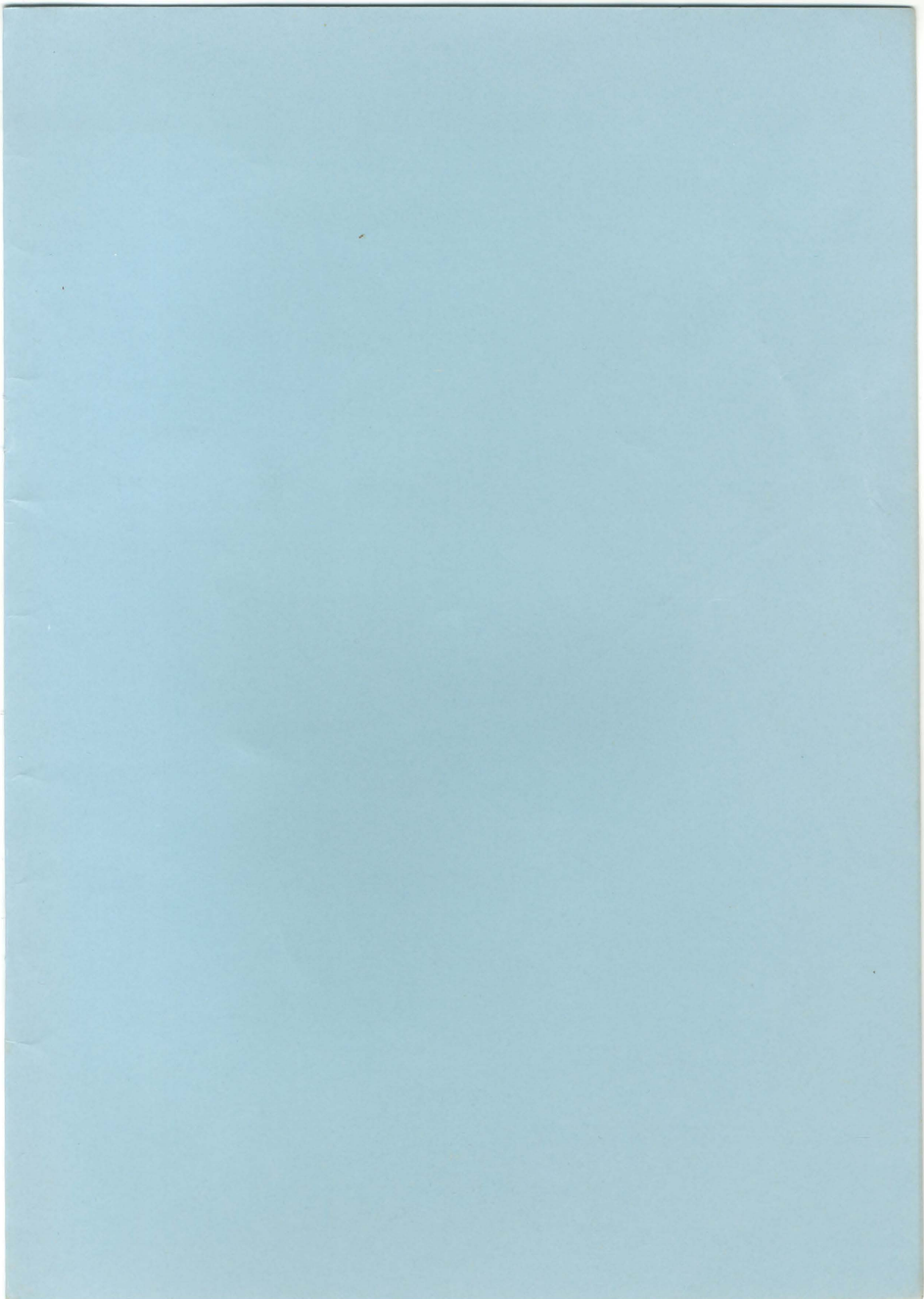
Today's Music

No 15  
Winter 1976-77

35p



- Music and Society
- Electronic Music
- Bedford, Bosseur, Crumb and Kagel
- Scores, Books, Magazines, Records and Reports



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# CONTACT

## WINTER 1976/77

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### ISSUE 15

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## Composers Today

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*This new format seems a good way of introducing short features on more composers than we can normally manage to include in one issue. The brief is not binding, but mostly writers have been asked for their views on the work of a particular composer in the light of some recently issued scores and/or records. Well known composers thus receive up to date discussion of their music, while lesser known figures can be introduced by reference to specific works. In a magazine that appears only three times a year at present it is quite obviously not possible to keep abreast of a composer's activities as much as we should wish. The discussion of David Bedford's *Odyssey* which follows was only possible because the promotion tour for the album occurred just a fortnight before copy deadline (or rather, an already extended deadline!): it's included here to put Malcolm Barry's article into the perspective of what Bedford was doing last October, and we haven't tried to hide any differences of opinion between the authors. In those cases where we have recently featured a composer, as with George Crumb here, the format will perhaps be that of a straightforward review of specific works; in others a more general line will often be taken. In all cases attention will be drawn to a short selection of relevant articles or extended reviews in this and/or other periodicals to enable interested readers to follow up some of the previous commentary on a composer's work.*

### DAVID BEDFORD

Malcolm Barry

Material received:

The Tentacles of the Dark Nebula  
Universal Edition 15342, 1975 (£4.50)

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer  
Universal Edition 15508, 1975 (£4.50)

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner  
Virgin V2038 (£3.49)

THERE ARE COMPOSERS that write music and there are composers that write music history; some manage to do both and these are usually considered to be the greatest, but none of these achievements is necessarily more worthwhile than the others. We regard the writing of history as more important because of our own attitudes to life (particularly those stemming from the historicist views of the 19th century) and because of the growth of music education which necessitates periodisation and categorisation. The result is that the musical wood is often missed for the historical trees, or — worse — that the writing of history is confused with the writing of music.

David Bedford is not an Important Historical Figure (even if it is any longer possible to speak in these terms). He is not even 'pushing back the frontiers' very markedly. Rather (*if* an historical perspective is necessary) he is using the vocabulary of the present day in his own characteristic way. 'His own way' happens to be one of extreme simplicity, even naiveté, and in this he may be seen as reacting to historical tendencies, though this would appear to be the only historical part of Bedford's music. This ahistorical position, however, poses certain critical problems. His pieces have a rather elusive existence. There is little conceptual content other than in terms of the music itself and thus there is not very much that can be stated confidently about his style or the significance of his works. When his music is not being performed it has less existence than, for example, the music of Cardew, Stockhausen or Tippett, which often seems to exist independently of its realisation.

So Bedford's music depends upon its audition: it is 'about' its performance, and reflecting this, his works are overwhelmingly concerned with performance techniques, ranging from the space-time notation he used in 1963 to the string sounds of *The Tentacles of the Dark Nebula* (1969).<sup>1</sup> It is therefore quite appropriate that Bedford has sought links with another performance-based music that exists only for the occasion on which it is played. His leanings towards pop go back at least to 1966 and the early days of The Who.<sup>2</sup> The collaborations with Mike Oldfield are a logical development of this inclination. These works are also a natural extension of his interest in sound as such, something that has remained constant throughout 15 years. Every one of his pieces seems to start from an interest in tone-colour, perhaps

deriving from his studies with Nono and at the Studio di Fonologia at Milan. Despite these characteristics it is difficult to speak of development in Bedford's career or to mark out in this or that work a significant new departure — another aspect of Bedford's ahistoricism. Some pieces are inevitably more successful than others. Some, because of their simplicity, run the risk of becoming embarrassing unless it is remembered that to listen to Bedford with ears attuned for Schoenberg is to invite disaster. Bedford's output, more than that of most musicians, demands acceptance of its premises before any sympathetic listening can take place.

The first demand, stemming from his ahistoricism, is for unlearning. Bedford's music, though it may present a complex surface, is essentially simple. The structures are usually sectional, with sections characterised by texture or performance techniques. A piece may even be based on a juxtaposition of simple ideas united by a single procedure, a method which has both charms and dangers. These charms and dangers are demonstrated very well by his recent record *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1975). This contains eight sections and a coda, the sections being broken up by a narrative taken from Coleridge's prose gloss on his poem. The voice is untreated except at one point, the entry of the ghostly ship. The piece opens and closes with Bedford's arrangement of Susato's arrangement of *La Morisque*. From this emerges an ostinato, at first on piano, and subsequently spreading to other instruments at varying speeds. The ostinato becomes ostinati and governs the whole texture of the piece. Bedford also uses another objet trouvé: *The Rio Grande* arranged for children's voices. This dominates the second side of the record, producing an effect not unlike the song at the end of Mike Oldfield's *Ommadawn*. The textures that Bedford arranges, governed by ostinati as they are, change only slowly and — despite Bedford's disavowal — follow the poem in a programme-music manner. The danger then arises: if the piece depends so much on the poem, why have a piece of music at all?

Bedford played most of the instruments himself, arranged many interesting textures and produced the record. In these aspects he allies himself to that part of the popular music industry that defies categorisation and is characterised by Oldfield. The model for *The Ancient Mariner* is clearly the group of albums by Oldfield — *Tubular Bells*, *Hergist Ridge* and *Ommadawn*: single pieces devised, performed and produced by one musician using a lot of expensive studio time but using the potentialities of the studio to the full. It is only as a record that *The Ancient Mariner* achieved its full existence; a score would have a very ambiguous relationship to the perceived work. Like the Oldfield albums the main interest, given the long sections based on a single idea, lies in how these ideas and sections successively merge into one another. The most impressive bits are usually those more extended sections based on ostinati (e.g. those at the ends of the first sides of *Star's End*<sup>3</sup> and *Tubular Bells*), while the weakest seem to derive from a lack of stamina: usually at about the middle of the second side there is a feeling that padding is going on. That it is possible to identify these sections so clearly shows the successive nature of the works and also how closely they are tied to the record format.

In *Star's End* (1974) Bedford presents another sectional piece (eleven sections) but uses a certain amount of cross-reference to much better effect, breaking down the successive impression in favour of a more cohesive approach. It sounds as if a composer is at work in the piece, which unfortunately is not always the case in *The Ancient Mariner*. Both works comprise extended transitions that rarely arrive anywhere, but the evidence of thought is more impressive than the triumph of packaging. Perhaps it is as well, however, that the programme for *Star's End* is not as easily accessible as that of *The Ancient Mariner*. The latter, given the basis of the poem, the example of Oldfield's records, and what can be done in a studio, sounds far too easy.

Sound, performance and simplicity can govern a musical structure successfully as may be heard in *The Tentacles of the Dark Nebula*, a setting of a text by Arthur C. Clark with an accompaniment of a string ensemble. There are three sections of text, each describing a beach at a different point in history, separated by two static interludes for strings. In each section the music opens with a repeated type of sound (bowed glissandi in the first, plucked in the second) which creates a static texture that becomes progressively more mobile until, at the end of each section, individual glissandi return. A simple idea but an effective one (and excellently performed by Peter Pears and the London Sinfonietta). There remains a problem with this piece: the perennial one of the relationship between words and music. Bedford's textures teem with sound which inevitably distracts from the foreground, a fairly conventional setting of the words. These words are so strong and so unambiguously building a narrative that the listener is forced to concentrate upon them with the result that the nebulous background, inevitably accompanimental, can become an annoying intrusion. The successful construction of the piece is, therefore, not matched by its success in communication.

One of Bedford's most notorious pieces, *With 100 Kazoos* (1972), brought him into conflict with Boulez. (The note of the first performance in the score is thus incorrect.) Boulez' ire seems to have been aroused by the instruction to interpret some pictures included in the score, which range from star maps to illustrations suitable for children's books. (This was not the first time that Bedford had departed from any semblance of conventional notation: in *Music for Albion Moonlight* (1965) the instrumentalists are directed to interpret the word 'sklitter'.) The work — again sectional — is unified by the audience participation (with 100 kazoos) and Bedford's selection of textures. There are, as always, many striking ideas, such as the

presentation of the pitch material at the opening. But this presentation does not fulfil its promise — at least not audibly so — and the music becomes concerned with texture and therefore colour. In this instance the concentration on colour is certainly justifiable, for where such variables as free improvisation and an audience with 100 noise-makers are involved it behoves the composer *not* to make his pitch basis too strong in case the imbalance damages the piece. It is the result of each performance that counts (a common feature of Bedford's music) and it seems possible that with this work Bedford found a successful milieu.

Two other recent works attach more importance to pitch without losing any of the interest in colour. *When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer* (1972) is a sort of wind counterpart to *The Tentacles of the Dark Nebula*, a setting of words lasting about a quarter of an hour for a conventionally-treated voice and a similarly scored accompaniment of woodwind and brass. *The Golden Wine is Drunk* (1974) is a setting for 16 solo voices which inevitably invites comparison with the earlier and highly successful *Two Poems* for mixed chorus (1965) but, in that comparison, reasserts many of the aspects of Bedford's music. *The Golden Wine* is not an advance on the earlier work, nor is it a regression; it is merely different. Of all the music I have mentioned, it seems to be the most successful, given the sympathy of the human voice to the sort of textural composition in which Bedford specialises. The static pitches of some of the sections seem to refer back to *Piano Piece 1* (1966) where pitch-class set 6-14 (in Forte's terminology) was put through its paces very effectively. The unified and almost timeless nature of Bedford's 'progression' is thus once more demonstrated.

Just as there are references back to earlier music so there are anticipations in the works of the 1960s. For example, *Piano Piece 2* (1968), with its preparation of the piano and sudden entry of the prepared chord, anticipated the sonority of the Oldfield works and especially the entry of the major chords at the start of *Star's End*. There are confirmations in the later music too, particularly the lyrical gifts of the Patchen settings transferring so successfully to the apparently unpromising material of a short story by Arthur C. Clark. Chronology has little to teach about Bedford either within or without his output and it will be interesting to see whether he can continue to cheat history, to remain simple and demand unlearning for his music.

Such unlearnedness, however, contains its own dangers. Schoenberg once wrote 'mature minds resist the temptation to become intoxicated by colours and prefer to be coldly convinced by the transparency of clear-cut ideas'. The danger for Bedford's music is that for 'simplicity' could be read 'immaturity'. But this in itself shows up the dilemma of music today: for if music tends, at least in part, to be 'about' its own history, where does that leave music that is avowedly ahistorical?

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> This piece was written for Peter Pears who sings it accompanied by the London Sinfonietta conducted by the composer on Decca Head 3.

<sup>2</sup> See David Bedford and Cornelius Cardew, 'A Conversation', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 107, No. 1485 (March 1966), pp. 198-202. For more recent material on Bedford see Meirion Bowen, 'David Bedford', *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 20, No. 6 (February 1972), pp. 42-44 (this article is followed by the score of *An Exciting New Game for Children of All Ages*) and the chapter on the composer by Carolyn Stokoe in *British Music Now*, ed. Lewis Foreman (London: Paul Elek, 1975): this book also contains a Bedford bibliography and discography. (Ed.).

<sup>3</sup> Played by Oldfield, Cutler and the RPO conducted by Vernon Handley on Virgin V2020. All the scores mentioned are published by Universal Edition.

#### Richard Witts

Material received:

The Odyssey  
Virgin V2070 (£3.49)

DURING THE HOPEFUL 1950s the composer was encouraged to function as a Pioneer, the maker of a prototype syntax for future market use. The overall decline of profit through the 1960s rendered this image irrelevant. Composers collaborated with, or took ideas from, the popular music business: Berio meets McCartney, Maxwell Davies arranges The Beatles, Bedford works for Kevin Ayers. They were pushed willingly back to recognise a more accessible and stultified syntax. Inflated tonality has re-emerged as a force in progressive music, now used in an exclusive way (and not integrated as in Pousseur or Berio) by such composers as Cardew, Hobbs and Bedford. (The fact that it's used by composers from right across the political spectrum doesn't signify much more than the general economic and social climate affecting all; it's the service that the sounds are put to and the structure they engender that determines their political cast.)



Just when a new vitality in our music culture, Punk Rock and Reggae, is being hastily promoted by the rock press and the record companies, David Bedford is keeping his youth in virgin shape by recycling the remnants of Canterbury-rock. *The Odyssey* is a concept album based on passages from you-know-what. It belongs in the lineage of Mike Oldfield's *Tubular Bells*, the 'one man in a studio, did it all myself with a little help from my friends' species. The multi-track studio is attractive to composers who are fed up with the routine of score to publisher, to promoter, to inadequately-rehearsed concerts, to an audience of 50. In the studio you are responsible for every stage of manufacture (excepting prooction and distribution) and, if you have a quick brain, your output (and what's more, your control over the quality of output) is greatly increased. The money's rather better too, as is the audience.

In the commercial music weeklies Bedford is presented as one of many creators of progressive concept albums together with Oldfield, Vangelis and Alan Parsons, e.g. *Sounds* linked their review of *The Odyssey* with Gordon Giltrap's naive Blake-inspired album. But given his training and past career, Bedford should have much more to offer; he may be able to open out an area of remarkably successful and influential music-making. Successful? *Tubular Bells* is still in the U.K. Top 50 L.P. chart. Influential? The progressive and intellectual pretensions of these and similar musicians makes a greater impact on the public than any other composers mentioned in this magazine.

What I find most interesting in *The Odyssey* is the attempt to produce structural unity through extended tonality. I'm unsure that this has any aural value nowadays as the general interest in timbral variety has made any subtlety of modulation and harmonic contrast irrelevant. But I've played this album to 'non-musical' friends and young students, and some have talked positively of its harmonic variety ('in the bass' someone said). This may be a sign of new trends — Punk Rock so far avoids timbral hardware — and worth noting. Certainly the contrast of timbre is no greater than in *Tubular Bells*, and metric or temporal variety is actually less, but the span of tonality is much wider and richer. *Tubular Bells* is limited to ramblings around E minor (e.g. the Tune), E major (e.g. the end), A minor (e.g. the opening), F sharp major and D minor. Bedford's *Odyssey* is tied around both vertical and horizontal triadic relations, i.e. in both harmonic and melodic dimensions. Track by track, the overall tonal scheme is this:

- 1 F (modal) minor — D (modal) minor
- 2 C major — E flat minor
- 3 D (modal) minor
- 4 E major
- 5 D (modal) minor
- 6 A major
- 7 C minor — E flat major — E minor — G major
- 8 F minor/major
- 9 D (modal) minor
- 10 A minor — F sharp minor — D major — F major/(modal) minor

The odd-numbered tracks represent 'Penelope's shroud' by a perpetually-winding and never-ending Dorian scale (Stravinsky's 'Orpheus' motif inverted). Actually the effect doesn't work well, as the 'joins' (jumps down an octave) are clearly audible. The emergence of the D minor scale out of a nebulous Dorian (transposed on to F) cluster, and the emphasis on A at the 'shroud's completion' model the structural use of triadic pivots throughout. Similarly, the main tune of track 4 returns emphatically in the finale, first in D major, then in F. (This tune is itself constructed from triadic and scalic formulae, see Ex.1.)

Example 1. 'Phaeacian Games', bars 3-14

Two sections show well the wider tonal range employed by Bedford. 'King Aeolus' (track 2) is a finely-paced movement of great fluidity, with some good keyboard playing. It runs through C major, E flat major, G minor, C major, E flat major, E major, G major to E flat minor. (See Ex.2 for an extract: I've notated the melody and bass lines and implied the inner harmony but omitted the inner semiquaver figuration.) 'The Sirens' (track 6) employs the earthy-angelic girl's choir that features so much in Bedford's work; they're getting to be as much of an institution as Britten's boys. The harmonic scheme — long-held

Example 2. 'King Aeolus', bars 25-51

♩ = c.110

25. 30. 35. 40. 45. 50.

G min F7 E  $\frac{7}{3}$

C# $\frac{6}{4}$  Bb Bb $\frac{7}{9}$  Eb min  $\frac{3}{9}$  Ab Db  $\frac{6}{3}$

— Cb $\frac{7}{9}$  D min  $\frac{7}{9}$

etc

and regular sequences of chords — is reminiscent of Berio's reworking of *O King* in *Sinfonia*. I've listed these chords below in chronological order, with significant anchors underlined.

A — D $\flat$  — B $\flat$  — G $\flat$  —

A — D $\flat$  — B $\flat$  — A $\flat$  — G — B — G $\sharp$  — E —

G — B — G $\sharp$  — F $\sharp$  —

A — D $\flat$  — B $\flat$  — G $\flat$  —

A — D $\flat$  — B $\flat$  — G $\flat$  — B $\flat$  — D — B — G —

B $\flat$  — D — B — A — F min — D $\flat$  min — B $\flat$  min  $\frac{7}{9}$  — A —

F maj — B $\flat$  — A maj/min — E —

(etc.)

But the work has so many weaknesses. Track 4 has a similar tempo and pace to track 2, and is so stiff with its regular eight-bar phrases and its uninteresting tune (Ex.1). Track 7 is monotonous in its regular sectional repetitions, and track 10 — the only really fiery one on the whole album — is a bit too insipid to grab the gut. But all of this is less interesting than the symptom of which it's a part — that sad generation of professionally-trained composers moving to their menopause, and all at sea.

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# JEAN-YVES BOSSEUR

Richard Witts

Material received:

Completely Sweet  
Editions françaises de musique

Lire Schubert  
unpublished

Anna-Livia's Awake  
Radio France

*Personal application either to the composer or to the writer of this article seems the best way of obtaining these scores: see the last paragraph for details. No prices are at present available.*

DURING THE 1930s, the previous great period of inflation, transcription was used as a function of clarification. Whether Webern-Bach or Brecht-Shakespeare, the aim was to analyse aurally the structural components and reform in the light of altered class ideology the absorbed social image of the existing material. As Adorno wrote:

The Bach arrangements by Schoenberg and Webern which convert the most minute motivic relationships of the composition into relations of timbre, realising them thus for the first time, would not have been possible without the twelve-tone technique.<sup>1</sup>

The generation of composers born in that period have used the license of transcription to camouflage, complicate and inflate products of the past. Whether Maxwell Davies-Josquin, Kagel-Brahms, Stockhausen-Beethoven, Bedford-Susato or Stoppard-Wilde, the aim is to project the past on to all dimensions (and so incidentally reinforce it as an eternal source of raw material).

The first two of these pieces by Jean-Yves Bosseur offer a refreshing alternative to the elitist crossword-puzzle games and collage/montage of our leaders. Bosseur is a Parisian, now touching 30 who has a keen interest in the ways that verbal and graphic notations can transcend the barriers of technique (professional v. amateur) and clichéd structure. He collaborates with designers, painters, sculptors on such projects as he finds that they tend to have a more open and stimulating approach to space and line.

*Completely Sweet* (the title comes from a song sung by Eddie Cochrane) was composed in 1971 and is scored for an octet of flute, trumpet, harp, harpsichord, violin, viola, cello and bass. Each performer also plays percussion instruments. This combination isn't fixed, and instruments can be substituted as needs govern: when it was performed in Manchester by the Nor.media Band (March 22, 1976), the harp was replaced by a lute, and the trumpet by renaissance wind instruments (one player). The alternative that *Completely Sweet* offers in the zone of transcription is that of using familiar material to make the process of musical exploration clearer (the opposite pole to Webern on the same dimension) and play through the gamut of social groupings (consciousness-raising for musicians!). This point is firmly made in a review of the Manchester concert.

Bosseur's *Completely Sweet* . . . seemed explicitly to parody the 'social content' of [another piece in the programme] by exploring the music group as a social model. The musicians moved from one extreme of 'mutually deciding' to play a folk tune (music of social mutuality) to that of being 'conducted' in a Webern-like passage (music of controlled individualism).<sup>2</sup>

The work comprises three suites (Italian, French, English — actually British and Irish — totalling 50 different dances), realisations of a Monteverdi ritornello and Jannequin's *La bataille*, and pages of ornaments in various styles. As an example of its organisation, I'll refer to the opening of the work, the first half of the Italian suite.

First, scales and ornaments are 'run through' individually. This 'tuning-up' is then interrupted by dances proposed by individual players. The others may play along, oppose or ignore the proposer's dance. Each dance leads to freely-played blocks of extracts from a Monteverdi ritornello (*Orfeo* Act I). Finally, at an arbitrary point, the harpsichordist stops the proceedings to conduct the ensemble in an eccentrically Webernised version of the completed ritornello.

The notation of each piece consists of a mixture of score (generally monophonic) and a choice of verbal proposals (see Ex.1). As there are so many possibilities, not only for the overall sequence (e.g. simultaneous playing of Pavane and Passamezzo), but also within each movement, the musicians face two difficulties. First there's too much to remember, and cues can lead not to a change of action and pace, but to embarrassing stagnation as fuzzy memories grope about for the next move. Secondly, as each of the

Example 1. 'Trenchmore' from the English suite

The violinist begins to play 'Trenchmore' in a tempo of his/her choice; then he/she can choose to be followed by another player, his/her signal being given by looking at him/her; this player should play simultaneously with the violinist, always at the same tempo chosen each time by the violinist.

The first time you play 'Trenchmore' play the last two measures (a)  
 " second " " " " " " " " " (c)  
 " third " " " " " " " " " (a)  
 etc.

Each instrumentalist may individually adopt (b); afterwards he/she must adopt (a).

The image shows three musical staves. The top staff is a two-measure phrase in G major, 3/8 time, marked with a circled 'a'. The middle staff is a longer phrase in the same key and time, marked with a circled 'b'. The bottom staff is another phrase, marked with a circled 'c', which has a downward-pointing arrow from the circled 'c' to a specific note in the phrase.

