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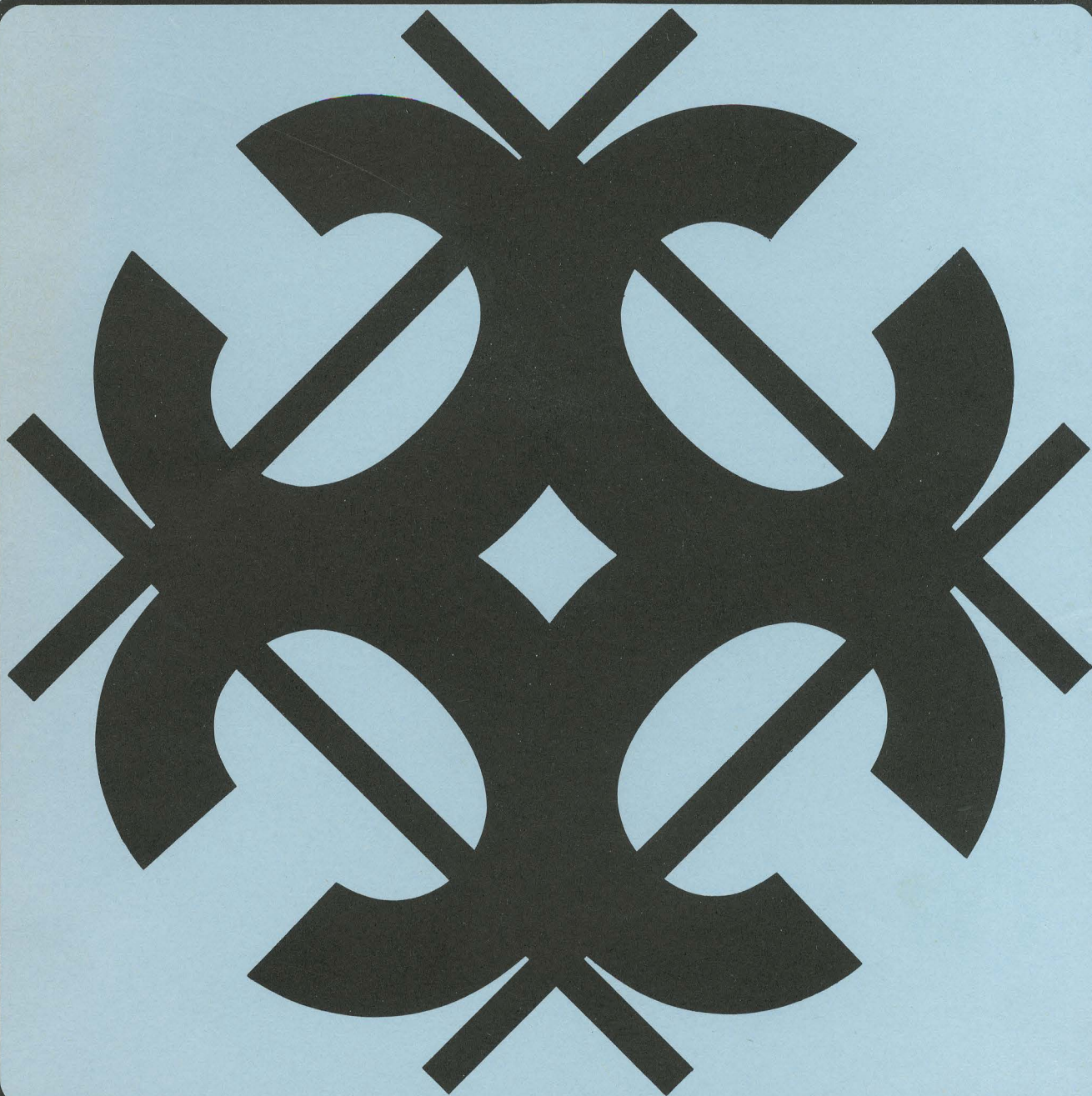
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# CONTACT

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Today's Music

No 18  
Winter 1977-78 45p



- La Monte Young ●Electronic Music
- Contemporary Music Network ●IRCAM's Secrets
- Music and Society ●Reviews & Reports

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# CONTACT

## No 18 WINTER 1977-78

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Edited by Keith Potter, Hilary Bracefield, David Roberts, John Shepherd

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# Following a Straight Line: La Monte Young

Through the few pieces of his I've heard, I've had ... utterly different experiences of listening than I've had with any other music. (John Cage)<sup>1</sup>

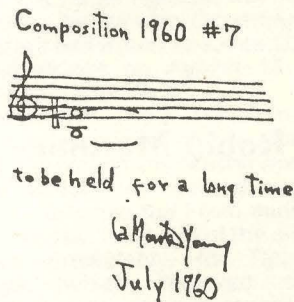
I am wildly interested in repetition, because I think it demonstrates control. (La Monte Young)<sup>2</sup>

He really goes to great lengths to control as much as possible, and to focus the attention on what remains uncontrolled. (George Brecht)<sup>3</sup>

It's not a question of 'there's so little to hear': there's so much to hear. (Howard Skempton)<sup>4</sup>

LA MONTE YOUNG'S *Composition 1960 No. 7* consists of the following instruction:

Example 1



*X for Henry Flynt* (1960) requires the performer to repeat a loud, heavy sound every one to two seconds as uniformly and as regularly as possible for a long period of time. (Instrumentation is unspecified for both works.)

The important words here are 'repeat', 'held' and 'for a long time'. (In 1963 Young organised a five-hour performance of the open fifth piece.) Performing, or witnessing a single activity extended in time, we begin to appreciate aspects and ideas that would otherwise remain hidden. In the open fifth piece we hear pitches additional to those notated: combination tones appear singly or in small groups. The mind constantly refocuses as the listener's attention is drawn by different elements and transformations of the sound. And the acoustics of an enclosed performance space ensure varied perceptions in different parts of the room.

The superhuman demands of *X for Henry Flynt* require total concentration on the part of the performer and a commitment to do the best job he can:<sup>5</sup> ultimately a mentally rewarding experience. But what of the audience? Cornelius Cardew wrote that the interest of the piece lies in

- (1) Its duration, and proportional to that:
- (2) the variation within the uniform repetition.
- (3) the stress imposed on the single performer and through him on the audience ... These elements occur rather *in spite of* the instructions, although naturally they are the *result of* them. What the listener can hear and appreciate are the *errors* in the interpretation. If the piece were performed by a machine this interest would disappear and with it the composition.<sup>6</sup>

*Composition 1960 No. 7* emphasises the harmonic series through the purity and reduction of material and points to Young's later work with precisely-tuned sinewave drones and voices. On the other hand, *X for Henry Flynt* is most often realised in the form of forearm

clusters on a piano. The composer has performed it by driving a hammer into a bucketful of nails amplified with a contact microphone, or by beating a large frying-pan with a wooden spoon: in other words, using sounds traditionally regarded as of indefinite pitch. (Young's music, however, negates the existence of indefinite pitch.) These two pieces bear a fundamental relationship to all of his output (and indeed to much English and American experimental music of the last ten years).

Young started working with long sounds in 1957<sup>7</sup> (in the octet *For brass*) but his interest in them dates from much earlier. He remembers the sound of the wind in the chinks of the Idaho log cabin in which he was born in 1935. In his childhood he was fascinated by continuous environmental sounds, particularly those of motors, power plants and telephone poles. The 'dream chord' (made up of the pitches G—G—C sharp—D) on which some of his pieces are based is the chord he used to hear in the telephone poles.<sup>8</sup>

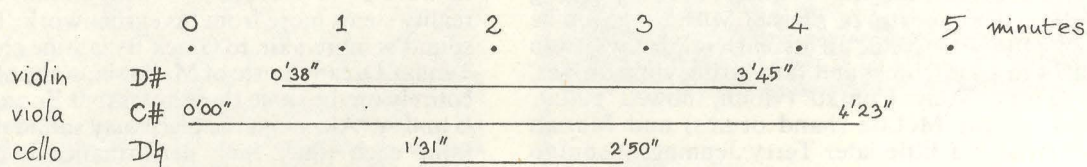
The *String Trio* (1958) is based entirely on different spacings and transpositions of selected pitches (usually three at any one time) from the 'dream chord'. The opening is given in Example 2. My timings are approximate since they are taken down from a recording, but the overlapping of notes in time seems to be carefully structured throughout the work as does the order of pitches (which is related to twelve-note procedures). But these are incidental aspects. What is more noticeable is that the 48-minute *Trio* is played entirely without vibrato, mostly pretty quietly and with very slow bowing. The sculptural qualities of the sound are reinforced in performance by the statuesque appearance of the players. The timbres are devoid of colour and the notes are played not 'as individual "parts" but as contributions to a chordal unit whose components are of different durations'.<sup>9</sup> These chordal units are separated by silences lasting up to 40 seconds.

Young was probably not aware of the early works of Christian Wolff which explore similar territory. The only pitches in Wolff's *Trio* for flute, clarinet and violin (1951) are two superimposed perfect fifths (E—B—F sharp), and the *Duo* for violins (1950) uses two adjacent semitones (D—E flat—E). Wolff's desire was to create as much diversity as possible within the severe pitch limitations he had imposed, e.g. through varying combinations of instruments, dynamics etc. Like Young's *Trio*, the *Duo* is slow, mostly quiet and played without vibrato. There is a similar emphasis on harmony at the expense of melody; another of Wolff's works that is interesting in this respect is *For Piano I* (1952) in which nine widely-spaced pitches are arranged in 'constellations' of sound separated by up to 18 seconds of silence.

Significantly, both Wolff and Young relate their early work to Webern, drawing attention to that composer's habit of repeating pitches only at the same octave placement for a section of a work. A European composer might understand this as a means of maintaining and increasing tension (e.g. see Jean Barraqué's remarkable *Piano Sonata* of 1950-52). The two Americans found that for them it created stasis.

Young spent most of the 40s and 50s in Los Angeles where he received his education.<sup>10</sup> Some of his early musical ambitions lay in jazz (he had been playing

### Example 2



saxophone since the age of six) and he played regularly with, among others, Billy Higgins and Don Cherry. At the same time, he was studying at Los Angeles City College with Leonard Stein, Schoenberg's assistant, and eventually decided to devote himself more to 'serious composition', although to this day he holds an exceptional regard for such jazzmen as Eric Dolphy and John Coltrane.

But the late 50s was a time of discovery for Young and he was deeply impressed by the drone-dominated liturgical chant, Gagaku and Indian classical music that he heard. Then in 1959 he attended Stockhausen's composition course in Darmstadt where, ironically enough, he discovered Cage's indeterminate music. The results of this experience were immediate.

*Vision* (1959) is a work for eleven instrumentalists spread around a darkened auditorium. Eleven sounds (or complexes of sounds) are heard in 13 minutes. The duration and spacing of these sounds are calculated by the performance director with the aid of a random number book or telephone directory. Unusually, the sounds are not constant but 'complex and changing'.

*Poem* (1960) is scored for chairs, tables, benches or anything else that can be dragged across a floor. Again, random numbers are used by the performance director, this time to determine the number of events, their durations, the points at which they begin and end and the length of the composition. The composer specifies that the sounds should be as constant and as continuous as possible, but 'what is actually perceived is the uncontrolled and unintended deviation which arises from the impossible attempt to achieve a constant sound' (Michael Parsons),<sup>11</sup> a clear relationship with *X for Henry Flynt*. Parsons goes on to point out that 'sounds of the kind specified in *Poem*, sometimes regarded as an affront to the ear, can actually be quite beautiful if one concentrates on listening to them'. Certainly the sounds can at first seem offensive and objectionable. But after a time 'the mind slowly becomes incapable of taking further offense, and a very strange, euphoric acceptance and enjoyment begin to set in ... After a while the euphoria ... begins to intensify. By the time the piece is over, the silence is absolutely numbing, so much of an environment has the piece become.' (Dick Higgins)<sup>12</sup>

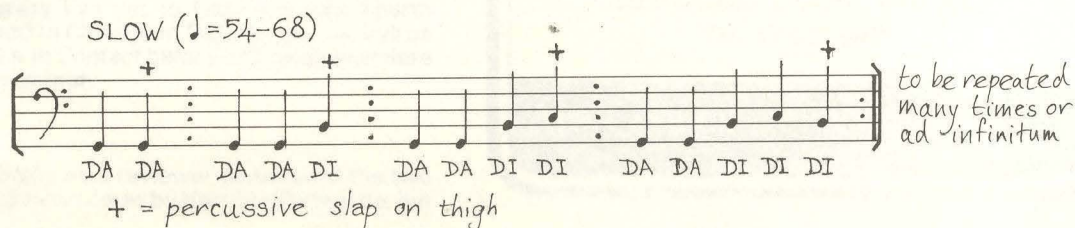
Young tests this theory even further in *Two Sounds* (1960), which dates from a period of close collaboration with Terry Riley. One sound is made by scraping a tin can over a pane of glass, the other by scraping a drum stick around a gong: contact microphones are attached to both **tin can and gong**. **The sounds were recorded on separate tapes** which are started at different times. Merce Cunningham has been using this version for his 'Winterbranch' ballet since 1964.

In 1960 Young won a travelling scholarship enabling him to study electronic music with Richard Maxfield in New York (where he has lived ever since). He became one of the leading lights of the Fluxus movement which included figures such as George Brecht, Henry Flynt, Dick Higgins, George Maciunas, Yoko Ono and Nam June Paik. Since this time he has been a free-lance composer, performer, lecturer and teacher.

1960 also witnessed the creation and performance of several short verbal pieces. Some encapsulate fundamental ideas, e.g. *Composition 1960 No. 10*, 'Draw a straight line and follow it' and *No. 9*, the score of which is a horizontal line on a card. For Young the line is a condensation of any one obsessional activity, e.g. marathon running, strict Catholicism, playing a chord for two and a half hours on a piano accordion,<sup>13</sup> or sighting with plumb-lines and drawing along the floor with chalk (Young's realisation of *No. 10*). Of the other *Compositions 1960*, two are concerned with sounds (?) of nature: turning a butterfly loose (*No. 5*) or building a fire (*No. 2*). (Young: 'Isn't it wonderful if someone listens to something he is ordinarily supposed to look at?') *Nos. 3, 4, 6* point to a fascination with the audience as a social situation. Nothing is *scheduled* to happen in these pieces, but in *No. 4* the auditorium is in darkness and *No. 6* involves the performers acting as an audience.

Young related his *Compositions 1960* to Cage whose later works 'were generally realised as a complex of programmed sounds and activities over a prolonged period of time with events coming and going. I was perhaps the first to concentrate on and delineate the work to be a single event or object in these less traditionally musical areas.' As with Cage's *4' 33"*, much depends on them being presented in a live concert situation. There is also a parallel to (and doubtless an influence from) certain Oriental philosophies. Nicolas Slonimsky has stated that: 'The verbal and psychological techniques of Zen can be translated into music through a variety of means which may range from white noise of (theoretically) infinite duration to (theoretically) instantaneous silences.... In the composition of instrumental music, Zen expands perception of the minutest quantities of sonic material and imparts eloquence to moments of total impassivity...' <sup>14</sup> As a devoted gesture to the concept of the single event, Young wrote all his *Compositions 1961* in a singular manner: each of the 29 compositions instructs the performer to 'Draw a straight line and follow it'.

*Death Chant* (1961), written on the death of a friend's child, is a notated piece for male voices with optional carillon or bells. The heavy, deep, regular singing relates it to Tibetan chanting. The construction shows a similarity with the additive processes of Philip Glass and Frederic Rzewski. (See Example 3.)



Since 1962 there has been more emphasis on series of works of considerable length, as well as improvising long concerts with The Theatre of Eternal Music, a group he founded in the same year. In its early days the group included John Cale (three- and four-string viola drones, sarandi, gong), Tony Conrad (violin, bowed guitar, mandolin), Angus McLise (hand drums) and Marian Zazeela<sup>15</sup> (voice); a little later Terry Jennings (soprano saxophone), Dennis Johnson (voice) and Terry Riley (voice) joined the group. In *Sunday Morning Blues* (1963 or early 1964) Young performs on sopranino saxophone against drones sustained by Cale, Conrad and Zazeela, and McLise's drumming. A recording I heard was about 28 minutes long: Young spent the whole time cascading up and down a slightly varying series of notes as fast as possible in five-second bursts. Example 4 is typical. This wild, tense tremoloing recalls the most electrifying moments of Eric Dolphy and (more especially) John Coltrane, who 'used to construct modes or sets of fixed frequencies upon which he performed endlessly beautiful permutations' (Young), often above one-note or one-chord continuums. In addition the music is given an incredible tautness by McLise's hard, fast, metreless hand drumming. Some of the early work of the Velvet Underground (in which both McLise and Cale were involved) is a logical extension of what Young was doing at this time.

Other works commenced during this period included *Studies in the Bowed Disc* (1963), the subject of which is a four-foot steel gong made specially by the sculptor Robert Morris.<sup>16</sup> A section of this work (*The Volga Delta*) was recorded in 1964 and is concerned with sustaining chosen sound elements with double-bass bows. It sounds a bit like distant aeroplane engines with certain pitches booming through above the rest.

In 1964 Young abandoned the saxophone in favour of singing. He commenced *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*,<sup>17</sup> a mammoth work which has gradually been unfolding through the years with new sections and subsections performed on each public occasion (sometimes lasting up to eight hours a day). Each section has its own title: the main one has been *Map of 49's Dream The Two Systems of Eleven Sets of Galactic Intervals Ornamental Lightyears Tracery* (1966- ). (49 is a pet turtle.) Other sections have even longer and more fanciful titles, e.g. *The Obsidian Ocelot*, *The Sawmill*, and the *Blue Sawtooth High Tension Line Transformer Refracting the Legend of the Dream of the Tortoise Traversing the 189/98 Lost Ancestral Lake Regions Illuminated Quotients from the Black Tiger Tapestries of the Drone of the Holy Numbers* (October 1965).

The basis of the music is sine-wave, vocal and instrumental drones (usually no more than three pitches at any one time). Young improvises vocally on these drone frequencies in rhythmically free fashion, sliding

from note to note at varying speeds. The vocal style seems to have close associations with Indian models, but in reality stems more from his earlier work. The effect of the sound is more akin to Greek Byzantine chant or even the Temiar Dream music of Malaysia, some of which is based entirely on the same three notes that Young often uses: D, G and A. 'Although the piece may sound pretty much the same each time, each performance is quite different' writes Young, and beneath my generalised description of the music lie some pretty complex theories. Previous work with drones had led him to investigate intonation: the longer a harmonic interval is sustained, the more precisely one tunes it. Also, a perfect fifth in just intonation yields overtones that are stronger and more numerous than those of the acoustically imperfect fifth in equal temperament. He began to explore ways of controlling which overtones would be present within a complex of different drones and their associated combination frequencies (*The Two Systems of Eleven Categories* deals with this research).<sup>18</sup> Consequently only certain frequency combinations are chosen for each performance. However, the duration and point of entry of a frequency is decided by each individual during the course of the performance. This places great demands on each musician who 'must know exactly what everyone else is playing, he must hear at all times any other frequency that is being played and know what it is'.

The sound is amplified to a high, but not uncomfortable, level. This ensures that the bass is heard proportionally louder and that the higher overtones are strengthened, making combination tones more audible. Young's carefully chosen amplification systems are placed so that the audience is totally surrounded by the sound. Performances are given in a darkened room illuminated by red and green lighting and a series of calligraphic slides (the work of Marian Zazeela) superimposed from four projectors.<sup>19</sup> These slides are focused and defocused so slowly that it is virtually impossible to see them change, and yet they obviously do. Zazeela speaks of colour ranges of red and green in different superimpositions producing or suggesting many different colours, a visual parallel to some of Young's techniques.

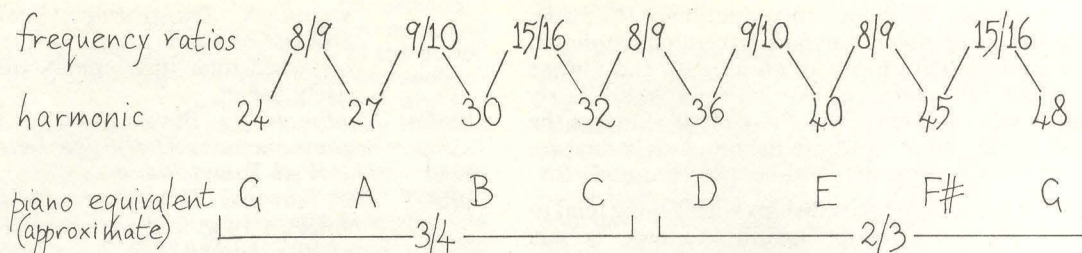
Young is deeply interested in the psychological effects of his music. The presence of drone means that the ear (and therefore the brain) is activated in the same way over a period of time and a psychological state can be induced. Also, harmonically related intervals (i.e. intervals related in whole number frequency ratios) are apparently more congenial information for the brain. On the question of intonation, the composer points out that the major scale is most rationally and musically represented in the octave 24-48 in the overtone series. (See Example 5.)

The major scale can be seen to be derived from ratios of 2, 3, 5 and their multiples. Indian music, however, also uses ratios of 7, 11, 13: these intervals are considered

Example 4

The musical notation for Example 4 consists of two staves. The upper staff, labeled 'sopranino saxophone', features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a dense, rapid sequence of notes, primarily within the range of G4 to A5, creating a tremolo-like effect. A bracket at the end of this staff indicates a duration of '(5 seconds)'. The lower staff, labeled 'voice, violin, viola', also uses a treble clef and shows a sustained drone of three notes: G4, D5, and A5, marked with a '(drone)' label.

# Example 5



harmonically over a drone and not melodically. 'The mere fact that they have the means to classify the moods of the different ragas, in whatever poetic way, means they have something that has almost disappeared from Western music. Sure, you had a few romantics who talked about the moods of various scales or chords. But for every romantic you had a hundred imperialists who were just writing notes.'

This takes us some way towards understanding the composer's fascination for the Kirana singing of Pandit Pran Nath, whom he first heard in 1967. Young was greatly impressed by the precision of his tuning (in order to produce and sustain a mood, it is necessary to repeat each pitch at exactly the same frequency). Evidently the admiration was mutual since Pran Nath invited Young to become his disciple in 1970. The composer agreed provided that he could continue with his own work. Since then, he has often accompanied Pran Nath on tamboura, and so has Terry Riley on tabla.

Meanwhile he has presented *The Well-Tuned Piano* (1964, but not performed publicly until 1974, possibly because of tuning difficulties), a work lasting three hours. The piano is retuned to conform to the harmonic series; the title is an obvious jibe at Bach. 'He then plays a series of partially improvised rhythmic and melodic variations, using what he calls "permutation combinations between the individual fingers, which I place over particular combinations of notes."' <sup>20</sup> *Sunday Morning Blues* demonstrates a similar procedure.

Frequency ratios between any two notes can be represented as whole number relationships. The number of intervals at Young's disposal is infinitely greater than on an ordinary piano. The smallest he uses can be expressed by the ratio 63/64: just over an eighth of a tone. Using a limited number of these intervals at any one time probably explains (1) the reported gradual alteration of timbre ('the sound seems to change from zither to lyre to sitar to orchestra of mandolins to choir') <sup>21</sup> and (2) the planned emotional responses that are different for each part of the work. The music is more rhythmic and less static than is usual with Young; certainly it is one of very few pieces written since 1961 that is not based on drones.

Lastly, there are the *Drift Studies* (1964- ) for two or more ultra-stable, precisely-tuned sine-wave drones. The recorded version offers a whole range of psychoacoustical effects to the armchair listener. In time, however, the pitches will 'drift' slightly, despite the volume of each pitch to drift as well. Between September 1966 and January 1970 Young had turned his house into a continuous sound environment he consequently studied the effects in great detail.

Information concerning his present work is hard to obtain. This is partly explained by the fact that the rigorous standards by which he controls sound are reflected in his attitudes towards giving concerts, making recordings and earning money. It's understandable enough why he used to insist (and perhaps still does) that others who play his work must pay in inverse proportion to the duration of a piece (\$300 for seven minutes, \$25 for 24 hours was once quoted). It's less understandable why he should demand fantastic sums for the dissemination of his work. It puts him in the position of being a relatively unheard major composer, almost a Sorabji of our time.

But perhaps he is less concerned with worldly realities. He used once to subscribe to a 25-hour day. And he has said, 'If people could more meditate, this would automatically lead to a change of the political situation.' I just can't see that happening, somehow. He will probably be playing parts of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* throughout his life, but rumour has it that he is only accompanying Pran Nath these days, as well as occasionally performing *The Well-Tuned Piano*. Whatever is happening, La Monte Young is sure to be following the straight line that he started drawing 20 years ago.

\* \* \*

I shall conclude with a note on the influence that Young has had upon other musicians. Young's music has had a fair amount of impact, even in Britain, where he has never played. Among those with whom he has worked, Terry Riley and John Cale are deservedly the best known. The soprano saxophone figures in Riley's drone-laden *Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band* (1970) <sup>22</sup> owe something to Young as well as to Coltrane. Riley has also worked with just intonation. Cale was surely responsible for much of the material on the first two Velvet Underground albums (1967 and 1968) <sup>23</sup>: think of the viola drones, the repeated clusters of *I'm waiting for the man*, the uniform cluster-glissandi and increasingly manic one-note obsession of *Sister Ray*. Cale, a Welshman, also gave the first British performance of *X for Henry Flynt* in 1964.

Terry Jennings's *String Quartet* and *Piano Piece* (both 1960) are both based on the 'dream chord'. The Quartet has many other similarities with Young's *Trio*. Tony Conrad's album with Faust (*Outside the Dream Syndicate* of 1972) <sup>24</sup> is predictably laden with violin drones and heavy, repetitive bass riffs. As for other American composers, Steve Reich and Philip Glass are obviously working in analogous fields and their music needs no introduction. Robert Erickson's *Oceans* (1971) for trumpet(s) and bells is a beautifully spacious harmonic series work, but Charlemagne Palestine's *2 perfect 5ths a major 3rd apart reinforced twice* (1973) seems to be little more than a cheap imitation.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Stockhausen's *Klavierstück IX* (1954, revised 1961) was once described by Cardew as a 'weak, aesthetic version' of *X for Henry Flynt*. <sup>25</sup> (Did Stockhausen revise the work after hearing the Henry Flynt piece in 1961?) And *Stimmung* (1968) is an infinitely less absorbing work than Young's *Tortoise*. But the work of Christer Hennix, a Swede, is to be taken more seriously. He seems to have beliefs and aims very close to those of Young and the style of his renaissance oboe playing is said to owe much to him too. I've heard one ear-splitting, distortion-ridden, primaevial-sounding piece that was fantastically exhilarating.

For the Scratch Orchestra 'it is only necessary to specify one procedure, and the variety comes from the way everyone does it differently'. <sup>26</sup> The ethics of *X for Henry Flynt* extended to amateur group performance was a radical step initiated by Cardew's *The Great Learning* (1968-70). Other examples are Parsons' drone-based *Mindfulness of Breathing* (1969) for low and suitably slow bass voices and Howard Skempton's *Drum No. 1*

(1969) (Any number of drums. Introduction of the pulse. Continuation of the pulse. Deviation through emphasis, decoration, contradiction.) is often lengthy and always exciting. Most of Skempton's works, though, are fairly brief. Pieces such as *September Song* (1968) possess the remarkable ability to concentrate the mind on the nature of the sound in a short space of time. (See Example 6.)

Otherwise the musical relationships with Young tend to be in pieces of far greater length. Volume is less important, except in works such as John Lewis's *Klavierhammer* (1974), a frenzied, 20-minute, double-octave barrage of sound (compared by a friend to Chinese water-torture). Tuning is even less important, although Brian Dennis cheerfully relates his work based on the harmonic and sub-harmonic series back to Young's perfect fifth. Dennis had a spell of experimenting with microtones before he started writing these pieces ten years ago.