If one of the instrumentalists wishes to stop 'Trenchmore', he/she must play one of the two following signs (either successively or simultaneously), repeating them until the harpsichord gives a stop sign:

The image shows two musical staves, each starting with the word 'HALT'. The first staff is in G major, 3/8 time, and shows a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes followed by a half note. The second staff is in G major, 3/8 time, and shows a rhythmic pattern of quarter notes followed by a half note.

If an instrumentalist wishes the violinist to play in a slower tempo, he/she plays:

The image shows a musical staff labeled 'WALK' in G major, 3/8 time. It features a slower tempo pattern with quarter notes and a half note.

If an instrumentalist wishes the violinist to play faster, he/she plays:

The image shows a musical staff labeled 'CHARGE' in G major, 3/8 time. It features a faster tempo pattern with quarter notes and a half note, including triplet markings.

above pieces fills up a page of score, the musicians must either lay out all the pages on a big board like a huge and unwieldy *Constellation-Miroir* or else frantically turn pages (in both directions) to locate the imminent passage. (An alternative is to stick resolutely to the ornaments page until 'Monteverdi' comes.) One solution may be to constantly project slides of the ornaments and Monteverdi pages.

However, when this section works, it's extremely enjoyable, the dances rising and falling through a sea of scales and ornaments. And if you can find dancers who don't expect the same sounds at each play-through, *Completely Sweet* would make a good score to choreograph. The entire work is, incidentally, very funny — you need a prima donna harpsichordist to get the best effect — and sensitively structured for contrast of pace and pitch.

*Lire Schubert* for piano solo or duet (one or two pianos) has Bosseur playing with Franz (I choose my words carefully as this is a family magazine), to be exact, the C minor impromptu from the set of four,

D899, Op. 90. There are twelve pages of score analysing, opening-out and making a surreal mess of the original. Here, the pianist creatively extends what he does anyway with a public performance of Schubert: Bosseur magnifies the processes of transformation and re-formation of a literally dead score that occurs during any interpretation by a living performer. Such an act hopefully causes the pianist to reappraise his attitude to revivals of past work, though I doubt it — what will, apart from the proverbial gun?

Example 2 shows one method of transformation, in this case melodic and harmonic: the register is widened, pitches are reallocated and harmonic weight reinforced. On each page there are generally four systems of material that can be combined by superimposing, surrounding, disseminating into, diverting into, overlaying (camouflaging), extending, interrupting, following, developing out of, or adapting into. The pianist may also 'constantly look to-and-fro from the left hand to right hand pages, and vice versa, gradually more and more hurried (agitated) until you can't see the music properly, and then the opposite, playing the whole time'.

#### Example 2

*Lire Schubert* can sound quite wild if played with full attention in the way that Gérard Frémy played it a while ago in Edinburgh. It can also sound dull and insipid, as it did in a performance by a different pianist in Sheffield. I personally find the piece rather showy — 'look what I can do to Schubert' — and that it works less well in its way of 'opening out' familiar material because there's enough scope in the work to do nothing.

*Anna-Livia's Awake* was written for a group of 'amateur readers' at the 1975 James Joyce Symposium held in Paris. Radio France (ORTF as was) made a recording and entered it for the 1975 Prix Italia where it was a success. (This recording was recently relayed by Radio 3.) Excepting his score for Arrabal's film *Viva la Muerte* (1971), it is Bosseur's best-known piece. It's enjoyable and stimulating for 'non-musicians' to work on — I took part in a performance with journalists from a Manchester newspaper — though there's a part for musicians too; in the recording there are eight of each. Bosseur takes words and phrases from the last section of *Finnegan's Wake* and plays on their syntactical and aural associations. This isn't a case of out-Joycing Joyce (which is Berio's business), but is another part of the attitude to past works outlined above. The taped version lasts 40 minutes and is all a bit too episodic, though the invention and variety is well sustained through the careful handling of groupings of phonemes, textual identity and pace of action.

The score, a text with no music notation, is in French and a kind of English. There are some wonderful Joycean phrases in the awful translation: 'time — thirty for minutes', 'when he deems that the musicians cannot further complexify their percussive attacks', 'the generator usually radiates frequencies at a higher and lower range than that afforded (sic) by instrumental possibilities'. I can work out that "'all" and its variants are taken up again periodically by one or several vocalists; the words around them are inscribed in time with respect to this period' means "'all" is spoken at regular intervals by one or more reciters; the texts surrounding "all" are spoken around this regular pulse'. But I can't work out:

Secure an absolutely autonomous sonorous activity by palliating the physical limitations of the instrument through supplementary activities whilst avoiding all shocks and interruptions; possibly engage in mutual aid, relaying one another under analogous conditions.

The work may be performed with or without the original tape. It's a pity that the score, published by Radio France, which is well printed and presented (though the musicians' and readers' parts could be better differentiated) means so little in translation. But a conversation with Jean-Yves Bosseur, who speaks excellent English, simplifies everything.

Some further information on these pieces: Bosseur has a very 'arty' handwriting and it's sometimes extremely difficult to decipher. Nor.media Band in Manchester have translated copies of *Completely Sweet* which are available (as long as you pay for the postage) from: Top Flat, 6 Kingston Road, East Didsbury, Manchester 20. *Lire Schubert* (not translated) can also be borrowed from the same address, or from Jean-Yves Bosseur, 149 Rue de Rome, 75017 Paris, France. The tape of *Anna-Livia's Awake* is also obtainable from the composer.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophie der neuen Musik* (Tubingen, 1948) as translated and quoted in Walter Kolneder, trans. Humphrey Searle, *Anton Webern* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p.57.

<sup>2</sup> John Shepherd, review of Manchester musical events in *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 24, No. 11 (July 1976), pp. 56-57. At the risk of making this look like a mutual admiration society, but in the interests of completeness, I should say that the only substantial and easily accessible introduction to Bosseur's music in English is the article I wrote about the Groupe d'etude et de recherche musicales, of which Bosseur is a member, in *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 24, No. 8 (April 1976), pp. 9-10 on the occasion of the group's British tour. Since then he has been to this country for performances quite a lot and will be doing so again in 1977. (Ed.)

## GEORGE CRUMB

Richard Steinitz

Material received:

Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death  
Edition Peters No. 66463, 1971 (£9.25)

Night of the Four Moons  
Edition Peters No. 66462, 1971 (£8.50)

Night Music I (with Robert Erickson: Chamber Concerto)  
CRI 218 (£2.97)

Eleven Echoes of Autumn (with Stefan Wolpe: Trio)  
CRI 233 (£2.97)

Black Angels (with Charles Jones: String Quartet No. 6 and Sonatina)  
CRI 283 (£2.97)

PETERS EDITION HAVE now published some dozen and a half pieces by the American composer, George Crumb, covering nearly all his major works since the early Cello Sonata of 1955. Despite their high price and demands of technique and presentation which must make ideal performances rare, one hopes that these attractive scores, coupled with the several excellent recordings available through the American catalogue, will make Crumb's captivating and unusual music better known in Britain.

Crumb, who is 47, is part of a definable trend — as it, surely, now seems possible to recognise — away from the highly dissonant, intellectually complex, severe and overburdened music at the forefront of the post-war period, towards a recapture of innocence, and the sheer beauty and joy of musical sound. Regressive, indulgent or escapist such music may appear, but there is no denying its power to revive and elate jaded senses and dejected spirit. Crumb, possibly more than any other composer, has successfully replaced tonal-thematic structure with a rich and intriguing fabric of timbral change, nuance and subtly fluctuating atmosphere. A sort of aural magician whose routines constantly surprise and delight, Crumb leaves the listener spiritually stimulated and refreshed.

The works above span an important seven years in the composer's development, from 1963 to 1970, the period during which he was much influenced by the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca; and they conveniently enable one to observe what changes, if any, occurred in his style during this time. In fact significant change is minimal. One feels that both aesthetic purpose and technique were securely established in *Night Music I* (1963), and that it is in greater depth, inventiveness and subtlety of allusion that the later music excels. From more ordinary instruments — bells, keyed percussion, piano (played inside and on the keys) — Crumb moves towards more exotic ones — alto flute, banjo, African mbira, prayer stones, kabuki blocks; from relatively conventional means of sound production to stranger ones — extreme string harmonics and curious bowing techniques, breathing words whilst playing the flute, bending notes, amplification and so on. Becoming more asiatic, the music grows richer in melodic inflection. At the same time there is an increasing use of quotation and borrowed styles placed in fresh and thought-provoking juxtaposition.

It was while working on *Night Music I* that Crumb became aware not only of the musical potential of Lorca's poetry, but also of its aptness to his own vision; and the discovery seems to have unleashed from him a flood of music scarcely less vivid in its imaginative response. At least ten of Crumb's works set or refer to Lorca, who is, indeed, an ideal partner offering, as well as frequent descriptions of actual sound, an immensely rich and passionate imagery, hidden meanings, eerie atmosphere and mystery. In this early composition, scored for soprano, piano/celesta and two percussionists, the poems occur in two out of seven movements. All of these, entitled *notturmi*, are in instrumental style derived from an amalgam of Webern, Bartók's night music, Messiaen's gongs and bird-calls and the Cage of the *Sonatas and Interludes*. As in some of Crumb's subsequent works, the latter part seems more attractive than the first, due perhaps to the effect of the intimate, trance-like atmosphere gradually stealing over one. The sixth nocturne, especially, has a wispy, veiled beauty of gently plucked repeated notes and bell resonances accumulating into chords, whilst the elegiac seventh movement makes an eloquent close.

Arresting though much of it is, there is less individuality here, particularly of timbre and sonority, than in the later *Eleven Echoes of Autumn* (1965) for violin, alto flute, clarinet and piano. The eleven short sections of this work, each with its distinct timbral and expressive character, are altogether more imaginative and vibrant, frequently requiring novel performance techniques and revealing many surprises of subtle coloration. Dramatic character is sharper, the total atmosphere and shape more memorable. Although there is no singer, the ever-present spirit of Lorca is underlined through a quotation: 'y los arcos rotos donde sufre el tiempo' ('and the broken arches where time suffers') which is softly intoned by the instrumentalists themselves before each of the three cadenzas forming *Echoes* 5 to 7.

*Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death* (conceived in 1962 but unfinished until 1968) for guitar, double bass, piano/harpsichord (all amplified), baritone and two percussionists, returns to full setting, this time of four dark and intense death poems. Crumb acknowledges this as his work most deeply involved with Lorca, but I feel that in the first two songs he has been over-concerned to leave unobstructed the message of the words. The predominance of Sprechgesang over singing, the frequent sparseness of the accompaniment with its hesitant, fragmentary phrases and long pauses, make them considerably less winning than the majority of his settings and certainly than the last two here, which splendidly match the powerful breadth of the poetry. The third, 'Song of the Rider', builds, from a kaleidoscope of brilliant ostinati, an energetic, almost brutal picture of beating hooves, the vocal phrases giving an eerie imitation of the animal's neighing. The Mahlerian lament of the final song, 'Casida of the Boy Wounded by the Water', with its oscillating minor thirds, piano harmonics, flexatone, water-tuned glasses and dream-like surrealist quality, is unforgettable. A curiosity is the circular notation, also used in the second song where two circles represent the Sun and Moon, one audibly shadowing the other. Similar notational symbolism appears in *Eleven Echoes* and in more recent works.

*Night of the Four Moons* (1969) for contralto, alto flute, banjo, amplified cello and percussion is the last but one of the Lorca-inspired pieces (the last is *Ancient Voices*), *Black Angels* of 1970, 'for electric string quartet', having behind it quite different generative ideas. These three, in fact, constitute probably the most imaginative and impressive of Crumb's music and the best introduction to it. *Night of the Four Moons* was composed during the eight days of the Apollo 11 moon mission and very effectively conveys the thoughts and subconscious associations aroused by man's capture of his ancient and once mysterious Goddess. Evocative magic is high in this piece, the vocal line always beautiful and original (a superb vehicle, incidentally, for Jan DeGaetani, whose incomparable voice and artistry contribute so much to the CBS recording, M-32739). There are fine qualities in the transitory first three songs, but the fourth is a highlight. After a breathlessly excited dialogue between the Child and the Moon, in which the singer must differentiate between the 'shrill, metallic' voice of the one and the 'coquettish, sensual' voice of the other (shades of the *Erlking* and of *Pierrot Lunaire*), four of the performers slowly exit, singing and playing farewell phrases, and leaving on stage the lone cellist sustaining (for some three minutes without a break!) a motionless 'A' harmonic, three octaves above the open string. Slowly the harmonic, symbolising the 'Music of the Spheres', begins to oscillate, while from off-stage the other players, like astronauts returned from space to a distant, tiny Earth, transmit snatches of a gentle, homely 'Berceuse (in stilo Mahleriano)' — the 'Music of Mankind' — which emerges and fades like an elusive radio signal. In the quasi-theatrical performance which Crumb invites the allegorical character of the piece could, I imagine, be greatly enhanced.

*Black Angels* is likewise an allegory conceived, according to the composer 'as a kind of parable of our troubled contemporary world . . . The work portrays a voyage of the soul. The three stages of this voyage are Departure (fall from grace), Absence (spiritual annihilation), and Return (redemption).' Besides some intricate numerological and motivic symbolism there are effective quotations or parody of the *Death and the Maiden Quartet*, *Devil's Trill Sonata*, *Dies Irae* and a Renaissance *Sarabanda*. The 13 movements have such titles as 'Night of the Electric Insects', 'Sounds of Bones and Flutes', 'Lost Bells', 'Devil Music', 'Danse Macabre', 'God Music'. To convey these colourful ideas Crumb requires each instrument to be amplified, using contact microphones, and the performers to adopt bizarre techniques such as playing with thimbles on the left hand, and bowing between left hand and scroll (which produces a strangely dream-like evocation of a viol consort), as well as to play an assortment of percussion instruments. The result is quite astonishing: lurid, uncanny, melancholy and hauntingly beautiful. Although the techniques are not

peculiar to Crumb, their application to so detailed and even romantic a programme must be unique. Incidentally, Christopher Bruce has recently choreographed the score for Ballet Rambert.

The recording of *Black Angels* by the New York String Quartet is excellent, both as to the performance and quality of sound. Indeed in all the listed recordings of his music Crumb is served excellently; my only complaint concerns a periodic hiss which mars the review pressing of *Night Music I*. In fact recordings have for the listener certain advantages over live performance in that sympathetic resonances, harmonics and other delicate sounds can be clearly heard, whilst one's mind is more receptive to the atmosphere of psychological suggestion when neither distracted by fellow listeners nor anxious on behalf of the performers concerning the technical hazards lying in their path. On the other hand, most of Crumb's works have visual-theatrical potential and in the right live performing situation, as Ballet Rambert is demonstrating, can be stunning.

The scores themselves are interesting to possess. In price and presentation they are almost coffee table exhibits, enticing the casual browser with their detailed descriptive instructions, visually riveting notation and excellent reproduction of handwriting by the composer so clear that it rivals that of a professional engraver. On a more serious level, it is valuable to be able to see exactly how the extraordinary sounds in Crumb's music are achieved.

Of the works which back the Crumb recordings only Stefan Wolpe's Trio of 1963 for flute, cello and piano strikes me as having a strength of personality comparable to his. In Robert Erickson's Chamber Concerto (1960) for 17 players a slightly uncertain, but mainly Weberian and atonal, language undergoes changing patterns of rhythmic relationship, a concept intended apparently to reflect 'notions more biological than mechanical, like the motions of the body or the flight of birds', but sounding to the listener, unfortunately, rather cerebral. Charles Jones's String Quartet (1970) represents the antithesis of Crumb's music. Workmanlike and substantial with sonata-based, progressive argument, dynamic thrust and eloquence, overall it wears, nonetheless, a somewhat plain face. His early Sonatina (1942) for violin and piano is also a bit confined, but its expressive, modal lyricism, reminiscent of Ravel and late Debussy, makes it pleasant to listen to, and, I should imagine, to play. Wolpe's Trio, on the other hand, impresses one at once with its commanding individuality, exciting, nervous rhythmic energy and taut, crisp motifs whose disciplined yet inventive course has the brilliance and minute precision of a fine mosaic. His highly personal and purposeful processes are both clear enough to be at once audible and sufficiently intricate to arouse one's fascination. It is the sort of music that makes one wish to hear more.

NOTE:

<sup>1</sup> Richard Steinitz's article 'The Music of George Crumb', *Contact 11* (Summer 1975), pp. 14-22, is obtainable from the business editor at the address on page 2 for £0.54. (The issue itself is now out of print.)

## MAURICIO KAGEL

Glyn Perrin

Material received:

Die Mutation  
Universal Edition 15605, 1976 (£3.00)

Kantrimusik  
Universal Edition 15919, 1975 (£17.50)

Mare Nostrum  
Universal Edition 15951, 1975 (£15.00)

GETTING TO GRIPS with Mauricio Kagel and his work is no easy task. He has turned his multivalent and seemingly inexhaustible imagination to conventional and unconventional ensembles both instrumental and vocal, to tape and disc, to radio and television, to theatre with and without actors and to the making of several films. Many of his works exist in several versions, have satellite pieces or exist only as potential material with more or less defined guidelines for their realisation (e.g. *Pandorasbox* (1960 . . .), *Tremens* (1963-65), *Kommentar und Extempore* (1966-67)). To the enormously increased rate of published output in recent years must be added the ongoing revision and even additional composition of earlier work. Thus the diversity and sheer volume of material conspire to deny any coherent understanding before the fabric of Kagel's composition is even considered.

Furthermore, the dearth of performances, at least on this side of the Channel — due to technical, economic and a host of other factors — means that the experience of many a work is substantially robbed of the context of Kagel's development. And this context is vital: Kagel, perhaps more than any other living



composer, conceives of his entire output as a single work-in-progress; many pieces (often individually in statu nascendi) have a complex conceptual underlay which is impenetrable without the illumination of certain earlier works. The result is inevitable: many a listener clutching at straws will appreciate only a superficial or partial aspect at the expense of all others (such as Kagel's sense of humour — often remarked upon) or will dismiss the work as incomprehensible if not downright silly, and Kagel as a charlatan.

Kagel is not accustomed to venerate sacred cows; the reappraisal of Beethoven implicit in *Ludwig Van* (1969) — in particular the film version — has apparently been a source of some discomfort for certain musically pious audiences. *Die Mutation* (1971) for male chorus and obligato piano takes for almost all its text about 80 titles from Bach's (371) *Four-Part Chorales*. These are distributed between a speaking and a singing chorus for the time it takes the pianist to perform the A minor Prelude, No. 44 of the 48 (about six minutes with both repeats taken). Each title spoken or whispered by the speaking chorus is frequently shadowed by a Sprechgesang of certain of its phonetic components in the singing chorus; eventually the roles are reversed and speaking chorus doubles singing chorus as the phonetic resonance assimilates first vowels and nasals, then liquids and sibilants and finally stops ('t' and 'g') which, drawn out in long spoken glissandi, lend the texture some unstable and not altogether pleasant edges. The second half of the Prelude proceeds by rigorous inversion of the first, and from this point (p.17) the mutation from supplication and naive affirmation (the chorale titles torn away from Bach's music are almost embarrassingly trite) to doubt, cynicism and finally heresy gathers inexorable momentum. A direct quotation from Berg's *Wozzeck* ('Der Herr sprach: lasset die Kleinen zu mir kommen') is answered by a raucous tutti 'Wir kommen' (p.30) and a communal shout of 'Heil!' is prefaced by a vulgar 'Sieg!'. Chorale 55 (Riemenschneider Edition) and *Wozzeck* Act II, Scene I are dovetailed to produce 'Wir arme Christenleut' and finally the synthesis is neatly completed between the last scene of the opera and chorales 239 and 53: 'Dein Vater, dort oben, ist tot!/ Hopp, hopp! Hopp, hopp! Hopp, hopp! Hopp, hopp!/ Das neugeborene Kindlein ist tot!'.

Whereas in his Violin Concerto Berg quoted and assimilated Bach, Kagel here has Bach quote Berg and effectively devours them both. Given the clear vocal elocution which Kagel specifically requests and the necessary working knowledge of *Wozzeck*, *Die Mutation* should make its various musical and theological points: though the latter will these days doubtless not provoke a *Ludwig Van*-type reaction ('after all, it's only religion, isn't it?').

*Kantrimusik* and *Mare Nostrum* are altogether more ambitious projects; written between 1973 and 1975 they run for about 40 minutes and over an hour respectively. Although *Kantrimusik* may be performed in a concert version, both include a substantial theatrical component. *Kantrimusik* requires a small ensemble of clarinet, trumpet, tuba, violin, piano, two guitars and at least three singers, and consists of eight movements with seven interludes ('Intermedia'). These form a programme of entertainment of the type frequently offered by those ensembles of the light music industry who come under the heading 'Folk' (sub-category 'Arrangements'). However, Kagel says that the piece deliberately makes no claims to use authentic sources but, on the contrary, aims to process conventional apocryphal musical art further, in an aesthetic way. One's orientation is therefore rarely decisive: in the second movement, essentially vocal ornamentation, strummed guitar chords and traces of a flat supertonic hint at Spain or Mexico; the third movement, with its slightly bas-relief piano line in thirds and octaves casting pale grey shadows in the other parts, includes a tape of rural sounds which is a composite of peaceful woods on a winter's day and quiet forest in summer. Only occasionally is the situation a little more overt: the fifth movement has a band playing a waltz ad absurdum while, on tape, a tremendous storm builds up. In the tumult of nature the musicians play on unperturbed; all becomes peaceful again, but then the waltz comes to an abrupt end. The short 'Intermedia', generally in a reduced scoring, centre on the singers: each piece is in a different language with opaque texts verging on the absurd.

If on one level, however, this score exudes semantic indefiniteness, the meticulous detail of the composition and the remarkable clarity of musical objects and processes cannot be ignored. Just as in *Die Mutation* Kagel requests clear vocal enunciation, so here he demands a high degree of responsibility from both musicians and stage designer: 'The pseudo-popular character of certain movements, their ambiguous, vague folk-lore should not in any way lead to ambiguous production. The degree of parody and caricature or independent seriousness which is present should be clearly audible from every accurate musical interpretation.' Theatrically, apart from the use of life-size inflatable plastic dolls, the 'leading role' of *Kantrimusik* is played by a piece of stage machinery with flats, curtains, props, screens etc. The visual elements employed are the paraphernalia of folk-lore: a cloud, a gable roof, a redbrick chimney, a mountain with snowy peak and many more. The basic scenic idea is thus 'a slow but continuous metamorphosis of landscapes and typical moods using a limited number of elements which, perpetually juxtaposed in different constellations, enable the synthetic production of "Nature"'. Kagel notes further: 'It is primarily a matter of the illusion of the manipulation of illusion. Whether the resultant landscapes appear artificial or discovered is irrelevant if the scenic method is free of illusion. It would be more important to put together dubious comforts in a poetic form in such a way that their reproduction becomes credible again. In this way space is created for the fantasy of the viewer.' Given that these delicate requirements are fulfilled, a staged performance of *Kantrimusik* promises to be memorable indeed.

*Mare Nostrum*, subtitled 'discovery, pacification and conversion of the Mediterranean by an Amazonian tribe', is in certain respects a considerably more complex work than *Kantrimusik*. The theatrical component is here obligatory and the technical possibilities for its realisation are more precisely mapped out. The basic personnel of counter-tenor, baritone, flute doubling piccolo and alto flute, oboe doubling cor anglais, guitar doubling mandoline and lute, harp and cello is augmented by an extensive catalogue of percussion (including much from South America) deployed by both vocalists and one percussionist.

Reminiscent in size of the resources of *Match* (1964) and *Tremens*, the meticulous differentiation of timbre implied in this arsenal has consequences for the composition as a whole. Substantial sections of *Kantrimusik* reveal a development of a technique most clearly exemplified in *1898* (commissioned in 1973 for the 75th anniversary of Deutsche Grammophon and available on DG 2543 007); two or three systems of 'instrumental reduction' or 'short score' are used by all performers who realise this ongoing skeleton, with or without multiple-octave transpositions, according to individual points of entry and cut-off. The deployment of timbre becomes primarily a structural concern (somewhat akin to Webern's orchestration of Bach's *Ricercare a 6*). In *1898* it is largely abstract — for any 11-17 players; in *Kantrimusik* further defined by the more or less specific instrumentation of the 'folk' ensemble. In *Mare Nostrum* the technique still exists in the form of a continuous monody which Kagel however has himself orchestrated and which is often deeply embedded in a complex of other, diverse elements. The technique and its function have thus become progressively more subterranean and in *Mare Nostrum* we find a correspondingly more local attention to instrumental and vocal timbre and its distortions.

*Mare Nostrum* is an essentially narrative conception. The mise-en-scène comprises the eight performers sitting, surrounded by the audience, around a single element of decor which represents the Mediterranean — which may be realised in any way, from a 4 x 6m. plastic sheet with puddles of water to an actual small pond. The baritone, sitting opposite the counter-tenor, assumes the role of a narrator who participated in the discovery of the Mediterranean, but who at the same time is a descendant of a long-extinct Amazonian tribe. Much of his narration is written in an invented language, a composite of the various ways in which German is spoken by immigrant workers from certain Mediterranean countries. Kagel notes that 'German as a foreign language should here be understood as a symbol of an effort to express oneself credibly, not as mere irony', and to this end he requests that the performer should not invent some quaint accent to accompany the already composed grammatical and other errors, but should speak the text with suitably clear 'stage' delivery in accent-free High German (I foresee translation problems for this score).