Last but not least, there is John White. The hour-long *Gothic Chord Machine* (1971) consists entirely of heavy open fifth chords. The hard, uncompromising sound and clashing chords of four reed organs bring to mind visions of an unvarying Arctic landscape. Michael Nyman has linked the vast *Cello and Tuba Machine* of 1968 (potential duration six hours) to Young's *Drift Studies*.<sup>27</sup>

#### Catalogue of works (incomplete)

- 1955 *Variations* for string quartet
- 1956 *Five small pieces for string quartet on remembering a naiad*, (1) a wisp, (2) a gnarl, (3) a leaf, (4) a twig, (5) a tooth
- 1957 *Variations* for alto flute, bassoon and string trio  
*Prelude and fugue in E minor* for two pianos  
*Fugue in A minor* for violin, clarinet, viola and bassoon  
*Fugue in E flat minor* for two pianos  
*For brass* for two trumpets, two horns, two trombones, two tubas
- 1958 *For guitar*  
*String Trio*
- 1959 *Three Studies* for piano  
*Vision* for eleven instruments
- 1959-62 *Untitled works for piano* ('an untitled rhythmic, chordal drone piano style of my own development')
- 1959-? *Untitled works* ('live friction sounds: gong on cement; gong on woodfloor; metal on wall')
- 1960 *Untitled works* ('a collage improvisation of electronic and concrete sounds pre-recorded on magnetic tape')  
*Poem* for chairs, tables, benches, etc.  
*An invisible poem sent to Terry Jennings for him to perform* (performed by Jennings on alto saxophone)  
*Two Sounds*  
*Arabic numeral (any integer) to H.F.* (usually referred to as *X for Henry Flynt*)  
*Compositions 1960 Nos. 1-15* (1, 8, 11, 12, 14 not listed by Young)  
*Piano Pieces for Terry Riley Nos. 1 and 2*  
*Piano Pieces for David Tudor Nos. 1-3*
- 1961 *Compositions 1961 Nos. 1-29*  
*Death Chant*
- 1962-64 *Untitled works* for sopranino saxophone/piano/gong, vocal drone, violin/guitar/lute and viola ('involving static permutation techniques of my own design applied to constellations of pitches over various stationary and movable drone combinations'; includes *Sunday Morning Blues*)
- 1962 *The Second Dream of the High-Tension Line*

*Stepdown Transformer* (from *The Four Dreams of China*) for bowed strings or other sustained-tone instruments that can be precisely tuned

- 1963 *Studies in the Bowed Disc* for four-foot steel gong; includes *The Volga Delta*
- 1964 *The Well-Tuned Piano*
- 1964- *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* for voices, strings and drones etc. (including *Map of 49's Dream The Two Systems of Eleven Sets of Galactic Intervals Ornamental Lightyears Tracery*)  
*Drift Studies*

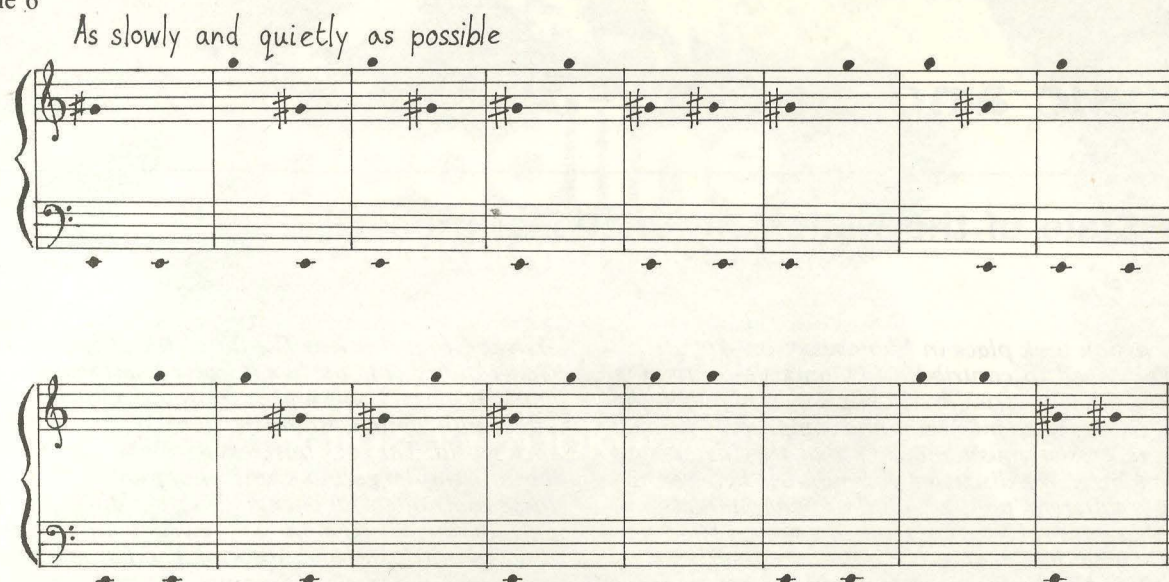
#### Discography

- Section of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* (23 minutes; recorded 1969)
- Section of *Studies in the Bowed Disc: The Volga Delta* (21 minutes; recorded 1964)
- Limited edition by Galerie Heiner Friedrich, Munich (virtually unobtainable)
- Section of *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys* (39 minutes; recorded 1973)
- Drift Study* (39 minutes; recorded 1973)
- Shandar 83 510 (available and recommended)<sup>28</sup>
- A Wergo album consisting of unspecified compositions is reported to be in preparation<sup>29</sup>

#### NOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> Interview with Roger Reynolds, December 1961, *John Cage* (London, etc.: Peters, 1962), p. 52.
- <sup>2</sup> Conversation with Richard Kostelanetz, 1967. Unless otherwise stated, all quotes from Young come from La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, *Selected Writings* (Munich: Heiner Friedrich, 1969). Other writings by Young include La Monte Young and Jackson MacLow, *An Anthology* (Munich: Heiner Friedrich, 2nd edition, 1970) and La Monte Young, *Compositions and Performances* (unpublished).
- <sup>3</sup> Michael Nyman, 'George Brecht: Interview', *Studio International*, Vol. 192, No. 984 (November/December 1976), p. 264.
- <sup>4</sup> In conversation.
- <sup>5</sup> Significantly, *Composition 1960 No. 13* reads: 'The performer should prepare any composition and then perform it as well as he can'.
- <sup>6</sup> Cornelius Cardew, 'On the role of the instructions in the interpretation of indeterminate music', *Treatise Handbook* (London, etc.: Peters, 1971), p. xiv.
- <sup>7</sup> One interesting precursor is Yves Klein's 40-minute *Symphonie 'Monoton-Silence'* (1947-49) which consists of five to seven minute long D major chords separated by 44 seconds of silence.
- <sup>8</sup> This chord is the entire material for *The Second Dream of the High Tension Line Stepdown Transformer* (1962). The work has been performed on two amplified violins.
- <sup>9</sup> Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music* (London: Studio Vista, 1974), p. 121.
- <sup>10</sup> John Marshall High School, Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles State College and UCLA from which he graduated in 1958. He then spent two years at Berkeley University, one year studying and one teaching.
- <sup>11</sup> Michael Parsons, programme note for *Poem*, Fluxus retrospective concert, AIR gallery, London, May 23, 1977.
- <sup>12</sup> Dick Higgins, 'Boredom and Danger', *Source No. 5* (January 1969), p. 15. Higgins is in fact referring to Erik Satie's *Vieux sequins et vieilles cuirasses* (1914), which ends with an eight-beat passage played 380 times and to *Vexations*. His comments are equally applicable to *Poem*.

Example 6



<sup>13</sup> As Howard Skempton did in the recent Fluxus retrospective.

<sup>14</sup> Nicolas Slonimsky, 'Zen', *Music Since 1900* (London: 4th, revised, edition, Cassell, 1972), p. 1502.

<sup>15</sup> Whom Young married in 1963.

<sup>16</sup> Another special instrument is Walter de Maria's *Instrument for La Monte Young* (1965), consisting of an aluminium ball and trough, 'a sound sculpture for performance with amplification and acoustical design by La Monte Young'. The ball is gently rolled back and forth from one end of the trough to the other.

<sup>17</sup> Why *tortoise*? Whereas other creatures have been evolving with the passing of time, tortoises and turtles have remained essentially unchanged.

<sup>18</sup> One way is through singing 'throat tones' and 'nose tones'. Try sounding a long note through your nose while slowly opening and closing your mouth and listen for the harmonics.

<sup>19</sup> Referred to as *Ornamental Lightyears Tracery*.

<sup>20</sup> Robert Palmer, 'Lost in the Drone Zone (When La Monte Young says take it from the top he means last Wednesday)', *Rolling Stone*, February 13, 1975, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Columbia MS 7315.

<sup>23</sup> *The Velvet Underground and Nico* (MGM Verve 2315 056) and *White Light/White Heat* (MGM Verve 710015).

<sup>24</sup> Caroline C1501.

<sup>25</sup> Cornelius Cardew, 'One Sound: La Monte Young', *The Musical Times*, Vol.107, No. 1485 (November 1966), p.959.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Parsons, as quoted in Michael Nyman, 'Believe it or not melody rides again', *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (October 1971), p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Nyman, 'Hearing/Seeing', *Studio International*, op. cit., p.234.

<sup>28</sup> Obtainable in case of difficulty from Public House Bookshop, 21 Little Preston Street, Brighton, BN1 2HQ.

<sup>29</sup> Rumour has it that Shandar will be releasing a recording of *The Well-Tuned Piano*. So far it remains a rumour, but I did notice a 45-minute tape advertised for \$1000 in *Musics 8* ...

I am particularly grateful to Hugh Davies, Michael Parsons and Keith Potter for valuable assistance in gathering information for this article.

Howard Skempton's *September Song* is reproduced by kind permission of Faber Music Limited.

# SCORES, BOOKS, MAGAZINES AND RECORDS RECEIVED

**Harrison Birtwistle**  
*Melencolia I* (Universal Edition)

**Benjamin Britten**  
*Phaedra* — vocal score (Faber Music)  
*Welcome Ode* — vocal score (Faber Music)

**Ross Edwards**  
*Five Little Piano Pieces* (Faber Music)

**Peter Sculthorpe**  
*Irkanda I* (Faber Music)  
*The Stars Turn* (Faber Music)

*La Biennale di Venezia: Annuario 1976; Eventi del 1975* (La Biennale di Venezia)

**Luigi Rognoni, trans. Robert Mann**  
*The Second Vienna School* (Calder)

**John Shepherd, Phil Virden, Graham Vulliamy, Trevor Wishart**  
*Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages* (Latimer New Dimensions)

**Christopher Small**  
*Music-Society-Education* (Calder, 'Platform Books' series)

Action Musicale 1

Brilliant Corners 1, 2 & 7

Documenta Musicae Novae I-V

Impetus 6

Interface, Vol. 4, No. 1

*Jaarboek I.P.E.M. 2, 4 & 6* (Yearbook of the Institute for Psychoacoustics and Electronic Music, Ghent State University, Belgium)

Key Notes 5

*The Musical Times*, Vol. 118, No. 1617 (November 1977)

Parachute 8

Tempo 118-122

Newsletters etc. from Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, Boosey and Hawkes, Editio Musica Budapest, London Musicians' Collective, Music for Socialism, Universal Edition

Incus records 17-22

## Music and Society-3:

### The State of the Nation – a functional primer

*This discussion took place in Manchester on August 30, 1977. We wished to contribute to Contact's continuing 'Music and Society' series by attempting to highlight the practical issues facing musicians and composers who deal with the repressive music industry that they detest and wish to change. We discussed the parallels between the apparently different 'popular' and 'straight' markets and the fact that our problems are really the same. (Tune in to Radio 1 at breakfast: that record is probably marketed by CBS or Polydor. Now tune in to Radio 3: that record is probably marketed by CBS or Polydor.) Economically, the entire range of music is reduced by the record industry to the same article: a disc, a 'unit'. We also discussed the ways in which we can aid social change through the industry in which we work; the 'tools' we have created and need to create to manage this.*

*Such 'tools' have been among the concerns of the British punk rock groups which have emerged in the last year or so and which are now generally known as the 'New*

*Wave'. Groups such as The Buzzcocks, Chelsea, The Fall, Generation X and the Sex Pistols consist mainly of young working class people and have a political awareness and a direct anti-capitalist stand that have scared the traditional rock world. The rock business is now trying, bit by bit, to 'absorb' the dangerous elements of punk rock, to 'absorb' these tools of social change. This situation also forms a part of our discussion. I showed a transcript of the discussion to Una and Mark of The Fall; three of Una's comments are inserted into the text below.*

*The magazine quotations in the example are intended to illustrate how close are the methods between the 'popular' and the 'straight' press: a point which underlines the discussion of the parallels between the two markets. The division of the discussion under headings is designed to focus attention on particular points in a suitably (or an unsuitably?) 'academic' fashion as well as to make the thing more readable.*

*(Dick Witts)*

#### The Clash

LOOKING GOOD on or off stage isn't just down to wanting to play the rock star role. Is it, Paul?

"Even before the band I was always very into clothes."

At this very moment Paul sports his scarlet "frayed look" (sic) baggy mohair sweater, black multi-zippered pants, and black lace-up boots. The spiky hair is currently blond. One observes the twin scars, like an Indian buck's colours, on each high cheek bone. He looks very good.

Actually, Paul's life has changed considerably over the last 12 months. He looks quite blissful about the current position. "I think it's *amazing*. A year ago I couldn't even play a musical instrument. 'E taught me," he adds, pointing to "Poodle" Mick Jones slumped in his best outlaw chic pose on his guitar case in the middle of the flood at Brussels Airport.

The band are currently in the studio cutting a series of tracks from which two will be selected for a single due out by the middle of next month. By the time the next album is out — "It'll be at Christmas. We're gonna call it 'Clash's Christmas Turkey' and it'll feature 'Run, Rudolph, Run In Lewisham High Street'," Mick Jones tells me at least one more single will probably have been released.

He's not concerned about The Clash's having failed to join the other New Wave bands in the singles charts — "It'll come."

*(New Musical Express, September 3, 1977, p.8.)*

#### News

COMPOSER Bernard Rands, for the past two years professor of composition at the University of California San Diego, dropped in from his sunny exile to *CMW*'s offices last week looking disgustingly fit.

Life there suits him well. Up at five each morning he manages to get in four or five hours' composition before starting the day's not-too-demanding academic tasks. Rands says his range is 'a good bit wider' than before and, himself enjoying and learning from much of the music of the past, deplores the common attitude in the US that you start with your own resources: 'it makes me nervous about the future of humanity'.

His latest major work *Magrigals for Orchestra*, commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra, was premiered last May in Washington's Kennedy Center. It is now in the hands of his UK publishers, Universal Edition, and Rands feels it would be ideal for the Academy.

'It's a good life', says Rands who will be returning to California after a trip to Australia for at least one more year. 'but I'm still very tied to Yorkshire.'

*(Classical Music Weekly, September 3, 1977, p.6.)*

## The Structural Bases of System Transformation

**DICK WITTS** This constant absorption of new 'tools' by big business: that's what worries me about the New Wave. This new recording you're doing, Richard, merely creates other records. I don't see how you're going to get out of just making more units. You can do this in the *performance* of things with more ease, because you're directly related to the public. The public's *there* and you can do what you want with them. Though there is that divide: you're the people with the equipment, there's your audience over there — there's this big break between you and the audience. But that's up to you to try and get rid of it.

**TONY FRIEL** It's difficult the way things stand to take away the distinction, whatever you do. The way things are, there's going to be performers and non-performers, and the way I see it, if you're going to have any alternative, you're going to have to start with the *people* and the people's attitudes to each other. If you want to start with music, if that option's open to you, you've got to start on a more personal level than the music, trying to put your ideas forward to people. You haven't got to make a 'music of society' in which music is just a reflection of social order. You've got to make a complete break to break down any barriers at all. You couldn't expect to use any system going to try and do that.

**TREVOR WISHART** You mean you've got to make a social change before you can do it ...

**TF** Well, they've got to go together. Obviously you can't have one without the other. You can't just experience a social change by yourself if you're a musician, and you can't wait for a social change before you can do something.

**TW** It's a practical problem. If you're looking for a practical solution you've got to say 'We've got to change society as well, then it'd be all right'. There are two sets of problems: what would music be like if the world were perfect (well, not 'perfect': *better*) and what do you do in the circumstances as they exist? I'm not quite with your implications, Dick. I think perhaps you're suggesting that you ought to set up an ideal situation in a relationship between performers and audience, because in microcosm it would reflect what it might be like in a socialist society.

**DW** I don't really know what *would* happen in a socialist society. The ideal thing for me is that there wouldn't be an audience. No! (Laughter) *Everyone* may be an audience, everyone performers. Concerning the stage, all you can do is make a statement that this stage exists. A lot of people don't even think about it: the reason why you're at the front there. So it would be useful to make a statement about this capitalist structure you're working in. It's interesting when you have concerts with seats and tickets for rock groups. Perhaps it's really lively stuff; then the audience can refuse to stay seated, separated from everyone else in regimental rows. So they disrupt it: they kick the place apart or crowd on top of the seats so that the seats no longer exist and the audience comes together. They try to destroy this capitalist institution. But this kind of 'physical criticism' is too limited, too contained. I'm not sure how you can operate in the market with strength, trying to raise the consciousness of people.

**TF** But if enough people did it and you tried to get rid of the superstars.... That's what appeals to me about punk music. When the Sex Pistols were very small they were saying 'Anyone can do it'. If it works at a grass roots level, most musicians could survive and make a living comparable to that of an electrician, a mechanic or a factory worker. That'd be a start to raising people's consciousness, because you could have lots of situations where everyone could have music and direct access to it.

**RICHARD BOON** What has happened to people who've said that, from Woody Guthrie to the Pistols, is

that others mimic them. These people don't see that there's a fundamental issue. They think 'We can do it if we're like *them*'. So they take their format and slightly change it, and now there are 50 groups that sound like the Sex Pistols, which is not what the Pistols themselves wanted. That's something fundamental in our culture.

**DW** How can the Pistols turn against that, though? What are they going to do? Any time anyone chameleon-like, for instance David Bowie, makes a turn, everyone does the same.

**TW** It's consumerism. If you're operating in the system it happens automatically. What you produce is a consumer product of a certain style, and people accept it as a consumer product. Even if you're making a strong social comment people unfortunately tend to think 'Ah yes, that is music that is making a strong social comment, file it under "Strong Social Comment", next to "Popular Classical"'.

**RB** Ideologies are commodities as well.

**TW** Precisely. I've got mixed feelings about this. My own 'participatory' work, the games that I do, gets hived off into 'Education' and loses its objective. It's nice that you can get people to participate, but it just reaches a smaller number of people. It might have a strong effect, but there are so many other things going on in society, so that what tends to happen is that its effect is negated by everything around it. Perhaps I'm getting too pessimistic now...

## Diplomatic Relations: Games and Strategies

**DW** All right. But you do get *some* consciousness raising going on in your games, just as you do in those of Jean-Yves Bosseur and Christian Wolff: though 'games' is perhaps the wrong word as it suggests competition. You have this genuine interaction between people who are *using* sound. But you're not concerned — here we have to *talk* negatively — with sound as a product, nor are you concerned with glossy expertise. You tend to be lost in the job you're doing. All people's selfishness and bigotry is brought out and gradually transcended. This is possible: don't you find it?

**TW** Ideally. With the whole structure of sitting people in a circle and everyone having their turn, no-one feels suppressed. Though it's quite a manipulative situation in a way. I've heard kids sing perfectly in tune passing 'the sound of a bluebottle' around the circle, whereas if you *asked* them to sing in tune they wouldn't be able to because you've told them that's what they're supposed to be doing. So there are some nice things about it, but ...

**DW** I've never found much feeling of solidarity in a rock group. You would have thought that with four or five people you'd get this feeling, especially over a long period of working intensively with communal pressures on you. But in a lot of groups you can just replace any individual player, any 'unit'. You can stick a more efficient player in, take one out ...

**TF** When I'm in a group I don't think of people as instrumentalists. As long as someone was doing something to the best of their ability I wouldn't care if they played really badly. You've got to think of them as human beings and not as musicians, robots.

**DW** But as soon as you get into a studio that's lost, because you're making little black discs ...

**TF** Yes: it's not a group of people then, it's a 'sound'.

**DW** They can isolate one from the other.

**RB** But that irritates you because you're talking of using a musical group as some sort of model for collective practice. It's all very well for the people who are doing it, but there are only four or five of them. They can have a great time working out their wonderful human relationships. But what does it do for the others? It just leaves them with the sound.

## The Dynamics of Classification

TW It's all to do with presenting an image. If you say 'presenting an image' in rock music, it's pretty obvious what you mean. You package this group: they all dress alike, perhaps, they have similar hairstyles and they get their pictures taken. Well, it's the same in 'straight' music. It's packaged to be 'straight', 'serious'. It's 'difficult' and you read about it in certain sorts of journals. Performers dress in a certain way, and composers deliver lectures on their works in which they say certain accepted things and relate their music to that of the past. It's a form of packaging, a 'sell', and people tend to accept it as normal. Ultimately there's no real difference. It's just a different sort of commodity for a different market. There's the 'Up Market' and the 'Down Market', as some would say. The 'Up Market' has this sort of dress and these sorts of manners, uses vibraphones, funny voices and lots of percussion but no regular rhythm; the people involved meet in certain sorts of institutions, sit in neat rows and drink sherry or Campari. Then there's the 'Down Market', but there's no real difference and it doesn't have any separate effect. The audiences for 'straight' music have consumed this commodity which gives them status. It hasn't made them think about anything. It's the same with the average rock music as with 'straight' music. People consume this commodity, they enjoy it and it might make them feel 'masculine' or something like that, since a lot of it is very sexist ...

UNA Women have to conform to the sexual stereotype in order to take part as musicians. They're tolerated as a novelty. Even those like Joan Baez, who as composers are allowed a status beyond that of mere sexual allure to promote their records, have a secondary role: Baez is presented as a second-level, feminine Bob Dylan.

TW Both commodity situations are like eating sweets really.

RB Except that certain aspects of the commodities are not reproducible. There's the possibility of a unique commodity, especially when people are into randomness.

TW That's what makes chance music a high status commodity.

RB Whereas rock music is disposable.

TW Let's actually examine, say, 4' 33", Cage's 'silent' piano piece, let's look at what it actually is. Actually it's nothing. Nothing happens. That's what it actually is. But it takes a fantastic mystique from its packaging. Cage might not have wanted it to be like that, but that's how it works. Packaging without content.

DW Four minutes and 33 seconds of packaging. A lot of contemporary composers — though not, I think, Cage — want their audiences to be confused ...

TW They want people to think, but not about anything in particular.

DW Yes, but they don't want the enjoyment bit.

TW We could soon subvert that! I think the problem in 'straight' music is that people come along expecting to think about nothing important. They get a big thing about how serious it is, and how intellectual, but not about anything that *matters*, about anything that's going to change them. I think that in that situation it's necessary to involve people and then try to force them to think about something that matters. Take my piece called *Fidelio*.<sup>2</sup> The audience start off laughing because it's funny, but it's not funny in the end and somehow you've drawn them in. When they laugh, they laugh as a social group and in a way that brings them together. But then the whole thing turns. It's not actually just a funny piece, it's making a political point and at the end you hope you've communicated something that matters, rather than just 'Oh, that was a nice performance and those are very nice suitcases', which is how middle class people react to concerts. It's breaking through that barrier ...

DW When I play something I like to ask people what they thought about it, but they always give very general remarks. I get the impression that some of the audience have got a film that they want to have running in their mind, a film without content. They only want me to provide images for the film by aural suggestion. All they tell you about is how they *saw* the music, in a banal Walt Disney way.

TW I'm sure it's the same in rock concerts. If you're doing some pieces with fairly political lyrics people come out and say ...

RB People come backstage, or the group's in the bar and people say 'That was great!'. Then you ask 'What did you think about it?' and they've been too busy drinking to notice.

## Nongovernmental Institutions and the State: Trends Analysis

TW People don't expect to have their assumptions threatened, and people expect to receive a commodity. Bearing that in mind, you hope that you might reach 10% of the audience.

RB Culture is a commodity that justifies our role.

DW Did you start your record label with that ideology in mind?

RB No, there was a certain amount of necessity, in that it'd be nice to have the record, nice to have the songs recorded. At the time we just wanted to do it ourselves, to retain control. As it happens it was profitable and each artist received as much of his due as possible. But if that hadn't happened it would still have been good to make a record and get it out to some people, and to do it ourselves, seeing the process through from start to finish. It's our attempt to be involved in the production. But now, of course, it's grown out of our hands.

DW The Buzzcocks have signed to United Artists. You end up being a feeder to the big companies.

RB Yes, we're nailed by the contradictions. If we had continued as we started, there'd be a lot of frustrated customers around, which would obviously affect the performers.

DW The only way out is to become a big company yourself. Where was the break when it became impossible to carry on?

RB By the time we'd sold 5,000 records it became an impossible demand.

DW Did it become impossible because you were relying on big business companies for your pressing?

RB Yes, partly, and because each pressing financed the next and we just couldn't meet that demand immediately.

DW Cash flow? The money from sales comes back too late to ...

RB Yes ...

TW It's a lot of hassle as well, presumably, to press it more than once.

RB We'd get an order for 1,000 but we'd have to wait for the money to come back from the shops and other people before we could meet later orders from the same shops. People aren't very good at paying you: some have quarterly accounting systems. There's even a problem with monthly payments.

DW But surely you're capable of going through the process again with another record?

RB I don't know. The cost escalates: it's one of those financial curves. If we did another record, the market for the first one would want the next, and then more people. So we have to go to a major company whose job it is to sell on that level. You have to deal with them as merchants, but to try and retain the way of working where the artist has as much involvement as possible with your merchant

at every stage: selection of material, the way it's released, the packaging, how it's promoted.

DW Both markets seem to me like a spring. The classical market is basically the same, but the rock market is very intense, compressed, compared to it.

TW In 'straight' music, if you actually write scores, you're dealing with a situation in which there are a certain number of international publishing houses. You get on their lists and they pay you a retainer, and they take your works up and print the parts and promote the pieces. They go round to people and say 'Play this piece'. Their profits are a long way off in the future. If they can make you a big international success when you're dead, they'll make large profits from selling your scores. You usually have to sign a contract giving them the rights to publish your music, and if they don't like what you're doing, you don't get in on it. So they have a complete monopoly of taste: certain music is considered to be 'serious' or 'acceptable' and the publishing houses define what it is.

DW I'm sure that sometimes the publishers will print composers they're not totally sympathetic to: if a profit is likely and to ensure an absolute monopoly of access. Guiding the way people are going to experience music in the future. The means of production is not going to be modified by one or two 'risky' composers. If you've got a radically different way of treating music and treating your potential audience as consumers, then that's where the 'alternative' or parallel market enters. For instance, Universal Edition will take some of your stuff even though it's not marketable in the same way as ...

TW Yes, but I've had the same sort of history as Richard with my scores and discs, only at a slower pace. Take the *Sun* books I sent to Universal Edition. They were 'very interested', but then it turned out it cost too much and they couldn't print photographs and that sort of thing. After about two years I got fed up and published some of the material myself. For the complete book I found a printer and got a quote: one sixth of the UE estimate. Then, after all that, UE finally agreed to print the entire book. It's so much of a hassle. I still print my own scores: I found a small distributor for those. And I press and sell my own discs. I make about 2% on what I paid for them, and the amount of work involved in distributing is impossible. But I like the feeling that I'm in control of it and promoting my own music even though the big companies won't take it up. So what: I can succeed anyway. On the other hand, there are so many advantages in working through a big company. It's a matter of how much you compromise.

RB It's also a matter of how you live. If you want to live off what you do, you'll find trouble, like from Social Security. For instance, the group got their photos in the papers, and instantly the SS recognised them when they signed on and assumed they were making a vast amount of money, which they weren't. Now, signed to United Artists, the group have a wage of £25 a week each.

TW That's interesting, because my wage up to this year was £25 a week too.

TF I've got a job now. I'm only on £23. I think I'll become a recording star. (Laughter)

RB There is that old class thing: the way out for working class kids is to become a footballer or a recording star.

TW Or a 'straight' composer like me.

TF You were talking of starting an independent record distribution system, Dick.

DW Most of the material that needs that at present is either free improvisation or stuff like Trevor's: generally 'avantgarde' music that isn't reactionary, but not particularly rock, though it could include middle class composers who are moving to that area — seeking a bit more cash! The major record labels aren't going to take these kinds of music.

TW When I put out *Journey into Space* perhaps I didn't try hard enough, but I couldn't get shops to accept a private-issue label. It was a double LP of 'weird, out of the way' electronic music. Perhaps they still wouldn't accept that record?

RB But now that the New Wave and punk rock have developed, there is a climate in which shops will stock something that isn't necessarily a commercial proposition: they seem to need to support that kind of activity.

TF There's a mystique now about independent records. Even Rare Records in Manchester has a window display of independent singles. Lots of people buy the latest independent label for the status.

RB But the New Wave has certainly demystified some of the workings of the rock business.

DW True. You'd never have got articles in *Melody Maker* three or four years ago like the one we had the other week on how to market independent labels, as in The Drones story.

RB A lot of deals are more in the open. You even know now that Tom Robinson has signed for a vast amount of money to CBS and how much he got. A new development.

TW You now see the money and the politics behind it. And there has been this development in photo-direct printing in the last seven years or so, which means you can get things printed incredibly cheaply. Record presses at present are still different, in that you still have to go to an enormous plant. It may soon be possible to find that people will be able to press independently, cheaply.

RB Yes, major companies own all the presses.

TW Why has the market opened up?

TF It's because of the New Wave. There's a new market...

RB Because the old stuff didn't relate to anyone in a direct way.

TW And now they're actually saying something important in the lyrics.

RB A lot of New Wave bands aren't saying anything. Now there's a growing elite of 'professional amateurs'. People no longer object to musicians who can't play actually playing. Whereas if you go to a highly organised large rock concert, there's an incredible technology involved that you just can't relate to. But now, because technology accelerates, a cheap guitar at £30 today is as good as one that cost £200 four years ago.

TW Yes, it's like synthesizers ...

RB And just like printing. Or community video: the next big thing. There is more access to tools.

TW And, incidentally, it'd be good to have communalised electronic studios now that you can get cheap integrated circuit electronics. In the community, instead of the universities.

TF There's no reason for not carrying it further. Access to instruments, practice rooms, performance space.

RB You can make records cheaply in cheap recording studios. They don't have the latest 32 channel with flanger, they've only got eight track and are possibly technologically outdated, but they do their job. So the New Wave comes out of general disaffection. People don't like what's offered to them and find that they can make their own quite cheaply.

TW But is it a question of supply or demand? Is it that people have suddenly become politically conscious and that they want this new music which relates to them either in an aggressive way or in an openly political way? Or is it that record shops can't sell the old records, therefore they're prepared to take anything that comes along, and so you find that you can get your records into the shops?