The counter-tenor on the other hand represents a typical native of the respective countries discovered in the course of the exploration — although both participants often exchange their functions in the course of the piece, an understandable procedure in view of the inversion of history which is the premise of the work. All in all this is a very characteristic conceptual montage (might one hear in this situation echoes of Kagel's emigration from Buenos Aires to Cologne in 1957?). Beginning with the sighting of land and the discovery of Portugal, the voyage proceeds clockwise, so to speak, to Egypt and the final belly-dance of death where, standing in the 'ocean', the baritone tenderly embraces the counter-tenor, stabs him in the back (lots of stage blood!) and utters a primal scream of victory.

Lack of space precludes a blow-by-blow account of the events of this score: suffice it to say that Kagel's narrative, theatrical and musical imagination is apparently inexhaustible. In all these aspects Kagel tends to work in certain ways: either taking a 'correct' premise and applying 'false' procedures to arrive at absurd results, or taking an unsound premise and applying seemingly logical procedures to obtain equally absurd results. Apart from these compositional methods, however, there exists the dramatic situation of a newcomer from South America attempting to comprehend the conglomerate culture of the Mediterranean. Such an explorer must inevitably impose his own frames of reference upon his experience (just as Europeans did when discovering South American culture). Seen through a different filter, the various national heritages begin to stand in very strange perspectives. The situation, although 'authentic' enough, is already Kagelian, and is the direct motivation for Kagel's compositional technique. Conversely, it is Kagel's technique which structures and makes concrete continuity out of what is only potentially dramatic. In this unstable interplay between compositional method and given situation, *Mare Nostrum* treads its unpredictable path.

Tradition and convention are central concerns of Kagel's work. These encompass a singular awareness of his own previous output, attempts to reappraise composers of the past (*Ludwig Van, Variations without a Fugue on Brahms' Variations on a theme of Handel* (1971-72)) and the re-examination of the conventions of music-making (*Sur Scène* (1959-60), *Match*). The more recent works are no exception, but Kagel's material means have altered significantly. The use of a regular rhythmic pulse, albeit in asymmetric modules and latent in the output of the late 60s, has become further refined; consonance (most notably octaves) but with the corrective of 'false relations' is strongly in evidence both melodically (diatonic, chromatic and modal patterns) and harmonically (triads). One might hear faint echoes of Satie or middle-period Stravinsky in this ultimately static, detached music. But there is, as always in Kagel, a strong 'negative' element whereby patterns are set up only to be nudged out of line, expectations never completely fulfilled. One could call the work neither affirmative nor restorative (affirmation being a hallmark of restoration) and should shy away from attaching any 'neo'-labels, however tempting after a first hearing.

This new type of material seems to me to have at least two functions. First, the increased clarity of the musical image means that Kagel's techniques of montage, heterophony (the bundling together of diverse material processes), transition both as linear transformation and internal convergence between heterophonic layers, and modulation both as the alteration in perception effected by the interaction of one layer with another are, *aurally*, much more readily available. Even in *Tremens*, Kagel's music seems to stand in the shadow of integral serialism, so much so that the vital substructure is virtually irretrievable from the flood of surface information. In relation to the sound of certain earlier works (which was in retrospect often remarkably unremarkable) Kagel would now appear to have made considerable concessions to what might be called aural polish; but this seems to go hand in hand with the realisation that a clear image need not necessarily negate Kagel's demands for deep and active participation from the listener. It is precisely because the bones of his recent music are so much more apparent that Kagel's often ambiguous conceptual challenges should tend to override any possible superficial consumer anaesthesia.

Secondly, his current musical materials would seem to have developed primarily from an examination of more conventional music, particularly the use of musical 'objets trouvés', and by the same token are eminently more suitable means for the criticism of existing conventions than were his earlier methods. *Anagrama* is serialism deliberately taken to absurd extremes and as such is an implicit critique of the techniques of the time, but who was in a position to hear that in 1960? Though not setting up a 'language' (that, in Kagel, would be the ultimate irony), the musical means he has been working with of late would seem to have considerably more potential than before.

Finally, one reservation. Since music is a social activity, Kagel's ongoing critique of music and musicians has, logically, taken him further afield. *Mare Nostrum* includes a rather heavy-handed statement on water pollution, centred in this instance on Marseilles (members of the ensemble dump various substances and items of refuse into the 'Mediterranean' in the course of the piece). The resulting protest appears at best embarrassing and at worst cynically easy. Kagel, in common with many another contemporary artist, might do well to reconsider the use of crude polemic in the service of watery social criticism.

NOTE:

<sup>1</sup> *Music and Musicians* has contained some of the most informed (as well as pretty well the only!) writing about Kagel in this country. Richard Toop's 'Social Critic in Music', *M&M*, Vol. 22, No. 9 (May 1974), pp. 36-38, is introductory in nature. In *M&M*, Vol. 22, No. 12 (August 1974), pp. 41-44, Adrian Jack reviews the London concert in May that Toop's article was intended to introduce: and does it with the aid of the composer in the form of an interview. Nouritza Matossian's 'The New Music Theatre', *M&M*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (September 1976), pp. 22-24, brings things a little more up to date with discussion of *Bestiarium* and *Two-man Orchestra* which have not yet been seen in this country but which Miss Matossian has seen in Germany. For readers of German, Dieter Schnebel's book *Mauricio Kagel: Musik Theater Film* (Cologne: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1970) is still very useful. (Ed.)

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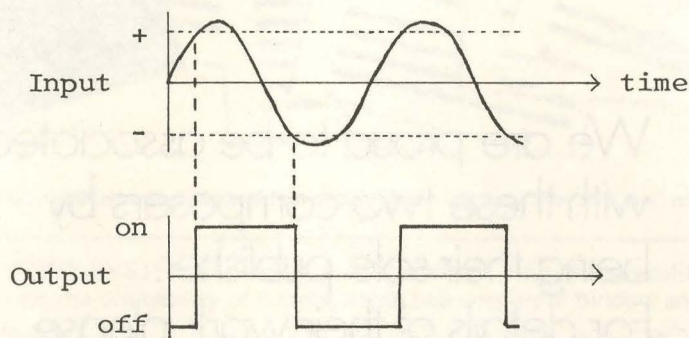
UE

# New Instruments through Frequency Division

SINCE 1945 MORE AND MORE interest has been paid to timbral transformation as a vital process of composition. Orchestration, as a transformation technique, is concerned with which instruments should share which pitches, and often which pitches should be doubled in the octave relationship. Timbral transformation, octave division and multiple octave division can also be accomplished electronically from a single source, rather than orchestrationally from multiple sources. (In these days, this is frequently an economic as well as an aesthetic consideration!)

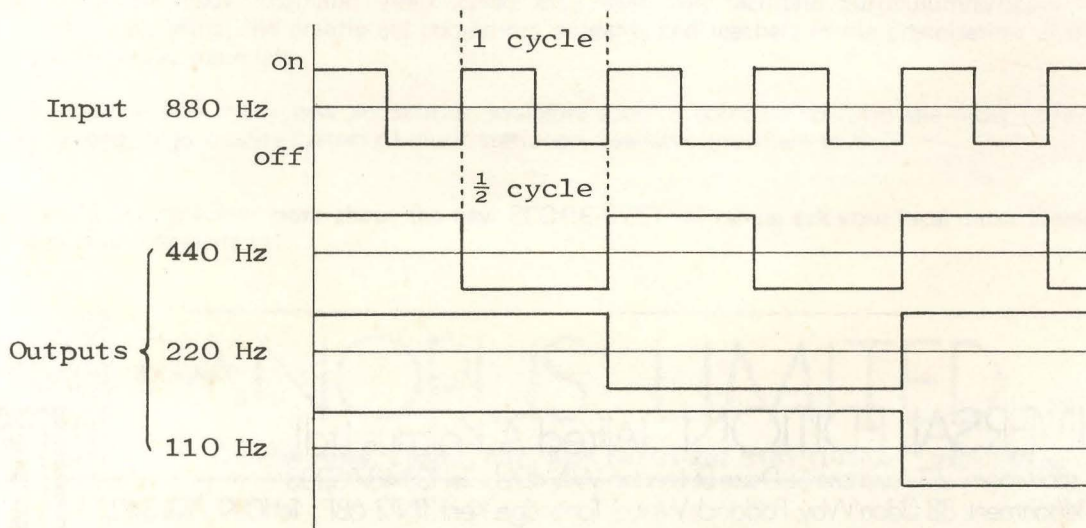
The octave relationship is logarithmic: in other words, if the note a" (880 Hz or cycles per second) is to be lowered by one octave, its frequency must be divided by two; if it is to be lowered by two octaves, its frequency is divided by four; by three octaves, divided by eight, and so on. So what is needed is a device that, when fed a certain frequency, will output exactly a half, quarter or eighth of that number. This is what happens in an electronic device called an 'octave divider'. A signal to be transformed is dealt with in two stages. First it is passed through a digital device<sup>1</sup> called a Schmitt trigger, the output state of which changes from on to off, or vice versa, whenever the input voltage crosses certain preset positive and negative thresholds; the incoming signal is thus transformed into a square wave (Fig.1).

Figure 1



output of the Schmitt trigger is fed into the divider, also a digital circuit, the output state of which changes when a positive voltage is received at the input. Since a whole cycle of the input generates a half-cycle of the output, the output frequency will equal the input frequency divided by two, or one octave down. To divide by another octave, the divided signal is itself divided, and so forth (Fig.2).

Figure 2



By means of these two very simple devices, commonly found on the same IC (integrated circuit or chip), one can transpose an instrument down any number of octaves, and transform its timbre to that of a square wave. It should be pointed out that a drawback of this system is that the input must be fairly pure, i.e. the fundamental must be the strongest component of the signal. The guitar, for example, has a very strong second harmonic, and often the divider cannot decide between whether to follow the fundamental or this the second harmonic. This results in 'hiccups' between the octaves. Manufacturers of commercially marketed dividers suggest that when using a guitar, it is best to stick to the upper three strings, which are less rich in harmonics. The unit works very well with practically every other instrument, especially the winds.

The spectrum of a square wave consists of the odd-number harmonics in the amplitude ratios of the reciprocal of the harmonic number. (For harmonic number 'n' of a fundamental 'F', frequency = n(F), amplitude = 1/n(amplitude of F); e.g. the 7th harmonic of the fundamental 110 Hz has a frequency of 770 Hz and 1/7 the amplitude of the fundamental.) Because of its harmonic construction, the sound of a square wave is quite harsh — much like a clarinet in the chalumeau register. Any of the characteristic harmonics can be amplified or attenuated by filtering and the timbre modified. In this way a rich sound source may be produced that is related in pitch to the original input.

Once two or more octaves have been generated, they can be added to one another in various amplitude relationships to create a multitude of wave-forms. Let's say, for example, that an input of 1660 Hz has been divided four times: there will be four outputs — 880 Hz, 440 Hz, 220 Hz and 110 Hz. If these are added together in equal proportions, the harmonics will relate to the fundamental, or lowest tone, 110 Hz (hereafter  $F_1$ ). The spectrum of  $F_1$  is shown in Fig.3, which displays the decay in the amplitudes of the harmonics.

Figure 3

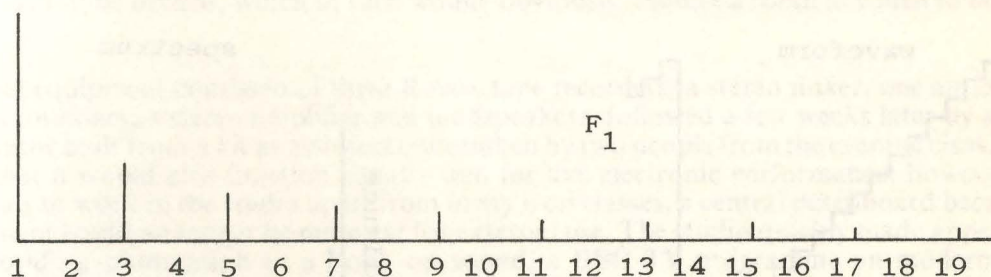


Fig.4 shows the result of adding to this the octave above ( $F_2$ ).

Figure 4

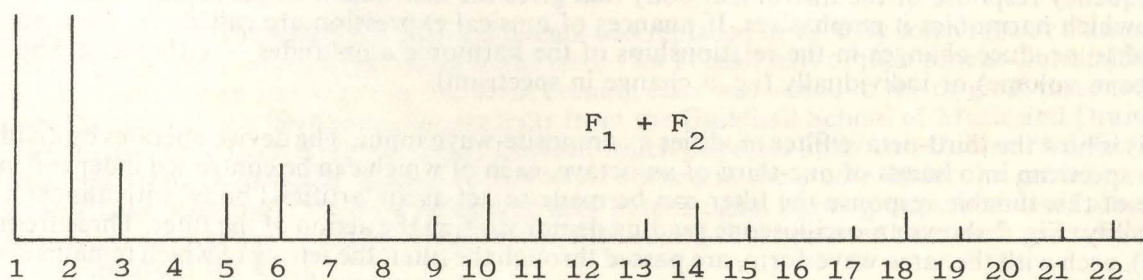
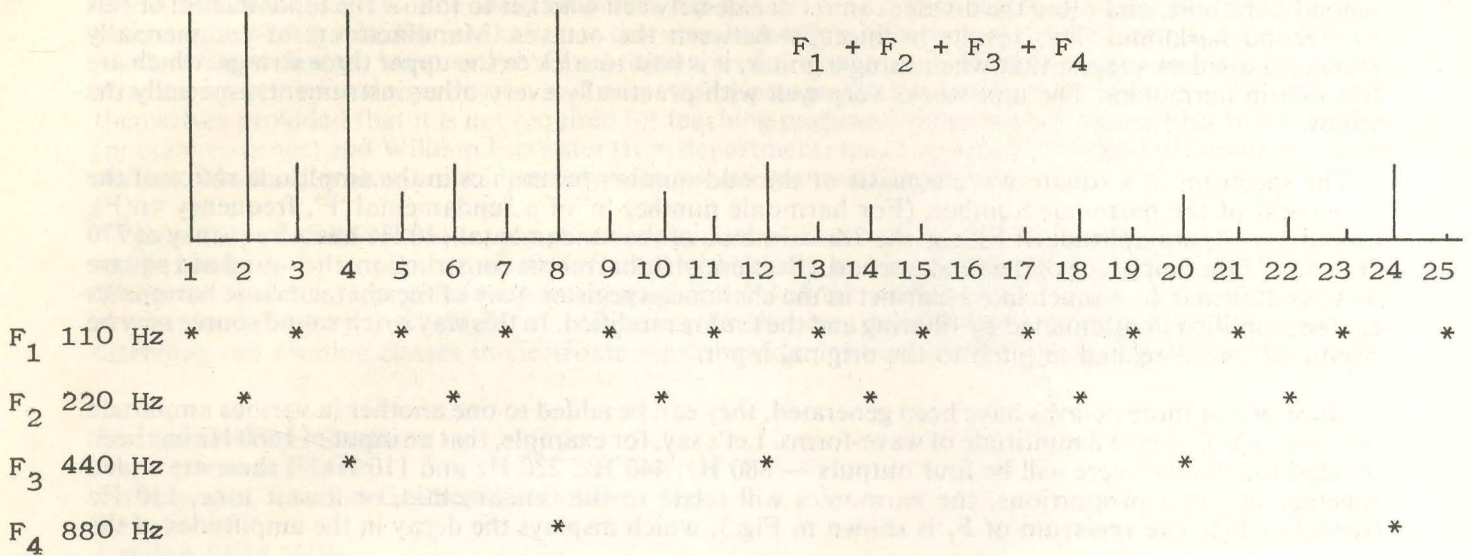


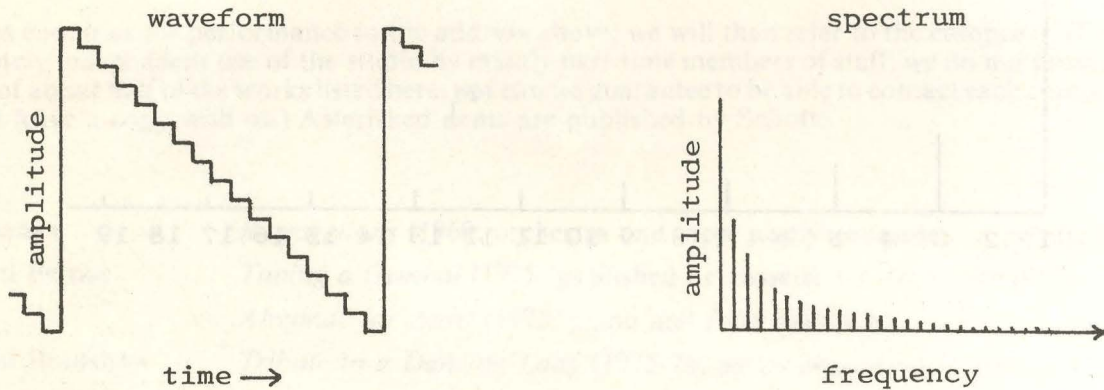
Fig.5 gives the spectrum that is produced when all four octaves are added equally.

Figure 5



This is quite an unusual distribution, and as one can imagine, a very 'live' sound with such high amplitudes at the 8th, 12th, 20th and 24th harmonics. If the four octaves are added with amplitudes descending in the proportions  $F_1 + \frac{1}{2}(F_2) + \frac{1}{4}(F_3) + \frac{1}{8}(F_4)$  the result is a staircase wave, equivalent to a ramp wave with every 16th harmonic missing,<sup>2</sup> and in which there is an even decay of both even and odd harmonics (Fig.6).

Figure 6

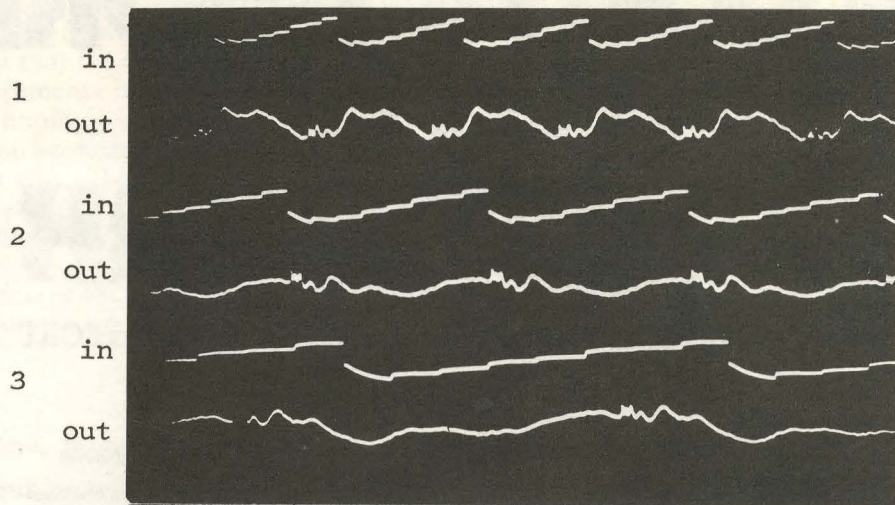


After these further harmonics have been generated through addition, the composite wave can be filtered to synthesise many more wave-forms, which will respond 'acoustically' when passed through a third-octave filter, the use of which is described below.

One of the shortcomings of synthetic tones, as many electronic musicians are now finding, is that they are too efficient. In other words, the wave-form stays exactly the same throughout the entire range, something that does not happen in an acoustic instrument. Since our ears are accustomed to change, a monotonous wave immediately sounds 'electronic' and boring. Consider how an acoustic instrument works: the input — be it a string, a vibrating reed or a pair of lips — is usually the same; it is the resonance or frequency response of the instrument body that gives the instrument its particular sound, depending upon which harmonics it emphasises. If nuances of musical expression are called for, the input is then altered to produce changes in the relationships of the harmonic amplitudes — either as a whole (i.e. a change in volume) or individually (i.e. a change in spectrum).

This is how the third-octave filter modifies a composite-wave input. The device operates by dividing the audio spectrum into bands of one-third of an octave, each of which can be controlled independently. By virtue of this tunable response the filter can be made to act as an 'artificial body' with almost limitless variability. Fig. 7 shows an oscilloscope reading demonstrating the action of the filter. Three frequencies (1,2,3), each with the same wave-form, are passed through the filter, the setting of which remains constant. The differences in response between the three outputs can be seen easily.

Figure 7



So the end result is a very versatile instrument in which the spectrum of the input is variable according to the mixture of octaves, and the response of the output is tunable within a third of an octave.

So far we have just been dealing with octave division. With the addition of one more circuit in the process, octave multiplication is also possible, giving any input an infinite range, up or down, limited only by the human ear. But why stop at *octave* division and multiplication? Octave-related division is necessary for subtle timbral transformation, but for intervallic transformation, whole-number division and multiplication of fundamentals can also be used, i.e. the frequency of an input can be shifted by 1,2,3. . . and not just 2,4,8. . . . So, if one wanted to shift the transformed wave a major third above the input, since the ratio of a major third is 5:4, one would multiply the input by 5 and divide by 4. (This sort of logic is basic to the manufacture of electronic organs that do not use separate oscillators for every note.)

With a handful of inexpensive electronic components, an instrument can in this way be transformed extensively in both timbre and pitch. In addition, the steady-state tone that such a process produces can be modified by enveloping it (i.e. providing it with attack, sustain and decay characteristics). The envelope might either be the same as that of the input or else an entirely different one that would further disguise the identity of the instrumental source.

The real challenge arises when it comes to mixing the newly synthesised tone with the input, or the rest of an ensemble. It must be remembered that this is a new instrument, which one must learn to play, and that like any musical instrument its strengths and weaknesses must be digested in order to facilitate musical expression. With so large a dynamic, timbral and pitch range, a great deal of subtlety is needed to achieve the correct musical balance. (One can imagine the psychological problems of playing a piccolo and the sound of a tuba emerging, or vice versa!) Division has been used successfully throughout the past decade in many different kinds of music: Herbert Lawes plays divided flute on many solo jazz albums, Captain Beefheart featured the 'Air Bass' (divided trombone) in his last British concert tour, and Paul Chihara, the young Oriental-American composer, uses divided flute as the solo instrument in one of the movements of his *Forest Music* suite, commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1970.

The possibilities are endless and exciting. I hope that composers will take advantage of this new sound world, and that players will discover this powerful extension of their own instruments in order to become more diversified musicians, and help create a more versatile music of the future.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> A digital device is one that can be in only one of a fixed number of possible states. In the case of the Schmitt trigger there are two — on or off. An analogue device, however, can vary continuously.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that with octave square wave addition, the harmonic that will be missing from the spectrum is determined by the formula  $2^n$  where 'n' is the number of octaves added. In Fig. 4 there are two octaves,  $2^2 = 4$ , therefore every 4th harmonic is missing, which is evident in the figure. For Fig. 5,  $2^4 = 16$ , and so on.





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1977

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" 18 Royal Northern College, Manchester  
" 19 Leeds University  
" 20 University College of N.Wales, Bangor  
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" 22 Malvern Festival Theatre

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With Norma Winstone, Ken Wheeler, Chris Lawrence and Tony Levin

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" 23 Nottingham Playhouse  
" 24 Jesters, Braunstone Hotel, Leicester  
" 25 Sunderland Arts Centre  
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Harrison Birtwistle *New work*  
Weill *Dreigroschenmusik*

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" 24 Arts Centre, Christ's Hospital, Horsham  
" 26 Banqueting Room, Royal Pavilion, Brighton  
" 27 Birmingham Town Hall  
" 28 Huddersfield Town Hall  
" 29 Leeds Town Hall  
" 31 Blackfriars Hall, Norwich  
February 1 Southampton University  
" 2 Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol  
" 3 Lancaster University  
" 4 Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool

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"Drumming"

February 1 Huddersfield Polytechnic  
" 2 York University  
" 3 University of Keele  
" 4 Gosta Green, Birmingham

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Michael Tippett *Quartet No. 1*  
Hugh Wood *Quartet No. 2*  
Schonberg *Quartet No. 2*

February 15 Huddersfield Polytechnic  
" 16 Wintringham School, Grimsby  
" 17 Tempest Anderson Hall, Museum Gardens, York  
" 20 Nottingham Playhouse  
" 21 Gosta Green, Birmingham  
" 22 Liverpool University  
" 23 Liverpool University

" 24 Aberystwyth Arts Centre  
" 25 Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol  
" 26 Middleton Hall, University of Hull  
" 27 Leeds College of Music  
" 28 Art Gallery, Library Street, Blackburn

**Bob Downes Open Music**

*South American Suite*

February 27 Bath Academy of Art, Corsham  
" 28 Jesters, Braunstone Hotel, Leicester  
March 2 Birmingham Arts Lab  
" 3 Sunderland Arts Centre  
" 4 Southport Arts Centre  
" 5 Hurlfield Adult Education Centre, Sheffield  
" 6 Humberside Theatre, Hull

**BBC Singers & Philip Jones Brass Ensemble** (John Poole – conductor)

Gibbons *O Clap your Hands*  
Byrd *Fantasia a 6*  
Gibbons *Lift up your Heads*  
Gibbons *O Lord in Thy Wrath*  
Purcell *Funeral Music for Queen Mary*  
Dallapiccola *Two Motets (1972)*  
Gabrieli *Canzona in Four Parts*  
Gabrieli *Timor et Tremor*  
Gabrieli *Canzona in Five Parts*  
Gabrieli *O Domine Jesu Christe*  
Anthony Payne *Phoenix Mass*

March 10 Metropolitan Cathedral, Liverpool  
" 12 Coventry Cathedral

Byrd *Laudibus in Sanctis*  
Byrd *Miserere Mei Deus*  
Byrd *Fantasia a 6*  
Taverner *Magnificat II*  
Purcell *Funeral Music for Queen Mary*  
Dallapiccola *Two Motets (1972)*  
Gabrieli *Canzona in Four Parts*  
Gabrieli *Beata es Virgo Maria*  
Gabrieli *Canzona in Five Parts*  
Gabrieli *O Jesu mi Dulcissime*  
Anthony Payne *Phoenix Mass*

March 11 Carlisle Cathedral  
" 13 Derby Cathedral

**Hans Werner Henze "El Cimarron"**

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Gary Kettel (percussion), Michael Rippon (bass)

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" 18 Huddersfield Polytechnic  
" 19 Fermoy Centre, King's Lynn  
" 24 Tees-side Polytechnic  
" 25 Christ's College, Liverpool  
" 26 Bridgwater Arts Centre

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## Music and Society - 2

### The Impact of Industrial Society on English Folk Song — some observations

THE SUBJECT OF THIS ARTICLE is a vast one, in many respects barely worked on, and riddled with pitfalls. But I feel justified in writing, however tentatively, because of doubts I hold about what appears to be the accepted wisdom among historians of music and commentators on the modern cultural scene concerning the nature of pre-industrial society. More narrowly, I should like to suggest the need for a slightly different perspective upon the nature of folk music and traditional culture from the one usually given.