DW I went to a People's Liberation Music concert in Manchester a while ago. Their Maoist line was that in London there are thousands of different musical things going on at the same time, hoping for a break, and it's always in turmoil at the bottom. There's punk rock and probably its opposite all happening at once. Big business will take up one or two different musical styles for a try-out, and if one of these grows or catches on, big business will put everything in to promote it.

TW Suggesting that the market generates demand.

RB It does happen on a very basic level and the business exploits it. But I think that a lot of the New Wave wasn't generated by big business. Now the business is really getting into it. It grows as they cultivate it, and now it's all you can read about in the rock papers, though it's not all you can hear on the radio. That in itself shows it wasn't some planned promotion: it took the business by surprise. It's now becoming absorbed and institutionalised.

DW But PLM are saying that it's big business that generates and grooms new forms from the start, and I don't think they're correct. I think the New Wave is due to the economic climate: because of the one and a half to two million unemployed or those trapped by menial tasks after comprehensive education. Reggae was an influence. Big business will groom a bastardised, 'cosmetic' form of *that* as a deflection, but not what we've seen from a year ago up to now. I wonder how long this dynamic openness will last. How many months?

RB The lifespan of the New Wave will probably be shorter than those of psychedelic music or traditional rock 'n' roll. Technology also accelerates lifespans.

DW Is there a chartable cycle? Something exploited, then cold-stored?

RB There are a lot of carefully-plotted artificial cycles for a start. Disco music was very much the business fostering a concept — a presentation, a mode, a style of music — onto people. It was a factory thing. They had all these things on tape and just mixed them up every now and again. (Laughter)

DW Just like Berio. The classical market operates entirely on such planning, tied to anniversaries.

TW Yes, it's just the same in the 'straight' market. Someone like Schoenberg comes along and is terribly unacceptable, then suddenly everyone's doing pastiche Schoenberg and now there's background music in that style. The next cycle must be Webern ...

RB Just because it's institutionalised doesn't deny that there's some driving force at the source.

DW I reckon that the most potentially revolutionary part of this cycle comes just after the start. Like the whole thing with the Sex Pistols. It really showed up the market's contradictions: these companies taking them one day and dropping them the next. We saw all the hostility and paranoia of the capitalist media. They didn't know what to do! If that point can be prolonged, strengthened and driven further, then that's a most important tool.

TW There's that parallel, you see, with something like the case of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. It involuntarily attacked the audience's values at an economically unstable time. What happens in rock music is that it eventually gets arranged by Mantovani and put on Radio 2, while Webern's music gets put into 'The Past' and people write books about it and analyse it and it becomes part of our museum culture. Structurally it's the same process of assimilating and institutionalising.

RB Sure. They may have tamed Elvis, but they're still scared of rock 'n' roll.

TW The same thing as reading these articles in journals like *Perspectives of New Music*, such as an analysis of the rhythmic structure of *The Rite of Spring*: incredibly academic with lots of diagrams. The reaction of the first

audience was to walk out!

## Security and Codification

DW It gets to that position where the music becomes the last thing. The circulations of the weekly *Melody Maker*, *Sounds*, *Record Mirror* and *New Musical Express* are huge, even though people don't hear even half the stuff that's being written about. People adopt clothes, mannerisms based entirely on photos, articles and gossip columns. I used to think — I'm not sure that I still do — that the reason behind this is that some music is potentially more dangerous to capitalist forms of control than the industry likes to pretend. So they isolate and screen it, camouflage it and replace it by all this secondary, fetish material that's equally profitable. So that this other, non-aural stuff isn't mainly a way of maximising profit but a method of transferring attention, of deflecting from and weakening the real tools of consciousness raising.

TW In the 'straight' music world you can only sell yourself by quoting your reviews. It's no good playing to promote your music, they want to see whether a review says it's good. (Laughter)

DW I'm trying to help four foreign groups to visit Britain next year. I've so far written to over 60 promoters about these groups and I've said 'There are tapes of these groups and if you want to hear them I'll send you a cassette'. People have replied to say that they're interested, but only one has taken up the offer of hearing their work to check them out. These groups could be anything!

TW There's this big myth in the 'straight' music world, from extremists, that pop music is just 'image' and the music is, without exception, totally crap. Its image is what sells it. But if that's true of anything, it's true of 'straight' music, because there it's *only* the image that matters.

DW There's far more secondary material on, say, late 17th century opera than available 17th century operatic music itself ...

RB I wonder how someone like Brian Eno stands in the 'serious' music world. Does he lose credibility because he's been a rock star?

DW He's patronised like hell, seen as very naive. He's picked up a few ideas, they say, from *real* composers.

RB Because he gets an audience that they don't consider serious? Maybe he *has* ripped off Terry Riley or whoever, but teenagers hear of him and are possibly getting something out of his music.

TF I suppose these people think Eno's deflecting them from 'real' music.

TW It's simply a question of markets. If you sell your music to the wrong market you've had it. Like the stuff I did recently for the Palm Beach Orchestra: I could package that as 'Popular/Novelty/Serious/Educational'. I could package it in any of these ways and sell it to different people. I could call it 'Important Environmental Conceptual Art' and sell it to art galleries. Actually I find it annoying that there are these distinctions, because I tend to work in varied areas. People who've bought my music because they think it's 'Music Education' don't know that I make tapes, and vice versa. If I admit that I work with kids, people think 'Ah, he's not a serious composer'.

RB It's a supermarket mentality. People wander down the aisles and pick up a can. It's rarefaction.

## Evolution of Goal Conflict

TW It's horrible to be in the position where you can see that, but you realise the consumers around you haven't latched on. When you realise that there's no difference between the rock world and the straight world, you expect

others to understand. But because you haven't built up a theory to explain it, but experienced it directly, you spend all your frustrated time going over the same ground, because you can't move on alone.

TF It's very difficult to keep going over the same ideas, to dig out all the same arguments, even when your thinking about it has moved on. This shows up directly in the music too.

RB Yes. If you're playing to audiences who know some of your material, they expect you to have progressed in a way that they can follow, which usually means not at all.

TF We've only done a handful of concerts, but already we're bored by the same material. You've got to put the same thing across to a different audience. It's so difficult to ...

DW Unless you're playing to other musicians who've been through the mill themselves, people who accept that you can change on different occasions.

RB It's because the dominant kinds of consciousness in our society are ones of repetition, categorisation, predictability. Spontaneity doesn't enter into it. That's what I find with The Buzzcocks. Their soundchecks are much more interesting than their shows because all sorts of things come out then. Bits and pieces later on work into songs, but their concert material isn't allowed to alter.

TW I get the same. Because people have seen me do 'X' they expect 'X' again. I just can't be bothered.

DW It's important to make a stand and do something else, otherwise you get trapped into the instant nostalgia thing.

TW I did a piece about this at a New Music in Action conference for teachers last year. Everyone expected me to do these participatory events. People made these environments in rooms, so we relabelled them. One room was called 'Sinister' to begin with, so we changed the label to 'Bureau of International Co-operation'. They came back to be shown around after tea, and the guide leading them round took his information from the Watergate transcripts. They were pissed off about this at the 'hearing' two days later.

RB That's good because it's about the labelling process. It's a tactical thing of what you do with your material, how you generate different things.

TW Must be very problematic if you're relying on a mass sale!

RB The Fall are beginning to have this trouble with 'Repetition' which has a four-note guitar figure, and The Buzzcocks have got it with 'Boredom' which has a two-note guitar solo, a demystifying and sending-up of the tortured guitar solo. But it's become a cliché itself now.

TF The funny thing about it is that 'Repetition' has never been quite the same twice. The bass to begin with was three notes, now it goes up the octave with five notes. The words say 'Repetition on the drums and we're never gonna lose it', but there's all this fancy drum-work.

DW It's bad now that even in the New Wave audiences don't realise that musicians have the right to alter their own material.

TF Yes, people say 'That was really good, just like the record'.

DW They want the content to be nostalgically fixed, to be incapable of change. In that way we're all contributing to a reactionary perspective.

### System Analysis

TF But the content for us is mainly the words, and

changing the music isn't as important to an audience. They don't notice.

UNA I don't agree with Tony, because a lot of people we play to don't get all of the lyrics, so it must be the music that they're concerned with.

TW I've just done a book with three others, trying to figure out whether music without words does convey content by itself.<sup>3</sup> Trying to show that medieval music is different from tonal music of the Renaissance and music of the modern period because society is different. Or rock music is different from avantgarde music only because the audience is different: they have different assumptions, different values.

TF I've always thought that music without words is so ambiguous. You can't express something without the ambiguity of it. Different people put different associations on it.

UNA But words can also be ambiguous. Every existing syllable is ambiguous, as its meaning is a totally individual interpretation, this being socially conditioned. Even dictionary definitions have to be interpreted.

RB Associations are culture-bound, too.

TF Yes, but that's an ambiguity in itself ...

TW I don't agree with *all* of that. Our theory is that if you look at a musical language, say tonality, with a series of keys that you can modulate to, and come back to the tonic, it's all hierarchically organised. If you look back at medieval music, it's not like that at all, and these languages reflect the different structures of society: nationalistic centralism and feudalism..

RB The words and the music are similarly subject to dominant ideology.

TW Yes.

RB You said you didn't agree.

TW No, I meant: even *more* so. The structure of the language itself is as important.

RB There are people, though, who attack the language and not what the language *says*.

TW Precisely. The actual language can say something that so offends ruling class values that they attack the whole musical language. You're not allowed to just use three chords because it doesn't express the spirit of progress and a subtle, controlled exploitation of form which is what the ruling class ideology is about.

RB Minimalist?

TW I don't think punk is minimalist ...

TF I don't know, what about all those staccato cymbals we use? (Laughter)

TW Minimalism is actually *conceptually* minimal.

RB I don't like minimalism. It's 'rich in reference to pre-existing forms'.

TW It's supposed to be clever because it relates to something in 'The Tradition', therefore it assumes all sorts of values. I'm for maximalism.

### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> For the previous articles in this series see *Contact 14* (Autumn 1976), pp. 3-10 and *Contact 15* (Winter 1976-77), pp. 23-27.

<sup>2</sup> For a review of this see *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), pp. 28-29.

<sup>3</sup> John Shepherd, Phil Virden, Graham Vulliamy and Trevor Wishart, *Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages* (London: Latimer New Dimensions, 1977). This will be reviewed in a future issue of *Contact*. (Ed.)

# IRCAM: Le Marteau sans Matière?

ON JUNE 7, the day on which some were celebrating the Silver Jubilee of George VI's death, I went to IRCAM to discover how I (or you or all of us) could get to work there. At the beginning of September I made a return visit to check out what I had learned three months before.

The Institute for Acoustical-Musical Research and Coordination<sup>1</sup> lives beneath central Paris, close to the Marais and hard by the prostitutes of Les Halles. It's officially one part of the Beaubourg Centre (or Pompidou Centre/Pompidouleum/'National Centre of Art and Culture, Georges Pompidou'), a huge and beautiful glass block building housing the National Museum of Modern Art, an Industrial Design Centre, a public library (a novelty in France), a restaurant (naturally) and a rooftop view of tourist Paris.

The Beaubourg Centre was officially opened in late January 1977 by President Giscard-d'Estaing who doesn't really want it. It's a monument to the French state obsession with prestige, intended to make Paris the cultural source of civilisation. This is not simply altruism at a huge cost. Beaubourg has another function: to regenerate the property market in an area rendered redundant by the transfer of the foodstuffs trade away from Les Halles, the domestic emigration to the suburbs and the slowdown of property investment in central Paris.<sup>2</sup> The State has to develop new property. British speculators failed by flooding Paris with a surplus of offices only, and so the French are stimulating a different, untapped high-quality market — from food to art. By the start of 1977, an available return of eight per cent on existing space around Beaubourg beat most of Europe. This figure is improving as Beaubourg is promoted.<sup>3</sup>

There's tremendous resentment against the Pompidouleum. Its dense concentration of resources and enormous cost drain places outside Paris. John Ardagh wrote in *The Times*:

The state's cultural budget for 1977, some 0.5 per cent of the total, is 1,865m francs, 13.5 per cent more than for 1976 ... Paris's share of the ministry's total budget is now 60 per cent, against 49 per cent in 1973. Three prestige bodies, the Opéra (138m francs), the Comédie Française (44m francs) and Beaubourg (132m francs), eat up nearly a quarter of the total working budget ... Another charge against the Beaubourg *opération de grandeur* is that it is accentuating the recent trend towards cultural recentralisation on Paris ... but is not Beaubourg's big subsidy causing cuts elsewhere? The ministry denies it ...<sup>4</sup>

Criticisms are also made by those who live in Paris, such as two city councillors quoted in *Le Monde*:

... a living ensemble of original artistic institutions should be set up to fulfill a serious lack. There will be objections that Beaubourg already answers this need. But it would be a mistake to give more credit to the Centre Pompidou than it deserves. People forget that Beaubourg — devoted primarily to the fine arts and to a public reference library — makes only a token nod in the direction of theatre and dance, pays little attention to the needs of children, and is more concerned with exhibiting existing works rather than with creating new ones.<sup>5</sup>

IRCAM is one element of Beaubourg, and all the resentment felt against the Centre falls onto the Institute too. But IRCAM is apart from rather than a part of Beaubourg. It lies under the pavement, a street away and thinly connected. It's claimed that an underground

institute aids acoustic stability. This may be true, but only discovered thanks to the Paris authorities who wouldn't allow IRCAM to obstruct the view of the St Merri Church, where Saint-Saens was organist. Pompidou tacked a sentence about music on the bottom of the initial plan of 1969, his personal interest being modern painting. Boulez, France's most prestigious conductor, was asked to turn this sentence into a centre.

Pompidou realised his dream through an architecture contest. Piano and Rogers (true!) won with a box divided into six horizontal layers, allowing flexible vertical division. This left no space for Boulez. And that's why IRCAM is tacked onto Beaubourg as though in parentheses.

*This institute will bring together musicians and scientists in a new interdisciplinary research area.*<sup>6</sup>

There has been a great deal of publicity for IRCAM, usually in connection with Boulez. An article by Peter Heyworth is the boldest British one that I've seen:

IRCAM will probably succeed in pushing out the frontiers of sound as drastically as the great explorers of the Renaissance succeeded in expanding man's knowledge of the Earth.

Though there is the following let-out clause:

If it fulfils Boulez's ambitions, it will be a milestone in the history of Western music as crucial as the advent of the aeroplane has been in the field of transport. If it fails, it will at least provide a further example of Boulez's extraordinary determination to confront the basic problems that face composers in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

In a recent article<sup>8</sup> outlining his attitude to music research, Boulez states that

... musical invention must bring about the creation of the musical material it needs; by its efforts, it will provide the necessary impulse for technology to respond functionally to its desires and imagination. This process will need to be flexible enough to avoid the extreme rigidity and impoverishment of an excessive determinism and to encompass the accidental or unforeseen, which must be ready later to integrate into a larger and richer conception. The long-term preparation of research and the instantaneous discovery must not be mutually exclusive, they must affirm the reciprocity of their respective spheres of action....

Research/invention, individual/collective, the multiple resources of this double dialectic are capable of engendering infinite possibilities. That invention is marked more particularly by the imprint of an individual, goes without saying; we must still prevent this involving us in humdrum, particular solutions which somehow remain the composer's personal property. What is absolutely necessary is that we should move towards global, generalizable solutions.

Commutable rhetoric. For all the clarity it contains, the statement could just as easily read:

Musical invention will need to be flexible enough to provide the reciprocity of this richer conception, etc.

At root it states that research needs association; invention needs privacy. Such articles reveal only that IRCAM is ideologically ambiguous. They say nothing about its place in real life. So I asked for facts, and was told the following.

**Organisation** Boulez is the principal director. ('I cannot

make [decisions] all myself, though the final responsibility on priorities and the budget will be mine.'<sup>9</sup> There are five directors beneath him on three-year contracts: Gerald Bennett, Luciano Berio, Michel Decoust, Vinko Globokar and Jean-Claude Risset. There is at present an administrative and technical staff of around 30. When it's fully operational there will be 50. When will that be?

Perhaps October 1978 or 1979 or later, after the 'running-in' period: the opening date slips further back each time.<sup>10</sup> It seems odd that such a publically-financed institution should be so unsure of its schedule. After all, its construction and equipment bill is at least eight million pounds, though it's hard to find out how much it actually has cost. Peter Heyworth quoted seven million pounds as the 1973 estimate,<sup>11</sup> a contemporary sterling equivalent of the 59 million francs quoted to me as *today's* figure. As the IRCAM building is behind schedule, and given steady inflation, it's remarkable that an estimate four years old stands today. What's the true figure? £10 million? £15 million?

Phone them and find out. And while you're talking, ask them about the annual subsidy. *The Observer* quoted two million pounds a year as the estimate of January 1973. I've phoned three times to check, and each time I was told the estimate, not a real-life figure.

Evidently Boulez has obtained a high degree of autonomy from State interference. The very creation of a State-aided research institute, not accountable by controlled assessments of proof or success or effectiveness, is itself quite an achievement. It's also vital for research requiring time and stability. As Andy Moor of the computer department said, 'The thing sort of moves slowly. It's not going to be like in the movies, where somebody suddenly invents a cure for cancer.' Excellent too for IRCAM because it doesn't get involved in petty Gaullist wrangles between the presidential Giscardians led by Culture Minister d'Ordano and the Pompidou protégé Chirac, Mayor of Paris. The Ministry aids IRCAM which can also count on private funds, industrial and commercial foundations on the American model. Mayor Chirac deals only with IRCAM's dustbins.

*For the first time data processing, electro-acoustics, instrumental and vocal research — research areas usually entirely separate — will be combined in the same place.*

**Research** At present the computer and electronics are functioning. The computer department started work a year and a half ago, though their central computer, a (DEC) PDP 10, hasn't yet been installed. They've also purchased two peripheral PDP 11s. So their principal hardware is all-American as are several of the staff, such as Max Mathews, Andy Moor and Gerald Bennett. IRCAM has a strong connection with Stanford University, California. Stanford staff, principally engineers and programmers, including Prof. Lowell Smith, visit and supervise 'tool-building' at IRCAM (Stanford-by-the-Seine). In 1975, Boulez spent some time at Stanford 'learning, learning, learning'.<sup>12</sup>

The French are currently pushing their own computer and telecommunications industries as a priority.<sup>13</sup> The State has merged the industries around one dominant group: for computers, CII-Honeywell-Bull. It would seem likely that a new prestige state-aided research institute would use French-built equipment whenever possible, and that it would have a role in the development of such technology. But no. Practical autonomy allows IRCAM to buy American. Why?

It's not a matter of quality. It's because the services, documentation and software (programming) written for the PDP computers are readily available from a tradition of 15 years of work. They are using the established MUSIC V programming language.<sup>14</sup> But why is their research to be tied to the technology and practices of the

mid-1960s, like sound-stale Stanford? Because the ideology behind IRCAM stems from that period. From the end of *Die Reihe*. The time when 'excessive determinism' and the 'accidental or unforeseen' were the hemispheres of avantgarde action. Just when developments that Boulez so much despises such as music-theatre, 'new tonality' and montage began to take a hold. The last period of relative stability before the decline of profit dipped to its first great crisis point. Just before Boulez touched middle age.

Now the major research operation at IRCAM is the construction of a digital synthesizer,<sup>15</sup> an item vital to Berio's concept of 'sound sculpture' (extraction from a store of timbres, rather than building from sine-waves). The physical devices are scheduled for service after Summer 1978. Future research seems to lead on from the existence of the synthesizer which is directed towards three ends: (1) as the tail-end of a MUSIC V composition; (2) (as it's being built in several detachable sections) as a small on-stage instrument capable of modification in real-time; (3) in a recording studio, absorbing the functions of tape recorder and mixing desk, to eliminate tape hiss and manage thick overlays and great clarity. Fine, but this work has been or is being done elsewhere. For instance Stanford and the University of Utah have already had good results from the third project. IRCAM seems happy to duplicate the achievements of US campuses. Perhaps, I was told, because Boulez and his workers are seeking to merge the benefits offered by American technology with those of fresh French bread. Ohm sickness.

Who can work at IRCAM? In principle, anyone. But only 'some people who have shown great interest' are allowed to make contact with the studios.<sup>16</sup> And can you guess who, out of the entire music and age range available, they might be? Yes, up-and-coming Stockhausen, Pousseur and Ligeti. Anyone under 48? The young British composer Stanley Haynes was mentioned, known over here for his pioneer promotion of works by Jean-Claude Risset and colleagues (not that I'm implying a connection with his invitation to IRCAM!).

This prestigious institution does not, and will not, have places for students (well, at some future date, perhaps one or two especially gifted ones, I was told) or courses of instruction.<sup>17</sup> You may submit a project to the relevant director, and if he finds it interesting, and the facilities are available, and it's convenient, then you may be invited. But you'll have to pay your own way.<sup>18</sup> IRCAM may put you in touch with a sympathetic foundation. It may not.

Now, in Paris, I was told of a composer who had submitted a suitable if complicated project involving computer and lasers. It was rejected, he thinks, because the directors are preoccupied with supervising their own work, and can't accommodate 'inconvenient' use of the studios. (The real advantage of IRCAM should be the possibility of working in real-time, and discarding all time-sharing problems of university facilities.) It transpired that personal affinity and 'old music-school tie' took priority over valid proposals; write in the Boulio house-style and you may stand a chance.

IRCAM does, however, hold short symposia. For example, a three-day one on psycho-acoustics (July 11-13, 1977). Advertised in psychological and physics journals, it drew around a hundred replies. From this they selected 45 papers for reference during the sessions: 18 from the USA, none from Britain. They didn't have details of future symposia or short courses, though there may be one on the digital synthesizer. Well, that's one way to get your foot in the door, scoured specialist journals permitting. Incidentally, even if you contribute a paper, you have to pay the 100F registration fee. The symposium leaflet gives accurate information on the IRCAM support services:

Lodging: Paris is an extremely popular tourist attraction

and the hotels are typically quite full in July.

Meals: Many fine and reasonably priced restaurants are in the vicinity of the Centre.

Symposia held to keep up contacts in the profession, but they're basically a researchers' recital, a display. Critics of the institute told me that this is all they expect from it: it's a haut couture boutique, a fashion parade for the grandes dames of Darmstadt, Boulez the Pierre Cardin of music.

*The pure researcher, the professional, the composer, instrumentalist, acoustic specialist and scientist belonging to these different disciplines will cooperate in research that is both theoretical and practical.*

**Public** The law passed on January 3, 1975, giving IRCAM its legal status sets out its obligations.

It contributes to the enrichment of the cultural heritage of the Nation, to the information and the education of the public, to the spread of artistic creation and to social communication. It offers advice on request . . .

The publicity also talks of contacting and servicing the public. Naturally.

In the main Beaubourg building the maps delineate an IRCAM information centre. I went there. It doesn't exist. I asked later at IRCAM about it. 'Ah, yes, we don't know what to do with that space.' I was told.

Notices around Beaubourg explain that the institute is open to the public each afternoon (except Tuesdays). In June, the entrance to IRCAM, across the street, is a door of the old municipal baths. The door is locked. To get in, you press a buzzer, shout your name and purpose of visit to The Voice At The Other End. IRCAM admits only that the public aren't welcome. In September, a new entrance, with steps leading below ground. Open to the public? Yes, and locked up. Naturally.

But there are the concerts and workshops, collectively labelled in their opening season of 1977, 'Passage du XXe siècle'. Boulez has prefaced the concert leaflet with a statement of intent, full of tub-thumping rhetoric.

Let's look together  
at the passing of this century  
with its certainties that it has abundantly meted out,  
with its uncertainties that have been no less manifest:  
to confront both of these will help us  
to outline our project publically  
to describe its necessity daily.

We want constantly  
the transition  
of the work (becoming) as model  
to the resolute and adventurous experience.

(You can almost hear a 'Vive la France!' at the end.) The 1977 series contains 54 events (30 in the January to July period, 24 during September to December), in three groups: 13 orchestral, 17 Ensemble Intercontemporain events,<sup>19</sup> and 24 chamber recitals or workshops.

We're familiar with finely planned programmes from the Boulez domain, manifest here also by nine performances of self-penned pieces,<sup>20</sup> plus the 60 per cent of orchestral concerts he conducts. We're also familiar with the way he rewrites history, witness the non-appearance of neo-classicism. Music-theatre finds no place, nor do 'systems' pieces, 'new tonality' or improvisation (except on Mallarmé). La Monte Young, Wolff and Lucier are missing from a sequence of Franco-American concerts. I was given the defence that perhaps the directors found these elements to be of sociological significance only. How could Boulez, with so many commitments, find time to check out what was happening elsewhere in today's music? No answer.

Only the trombonist Vinko Globokar seems to show a more open mind.<sup>21</sup> He set up a week of recitals in March, 'The Contemporary Soloist'. Six rooms were laid aside in the Paris Conservatoire for 15 jet-set soloists to do their stuff. But he also gave time to two pianist-composers: Jürg Wyttenbach with his Kagelesque instrument-theatre

pieces, and Frederic Rzewski who composed his *Instrumental Studies* for the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

To be fair, a one week spectacle of improvisation groups was organised for February. Feedback Studio, GERM, Musica Elettronica Viva, Neue Horizonte, Extended Vocal Techniques and New Phonic Art were invited (mandated, according to one group). However, the concert budget was cut, and improvisation being expendable, the show was postponed until July 1978. I hope some Ircamite knows that at least two of the groups are dead.

Lastly, and to demonstrate the sincere wish of IRCAM for public contact, Michel Decoust has arranged four 'Weekends d'Information'.

Availability: These weekends are open to all, and in particular to:  
— employees in state education  
— staff of the Cultural Centre for Youth  
— music amateurs.

Number limit: 15 people.

Applications: Write by letter with explanations of motives, activities of particular interest.

Open to all. (Well, 15 who can justify their interest, neatly.)

*This research is bound to lead to a better understanding of musical phenomena and to lead musical composition into new and unexplored regions.*

From the facts: IRCAM is an exclusive, centralist institution, in the manner of the Ecole Nationale d'Administration<sup>22</sup> (where, attracted by prestige and elegance, competent minds are pressed into the State's service).<sup>23</sup> It sustains a selective club of composers of similar age, background and conceptions, with those closely sympathetic ('the comfortable avantgarde'). This is to be expected.

But IRCAM is a symptom of a more foolish process, appearing throughout the contemporary music world, namely the rift between promotion and reality. IRCAM is for us all ... but only a few. It serves the public ... but won't tolerate them. It embraces the advancing spectrum of new music ... aside from the silly bits. It is democratic ... ally controlled by Boulez. A new global grammar will be secured collaboratively ... external to society. We are socialists ... wealthy ones.<sup>24</sup>

This schizophrenia is endemic in the sympathetic critic's fear of writing reviews or analyses (an account of reality) rather than previews (promotion); in the romanticised announcements of projects; in the formation of newsworthy rather than exciting music; in the promotion of concerts where all is promised and nothing given. It's above all the bourgeois fear of clarity. They adore secrecy and ambiguity ('richness' they call it, just as they call exploitation 'freedom'). Bourgeois creativity seeks always to hide the reality surrounding it. That's why, by asking practical questions, IRCAM seems to dissolve. It can only survive in an artificial world where 'global, generalizable solutions' can be assessed external to social change.

Boulez has written:

In material as in method, a constant flow must be established between modes of thought and types of action, a continual exchange between giving and receiving. Future experiments, in all probability, will be set up in accordance with this permanent dialogue. Will there be many of us to undertake it?<sup>25</sup>

Not if Boulez has his way.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Institut de recherche et coordination acoustique/musique, 31 rue Saint-Merri, 75004 PARIS; tel. 010 331 277 1233.

<sup>2</sup> See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *France: OECD Economic Surveys*, February 1977, pp. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> See Anne Singleton, 'Culture' in 'Financial Times Survey: France', *Financial Times*, July 27, 1977, p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> John Ardagh, 'Culture money may be easier promised than found' in 'France: A Special Report', *The Times*, May 31, 1977, p. VIII.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in *The Guardian/Le Monde Weekly*, Sunday August 7, 1977, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Quotes in italics are from the official brochure on Beaubourg.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Heyworth, leader article in *Observer Review*, July 27, 1975, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Boulez, 'Technology and the composer', *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 6, 1977, pp. 570-571, a translation of the lecture quoted in *Passage du XXe siècle, Ire partie, janvier/juillet 1977*, published by IRCAM. The TLS article was followed by a reply from Alexander Goehr (June 10, 1977, p. 703) in which he made the point that despite technical research, the musical problems remain. Robin Maconie then produced an article about these two items for *The Times Educational Supplement* (August 26, 1977, p. 11). Neither the Goehr nor the Maconie have much to offer other than cynicism.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Heyworth, op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Boulez: 'The centre will be ready by December 1975.' See interview with Adrian Jack, 'Boulez answers some questions', *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (November 1973), p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> *New York Times*, August 8, 1975, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Webber, 'Computers' in 'Financial Times Survey: France', *Financial Times*, June 27, 1977, p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> They've developed a MUSIC 10 programming language written in PDD 10 machine code, easier for composers to handle, though it has its disadvantages. The MUSIC V language has also been modified. I'm grateful to Kevin Jones for this information.