Despite the scholarship of the early folk song collectors, despite the recent revival of interest in traditional music, and despite the confident pronouncements of musicologists and social historians, we really know very little about traditional music in its social context, or its relationship to other forms of music. The assumption that 'the folk' and its culture was a pure entity in our rural past, hermetically sealed from the influences of the upper classes, the church and the printing press, seems to me essentially false; the notion that this culture, even if it existed, was swept away in some absolute fashion by industrial England seems to me a total misconception. The transition will not be understood until it is studied by scholars who know enough to demystify the pre-industrial 'folk' and who have a sympathy for, and who preferably have some involvement in, the musical activities of the urban working class. It seems likely that these scholars will discover that in many ways the discontinuity in the popular musical culture of the English people came not in the last half of the nineteenth century, but rather in the years that followed the Second World War.

Generally speaking, until certain elements of pop music were captured by middle-class adolescents in the late 1960s, academic or literary observers had little sympathy for popular music. It was seen, especially in that it represented another step in the Americanisation of British culture which had been drawing adverse criticism since the arrival of ragtime, as part of the general debasement of the masses, one element in the general slide into a materialistic consumer society. Condemnation of this deleterious influence has come from both the mainstream of criticism and the revolutionary proponents of the 'New Music'. Hence Wilfrid Mellers, in stressing the abnormality of a commercial music imposed on the masses, has referred to

a synthetic or stock-response music manufactured because the majority of people's lives have grown, under the influence of the machine, non-creative and emotionally bogus . . . the machine technique of music manufacture is so insidious and through mechanical means of reproduction so widely disseminated that it acutely accelerates the pace of the debasement of taste.<sup>1</sup>

Essentially similar sentiments were put forward by a composer attempting to 'channel socialist beliefs into practical activity' when he wrote

Because of their situation in this industrial society, the working class has been largely deprived of even the possibility of creating more living cultural values. Young people's music apart, itself also in a state of revolt, what we normally call popular modern music is only a terrible sub-product of middle-class music, its function being essentially anaesthetic.<sup>2</sup>

The position of these two writers seems basically similar: if only the masses would learn what was good for them and give up Radio One, Cilla Black, sliced bread, Coronation Street and bingo! What makes the cultural plight of the masses all the more sad to the educated observer is that he has a more desirable state of affairs to look back on. Today, he would argue, the people, under the influence of the industrial society in which they live, seem happy to have synthetic rubbish imposed upon them; but it was not always so — once upon a time, things were very different.

In our pre-industrial past, we are told, the situation was much healthier. The elements contributing to a sounder cultural life were, according to standard interpretations, roughly as follows. Firstly, work and leisure were closely integrated, or — more accurately — were not perceived as being different and antipathetic activities. Once, we are told: 'Everyday life, in so far as explicitly freed from work, was organised in terms of religious and civic festivals. It derived meaningfulness from permanent (sacred, as Weber says) and ritualistic elements in human life.'<sup>3</sup> Secondly, work was more rewarding. The worker in

the past was not merely a machine operator in a factory, but a *craftsman*, and it is this emphasis on craftsmanship that is crucial to the distinctions so often drawn between the attitudes of labour in the pre- and post-industrial periods.<sup>4</sup> Thirdly, there is the assumption that there was less social stratification in the past, and hence that the differences between high and low culture, between the taste of the masses and that of the educated, was almost non-existent. Thus we are told that in the Elizabethan period 'At no time do we find such subtlety and maturity functioning as naturally as the human organism. The general level of taste, among artists and "folk", has never been so universally creative.'<sup>5</sup>

I have neither the room nor, perhaps, the conceptual framework, to enter here into a full criticism of this view of our cultural past, especially as some elements of it retain a lingering accuracy. Suffice to say that many of the statements made so confidently about medieval or pre-industrial society by historians of music and writers on modern England would send scholars working on the social history of these periods reeling across their boxes of filing cards, halfway between tears of despair and hysterical laughter. The description of Elizabethan England as an organic whole, although a concept dear to contemporary government propagandists (hardly the most disinterested of observers) is frankly unconvincing, and many of the assertions about leisure in this period, or of the universal prevalence of 'craftsmanship' are, to say the least, not proven. One of the more distressing features of the historian's life is the tendency for people who know very little about history to talk and write as though they knew a great deal.

Whatever doubts we might entertain about the accuracy of this model of the past in real terms, it remains the starting point for many discussions of folk song. It is significant that interest in folk music in England first developed within a few decades of the country's becoming recognisably industrial and urban, and it is arguable that this early interest was one facet of that great preoccupation of the Victorian age — the worry provoked by the new phenomenon of the urban Englishman. Already the agrarian past was being idealised. Sir Hubert Parry, in his inaugural address to the Folk Song Society in 1899, had the dichotomy between the rural and urban situations firmly in mind. Folk songs, to Parry, were 'characteristic of the race, of the quiet reticence of our country folk, courageous and content, ready to meet what chance shall bring with a cheery heart'. This peasant wholesomeness was contrasted with the conditions in

the outer circumference of our terribly overgrown towns, where the jerry-builder holds sway; where one sees all around the tawdriness of sham jewellery and shoddy clothes, pawnshops and flaming gin palaces; where stale fish and miserable piles of Covent Garden refuse which pass for vegetables are offered for food.<sup>6</sup>

Cecil Sharp similarly stressed that folk song was the product of 'the spontaneous and intuitive exercise of untrained faculties', untouched by art or popular music, and was therefore to be found in 'those country districts, which, by reason of their remoteness, have escaped the infection of modern ideas'.<sup>7</sup> The supposed uncorrupted non-synthetic nature of folk song has led to some very broad claims being made on its behalf by scholars. On hearing a traditional song, we are told

The impression still tends to the merging of the personality in something outside itself. For all the local detail of the songs, the effect is not that of any expression of a personality, but of a creative act which is independent of any particular person, made manifest through the human voice.<sup>8</sup>

There is some truth in such sentiments, although contact with traditional performers can elicit a less exalted view of folk culture. One is reminded of the Somerset singer, Sidney Richards, who when asked the significance of a particular wassail custom by a song collector, shifted uncomfortably and replied hesitantly 'Well, I reckon it were just an excuse for a good booze-up'.<sup>9</sup>

Before examining the implications of the impact of industrial society upon the uncorrupted world of folk song it is perhaps necessary to attempt to define it. The classic definition of folk song was laid down by the 1954 International Folk Music Council and consisted of the following basic elements. Folk music is the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission. The tradition is shaped firstly by continuity, linking the present with the past, secondly by variations which springs from the creative individual or the group, and thirdly selection by the community, which determines the form in which the music survives. The term can also be extended to include composed music which has subsequently been absorbed into a living tradition, and re-fashioned into such a form as to give it a folk character. In addition, importance has been placed upon the social context in which folk art was performed. Folk culture is seen as dealing directly with the concrete world familiar to the audience, and involved a direct relationship between the performer and the audience, with a large element of participation on the part of the latter, who would be largely familiar with the material of the former.

This definition is, perhaps, the best we have at present (although it is worth pointing out that the best-informed recent commentator on English folk song has remarked that 'after three-quarters of a century of tune-collecting and nearly two hundred years of text-study, we are still without a definition of folk song that really fits our local conditions').<sup>10</sup> If it is accepted, it is easy to see, on a superficial level, why folk song should die when isolated rural communities with an oral culture were submerged by the literate urban masses. Unfortunately, the story is nowhere near as simple as it is so often portrayed, and the easy assumption that an oral, participatory folk culture was replaced in a short space of time by a mass culture

in which music was consumed ready-made is a false one. The idea of the 'death of folk song' wilts under closer examination, as indeed does the idea of urban masses devoid of any desire to make their own music.

A fundamental problem is the difficulty of accepting Sharp's definition of folk song as essentially the property of the unlettered, isolated rural community. At an informed guess, such communities had been so rare in England as to be insignificant for a good three centuries before Sharp wrote. We know little as yet about literacy (let alone musical literacy) in pre-industrial England. We do know that broadside ballads enjoyed a large sale from the late sixteenth century onwards. We also know that John Playford's compendium of country dance tunes, *The Dancing Master*, first published in 1650, had gone through seventeen editions (under minor variations of title) by 1728. It seems likely, therefore, that the relationship between the music of town and country in the two centuries before industrialisation was one of interaction rather than antipathy — broadside publishers collected and printed country tunes, country singers bought and learnt broadsides. One also suspects that the most active carriers of English folk song in its heyday were not the elderly and illiterate labourers whom Sharp studied, but rather the most educated, lively-minded, and outward-looking members of the community,<sup>11</sup> capable of absorbing a wide range of musical influences other than those of the broadside ballad and the tune book. Church music must have been a major influence, and many country musicians and singers must have received an elementary musical training in church. Thomas Hardy, in his anecdote 'Absent mindedness in a Parish Choir', set in the mid-nineteenth century, describes a village band consisting of fiddle, bass viol, tenor fiddle, serpent, clarinet and oboe, who

one half-hour . . . could be playing a Christmas carol in the squire's hall to the ladies and gentlemen, and drinking tay and coffee with 'em as modest as saints; and the next, at The Tinkers' Arms, blazing away like wild horses with the "Dashing White Sergeant" to nine couple of dancers and more, and swallowing rum-and-cider hot as flame.<sup>12</sup>

What we describe as folk music has never existed, at least in the case of England, in isolation. An important consequence of this, and one which Sharp of course realised, was that folk or traditional music was never static. Perhaps the most important evidence of vitality in a living folk tradition is not some purity of form or content, but rather an ability to absorb new influences, even if this process necessarily produces changes in that tradition. I would argue that previous studies of folk song in the closing years of the nineteenth century have rather missed the point by concentrating on the decline in the singing of the classic folk song as defined by Sharp.

The folk song enthusiasts of this period were convinced that the form that they so admired was facing extinction from the music-hall song and the parlour ballad — that they were witnessing, as it were, a transition from a folk to a popular culture. A great deal of evidence can be adduced to support them. Consider, for example, two stories from Flora Thompson's *Lark Rise to Candleford*, an account of childhood and adolescence in Oxfordshire in the closing decades of the last century. While describing singing at the local pub, she recounts how, with the exception of some chorus songs, the old songs were being ousted by the new products of the town, whose arrival was eagerly awaited by the young men of the village. So far had the old folk song declined that when one of the village ancients was called on to sing his version of 'The Outlandish Knight' (a very old ballad) it was generally taken by the wives of the hamlet that proceedings were at an end, and that the men would soon be home. Even so, for a while the two forms co-existed. Similarly, she tells of a lad in the hamlet who was bought a melodeon by an aunt. This was used not only to accompany dancing on the green, but also to play 'all the old favourites' — "Home, Sweet Home", "Annie Laurie", "Barbara Allen", and "Silver Threads Among the Gold".<sup>13</sup>

The willingness among participants in traditional culture to adopt new material and perform it alongside folk material proper becomes even more marked if the repertoires of country singers who survived into this century are examined. Percy Webb, the recently-deceased Suffolk singer, sang a collection of songs ranging from the impeccably traditional 'Nutting Girl' through the Victorian tear-jerker 'If Those Lips Could Only Speak' to 'Old Shep', more familiar to the present writer through the singing of Elvis Presley.<sup>14</sup> The 1936 songbook of Jim Copper, member of a Sussex family of singers whose performances had been noted by collectors since the 1880s, shows a similar eclecticism.<sup>15</sup> Many country musicians have possessed an immensely varied repertoire, evidence of a comparable variety of influences. Scan Tester, the Sussex multi-instrumentalist now best known for the concertina playing that made him a major influence on southern-English style revivalist musicians, demonstrates this premise. He began as a child playing tambourine in his father's pub, graduated to melodeon, had contact with gypsy fiddlers in the Ashdown Forest, and after the Great War organised a dance band, 'The Tester Imperial' (named after a brand of gramophone record then sold in Woolworth's). Scan also played cornet in the Horsted Keynes town band until a new bandmaster banished all non-music-readers from its ranks. On Sharp's strict definition Scan Tester was not a folk musician: it is difficult, however, to think of an alternative description of him.<sup>16</sup>

What emerges from these examples is a suspicion that even though the classic folk song was in decline (i.e. the repertoire of the tradition was changing) the style of playing and singing new material remained much the same, as did the social context in which it was performed. What is perhaps more remarkable is evidence that the new urban masses were not merely passive consumers of the product of the music

industry, but were themselves evolving a style of performance and a canon of accepted songs. The subject is a little-studied one, but finds its classic description in Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, a sensitive celebration of a working-class culture that is now dying, as surely as the rural culture which Sharp describes so fondly was dying when he wrote. In a lengthy section<sup>17</sup> the author describes singing in a working man's club, and from this description two important points emerge.

First, there was a central body of repertoire, most of it originating from the years 1880-1910, but from which old songs were continually dropped, and to which new ones were constantly being added. These new songs, although often of American provenance, had to fit to a 'firm and restricted set of conventions' before being accepted. They were, moreover, delivered in a distinctive manner, which Hoggart describes as the 'big dipper' style, and which put a local stamp even on transatlantic imports. This style needs to be analysed before it too disappears, as it represents a logical progression from the older style of delivery described by Sharp and others. It certainly caught the attention of John Steinbeck, who as a war correspondent in England in 1943 gave his impression of English pub-singing:

A mixed group of pilots and ATS girls at the other end of the pub have started a song. It is astonishing how many of the songs are American. "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home to" they sing. And the beat of the song has subtly changed. *It has become an English song.*<sup>18</sup> (My italics).

This resilience of a distinctive style of singing and pub and club playing which survived unchallenged until the post-war innovations of piped music and the juke box must modify any flat assertion that the rise of industrial society rapidly created a race of musical consumers. It cannot be denied, of course, that the peculiar circumstances of industrialisation in England did provide the necessary market for an enormous leisure industry. It is no accident that the growth of the music hall (itself an evolution from earlier forms of musical and 'variety' entertainment) began in the 1860s, only a few years after the census revealed that for the first time a majority of England's population lived in large towns. This emergence of the music hall as a mass entertainment coincided with the development of many other forms of working-class leisure which became fully embedded in British culture, of which perhaps the two most important constituents were seaside holidays and professional football. The subject is one that is only just beginning to receive serious attention. Most labour historians have so far concentrated on political movements in the working class, which probably tells us more about the preoccupations of labour historians than it does about those of the new industrial masses. Richard Hoggart's contention that historians of working-class life 'do not always have an adequate sense of the grass-roots of that life'<sup>19</sup> still contains a large element of truth.

Secondly, despite the steady growth, since about 1880, of a leisure industry dependent upon consumers, many of the urban masses spent at least some of their spare time in active, even creative leisure. The subject is a truly immense one, and here I can do little more than suggest a few areas in which people were actively taking part in musical activities. So far few good regional studies of which might be termed the 'musical explosion' of the late nineteenth century have been published,<sup>20</sup> but it is obvious that recently urbanised England suffered from no shortage of interest in music. The new industrial areas were the home of a lively tradition of choral singing, while it has been calculated that in 1889 there were some 40,000 amateur brass bands in England, many of them in the industrial areas, most of them consisting of working-class musicians. Meanwhile, the wide use of the Tonic Sol-Fa system in schools meant that perhaps two million children could read music by the end of the century. Even earlier in the century, before the emergence of a leisure industry, it seems that at least some sections of the working class were actively involved in music making, especially in areas where enlightened factory owners felt that such pursuits had a 'civilising' effect upon their operatives.<sup>21</sup>

Technical innovation, so often seen as the villain of the piece when the emergence of 'synthetic' music is discussed, was itself a necessary contributor to this wide involvement in musical activity. Good, cheap instruments — concertinas, brass band instruments, and above all pianos — became available in quantity for the first time. Cheap printing techniques allowed mass sales of sheet music: evidence of widespread musical literacy and an extensive desire to perform. As an extreme example, and a rare case of ability to match theory with practice, one might cite the American Charles K. Harris, the author of *How to Write a Popular Song*, who in 1892 composed 'After the Ball', a sentimental ballad which in the twenty years following its publication sold ten million copies. The arrival of mechanical music devices, from the pianola onwards, did not kill participation in music, and replace the performer with the consumer. Even the gramophone and the radio, so often berated for nipping embryonic performers in the bud, have done much to disseminate tunes, styles, and an interest in music among actual or potential participants.

In concentrating upon working-class music, I have ignored not only the musical taste of the middle and upper classes, but also the whole problem of social stratification in culture. All I can do here is repeat my suspicions that the supposed organic nature of pre-industrial society seems very unconvincing, and that any stratification that exists after industrialisation should therefore be studied in terms of continuity as much as complete novelty. A second element in the subject which I have barely touched upon is the influence of American music, from ragtime to acid rock, although as I have suggested, the edge of the American invasion has at least been blunted.<sup>22</sup>

Despite these omissions, and the drawbacks inherent in a very compressed treatment of the subject, I feel that two major points have emerged. Firstly, that the industrialisation of this country did not produce a musical desert in which rustic ballad singers were replaced by a commercial entertainment industry and passive consumers. Secondly, that 'folk' or 'traditional' art, except perhaps when it is moribund, is never static: I suspect that the history of English traditional music is one of steady change, with new material, styles and instruments being absorbed at one end and old ones being discarded at the other. If this is correct, the technological changes of the nineteenth century might, perhaps, in many ways be most usefully interpreted as an acceleration of a traditional process of change. The most important question, then, is to decide at what stage, and under what influences, the rate, or quantity of change produced qualitative change and a definitive break with the past. As a historian, I am trained to avoid absolutes of this sort, but as a tentative guess I would suggest that such a change did not come about until the Second World War. I would also suggest, again very tentatively, that the first few generations of industrial workers had more in common, in terms of their relationship with music as in so much else, with their agricultural forbears than with their consumer-society descendants.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Wilfrid Mellers, *Music and Society* (2nd. Edn., London: Dobson, 1950), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Pousseur, quoted in *Contact 13* (Spring 1976), p. 13. I would guess that the 'young people' to whose music Pousseur refers favourably are essentially university-educated, middle-class young people. I see little revolutionary potential in, for example, the work of the Bay City Rollers, despite the youth of the bulk of their admirers.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Burns, 'Leisure in industrial society', in *Leisure and Society in Britain*, ed. Michael A. Smith, Stanley Parker and Cyril S. Smith (London: Allen Lane, 1973), p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Hence Mellers, *op. cit.*, p. 25, after criticising machine culture, says 'we have to make our machines, and our machine music, work effectively to recover a sense of craftsmanship'.

<sup>5</sup> Mellers, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> *Journal of the Folk Song Society*, No. 1(1899), pp. 1-3.

<sup>7</sup> Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions* (4th. Edn., ed. Maud Karpeles, London: Mercury Books, 1965), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Mellers, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> From the sleeve notes of Shirley Collins, *Adieu to Old England* (Topic Records 12TS238).

<sup>10</sup> A. L. Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1967), p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> This suspicion is prompted especially by reading David Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hardy, *Life's Little Ironies* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 233.

<sup>13</sup> Flora Thompson, *Lark Rise to Candleford* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 141-142. The description of singing at the local pub can be found in Chapter iv, 'At the "Wagon and Horses" '.

<sup>14</sup> *Traditional Music*, No. 2 (late 1975), pp. 20-21.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 3 (early 1976), p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> From the sleeve notes to *Boscastle Breakdown* (Topic Records 12T240) and *English Dance and Song*, No. 34 (1972), p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), pp. 149-166.

<sup>18</sup> John Steinbeck, *Once There Was a War* (London: Heinemann, 1959), p. 27.

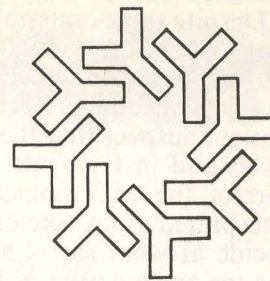
<sup>19</sup> Hoggart, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Two useful studies are Reginald Nettel, *Music in the Five Towns, 1840-1914: a study of the social influence of music in an industrial district* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944) and E. D. Mackerness, *Somewhere Further North: a history of music in Sheffield* (Sheffield: Northend, 1974).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, the cases quoted in E. D. Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge, 1964), pp. 129-133.

<sup>22</sup> The rise of American popular music and its impact on Britain is charted by Ian Whitcomb, *After the Ball* (London: Allen Lane, 1973).

# YORKSHIRE ARTS



## COMPETITION FOR YOUNG COMPOSERS (YORKSHIRE) 1977

The Yorkshire Arts Association wishes to encourage composers of under 30 (on 1 April 1977) who were either born in, have a home in or study in Yorkshire with a competition for their compositions which will ensure later performances of high standard and so is organising a follow-up to the first such competition which was judged in March 1976.

The closing date for entries is 15 March 1977 and the judging will take place in April 1977.

### Prize Money of £500 has been budgetted for this Competition.

The composition should not last more than fifteen minutes and can be for the following Categories:

String Quartet, in which the Yorkshire Arts Association's resident quartets will be involved.

Ensembles of up to eight players. It would help if pieces could be written for specific groups or individuals, preferably resident in the north. This is a practical point because we want wherever possible to ensure that there are performances, and more than just the premiere.

Brass Band. Work to be premiered in York during 21st celebrations of York and District Brass Band Association in 1977. A York Theme or the Queen's Silver Jubilee are suggested subjects.

For full details, an entry form and individual enquiries write to:-

**Richard Phillips, Music Officer,  
Yorkshire Arts Association, Glyde House, Glydegate, Bradford BD5 0BQ.  
(Tel. Bradford 23051).**

## NORTHERN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CENTRE

Of the nearly thirty concerts in Yorkshire in the first season of the Northern Contemporary Music Circuit, most took place before Christmas, but you might still catch up with the following:

### DELME STRING QUARTET WITH JACK BRYMER

Tuesday 15 February Temperance Hall, KEIGHLEY

Quartet Op 20 No 5/Haydn, Clarinet Quintet/Bliss, Quartet Op 3/Berg and Clarinet Quintet/Weber  
Booking Keighley Library Tel. Keighley 602309. Keighley Music Club

Wednesday 16 February Kings Hall ILKLEY, same programme as Keighley  
Booking Ilkley Library Tel. Ilkley 2721 (day-time) 2724 (evening). Ilkley Concert Club

### AULOS ENSEMBLE

Thursday 20 January Danum Grammar School, Danum Road, DONCASTER

Quartet for Clarinet and Strings/Hummel, Paraphrases and Cadenzas/A Payne, Two Studies/P Wilby and The Trout/Schubert  
Booking Dodd's Music Shop Copley Road. Doncaster Arts and Museum Society and Doncaster Concerts Society

### CLAP MUSIC THEATRE

with Melody Lovelace and seven performers

Monday 14 March Sheffield City Polytechnic SHEFFIELD

Savari II/T Endrich, Unguis Incarnatus Est/M Kagel, Songs/Ives and The Burial of the Moon/T Endrich  
Booking Paul Walker Tel. Sheffield 56101. Sheffield City Polytechnic

Details of the 1977/78 season will be mentioned in a future issue of Contact. For full details contact **Richard Phillips** at Yorkshire Arts Association.

## Electronic Music Studios in Britain-4

### Goldsmiths' College, University of London

THE FIRST EQUIPMENT for what was originally called the Electronic Music Workshop was purchased or ordered in December 1967. In January 1968 an evening class (plus occasional sessions for small groups of music students) was started. This appears to have been the first such regular class given in any academic institution in Britain, although others followed fairly rapidly. From the start the evening class has attracted a wide variety of people: composers and musicians with some training or experience, people with some training or experience on the technical side, and people who are just interested.

The studio spent its first two terms 'camping out' in a physics laboratory, having to be replaced in cupboards on the two days a week that it was used. By autumn 1968 it had a room of its own, the main downstairs room in one of the semi-detached houses bought up by the College on its perimeter. The creation of the studio was due to the composer Stanley Glasser, then Head of Music for the Adult Studies Department (and shortly to take over the same position for the full-time Music Department), and then Principal of the Adult Studies Department, the late Ian Gulland, with full support from the then Professor of Music at London University, the late Thurston Dart. Stanley Glasser had hoped to start a studio at Goldsmiths' for some time, and when I contacted him in the autumn of 1967 he quickly arranged for me to be engaged to give an evening class in electronic music. From there on some subterfuge — not uncommon with studios! — was necessary: instead of asking Goldsmiths' outright to provide a studio, the evening class was first agreed on, followed by insistence on the importance of practical work for which 'of course' equipment would be needed, which in turn would 'obviously' require a room in which to be permanently installed.

The initial equipment consisted of three Revox tape recorders, a stereo mixer, one air and a couple of contact microphones, a stereo amplifier and loudspeakers, followed a few weeks later by a sine/square-wave generator built from a kit as a project undertaken by two people from the evening class. I planned the studio so that it would also function equally well for live electronic performance; however, once other people began to work in the studio apart from in my own classes, a central patchboard became necessary and equipment could no longer be removed for external use. The studio quickly made appearances in the 'outside world': a photograph in a book on sound, a BBC TV programme on modern music and a performance at a London concert. More recently the BBC has broadcast three of our productions. Due to lack of funds we have not been able to expand substantially, and the same restriction has prevented any full-time appointment of personnel; this is primarily because of the considerable expansion and upgrading of the whole of the music department under Stanley Glasser's direction, from being primarily concerned with teacher training to becoming exclusively a university music department by 1978, and necessitating a greater proportion of Goldsmiths' total budget to be given for music than had been hitherto.

The considerable number of people who have been associated with the studio is a reflection of the fact that all work there is paid by the hour, and that better-paid or more permanent jobs have attracted several people away from Goldsmiths'. A list of names is perhaps the most appropriate way of presenting this. Teaching staff: Hugh Davies (1968-), George Newson (1970-72), George Brown (1972-), Lawrence Casserley (1972-75), David Burnand (1975-76). Technical staff: Adam Skeaping (1970-73), Per Hartman (1973-75), Robert Ahern (1975), Richard Guy (1975-); additionally most of the teaching staff have helped with maintenance. Finally the Heads of Music of the Adult Studies Department, who have all been involved in the studio to some extent: Stanley Glasser (1968), Don Banks (1968-71), Anthony Gilbert (1971-73), Malcolm Barry (1973-).

The initially sporadic tuition for selected students was replaced in 1970 by some regular classes. More than 200 music students now attend classes in the studio for at least part of their time at Goldsmiths'. Last year for the first time an introductory one-term evening class was added to the original three-term one. Additionally, classes have been given for students from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama since 1971, and occasionally from King's College, London which has close links with Goldsmiths'. For several years students from Goldsmiths' School of Art have worked in the studio under the guidance of their tutors, the kinetic sculptors Philip Hodgetts and now Peter Logan. Many groups from local schools and musicians from all over the world have visited the studio, and short courses have been given for various student groups from the USA.



There is little to be said about the installation that is in any way unusual. The room in which it is housed has to double as composition studio and lecture/demonstration room. We plan to convert a small room next door to the studio into an editing room in which the equipment would be mounted on a trolley for easy removal back to the main studio for any large-scale project. Similarly we are not in a position to promote any substantial research. The main emphasis has always been on the teaching aspect of the studio, and much of the weekly schedule is taken up in this way. Indeed it is only possible for undergraduate students to produce short studies, because individual tuition is of necessity rare. Thus of the works listed here none were composed by undergraduates, and only two by postgraduates. Staff members can use the studio for themselves provided that it is not required for teaching purposes; those named above, plus Bob Cobbing (poet in residence) and William Fitzwater (film department) make up about one-third of the composers in the list. Most of us have worked mainly with privately-owned equipment.

Since 1971 the SPNM has bought a limited amount of studio time for outside composers to work in the studio, assisted by a member of staff. (Goldsmiths' College also hosted the 1971 SPNM Composers' Weekend, at which George Newson was responsible for all the studio work.) This money has financed the production of nearly two-thirds of the works listed here, divided fairly equally between musicians attending our evening classes in electronic music or composition, and composers from outside.

Electronic Music Studio  
 Department of Music  
 University of London Goldsmiths' College  
 New Cross  
 London SE14 6NW

*Current Personnel* (all part-time)

Director: Hugh Davies  
 Lecturer: George Brown  
 Technician: Richard Guy

*A selection of works composed in the studio*

Address enquiries for performance to the address above; we will then refer to the composer. (Due to the completely independent use of the studio by mainly part-time members of staff, we do not possess studio copies of about half of the works listed here, nor can we guarantee to be able to contact each composer who did not leave a copy with us.) Asterisked items are published by Schott.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Don Banks                              | * <i>Intersections</i> (1969; orchestra and tape; partly composed in private studio)   |
| Richard Bernas                         | <i>Tuning a Cymbal</i> (1975; published on cassette by <i>Audio Arts</i> )   |
|  | <i>Almanac for April</i> (1975; piano and four track tape)   |
| Graham Bradshaw                        | <i>Tribute to a Dancing Lady</i> (1975-76; partly composed at Morley College)  |
| Alan Bullard                           | <i>Study on D♭</i> (1971)  |
| David Burnand                          | <i>Constellations</i> (1976; large ensemble and tape)  |
| Roger Butler                           | <i>Stigma</i> (1971)   |
| Jonathan Clifford                      | work for piano, slides and tape (1973)   |
| Bob Cobbing with<br>Lawrence Casserley | <i>15 Shakespeare Kaku</i> (1973-74; completed at SMS, London)   |
| Hugh Davies                            | <i>Interfaces</i> (1968; six performers, amplified objects, two stereo tapes and live electronics / two performers, two stereo tapes and live electronics; tapes are identical in both versions) |
| William Fitzwater<br>with Hugh Davies  | <i>Metropolis</i> (1975; two-hour soundtrack for BBC2 TV showing of 1926 silent film; edited and mixed with percussion and sound effects in film and TV studios)                                 |
| Martin Gellhorn                        | <i>Mandala</i> (1974; completed at University of East Anglia, 1975; four track tape)   |
| Anthony Gilbert                        | * <i>The Scene Machine</i> (1971; passage for opera)   |
|  | * <i>A Treatment of Silence</i> (1973; violin and tape)  |
| Stanley Glasser with<br>Hugh Davies    | <i>Coromantee</i> , sequences for chorus and tape (1970-71)  |
| Stanley Glasser                        | <i>Serenade</i> for piano, ten instruments and synthesizer (1974)  |

Lily Greenham	<i>Traffic</i> ; lingual music (1975; four track tape)
Stephen Peter Lawson	<i>Radio Music II</i> (1972)
Anna Lockwood	<i>Tiger Balm</i> (1970; reduced version for disc, <i>Source 9</i> ; partly composed at Tangent studio, London)
John Metcalf	<i>Notturmo</i> (1971; chamber orchestra and tape)
George Newson	<i>Ballet Scene</i> (1972)
Laura Owens	<i>Omen</i> (1973-74; choir and four track tape)
Tom Puckey	<i>George Jackson Texts</i> (1971-72; two speaking voices and tape)
Howard Rees	. . . <i>The Cat's Paw Among the Silence of Midnight Goldfish</i> (1969; trombone, six instruments and tape) <i>Doug's New Flute Thing</i> (1969; amplified flute, tape and live electronics)
David Rowland	<i>Masques</i> (1973; oboe/cor anglais, percussion and two stereo tapes)
James Siddons	<i>Guy Fawkes</i> (1970; actors, musicians and tape)
Andrew Wilson	<i>Childhood's End</i> (1971)
Margaret Lucy Wilkins	<i>SCI-FI</i> (1972)

*List of main studio equipment as at September 1976:*

Custom-built 10-in 4-out mixer  
 Lux and Quad amplifiers  
 Tannoy and Goodmans loudspeakers  
 Two VCS3 synthesizers  
 Keyboard (prototype) for above  
 EMS pitch to voltage converter  
 Six sine-wave generators (Hewlett-Packard, Leland)  
 Three sine/square-wave generators (Heathkit)  
 Astronic octave filter A1671  
 Amcron dual channel band-pass/reject filter VFX2  
 Two Mullard high-pass filters GFF 001/02  
 Heathkit 10-12U oscilloscope  
 Two Revox G36 stereo tape recorders (one high speed, one low)  
 Two Revox A77 stereo tape recorders (one high speed, one low; each has a different variable speed device)  
 Remote control for one Revox A77 on mixer  
 Two Teac A3340 four track tape recorders  
 Racal Universal Counter 8935  
 Simple ring-modulators, phase-shifter, wave-shapers, reverberation unit, signal level boosters (own constructions)  
 Various acoustic and contact microphones, headphones, portable mixers, test equipment.

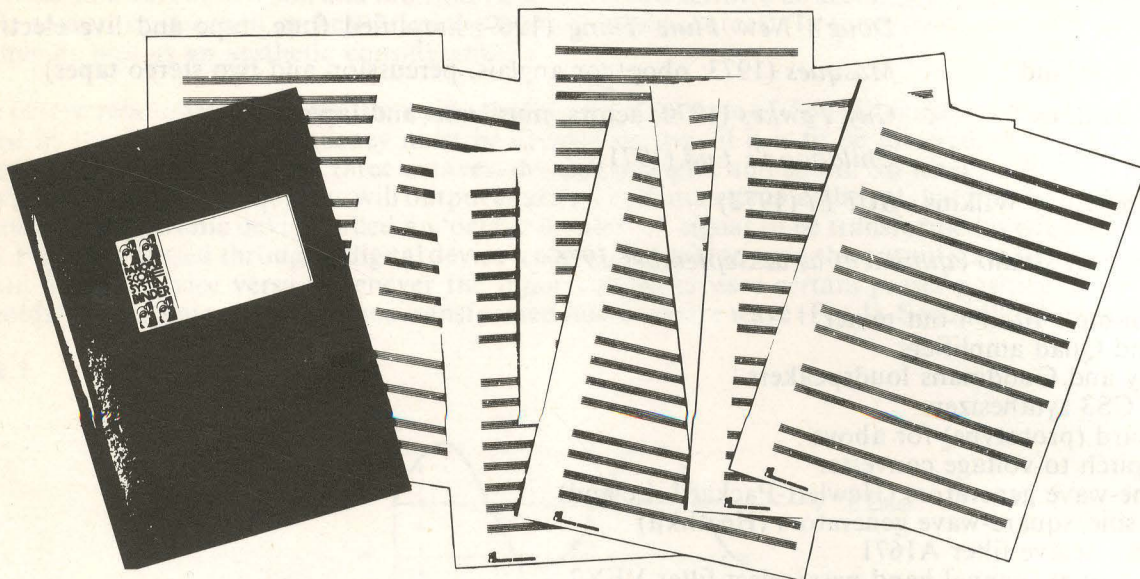
**This is the fourth of a series of articles designed to acquaint composers, technicians and other studio users as well as our general readers with current activities in electronic music studios. At present the series will be confined to those in Britain. Studio directors are invited to submit *brief* articles, following the layout displayed above, for inclusion in future issues. It must be stressed that only brief articles will be considered for publication and that, since we only have space enough for one studio per issue, a waiting list may develop. The next studio to be featured will be that at the University of East Anglia (*Contact 16*).**

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# Reviews and Reports

THE UNCONSCIOUS AS INFINITE SETS, By I. M. Blanco  
Duckworth, 1975 (£14.00)

ROBIN HIGGINS

Music has been described as evolving between the nebula of emotions and the geometry of reason. Certainly for centuries a close connection has been upheld between the expressions of emotions, mathematics and music. For composers and listeners alike the evolution of this connection occurs as much, if not more, below the level of waking consciousness as at it.

Any book, then, which offers a connected study in depth of the three issues of the emotions, mathematics and the unconscious *should* be of interest to musicians. The emphasis is on 'should', for while it certainly does provide just such a study, Blanco's book is not written for musicians and will demand considerable effort on their part if they are to exploit its relevance. It is a sad fact that most musicians' education does not leave them as well equipped as they might be to make that effort. This is a pity since this book is something of a breakthrough.

Blanco starts by summarising Freud's observations on how our mind works: the structures of our imagination when we dream or, as we say, are not fully conscious. The elisions, the condensations, the displacements, the suspended negation (anything goes): these were some of the aspects of our dream-consciousness that Freud noted in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and each opens up a world of possibilities to a musician. Think how Berg handles them quite explicitly in *Lulu*.

What Blanco has done is to interpret these combined features logico-mathematically (analogies here to Allen Forte's premises in his set-theoretic analyses of atonal music). In these, our unconscious structures, Blanco suggests we make use of:

- Infinite sets where a proper subset is no longer distinguishable from an improper one;
- a symmetrical mode of Being, since as Parmenides, Leibniz and Einstein saw, an Infinite set implies a symmetry;
- a dual system of logic, a bi-logic, since we are aware of this symmetrical mode of Being in our waking consciousness.

We can, after all, talk about our dreams; indeed it is an important way of coming to terms with them. Yet in our waking consciousness we use many asymmetrical, finite assumptions. We order events, we give them priorities, we accept inequalities, we distinguish proper subsets, we admit contingency. We have to filter our understanding and experience of a symmetrical mode of Being through our everyday asymmetrical mode. For Parmenides this meant relating the way of Truth to the way of Seeming; for Clarke, in the 17th century, it meant that Leibniz' 'sufficient reason' often lay in the mere will of God. For Cage, Xenakis and others it means confronting randomness.

Much of what Blanco concludes for unconscious experience applies to our emotions. In either case we are concerned with this subtle balance of symmetrical and asymmetrical modes. (Another analogy: Lendvai's study of Bartók's music.) This is a crucial area for tension in music as in our psyche generally. Weyl and others have shown the mathematical underpinning to symmetry: the geometric transformations and the group automorphisms. Blanco corroborates and extends this underpinning to our emotional dream-conscious expression. Ultimately that could mean music.

The gain? On a vastly expanded scale, similar to the gain we enjoyed when we wrote 'crotchet = 32' rather than a vague 'allegro'. By this more precise notation of pace we reduced guesswork and made possible informed comparisons between one pace and another, and between our pace today and yesterday's or tomorrow's. If we follow Blanco we can begin to notate with something of the same precision the shifts in our balance of symmetrical and asymmetrical modes, in our degree of different levels of consciousness (Parmenides would say levels of Truth) or of different emotional logics.

FOREIGN MUSIC MAGAZINES

KEITH POTTER

Brief details of four magazines of which you will hear more in future issues of *Contact*:

ANALOG SOUNDS

Editor: Jacob Meyerowitz

Quarterly

Subscription: \$16.00 for one year

Obtainable from the editor at 12 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011

A journal devoted to electronic music which we have advertised before. Published every October, January, April and July, beginning in October 1974. We have been sent issues 3, 6 and 7. Basically the journal is devoted to a description of the techniques and practices involved in electronic studio work, though it also contains book reviews and a news section called 'Commentaries'. Issues come in a loose leaf binder so that sections on different aspects of hardware, studio technique etc. can be filed together, as each number builds on from the previous one. There is also a 'Medium and Process Directory' which functions as 'an accumulative subject index of relevant material abstracted from recent audio and electronic magazines. Each item can be cut out and mounted on a regular 5 by 3 card.'

NOTIZIARIO

delle Edizioni Suvini Zerboni

Three times a year

No price or subscription details

Obtainable from Edizioni Suvini Zerboni at Via Quintiliano, 40 - 20138 Milano

A journal of the publishing house of Suvini Zerboni, mostly in Italian but also fairly extensive quotations from reviews etc. in English, French and German (no translations). We have been sent two copies of issue 2, which has the date (December) 1975. The journal would seem, quite naturally, to be a promotional organ of the publishers: performances, radio broadcasts, new scores, records, books and magazines are listed and sometimes discussed in some detail; the second issue's *Sommario* runs: Goffredo Petrassi (article by Wolfgang Schreiber), Festivals, Prime esecuzioni, La stagione teatrale e concertistica, Dischi, Libri e Riviste, Notizie varie, Le novità, Alcune trasmissioni radio.

NUMUS-WEST

Publisher-Editor: Louis Christensen

Assistant Editor: Sharon Dunstan

Three times a year

Subscription: \$9.00 for three issues (North America)

\$9.75 for three issues (elsewhere)

Obtainable from NUMUS-WEST, P.O. Box 135, Mercer Island, Washington 98040

This journal comes very near to *Contact* in scope, areas of music covered and, I think, general aims. It's an excellent magazine, in fact! To be quite truthful, its scope is, if anything, wider than *Contact*'s: it packs an awful lot into one issue, usually under headings like 'Numus-Canada', 'Numus-Jazz', 'Numus-Ethno'; there are many articles, interviews, reviews of records ('Nudisks'!) and an extensive news and short reviews section written by the editor called 'Numus-International'. It's a mine of information about music in the USA, but also elsewhere. We have been sent issues 6, 7 and 8 (1974-75); the magazine is published in November, February and May each year and began in 1972.

Issue 6 includes articles on communication in new music between North America and Sweden, 'The Kiev Avant Garde', Steve Reich, musical acoustics, computers and future music, 'Trans-Ethnic Composition' and an extensive review of the second edition of Harry Partch's book *Genesis of a Music*. Issue 7 contains an article about Roumanian music and a whole series of ten features on new music in the Midwest as 'a part of our continuing effort to document the musical activities of North American composers'. And much, much more! Issue 8 continues the Scandinavian link (Christensen comes from Sweden) with an article called 'Inside a Symphony' by Per Nørgaard and extended

groups of articles under the headings 'Numus-Canada' and 'Numus-Jazz', an interview with Lukas Foss and more.

Contact will present a more extended and up-to-date examination of *Numus-West* in a future issue. Meanwhile it seems that all their back numbers are still available: nos. 1 and 2 at \$2.50, subsequent issues at \$3.50, post paid.

#### PARACHUTE

Directors: France Morin, Chantal Pontbriand  
Music Editor: Raymond Gervais  
Three times a year  
Single numbers: \$2.50  
Subscription: \$9.00 for three issues  
\$15.00 for three issues (air mail)

Obtainable from C.P. 730 — Succursale N, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 3N4

Describes itself as 'the only contemporary art magazine published in Canada'; in a mixture (not parallel text) of English and French. We have been sent issue 3 which includes an article on Michael Snow's *Musics for piano, whistling, microphone and tape recorder* (a double album available on Chatham Square 1009/10, Philip Glass's record label) by Raymond Gervais and an interview with Luis de Pablo as well as an extensive news section listing quite a lot of new music events, records etc. from all over the world.

#### BOB DOWNES OPEN MUSIC: EPISODES AT 4 A.M.

Openian BDOM 002 (£2.90 inc. P. and P.)  
Obtainable from Openian Records, 30 Seymour Buildings, Seymour Place, London W1

#### A TOUCH OF THE SUN: MILK TEETH

Bead 1 (£2.20)  
CHAMBERPOT  
Bead 2 (£2.20)  
Obtainable from Bead Records, 28 Chiswick Road, London W4 5RB

#### JAN STEELE; JOHN CAGE: VOICES AND INSTRUMENTS

Obscure No. 5 (£1.99)  
MICHAEL NYMAN: DECAY MUSIC  
Obscure No. 6 (£1.99)  
Distributed by Island Records

#### DAVID ROBERTS

*Episodes at 4 a.m.* was commissioned by the Welsh Dance Theatre in 1974, and is just one in a string of works that Bob Downes has produced for dance companies. The music — characterised by clear, simple, yet strikingly atmospheric ideas — is well-suited to choreography, so much so that one has to question whether the piece stands up on its own. As a whole, I don't think it does; some spots are certainly a bit scanty. On the other hand there are a number of original and effective sections which are predominantly textural and timbral, such as 'Flute Streams' and 'String Percussion', that are quite delightful and sustain repeated hearings. *Episodes at 4 a.m.* is performed by Bob Downes and Wendy Benka on a wide variety of instruments; Downes produced and engineered the record, and it's issued on his own label.

Although it has since expanded, in 1974 at the time of recording *Milk Teeth*, the improvisation ensemble *A Touch of the Sun* was a trio comprising Peter Cusack (electric guitar), Simon Mayo (clarinets) and Shelley Lee (dancer). Since I don't hear any muffled footfalls in the background I think it's safe to say that the recorded ensemble is effectively a duo. Interestingly enough, at times it takes careful listening to convince yourself that there are just two people playing. The complexity of the textures and the rich, full sound they produce are extraordinarily deceptive. What is more, one finds a lively and invigorating interplay between the performers that encompasses plenty of wit and playfulness — it really does sound as if they are enjoying themselves. All in all it adds up to some of the best improvisation that I've come across: and it's improvisation that has something to offer the listeners as well as the performers. One slight drawback of the record is that it has rather a lot of surface noise, though this keeps within tolerable limits.

Simon Mayo also plays with Chamberpot on their eponymous album; the other three members of the group are Philipp Wachsmann (violin), Richard Beswick (oboe/english horn) and Tony Wren (double bass). The style of playing of this larger group is somewhat less frenetic, with perhaps more attention to long-term shape. The record certainly has its moments but it never takes off in the same way as *Milk Teeth*.

Obscure Records continue to do good work and I'm delighted to see that they are beginning to pay some attention to the scandalously-neglected early music of John Cage. Included on Obscure No. 5 are five of his modal pieces dating from before his discovery of the *I-Ching*. Two are instrumental: *Experiences No. 1* (1945-48) for piano duet (Richard Bernas double-tracked) and *In a Landscape* (1948) for piano (Bernas solus). The remaining three are vocal, and here two unconventional but wholly successful choices

of singer were made: Robert Wyatt (ex-Soft Machine etc.) sings *Experiences No. 2* (1945-48, words by e e cummings) and *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* (1942, text taken from *Finnegan's Wake*); Carla Bley (*Escalator over the Hill* etc.) sings *Forever and Sunsmell* (1942, another cummings setting). In all the pieces an uncanny formal balance is coupled with a precision of detail that can only have come about through the application of the greatest care in their construction, scotching all that nonsense about Cage not being a composer. I am hungry for more Cage of this vintage, and certainly hope that Obscure will consider bringing out more in future — some of the prepared piano pieces perhaps?

Coupled with the Cage items are three pieces from Jan Steele, which all arise out of his work with the York-based improvisation group F & W Hat. This was 'directed toward playing a very quiet, repetitive form of improvised rock-based music'. Of the three, the song *All Day*, a setting of one of the Joyce Chamber Music lyrics, comes closest to rock. The backing falls straightforwardly into a sophisticated soft-rock category, though the vocal line, modelled on Debussy, is more problematic. I'm not quite sure what effect the composer intended but I find the result curiously disjointed, though there are a lot of good things in the song. I'm not sure how to react, either, to *Distant Saxophones* (not a saxophone to be heard) in which the bass riffs and regular pulse of the percussion seem quite opposed to the whining sustained line of the viola solo. *Rhapsody Spaniel* for piano, four hands, is simpler and more successful. For my money it could have been even simpler still, dropping the contrasting middle section and relying upon the single cunningly-devised ostinato all the way through.

Michael Nyman's album is made up of two longish pieces, *1-100* and *Bell Set No. 1*. Both rely on long-term processes resulting from the working-out of simple material — hence 'decay music'. *1-100* consists simply of four unsynchronised but superimposed performances of 100 quiet, slow-moving tonal chords played on the piano. This produces a very strange effect of suspended animation. The superimposition occasionally results in coherent tonal progressions, sometimes in incoherent ones, with just sufficient balance between the two to keep things interesting. *Bell Set No. 1* is noisier and busier. The process involved here is one of a gradually diminishing density of attacks, i.e. in the score the notes become longer. With this declining activity, more and more of one's attention is focussed upon the timbres of the steady-state sounds of the bells, triangles, gongs, cymbals and tamtams, rather than upon the attacks. Again it's one of those things that looks terribly obvious and dull on paper but must be heard in order to appreciate its subtleties.



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**TOPIC**

BARCLAY MCMILLAN

Members of CAUSM travelled to Quebec City in late May for their three-day Annual Conference held under the aegis of the Learned Societies of Canada. Most of the papers and discussions centered on various aspects of the conference theme, 'Music in Higher Education in Canada'. A sizeable proportion were concerned mainly with matters of academic housekeeping: faculty teaching loads, student/teacher ratios, course configurations and the like. Statistical data comparing universities across the country compiled by Brian Ellard of Moncton and Malcolm Brown of Calgary served as a useful focus for discussion. One housekeeping matter, the status of the performer-instructor in academic life, displayed some marks of a smouldering, if not a burning issue. Professor Abe Kniaz of Laval raised a series of questions to which no real answers emerged, but their number and intensity left no doubt about the mounting frustration with which many performance instructors endure an often ambiguous position on the university faculty.

The problems discussed in the meetings on curriculum were not of the kind susceptible to once-for-all solution, but the participants dealt faithfully with the perennial concerns of co-ordinating courses in history with those in theory and composition, of guiding students through the rigours of a demanding core programme without discouraging creativity, of producing musicians capable of using the mind... In these sessions the sharing of experience played an important role. David Keane of Kingston, for example, presented a valuable discussion of an approach to first-year theory involving history, composition and performance which has operated successfully at Queen's with annual refinement since 1971. A thoughtful paper by Istvan Anhalt of Queen's analysed data on the teaching of composition at 26 Canadian universities. In terms of a general emphasis on solid preparation in traditional techniques combined with a diversified approach to teaching he judged the situation good. He reminded delegates, however, that teaching is only a preparation, an aid to channel the flow of music from the depths of the young composer's psyche. He urged them to ensure that students be exposed to growth-provoking experience in disciplines far beyond the bounds of music, that they be encouraged constantly to work with a strong sense of honesty towards their own ideas, but disciplined always by the highest possible critical standards.