<sup>15</sup> Berio: 'We are developing with Professor di Giugno [Naples University] a new system which you can control manually or digitally with a mini-computer.' See interview with Simon Emmerson, 'Luciano Berio', *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (February 1976), p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> 'The facility will house 30 to 35 artists and scientists whose mandate it is to study "the physical, theoretical and creative parts of music as a team," Mr Boulez said.' *New York Times*, loc. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Asked by Adrian Jack if IRCAM would have courses of instruction, Boulez replied, 'After the first two years, yes ... First when the material is outdated we will put it in the pedagogic department so that people can learn on it without it mattering whether it is spoilt. Then we will have a constant flow of assistants. Assistant will be the first step.' (Adrian Jack, op. cit., p. 36.)

<sup>18</sup> The British Council have no funds to support this kind of activity. The Cultural Service of the French Embassy, London have two general music grants a year available from the French Government which may be applicable, depending on competing claims.

<sup>19</sup> The Ensemble Intercontemporain is a 29-strong chamber orchestra on salaries paid by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. Two-thirds of their time is spent with IRCAM, the remainder spent as each member prefers (teaching, outside engagements, etc.).

<sup>20</sup> 116 composers are listed as being represented in the 'Passage' series. Most of them receive one performance. A listing of composers represented by several works is revealing: Schoenberg 16 items; Webern 14; Ligeti 10; Berg, Berio, Boulez and Carter 9 each; Stockhausen 8; Xenakis 5; Stravinsky 4.

<sup>21</sup> In June the rumour was circulating that Globokar was resigning from his IRCAM post. By September the rumour was the Globokar had resigned.

<sup>22</sup> Compare Boulez' statements on assistants in footnote 17 with the following on the Ecole Nationale d'Administration. 'Both the *polytechniciens* (known as X) and the recruits to the ENA (the *énarques*) are predominantly of solid bourgeois background, often from the Paris region. As students, *énarques* get a junior civil servant's pay, the X those of a junior officer. Both enjoy higher prestige than university students, as well as the secure knowledge of good jobs ahead. Their material and psychological advantages are enormous compared with that of a university student ... Their weakness is their remoteness from the common man.' Margot Lyon, 'Inquiry reflects volte-face in education ministry' in 'France: A Special Report', *The Times*, November 25, 1975, p. VIII.

<sup>23</sup> IRCAM forms one part of Pompidou's reactionary education reforms. 'The reform gave priority to reducing an unemployable diplomatiariat, to promoting technical training at all levels and to restructuring the teaching corps accordingly....the French education system nourishes privilege. French education is said to perpetuate the division in French society between technical training for worker children and intellectual work for the bourgeoisie.' Jonathan Story, 'Education reform moves meet with criticism' in 'Financial Times Survey: France', *Financial Times*, June 25, 1974, p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> Boulez: 'You cannot make a revolution with anarchists. There I am three hundred per cent Leninist.' Peter Heyworth, op. cit. Berio is a member of the Italian Communist Party, though in effect that means little more than that he's not a fascist. It's a pity that these composers use their public responsibilities to misrepresent communism.

<sup>25</sup> *Times Literary Supplement*, loc. cit.

## HAROLD ALLEN

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## The Contemporary Music Network: A Continuing Discussion

*The ensuing discussion took place at 105 Piccadilly, London on September 8, 1977. In addition to the five members of this year's ISCM British Jury which was meeting at the time to select scores for the 1978 festival, five others were invited to be present, three representing in particular the fields of jazz and regional promotion, the remaining two being the Music Officer at the Arts Council responsible for the Contemporary Music Network and myself. What follows is intended in part as a continuation of 'Contemporary Music Network — A Discussion', Tempo No. 119 (December 1976), pp. 7-14, in which three of the present group also featured, and Paul Fromm's response, 'The British Contemporary Music Network: An American View', Tempo No. 120 (March 1977), pp. 53-54. Particularly in view of the fact that it was impossible to represent all the parties concerned and all shades of opinion, the contributors would join me in seeing it as part of a continuing debate, and contributions, particularly in the form of letters to the editor, are invited for future issues of Contact to give a fuller perspective to a very important area of discussion.*

(Keith Potter)

**KEITH POTTER** What were and are the aims of the Contemporary Music Network and how far do you think it has achieved those aims in the five or six years it's been running?

**ANNETTE MORREAU** The idea for a Network originally emerged in about 1970 and was due principally to the fact that outside London there were very few performances of contemporary music. What there were were probably not adequately rehearsed. If there was any likelihood of adequately rehearsed concerts, they were much too expensive, and so the opportunities for performance were very small. So the idea was to try and link current London performances with regional tours. It was hoped at the beginning to have bases, one in each Regional Arts Association area — the RAAs were just being set up at this time — which would be regularly supplied with concerts. In fact, when the RAAs — with whom, of course, the scheme has always worked in collaboration — were asked to suggest places, they each suggested several rather than just one, and therefore one could say that the impact of the concerts has been somewhat diffused.

There are two obvious aspects to the Network. One is that if you can arrange a number of performances, you're going to make the costs slightly cheaper per performance. The other is that you hope to raise the standard of performance; of course you may also even encourage performers to learn particular works which they wouldn't learn, or they'd be less keen to learn, without the guarantee of a certain number of performances.

As for achievements: well, we've achieved the fact that there *are* concerts, that promoters do take the concerts and the tours take place: there are now something like 100 concerts each year. I think that the idea of the Network being a showcase to encourage promoters to engage groups to play contemporary music independently of the scheme has not worked too well yet. I think there's a danger of the Network having become the country's diet of new music. We had hoped that the RAAs would introduce their own backup schemes, so that if promoters

presented a concert on the Network and were interested in further performances the following year, the association would then be in a position to help with this. In some areas, particularly that covered by the Northern Contemporary Music Circuit for instance, this has happened, but generally speaking there isn't, I think, a vastly increased interest in contemporary music as a result of the Network yet.

**KP** Is that because it was too idealistic an aim, or have you really felt that things could actually still go a lot further following the same lines?

**AM** Certainly it's idealistic, but I don't think one should be under the illusion that five years is going to make up for 50 years of lack of education about what music has been doing. So I think it's unrealistic to expect a great deal. Perhaps it's unfortunate that the scheme has coincided with a difficult period economically ...

**ARNOLD WHITTALL** But aren't the RAAs going to say 'Fine, you offer this so we'll spend our money on non-contemporary music, on things which aren't offered or are more popular'? Unless you were actually to cut off the Contemporary Music Network completely, it's perhaps unlikely that they will take over or even supplement it.

**AM** I don't think cutting off the Network would help. Before it existed there was extremely little going on. I suspect that things would go back to square one if the scheme were cut off.

**AW** Oh quite, I think this could well happen. But at the moment, because of what you provide, they don't feel any obligation to provide more.

**AM** I think the Arts Council is in a very difficult position here. The RAAs are not our subsidiaries and we can't tell them how they should spend their money.

**JOHN HOPKINS** When you thought about the RAAs taking over and developing their own backup schemes, did you imagine that they would do it like the Network originally did, offering guarantees rather than providing things? Or did you hope that they might even go as far as to do what the Network now does and pay fees and travel expenses in full?

**AM** I think I felt that if the Network encouraged enough interest for promoters in the regions to want to put on performances by groups that they knew, then they could ask their RAAs for guarantees to help. From the point of view of Music in the Arts Council, the Network is surprising in that the groups and the programmes are *chosen*: direct provision that is. Normally we are here to subsidise other people's wishes. But the Arts Council relies on the British Section of the ISCM<sup>1</sup> to advise on programmes, so I think it's a reasonable system. Obviously there are going to be criticisms of what's been chosen. But one of the essential things is that it shall be done by a publicly accountable committee. I think the Arts Council might be happier, however, if the Network could be organised independently of the Council. But I've always argued that the safeguard in this kind of scheme is that it shall be open to criticism from the public.

**KP** If it's going to be a direct patron, which is what you're saying, it's very important that it is and should be seen to be not by any means the only patron of contemporary music. Hence the criticism regarding the possibility of a monopoly arising from this situation.

AM Yes, but I think for the RAAs themselves to dictate programmes might be more difficult. The committee that the Arts Council uses is made up of musicians from all over the country and one therefore hopes that it's representative.

MICHAEL NYMAN How are groups chosen to tour?

AM The procedure is that a small group from the main ISCM British Section chooses the programmes for the season. We make our selection from groups that have applied, from consideration of particular works that we want to be heard (what you might call 20th century classics such as Messiaen's *Trois petites liturgies* this season), from particular performances that we know have taken place, from the notion that certain groups must be kept alive to keep the musical culture of this country varied, from trying to produce a balanced programme: from all these things the choices are made.

MN And then those choices are circulated to the RAAs?

AM When they've been approved by the full ISCM committee they're circulated to all promoters who have expressed interest and who have *some* proven record of being able to put concerts on, plus the RAAs. The RAAs are always asked about the suitability of promoters in their region for taking a particular concert. After that the promoters 'bid' for the concerts they would like.

MN But how is that selection made, of who gets what?

AM Well, that's done in view of various factors. The suitability of a promoter to take a group; size of venue; geographical considerations of how a tour will work. And things like the fact that many of the promoters only put on concerts on certain days of the week, or have a series: by and large a series is better advertised, so possibly this may take priority. There are obviously problems: on the whole there are always more promoters bidding for concerts than we can afford. Without, that is, expanding the Network enormously and so turning it into the country's diet of contemporary music, which would be most undesirable.

KP John, you're Music Organiser at the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol. How does all this look from your end?

JH It's very good in some ways because I couldn't really afford to put on a series of concerts at all without the Network. But on the other hand I've got very little money to spend outside the Network concerts, presumably because I've *got* these concerts. You see, I don't feel I've got enough money to make anything of the Network concerts in terms of other activities. I also feel that I don't have very much choice in what comes on the Network in any one year, so it's always a question of taking these things off the shelf in pre-packaged forms. My aim now is to try to consider one financial year as some kind of structure. My ambition is to attempt to build up a whole year's related programme around the nucleus of the Network concerts ...

KP Do you have a design you want the Network concerts to fit into, or do the concerts dictate the design to you?

JH I don't see in the way things are run at the moment that there's going to be any alternative to trying to fit other activities around the Network concerts.

AM I do think that the Arnolfini is a classic example of how an RAA could back up what a promoter has been doing. In fact the Arnolfini is subsidised for its music activities outside the Network by South West Arts.

JH However, I don't see the answer to this problem yet, since out of SWA's budget I should think we get about as much as we've any right to expect, considering that the South West is such a colossal region.

GUY PROTHEROE Is it possible for the RAAs to make requests for groups to be put on the Network?

AM Anybody can make suggestions.

AW But do the RAAs?

AM Not often.

MN Are suggestions from others taken seriously?

AM Yes. Every suggestion is taken seriously.

CHARLES ALEXANDER It seems to me that while the method of selection you've been describing is in a sense democratic, there is one stage missing. When you have a Network of promoters, some of them well established, such as Arnolfini, it's surely wrong that they should not be consulted, at least given the chance early on to make their suggestions.

AM They *can* make suggestions.

CA But are they actually asked? Does a circular go out?

AM No, and for a number of reasons. At the beginning we put virtually every performing group in the country on the list. And obviously tours couldn't work out in this way. Asking every promoter and RAA in the country is going to produce an enormous number of suggestions and there are consequently going to be an enormous number of promoters and so on who'll be very disappointed because their ideas haven't been taken up. The idea of having a committee that is geographically representative of the country is that those people can keep in touch with what the RAA and the promoters in their area want on the Network.

CA I can understand that. But surely by now the Network has established a number of promoters who are liable to take concerts every year, and it would be reasonable to make a direct approach to them.

JH But the committee members aren't officially told to go out and canvass in their areas. Unless they do, the idea of the committee being geographically representative is meaningless.

AW But the committee members surely have their fingers on the pulse to some extent, even if they don't canvass opinions directly?

CA I think you could avoid the problem of false expectations simply by putting a paragraph in the circular to explain the situation. Travelling around the country a bit and coming into contact with local promoters and RAAs, the main complaint I hear about the Network is that they seem to be excluded from the decision making.

AM I just think it's impractical. And here we return to the question of backup: it's in *that* situation that the promoters should have entirely their own decisions: they should be asking their RAAs for money to put on concerts of their choice outside the Network. If the Network were not considered as the diet of contemporary music, but as a showcase of what there is, then it would be very much easier. There will, incidentally, from now on be a representative from the RAAs on the committee.

TIM SOUSTER Though a letter such as has just been described would also produce some interesting information about the promoters themselves. It's perhaps understandable that they may not identify sufficiently with the groups they get and so there's only a minimum incentive for them to engage personally in any real promotion. And yet promoters vary so much in their attitudes. The best promoters I've known have been in the regions. Some might come up with some amazingly good suggestions: someone in their area whom no-one knows about, for instance.

KP It seems to me important to take advantage of the knowledge that's available, wherever it comes from. In terms of organising concerts and getting audiences, how dependent are you on individual promoters?

AM Almost entirely. The original idea of the collaboration with the RAAs was in fact to use an organisation that's more on the ground than we at the Arts Council could possibly be, in order to make sure that the promoters were handling the concerts in the best way.

I think it raises the question of how to sell contemporary music; I'm afraid I don't think the RAAs are any better informed than the promoters in this respect. It's a very specialised and indeed time-consuming problem, and the RAAs have many other things to do.

RONALD LUMSDEN Do the promoters and the RAAs know how disappointed the Arts Council is at their response? Would it be worth circulating this discussion, for instance?

AM They have received the *Tempo* discussion; I think this one should go too.

AW I see that in *Tempo* Tim Souster made the suggestion, which was subsequently taken up by Paul Fromm, that there should be a 'travelling person' to assist you and to act as a promoter travelling around in a way which you can't do. Is the problem about this a financial one?

AM There is a problem in that at present the Arts Council has a moratorium on staff appointments. But anyway, I'm not convinced that someone coming from London could do any better. The idea of using local promoters is that they have local contacts. It would be much more worth while to try and help the local promoters.

KP In his article Paul Fromm was stressing the educational importance of such a person more than just the idea that he or she should 'go out and sell'. Obviously the two are in some ways linked, but it shouldn't be just a question of selling advertising space or whatever, it should be an educational concern. Do you see this as being very important?

AM Yes, I think it's absolutely vital. I think the incidence of small audiences is not only to do with the fact that a lot of people find contemporary music strange and difficult to listen to, but the fact that there is no positive encouragement and little interest in the schools ...

AW Or in the universities ...

KP Yes, when the BBC put their Invitation Concerts in different universities around the country, this connection with educational establishments wasn't entirely successful, was it?

AM I don't know what the audience figures were for the Invitation Concerts, but the BBC carries a certain prestige: the fact that it's the BBC coming to record is possibly likely to bring people in as much as the music being played. I know that the BBC has phased out its Invitation Concerts largely as a result of the Contemporary Music Network being set up. But the Network's experience in universities is not a particularly good one, contrary to popular belief about audiences there in general.

KP Arnold, you in particular have worked in universities outside London in the past; what are your experiences in this respect and what do you think can be done now?

AW I can go right back to the BBC Invitation Concerts in Cambridge in the early 60s and remember that they were very canny about trying to attract local interest. I recall a Roberto Gerhard premiere, for example, when the Guildhall in Cambridge was surprisingly full: not just because of that, because there were, if I remember rightly, Haydn piano sonatas and other things as well. But there was a sense of occasion, a local interest which seemed to catch on, partly perhaps because this was probably going to be the only concert of its kind for the whole season.

I remember also at Nottingham, before the Network and where we had no BBC out-of-town Invitation Concerts, that it was very difficult to promote such things at all: in the university we had to arrange concerts ourselves, which meant a great deal of extra administrative work, dealing directly with agents and so on, and certainly we always used to lose money. Although

it depended: we had the Pierrot Players in their first year; they had just enough publicity in places like the *Radio Times* to bring in a slightly larger audience than a university concert of modern music would normally have done. But the real problem then was the lack of co-ordination and the feeling that this was just an isolated event which couldn't be followed up in the way that the Network concerts can. So I can't altogether share the apparent feeling that the Network is in the doldrums: it *must* be of enormous value to the regional centres because it provides the system and the regularity which are so vital if you're going to build up an audience. And yet I can see the problem of the middlemen in the regions who are going to sit back and say 'Fine, that's our dose of modernity for this year'. So ultimately I feel a bit pessimistic about how the thing can do more than coast along in the way that it's doing now. And yet perhaps we *shouldn't* be too pessimistic: it *is* successful for what it sets out to do, and it's very difficult to think of ways of improving it.

TS I think that rather than becoming a link between centralisation and regionalism, which is what it was originally intended as, the Network has resulted in a regional ghetto into which contemporary music can be siphoned off. This is simply because the tours are no longer connected, as I believe they originally were, to London concerts. Is that right?

AM Well, they were hardly ever connected to London concerts because the tours are actually arranged well ahead of London programmes, and it became incidental whether a London performance emerged or not. I think, however, that this *is* a mistake, and it's quite interesting in terms of developments over the last five years. When the scheme was thought up there were a fair number of contemporary music concerts in London chasing the same small audience, and almost nothing in the regions. Now I think that there are concerts of very high quality provided by the Network which don't get into London. This is something we must reconsider.

TS The programmes still have to be given an airing in London simply because the media are so hopelessly centralised; they still have no awareness even of the variety of venues in London, let alone making the effort to go out into the regions to report, with the exception of *The Guardian* which anyway is a regional paper. But there's no national review at all for a lot of the programmes, simply because none of the critics get to them.

AW And perhaps because they don't contain world premieres.

AM This brings up another thing that Paul Fromm remarked on in his article: we have a lot of music that's orphaned once it's had its first performance.

MN I know it's not typical, but Steve Reich always saw the Network concerts as a kind of penance for the London concert. The London concert would always introduce the new work so that it would get all the critical acclaim, and the regional concerts would contain older music that had previously been heard in London. Since the regions don't get the new work, the people have to come to London for it and therefore maybe don't go when it later turns up in the regions. This happened with *Drumming* last season.

AM But that's going back to the syndrome of premieres. After all the Network wasn't set up for premieres; it was set up to make sure that the best works were toured.

MN\* And *Drumming* is cheaper to tour than *Music for 18 Musicians*.

AM But I don't think that Steve Reich is a very fair example to take, because judging from the large numbers of groups that *want* to tour, I don't think they *do* regard the Network as a penance.

MN No, I'm sure most of them don't. For instance, there's been absolutely no English experimental music on the Network: only Cornelius Cardew's three concerts of his own piano music three years ago. It seems that these imported Americans, Reich and Philip Glass, have completely covered that kind of music as far as the Network is concerned. Now if you say you want it to be representative, there is a lot of experimental music which has never been toured.

AM Well, in an ideal situation ...

MN No, *not* in an ideal situation, but in a situation which is supposed to be representative of the new music being produced in Britain today.

AM Well, I suppose I don't really agree with you, because the Network is looking at music internationally, and if the consensus of opinion is that the music being produced by Reich and Glass is of more interest than what's produced at home ...

MN But who *knows* what is being produced?

AM One hopes that the ISCM British Section committee members do.

IAN CARR We're also subsidising the audience, you must remember, it's not just a subsidy for musicians. If a certain type of music draws reasonable numbers of people, those people should be subsidised if necessary.

MN But from an educational point of view, it means that outside London people's tastes are going to be geared towards Reich and Glass, and the home product, which is related but different, is never going to be heard. So they'll always think it's inferior, which is more or less what you were saying, or at least it's always going to bring in a smaller audience.

IC There's a danger in chauvinism ...

TS The impact that experimental musicians have made on the regions as a whole is absolutely infinitesimal. There hasn't been enough music performed, it's true, but I'm afraid the experimental music that ought to have been disseminated can only be played by the musicians who specialise in it. They don't play any other music, and I wouldn't have said there had been groups capable of sustaining complete programmes.

IC The main problem is the complete ignorance of contemporary music in this country, at large, wouldn't you say? For example, in Italy they have one hour a day of contemporary music on the radio, and during the summer when I was there they had 30 minutes of jazz at lunchtime every day on television. Well no wonder there's a great interest there; and it's the same in Germany. How much is there on radio in Britain? Very little: 'Music in our time' ... This is the really serious problem.

AM I think there's a class system, if you like, at work here: opera is 'upper class' and contemporary music is relegated somewhere pretty low.

IC There is truth in this: snobbery has absolutely severed England artistically; there are clearly two layers.

AM Of course opera has its place, but if you don't provide the money for contemporary music as well there's never going to be much demand for it.

TS Also a vast amount of almost evangelical zeal in the music field in this country has been put into the development of the appreciation of opera, educationally, mainly through the structure of the music academies: it goes right the way across the country.

MN It's not only opera, it's old music of every kind.

IC Anybody who has no confidence will be stuck with old music, because you're safe with it, the values are all proven. The thing that I notice in Germany and other countries is the immense confidence of the people involved in the media: they don't give a damn what anybody else thinks, if they feel something is worth

putting on, they do it. That's what's totally lacking in England.

CA Derek Bailey once said that people don't like music, they only like certain types of music. It's the fact that so few people cross the gaps between different categories — not only between 'serious' music and jazz, for instance, but all the very different kinds of music contained under those names — that's a part of the problem.

TS Again the BBC is partly responsible for this attitude.

RL What sort of public are we aiming for anyway?

AM I think that in this country we lack what I think perhaps Ian has been alluding to: a radical left and underground movement that has a real association with contemporary art. I think most of the countries you're thinking about have that.

TS It varies from country to country.

AM Musicians in this country aren't very interested in playing contemporary music either.

CA There's no centre for contemporary music in London: I'm sure this has something to do with it.

AM I have a feeling that one large well-organised contemporary music festival which got wide critical coverage would help promoters outside London to take the promotion of contemporary music more seriously.

AW So it comes back to London in the end.

IC We haven't solved *anything* ...

#### NOTE:

<sup>1</sup> The British Section of the International Society for Contemporary Music is a sub-committee of the Music Panel of the Arts Council. (For the historical background to this see the discussion in *Tempo* No. 119). The list of present members is as follows: David Cain, Ian Carr, John Casken, Gordon Crosse, Martin Dalby, David Drew, Peter Evans, Charles Fox, Anthony Gilbert, Alan Hacker, Barry Iliffe, Oliver Knussen, William Mathias, Nicholas Maw, Evan Parker, Anthony Payne, Judith Pearce, Stephen Plaistow, Veronica Slater, Tim Souster, Thomas Wilson, Hugh Wood.

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# Electronic Music Studios in Britain-8:

## University of Surrey, Guildford

SURREY UNIVERSITY Music Department's recording studio is first and foremost a training ground for student Tonmeisters (a German term meaning a person trained equally in the theory and practice of music and in the technical aspects of recording and record production). The Tonmeister concept first took root in 1946 in Germany, where a Tonmeister Institute was formed at the Hochschule für Musik at Detmold. The exiled Schoenberg, in a letter written that same year to the Chancellor of the University of Chicago, proposed that its music department should offer courses in which

Soundmen will be trained in music, acoustics, physics, mechanics and related fields to a degree enabling them to control and improve the sonority of recordings, radio broadcasting and of sound films ... The student ... will be trained to notice all the differences between his image 'of how a score should sound] and the real playing; he will be able to name these differences and to tell how to correct them if the fault results from the playing. His training in the mechanical fields should help him to correct acoustic shortcomings, as, for example, missing basses, unclear harmony, shrill high notes, etc.

This can be done and it would mean a great advantage over present methods where engineers have no idea of music and musicians have no idea of the technique of mechanics.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1946 training for Tonmeisters has been established in Berlin, Dusseldorf, Stockholm and Warsaw. Though the basic philosophy is similar in these institutions, and at Surrey where the course began taking students in 1971, the style and weighting of training between musical and scientific teaching varies a good deal.

Surrey is a new, 60s style technological university, and music for this reason occupies a central place in the university's cultural life. Under the Head of Department, Professor Reginald Smith Brindle, a pattern of study has been developed which takes more than the customary passive regard for the role of mass communication in present-day musical affairs. In particular, the courses indicate an informed awareness of the positive influence of recording techniques and the recording medium on musical aesthetics and performance. There are two main study options: Course A, combining academic studies with a degree of specialisation in one or more practical disciplines (instrumental performance, conducting, composition), and Course B for Tonmeisters, run in collaboration with the Physics Department, which additionally incorporates training in mathematics, electronics and electro-acoustics and sound recording techniques. Course A students inevitably acquire a familiarity with the recording process through having their performance work regularly recorded, as well as by helping Tonmeisters informally in their own portfolio work, which ranges from recording orchestras, choirs and professional ensembles on location (using the Department's mobile recording studio) or at the University to realising pop music in the Department studio. Early and continuing experience of playing before a microphone and assessing one's own performance from tape has a markedly beneficial effect on every student's aural awareness and professional attitude.

In their third year of the four-year course (a year more than for Course A) Tonmeisters take work in various sectors of industry and broadcasting in Britain or abroad in consultation with section supervisor John Borwick, Senior Lecturer in Recording Techniques. The industrial year gives students an opportunity to practice basic techniques in a professional environment and gives industry a chance to measure the calibre of Surrey-trained Tonmeisters at first hand.

It should be stressed that the Tonmeister course is essentially academic, not glorified engineering, and that the academic side is growing in significance as music comes more and more to rely on technical judgement for its intended effect. Academic function is conditional, furthermore, on a fundamental professionalism of studio design and operation. Surrey is only one of many universities claiming the resource of a studio for teaching and compositional research, but few other departments of music can claim to provide an appropriately thorough course structure in the use and maintenance of electronic equipment on which the quality of musical output substantially depends. Hitherto Surrey has rightly concentrated on laying that professional foundation, and experimental work among Tonmeisters has mainly been directed to refinements of stereo recording (and within practical limits, of multi-track pop). Present teaching and individual student work already stretches studio facilities and time to the limit, so the aspiring composer of electronic music at Surrey, as anywhere else, cannot bank on unrestricted access to the studio in order simply to find out how the machines work. However, the keen student can learn a great deal from observing his fellow Tonmeisters in action and has every opportunity to do so.

Since joining the Surrey Music Department in 1975 I have made some progress in enhancing student awareness of the historical and aesthetic significance of recording media in the development of 20th century music, along the lines of Adrian Scharf's very successful visual-arts thesis *Art and Photography*.<sup>2</sup> Informal recording groups for pop session work and intuitive music have also been set up on a week-by-week basis, giving performers a chance to work under studio pressure and Tonmeisters a chance to contribute creatively on an equal footing, and results so far are encouraging. An innovation in the formal curriculum this year has been to set final-year Tonmeisters an orchestration exercise consisting of taking a section of mono-recorded short-wave radio random tuning and transforming it under supervision into stereo electronic music. *Limina*, the first fruits of this endeavour, has emerged as a raw, vigorously expressionist 20-minute study whose five sections, though sharing a common vitality, clearly reveal five individual personalities creatively at work.

The Music Department studio and control room are situated in the basement and ground floor of the University Great Hall. Performances in the Great Hall are recorded via six tie-lines direct to the control room and monitored by closed circuit television. The studio measures approximately 32ft x 24ft and is about 16ft in height, overlooked by the adjacent control room set at a higher ground level which measures approximately 16ft x

16ft x 8ft high.

As has been stated, the Music Department studio at Surrey is primarily committed to producing competent Tonmeisters and its development as a composing facility remains a long-term objective. The department's holdings of student tape portfolios, including a proportion of original compositions, are considerable, but much of this material is of limited intent and interest and in most instances superseded by subsequent production work done outside the University. Unlike other departments, Surrey prefers not to be drawn into competition in numbers of works produced or visiting composers

entertained, regarding the field of electronic, concrete and computer music as one in which much essential groundwork has still to be done, both artistically and technically.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>Ed. Erwin Stein, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser, *Arnold Schoenberg Letters* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964; paperback edition 1974), Letter 210, pp. 240-241.

<sup>2</sup>Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books ('Pelican' series), 1974.

University of Surrey Recording Studio  
Department of Music  
University of Surrey  
Guildford  
Surrey  
GU2 5XH

Tel. Guildford (0483) 71281

#### Current Personnel

Senior Lecturer in Recording Techniques: John Borwick  
Technician: Rob Blee  
Assistant Technician: to be appointed

#### A selection of works composed in the studio

Address enquiries for performance or educational use to the address above.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Reginald Smith Brindle | * <i>Worlds without end</i> (1973; male and female reciters, chorus, orchestra and electronic tapes; tapes realised at Surrey using EMS equipment belonging to the composer)   |
| Robin Maconie          | <i>Limina</i> (1975; modified soundtrack; prototype version realised in stereo in 1977 by David Clarke, Terry Davies, Richard Longley, Steve Smith and Tony Spath)   |
|                        | <i>Duel</i> (1976; intuitive music; realised October 19, 1976 in the Music Department Studio by Chris Burn (harpsichord), John Butcher (tenor saxophone), Martin Butler (violin, drumheads and small cymbal), Bruce Jacobson (soprano saxophone), Robin Maconie (bass drum) and Rob Priestley (piano) with Dave Mitcham (sound technician); recorded in quad, available in stereo) |

\*Published by Peters Edition Limited

#### List of main studio equipment as at July 1977

16-in 4-out Neve desk with eight monitor channels, foldback and standard EMT stereo plate reverberation  
Calrec custom-built 8-in 2-out portable desk  
Quad tuners and amplifiers, including trolley-mounted units  
HH Unit PA system with HH amplifiers  
Tannoy Arden, Tannoy Berkeley, Quad electrostatic, JBL studio monitors  
Eight Dolby-A noise reduction units  
Scully four-track ½" tape machine  
Studer A80 two-track tape recorder with varispeed  
Studer B62 stereo tape recorder  
Ferrograph Studio 8 stereo tape recorder  
Revox A77 stereo half-track tape recorder (high speed; 38, 19 cm/sec)  
Revox A77 stereo quarter-track tape recorder (19, 9.5 cm/sec)  
Two Revox A700 stereo tape recorders (three speeds and varispeed)  
Nagra stereo portable tape recorder

Two Neal stereo cassette decks  
Fons, Garrard, Goldring turntables, including trolley-mounted units  
AKG, Beyer, Calrec, Neumann, Sennheiser, Shure, STC microphones  
EMI 815, 816 tape in normal use  
Mobile studio: Ford three-ton Transit van, Calrec desk, CCTV, units selected from above

This is the eighth 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 normally 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 Glasgow (Contact 19).