Several speakers recognised as a problem for the university the shrinking vocational horizons, in an economy no longer rapidly expanding, of graduates in music and musicology. They urged delegates both to accept responsibility for assisting students to formulate goals which are realistic and to tackle seriously the problem of broadening the scope of professional opportunity. Canada's need for orchestral players, for example, is not being served by allowing students who will surely be frustrated in their desire to become solo performers to persist in a near-neurotic attachment to the solo repertoire. They need to be de-hypnotised, Helmut Blume of McGill stressed, and directed to ensemble work where the rewards, both personal and social, are worthwhile and still relatively certain. Similarly students of musicology need to be weaned from the now-obsolete expectation of academic appointment at the conclusion of postgraduate work and challenged, instead, with the scarcity in Canada of first-rate musical scholars in journalism, radio, television and librarianship.

Among the handful of papers on topics outside the main theme of the conference, that of John Shepherd of Manchester Polytechnic appeared to offer the most wide-ranging implications. In a critique of the theories of Langer and Meyer, he attacked the notion that music is an informationally closed mode of symbolism. Using structural methodology, Shepherd argued convincingly that it is, in fact, an open mode, singularly fitted to demonstrate the dynamic structuring of social life. His cross-culturally grounded theory of the relationship between music and society outlined at the CAUSM meeting will shortly be published in book form. It deserves critical attention.

In general the ratio of criticism to information in the papers presented at the 1976 CAUSM Conference was rather less than one might expect at a gathering of academics. Nevertheless they contributed significantly to the inventory of an emerging Canadian experience of Music in the University. Participation was well worthwhile.

NATIONAL CHOREOGRAPHIC SUMMER SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, GUILDFORD  
JULY 25-AUGUST 7, 1976

HUGH DAVIES

The Gulbenkian Foundation held its second National Choreographic Summer School for a fortnight from the end of July at the University of Surrey. The object was to enable composers and choreographers to work together much more closely than is

normally possible. The original aim was to select six choreographers and six composers, but this was increased to eight of each after the applicants had been interviewed. On the music side two additional applicants were invited to attend the course as 'musicians' (I shall here refer to them as performers, using the term musicians to denote composers and performers together); they were comparable to the 24 dancers who were selected, and had no guarantee of being able to work as composers — though in fact both musicians had a couple of such opportunities, just as two of the dancers who had also applied as choreographers had an opportunity to work as choreographers. All costs, including food and accommodation on the course, were covered by the Gulbenkian Foundation, with some assistance from the Arts Council of Great Britain.

The School was directed by Norman Morrice, choreographer and former artistic director of Ballet Rambert, with a faculty consisting of John Herbert McDowell (composer), Adam Gatehouse (musical director of Ballet Rambert), Mary Hinkson (modern dance) and Piers Beaumont (classical ballet). John Herbert McDowell was particularly appreciated by both musicians and dancers; he has worked with several modern dance companies in New York, has composed over 150 scores for dance and has himself choreographed 16 dance works, in addition to composing for concerts, TV, films and theatre (also directing and on occasion appearing as an actor!) Greatly appreciated, by the musicians as much as by the dancers, was the contribution of the other American, Mary Hinkson, and in particular the four one-hour sessions (increased by popular demand) that this former principal dancer with the Martha Graham Company gave for the musicians and those dancers who had done little or no modern dance (including three from the Royal Ballet School). The only real way to understand and learn about even the most basic movements was to be down on the floor trying them oneself. Unfortunately this is not possible with classical ballet, as we learned from a fascinating lecture that Piers Beaumont of the Royal Ballet School gave just for the musicians. He showed how the different parts of the body are moved in ballet, and how this differs from everyday usage; it is remarkable how little of the whole body is actually positively used and how few elements in innumerable combinations comprise the whole of classical ballet. (But then we have the same in classical music: 'you mean to say only seven different notes?')

The composers covered a wide variety of styles and approaches, ranging from one well-known figure (Jonathan Harvey), through some who are beginning to achieve a reputation in their own fields (Gregory Rose, Ilona Sekacz, Judith Weir), to those who are or had just finished studying (Avril Anderson, David Sutton and the Australian Carl Vine), plus myself (no comment). The two performers were Christopher Burn and Martin Jacklin, both of whom had also just finished their studies. (The provision for including composers and choreographers from Australia and Canada was introduced this year and both countries sent a choreographer.) About half of the musicians had worked on one fairly substantial dance score before applying for the course and three had played piano for dance classes. A further requirement was that each composer should be a competent instrumentalist, since the ten musicians had to provide all the music; this was in contrast to the two dozen dancers who were available to the choreographers (most of whom did in fact also dance at some point). In fact we discovered — too late to try it out — that we could muster the exact ensemble for Ives' *The Unanswered Question!* Apparently the involvement of the musicians in every aspect of the course was greater than in the first year, when the publicity did not reach as wide a cross-section of musicians as it did dancers. To remedy this the Gulbenkian's administrator, Gale Law, visited various music colleges and university departments earlier in the year to ensure that the students would all know about it. (Indeed it seems that students from the Royal College of Music in particular are doing very well for themselves in competitions just now, and two of them were on this course.)

A typical day was as follows, beginning at 9 a.m. The dancers had a 90 minute class in classical ballet followed by one in modern dance, while the musicians met together. The remaining hour before lunch was used differently on different days. Sometimes there were special classes simultaneously in classical ballet, modern dance and music between which everyone was free to choose, with a strong urging to go to one that one did not normally do (as with Mary Hinkson's classes mentioned above). Sometimes there was a special session, usually musical, involving everyone on the course, which included a vast percussion ensemble in which the musicians directed small groups made up of all the dancers and choreographers (which for some of them was a highlight of the course), a concert of short pieces by all the musicians — (planned earlier that morning, each illustrating an aspect of time), a performance by Jonathan Harvey of a new work, *Meditation* for cello and tape (premiered the day before for the musicians alone) and demonstrations by Carl Vine of the EMS Synthi and by myself of some of my invented instruments. Some of these events had been specifically asked for by participants. As regards Jonathan Harvey's performance: what an ideal situation for performing and listening to music! A hot day, in a large cool room, playing to an audience of some 40 friends who are all totally relaxed, comfortable and receptive, a music that is expressive, resonant, deeply felt and not unnecessarily virtuosic, played by the composer (what instrument could be more suitable in this situation than the

cello?) with a tape made from pre-recorded material played on the very same instrument. Added to which there was the feeling of the privilege of hearing the first two performances of a new work, given the emphasis placed on premieres by most concert promoters (in the strange outside world we had almost forgotten during he course).

After lunch Norman Morrice's masterclass for all the participants summed up the previous evening's results and achievements and gave us various individual and group exercises to work out. For me the most interesting was trying the opening section of Anthony Tudor's ballet *Dark Elegies* to Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*, where the musicians joined the dancers in several identical groups of seven, though unfortunately it contained a very tricky sequence of steps at one point with which even the dancers had problems. Maybe it would have been more effective if it had been one of Norman Morrice's own works or even something created on the spot. The actual process of making the movements oneself in a group had the same illuminating immediacy for me that the percussion ensemble had for the dancers, though each event seemed fairly commonplace to the normal practitioners of that medium. At the end of the masterclasses we were set a theme for the project which was then worked on for the next three hours by different pairings of the choreographers and composers; all eight projects were presented the same evening. During the second week we had instead three two-day projects, for which some eight or nine hours were available, including the evenings when no projects were presented.

The musicians' sessions in the mornings were partly taken up by two of us presenting their work each day for about 45 minutes. They also included visits to each of the dance classes both at the very beginning and at the end of the course and allowed time for us to prepare our contributions to the percussion ensemble and the concert of short 'time' pieces. (These plus the nine workshop projects made a total of eleven pieces per composer, with two more each by the two performers, making — with allowance for collaborations — some 86 pieces, durations from two to about 15 minutes, produced during the fortnight). After each evening of presentations the musicians would discuss each one in turn the next morning with an unusual frankness. These sessions were very valuable and choreographers often came to them (torn between them and the dance classes going on at the same time immediately above the room we were in). A very striking aspect of the course was the genuine interest and involvement of such diverse composers and choreographers in each other's work, with no feeling of rivalry and competition that is so often felt on such occasions. On the last evening a collaboration of three composers

and three choreographers produced a very impressive joint work, unusual enough in music but unheard of in dance! We had excellent facilities in Guildford: the music department's recording studio (used in their Tonmeister course) run for us by a student Philip Chambon, the department's percussion instruments (supplemented by some brought by the musicians), a total of three Synthesis, plus a playback and amplification system installed in the main hall by the very hard-working technical director of the course, Cees de Vries.

The themes for the workshop projects, such as 'Rondo', 'The Unexpected' and 'Use an Inanimate Object' were not always helpful except as something to cling to when faced with a total blank on being told to 'go off and create'. It was, for example, usually possible to work in an idea that one had had even before that particular project was set and one had paired up with a choreographer; maybe the themes were not limiting enough? It's very hard to know. Sometimes one tried to keep to the theme and eventually gave up, or just worked it in somewhere as a concession. Even when a piece was abandoned after a couple of hours, a replacement was put together at the last minute; nobody ever came empty-handed to the evening presentation. These had of necessity a conflicting role: even though nobody expected a finished, polished work after only a few hours' preparation, the results were nonetheless being presented before an audience made up of the rest of us, and it was hard not to judge them as if they were finished works. By the end of these evenings, with eight works presented and discussed (following a long and strenuous day), one tended to find concentration hard, both as audience and as performer. To end the evening, after the performances were over by around 10.15 p.m., free wine was laid on, and a bar was specially kept open until midnight for us thanks to the foresight of Gale Law, who quickly became known as 'The Computer' for his efforts in distributing practice studios for working on the projects (rooms of different sizes, some with and some without pianos) to suit everyone's conflicting requirements.

The projects featured an extraordinary range of results; people could usually be seen from one day to the next to learn more from failures than from successes. Naturally, working at great speed, one felt that one wasn't doing what one would normally do. But then there is almost always a modifying factor, as, for example, when one is composing a work for a particular performer or group. I feel that the most effective way that this works is not when the composer imposes his usual style and content on to the performers, nor when the composer works in all the specialities and 'tricks' of the musicians, but when he discovers a tangential area which is recognisable to both sides and is as yet unexplored by either. I will

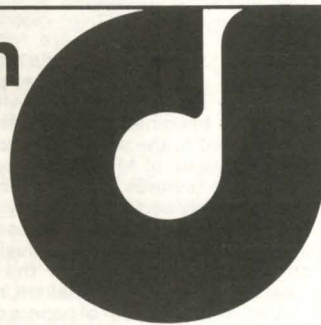
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mention some of the most memorable and unusual presentations, with some of my own ideas and intentions, given in no particular sequence of occurrence or preference.

The most untypical uses of space were made by the Canadian choreographer Anna Wyman. With composer David Sutton she put on an outdoor performance that started in a small amphitheatre and spread out backwards and upwards over a long slope between buildings towards the tower of Guildford Cathedral, with various people (not all chosen from the ten musicians) adding sounds from various hidden positions as the dancers moved further outwards. She also staged a candlelit ritual with Ilona Sekacz in which the two of them were the musicians, with some added sounds from the dancers, including a tall man wearing the notes removed from a xylophone as an insect-like costume that clattered and clanked as he slowly advanced across the stage. Choreographer Royston Maldoom and I had also been the performers in our collaboration, and we were each responsible for part of the other's proper preserve: he suggested the sounds for some parts and I choreographed about 90 seconds of the piece. Because our way of working was refined down to basic elements, the sounds mainly produced by amplified natural found objects and the movements based on those of animals, plants, birds and insects, it was much easier for us to exchange roles than in a similar and briefer episode in the collaboration of Richard Slaughter (who wrote a short song with the words 'We have swappèd over') and Judith Weir, both of whom expressed surprise at the difficulties they had had. Judith Weir also explored other related areas, collaborating with Anna Wyman on a piece in which three musicians (instruments chosen individually by the dancers) 'played' the movements of three dancers and — once again with Richard Slaughter — involving the dancers playing percussion instruments in an instrumental ensemble in between appearing on the stage, with her cues as conductor controlling the course of the dance as well as that of the music.

Carl Vine, who was building a new, very portable synthesizer that he unfortunately did not finish during the course, provided a wide range of approaches, including a very amusing collaboration with his fellow Australian, Graeme Murphy, on the subject of kangaroos, which included a recorded description of them read by the composer in a mock German accent, with occasional fictional attributes slipped in. Since this was taken from a card that he had received that morning, the arrival of the morning's mail — which invariably contained something for him — was a cue for 'here's your score for today's project!' In my own collaboration with Graeme Murphy, the dancers started by singing equivalents to their movements; later on props were added in the shape of long

cardboard tubes which were whispered into, drummed on, slapped against each other and on the floor. It was not possible to find a way for the dancers to produce the music throughout, so I added drums and a short vocal passage, and asked other dancers rather than musicians to do this, choosing as drummers three dancers who I knew particularly wanted to perform musically.

Similarly, musicians were used on stage a number of times. Gregory Rose crouched motionlessly against an upturned table during his collaboration with Kristin Donovan, halfway through which he and the table were turned so that he ended up, still motionless, in a very awkward-looking position. In the same composer's collaboration with Richard Slaughter he played violin and Ilona Sekacz played vibraphone on stage, the action going on around and between them. In the middle the two musicians exchanged both positions and instruments, which (even knowing that they both played the violin) was an astonishing effect. One of Jonathan Harvey's collaborations involved at one point a single held note played by musicians in a slow procession around the perimeter of the stage, and he himself appeared as the centrepiece in the six-way collaboration, miming, without his instrument, the cello part that he had previously recorded, while the rest of the action around him was related to his presence in a variety of ways. In Carl Vine's collaboration with Kristin Donovan the composer wandered about the stage with two small transistor radios that he had bought for the purpose and wired up in such a way that electronic noises were produced from interference between them. The use of vocal rather than instrumental music is also somehow more dramatic (and needs to be used with considerable discretion), as in a jazzy 'scat' vocal trio by Avril Anderson and in a song cycle to Chinese texts composed and sung by Ilona Sekacz with guitar accompaniment.

Due to very limited choice, little use was made of lighting. However, in a solo dance choreographed by Gideon Avrahami the space in which the dance took place was lit by an epidiacope, with the dancer at times like a moth attracted to the artificial light. The music composed by Gregory Rose reflected these enormously magnified flutterings.

I was always surprised at the large ensembles for which Judith Weir in particular managed to find time to write, given that one was usually required to rehearse or record for at least one other composer while trying to finish one's own composition. There were different ways of setting about the collaboration. One could sit in the practice studio for the whole time, writing the music as the choreography developed, so that the composer could have a say in the way the whole work progressed. Alternatively one could go away to write it as soon as the choreographer could give one an

## *Simon Bainbridge*

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idea of how his or her contribution would be (some could not do so until it was actually finished). Then again one could agree to be totally independent and only put the two elements together for the first time at the performance in the evening (Royston Maldoom and Jonathan Harvey tried combining a developing music to a short dance that was repeated several times). Indeed many of the musical performances were completely unrehearsed, with dinner-time taken up with snatching something to eat in between copying out the last of the parts and talking them through with the individual performers.

On one occasion I made a very rough tape of how the music would be, since a piano version would have been totally useless. In my collaboration with Tamara McLorg I used an ostinato tape that I made very quickly for the dancers to have something to work with, the live instruments being added only in the performance. When I tried the tape out I felt that it speeded up the total result too much, so the instrumental music I wrote consisted of slow, overlapping mellow sounds on cello, cor anglais and low marimba in contrast to the light, bubbling high electronic sounds on the tape. The movement of the fairly active ensemble dance lay in between these two extremes, and I treated it compositionally as one layer of the music, not only in tempo but somehow almost as it were in pitch as well. A recording of the music by itself would need a layer added to replace the dance. One choreographer, David Bintley, preferred working with tape, which he wanted as quickly as possible, and seemed uneasy when any of the music was played live. This was because of his intense respect for the music and his desire to really know it before adding his own choreography. Although this is the traditional approach to which we were trying to find alternatives, and some of us found it a bit frustrating, the creative development of this very young classical choreographer from the Royal Ballet School over the fortnight was very exciting to observe.

What visible, tangible results are there now that we are no longer all together in the same place with no other commitments but to work together? Few of us would deny that they have changed substantially. Those who are based in or near London have tried meeting one evening a week in a workshop situation, without any intentions of producing an end product, and with the dancers given the same creative status as the choreographers and musicians. Something similar was attempted after the first course but did not last. We too have had difficulties, starting in mid-August when many people were away and on holiday; at the time of writing the studio that we use is having heating installed, but we hope to try again soon. Undoubtedly we cannot succeed unless we find other people to join us; given everyone's conflicting and busy timetables there are not enough of us to do more than form a small nucleus each week.

Another more immediate result is a BBC TV film of about one hour, directed by Bob Lockyer, which was scheduled to be shown on December 12. The Gulbenkian Foundation only agreed that the BBC could film the course under what are unusual conditions for such a documentary (but are exactly the same for some kinds of documentary, such as wildlife films): the film crew could film anything provided that they did not disturb the activity that was taking place, did not ask for retakes or for anyone to do something in a different way for the sake of a better 'shot'. This worked very well for us, and Bob Lockyer became just another participant, staying at Guildford even during the several days in the middle of the course when his crew was working elsewhere. Finally Royston Maldoom and I have just started on a work, based on our course collaboration, for a new dance group, Gideon Avrahami's EMMA Dance Company in Loughborough, to be premiered in January. The Gulbenkian Foundation has made money available to commission works such as this which come into being as extensions of the course. I believe that this is the first such collaboration and look forward to experiencing others that will certainly happen before long.

The Gulbenkian Foundation intends to hold a third course next summer, again at Guildford University. If this continues, in five or ten years the whole of dance and music for dance in Britain and elsewhere (since it is the first and so far the only such course in the world) cannot but be greatly changed. It will be very stimulating to be involved in this in some way.

DURHAM ORIENTAL MUSIC FESTIVAL  
AUGUST 7-20, 1976

LYNDON REYNOLDS

The Oriental Festival, held at Durham in August this year, was an entirely unique event for this country: two weeks of music from the Orient, including music from China, Iran, Vietnam, Iraq, Korea, Japan, India and Thailand, together with lectures, both scholarly and unscholarly, on music of these and other cultures.

When we first heard rumours about the Festival some of us were a little incredulous: it seemed too good to be true. In the event it really was splendid. How soon it will be before there is another, one cannot dare guess; it must have cost a great deal in effort and headache. The Festival was conceived by Mr. Keith Pratt (Spalding Lecturer in Chinese at Durham) and Mr. Philip Rawson (Curator of the Gulbenkian Museum of Oriental Art. Mr. Pratt points out that

whilst Oriental musicians study and appreciate Western music, Western musicians are still rather in the dark about Oriental music. The aim of the Festival was to begin to redress this imbalance.

I believe there is a hope at Durham for there to be an Oriental Music Department. Universities are feeling the pinch these days, but I hope the idea materialises. The extensive videotaping that went on during the Festival would provide an invaluable basis for teaching, and it seems, for a university that has both thriving Oriental and music departments, an opportunity not to be missed. The study of non-European music is very slight in this country and is very rarely treated as music rather than an aspect of specific cultures; Durham has aroused our hopes.

There follows a review of the Festival, but of course this must be highly selective, and the selection is personal.

Dr. Hormoz Farhat of Farabi University in Tehran gave a useful introductory lecture on the classical music of Iran, discussing both its history and theory. Classical music in Iran has had a considerable revival since the 1920s, but from the 16th century until the present century musical scholarship virtually disappeared, and musicianship became a private domestic affair, this because the prevailing Islamic sect disapproved of music. Before the 16th century there had been a rich culture of musicianship and musicology, associated with the prodigious Islamic scholarship of Iran. Since the musical revival music has again been studied and researched, and it is played well and often by groups associated with radio and television. There has been one innovation: the practice of several instruments playing a composition together in heterophony, as well as solo improvisation, which remains the heart of the music. Dr. Farhat did not discuss folk music which, unlike classical music, is highly diverse and regional, nor pop music which he said was not worthy of our attention.

Two concerts of Iranian music were given by musicians from the National Iranian Radio and Television Centre for the Preservation and Propagation of Tradition Iranian Music. Very few of us had ever heard Iranian music before, and we were most impressed. I think the performances that aroused most interest were those of the Ney (the Iranian flute) and the human voice. I have never seen music performed with such quiet seriousness and intensity. The music is purely melodic, rather than harmonic, and depends for its expression and invention upon very elaborate ornamentation. It is largely improvised, resting on a tradition of about 300 aurally transmitted 'pieces' that are not actually compositions at all but something hard to define - each is something for which an infinite number of performances can be correct representations or realisations.

Professor Tran Van Khe, of the Institute of Musicology in Paris, gave a lecture and two concerts of Vietnamese music, performing with his family. His lecture, which was one of the most entertaining of the festival, concerned the combined influences of China and India upon Vietnamese art and music, and the purely indigenous Vietnamese elements that occur. For example, most instruments used are Chinese but the drum is of Indian origin, and its playing involves a system of rhythmic cycles, with echoic names for strokes, which is analogous to the Indian system and has no parallel in China. On the other hand such instruments as the clappers or the one-stringed zither are purely Vietnamese. The music uses a system of modes. These are not just scales, as in China, but scales with specific ornamentations on specific pitches. Probably because of this subtlety I found the music very hard to follow; I think one would need to be more familiar with it.

There were no concerts of Indonesian music, but there were three lectures on Javanese music that aroused great interest in those unfamiliar with it. Dr. Ernst Heins, of the Jaap Kunst Centre of Ethnomusicology in Amsterdam, gave two lectures. In the first he gave a clear and simple account of the nature of the gamelan, the part each instrument plays in the music, the processes of elaboration used and so on. In his second lecture he gave an account of the contexts in which the gamelan takes part, and the culture, aesthetics and mysticism that surrounds it. We were told, for example, that gamelan is always 'in the air' so to speak, and the musicians merely make it audible. This, together with the veneration paid to the gamelan itself, means stardom, at least traditionally, is unknown - it is the gamelan who speaks, not the musicians. And the audience does not listen in concert fashion and clap afterwards, but talks and drinks and so on; not because the music is background music, but because it is all-encompassing. Dr. Heins concluded his lecture by playing examples of some new developments, especially the work of Ki Nartosabho, who uses many innovations (for example triple time, instead of the usual duple time; elements imported from Bali; two nuclear melodies at once and so on). Ki Nartosabho has de-mystified the gamelan, playing short virtuosic pieces in concert contexts and using short understandable texts instead of the long obscure epics. His music is rooted on the earth instead of looking upwards to the Gods, and sounds rather pop; no doubt the Western influence is to blame.

Miss Jeune Scott-Kemball's lecture on the gamelan itself, as a collection of instruments, was one of the high points of the festival. We were told more about the mysticism of the gamelan and given an account of the making of a Great Gong, a rare event, which Miss Scott-Kemball had recorded on slide and tape. For a while Java came to Durham, such was Miss Scott-Kemball's power of enchantment.

In some ways, the most important inclusions of the festival

concerned the music of Korea, for whilst Korean music is virtually unknown in the West, it is rich, vital and approachable. Mr. Jonathan Condit, of Cambridge University, gave two lectures, the first being a very clear and pithy account of the instruments and genres of Korean music, and the second presenting his own research and conclusions concerning the evolution of Korean music over the centuries by extensive elaboration upon simple Chinese tunes, until the original tunes are lost to the ear and forgotten; for example *each crotchet* of a Chinese tune ending up as *four bars* of music in 5/4 time. For scholarly lucidity Mr. Condit's lecture must take the festival prize. I am sure his research could leave 'spin-offs' for contemporary composers.

Members of the National Classical Music Institute of Seoul gave two concerts which included music from all the major traditions – Court music, Aristocratic and Folk. The latter is not folk in our sense, but is named in contrast to the Court and Aristocratic traditions. Court music and, to a lesser extent, Aristocratic music, are austere and often dispassionate, striving to create that calm of mind required by Confucian ideals, whilst not disrupting the noble thoughts of the listeners. Folk music, on the other hand, is highly passionate and often fast and syncopated. We heard examples in this genre of Sanjo, involving a solo instrument with a drum, and of P'ansori, or Korean opera, for one singer and drum, the singer accomplishing all the roles and narration (for as long as eight hours for a full performance).

Most Korean music depends upon extreme ornamentation of individual notes: so much so that 'ornamentation' is a poor description since the 'melody' itself is merely a skeletal entity, not a tune that is embellished by ornament, as in, say, baroque music. Moreover, the Korean sense of pitch is highly fluid so that glissandi, especially the characteristic wide vibrato effects, become the heart of the music, not an ornamental device. Korean music, because of its richness and complexity, and because in it are found together aesthetic attitudes normally found apart, must be an invaluable tradition for Westerners to study. It combines typically Chinese musical ideas with an emotional warmth as great as in Indian music: even the Court music, for all its austerity, conveys a sense of sheer well-being. And whilst its techniques are often the epitome of being non-Western, the music is approachable and easy to enjoy.

There was much more in the festival, but it would take too long to give a full account. But I should mention the performance by Mr. Tong Kinwoon of Hong Kong, upon the Chinese Ch'in. It was a pity we could not have heard something about the involved technique of this instrument and its association with the high culture of the Chinese literati. I hope Mr. Tong, who is a charming man and an

excellent scholar, will return to this country to instruct as well as to play.