## Reviews and Reports

POP MUSIC IN SCHOOL, edited by Graham Vulliamy and Ed Lee  
Cambridge University Press, 1976 (hardback, £5.50; paperback £2.25; reel tape, £4.50 + VAT; cassette tape, £3.50 + VAT)

IAN BARTLETT

'The exercise of taste for its own sake makes for dubious criticism: it is more valuable to suggest the terms of a discussion in which various and even conflicting judgements may reasonably be argued. Evaluation is more cogent and convincing as a by-product than as a goal or even a starting-point of criticism.'<sup>1</sup>

These observations of Charles Rosen, made by way of introduction to a consideration of the aesthetics of Schoenberg's music are equally apposite to the central theme of this book. Graham Vulliamy and his team of contributors are concerned to question the validity of applying to pop music standards of taste based on criteria established with reference to the great central European classical tradition. Jazz and a great deal of pop music — however urbanised or dependent upon European harmonic structures they may have become — should be judged in terms of musical principles derived from the black Afro-American folk tradition. At the same time, the authors assert and demonstrate through musical illustrations and recorded examples the beneficial role which pop music can play in the context of school music, if it is approached with discrimination and sensitivity.

It is evident, however, that a profound *distaste* for many of the musical characteristics of pop, not to mention the extra-musical values rightly or wrongly associated with it, has motivated the more vociferous opponents of its use in education. The manner in which their point of view has often been presented may be illustrated by the following quotations:

With the prevalent commercial pop at the extreme of vulgarity, primitive repetitiveness and excessive volume, some misguided people have introduced it in school classes. For what purpose? To encourage the equivalent of dropped H's? ... No real musician can present pop to a class with honesty. It is the equivalent of a teacher of literature instructing a class to write dirty words on a lavatory wall...<sup>2</sup>  
Pop is not music. It is a commercial product with two aims — the making of money and the deliberate corruption of young people.<sup>3</sup>

Some common tendencies may be observed among those who feel the influence of pop music to be wholly pernicious. (1) 'Pop music' is used as a generic term, irrespective of the many different styles and degrees of musicality subsumed by it. (2) Crude commercial interest is identified as the main driving force behind the music. (3) Pop music is assumed to cause, or at least to encourage, the betrayal of moral standards and to set out deliberately to exploit the innocent and vulnerable. (4) Rational analysis and careful appraisal are largely abandoned in favour of instinctive evaluation and rejection. (In psychological terms, strong defensive measures seem to come into operation here. Notwithstanding the importance of spontaneity in the performance of much pop music, and of intuitive response on the part of the listener, it is still felt to be totally unacceptable.)

Unfortunately, no musician seems to have attempted to emulate David Holbrooke who has developed, mainly but not exclusively from a literary point of view, a serious critique of the values and standards of pop culture in general. Yet the problems generated by the existence, not to say the ubiquitousness, of pop music demand careful examination by music educationists, for interactions of complex psychological, sociological and economic as well as musical factors are involved. *Pop Music in School*,

without in any sense ignoring or minimising the wider implications of the subject, represents a cool, balanced and carefully reasoned attempt to establish the terms in which we might begin to make sensible judgements about pop music in its various forms, and hence to justify its inclusion in the curriculum. Particularly in view of the increasingly multi-racial nature of many schools, especially in the larger conurbations, the significance of the questions raised by this book cannot be overestimated.

A major factor inhibiting the use of pop by music teachers is the difficulty of gaining a clear historical perspective on the subject, let alone keeping up with the latest trends. Moreover, the knowledge that some pupils are likely to be more expert than the teacher tends to increase the sense of insecurity. Dave Rogers' introductory chapter on 'Varieties of pop music: a guided tour' provides a succinct and (as far as it is possible to be) orderly account of the potentially bewildering developments which have taken place since the advent of rock 'n' roll in the mid-50s. If this outline is used in conjunction with the extensive and carefully organised bibliography and discography, determined newcomers to the field should soon be able to orientate themselves. Recordings are listed under no less than 26 categories so that recommended examples of styles such as Motown, Soul, Country and Western or Rhythm and Blues can be readily identified.

From the practical standpoint, there can be no question that considerable expertise and experience lie behind the advice offered by Tony Robins on 'The presentation of pop music'. Teachers who have not participated in pop music as performers themselves will benefit especially from his ideas on the purchase and use of electronic equipment. On the tape which accompanies the book, Robins' 'Choral and Instrumental Group' of senior pupils gives highly polished performances of skilfully arranged items from their repertoire of light and popular pieces. A wider range of issues and practical problems is covered by Ed Lee in 'Pop and the teacher'. Though he might be accused of taking an over-optimistic view of the consequences of attempting to give guitar tuition in large groups, his observations are generally perceptive and helpful. Teachers with an exclusively classical background may also find his 'Note on conventions of notation in Afro-American music' useful.

In 'Definitions of serious music' Graham Vulliamy tackles the theoretical issues with which the book is concerned. In his brief account of the background to the present situation in schools, he seems to have underestimated the extent to which varieties of folk music, exotic as well as indigenous, jazz idioms (even if often in the form of pastiche) and light music of various kinds have already been absorbed into the mainstream of class music teaching. Nevertheless, his exposure of the questionable, if not false, premises on which much of the criticism by classical musicians of jazz and jazz-derived styles has been based is convincing enough. To support his main contention, Vulliamy draws on the work of Charles Keil<sup>4</sup> who has revealed the limitations of Leonard B. Meyer's concept of 'embodied meaning'<sup>5</sup> if it is applied to jazz. Whereas in classical music, with which Meyer is principally concerned, the apprehension of precisely-defined formal relationships and harmonic tensions is crucial to its appreciation, jazz relies much more for the communication of its meaning upon elements of improvisation and subtleties of pitch and rhythm that cannot be notated. In order to judge the quality of a piece of jazz or pop (not to mention many other musics relying upon aural dissemination), the extent to which these essential characteristics of the style are successful in evoking responses in the perceptive listener must be taken into account. In Keil's submission, 'engendered feeling' rather than 'embodied meaning' is the essential factor in the evaluation of jazz. Thus a strong theoretical basis is provided for the basic propositions of the book.

The case for teaching from the musical culture of the pupil rather than that of the teacher is presented by Vulliamy in 'Pupil-centred music teaching'. The familiar, and therefore the understood, is made the starting point for the widening of horizons with which all education must be concerned, while invidious comparisons between different kinds of music are avoided. A case-study of the practical application of this approach is provided by the music department of a college of technology. The director of music sees his role as that of guide and organiser rather than leader and instructor. Music flourishes with a wide range of extra-curricular activities from jazz and rock bands and folk groups to a large choral society. As Vulliamy recognises, however, the department can hardly be regarded as a model for secondary schools, very few of which enjoy anything like comparable resources or accommodation.

The account by Malcolm Nichols of his experience in 'Running an open music department' in a 14-18 upper school also has only a limited relevance. In this case, not only are the facilities quite exceptional, but the way in which the department is run is a direct reflection of the unusual policy and organisation of the school as a whole. For half of their time, pupils follow an individualised and optional curriculum. The music department, rather than offering courses with a preconceived content and structure, aims to cater for the needs of any pupil who expresses interest in acquiring or developing further any musical skill. Valuable as experiments like these undoubtedly are, they presuppose and depend upon a considerable degree of maturity and capacity for self-direction in the student. It is difficult to envisage the success of such a scheme in secondary schools catering for a lower age range. Yet it is in these schools which deal with younger adolescents at the most difficult stage of their development that the most intractable problems of music in education are to be encountered. A book such as this stands or falls on the extent to which practice can be shown to validate theory.

The most convincing justification for the views expressed in this book are provided by the two chapters by Piers Spencer. Here is a practising secondary school teacher who has obviously succeeded in integrating pop music into the

framework of his teaching with impressive results. In 'The blues: a practical project for the classroom', Spencer shows how, relying upon normal classroom instruments such as recorders, xylophones, guitars and percussion, jazz and pop music idioms can be utilised creatively within the now well-established techniques of group improvisation originally devised by Carl Orff. Improvisations based on pentatonic melodies in familiar jazz rhythms can take place over ostinato (or riff) bass patterns or simple blues harmonic progressions. In the attractive recorded illustrations of classroom work, it is refreshing to hear the way in which the genuinely musical impulses of individual pupils are given scope for expression in the improvisatory sections. In 'The creative possibilities of pop', Spencer provides further evidence of the musical potentialities of this approach. Particularly fascinating and salutary (in view of the pre-eminence given to the acquisition of musical literacy at the expense of other skills in conventional musical education) is his tracing of the creative development of an individual pupil, who could not read music and had received no formal piano lessons, through the analysis of the songs he had composed.

Controversy over the place of pop music in education has smouldered fitfully for more than a decade now: from at least the early 60s when the Beatles began to be taken seriously in some of our august literary and musical institutions, mainly through the exchange of shortwinded polemical broadsides in the press. Only occasionally have substantial and positive contributions to our thinking illuminated the scene. In this respect, *Pop Music in School* takes its place in an honourable line of succession from Keith Swanwick's eminently reasonable first survey of the issues in *Popular Music and the Teacher*<sup>6</sup> to Michael Burnett's valuable and constructive series of articles 'Coming to Terms with Pop'<sup>7</sup> and, of course, Wilfrid Mellers' acute and detailed study of the work of the Beatles in *Twilight of the Gods: The Beatles in Retrospect*.<sup>8</sup>

No secondary school music teacher or student contemplating music teaching as a career can afford to ignore *Pop Music in School*. The fundamental nature of its message is best summed up in the words of Christopher

# William Walton

## A Thematic Catalogue

### by Stewart Craggs

With an introductory essay by Michael Kennedy

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Searle, who is aware of the psychological considerations that should be borne in mind. 'Pop music can be used to create a genuine education experience. We have to work realistically within the media that are inevitably forming the symbolic structure of the children's expression, in order to fight to reverse its pernicious effects. Pop music is having an enormous impact on adolescent experience. If we work against that experience, we work against the formation of the child's identity at its most vital social stage.'<sup>9</sup>

#### NOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> Charles Rosen, *Schoenberg* (London: Fontana, 1976), p. 7.
- <sup>2</sup> 'The Use of Trendy "Amplified Pop" in School Music Classes', *Music Journal* [Incorporated Society of Musicians,] Vol. 42, No. 3 (October 1976), p. 17.
- <sup>3</sup> From a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, September 6, 1975.
- <sup>4</sup> Charles Keil, 'Motion and Feeling through Music', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Spring 1966), pp. 337-349.
- <sup>5</sup> Leonard B. Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).
- <sup>6</sup> Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1968.
- <sup>7</sup> In *Music Teacher*, February to July and September to December 1972.
- <sup>8</sup> London: Faber and Faber, 1973. This has recently become available in paperback and a review will appear in a later issue of *Contact*. (Ed.)
- <sup>9</sup> Quoted by Piers Spencer from Christopher Searle, *This New Season* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1973), p. 112.

#### MUSIQUE ET INFORMATIQUE: UNE BIBLIOGRAPHIE INDEXÉE,

Marc Battier avec la collaboration de Jacques Arveiller  
Département Musique, Département Informatique,  
Université Paris VIII, Vincennes, 1976 (15.00Fr, \$3.00)

Obtainable from Département Musique, Université Paris VIII, Route de la Tourelle, 75571 — Paris Cedex 12, France

#### STEPHEN ARNOLD

This bibliography is concerned to document the musical applications of digital computers and aims to be comprehensive. In spite of the criticisms which follow, all serious music libraries should obtain it. It includes references to books, but more often to dissertations or articles, dealing with digital sound synthesis, computer-aided composition, computer-aided analysis, computer-aided music theory and computer-aided musicology. It does not include references to the related area of speech synthesis, which is a pity since the problems of speech synthesis and sound synthesis in general are so interdependent.

As far as I could tell, all sources of significance are included as far as digital sound synthesis goes: I cannot vouch for other areas. (There were a few omissions that I was able to spot, but they were not important in relation to the whole.) What is a little puzzling is the inclusion of sources of little or no significance. Is there any point in including 'Tom Swift and the Electronic Muse' from *High Fidelity/Musical America* or 'Play it again, IBM' by Howard Taubman in *The New York Times*? These are only a couple of several possible examples. Inevitably the questions arise: (1) for whose benefit is such a bibliography intended? (2) how desirable or helpful is it to be comprehensive rather than constructively selective? It isn't for me to answer these questions, but for the compilers. I merely observe that specialists in the field are probably aware of most of the entries which concern them, but should find such a bibliography helpful in tracking down the odd item that has hitherto escaped their attention; they will not find such pointless breadth particularly enlightening. Novices who are intending specialists are likely to find their time wasted in pursuing the journalistic trivia; while those who might care to get acquainted with this exciting field in a general sort of way will be intimidated by the forbiddingly 'heavy' aspect of so many of the serious entries. I do not know whether the compilers have been fully comprehensive with regard to the silly ones.

One might wonder whether the indexing system goes

any way towards countering these grumbles. To some extent it does, in that it enables a reader to sort out, in a rough and ready way, what area or areas an entry will cover by means of four-letter key-words. Here is an example of an entry selected at random

162 BRENDER, Maurita, BRENDER, Ronald F. DESS  
"COMPUTER TRANSCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF  
OF MID-THIRTEENTH CENTURY MUSICAL  
NOTATION." *Journal of Music Theory* 11, 2,  
Winter 1967. 198-221

The key-words for entry No. 162 are DESS and NOTA. On consulting the 'Tables des mots-clés' at the rear of the bibliography, we find that under category 1, 'Type de l'Article', DESS is defined as 'description sommaire' and that under category 3, 'Champs', NOTA is defined as 'notation et/ou transcription'. We then deduce that entry No. 162 is a summary description in the field of notation and/or transcription. In this instance, as in many more, this seems to be overstating the obvious. But we can, of course, work the system the other way round. We could, for instance, look up NOTA in the 'Index des mots-clés' and find listed by entry number all references the compilers consider relevant to the fields covered by NOTA. There are 49 such references to check out in the bibliographical body of the book. If, however, we consult the 'Index des mots-clés' hoping to find listings for DESS, INSO ('information sommaire'), PANO ('panorama') and TECH ('article technique'), we will be disappointed, for they are inexplicably absent.

Another grumble is that, according to the Preface, FORTRAN and ALGOL are not mentioned in the body of the text (in fact, there is a key-word 'FORT' for FORTRAN in the body of the text) on account of their very frequent everyday use. Of course it would be tedious if, every time it was apparent that someone had done a spot of programming in FORTRAN or ALGOL, some key-word such as FORT or ALGO kept appearing. It is, after all, not of primary importance to know whether Scott Fitzgerald typed his books or wrote them out in long-hand: it is more important to know what he actually said in them. On some occasions, however, the seemingly trivial can in fact be crucial. It is not, for instance, without significance that the sound synthesis programmes MUSIC IV, IVB and 360 are not FORTRAN based, but that MUSIC IV BF and V are.

The cut-off date for compilation was during the summer of 1975. The rapid progress being made in the area of the musical applications of computers means that, inevitably and understandably, a document such as this is already to some extent out of date. In case you are wondering, as I did for a long time, what 'Informatique' means, I can, with the aid of the *Grand Larousse de la langue française*, tell you that it derives from informat[ion] and [automat]ique and/or [electron]ique, and is defined as the 'science de traitement rationnel, notamment par machines automatiques, de l'information considérée comme le support des connaissances et des communications dans les domaines technique, économique et sociale'. The bibliography is in paper covers, consists of 172 xeroxed, typed sheets and contains 1485 entries.

MUSIC IN TRANSITION: A STUDY OF TONAL EXPANSION  
AND ATONALITY 1900-1920, by Jim Samson  
Dent, 1977 (£7.50)

#### MICHAEL TAYLOR

The number of books dealing with the music of the early part of this century is relatively small: indeed, large histories excepted, only two suggest themselves — George Perle's *Serial Composition and Atonality*<sup>1</sup> and Allen Forte's *The Structure of Atonal Music*,<sup>2</sup> both of which cover part of Samson's field from widely differing viewpoints. The title should, I think, be read in conjunction with a sentence from the Preface describing the scope of the book. 'In selecting a small number of composers for detailed analytical study I was guided less by the considerations of quality ... than by the light these composers shed upon the central development.' The eccentricity of one of Samson's choices and the resulting effect on the balance of the book will be considered later in this review.

Samson divides his book into three parts:

- (1) 'Tonality: its Expansion and Reinterpretation': tonality in the 19th century, late Liszt, Busoni, Debussy, Bartók and Stravinsky;
- (2) 'Paths to Atonality': early Scriabin, Schoenberg, Berg, Webern and Szymanowski;
- (3) 'Early Atonality': a further consideration of those composers covered in Part Two under the headings 'Atonality and tradition', "'Free" atonality' and 'Rappel à l'ordre'.

Included in the second part is a more general historical-geographical survey relating the more detailed discussions to the two decades as a whole, and in the third part a brief 'attempt to clarify some of the difficulties of terminology which arise in a study of tonal expansion and atonality'. The plentiful examples include 'harmonic abstracts' in addition to quotations from the literature. This prompts me to wonder for whom the book is intended: would a student with access to the range of music covered, and the ability to cope with the reductions, find any great value in the rather cursory chronological section?

The central theme of the book as set out in the Preface is 'the breakdown of traditional tonal functions and the subsequent rejection, by some composers at least, of the principle underlying those functions'. It is worth establishing exactly what is implied here by 'traditional tonal functions'. 'The central harmonic unit of classical tonality is the major triad, its fundamental harmonic progression I—V—I. These represent a vertical and horizontal expression of an acoustical phenomenon in nature.' (pp.2, 223) Having thus sketched out the basis of tonality in unambiguously Schenkerian terms, it is surprising to find that Samson neither adheres to this definition, nor places Schoenberg, for example, correctly in relation to it. A clear statement of the distinction between Schoenbergian tonality (as set out in his *Harmonielehre*) and that defined above is found in Schenker's *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik*.

Since a mechanistic approach had already existed due to the departure from live voice leading in Rameau's principles, one mechanical entity led to another ... gradually, the seventh, whether a passing tone or a suspension ... and the ninth, whether a suspension or an auxiliary note, were set down as chord constituents, all of which led to the assumption of seventh and ninth chords. Once on this path, there was no hesitation in recognising eleventh and thirteenth chords, until finally today ... any superposition of tones ... is explained as including distant partials of the overtone series and is likewise taken for a chord.<sup>3</sup>

Samson correctly points out (p. 100) that the *Harmonielehre* belongs to the 'Rameau-Riemann line of harmonic theory' without apparently understanding the corollary of this statement: that the distinction between passing and harmonic notes has been swept away and with it the principal source of motion in *truly* tonal music. Tonality has been deprived of its ability to function alone as the 'central point of reference' (p. 2). It is significant that composers at this time sought to increase the role played in their music by other potentially compensating techniques, e.g. the contrapuntal intricacies of Reger (shown to have no meaning in true tonal terms by Schenker)<sup>4</sup> and the adaptation of Brahms's obsessive thematic integration (the latter was regarded by Schenker as 'the last master of the German musical art').<sup>5</sup> As Schoenberg remarked: 'Renouncement of the unifying power of the tonic still leaves all the other factors in operation.' He lists, as the other integrative qualities, 'rhythms, motifs and phrases'.<sup>6</sup> What remains is a fundamentally triadic language in which the relationships between the triads do not function in respect of an overall tonality, but which require to be defined anew with every composition. Music has moved from a tonally *exclusive* to a tonally *inclusive* language. It is at once apparent that the term 'tonal expansion' is a complete misnomer: we are here dealing with a *contraction* in the role of tonality.

The distinction proposed here is not simply semantic; rather it fundamentally alters our perception of post-Brahms music, dispensing with the fruitless disservice we do such music by assuming the ramifications of tonality instead of hearing the actual hierarchies set up within a given work. The process of evolution, whereby the role of the triad is gradually reduced within a language that is already 'atonal' in the sense usually employed, is clearly perceptible. None of this emerges from the book. Instead one is confronted with such meaningless terms as 'neo-

tonality' and pointless deliberations on the tonality or otherwise of the second of Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*, Op. 16 or Bartók's Second Violin Sonata. A major cause of the difficulties encountered by theorists of this period is their inability to countenance tonality as capable of a high degree of chromaticism (witness Samson's remarks on Chopin's Mazurka, Op. 68, No. 4 on pp. 3-4) coupled with a refusal to hear triads as anything other than tonal. In a recently completed thesis, Robert Hanson has demonstrated how the triadic climax in bar 13 of Webern's song Op. 3, No. 5 is the logical outcome of the non-tonal material. He goes on to say that 'if this is tonal music then it is very bad tonal music'.<sup>7</sup>

I shall illustrate the type of analysis employed in this book by examining Samson's discussion of Schoenberg's Second String Quartet, but before undertaking this I ought to point out the serious error in the harmonic abstract of the second of Berg's *Four Songs*, Op. 2 (Ex. 34(ii), p. 122). Samson's reduction shows 'a grouping of seven ascending and five descending fourths' outlining 'the tritone B flat—E'. The first seven fourths are correct, articulated by the minim plus crotchet harmonic rhythm. However, the chord on the downbeat of bar 4 comprises the same notes as the first chord of bar 1 and an overlapping cycle of fourths beginning on D ensues, retaining the harmonic rhythm (now filled out with whole-tones) and continuing to the B flat on the third beat of bar 7 (note the change of harmonic rhythm in this bar and the use of thematic compression). The smooth semitonal progression of the upper parts suggests that the initial sonority is transposed by this interval rather than the fourth favoured by Samson, and this is borne out by the resumption of this downward movement at bar 13, continuing from the pitch level reached at the onset of the middle section (bar 9). There is a wealth of subtlety in this song that Samson has not begun to explore. There is also an accidental missing from the first chord (a) in the reduction of the fourth of the Op. 2 songs (Ex. 34(iv)): the C should be C sharp and the designation (a) deleted.

Whatever one's view of its tonality, Schoenberg's Second Quartet is a work of crucial importance to his development and Samson rightly devotes to this work a major part of his discussion of Schoenberg's 'pre-atonal' music. He summarises the first movement as follows:

The thematic groups of its exposition section are short and self-contained, and Schoenberg makes little attempt to develop them extensively in the early stages of the work ... For this reason ... a working-out section is more essential and makes for a more effective contrast with the outer sections in this work than in either Op. 7 or Op. 9 ... The section (bars 90-159) begins with a 'false repeat' ... before turning to an exhaustive contrapuntal exploitation of the principal thematic material, in particular that of the second subject group. At bar 160 the central F sharp tonality returns and there is a condensed recapitulation in which the order of thematic presentation differs from that in the exposition. (p. 105)

A glance at the score reveals alarming differences: the first theme is already extended sequentially in bar 10 and overlaps the second idea with its characteristic falling semitone A—G sharp. The latter also figures prominently in the new theme (D—C sharp, G—F sharp, F sharp—E sharp etc. in the viola and all the cello part at bar 12ff). In bar 24 the second violin plays a five-note figure that develops via bar 50 into the new idea that finally emerges at bar 58 (first violin). In fact this exposition might well be described as an example of thematic interpenetration. Contrast Schoenberg with Samson concerning the development section: 'In this quartet a disinclination against the traditional *Durchführung* ... can ... be observed' and speaking of the third movement: 'I designed this movement to present the elaborations (*Durchführungen*) I had restricted or omitted in the first and second movements respectively'.<sup>8</sup>

Much more is now known of Schoenberg's personal circumstances during the composition of the work and this makes it difficult to understand why Samson sees the quotation of the Viennese street song in the Scherzo as indicative 'of the acute creative crisis engendered by the tonal suppression of the quartet's final movement' (p. 2), particularly when on p. 229 he cites the very book that revealed the link between the quartet and Mathilde Schoenberg's involvement with Gerstl.<sup>9</sup> There is an interesting parallel here with the recently discovered 'programme' for Berg's *Lyric Suite*.<sup>10</sup> Both works are quartets featuring vocal settings (albeit suppressed in the Berg) and cryptographic references, and both were written at times of marital crisis. Such coincidences (or otherwise)

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would not have been ignored by Berg.

It is only with the last movement that we reach an extensive attempt to demonstrate the 'tonal-harmonic structure of the movement' (p. 110) in two and a half pages of text plus a full page harmonic abstract. Here I felt that we were really dealing with the notes, although I suspect that the text was edited at this point as the figure (p) in the reduction is never discussed. Lack of bar numbers makes the correlation of abstract and score rather tiresome (this criticism can be levelled at the book as a whole), a chore further hampered by mistakes in the musical text. On the second system, bass clef, the second C sharp—G sharp should read C—G sharp (bar 14, viola) and the figure (x) should comprise only the notes A—G sharp—D; third system, treble clef, (p) should read D sharp—C sharp—G sharp—F sharp: fourth system, bass clef, the final note of (a) should be F sharp (bar 76, cello); fifth system, treble clef, should refer to Introduction (iii) (compare bars 10, 83) and bass clef, (p) is three statements of the figure F—B flat—C—E flat, D flat—A flat—C flat—A—D—E—G, connected by whole-tones as the example shows; treble and bass clefs, the final semiquaver figure should be marked (a) and its last note amended to D (see bar 97, second violin); sixth system, bass clef, lili should surely read lli as both harmony and melody (second violin) are identical with bar 52ff. Several important motivic occurrences are omitted without explanation (most curious of all the first appearance of (p) at bars 21-23 to the words 'Ich fühle Luft') and I found the reduction of the third section of the Introduction rather arbitrary. Why is the cello fifth G—D (bar 13) omitted when it forms part of a fifths progression (bars 13-15)? In linking the C sharp and F sharp triads (bars 16, 25) as part of a tonal progression, Samson omits to mention the structural role played by the notes C sharp and D, particularly in the low cello register (e.g. bars 25-29, 38-39, 79-83, 151), an emphasis which calls to mind bars 89-92 of the Scherzo. The idea is also used in transposition at bars 30-31, 146ff. Despite these reservations, I found this by far the most interesting of the reductions even if I was left with the impression of many apparently unrelated fragments rather than the unity expressed by the music itself.

Despite his protestations in the Preface regarding the criteria governing the selection of composers for discussion, I feel that Samson's enthusiasm for Szymanowski in particular has left his book seriously unbalanced in favour of the 'minor figures'. Perhaps because of what I see as a totally unjustified division of composers into 'neo-tonalists' and 'atonalists', this imbalance is inevitable, for it debars such major figures as Bartók and Stravinsky from the latter two-thirds of the book. Consideration of Szymanowski extends to 1932, the final section (pp. 200-207) being an 'extended parenthesis' devoted exclusively to works composed beyond the two-decade scope of the book. This fact, taken in conjunction with the comparative brevity of the text and the number of important works barely mentioned or omitted altogether — *Pierrot Lunaire*, *The Rite of Spring*, *Wozzeck*, Sibelius's Seventh Symphony — gives some idea of the bias involved. I am not denying the right of an author to discuss minor figures, rather the propriety of allowing them to assume a wholly disproportionate scale in a book concerned with an historical movement projected by far more important composers.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> 4th, revised, edition, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Sylvan Kalib, 'Thirteen essays from the three yearbooks *Das Meisterwerk in der Musik* by Heinrich Schenker: an annotated translation' (Northwestern University, 1973), Vol. II, p. 504. This is obtainable from University Microfilms, No. 73/30626.

<sup>4</sup> A negative example: Max Reger, *Variations and Fugue on a theme of J. S. Bach*, Op. 81, see Schenker/Kalib op. cit., pp. 451-490.

<sup>5</sup> Heinrich Schenker, *Beethoven: Neunte Sinfonie* (Vienna, 1912), dedication.

<sup>6</sup> Arnold Schoenberg, 'My Evolution', *Style and Idea* (2nd, revised and enlarged, edition, London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Hanson, *Anton Webern's Atonal Style*

(unpublished thesis, University of Southampton, 1976), p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Ursula von Rauchhaupt (ed.), *Schoenberg, Berg, Webern — the String Quartets: A Documentary Study* (Hamburg: DG, 1971), pp. 43, 47.

<sup>9</sup> H. H. Stuckenschmidt, *Schoenberg: Leben, Umwelt, Werke* (Zurich: Atlantis-Verlag, 1974). This has just been published by Calder and Boyars in an English translation by Humphrey Searle and will be reviewed in the next issue of *Contact*.

<sup>10</sup> See George Perle, 'The Secret Programme of the Lyric Suite', *The Musical Times*, Vol 118, Nos. 1614-1616 (August-October 1977).

#### PIERRE BOULEZ: CONVERSATIONS WITH CELESTIN DELIÈGE

Eulenburg Books, 1977 (hardback £3.00, paperback £1.50)

#### BOULEZ: COMPOSER, CONDUCTOR, ENIGMA, by Joan Peyser

Cassell, 1977 (£7.50)

#### GEORGE BROWN

One of my initial reactions on reading these two books was to wonder at which sort of reader the publishers could be directing them. If one were to scan them superficially, one would get the impression that *Conversations with Célestin Deliège* was another factually imprecise, open form, semi-anecdotal, semi-biographical, semi-everything series of mental meanderings of a famous victim faced with a genuflecting admirer, cast in the well-worn 'Conversations with ...' format. It does not contain a single music example, the translation is anonymous, the reader is left to find out for himself the identity of Célestin Deliège and Robert Wagnernée (who wrote the Foreword) and the book suffers seriously from the lack of an index. Conversely, Joan Peyser's *Boulez: Composer, Conductor, Enigma* promises, in the words of the blurb,

a biography of Boulez from his origins through his days as an avant-garde composer in post-war Europe to his controversial conducting engagement with the New York Philharmonic... It details the professional friendships and rivalries, the struggles for recognition and power, the politics of success and failure, in an absorbing study of Boulez, the man and artist.

This book contains several music examples, informs the reader about absolutely everyone and has an index that is so comprehensive that it has nine entries under 'Opus' and twelve under 'Symphony'. How misleading first impressions can be.

Boulez' conversations with Deliège were originally recorded for Belgian Radio in 1972, edited into their present form in 1974 and first published in French in 1975.<sup>1</sup> The present edition, the first in English, was translated in 1976 and published in 1977. The conversations are presented in 18 chapters, which progress from Boulez' early life through to IRCAM and the problems associated with technology-based research programmes. It presents a genuine artistic biography of Boulez which is structured around his principal works and theoretical writings, arranged in chronological order. Although the absence of an index is infuriating, the contents page does list, in addition to the chapter headings, those of Boulez' works that are principally discussed in each section.

The book, like several others in the Eulenburg series, despite a rather 'soft-sell' image, seems to be designed for someone who is generally well-versed in the music of this century. I should have thought that to make maximum use of it one should already be highly conversant with both the music and the theoretical writings of Boulez. With the latter in mind, it seems an oversight on the editor's part that all the references in the bibliography refer to the *Relevés d'apprenti* collection, rather than Herbert Weinstock's English translation;<sup>2</sup> anyone who can cope with these articles in French will not require a translation of this book.

Boulez takes the opportunity in these conversations of correcting many incorrect assumptions that have appeared during the last 30 years. A number of these have been created by his detractors in a rather mindless way for political ends, while others have been promulgated by Boulez himself, largely for artistic reasons to support his

total commitment to his art. I get the impression that when Deliège faces Boulez with a problem or inconsistency from the past or a cause for which he is no longer the chief protagonist, he is quite happy to elucidate; but when faced with a current problem, he is still considering the total implication of any answer he gives and treats it as a function of his current aims (a point which Peyser seems not to comprehend). Boulez might no longer be the polemicist of 'Incidence actuelle de Berg', 'Recherches maintenant' or 'Aléa', verbally demolishing all before him, but he is still using his intellect, though in a more adroit way, for the progress of Western music as he sees it.

I think many will gain much from this book. Seen in relation to his earlier writings, it forms a development that must be of interest to students and academics alike. Boulez resolves such antinomies as his distance from Berg and Schoenberg (vis-à-vis Webern) professed in some of his theoretical writings and the sympathy patent in much of his own music and sections of *Boulez on Music Today*.<sup>3</sup> There is a most interesting section where Boulez describes, often in a self-critical (but not self-deprecating) manner, the part he played in establishing the concept of total serialism and its subsequent modifications, reviewing the ideas which were germane to the pieces *Structures I*, *Polyphonie X* and later *Le Marteau sans Maître* and the articles 'Eventuellement' and 'Recherches maintenant'. Here, as in many other sections, I am impressed by the sincerity and vitality with which Boulez attacked these musical problems during that time, qualities sadly lacking in the syllogistic diatribes issuing forth from the band of journalists operating under the banner of Socialist Realism who bring with them a weight of unrealistic dogma which, perhaps, no art (as we know it) will be able to bear.

I can thoroughly recommend this volume to all composers, whether they are in sympathy with Boulez' aims or not. It contains no musical or technical exemplars which can be turned into effete effects, but conveys the impression that a composer of great integrity is explaining some of his solutions to some of his problems. I find this most stimulating as it often initiates a train of thought in one's own mind that makes one reconsider thoughts or technical processes in one's own work. If the results are diametrically opposed to those of Boulez, fine: it is not his piece!

Anyone who comes to Peyser's biography after reading the Deliège discussions will be amazed at the amount of it he or she has already read. With one exception, all the quotations from Deliège are reproduced by the ever-eavesdropping Ms Peyser in a way that suggests they are all direct statements made to her by Boulez. I quote below a lengthy equivalent passage from both books to exemplify the differences between them. I think that these amount to more than a few discrepancies that result from differing translations. This passage is initiated by a question concerning Boulez' choice of the non-contemporary poet, Mallarmé, for *Pli selon pli*. I have also included some of Peyser's text in order to give an indication of the scope of her musical commentary.

Deliège, pp. 93-95:

*PB*: It was not a retrogressive step — it was probably even a progressive one. In Char and Michaux, whose works I used before coming to *Pli selon pli*, I found many sources of inspiration, but they were hardly obsessed with formal preoccupations. Char's main preoccupation is rather with the selection of an extremely pregnant vocabulary and density of expression; with Michaux it is the development of an extraordinarily original poetic imagery. Syntax itself, however, the concern for form, the arrangement of the words, their cohesion and sonority as such, are not a major concern. What attracted me in Mallarmé, at the stage I had reached at that time, was the extraordinary formal density of his poems. Not only is the content truly extraordinary — the poems possess a mythology that is very much their own — but never has the French language been taken so far in the matter of syntax. . . .

What interested me was the idea of finding a musical equivalent, both poetic and formal, to Mallarmé's poetry. This is why I chose very strict forms from Mallarmé in order to graft on to them a proliferation of music sprouting from an equally strict form; this enabled me to transcribe into musical terms forms that I had never thought of and which are derived from the literary forms he himself used.

*CD*: You have often spoken of this search for equivalent forms. Given the specific differences between the two languages, it might well be asked at what level they converge, if at all.

*PB*: There are various levels of convergence. The simplest and most emotional is the poetic one which I tried to achieve by using certain equivalent sonorities. Thus when Mallarmé uses words like 'green', 'white', 'absence', and so on, there is after all a certain sonority in music that is directly associated with such ideas — for instance, certain extremely long-held,

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extremely tense sounds, which form part of this sort of universe that is not so much frozen as extraordinarily 'vitrified'. It was this emotional, direct level that made me select certain poems rather than others. It was not simply because it had a very precise meaning for me.

A further level of correspondence lies in the construction of the poem. The sonnet is a very strict construction as far as its rhyme is concerned, and implies a particular structure for the music. For instance, for one masculine or feminine rhyme I use a closely related but different structure. So these *Improvisations* become an analysis of the sonnet structure, in a more and more detailed and more and more profound way. This is why I called them *Improvisations I, II, III*. The first takes a sonnet and uncovers only its strophic character, which is not very intense work; the second is elaborated at the level of the line and verse itself — in other words, it is already an analysis of the stanza; the third proceeds in the sense that the line itself has a particular structure in terms of its position within the sonnet.

I also made use of numerical relationships. There is a sonnet in lines of eight syllables, and, for instance, in a whole section of the second *Improvisation*, where the vocal line itself is at once syllabic and melismatic around a given note, the structure rests on the figure eight: in other words, all the important and most audible events relating to the enunciation of the verse itself have as their basis the figure eight, since the initial sonorities are eight in number. The very numerical structure of the sonnet served as a basis for the musical structure.

Peyser, pp. 144-145 (the only quote from Deliège with any acknowledgement — although the interviewer remains anonymous):

Before 1959, Boulez had set three works by René Char and one poem by Henri Michaux. He explains his shift to Mallarmé:

'I found many sources of inspiration in Char and Michaux, but preoccupation with form was not one of them. Char's interest was in an extremely tight vocabulary; Michaux's in the creation of an original imagery. But syntax itself, the arrangement of words and their cohesion and sonority, was not the obsession of either poet.

'What seduced me with Mallarmé was the formal density of his work. Not only is the content extraordinary — for his poems have a very particular mythology — but the French language has never been led further, from the point of view of syntax. I wanted to find a musical equivalent and that is why I chose the strictest forms.

There are various levels of convergence between poetry and music. The simplest is the conveying of the sense of the words. Thus, when Mallarmé speaks of 'absence', there is a musical sonority — a sound held for a long time — that can convey this idea. Another point of convergence is the form itself. The sonnet has a very strict form which calls for a certain musical structure. My purpose was to attribute a kind of form to each verse according to the rules of the sonnet itself. There is also a numerology here: one structure is based on the number 8 because it is a verse of eight syllables. Gradually these improvisations become analogous [sic] with the structure of the sonnet, but in a manner more and more detailed, more and more profound. That is why I call them *Improvisations I, II, and III*.'

Boulez's elaborate discussion of technique in the interview quoted above ... serves to hide from the listener the real 'meaning' of the work, which can easily be discovered in the words of the poetry.

Few listeners could pick up Boulez's devices, for the system is impenetrable. Few could even pick up the words, for they are virtually drowned in the music. What the listener will pick up is the dazzling instrumental color: *Pli selon Pli* is a remarkable work for its instrumental passages of great beauty, for its technique and proportion.

The form adopted by Peyser for this biography is the now fashionable one of psycho-biography. This approach often works when the investigative journalist probes into the inner life of some well-known politician who adores any publicity. But when the person being interrogated thinks, as Boulez does, that most of this is irrelevant, the idea falls flat. Rather than abandon this journalistic approach in favour of some methodical research, Peyser goes on, with the aid of some questionable psychology, to relate the fruits of her endeavours to Boulez and Composer and Conductor and then deduces the Enigma.

After a rather ponderous introduction, Peyser progresses through the story (for that is how it is told) of Boulez' life in a vaguely chronological way. I say 'vaguely' because Peyser quite often becomes so carried away with other characters in her drama and develops them with such gusto, that she loses sight of her principal theme, quite often making en passant comments about events and pieces which she has yet to explain. Does Peyser really think it necessary to

inform her readers who Stockhausen and Pousseur are? Her pièce de résistance is an amazing six-page miniature biography of John Cage: this is to show the cultural disparity between a European and an American background!

Peyser continues in this manner until she reaches the 1970s. We are then treated to a long, detailed description of the political background to, and the later ramifications of, Boulez' appointment to the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. Peyser concludes that Boulez failed in his attempt to change the musical aspect of New York. In this respect it is a shame that the author could not be bothered to acquaint herself more fully with the changes Boulez brought to London's concerts, for many of Boulez' ideas which 'failed' in New York were very much more successful here. The ideas about IRCAM put forward in Deliège's five-year-old book are naturally exiguous; however, Peyser's more up-to-date information is no less amorphous.

Peyser is at her best when she is recalling other people's anecdotes and jokes about, or confrontations with, Boulez. Some of these are interesting, most are superficial and a lot are just plain irrelevant and boring. To single out any for quotation would be pointless, considering their number. As entertaining as some of this is, I cannot overlook the nature or content of the musical commentary. The quotation which follows (pp. 67-69) is typical. The description of the Messiaen work is careless and somewhat misleading, while that of the Boulez is not very helpful.

In 1949, before Boulez began *Polyphonie X*, Messiaen had published his *Quatre Etudes de Rythme* of which the second, entitled *Mode de Valeurs et d'Intensités*, was probably the first European composition which extended the serial principle beyond pitch to the other musical elements. The work was organized in this way: a melodic series of thirty-six notes, a rhythmic series of twenty-four durations, a dynamic series of seven attacks, and an additional series of seven intensities. (The work is for piano, therefore timbre does not undergo permutation.) This fourfold determination is then set into three-part canon. Despite the imposition of such mathematical formulas, the *Mode de Valeurs et d'Intensités* is full, expressive, extroverted music. Messiaen used his formulas in a free and romantic way. After the completion of this work he chose not to pursue the path of total organization.

It was left to Boulez to remove the trimmings, to make music 'from scratch', to go, in a sense, bone dry .... Boulez did not merely adopt Messiaen's technique; he complicated it considerably. In place of a rather straightforward method, Boulez developed a most intricate mechanism which appears to have been designed to transmute his private anguish and joy into something distant, universal, and cold. In *Structures* even the smallest aspect of each musical event undergoes a perpetual transformation. Thus each pitch never recurs with the same duration, the same intensity, or the same attack. A staggering multiplicity of combinations occurs.

I was puzzled by the inclusion of several pages from *Boulez on Music Today*. These deal with such technical points as the isomorphism of the subsets in 'Tropes', the second formant of the Third Piano Sonata. This would be beyond the comprehension of the reader at whom this book is seemingly aimed, and seems included only in an attempt to support Peyser's various hypotheses e.g. 'Thus Boulez's method of making music can be seen as one in which some kind of mathematical equations have displaced man as the centre of art. Purpose and invention have capitulated to structure and system. Boulez's ties to both can be traced, perhaps, to Catholicism and his early rigid life.' (pp. 152-153)

The aforementioned index is certainly copious, but does not cross-reference works by anyone but Boulez, i.e. to find a reference to the Webern Symphony, one can either wade through the 27 entries under 'Webern', or remember it is under O as 'Opus 21'; we are spared an entry under 'Symphony'. The music examples seem to be quoted for their intrinsic artistic beauty as they have only tentative links with the text. Incidentally, not all the manuscript ones are in Boulez' own hand. It is not surprising that there is no bibliography.

No doubt this book is fully satisfying for the New York trendy, but for those with a real interest in the music and ideas of Boulez it is not sufficient. Considering that Ms Peyser spent several years accompanying Boulez from place to place in the manner of a somewhat high-class groupie, I find the result totally execrable and most irritating to read.

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> *Par volont   et par hasard: entretiens avec C  lestin Deli  ge* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> *Notes of an Apprenticeship* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968).

<sup>3</sup> Susan Bradshaw and Richard Rodney Bennett, trans., *Boulez on Music Today* (London: Faber and Faber, hardback 1971, paperback 1975).

WILLIAM WALTON: A THEMATIC CATALOGUE OF HIS MUSICAL WORKS, by Stewart R. Craggs  
Oxford University Press, 1977 (£12.50)

PAUL HINDMARSH

In a review<sup>1</sup> of the second edition of *The Music of William Walton* issued by Oxford University Press to coincide with the Walton 70th birthday celebrations in 1972, I remarked upon the limitations of the late Frank Howes' comprehensive but rather superficial discussion of the music. Now, as a 75th anniversary tribute, OUP have published the first of two full-length studies.

A substantial part of this thematic catalogue was originally prepared in 1973 by Stewart Craggs as a thesis for his Fellowship of the Library Association. He subsequently revised and expanded it to include works written after 1972 and further revisions of some earlier works (including the 1976 revision of *Troilus and Cressida* and the revival of the suppressed *Facade* numbers). Like Imogen Holst in the superb thematic catalogue of her father's music,<sup>2</sup> Craggs has adopted a chronological format, with each work systematically documented as follows: (1) title, (2) incipit (for the published works), (3) instrumentation, (4) length or duration, (5) first performance, (6) dedicatees, (7) publication details, (8) manuscript sources, (9) bibliography and discography, (10) commentary and further information (similarly treated in cases of alternative versions or revisions). A cross-referenced, classified list of works is printed at the end of the main sequence, followed by a chronologically-organised general bibliography.

The wealth of scrupulous research, compiled from a multitude of sources, is certainly impressive, the entries for *Facade* and some of the little-known film and incidental music being especially worthy of praise. For the first time in any study of Walton's music, source material and important biographical information have been obtained from his closest friends and colleagues. In particular, source material from the late Sir Hubert Foss, from Roy Douglas and from the pianist Angus Morrison (a veritable mine of information who also contributed a great deal to the recent book on Constant Lambert)<sup>3</sup> has supplied Craggs with many hitherto unknown facts. Walton himself has given permission for extracts from his correspondence to be printed in Michael Kennedy's introductory essay.

Inevitably, comparisons can be made between the Holst and Walton thematic catalogues. In a number of respects it is the former composer that is better served: each entry is numbered (facilitating easy cross-reference) and dates of completion of works are supplied where available. Occasionally Craggs will use some rather awkward turns of phrase, whereas Imogen Holst's literary style is impeccable throughout.

A thematic catalogue is particularly useful when it gives musical incipits for lesser known and unpublished works. The Holst catalogue provides incipits for all works except those that are lost. The Walton catalogue is impaired by having no incipits except for well known and published works. Music examples for the discarded numbers from *Facade*, the recently discovered incidental music for *Macbeth* and the ill-fated *Battle of Britain* music would have been especially welcome.

Faber, publisher of the Holst catalogue, went to considerable lengths to ensure a clear and easily readable format. Unfortunately, OUP appear to have sacrificed clarity of presentation for the sake of cost. The print is somewhat cramped and difficult to refer to quickly.

As a preface to the catalogue, Michael Kennedy has written a critical appreciation of Walton's life and work. Kennedy, with his depth of knowledge of British music, his

access to interesting new source material and his succinct and eloquent literary style, has placed Walton's musical achievements over the past 50 years in their proper perspective. He traces Walton's development from enfant terrible (1920s), through respectability and critical acclaim (1930s and 40s), followed by something of a backlash of critical rejection despite general popularity (1950s), to a final period of veneration as the doyen of British composers (1970s). Walton's relationship with the Sitwells and with the Lambert—Warlock—van Dieren clique is dispassionately retold, providing a sharp contrast to the comparison Kennedy draws between Elgar and Walton. The crucial post-war years, with the so-called 'falling off' in musical vitality and inventiveness, are dealt with in a positive yet sympathetic way. Kennedy prefers to label these later years as ones of retirement and relaxation of style, with Walton not bending to the fashions of the moment. He sees him as a victim of circumstance, a composer who has been left behind stylistically. Could this fact itself not have led Walton towards a more mannered and clich  d approach?

It would have been interesting to read Kennedy's opinions on the possible influence of Prokofiev on Walton's early style (Walton's painstaking study of Prokofiev's piano concertos is well known; their influence is to be heard in the main themes in all four of his own concertos); also on the possible connection between his marriage (his new-found emotional security in Ischia) and the relaxation in musical utterance in the 1950s. Little is mentioned of the relationship between Walton and his patroness, Lady Wimborne.

These criticisms and comments on the essay and catalogue are, however, of small importance compared with the overall excellence of the book. It will, I feel sure, prove an invaluable compilation of source material and critical commentary, and will make a more than suitable companion to Gillian Widdicombe's eagerly-awaited full-length evaluation of Walton's life and works.

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> *Contact* 9 (Autumn 1974), pp. 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> Imogen Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974).

<sup>3</sup> Richard Shead, *Constant Lambert* (London: Simon, 1973).

MUSIC-SOCIETY-EDUCATION, by Christopher Small  
John Calder, 'Platform Books', 1977 (£6.95)

JOHN SHEPHERD

Although its precise extent and nature is difficult to determine, it is probably true to say that there has grown up over the past decade or so a general awareness that modern Western society is facing, if not a crisis, then certainly a number of intractable and inter-related problems. Debates over pollution and energy highlight the fact that technological man's relationship with the environment is perhaps not all that it might be, while the continuing spate of urban terrorism points to the inherently pathological structure of the capitalist world. But whatever form the symptoms might take, the disease is not difficult to identify. It is a way of approaching the world which implicitly denies the intense and indissoluble relationships that exist between individual people, and between those people and the external world. In his attempt to understand and control the world, modern Western man has receded so far from his environment, other people and, indeed, himself, that the total interconnected system of man, society and the environment has ceased to be a 'unified' process experienced at first-hand, and become a series of isolated 'objects' known about in a second-hand fashion through professional intermediaries. We have scientists and engineers to manage the environment, doctors to mend our bodies, psychiatrists to regulate our minds, teachers to 'educate' our children, and social workers to cope with those who cannot cope with it all. We participate in the world by proxy with the result that people become alienated from their essential natures. And nowhere is this alienation and concomitant inability to engage the world in an immediate and first-hand manner better evidenced than in

the inability of our politicians to face up to any of the very real problems which we have created. Hence the basic pathology.

There is, of course, nothing new in this kind of critique. It has been formulated with considerable insight by many commentators, of whom Gregory Bateson, Ivan Illich and Robert Persig are perhaps the most notable. In their different ways all these authors have argued for reintegration in the world: for an attitude of mind that will allow people to live more 'within' themselves, their society and the environment. But until now scant attention has been paid to the way such matters are evidenced in the world of music. Christopher Small's *Music-Society-Education* goes quite some way towards rectifying this situation. The book analyses the world of music and its relationship to present-day society in a surprisingly comprehensive manner. And in line with his underlying philosophy, the author presents his arguments in a way that makes them accessible to anyone with more than a passing interest in music. Indeed, the absence of any attempt at professional mystification results in a candour and openness of approach that is very refreshing.

Small begins his argument with an exposition of what he sees as the principal characteristics of functional tonality, and the social conventions which surround the production and consumption of that type of music. He points to the discursive, purposeful and self-contained nature of the music (it has a 'definite beginning' and a 'definite end'), and to the way in which it is created and performed by a coterie of experts for passive enjoyment by a largely lay audience. Through a discussion of music and musical life in Bali and black Africa, the author then highlights the fact that there is a great deal of music in the world which articulates a radically different aesthetic, and which is 'produced' and 'consumed' in a much more communal manner. The assignment of any 'expert status' to a musician in pre-literate societies tends to be charismatic rather than institutionalised, for example, and the 'education' or 'training' of young musicians usually occurs naturally in the day-to-day life of the society rather than in the breeding grounds of specialised hothouses.

The effect of this comparison between the world of functional tonality and certain pre-literate musics is to establish the culture-specific nature of the former (as well, of course, as the latter): to establish, in other words, that music as the majority of ('non-musical') people in our society understand it is not a God-given phenomenon with its own internally sufficient laws, but a means of communication which conveys the deep-seated attitudes and forms of social organisation so fundamental to present-day life. Small then proceeds to an examination of those attitudes and forms. Most importantly, he shows that modern Western man's 'scientific' outlook depends on a basic epistemological split between the intellectual and the emotional: the intellectual receiving a great deal of emphasis, the emotional being viewed with considerable mistrust.

Having indicated some of the links that exist between functional tonality, its production and consumption, and the pathological nature of modern Western society, the author goes on to consider the social alternatives propounded through 20th century music. He argues that certain European composers (Webern and Messiaen are taken to be the most successful) and, in rather different ways, certain American composers (principally Harry Partch, Steve Reich, Terry Riley and La Monte Young) have musically articulated a model of society that has more to do with process and which is more organic and communal. But because of the unhealthy preoccupation with 'commodities' that is symptomatic of the capitalist mode of production, the 'message' of the music tends to be severely compromised by the way in which it is conceived and disseminated. In most but not all of these cases the strict dividing line between composer and audience persists, and the audience remains largely unaffected by what the music is saying to them. The structure of Western society, in other words, frequently succeeds in diffusing any criticisms or alternatives that arise within it. It is within this context that Small discusses the work of some improvisation groups, whose actual music-making acts as a blueprint for a more communal society. Even here, however, there are problems, for while the experience of improvisation

## Brian Ferneyhough



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provides a genuine alternative, it ultimately fails to transcend the ills of our musical culture. It is an alternative achieved at the cost of retreat.

Against the broad sweep of these discussions, the book's final two chapters consider the state of education in general and music education in particular. Small criticises the educational system (and in the context of his criticisms 'system' is a particularly revealing word) for suppressing the exploratory and creative potential of the human mind through a one-way imposition of pre-packaged, standardised, scientific-like facts. The ability of the individual to contribute to his community in any meaningful or immediate fashion (beyond the mere sale of skills or labour, that is) is rejected for a form of social indoctrination which is frequently irrelevant to the situation of the child. The general musicality of the many is prejudiced in favour of the musical status quo, with its emphasis on developing the professional musical ability of the few. Small concludes by suggesting that the education *system* be replaced by a situation in which schools act as community *educational* resource centres, with teachers acting as guides for personal development rather than as institutional mentors. Music, of course, would form an integral part of such a scheme.

There is not a great deal that, of itself, is new in this book; this is something that the author himself acknowledges with regard to his chapters on education. What is new is the way in which a wealth of material has been drawn on to develop an immensely important line of thought: namely, that if music can in one way or another reflect the pathology of modern Western life, then it should be equally possible for it to put forward an alternative model of society where people could live in a rather saner relationship with themselves and the environment. The scope of the book, its prescriptive conclusions and the accessible way in which it is written not unnaturally lay it open to criticism. For it is concerned with insight rather than with the safe and irrefutable academic fact. It would be easy, for example, to put forward another view of Webern's music than that its 'balance can be characterised as a metaphor for an ideal state, in which the needs of the individual and those of the

community are viewed, not as an opposition which needs sacrifice and compromise to preserve an uneasy balance ... but rather as complementary, the individual being fully realized within his social milieu and the needs of the community being most fully met by completely realized individuals' (p.117). Again, there will be those, particularly musicians attempting to change the structure of the music establishment by penetrating it, who will find some of the ideas put forward in the final chapters verging on wishy-washy liberalism. But whether one should try to influence the course of society by simply getting on with an alternative, attacking the system or, indeed, by working within the system is a question to which there can be no certain answer and, wisely, Small does not attempt any.

In short, one would infer that it is the purpose of the book to instigate discussion around questions such as these, and it is to Small's credit that it may achieve this end outside and beyond professional groups of musicians, educationists and sociologists.

COMPANY 1 (Maarten van Regteren Altena, Derek Bailey, Tristan Honsinger, Evan Parker)  
Incus 21 (£3.50)

COMPANY 2 (Derek Bailey, Anthony Braxton, Evan Parker)  
Incus 23 (£3.50)

Available from Incus Records, 87 Third Cross Road, Twickenham, Middlesex. Prices include postage and packing to UK.

#### MALCOLM BARRY

Would you let your daughter marry an improviser? When the dots are away the psyche will play and one certain aspect of total improvisation is that if you have ears to hear you will have a better idea of the personalities playing this type of music, having listened to their spontaneous creation/performance, than of the personalities of musicians playing a notated score having listened to *their* performance.

So to make a record of improvised music is in itself an act of personal as well as musical courage. When the music is as uncompromising as that of Company the courage is multiplied. And when the uncompromising musicians produce and market the records themselves with the aim of keeping their records available (not adopting what they see as an artificial marketing procedure of deleting and reissuing) their faith in their own path compels a certain amount of admiration.

It is significant of something in today's music that when Brian Eno produced seven records on his Obscure label there was a fair amount of critical attention, but that the achievement of saxophonist Evan Parker and guitarist Derek Bailey, in setting up Incus Records and producing 23 recordings in six years, has gone largely unnoticed. Eno started from a successful position in the commercial field and was able to negotiate distribution with a large recording organisation. Incus, founded in 1970 on the basis of self-determination for improvising musicians, is run in all aspects by Parker and Bailey only, and has had neither of Eno's advantages.

The label is one sign of the flurry of activity at the improvising (only possible?) end of what used to be called (when we had one) the avantgarde; the magazine *Musics* is another and there are many links and personalities in common. The records produced by Incus have concentrated largely on improvisation, whether solo (percussion, saxophones or guitar) or group, though there have also been big band compositions such as Barry Guy's *Ode* and Kenny Wheeler's *Song for Someone*. Given the emphasis of the record business on marketing and distribution, Parker and Bailey can be proud of their achievement.

Of particular interest are the two recent recordings by the ad hoc arrangement of musicians called Company. They represent what some of the musicians of 'the pool' were playing in May and August 1976. Only a small portion of the possibilities of the company are revealed, for this Company includes, as well as the musicians on these discs, Lol Coxhill, of Festival Hall fame (outside), Leo Smith, a phenomenal American trumpeter, Paul Rutherford, 'of

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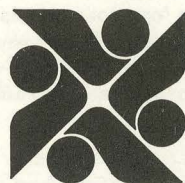
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# INCUS RECORDS

INCUS RECORDS / COMPATIBLE RECORDING AND PUBLISHING LTD. is a self-managed company owned and operated by musicians. The company was founded in 1970, motivated partly by the ideology of self-determination and partly by the absence of an acceptable alternative.

The spectrum of music issued has been broad, but the musical policy of the company is centred on improvisation.

Prior to 1970 the innovative musician had a relationship with the British record industry that could only be improved on. To be offered any chance to make a record at all was already a great favour and somehow to question the economics (fees, royalties, publishing) would certainly have been deemed ungrateful. A few records were made (AMM, SME, Tony Oxley groups), but by now they are all without exception deleted and to be found only through the specialist dealers' network for second-hand records.

An important function for records of improvised music is to build up a system of documentation that can be approached chronologically by anyone sufficiently interested. When records are deleted almost as soon as they have been issued, as was the case prior to 1970 (for tax-loss reasons by the major companies or hit and run tactics by the one-man companies), this cumulative effect of long-term documentation is lost.

INCUS aims to keep records permanently available rather than adopt the artificial marketing procedure of deleting and re-issuing, although from time to time financial limitations mean that records are temporarily out of print.

Records are distributed by mail-order and through specialist wholesalers and dealers in various countries.