Not every event in the Festival was successful, of course, but the majority of events were. The only sour note was caused by the television cameramen, who tended to intrude too much into the performances and aroused much bad feeling. Sometimes an audience can be made to feel like screen extras, a necessary complication in putting on a television show. It was after all our (the audience's) festival, a live event.

It is a strange experience to be bombarded with music from such diverse cultures for two weeks; we often covered, by concerts and lectures, three cultures in a day. Some people got intellectual indigestion, and some found the confusion exhilarating. Several people were quite convinced that the noise in fact produced by one of the canteen toasters was somebody rehearsing something somewhere. It is certainly a freak culture that submits itself to this sort of polycultural bombardment, but I think we should rejoice in it, not erect barriers and limits or build walls against experience.

On the other hand, what does such a festival achieve, since one can only glimpse each culture? For to appreciate a music requires continued exposure and familiarity. One rational justification is that the Festival provided a sampler (a sort of global village bazaar), so that an audience can hear what there is and choose what to follow up afterwards. (But following-up may be impossible if the music one chooses is under-recorded, or, more subtly, is the kind of medium that does not record well.)

Then again, is 'Oriental music' a coherent category at all? Is it not an assorted bag of disparate entities, linked only by a very broad geographical coincidence? Whatever unity there is in the concept is really not because *they* (the Orientals) collectively do something similar, but because *we* (the Westerners) have gone off on a curious tack of our own by elaborating a system of harmonic progression and perhaps, above all, attaching music to notation. Thus, the further we go back in our own development and the closer we get to our own folk traditions, the less we diverge from the Orient.

Is Oriental music a useful area of study for Western musicians? After all, Oriental music often suffers from contact with the West. And it is ironic that most Eastern traditions have a very strong role of teacher and tradition, whereas in the West it is often the tear-aways and tradition-deserters who turn to the East for creative inspiration.

However, our present intellectual climate tends to be mixed and cosmopolitan, and there is no situation of *isolated purity* to protect. We may as well look into the East carefully and profoundly, and we

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may thereby re-discover elements of our own culture that we have lost (as has happened to some extent with Eastern religion and philosophy), and I am sure that our interest will be useful and encouraging to the East where its own traditions are fading, as is often the case. I hope those ministerial representatives who attended the festival took note of the enthusiastic responses given to their countries' music. And we should remember that, contrary to what the National Front might think, many, perhaps most, of the world's great cultural, artistic and spiritual achievements have come about as a result of social and cultural exchange.

Dr. Farhat, during an open discussion on East-West influences, said that Western music had reached an impasse and that Eastern influence could take us forward. He pointed out that Persian poetry and miniature painting both became stale after reaching their zeniths and that it was Western influence, used creatively and selectively, that revived them. Whether or not one believes that Western music as a whole has reached an impasse is irrelevant. Dr. Farhat's point is that in an impasse (which situation can occur at any time) an outside influence can be a new inspiration. The effect of such an influence cannot be predicted, or restricted by doctrine; artists will take from the foreign influence just what they require. (Steve Reich's experience of African music is a good example of this.)

The discussion session as a whole was rather disappointing, but really only because the issues involved are too weighty for a session of this sort. Speakers tended to dwell upon distinctions such as that Eastern music is static, whilst Western music is dynamic; or that Eastern music is pentatonic and Western music is diatonic. There is truth in these ideas, but they are too sweepingly and simply expressed. But that is inevitable in a brief discussion where anything as diverse as 'Eastern music' is to be discussed.

There was also a feeling expressed that Eastern music is hard for us to understand. The idea of a great barrier between East and West is a false one. Anything unfamiliar is hard to understand, and anything coming from an unfamiliar culture may be hard to understand as well, but this is not a barrier but a difficulty that can be overcome. Some Oriental music, of course, just *is* hard to understand, by anybody, just as some Western music is. Sometimes a musical form may lose its strength when removed from some context, for example, social, ritual or theatrical contexts, and this problem is more frequently met in Eastern music than Western. But this again is a difficulty, not a barrier.

The British tradition of Oriental study is perhaps too timid and tentative. We should be more prepared to plunge into other cultures and really come to appreciate them. Perhaps this Festival was the first step in the right direction.

MUSICA NOVA, GLASGOW  
SEPTEMBER 12-18, 1976

BARBARA WINROW

The Scottish National Orchestra's third Musica Nova, held at Glasgow University, continued a venture which, though still to some extent suffering from teething troubles, has considerable potential if it can define clearly its own exact identity and purpose. This seemed to be the general consensus of opinion among those who attended it, and it was a promising feature of the week that lively discussion about some of its more controversial aspects led to the drawing up by participants of a number of positive proposals for the future, which were submitted to the organisers.

Not having myself attended either of the previous Festivals (in 1971 and 1973), it is essentially in such forward-looking terms that I must discuss this one and the balance between its diverse strands. Basically the situation was that four orchestral works, commissioned for the occasion, were presented in a concert forming the climax and conclusion of the Festival, the four composers concerned having been, as it were, introduced at the beginning of the week through a BBC Invitation Concert by the New Music Group of Scotland, who played a chamber work by each. The intervening days were filled by open rehearsals of the commissioned works, seminars for 'advanced composition students' conducted by the guest composers and a variety of evening events, including a choral concert in Glasgow Cathedral at which Penderecki conducted the Scottish premiere of his *Magnificat*.

While competition as such was no part of the Festival's intention, I think most people tacitly conceded pride of place to Harrison Birtwistle's *Melencolia I*, a remarkable work given its finishing touch by the superb playing of Alan Hacker. Two string orchestras, 'placed distinctly apart' create an extraordinary sound world, through which the clarinet inexorably pursues an ever-widening path of exploration, accompanied by comments from the harp (also an essentially solo part, ably performed by Rhona MacKay whose name should surely have appeared on the programme). Birtwistle's fascination with the paradoxes of time comes to the fore in the strange ending where free contrapuntal permutations of melodic and rhythmic units by separate string groups finally coalesce into stillness and are filtered out; and, out of nothing, the clarinet quietly and self-absorbedly embarks afresh on what Birtwistle calls a 'beginning' - only to be cut off decisively by the harp.

Unlike some of the critics, I found Morton Feldman's *Orchestra* also a very satisfying piece to hear. Feldman's sound world, in

## John Casken

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many ways the antithesis of Birtwistle's, is equally distinctive in its translucent, ethereal, but nonetheless resilient mosaic. Among the elements which stood out from this were the semitonal descent in the cellos (a recurrent topic in discussion of the piece, in which Feldman persistently, and understandably, refused to describe what is, after all, a monochrome streak in a multi-coloured fabric as a 'chromatic scale') and the lovely metamorphosis at the end into a coda by two widely-spaced pianos and six softly-played gongs.

Faced with the somewhat formidable challenge of standing beside two such highly individual works, George Newson's *To the Edge of Doom* nevertheless triumphantly preserved a convincing character of its own. Its relation to the Shakespeare sonnet 'Let me not to the marriage of true minds', explained at some length in the programme note, has actually no direct relevance for the listener, and Newson's obvious interest in literary and other non-musical terms of reference found a more direct outlet in the chamber concert when his explicitly theatrical *Valentine* was presented. However, his work is well integrated musically, and *To the Edge of Doom* made an effective opening to the evening. In saying that David Dorward's Piano Concerto (played by Ronald Stevenson and stringless orchestra except for two double basses) survived the challenge less well and tended to emerge as a series of clichés, it should be pointed out that a variety of factors probably prevented Dorward's abilities being shown to best advantage. The choice of medium (perhaps connected in some way with the almost uncanny symmetry of disposition of forces in the concert as a whole) inevitably invited direct comparison with the Birtwistle; and its position as the final (apparently a last-minute alteration) and longest (and incidentally least rehearsed) item of the concert placed on it more strain than it could well stand. A shorter orchestral work, early in the programme, might well have had more success.

Of the other evening events, Jane Manning's and Barry Guy's late-night recital provided some pleasant variety and the electronic concert showed a courageous desire to extend the Festival's territory. This latter event was accompanied by a sort of 'Mrs. Dale's Diary' by Peter Zinovieff – entertaining enough in itself, though advertised under various misleading titles connected with electronic music. The two forums were presumably intended to promote public involvement, but unfortunately the brains-trust set-up, in which an over-large panel faced a scattered audience across a large bleak hall with speech-acoustic problems, was not particularly helpful in furthering this aim, though some good points were made on both sides.

The choral concert is a problematical event to discuss. It was impossible not to welcome the chance of hearing a live performance of the Penderecki but, all things considered, it is questionable whether this was the best occasion for it. The concert did not really integrate into the overall structure of the week, and Hamilton's *Epitaph for this world and Time* did not pair very satisfactorily with the *Magnificat*. Attendance at rehearsals was restricted by various factors, such as distance and time-table clashes; and, in a Musica Nova context, the enormous expense of mounting such an event might perhaps have been better diverted to other purposes.

It is here, in fact, that we come to the central question – for whom should Musica Nova sessions be primarily intended? The organisers' hope was that Glasgow's concert-goers would eavesdrop for a week on rehearsals and discussions and thereby lose some of their inhibitions concerning 'new music'; while, as a by-product, student composers could talk to more experienced and established colleagues. Laudable as these twin aims may seem in theory, in practice the scheme tended to fall between the two. The public fairly predictably, flocked to the cathedral, came to the concert of commissions in passable numbers (one naturally does not meditate, in such a context, on the size of Glasgow's population), attended other concerts and forums thinly and rehearsals hardly at all. Student and other young composers, on the other hand, seeking maximum feedback from the week, often felt somewhat frustrated. The seminar groups (again meeting, unsuitably, in large halls) proved to be too large and, as always in such circumstances, the sessions tended either to develop into lectures or to be dominated by one or two people. Furthermore, a certain barrier to informal contact tended to exist between the students (who lived in halls of residence) and the guest composers (who lived in a hotel), so that the former found little opportunity, for example, to discuss scores with the latter and, with one notable exception, none to discuss them with the professional players. The exception arose from a spontaneous offer by Alan Hacker, who spent a whole afternoon playing pieces written for him literally overnight. In the light of this experience, one of the most important recommendations finally drawn up by participants was that a chamber ensemble (perhaps drawn largely from the orchestra) should be engaged which would play and discuss participants' pieces and provide soloists to lead some of the seminars. Seminar groups, it was unanimously agreed, should be doubled in number and halved in size; five students with one composer would give much better value for time in terms of personal exchange than ten with two.

The moral of all this seems fairly clear. Musica Nova is, in principle a Good Thing (one might say an Excellent Thing) and should exert all its will to survive – to which end it must grow and respond to the demands of its immediate environment like all successful organisms. No-one would decry or seek to check its

endeavours to narrow the notorious gap between the 'public' and 'contemporary music'; but everyone knows by now that this is a sticky problem (calling, I personally think, for skilled research as well as missionary work), and in the short term the most urgent need is to remember that charity begins at home and concentrate more on the existing, and admittedly more specialist, demand. If, in its next incarnation, Musica Nova caters liberally for its future composers – the people, after all, who have scraped together the cost and travelled from all over the country and committed themselves wholly and seriously to the week – then it will have established for itself a strong nucleus with, in fact, an intrinsic long-term interest in promoting the public relations of 'new music'. If it fails to do this, it risks decaying from within – a common enough fate of new enterprises – and all wider issues will then be irrelevant.

#### WARSAW AUTUMN FESTIVAL SEPTEMBER 18-26, 1976

JOHN SHEPHERD

To attempt to attend all the events at a Warsaw Autumn Festival is an exercise in concentration that certainly leaves one satiated, if not a little light-headed. At this year's twentieth Festival there were 22 concerts and eight press conferences, most of the latter lasting in the region of three hours. Add to this the copious programme notes – often written, it would seem, by over-imaginative commentators or composers whose thoughts were more interesting than their music – and the scene was set for an immersion into the world of contemporary music that was nothing if not intensive.

The statistics alone are impressive. In nine days 93 pieces were presented from 20 countries. Of these 32 were by Polish composers, 62 were being given for the first time in Poland and 15 were receiving their world premieres (including, according to the press release, Boguslaw Schaffer's *Missa elettronica*, which was certainly performed at least twice before the Festival). All the concerts were recorded by the Polish State Radio and records of some of the Polish works were issued towards the end of the Festival.

Every festival, it can be supposed, develops its own particular atmosphere. That of this year's Warsaw Autumn can best be described as a discreet yet fervid feverishness. Any piece that was loud (preferably with a dozen or more percussionists) was generally received with enthusiasm. Typical in this respect was a raucous performance of Charles Ives' *Three Places in New England*, which would have been lengthily applauded had it not been for the indecent haste of the encore (Jacek Kasprzyk conducting the Cracow Orchestra). This travesty of an interpretation was awarded the Composers' Union prize for the best Polish conducting performance of the Festival, a decision, one felt, that had more to do with internal musical politics than with isolated artistic judgment.

The nadir of cacophony was reached, however, with a performance of contemporary Yugoslav music given by Anton Nanut and the Slovene Philharmonic from Ljubljana. But while the audience approved of the Ives and tolerated the Yugoslav incident (a case of trial by sonic rape), they were, on another occasion, unable to give a decent hearing to the subdued minimalism of Morton Feldman's *Vertical Thoughts I* for two pianos. It was indeed unfortunate that the fine and sensitive performance of Roger Woodward and Robert Curry should have been spoilt by deliberate audience noise.

Yet on the whole, the somewhat unreal intensity of the Festival gave rise to happy rather than sad occasions, and none more so than the concert given by the King's Singers of works written especially for them (*The House of Sleep* by Richard Rodney Bennett, Berio's *Cries of London*, Penderecki's *Ecloga VIII* and *Time Piece* by Paul Patterson). Both *Cries of London* (1974) and *Ecloga VIII* (1972) are fine pieces that give revealing reign to the King's Singers' considerable abilities. But it was Patterson's *Time Piece* (1973) which made the most impact. *Time Piece* is a half-humorous, half-serious work that takes as its subject matter the effect of mechanical time on the pristine serenity of Paradise. Initially 'the world is created in mysterious tonal substance' which leads to a 'sweet sounding Paradise'. Then Adam tries to interest Eve in the rhythm of time. As a result of this, the original symbolic act, 'time [shows] its horrible face and [ruins] the peace of Paradise'. After an appropriately mechanical fugue God decides he can't stand it any longer and orders all the clocks and watches to cease. Peace returns to Paradise.

The humour in the piece depends on the superbly integrated parody of the music (commercial clichés, blues, negro spirituals and so on) as well as on the dry pithiness of the text: in the beginning Paradise is 'groovy', while at the conclusion we are informed in McLuhanesque fashion that it is 'time, gentlemen, please' and that 'there was no time for a long time'. Through this humour it was possible to discern a paradoxically serious comment on modern man's serious attitude towards his often frenetic activities.

Another lesser known figure who produced a memorable work was the Dutch composer Peter Schat. *Canto General* (1974) for mezzo-soprano, violin and piano is a memorial piece for Salvador Allende which uses a text by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. The work's form was inspired by the architectural qualities of the

Salginatobel Bridge which, to use the composer's words, is 'slender . . . light, and tensed as a pinion across an unfathomable Swiss mountain chasm'. In similar fashion the musical structure is built up from permutations and reiterations of horizontal melodic-rhythmic elements into a freely atonal vocal-instrumental line that lasts for over half an hour. Consequently, the vertical or harmonic aspect comes across as stretched and suspended. Such a form is difficult to manage. Not only can what the composer called the 'permutations' become boring and lacking in direction, but the harmonic substance can equally well crack and dissipate the delicately maintained tension. On first hearing Schat seemed to have avoided these pitfalls. The drama was genuinely felt, and its intensity lacked the over-statement and banality which can so easily creep into politically motivated works.

There were several pieces of note by more famous contemporary personalities. As well as Feldman's *Vertical Thoughts I*, there was George Crumb's *Makrokosmos I* (1972), Ligeti's *Aventures* (1962) and *Nouvelles aventures* (1965), Stockhausen's *Oben und Unten* (1968) – part of the *Aus den sieben Tagen* cycle, Xenakis' *Eonta* (1964) for piano and five brass instruments, Christou's *Praxis for 12* (1966), and Heinz Holliger's String Quartet (1973) and *Cardiophonie* (1971). Amidst all this American and European self-consciousness it was also refreshing to hear Takemitsu's *Green (November Steps II)* (1968), as well as an entire concert of contemporary Japanese works given by the Tokk Ensemble.

Heinz Holliger's better known role as a virtuoso oboist was given full expression in the Festival through a work written especially for him, Penderecki's *Capriccio* for oboe and 11 strings (1965). Yet Holliger seems equally capable as a composer. Both the String Quartet and *Cardiophonie* (for wind instrument and three tape recorders) are essays in paroxysmal collapse. *Cardiophonie* depends for its effect on the intermodulation of the performer's heartbeat with the sounds made by voice and instrument. Tape delay equipment and the quickening of the heartbeat as the performance progresses results in a growing montage of sound that gradually overwhelms the performer and induces a breakdown. The String Quartet, which uses amplified instruments, follows a similar programme. Nervous stutterings and screeches slowly mount to a moment of tension which snaps, leaving the work to end in a mood of depression and weakness. This mood is underlined not only by the continual, lower retuning of the instruments which takes place throughout as part of the piece, but by a gradual descent to the depths of each instrument's register, the increasingly long bow strokes, and the uncertainty of contact between bow and string. Although similar in overall effect, both pieces are strikingly original in concept and speak of an extremely lively musical mind.

One of the principal purposes of the Festival, of course, is to act as a shop window for contemporary Polish music. In general, the works presented were a little disappointing. Lutoslawski was represented (only at the last minute, it would seem) by a work, *Jeux venitiens* (1961), which has now become a classic. And, aside from the two shorter works written for specific artists, Penderecki was likewise represented only by a work, *De natura sonoris 2* for orchestra (1971), which – flauto a culisse and saw notwithstanding – has its origins in the creative surge of the 1960's. It was left to the least well-known of the mainstream Polish colourists, Kazimierz Serocki, to provide a piece of real interest in this genre. As well as being infused with an engaging vitality, *Phantasmagory* (1971) for piano and percussion (37 instruments – one player) demonstrated a clear handling of ideas and an originality in the mounting of individual sound clusters that did much to explain the respect this composer has earned from those with a thorough familiarity of Polish music.

There were two other Polish composers whose individuality communicated itself during the Festival. *Automatophone* (1974) for twelve plucked instruments and seven mechanical instruments continues Zygmund Krauze's concern both with folk instruments and music, and with techniques involving quotation and collage. The plucked instruments in the piece were guitars and mandolins, while the mechanical instruments, of nineteenth century origin, consisted of steel rods vibrated by means of revolving metal plates. Initial interest in the work was thus created through a subtle contrast of sonorities, the silvery edge of the mandolins and the watery flow of the guitars commenting on the metallic quality of the mechanical instruments. But there, unfortunately the interest stopped. There was little interplay between the two sets of instruments, and a good opportunity for further enticing exploration was missed.

Gorecki is perhaps the best of the talented group of composers from Katowice, an industrial town in the south of Poland. Gorecki's music has always been marked by a penchant for simplicity and economy of means, as well as by a deep sense of the religious. To these characteristics has recently been added a desire to see traditional harmonies intergrated into his musical language. All three traits were discernable in *Euntes ibant et flebant* (1973) and *Amen* (1975), works for a capella choir performed in the Protestant church. But these pieces also evidenced a strong awareness for the plastic or tangible qualities of sound. Particularly impressive in *Euntes ibant et flebant* was the manner in which a composed, dynamically achieved 'resonance' was extended beyond the natural resonance of the church to produce a quite static ethereality.

Among the more conservative composers, Baird (*Goethe-Briefe*, 1970, for baritone, mixed choir and orchestra, and *Concerto lugubre*, 1975, for viola and orchestra), Luciuk (*Portraits lyriques*, 1974, for soprano, two violins, cello and piano), and Meyer (String Quartet No. 4, 1974) all produced pleasing works. None was more so, however, than Augustyn Bloch's *Wordsworth Songs* (1976) for baritone and chamber orchestra. Bloch's piece was memorable not only because it draws on the two major trends in Polish composition (the colouristic and the romantic), but because this diverse material was skilfully woven into an organic whole which never lost sight of the ultimate dramatic end. Bloch succeeded, in other words, where so many of the cacophonous imitators of colourism expressly failed.

The standard of performance at the Festival was strangely schismatic. With one notable exception, the orchestral concerts were again disappointing. Part of the trouble was a number of practical misfortunes for which the organisers could not be held responsible. But it has also been suggested that the large amount of time spent abroad by Poland's better conductors can hardly help the standard of playing at home.

The chamber concerts, on the other hand, were of a consistently high standard. Jane Manning (soprano), with Howard Shelley (piano), gave a very creditable performance of Messaien's difficult *Harawi*; Vera Beths delicate playing of Cage's *Six Melodies for Violin and Keyboard* was followed by a contrastingly aggressive interpretation of George Antheil's seldom heard futuristic Violin Sonatas; Elizabeth Chojnacka (harpsichord) gave an intense account both of Luc Ferrari's *Musique socialiste?* (1972) and Cristobal Halffter's *Tempo para Espacios* (1974) – the latter an interesting piece whose success was compromised by bad amplification of the harpsichord; the Wilanow Quartet coped manfully with the difficulties of Holliger's Quartet; and Stefania Woytowicz was empathy itself in Luciuk's impressionistic *Portraits lyriques*. Mention must also be made of the Moscow Chamber Opera's first-rate presentation of Shostakovich's *The Nose* (1927-1928), a study in smugness, obsequiousness and bureaucratic folly that was revived in Moscow two years ago.

The one outstanding orchestral concert was given by Jerzy Maksymiuk and the Polish Chamber Orchestra. It was help, of course, that all the pieces performed (Bacewicz's *Concerto for String Orchestra*, Bartok's *Divertimento for String Orchestra*, Bloch's *Wordsworth Songs*, Penderecki's *Capriccio* and Christou's *Praxis*) were consistently strong. But Maksymiuk (b. 1936) had prepared himself well, and is clearly a conductor with a wealth of talent. The Bartok in particular was a very fine reading.

There was plenty of excellence and originality in this Festival to make it a thoroughly worthwhile experience, and if the Polish works in general conveyed a sense of retrenchment, then that is only to be expected after the exciting happenings of the 1960's. Finally, one glorious misprint in the English programme notes tailor-made for latent iconoclasts: Bernd Alois Zimmermann, we were informed, studied at the 'International Summer Curses of New Music in Darmstadt'.

## NEW MUSIC DIARY

### KEITH POTTER

The idea for this new column originally came about as a result of my move to London from York, and the opportunity I thus have of hearing a substantial amount of new music in live performances regularly. Not that we were exactly starved of this in York, where the university music department has been famous for its championship of contemporary music (that's why I went there). All too many people assume – and may infer from my opening remarks – that London is the *only* place to hear new music: especially those who live in London. That there's more than a grain of truth in these rumours cannot be denied (that's partly why I left York; but not the only reason). However, we do the efforts of quite a lot of people quite an injustice if we take no account of, not only new music, of course, but music-making in general outside the metropolis; there's a lot of it about if you look (listen?) for it, and, like the new magazine *Classical Music Weekly*, we shall take our geography lessons to heart (in our own way). Indeed, I found it somewhat ironic to think that, having studied at no less than three universities outside London (one of the few healthy things about the Academic Scene is that it isn't nearly so centralised as everything else), I should be coming to London just as everyone *else* is starting to take devolution seriously. . . .

But enough of the philosophy. Except to say that I mean to put into this column anything (well, *almost* anything) that I think happens to be appropriate and, eventually at least, to make it as newsworthy as anything can be which only appears three times a year. I also don't intend to keep it to myself for ever, but to let other writers have a go when I've got it established (or had enough).

### Wednesday September 22

Actually I hadn't moved at this point, but had to be in London and very much wanted to include a mention of the concert in St. John's, Smith Square on this date given by the Saltarello Choir under its

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relatively new conductor, Richard Bernas, for it included the first performances of pieces by Richard Orton and Graham Hearn specially commissioned by the choir for the occasion.

The past tense already reveals that this isn't a *real* diary: I wasn't quite sure of my format and so didn't write as I went along as true diarists do (also I'm too lazy: and busy). It would also appear at the time of writing that the programme notes for this concert got lost during the move. (Must attempt to keep the diary up in future.)

Orton and Hearn, and Bernas too, were founder members of Gentle Fire, a group that was formed at York University in 1968 (well before my time) where Orton was already teaching and the others were students; Orton left in 1971 and the group itself folded 'officially' towards the end of 1975. Hearn's *Two Choruses* is delightful and typical: one piece for double chorus, one of which attempts to seduce the other into taking a traditionally romantic (and functional?) view of the piece's basically triadic harmony. Hearn's music should really be done more often: I've heard very few works of his, but every one has been individual, striking and well written. He still teaches in Harrogate: that's one reason why London hardly ever hears him (note the fallacious supposition: 'doing his music' has to be 'in London').

Orton's *The Seed of Time* wasn't finished: only eleven out of 35 poems, brief fragments mostly, by George Murphy, were heard. The piece is confusing, no doubt partly due to this (Bernas hopes to do it complete some time), but mainly because the style is so unlike anything of Orton's I've ever heard before: much more traditional, and not only in terms of tonality and those 'traditional' elements that can be used 'experimentally' (think of Orton's own *Pièce de Résistance*, a piano piece written for Bernas). Some parts of this new work were straight-forwardly old-fashioned and others were straight-forwardly vaguely modern (the latter the more surprising of the two, the mixture even more so). A long car journey back to York with the composer gives me a chance to talk to him about why he did it: he's *feeling*, like a lot of composers (Hobbs, White, Cardew, Rzewski, Blake, Bedford, Potter) more traditional, more concerned with some kind of roots (but all these composers feel it for different reasons: subject for an article?).