INCUS 1	'The Topography of the Lungs' Evan Parker – saxophones, Derek Bailey – guitar, Han Bennink – percussion.	INCUS 14	'Evan Parker and Paul Lytton at the Unity Theatre' Evan Parker – saxophones, Paul Lytton – percussion and live electronics.
INCUS 2	'Derek Bailey Solo' Derek Bailey – guitar. <i>Reprinting.</i>	INCUS 15	'Tea time' Steve Beresford – piano, John Russell – guitar, Nigel Coombes – violin, Garry Todd – saxophone, Dave Solomon – percussion.
INCUS 3/4	'Iskra 1903' Paul Rutherford – trombone, Derek Bailey – guitar, Barry Guy – bass.	INCUS 16	'London Concert' Derek Bailey – guitar, Evan Parker – saxophone.
INCUS 5	'Collective Calls (Urban) (Two Microphones)' Evan Parker – saxophones etc., Paul Lytton – percussion and electronics.	INCUS 17	'Music Improvisation Company 1968–70' Derek Bailey – guitar, Hugh Davies – live electronics and Hammond organ, Jamie Muir – percussion, Evan Parker – soprano saxophone and amplified autoharp.
INCUS 6/7	'Ode for Jazz Orchestra' Barry Guy, London Jazz Composer's Orchestra.	INCUS 18	'February Papers' Tony Oxley – percussion, with Barry Guy – bass, Ian Brighton – guitar, Philipp Wachsmann – violin, David Bourne – violin.
INCUS 8	'Tony Oxley' Percussion solos; quartet with Bailey, Parker and Rutherford; sextet with Holdsworth, Riley, Guy, Parker and Rutherford.	INCUS 19	'Saxophone Solos' Evan Parker – soprano saxophone.
INCUS 9	'Selections from live performances at Verity's place' Derek Bailey – guitar, Han Bennink – percussion.	INCUS 20	'Duo' Derek Bailey – guitar, Tristan Honsinger – cello.
INCUS 10	'Song for Someone' Kenny Wheeler compositions for big band with Oxley, Bailey, Parker, Griffiths, Osborne, Taylor.	INCUS 21	First 'COMPANY' recording. Maarten van Regteren Altena, Tristan Honsinger, Evan Parker, Derek Bailey.
INCUS 11	'Balance' Frank Perry – percussion, Philipp Wachsmann – violin, Ian Brighton – guitar, Radu Malfatti – trombone, Colin Wood – cello.	INCUS 22	'Statements V–XI' Barry Guy – solo improvisations on bass and violone.
INCUS 12	'Lot 74 – Solo Improvisations' Derek Bailey – guitar.	INCUS 23	Second 'COMPANY' recording. Evan Parker, Anthony Braxton, Derek Bailey.
INCUS 13	'Synopsis' Howard Riley – piano, Barry Guy – bass, Tony Oxley – percussion and amplified percussion.		

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whom no more...', Steve Beresford, a virtuoso on toy piano, and Han Bennink, described by John Fordham as having something of 'the precision of a jeweller and the mayhem of a demolition squad after closing time'.<sup>1</sup>

That these records represent only a fraction of the possibilities of such a wide-ranging group is understandable. A more specific limitation concerns the nature of records of improvisation in themselves. Improvisation is about live spontaneous performance and interaction between musicians, and, in the best examples, concerns and involves an audience. Recorded improvisation cannot involve an audience, while any improvisation heard repeatedly changes in the ears of the listener into a composition: different standards apply and different strengths and weaknesses are thrust to the attention. Considered as composition, the music on these records has many interesting moments, but the necessary coherence is lacking. So the records have to be accepted as improvisations, i.e. on their own terms. It has to be remembered that different ears are needed to listen successfully to improvisation. The ears needed for these records should have the virtues of receptivity (to new sounds produced by conventional instruments and to a variety of different backgrounds coming through in the playing) and trust (that the free form elements of these 'pieces' are intended to, and may, communicate something, if only their free form elements).

The first record contains four tracks: 'No South', 'No North', 'No East' and 'No West'. Parker and Bailey are joined by Tristan Honsinger on cello and Maarten van Regteren Altena on bass; the four tracks represent ten to twelve minutes each using the four possible trio combinations. Each track is a selection from a 25-minute improvisation, the selection being made 'with the permission of the other players' by Bailey, who chose 'that part of the music which seemed to me to be most characteristic of improvisation and which best revealed the qualities which can be found only in improvisation'.

Given that it's a thin but essential line between recorded improvisation and composition, and the necessity to preserve the character of the improvisation, Bailey has done, by and large, a good job. Paradoxically, in this spontaneous and immediate music, the past history of the musical personality is very apparent, and Parker's post-'bebop and faster' blowing and Bailey's jazz and even blues orientation, with bending of intervals (particularly the minor third), contrast nicely with Honsinger's virtuosic but straight cello playing, as fast as Parker's sax but from a different world. This contrast and interaction is one of the most communicable and enjoyable parts of the record.

Other satisfying sections are those, especially on side 1, where ideas, however fragmentary, are taken up and developed, however briefly. This listener, at least, is left wanting to hear these musicians interact more positively over a greater period of time, i.e. to create something they will hang on to. The negative aspect of this comes in 'No East', a very frantic piece that leaves little breathing space: humans need to grow and so do their ideas; if they're not given enough air they won't.

Perhaps, in whetting the appetite, the record has achieved one of its purposes, but the format — equal time for all, a fine liberal idea — becomes a rigid limitation. Hoist by his own petard of permissiveness, Bailey is presenting a shop window, doubtless necessary but oddly in conflict both with the nature of improvisation and Incus's avowed aims. As a shop window, though, it's good.

*Company 2* is rather different. Parker and Bailey are joined by Anthony Braxton on saxophones and clarinets. The record contains five pieces of varying length in which ideas are expanded in a variety of contexts. 'Braxton, in any other circumstances but the doggedly democratic new music, would be regarded as a "star"' writes John Fordham;<sup>2</sup> listening to his virtuoso playing on a variety of reed instruments, with Bailey on guitars and Parker on soprano and tenor saxes, one can hear why he has been described as the new Ornette Coleman.

This is not a record to win converts, however, for the ideas that are expanded are timbral and technical rather than more traditionally motivic or rhythmic. Playing techniques are pushed towards the limit. The disapprovers who find Webern 'cough and spit' music and Cecil Taylor incomprehensible are not going to find much joy here. Perhaps they aren't supposed to, for the world of improvising musicians is a shade introverted and this

readily emerges in *Company 2*. That said, Incus is a brave venture and the records of Company show that there is some fine music waiting to emerge from the obscurity to which it is banished by the non-attention of the media. I cannot help wondering, however, at what point somebody sympathetic to the music and the musicians, when confronted with this music, is going to ask a very important question: 'For whom?'

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> John Fordham, 'Improvisation Incorporated', *Time Out*, No. 373 (May 20-26, 1977), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

#### AMNESIA & FRIENDS

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Blank Tapes No. 6 (C60 stereo)

Obtainable from Robert Carter, Flat 1, 55 Brooke Avenue, South Harrow, Middlesex — £1.25 each UK, £1.75 overseas (includes postage)

#### DAVID ROBERTS

Among the many changes that the advent of modern recording techniques effected upon music was a fundamental alteration in its existential status and hence in its commercial value. Paying for admission to a concert is not so much a case of *buying* a musical experience as *renting* one; all you have to show for your money afterwards is a ticket stub. To purchase a score (restricted in any case to the musically literate) is to obtain a mere simulacrum; a score is no more the music than a recipe book is a meal. What the gramophone record did was to reify music, to introduce to the world the emotional and *possessible* musical experience. Sell it, buy it (Mahler would tone in nicely with the curtains), keep it on the shelf, put it on the record deck as often as you like (you know what you like and you're getting it). The owner is sure in the knowledge of his ownership and his control of the situation. Security embodied in a few grams of plastic.

Western classical music, with both feet firmly fixed in the camp of Platonic idealism (individual realisations may differ but the work is immutable), can largely withstand such treatment. But for musics not predicated upon the dissociation of form and performance, recording can, and often does, spell the kiss of death. Improvised music is in a particularly vulnerable position. Malcolm Barry outlines some of the pitfalls with which it is faced in his review of the two Company records above. I, if anything, am even less sanguine about the successful outcome of recording improvisation. At all levels the medium will tend to misrepresent the activity.

The one sound excuse for recording and distributing improvised music (one-off recordings for the benefit of the musicians themselves are a separate issue) is that the genuine, live article is thereby advertised. In default of radio broadcasts (which would be the ideal solution, but we know that's another story) recording is an unwelcome expedient.

While they are not a remedy for this besetting ailment, Blank Tapes, produced under the auspices of the London Musicians' Collective, do at least alleviate some of the symptoms. The widespread availability of cassette recorders and the comparative ease and cheapness of reproducing recordings means that such an enterprise may

be run virtually as a home industry. Little capital outlay and no specialist technical knowledge is required. Packaging costs are minimal. Cassettes travel well through the post too. Hence the price is low and a lot of the commercialist rigmarole with its attendant commodity fetishism is cut out. But the most telling gesture that Blank Tapes make towards showing that their intention is dissemination of the music and not exploitation of it is the legend 'Copying of this material is recommended' on each cassette instead of the usual dire warnings about copyright infringement.

Five of these tapes are recordings of the work of a number of improvising ensembles. The sixth, Robert Carter's *Do not cover* (subtitled 'Aural ephemera manipulations') is, I guess, produced by tape manipulation, but who knows? Carter solos on 'tape recorders, elsit, claritubes and miscellaneous' to produce a series of 16 very short musical hors d'oeuvres, ranging from nine to 220 seconds. A nice conception, even if it's a bit samey in sound quality. Listening to the other tapes I wished more than once that bands would occasionally think in terms of a three minute improvisation rather than one of half an hour.

Carter also plays with Miru (other members Mick and Tony Fox, Andy Garnham, Stephen Luscombe and Brian Sklar) on Nos. 2 and 4. Their characteristic sound is predominantly homogenous. The first side of No. 2, *Spontimp*, is really rather dreary, but the second, *Imra*, has some striking and even exciting moments.

The fairly straight jazz idiom of Amnesia (Ye Min, Robert Smith) I found completely arid, though the Friends of No. 1 (Mick Fox, Stephen Luscombe, Robert Smith) had a little more to offer. The jazz roots of the Eddie Prevost Band (Gerry Gold, Jeff Hawkins, Marcio Mattos, Eddie Prevost) are equally obvious but the band sustains a far higher level of invention.

The playing of Item 9 (George Allum, William Embling, Chris Stubbs, Ann Wolff) is also extremely dull, but Crystal Palace (William Embling, Yuki Hormoto, Barry Leigh) with whom they share tape No. 3 do manage to get somewhere.

My own favourite from the batch is the recording of Chamberpot (Richard Beswick, Phillipp Wachsmann, Tony Wren) playing at the Cockpit Theatre. Their effervescent and often humorous style provides a healthy contrast to a lot of the leaden and po-faced playing of some of the other bands.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, bearing in mind what I've written earlier, a caveat must be appended to all these subjective impressions of the playing on these tapes. Producing imperishable monuments is not what improvisation is all about. The only way to judge the work of these ensembles is to see and hear them in the act itself.

#### NOTE:

<sup>1</sup> For a further review of Chamberpot see David Roberts's discussion of their album on the Bead label (No. 2) in *Contact 15* (Winter 1976-77), p. 34. (Ed.)

#### ISCM WORLD MUSIC DAYS, BONN, WEST GERMANY MAY 14-21, 1977

HUGH DAVIES

I was one of the members of the British Jury which read about 70 scores that had been submitted for the 1977 ISCM Festival; the others were Peter Evans (chairman), Brian Dennis, Oliver Knussen and Keith Potter. One of the things we found when reading the scores was the problem of dealing with composers — or their publishers — who had submitted more than one score; one composer sent in six. This may even have prejudiced our final selection, which was made in terms of individual works rather than composers, so that, for example, a composer would be selected with four votes for a single work, but not with two for each of two works. I would strongly advise future submissions, especially when made by publishers on behalf of a composer, to consist of no more than one, or at the most two, scores per composer; if they find it hard to select a work, then they should pity the poor jury members who have to sustain an average of about ten minutes per score!

We selected seven works which were then sent on to the International Jury in Bonn. Of these, two were actually

proposed by members of the British Jury as works that we would like to have seen submitted, and were voted upon (by those of us who had heard them) in the same way as with the submitted scores: this was a procedure that we were told had been used before. Both of these additional selections involved tape, and one (Bryars) also specified slide projections; the Bonn organisers were particularly looking for works that featured both elements.

Of the seven works that we selected, only one was finally performed, *The Sinking of the Titanic* by Gavin Bryars. A second work, David Lumsdaine's *Sunflower*, was unfortunately not performed due to problems of programming. In addition to our seven selections, we also sent in two compositions under a new category inaugurated by the presenters in Bonn for music by composers under 25. One of them, *Reflections of Narziss and Goldmund* by Robert Saxton, was chosen by the International Jury.

A further innovation this year was a request for the submission of projects for amateurs or children and for sound environments; these were not sent in to national juries but were submitted directly to Bonn. Two British works were selected, *Triple Music IV* by Tim Souster and an untitled project for children devised by myself.

It is worth mentioning at this point that our system in Britain does seem to be as democratic as is possible. In certain other countries the selection of works is made by a small group of people, without any invitation for scores to be submitted by any composer who chooses to do so; thus, as reported recently in *Melos*,<sup>1</sup> none of the 'East Coast' works sent in by the American ISCM section were programmed, but five 'West Coast' environmental works were presented in Bonn, causing a protest from the American section.<sup>2</sup> Further, to continue with the USA as an example, their section does not appear to have access to funds even to pay for those composers whose works have been selected to travel to the festival. In Britain it is the British Council which pays the travel costs, not only for Bonn, but also the considerably larger amount for a similar number of composers represented at the 1976 festival in Boston.

The tone of any ISCM festival seems to be largely dictated by those who choose the members of the International Jury, which for this year's festival consisted of Dieter Schnebel (chairman), Luc Ferrari, Italo Gomez, Marek Kopelent, André Laporte, Wolfgang Rihm and Christian Wolff. Such a group would have a slight 'West Coast' orientation and would be sympathetic towards many of the newest tendencies, especially for the projects. This applied to a certain extent to the normal concerts as well, although the selection could, of course, only be made from works actually sent on to the International Jury. In addition, and a feature which is normal practice, a few works already in their repertoire were proposed by the performers when limited rehearsal time prevented a substantial concert of new works from being prepared. During the whole festival four such works were performed, plus two special concerts: a piano recital by Maurizio Pollini of Beethoven, Webern and Stockhausen (the 'hit' of the festival) and a concluding concert of 'Key Compositions of the 1950s' by Boulez, Cage (whose *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* was grossly mistreated), Nono and Stockhausen. As for the projects, two were presumably special invitations from Bonn: a laser environment by David Tudor, Lowell Cross and Carson Jeffries, and *Polyagogie* by Xenakis, a demonstration of a computer-controlled system for direct sound creation intended partly for operation by children.

I was able to attend nearly all of the concerts. The two orchestral concerts included works by two German composers under 25 — *Morphogenesis* by Hans-Jürgen von Bose and *Variationen über ein Thema von Mozart* by Wolfgang von Schweinitz, both lavish, youthful and neotonal (Reger?) — and Robert Saxton's composition for two chamber orchestras; I was surprised, having read the score of the latter, how liquid and relaxed the very complex rhythmic notation sounded in performance. There were also two new orchestral works by better-known composers, *Gespenster* ('Ghosts') by Nicolaus A. Huber and a late romantic *Houdini Symphony* by Peter Schat. Huber's piece, typically for him, distorts the time span in a disconcerting but effective manner, mixing various disparate elements such as the final two-minute setting of a Brecht text in a style close to that of Kurt Weill, which breaks off just when one is beginning to enjoy it.

The second orchestral concert contained the third performance at an ISCM festival (!) of *Accanto* for solo

clarinetist and orchestra by Helmut Lachenmann, a work already in the orchestra's repertoire. I don't think any piece of music has ever made me so angry! It took to absolute extremes the avoidance of players using their instruments in the conventional way. Much of the time the solo clarinetist blew through his instrument without the mouthpiece, carefully fingering to impose different pitch inflections on the wind noises, and the orchestra was treated in a similar way. Musically the work is partly based on a similar destruction of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto. *Accanto* was well received by most of the audience, and perhaps my own reaction to it is due to the fact that it was totally unnecessary to have a whole orchestra on stage to obtain the sounds that were produced. (And it's a strange mentality that only arrives at such sounds destructively rather than creatively: the music could have been just as well produced by a small group of musicians playing specially invented instruments.)

Most of the chamber music concerts were rather low-key affairs, taking place in a small hall which necessitated considerable shifting of instruments and props between works; the problem with any such festival of submitted works is to put together a programme where most of the performers play in at least two items. The music ranged from *Chanson pour instruments à vent*, for specially constructed amplified aeolian instruments, by Mario Bertoncini to a refreshingly brief work by the Mexican Mario Lavista called *Cluster*, which consisted of just that (once only) performed on several keyboard instruments. Bertoncini performed his own composition: the instruments consisted of large suspended frames across which were strung dozens of thin strings, and several other metal objects. These were set vibrating by compressed air jets and small ventilator propellers, producing very beautiful, rich resonances; but the best moment was a throw-away gesture (possibly to cover essential technical operations which needed both hands) when he blew on several parts of the frames: how much more expressive are the inequalities and irregularities in human breath!

Two more established composers were represented by interesting and unusual works: Klaus Huber by *Transpositio ad infinitum* for solo cello, a very delicate and sensitive work

dedicated to Rostropovich, and Karel Goeyvaerts' *Ach Golgotha!* for harp, organ and percussion. This was conducted by the composer standing almost motionless in front of the performers and was a quiet, minimalist, almost systemic examination of the accompaniment to the recitative of that name from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*.

In spite of the special emphasis on mixed media made by the Bonn organisers, there was comparatively little use made of electronics during the festival. One example was *Solo* for piano and live electronics by the young Finish composer Jukka Tiensuu, for which the equipment was provided by the experimental studio in Freiburg; unfortunately the composer, playing the piano, was forced to start the piece again due to the fact that the considerable technical installation with two engineers in charge (who did not seem to take their job very seriously) was not functioning properly. The work explored the electronic transformations of the piano sound with considerable success and ranged from extremely wild passages for the piano to long drawn-out lyrical canonic structures using some form of sound delay system.

The most interesting work in a choral concert turned out to be one proposed by the performers, the Collegium Vocale from Cologne (sharing a programme with the choir of NDR Hamburg). This was *the gentleness of rain was in the wind* by Gerhard Rühm, who is a sound poet with considerable involvement in music. The piece is based on the phrase from Shelley used as the title, and expands both the sound qualities of the words and the implications of their meaning in various ways: an attempt to find the most suitable German translation of the word 'gentleness', lexical descriptions and catalogues of words meaning rain and wind in a variety of languages, permutations of vowels and consonants in the German words 'Wind' and 'Regen', and so on.

Among the sound environments submitted as projects were works by Janos Darvas and the singer Joan La Barbara. The latter's *Wind/Tornado Piece/Cyclone*, included in a normal concert, is a tape composition distributed around loudspeakers in the hall. I was unable to attend the concert in which it featured, but heard the piece a few days later in Paris. In each case, apparently, the hall

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was too small for the long growth of the *Cyclone* to have its full effect in space. Darvas' *Hörfilm* was an audiovisual environment set up for several presentations in a special room; it used multivision (a large screen on which up to twelve slide projections were shown simultaneously, with a second set of projectors for cross-fading to new images) and tape (heard over individual headphones). This was a documentation about Bonn past and present interspersed with short 'commercials', collages of visual and sound advertising from various sources. The recording techniques that were used for the sound explored a scale from 'telephone quality' to 'studio quality' in order to add a chronological element similar to that of the visual images, as well as 'Kunstkopf' stereo, conventional stereo and mono.

The laser environment, entitled *Free Spectral Range IV*, was shown three times; I attended the first and last of these. The first presentation was more or less an improvisation to 'warm up the system'; the third consisted of three recognisably different compositions, whose titles were given in the programme (one by each of the three creators of the system), played without a break. In Jeffries' *Pacifica Electra*, for example, the electronic sounds that mostly paralleled the visual laser element were interspersed with recordings of breakers, which visibly distorted what were otherwise mainly pure geometric shapes on the screen. This was the first occasion on which I had seen a visual element produced entirely by lasers, and I have not seen the several more primitive laser events that have recently been shown in London. Many of the visual effects were extremely beautiful, but very rarely were the images completely new. Some resembled typical oscilloscope patterns multiplied out by deriving four separate beams from the laser, in red, blue, green and yellow. Sometimes all four colours featured the same image rotated each time through 90 degrees; at other times one or more of the colours would be totally independent. Altogether I felt that there was too much of the sort of effect which more than anything resembled random scribbling across the screen. Some delicate textures were produced by frosted glass filters introduced into the path of the laser beams. The whole system, sound and visual, was clearly interlinked; I should imagine that it is operated by sets of control voltages which are applied both to electronic oscillators and to the laser beams.

Tim Souster's sound environment *Triple Music IV* took place in the foyer of the Beethovenhalle before, during the interval and after an orchestral concert. This consisted of taped sounds, including many radio call signals from different countries, which were played over quite a considerable number of loudspeakers, but mostly at rather a low level, so that it was quite easy to hold a conversation and forget the sounds.

A similar environment, similar perhaps only in the way the organisers of the festival decided to present it, was *Orange Air* by two young Americans, Richard Feit and Richard Shaer. This took place in a smaller foyer at the Bonn Center, with the sounds emanating from a considerable number of loudspeakers spread around an exhibition of paintings by Vasarely. The sound sources used were derived from the air: radio and TV broadcasts and sounds from outer space (such as have already been used in Alvin Lucier's *Whistlers*), plus prerecorded sounds that the composers had taped in and around the city of Bonn. A further American sound environment by Max Neuhaus, *Drive-in Music(s)*, designed to employ local radio broadcasting over car radios, was unable to be put on due to the last-minute refusal of the German Post Office to give permission. I was lucky to experience another new work of his a few weeks later at *documenta 6* in Kassel: quiet irregular electronic clicks distributed over a series of loudspeaker horns mounted around the main branches of a large tree in a wood, sounding rather like rain drops or acorns falling. (I wonder how many people completely missed this delightful contrast to the gigantic sculptural gestures that seemed to fill the rest of the park.)

A programme of theatrical pieces presented as a concert began with Gavin Bryars' *The Sinking of the Titanic*: a very relaxed and typical Bryars presentation which I greatly enjoyed, having missed previous live performances of it in Britain and knowing the work only from the Obscure record. Bryars chose to present a fairly simple version of his piece due to the predictable problems of rehearsal time and the amount of equipment that was simultaneously in use in

different parts of Bonn. There was in fact no theatrical element in this realisation; it consisted of a small string ensemble conducted by the composer, with tapes and slide projections. In the same programme there was *Peripathetisches zur Lage*, an extremely virtuosic and humorous verbal work by the Austrian composer Otto Zykan, based on a letter written by Schoenberg, which approached the area of sound poetry (indeed, many sound poets could learn from this piece). The composer, aided and abetted by fellow-composer Heinz Karl Gruber, performed complex, tongue-twisting verbal acrobatics and made a considerable impression, even on non-German-speaking members of the audience.

Within the city centre in Bonn during the festival there was also a presentation of a specially-created work by Pauline Oliveros called *Bon-Fire*, which had won the prize in the competition 'City Music'. The title contains a double pun, since the pronunciation of the English word 'fire' is virtually identical to the German word 'Feier' (celebration). It consisted of events, often without music or sound, of a deliberately low-key theatrical nature, which took place in the pedestrian precinct in Bonn. This is a very compact area, the most successful transformation of a town-centre into a pedestrian precinct that I have seen, where many other events have taken place over the last few years, so the citizens are more or less accustomed to unusual things happening there. Children were finger-painting the man-hole covers in the streets; teenagers, two or three at a time, would very occasionally walk through the market-place carrying musical instruments but not playing them; old people were at one point seen painting pictures in a display window of a big department store; Mustapha Tettey Addy, the Ghanaian master drummer who now lives near Bonn, appeared every now and then, performing on his own; a man dressed up in an old-style naval uniform with a parrot on his shoulder was observed from time to time (and occasionally directed to the Rhine by helpful citizens), and various other events were also to be seen. Some of these were not planned by the composer but fitted in with the atmosphere: sitting outside a cafe in the market square one afternoon, I heard every now and then a distant bell-like sound, which turned out to be a four-year-old boy throwing something metallic on the ground, chuckling, picking it up again and repeating the process a few seconds later. In the same area there was at least one organ grinder and a man who sang standing on his head for several minutes at a time (both permanent fixtures); I also caught the end of a round dance performed by schoolgirls and a programme for children given by the Amsterdam Electric Circus featuring Moniek Toebosch and Michel Waisvisz (with his specially built combination violin-machine gun with crackle-box).

Finally, the area in which I myself was involved: music for amateurs and children. There were three programmes: two with actual compositions and the already-mentioned demonstration by Xenakis. This last was very disappointing; I got the impression that Xenakis and his team were not ready to present their work in public, and indeed by the second of the three afternoons on which it was shown, the system had broken down. It consisted of a small computer, a cathode ray screen and a large board on which graphic notations could be drawn. This specially-constructed board contains built-in electrical contacts in grid format and is used to transfer graphic information into the computer which can then be seen on the screen and heard over loudspeakers. A group of children had been brought along to demonstrate that anyone could use the system. It took about five minutes for the very simplest sounds to be seen and heard. It is probably only a matter of more time and money that has prevented them from building the necessary equipment to create an instantaneous visual and aural realisation of the graphic notation; a five-minute delay is quite impossible for anyone to work with on a system that is designed for immediate self-expression. Its potential would seem to be great once this delay is removed; however, it will also be extremely expensive, and I doubt whether many electronic music studios could afford such a system, let alone schools. Another aspect which I found disturbing was that it was presented to us as a solution to all one's problems: with this system 'composers can finally just get on with composing'. (Peter Zinovieff has made a similar claim for the new EMS Vocoder, which friends tell me is also rather limited in practice as well as costly; such claims remind me of categorical statements made by eminent scientists that are totally refuted a few years later: such as

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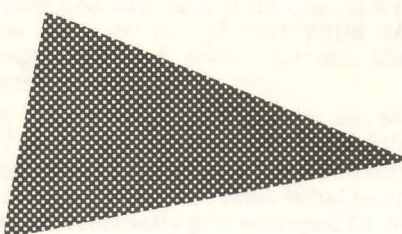
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that around the beginning of this century everything in physics was known and there was nothing of importance left to be discovered; or that man would not reach the moon in the 20th century — made shortly before the first sputnik.)

The two concerts of music for amateurs and for children contained five works which covered a wide range of musical possibilities and age groups. In the first, Jean-Yves Bosseur presented *Jeux avec le Scriptoson*. This consists of a metal sheet on which magnetised shapes of different colours can be arranged, forming the notation of the piece; some of the children (aged between five and eight) manipulated this, while others played simple instruments, mainly percussive, many non-Western in origin. This was the first work in a concert that began at 8pm, which was much too late for children so young; they were nervous and over-excited long before the programme started.

The second piece was the result of a fortnight's work that I had done with two groups of children during the second half of April.<sup>3</sup> Since my project proposal did not involve any existing composition, the title was actually made up by the organisers (*Stücke mit selbstzubauenden Instrumenten*, which is a very compact and informative title meaning 'Pieces for self-to-be-built instruments'), and none of the children came up with an alternative suggestion. During rehearsals I proposed six sections in the piece, based on different structures that we had tried out collectively; during the performance I functioned as a sort of traffic policeman, holding up a large card to show the beginning of each new section, using my hands to control loudness and density in certain sections, and in two sections using additional cards to select different categories of instruments, such as percussion, xylophones, wind, flutes and so on.

The final work in this concert was *Kommunikationsspiele* by the Swiss composer Hans Wüthrich. This was performed by the composer and his wife with four teenagers on a considerable variety of mostly percussive instruments, some home-made. It consisted of a number of sections, in each of which a relationship of communication between people is enacted; in some cases there are parallel dialogues going on, in others one person is the leader, the father-figure or controller who can stop the other performers by a musical gesture, and so on. This was to have been performed by a group of eight out-of-work young people; however, half of them got cold feet a couple of days before the concert, so that Wüthrich and his wife had to step in at the last minute. Musically the effect was very dynamic and the piece was played with tremendous gusto; in a discussion afterwards the performers stated that they had enjoyed it and had learned certain things about human relationships, but on the whole would prefer to play pop music. All three composers stated even before the concert that the collaboration with the young people had been far more important than the presentation of the results; in my own case I had imagined more of an exhibition-demonstration than a formal concert.

In the second concert of music for children, which took place in a school one morning during a public holiday, the first work was by Chisako Shimizu from Japan, *Yobikake* ('The Call'). This was simple and charming; however, I was slightly disappointed that the performers turned out to be Japanese children from a school in Düsseldorf (who performed excellently). The composer does not speak German or English, and would have therefore had great difficulty in working with German children, but I felt that the challenge that the rest of us had faced in working with local children had been avoided in her case. This was the only fully notated score in these two concerts. The children were scattered in groups around and among the audience and were directed by the composer. The work was made up of Japanese calling words and vocalising against sheets of cellophane paper; considerable use was made of the possibilities of the space by antiphonal effects and movements of groups from one point in the hall to another.