Bernas himself turned temporarily into a jetset conductor, flying back to Warsaw the next day to conduct Xenakis's *Ensta* and Richard Meale's *Interiors/Exteriors* (see review of the Warsaw Autumn in this issue). He's a good example of the modern all-round musician: pianist, conductor, composer, reviewer (not necessarily in that order). And of the diversification of interests that led to the extinguishing of the Gentle Fire.

#### Friday October 1

Having now hit town, I go to an evening of African drumming and dancing given by Adwe at the Africa Centre. Not really a reviewing job, but I'd commend to you the work of the Centre,<sup>1,2</sup> though I have heard better drummers and I've *certainly* heard better compering. I intend to get some African drumming going at the College I teach at: the people who make the drums, are involved with the group, so I seek them out and arrange to visit the workshop in Chalk Farm.

#### Sunday October 3

First in a series of twelve Sundays of new music at the Institute of Contemporary Arts between October and Christmas which promises to be really good: the first time the ICA has taken contemporary music seriously for ages. They kick off with the first of three sessions by Option Band (basically the players of Dreamtigger minus Douglas Young and Peter Hill). No short shrift here: concert at 4 p.m., discussion with the composers at 5.45 and a full evening concert at 8 p.m. All part of the policy: you could call it making *Contact* with the composers and players. Intermittently successful on these terms, despite some disorganisation over starting times, and having adequate programme notes (I never *did* find out the titles of all the pieces). It's a pity that every corner of the ICA has to be used round the clock for maximum economy: so the performers have to clear up from the previous night's disco before they can rehearse and a jazz band of mediocre quality prevents all conversation in both the hall and restaurant for some while after 6.30. But Lise-Martine Jeanneret, the Swiss pianist and director of the group, preserves a delightful informality, and got over a very commendable percentage of the foreign composers of whom she was making a special feature: on this occasion Jean-Yves Bosseur and Francis Miroglio, both from Paris.

Bosseur already has enough space in this issue; we heard a chunk of the tape of *Anna Livia's Awake* in the first concert, and the evening saw a performance of a very good piece for two cellos and slide projectors, *Souvenez-vous*. Miroglio's music (a flute and piano piece and *Refractions* for flute, violin, piano and percussion) makes far less impression, but I was surprised to like enormously a work by Hans Zender, *Muji No Kyo* for speaker, flute, cello and piano: evocative, spacious and beautifully unadulterated, quite unlike the impression I previously had of him as a Boring German Composer of big orchestral pieces and a good conductor of German contemporary Meisterwerke, but a hopeless stylist when it came to Cage's *Cheap Imitation*. Also pieces during the day by Simon Emmerson, André Boucourechliev (who didn't make it on this occasion, but did the next week), a quite nice performance of George Crumb's *Vox Ballaenae* almost enhanced by the rain thundering on the asbestos (?) roof (something else the ICA hadn't

thought of), but a lousy one of *Prima Vista* by Kagel to end.

#### Wednesday October 6

Another very valuable series starts up, the Composers' String Quartet from American are playing an enterprising four-concert survey of American string quartets in the Purcell Room under the auspices of the Park Lane Group. I can only get to the two Wednesday programmes: the others clash with the ICA series on Sundays. Some stupendous playing and some stupendous pieces: notably Elliott Carter's First Quartet in this programme. Ives' First Quartet, written when he was only 22, was good to hear (piquant experimentalism), but why didn't they play the Second? I still don't like Milton Babbitt (Fourth Quartet: thank goodness they *didn't* play his ubiquitous Second), and suppose that I never shall.

#### Thursday October 7

'New Music from West Germany' at the Wigmore Hall (how I hate the place); the first of *another* series — this time mounted by the Composers' Guild of Great Britain and planning country-by-country surveys in return for concerts of British music abroad. This concert was promoted in association with the Deutscher Komponisten-Verband; next the country is reported to be East Germany, which could be interesting. A good idea, but a bad concert: mostly 60s serialism and cautious aleatorics, none of it justifying the word 'new'. The best pieces are two by Isang Yun (a Korean now living in Berlin): a piano trio and a trio for flute, oboe and violin: less notes, more thought. Hans Zender (*Trifolium* for flute, cello and piano and Quartet for flute, cello, piano and percussion) turns out to be a Boring German Composer after all (strange to hear three pieces by him in the space of five days). Dieter Acker, Frank Michael Beyer, Norbert Linke and Wolfgang Steffen are the filling in the sandwich formed by two slices of Yun and Zender, and were all, I think, in attendance. Some sturdy work by British performers, including Susan Bradshaw (piano), Irvine Arditti (violin), Kathryn Lukas (flute) and Rohan de Saram (cello): the last two are both in Option Band and must have spent a lot of the previous week over Zender: they were both in all three pieces.

A footnote (not a real one): when I was in Glasgow for Musica Nova (see Barbara Winrow's report on this elsewhere in this issue) the Goethe Institute was showing an exhibition of scores, tapes and information called '28 Young Composers from the Federal German Republic'. Norbert Linke was the only composer in this collection to appear in the concert as well; I didn't really get a chance to do the Exhibition justice, but some composers (e.g. Rolf Gehlhaar, Johannes Fritsch, Michael Vetter) are worth listening to if the exhibition comes round again (don't know if they have any plans for it to).

#### Sunday October 10

The second Option Band programme. This one centered around the dishy young Polish harpsichordist Elizabeth Chojnacka (don't ask me how to pronounce her name), who specialises in new music for the harpsichord and in the afternoon gave a demonstration of new techniques, unfortunately not very illuminating. I did have the uncharitable thought that harpsichordists using new techniques can only make unsuccessful copies of those of the piano, though effects inside the harpsichord were more interesting that you might perhaps at first suppose. The young composer David Sutton played a harpsichord piece of his that could easily have been written for the piano.

It was a pity that Miss Chojnacka didn't play any pieces using the 'inside' in her evening recital, which otherwise was a brilliant display of a lot of less than brilliant music: except for the incredible virtuosic finale of Xenakis's *Khoai*, written for Miss Chojnacka and here, presumably like many of the other pieces in her concert and the Option Band series as a whole, receiving its first performance in this country: the pages cast impatiently on the floor as she devoured them.

Works by François-Bernard Mâche, Betsy Jolas, André Boucourechliev and Luc Ferrari, some involving tape, made up the rest of her programme. Luc Ferrari (whatever happened to him? Oh, he went into political music just like the rest) didn't make it and the performance of his *Ephémères* by Miss Chojnacka and Option Band was cancelled, but we heard *Socialist Music?* for harpsichord and tape: strange new avantgarde light thrown on the composition of 'political music'. Miss Chojnacka also played this piece at the Warsaw Festival; see John Shepherd's review.

And in the afternoon Boucourechliev, a former Bulgarian who has lived most of his life in Paris, turned up to talk interestingly about and to play tapes of his music: two of the *Archipel* pieces were played in the Option Band series, No. 4 for piano by Lise-Martine Jeanneret on October 3 and No. 5B for harpsichord by Miss Chojnacka on this occasion. Boucourechliev is a worthwhile composer as well as a notable Beethoven, Chopin and Schumann scholar, and his *Archipel* series develops in complex and sometimes original ways the open form notations of Earle Brown and others (he specially mentioned Brown in response to a question on this point). Someone asked if he had written any pieces other than those called *Archipel*: he has, but it's just that we don't get to hear them here. Perhaps we should.

### Wednesday October 13

The third of the Composers' Quartet series and for me probably the most rewarding programme which should, however, need no introduction. Copland's *Two Pieces* are slight and fairly early, but Ruth Crawford Seeger's Quartet of around the same time is a stunningly original and advanced piece which is fortunately known now through the Composers' Quartet's own recording of it.<sup>3</sup> Cage's even more original contribution to the traditional medium par excellence and Carter's Second Quartet completed the programme. I was particularly sorry to have missed the Carter Third Quartet and Henry Cowell's Fourth in the Sunday concerts among other things. The Park Lane Group did us an excellent service in making possible such a panoramic view of American quartets in the 20th century. The only pity is that more people didn't take advantage of it.<sup>4</sup>

### Sunday October 17

Third and final Option Band programme. This was called 'The Audible Eye', while the first went under the name of 'The Optical Ear': I'd take too long to discuss the differences. Various ramifications in the ordering of the three different programmes presented us with a real bumper collection on the last day, and presumably it was considered more prestigious by the New Music Crowd, since there was a good audience from 4p.m. onwards.

Two pieces were introduced by their composers in the afternoon. Rolf Gehlhaar's *Solipse* for cello and tape delay is original and beautiful, with a structure that is in general so clear and well-rounded that the short last section almost seemed not to fit. (I seem to be using the word 'original' a lot: does a piece *have* to be original to be worthwhile, and what constitutes originality anyway?) Gehlhaar, formerly with Stockhausen in Cologne, where he continued to live until this summer, is/was (?) one of the Feedback group<sup>5</sup> and is now teaching at Dartington.

Hugh Davies is someone we don't hear so much of as a 'straight' composer: he's spent a lot of time making his own instruments and improvising, but he seems to bridge the two 'worlds' very well: indeed, I don't think he'd want to emphasise the difference that much. His *Raisonnement* (the title means both reasoning and resonance) for piano was written for Miss Jeanneret and uses implements inserted between the keys of the instrument to enable the piece to explore the wide range of harmonic resonances obtainable by such means but not possible with just two hands. Brian Ferneyhough's *Cassandra's Dream Song* for flute was intelligently introduced and, it would seem, excellently played by Kathryn Lukas (what performance problems Ferneyhough presents!); an early song by David Bedford completed the afternoon's proceedings.

In the evening Jeremy Dale Robert's *Reconciliation* for speaker (John Macleod) and musicians tackled different methods of presenting two poems and the problems of reconciling 'the essentially alien relationship of words and music', to quote the composer. He himself regards it as a study and I would agree with him; I should like to hear his more recent explorations into this territory. *Personnage*, one of the two pieces in the programme by Makoto Shinohara, a Japanese composer now living in Berlin, involved a mime (John Macleod again), lights and tape in a pessimistic trio: the one 'live' element subjected to bombardment by the other two. The young Graziane Finzi from Casablanca, who now lives in Paris, contributed *Songes* for ensemble and dancer: effective choreography and dancing (a splendid performance from Avagail Ben Ari); music that made me want to hear what Miss Finzi can do without the visual aids. Rohan de Saram and Alan Brett (cello) and Richard Witts (percussion) gave a superb rendering of Kagel's *Match*: that particular 'intellectual safety valve' (to quote Witts' provocative programme note read aloud before the performance) still seems relevant ten years on (for more on 'relevance', read on).

Option Band are to be congratulated on bringing a wide range of, in particular, European music to our attention and in getting so many of the composers over to talk about their work. Why, then, were their concerts hardly reviewed at all in the national press? More attention to details in the mechanics of keeping your audience interested and informed, as well as more rehearsals, would make things even better. I look forward to hearing them again and trust they will include Robert Dickinson's percussion piece *She was only the drummer's daughter, but she knew how to beat a retreat* in their next London programme.

Another (artificial) footnote: it was interesting to have heard two pieces by Hugh Davies in one week. On the Tuesday before this concert Radio 3 had broadcast a two-year-old tape of a Gentle Fire concert at Glasgow University which included his *Gentle Springs* for five springboards (electronically amplified instruments of Davies's own invention) as well as Richard Bernas's *Almanac for October* and the first British performance of Stockhausen's *Spektra* (from the *Für kommende Zeiten* series). Davies was, of course, also a member of Gentle Fire (I've covered four of the original six in this review); his piece stood up two years on, I thought, with no trouble: in fact I preferred this largely improvised work to his fully notated piano piece. Bernas's piece stood up less well. I say this because I know that some of the group were unhappy at the tape being broadcast at all after so long. Such is their momentum that they have long since moved on to other things (as

illustrated above) and so they didn't all feel it was relevant any more.<sup>6</sup> What kind of music is it that dates so rapidly? Does it say anything *less* for it that it doesn't 'last' for its creators? Perhaps it still does for others, anyway. The whole 'relevance' concept needs looking at, I feel, though I'm not doubting the sincerity of the performers. Anyway, I shouldn't image the Beethoven thought too much of his First Symphony in 1827. Some people, I know, feel this approach is too consumer-orientated: instant art, here today and disposed of tomorrow. But surely canned, 'historical' art, preserved for posterity, is just as much a 'consumer product'?

### Sunday October 24

First, Japanese Gagaku music at the Albert Hall in the afternoon, including a piece for Gagaku musicians by Takemitsu. I'm hardly qualified to write about this, but the sense of anticipation I felt was strangely unfulfilled by the event itself, beautiful though both music and dancing were. Perhaps it was the hall, and the many latecomers who were allowed to shuffle and mutter their way in during the whole of the first half hour as though it were a boxing match. (I'm told my new next door neighbour is Head of the Ushers at the RAH: must have a word with him.) What opportunities we now have for listening to and seeing oriental music and dance! This group of musicians and dancers of the Imperial Household, Tokyo were brought here by the London Music Digest; they last came five years ago. Did they *really* do only one performance in this country? What a wastel Steve Reich (twice), Richard Meale and György Ligeti are on the menu for the rest of this season's Digest programmes.

Then on to the ICA again for the first of two Music Now presentations in the Sunday series, an evening of music by the dynamic duo of Christopher Hobbs (percussion, piano, reed organ, toy piano, bassoon etc.) and John White (percussion, piano, reed organ, toy piano, tuba etc.) 'Aren't they *versatile*?' whispered an American friend of mine when the bassoon and tuba appeared after the sets of percussion pieces and piano duets and solos. Well, yes, they are, and their slick professionalism (not exactly a characteristic of all experimental presentations and even slipping slightly here on occasion) seems partly to be the cause of their recent successes at the National Theatre foyer concerts where others have apparently failed. (Must get along to one of those foyer concerts some time. While I'm about it I must see the famous four-and-a-half-hour *Tamburlaine the Great* and perhaps even *Hamlet* too, for the productions at the National Theatre of both of which Harrison Birtwistle has written the music. And I might even get

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along to *Il Campiello*, with music by Michael Nyman. I hear occasional good things about the theatre, which is more than some seem to hear. . . .)

This concert was supposed to be a retrospective of the duo's music over the past four years, from the post-PTO percussion pieces to the post-prandial piano pieces and duets. I found myself wishing they'd play more of the old systems-based percussion works, much though I enjoyed the piano duets in particular, and some of the music involving bassoon and/or tuba. No doubt they feel piano duets are more relevant these days. . . .

#### Saturday October 30

The University of London is holding a series of four programmes of contemporary music played by the Twentieth-Century Ensemble of London directed by Edwin Roxburgh at the Royal College of Music from Thursday 28 to Sunday 31 October, with open rehearsals, introductions to each piece and public discussions after each concert. As an exercise in persuading students that new music is worth hearing, it is only intermittently successful. What's the solution? These occasions are always put on with lots of good intentions, like the Option Band series, but how often do they end up preaching to the converted? Or should we be preaching at all?

This programme had more harpsichord music (strange how these coincidences crop up) and contained one rather obscure harpsichord piece, *Nine Rarebits* by Earle Brown, and one very obscure harpsichord piece (didn't get the title) by Thon Tan Thiet, both introduced and played by Harold Lester. Both were actually quite decent pieces (the Brown I knew before), but the demand for contemporary Vietnamese harpsichord music written in Paris can hardly be large enough to entice students away from whatever it is they do on Saturday nights. John Casken's *Music for the Crabbing Sun* for flute, oboe, cello and harpsichord was receiving its first British performance. His pieces are finely crafted and becoming increasingly personal extensions of the largely Polish models from which his musical style has sprung. Edwin Roxburgh's own *Convolutions* for mezzo-soprano, tenor and '18th century' ensemble was also a worthwhile piece.

#### Sunday October 31

A long day's music, beginning with the fourth and last of the RCM concerts, consisting of Ligeti's *Ramifications* for out of tune string orchestra (one group tuned a quarter of a tone out) and Lutoslawski's *Preludes and Fugure* for 13 strings (in tune), introduced very perceptively by Richard Steinitz and John Casken respectively. The performances themselves unfortunately rather suffered from lack of rehearsal. Surely adequate rehearsal time should be an essential part of such a 'didactic' enterprise? Both the Saturday and Sunday concerts, with the introductions but not the discussions (the latter chaired by Arnold Whittall), were taped by the BBC for eventual broadcast.

Then on to the ICA *again*, this time for four and a half hours of experimental music from Michael Parsons, Howard Skempton, Dave Smith and John Lewis.<sup>7</sup> A total of no less than 35 pieces in this programme, most of them recently written and all performed by the composers using drums, pianos, electric organs, baritone horns, accordion, voices and a few other things. In the first half Skempton's pieces, several of them familiar, continued to delight in their simplicity and natural-sounding use of both systems and free tonality and chromaticism, while Parsons has always been drier, less witty, more ascetic (it's not surprising that he's the one who tends to relate systemic music to serialism, which he used to use, and now increasingly to compose according to classical models such as the canon). On this occasion his seven canons for two baritone horns became rather wearing. The drum pieces, however, retain all that is best in his music: the simple opposition of developing rhythmic structures in a quietly dramatic counterpoint.

Smith and Lewis's music is often easier on the ear, and the second half was something of a relief, with longer and more expansively textured pieces, some real systemic winners (like Lewis's *Blue Beat Bicycle* for two electric organs) and others

surprising new departures (like Smith's *Moderation in Nothing*, a non-systemic (?), spacious, very free-sounding and magical piece for ocarina, recorder, wine glasses, bell and voice (a deep bass hum), electric organ, electric piano, guitar and cymbals). Even Smith's baritone horn duos (Smith and Parsons are the protagonists of these instruments) make light of their arithmetic, especially the first one which was sheer delight. And Lewis managed to combine those things with organs in his *Brontosaurus Boogie*. But some of Smith's pieces are also known for their obsessive adherence to Mode 2 (of Lili Boulanger and Messiaen fame) or the tritone: his *Diabolus Apocalypsis* for two electric organs, electric piano and acoustic piano lived up to its fierce title, with everybody beating a systemic hell out of everything for what seemed an eternity. I certainly never expected to see Howard Skempton hit a piano (that admittedly could have been said to be on its last legs, if it had had any) so hard that the strings started to flee from the instrument in terror.

This column is long. In fact it is probably too long. But I've not included whole areas of new music — jazz and free improvisation, by and large, for instance — which I should have liked to and intend to another time. In particular we shall be drawing attention to the work of both the London Musicians Collective (successor to the London Music Co-op) and the National Musicians Collective in a future issue.

Martin Mayes, who organises music for Action Space, has sent me details of their Festival of the Audience which goes on through November and December and is just starting as I write. The Drill Hall<sup>8</sup> opens on the same day as the festival (November 5) as a centre for artists and the community: I hope it will become a regular venue for musical activities.

I'm also requested to draw your attention to 'E-Music', which describes itself as 'an ongoing concern in which traditionally trained musicians can get together as both composers and performers within a group situation to revitalise contemporary music-making by interacting as members of a social model and not as caretakers of stolen property within the concert hall museum case' (pew!). The group will meet every Saturday morning at 10a.m. in the Moberly Hall of the University of Keele, where Robert Dickinson, one of E-Music's founder-members, is a postgraduate music student: their first event was scheduled to be a performance of *Marsyas Protocol* by Pierre Marietan (like Bosseur, a member of the French Group GERM) on November 10. There is also, I believe, a London branch of the group (a nice touch). 'So as to avoid cultural insularity' contact will be made with organisations such as Feedback in Cologne, Logos in Ghent and New Horizons in Berne, which we either have already featured in *Contact* or will be doing so in the future. Contact Robert Dickinson for details.<sup>9</sup> Since he is no longer at Sheffield University, the Sheffield Musicians Co-op featured in *Contact 12* has now folded; as has the York Co-op too. Pity.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Who ever heard of a diary with footnotes? Still, it seems the best place to put all the most useful pieces of information.

<sup>2</sup> Africa Centre, 38 King Street, London WC2, tel. 01-836 1973.

<sup>3</sup> On H-71280.

<sup>4</sup> For a useful discussion of this series, see Stephen Walsh, 'Abundant Vitality', *The Observer Review* (Sunday October 17, 1976), p.31.

<sup>5</sup> For details of this see Tim Souster's review of the *Feedback Papers* in *Contact 14* (Autumn 1976), p.36.

<sup>6</sup> See also Adrian Jack, 'In whose time?', *The Listener*, Vol. 96, No. 2481 (October 28, 1976), p. 556.

<sup>7</sup> For a good introduction to the systemic music of these four composers as well as that of Hobbs and White and the systemic art group see Michael Parsons, 'Systems in Art and Music', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 117, No. 1604 (October 1976), pp. 815-818.

<sup>8</sup> The Drill Hall, 16 Chenies Street, London WC1, tel. 01-637 7664.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Dickinson, Department of Music, University of Keele, Keele, Staffordshire ST5 5BG.

## RECORDS RECEIVED

- CRI 150 Charles Ives  
CRI SD 176 Elie Siegmeister  
CRI 196 Charles Ives; Jack Beeson  
CRI SD 276 Morton Feldman  
CRI SD 330 Earle Brown

## SCORES AND BOOKS RECEIVED

### Alan Bush

Three English Song-Preludes for organ (Oxford University Press)

### Gordon Crosse

Holly from the Bongs, vocal score (Oxford University Press)  
Studies for String Quartet Set 1 (Oxford University Press)

### Alun Hoddinott

Landscapes (Oxford University Press)

### Robin Holloway

Five Madrigals (Oxford University Press)

### Richard Popplewell

Pucks Shadow for organ (Oxford University Press)

Die Reihe 1-8 (Universal Edition)

### Erik Tawaststjerna, trans. Robert Layton

Sibelius Vol. 1 (Faber and Faber)

### Louise Varese

Varese A Looking-Glass Diary (Eulenburg Books)

### Arthur B. Wenk

Claude Debussy and the Poets (University of California Press)

Inclusion in this list does not necessarily presume a review in a later issue.

In addition, it is hoped to continue to bring readers' attention to more foreign publications in due course, including magazines and other material not generally available in this country. Editors of foreign publications concerned at least partly with contemporary music are invited to send material and suggestions for ways in which we can act together for the mutual benefit of our readers.

## CONTACT 16

This issue will include:

'A Short History of Intermodulation: a biographical cautionary tale for aspiring composer/performers' by Tim Souster

an article on the American composer and pianist Frederic Rzewski by Keith Potter

a re-examination of the German periodical *Die Reihe* by Jane and W.A.O'N. Waugh on the occasion of its republication by Universal Edition: it was last looked at in depth more than ten years ago, and this article by a musician and a mathematician specialising in stochastic processes takes into account subsequent musical and scientific developments

'Electronic Music Studios in Britain — 5: University of East Anglia' by Denis Smalley

a look at Britain's national music information centres including the British Music Information Centre in London and the Scottish Music Archive in Glasgow

reports from the London Musicians Collective and the National Musicians Collective

many reviews of new scores, books, magazines and records, and reports of events both in Britain and abroad

a comprehensive index to *Contacts 11-15*

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

**Malcolm Barry** Director of Music in the School of Adult and Social Studies, Goldsmiths' College, University of London

**Richard Witts** Wishes only to say that he lives in the Top Flat, 6 Kingston Road, East Didsbury, Manchester 20, and that he can be reached by phone during the day on 061-736 2983 and in the evening on 061-434 6340.

**Richard Steinitz** Composer, conductor and writer on 20th century music. Lecturer at the Huddersfield School of Music.

**Glyn Perrin** Composer and performer. At present studying composition with Richard Orton at the University of York.

**John Schneider** Californian composer and guitarist specialising in new instrumental techniques. Currently director of the Cardiff Composers Ensemble, director of The Guitar Quartet and engaged in research on contemporary guitar music at University College, Cardiff.

**Jim Sharpe** Lecturer in History at the University of York. Present research is concentrated on 17th century social history. Plays melodeon for the Ebor Morris Men.

**Hugh Davies** Composer, performer and instrument maker. Formerly Stockhausen's assistant in Cologne and now Director of the Electronic Music Studio at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. He is a member of the editorial team of *Musics* magazine, on whose behalf he sent us the collective statement published in *Contact 14* that we mistakenly attributed to him alone.

**Robin Higgins** Psychiatrist and musician.

**David Roberts** Musicologist. Lecturer in Music at the University of Sussex. At present completing a thesis on the music of Peter Maxwell Davies.

**Barclay McMillan** A Canadian who has worked for CBC in Germany, done research into Canadian music history at the Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, Ottawa and is currently completing a Master of Library Science degree of the University of Toronto.

**Lyndon Reynolds** Composer. At present completing a D.Phil. in composition at the University of York where he has been a student of Bernard Rands and Richard Orton.

**Barbara Winrow** Composer and pianist. At present studying at the University of Leeds.

**John Shepherd** Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Manchester Polytechnic, where he is initiating a research project concerned with arts in the community. Also completing a thesis on the sociology and aesthetics of music. He is a co-author of *Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages* which will be published by Latimer New Dimensions in March 1977: some of the material in this book also appeared in *Contact 14* by kind permission of the publishers.

**The Editor** Composer, performer and writer on contemporary music. Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. At present completing a thesis on aspects of 20th century musical notation. Member of a percussion duo with the composer David Jones.