The other work in this concert was *Fountains of My Sky* by Horatiu Radulescu, a Rumanian living in Paris, and seemed very unsuited to children (the work was originally composed for adults). A stage full (and I mean full!) of instruments, slide projectors, microphones, percussion instruments and other objects was revealed from behind drawn curtains, with the composer and two assistants directing the children; no creative contribution seemed to be required of the children, nor were they given much opportunity to enjoy themselves in performing the work.

The concert works performed during the World Music

Days covered the sort of range of styles and preoccupations that I had rather expected, with many recent trends not yet reflected. There were very few real discoveries. Admittedly I was personally involved in one of the projects, but there did seem to be a general feeling that this area was a valuable addition to the normal programmes of ISCM festivals. In my own case I have never received so many congratulations after a performance, although the piece was rather unsophisticated and not sufficiently differentiated; but the involvement of the children in the performance was clearly genuine, and the collaborative nature of the project was obvious.

I feel that if the addition of projects could be expanded in some way to become a more integral part of this annual festival, then the ISCM event could once again achieve the relevance to young composers that the very first festivals had 50 years ago. Many of the more interesting younger British composers would not normally dream of submitting a work for an ISCM festival, and the success of this year's projects will, I think, have shown even to those who are most interested in maintaining the existing form of the ISCM that an expansion of categories and of forms of presentation is essential for the continued life of such an institution.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Erhard Karkoschka, 'Komponistenkrieg in den USA', *Melos/NZ für Musik*, 4/1977.

<sup>2</sup> See also Stephen Arnold's report in *Contact* 17 (pp.35-37) which describes the somewhat reversed situation that obtained at last year's ISCM World Music Days in Boston, USA.

<sup>3</sup> A description of this can be found in David Roberts, 'Hugh Davies: Instrument Maker', *Contact* 17 (Summer 1977), under 'Kids', p.10.

#### REPORT ON BIRMINGHAM ARTS LAB MUSIC (SEPTEMBER 1977)

##### MELVYN POORE

For some time now, Arts Lab Music has presented a regular series of high quality contemporary music events and a music workshop in conjunction with the Extramural Department of the University of Birmingham. In August of this year, Birmingham Arts Laboratory opened the doors of its new premises in Holt Street and, with the appointment of Jan Steele as my part-time assistant, the activities of the music department will hopefully be considerably increased. A second music workshop has now been initiated, catering for a sector of the musical public not so far attracted to the Arts Lab: those interested in jazz, rock and improvised music. A joint Extramural/Workers Educational Association class entitled 'World Music' commenced in September and will run for two terms, and our usual Autumn-Spring Extramural Experimental Music Workshop will this year feature Tim Souster at a special weekend in the New Year. (I wonder how long it will be before we are able to offer a Diploma in Contemporary Music?) Depending on the result of grant applications, Arts Lab Music hopes to set up a more substantial sound workshop than we have at present, possibly providing facilities for making film soundtracks as well as normal tape work. Our music publishing scheme is about to be launched; this has links with our chamber ensemble ANOMALY, which is in the fortunate position of being able to commission two new works during this year.

All these activities make great demands on the time of the music staff and on the music budget (our rate of growth cannot be contained within one year's budget, however loosely structured), so we decided late in 1976 (when grant applications for this financial year were drawn up) to discontinue the concert series that was a feature of Arts Lab Music up to March 1977; our final presentation was 'An Evening with Henri Pousseur' as part of the Arts Today Festival.<sup>1</sup> Ending the series was not an easy decision, since I doubted whether Arts Lab Music could survive for long

without the stimulus of incoming musics; but it was intended to be only a temporary cutback to allow the department to consolidate its facilities in the new premises and to tempt new blood into our activities by permitting a freer financial rein to the workshop, which has in the past lost much potential experimental activity through lack of resources. In spite of this decision, however, we are planning to promote a series of jazz/rock/folk concerts in our new bar when it is completed at the beginning of November and we shall have had two or three concerts of contemporary music in the new cinema before Christmas.<sup>2</sup> Whatever changes of policy we do make, we shall always want to promote new music, and it is apparent now that even the most temporary cessation of concerts is not good for the Lab either internally or externally.

Our most immediate and exciting project is the publication of new music. The broad aim of this scheme is to help composers to gain recognition and performances of their works by making available cheap but well-designed and well-printed scores for international distribution. All scores will be produced at the Lab in consultation with the composers. The scheme will be jointly administered by Arts Lab Music and the Arts Lab Press and is being launched with four scores in the category 'Music for Brass Instruments': Lyell Cresswell, *Drones IV* (1977) for tuba and tape; Simon Emmerson, *Variations for tuba* (1976); Richard Orton, *Ambience* (1975) for bass trombone and tape; Melvyn Poore, *Vox Superius* (1976) for solo tuba. I make no apology for the predominance of tuba music in the first issue, for two reasons: one, it is badly needed; two, as Music Director of the Lab, I like to rely on my strengths rather than my weaknesses. I know where the markets lie for brass music and in this way I can help to give the infant scheme a healthy start. Future publications will include scores for ensembles, many of which will, we hope, pass into the repertoire of ANOMALY (also a growing concern and now consequently sometimes known as ANOMALY PLUS). Composers in all fields of contemporary music activities, including music education, are invited to submit scores for consideration.<sup>3</sup> Scores will be read by a panel of three, chosen from team members from different musical backgrounds. These publications will be available to libraries and individuals alike on an annual subscription basis at reduced rates.<sup>4</sup>

The Experimental Music Workshop, organised again this year by the Extramural Department of the University of Birmingham and supported by the Midlands Arts Centre and the Arts Lab, will take the form of an historical survey and some practical instruction in electronic music. I shall be taking the class through the painfully long processes involved in making electronic music in the early studios to give an insight into the particular works we shall study and, with the help of an acoustics lecturer from the Department of Physics, into the nature of sound itself. Tim Souster will spend a weekend demonstrating the voltage-controlled synthesizer and live electronics. The remainder of the course will comprise follow-up sessions to the weekend and an introduction to computer sound synthesis. (We are installing a MUSIC V programme at the University of Birmingham.)

The move to Holt Street brings the Arts Lab into an extraordinary and potentially dangerous situation; Aston Centre for the Arts has existed on the site for some years and attempts to cater for the students of Aston University (Birmingham's second university, entirely separate from the University of Birmingham at Edgbaston) and the general public. It lacks, however, a clear overall artistic direction, mainly because of its excessively bureaucratic infrastructure. The Arts Lab, on the other hand, is a very committed group of artists and sympathetic administrators who have a very distinct idea of what they are doing and why. The spectre of the University of Aston looms large over the comparatively small organisation of the Arts Lab, particularly because of Aston's financial commitment to the project; but the presence of the Lab now enables Aston to boast the largest on-campus arts complex in the country, including a Regional Film Theatre. All this in a science university! Unfortunately, the University of Aston is not at all interested in the contemporary arts, but only in prestige. It has been particularly unco-operative, territorial and bureaucratic in its attitude to finding a new home for Arts Lab Music: even a temporary housing. As a result of this, the music department is in danger of remaining where it is at the present time: in the front room of my house. We are

awaiting decisions on grant applications from Housing the Arts and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation: if both are positive in their reactions we may find ourselves with a small but brand new recording studio. The land on which this would be built belongs, of course, to the University of Aston, and its plans for the use of its property appear to alter every week.

All parties concerned with the new arts complex expressed their desire for co-operation in programming, use of performance areas and technical facilities. Up to now Arts Lab Music has seen little of it. Whether or not co-operation will be achieved, given the vastly different ideologies and policies of the two organisations, remains to be seen, but we certainly hope that the hard work of the last three years will culminate in the only real reason for the Lab's existence: some worthwhile artistic results.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>For a review of this see *Contact* 17 (Summer 1977), p.42. (Ed.)

<sup>2</sup>Anyone writing for concerts please contact Jan Steele, Music Assistant, Birmingham Arts Laboratory, Holt Street, Birmingham, B7 4BA.

<sup>3</sup>Scores should be addressed with a covering letter to Melvyn Poore at the above address.

<sup>4</sup>For details of the subscription scheme write to The Publications Manager, Arts Lab Press, 11 Gosta Green, Birmingham, B4 7ER.

#### NEW MUSIC DIARY

##### KEITH POTTER

This is the last instalment of the Diary in its present form and attempts to bring coverage up to mid-September. The main diaryist in the next issue will be Malcolm Barry.

*Contact* 19 will also include an up-to-date examination of all the foreign and British periodicals which we have received for review or on exchange (see the list of material received for a preview of this). I shall therefore devote no further space here to 'non-events' (please take this the right way!), except to draw attention to a recently completed *A Table of Pitch-class Sets* which has been compiled by David Roberts, one of our editors. This should be of use to anyone interested in Allen Forte's set-theoretic approach to analysis; the following quotation is taken from the Introduction:

The purpose of the table is threefold: to function as a ready-reckoner for the identification of pitch-class sets, thus obviating time-consuming calculations that are susceptible to computational error, to provide a convenient and unique label for every distinct set form, and to facilitate the reckoning of transpositional and inversive relations of equivalent sets.

This is available at a cost of £1 (including postage) from David Roberts, School of English and American Studies, The University of Sussex, Arts Building, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9QN.

##### Wednesday March 30

Henze's *The Bassarids* at the London Coliseum. Dionysian and Apollonian forces warring for two and a half hours without a break were too much for me on the last day of term. Several out of a large party of students from Goldsmiths' seem to have enjoyed it, but not being the holder of a complimentary ticket on this occasion, I slept peacefully.

##### Sunday April 24

Decided to take some time off from regular concert-going over Easter. But I couldn't resist a trip to Olympia for what must have been the first time since I was a child to see what the Festival for Mind and Body was all about. Described in *Time Out*<sup>1</sup> as 'the mystic's Jubilee bash', I found my Sunday afternoon not so much weird and wonderful as rather dull: I think the health foods were more interesting, as well as more expensive (in the restaurant anyway), than anything else and I at least came away with a few packets to provide some weird and wonderful breakfasts for the next few days.

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HEAD 14

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HEAD 11

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CHRONOCHROMIE 4-3-4-3, 4-4-3-1, glock, xyl, mar, 3 perc, str	30 mins
COULEURS DE LA CITE CELESTE 0-0-3-0-, 2-4-4-0, xyl, xylor, mar, 4 perc, piano solo	18 mins
DES CANYONS AUX ETOILES 4-3-4-3, 3-3-3-0, glock, xylor, 5 perc, piano solo, str	100 mins
ET EXPECTO RESURRECTIONEM MORTUORUM 6-4-5-4, 6-4-4-2, 3 perc	25 mins
HYMNE (Broude Bros) 3-3-3-3, 4-3-3-0, T, 3 perc, str	10 mins
LES OFFRANDES OUBLIEES 3-3-3-3, 4-3-3-1, tp, 3 perc, str	7 mins
OISEAUX EXOTIQUES (Universal) 2-1-4-1, 2-1-0-0-, glock, xyl, glock, 2 perc, piano solo, str	14 mins
REVEIL DES OISEAUX 4-3-4-3, 2-2-0-0, ce-, xyl, glock, 2 perc, piano solo, str	22 mins
SEPT HAIKAI (Esquisses Japonaises) 3-3-4-2, 0-1-1-0, 8 violins, xyl, mar, 4 perc, piano solo	18 mins
LE TOMBEAU RESPLENDISSANT 3-3-3-3, 4-3-3-1, tp, 3 perc, str	12 mins
TURANGALILA - SYMPHONIE 3-3-3-3, 4-5-3-1, tp, glock, cel, vib, 6 perc, piano solo, onde martenot, str	80 mins

Choral Works	Duration
CINQ RECHANTS for 3 sopranos, 3 altos, 3 tenors, 3 basses	20 mins
O SACRUM CONVIVIAM! 4-part motet to the Blessed Sacrament, with organ (ad lib)	3 mins
LA TRANSFIGURATION DE NOTRE-SEIGNEUR JESUS-CHRIST 5-4-5-4, 6-4-4-2, sax, 6 perc, str, SATB chorus (100 voices) Solo piano, 'cello, flute, clarinet, vibraphone, xylorimba, marimba	110 mins
TROIS PETITES LITURGIES DE LA PRESENCE DIVINE 18 women's voices, cel, vib, 3 perc, piano solo, onde martenot, str	30 mins

Vocal Works	Duration
POEMES POUR MI for soprano and orchestra, Texts by the composer Soprano solo, 3-3-2-3, 4-3-3-1, 3 perc, str	40 mins
CHANTS DE TERRE ET DE CIEL for soprano and piano. Texts by the composer	35 mins
HARAWI, Chant d'Amour et de Mort for soprano and piano. Texts by the composer	50 mins
LA MORT DU NOMBRE for soprano, tenor, violin and piano	10 mins
TROIS MELODIES for soprano and piano	8 mins
VOCALISE for soprano and piano	5 mins

Chamber Works	Duration
LE MERLE NOIR for flute and piano	5 mins
QUATUOR POUR LA FIN DU TEMPS for violin, Bb clarinet, violincello and piano	60 mins
THEME ET VARIATIONS for violin and piano	10 mins

Organ Works	Duration
APPARITION DE L'EGLISE ETERNELLE	10 mins
L'ASCENSION	30 mins
LE BANQUET CELESTE	14 mins
LES CORPS GLORIEUX	45 mins
DIPTYQUE	10 mins
LIVRE D'ORGUE	50 mins
MEDITATIONS SUR LE MYSTERE DE LA SAINTE TRINITE	75 mins
MESSE DE LA PENTECOTE	43 mins
LA NATIVITE DU SEIGNEUR	55 mins
VERSET POUR LA FETE DE LA DEDICACE	13 mins

Piano Works	Duration
CANTÉYODJAYÂ (Universal)	12 mins
CATALOGUE D'OISEAUX	
Book 1: I - Le Chocard des Alpes	10 mins
II - Le Lorient	9 mins
III - Le Merle blue	14 mins
Book 2: IV - Le Traquet Stapazin	17 mins
Book 3: V - La Chouette Hulotte	7 mins
VI - L'Alouette Lulu	8 mins
Book 4: VI - La Rousserolle Effarvatte	33 mins
Book 5: VIII - L'Alouette Calandrelle	6 mins
IX - La Bouscarle	12 mins
Book 6: X - Le Merle de Roche	20 mins
Book 7: XI - La Buse variable	11 mins
XII - Le Traquet rieur	10 mins
XIII - Le Courlis cendré	11 mins
La Fauvette des Jardins	28 mins
FANTAISIE BURLESQUE	10 mins
ILE DE FEU I	2 mins
ILE DE FEU II	3 mins
MODE DE VALEURS ET D'INTENSITES	8 mins
NEUMES RYTHMIQUES	5 mins
LES OFFRANDES OUBLIEES	7 mins
PRELUDES	60 mins
RONDEAU	3 mins
VINGT REGARDS SUR L'ENFANT JESUS	120 mins
VISIONS DE L'AMEN for two pianos	60 mins

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Among the few sound experiences on hand, proving, I suppose, some kind of point about aural pollution in having to compete hopelessly against the full force of the gurus' cattle market in full cry, was an innocuous biofeedback person who hadn't heard of David Rosenboom<sup>2</sup> and the Californian Steven Halpern's music to meditate by. Halpern runs the Spectrum Research Institute from which a number of discs and cassettes of his work as well as various literature on it may be obtained.<sup>3</sup> Since his stall's location was hardly conducive to meditation, I bought a couple of his products to sample at my leisure at home. Perhaps it's proof of one of his points that I've hardly had time to do them justice, and it would possibly be doing Halpern a disservice to say that his sequences of little pieces, repetitive, usually not rhythmically so, but sparse and 'free' sounding, don't sufficiently divert the attention towards either themselves or anything else: perhaps this is exactly what he's trying to do.

It would have been easy to take away from this 'festival' an overall impression of a load of freaks mumbo-jumboing in a desperately inappropriate commercial context: being asked to sell complex mystical concepts as though they were soap powder. If this were so, it was more the fault of the organisers than of the participants, some of whom undoubtedly were fanatics, though we should be prepared to take their ideas seriously enough to find out what they're trying to do.

### Sunday May 1

Nikolaus Harnoncourt's *Concentus Musicus* of Vienna in the afternoon in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, doing Bach and Rameau, and then in the evening the contemporary chamber ensemble Spectrum under the direction of Guy Protheroe in the Purcell Room. Both events were part of this year's English Bach Festival, and the Spectrum programme contained its only contemporary music this year: a sad reflection on the EBF's finances as well as perhaps its present inclinations when you consider what was on offer contemporary music-wise a few years ago.

I've already referred to what I believe we're now supposed to call *Racine 19*, Pousseur's solo cello piece for Rohan de Saram, which was played for the first time in London in this concert, having received its premiere in Birmingham in March.<sup>4</sup> Two pieces by the EBF director Lina Lalandi's continuing guru Xenakis were more disappointing: *Linaia*, premiered at the 1972 festival, was here done 'properly' as a game but without the decency of a proper explanation (the sounds meant little by themselves); *N'Shima*, receiving its British premiere, was a very unpleasant setting of Hebrew. Of the two EBF commissions, John Marlow Rhys's *Four Musicians* was long, complex, very worthy and not without charm, while Naresh Sohal's *Tagore Poems 2* was an uncharacteristically unqualified mess. This programme was later broadcast on Radio Three.

### Monday May 2

An Air Gallery concert in what has by now become a fairly regular series at a useful venue which is more serviceable on fine spring evenings with the sounds of birds giving an impression of being miles away from Cambridge Circus, whereas it's only just down the road, than on cold winter ones when the heating jacks up and the lights fuse. Another programme from John Lewis and Dave Smith who took part in the first one there.<sup>5</sup> Familiar repertoire, though no Philip Glass or even Terry Riley or Steve Reich this time, and quite a lot of solo as well as duo playing. Smith played his arrangements of *Five Anti-fascist Songs* by Hanns Eisler and his own *Five Songs of Class Struggle* to inform us of his continuing political as well as systemic concerns, while Lewis played Satie's *Danses gothiques* and 'Emerson' from Ives' *Concord Sonata*, the latter with Ben Mason briefly on viola. More technical versatility here than in their previous programme perhaps, for those who didn't already know they are good 'traditional' as well as 'systemic' pianists (Smith, in particular, has a real virtuoso technique). The concert was also very interesting for including Richard Ascoug's very fine *Atlantis Revisited* for two pianos and an 'early' Lewis/Smith offering, an improvisational *Continuum* dating from 1970.

### Sunday May 8

If the British premiere of *Monument, Selbstporträt, Bewegung* for two pianos was in some ways the highlight of the London Music Digest's all-Ligeti programme at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, it was Ligeti's two string quartets that provided the most solid fare: the First all Bartókian and a bit rambling, dating from the composer's Hungarian days ('the prehistoric Ligeti' he himself called it in a particularly engaging interval talk); the Second a fine and fully mature piece, one of his best. The Arditti String Quartet is a splendid group of splendid players and did a first-rate job on both, as did the Stockholm Wind Quintet on the familiar Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet and the early and unfamiliar Six Bagatelles for Wind Quintet (some of the very early *Musica Ricerata* piano pieces find their way into these: arranged for wind, they sound more engaging than in their original versions, which can be heard on record);<sup>6</sup> I find the Second Quartet a far superior work to the Ten Pieces, however.

The new work, played by Bruno Canino and Antonio Ballista, is vintage Ligeti in its blend of the traditional and the avantgarde and, not for the first time, the experimental in the narrower sense of the word. This is acknowledged in the full title of the second of these three pieces with an ironic and slightly self-mocking as well as an honest and self-revealing wit that is aptly and delightfully caught in the music itself: 'Self-portrait with Reich and Riley (and Chopin in the background)'. The allusion to a not-unrelated experimental present is almost as zanily serious as that to a not-unrelated traditional past in the form of the finale of Chopin's Third Piano Sonata: both are so Ligeti-like (yes: in this context I *do* mean it that way round) that he doesn't need to quote directly from either. Such allusions to grandeur leave one with no illusions, however, about Ligeti's own. A thoroughly enjoyable evening in all respects. The composer's recent heart attack has unfortunately meant the cancellation of his first series of lectures as Xenakis's successor as Gresham Professor at The City University, London. I hope, however, that his first opera *Le grand macabre* will still be premiered in Stockholm next March and be seen here as soon as can be arranged after that. Ligeti remains for me one of the greatest living composers without any doubt.

### Monday May 23

I don't make a habit of reviewing concerts in which I myself take part, but I feel I *can* mention the Fluxconcert at the Air Galley organised by Rob Worby if only because it gives the opportunity to include a contribution here from another of the participants. I originally had grandiose plans to commemorate this nostalgia trip into the world of happenings and the Fluxus movement of the 1960s, and asked several of the participants to write up their thoughts and feelings in connection with the concert and what the movement in general meant to them today. In the event, only Howard Skempton, who spent the entire evening playing La Monte Young's 'Draw a straight line and follow it' on the accordion, gave me a contribution: if I remember rightly during the interval of the Stockhausen concert on June 12. Typically, it is very brief. Here it is:

The power of music to inspire confidence is more than equalled by its ability to alleviate anxiety. Through music we are no longer manipulated by time. We focus the moment and become the manipulation. We can stem the tide of time through the practice of repetition; or through silence, the last refuge of the fastidious.

Anyway, we already have an article on Young in this issue, which incidentally quotes from Michael Parsons' useful programme note for the concert on Young's *Poem*, which its author did give me permission to include in any retrospective collection of writings. The fairly substantial programme book also included a reprint of Michael Nyman's *Art and Artists* article on Fluxus.<sup>7</sup>

For me the Fluxconcert made some of the ideas which we normally consider old-hat today come alive, at least for the concert's duration, perhaps because of the qualities to which Skempton has referred. I learnt a lot from it (not least what it's actually *like* to saw a violin in half), but I know that not all the participants felt the same. For an outside report of the concert, see David Cunningham's review in *Musics 13*<sup>8</sup> (which includes a rude comment about me).

## Sunday May 29

Malcolm Barry's review elsewhere in this issue of the two records so far issued by Company on the Incus label gives some idea of the music that this loose-knit group of musicians collected together by Derek Bailey tends to play. My early evening visit to the Round House to catch the tail-end of a whole week of improvising, mainly at the ICA's Nash House, didn't catch the best things by any means; so I was told and so I've gathered from the various literature I've read, at least a couple of items of which I recommend to you:<sup>9</sup> for instance, I didn't think all that much of the American trumpeter Leo Smith, which I gather is something of an heretical statement. The best thing I heard was a duo from Derek Bailey and Evan Parker, with whose duo playing I was already familiar, and despite the fact that(?) Bailey broke strings from two different guitars which he finally abandoned. But it was also fascinating to hear that crazy cellist Tristan Honsinger in an interesting line-up which also featured his Dutch compatriot, the bassist Maarten van Regteren Altena; and Smith played with the other Dutch musician present, Han Bennink, whom the appellation 'percussionist' scarcely begins to describe even in terms of the instruments he plays. I hope no frictions prevent Company musicians from working regularly in this country: indeed, there have been Company events on a smaller scale since this extravaganza. There will be further Incus reviews in the next issue of *Contact*.

## Monday May 30

A programme of new and older pieces from Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton at the Air Gallery which was typical both with regard to the kinds of techniques (often, but not always, systemic) and styles (Parsons normally austere, Skempton more 'human', humorous even) these composers have developed and for a (perhaps unexpected) branching-out into something new: in this case Parsons' interest in Bartók's piano music, some of which he played, and his own resulting very Bartókian pieces, not all of which used the piano in the percussive way that he admires in his model (but then not all Bartók's piano music eschews lyricism). If, with one or two exceptions, I felt more attracted to Skempton's pieces or to Parsons' earlier piano music such as the delightful *Arctic Rag* from his ragtime-influenced period of three or four years ago, it was perhaps this lyrical quality which I was seeking.

## Sunday June 12

Stockhausen's first visit to London for some years was actually a (relatively) late replacement for, of all things, the cello section of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra which was to have given the Park Lane Group's concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on this date, minus Karajan but with a suitably elephantine programme. In the event, Karlheinz arrived in a manner which may have been calculated to explode his own myth (and the connection with Karajan): instead of the familiar battery of electronics and players there were only three musicians, the clarinettist Suzanne Stephens for *Harlekin* in the first half and Helga Hamm-Albrecht (soprano) and Karl Barkay (tenor) for *Indianerlieder* in the second.

Actually, in their flirtation with post-serial (post-avantgarde?) tonal simplicity and simplistic theatricality, both works seem typical of the recent Stockhausen. *Harlekin*, the newer piece, dating from 1975, I preferred since its theatrical naivety didn't seem to detract from its undoubted charm, though undoubtedly overlengthy charm, as music: Ms Stephens is required to prance about the stage dressed, not entirely to her advantage, in a Harlequin costume, doodling on her clarinet the while: undoubtedly a tour de force of co-ordination as well as breath control and sheer stamina. Undoubtedly it took Karlheinz far less co-ordination, breath control and stamina to write it.

*Indianerlieder*, dating from 1972 and complete with phoney pseudo-orientalism and imitation rose-petals, I had had the misfortune to see before, in Darmstadt in 1974. (It doesn't mean anything these days to say one's been to the Avantgarde Mecca, so I can say it without fear of being accused of one-upmanship.) I said to someone that I didn't think anyone would take either of these pieces seriously if they had *not* been by Stockhausen, but he took this to mean that Stockhausen was able to imbue even such apparently

unworkable notions with an undefinable something that made them interesting and somehow valid. At least I *think* that's what he meant... Stockhausen remains for me one of the greatest living composers with lots of doubts.

## Monday June 20

Having missed an electronic music concert the previous week which had apparently been fraught with technical disasters, I was glad to have my confidence in British Electronic Music renewed by Barry Anderson's West Square Electronic Music Ensemble's Round House programme. (Actually Anderson is from New Zealand, but that doesn't alter my point. Or does it?) Not all the music seemed to me of a high quality; in fact all of it disappointed me in terms of either inventiveness of material or, more frequently, in terms of control of overall form: the two versions of Anderson's own *En face de...* with Jane Manning (soprano) and Barry Guy (double bass) had the best of both in the programme, while Steve Montague's zany mixture of ideas in *Passim* didn't seem to add up to anything and Guy's own *Eos II* was more a catalogue of effects than a piece. But technically the concert seemed nearly faultless and nowhere more so than in the unusual vocal version of Stockhausen's *Solo* with Jane Manning, manipulating West Square Studio's twelve-channel tape delay feedback set-up to excellent effect. One carefully-prepared concert a year is worth much more than a host of ill-prepared events.<sup>10</sup>

## Monday June 27

Brian Dennis, who mounts fairly regular performances of his music at Royal Holloway College in Egham but whom we hear very little of in London itself, studied with Stockhausen and was apparently responsible for at least one technical innovation in the field of electronic music, but his own present style owes increasingly less to anything avantgarde or even anything experimental. His one-act opera *The Feather Mantle*, based on Oriental sources and scored for two singers and a small group of players, received its second concert performance at Holloway on this occasion: its premiere had taken place there the previous week. Dennis's brand of tonal and nowadays non-systemic lyricism is a joy to listen to: if for those who continue to support linear notions of history it seems an unadulterated anachronism, it's certainly among the *happiest* music being written today. And that isn't meant at all cynically.

Owing *everything* to the past, including a superb technique of pastiche which nevertheless comes alive in some splendid tunes, is something Christopher Hobbs makes a virtue of in his operetta *The Mountebanks*, which sets the libretto by W. S. Gilbert that Sullivan never used. Hobbs is also a first-rate deployer of his material, though it was a bit difficult to tell how well the piece works as a dramatic whole since this performance consisted of unstaged excerpts. But the music is really good, as good as some of Sullivan's own I should say, and this performance, coped with manfully, as was the Dennis, by student forces and the composers themselves (Dennis in fine baritone voice in *The Mountebanks*), clearly demonstrated the need for a fully-staged, fully-orchestrated performance. Hobbs did the orchestration soon after the piece was written about two years ago and has sent the score to D'Oyly Carte. I can't see any reason why they shouldn't do it.

## Thursday June 30

The programme put on by the Saltarello Choir under their present conductor Richard Bernas should earn top marks for enterprise by almost anybody's standards. By no means all their concerts are devoted to new music; indeed one of the most enterprising features of Bernas's programming is precisely the mixture of the new with some less-well-known old. But this evening at St. Andrew's, Holborn Viaduct consisted entirely of American experimental music: starting, admittedly, in the 19th century (though you'd hardly believe it) with Ives' *Psalm 67*, but continuing with Morton Feldman's *Christian Wolff in Cambridge* and *Chorus and Instruments II* and Robert Ashley's *She was a visitor*.

The highspot of the concert was typically (for all concerned) low-key. The British premiere of Cage's *Apartment Building 1776* hardly disturbed the peace of this

rather beautiful church with its discreet 'baroque' string quartet (ravishing playing), cassette tape recordings played back among the audience, an intermittent organ and similarly discreet contributions from the choir itself aloft. Cage says the piece is intended to create the effect that the sounds of an apartment building in 1776 would have had, 'had there been one'. Of course it doesn't appear to do anything of the sort, but its multi-layered aspect must be capable of a multitude of interpretations if the New York Philharmonic and the Chicago Symphony have also tackled it.

#### Monday July 11

At very short notice I was granted a complimentary ticket for the second performance of Michael Tippett's fourth and (he says) last opera *The Ice Break* at Covent Garden (the world premiere was on July 7). The Royal Opera House is even *more* difficult to get into when you're paying, so I suppose I shouldn't have been surprised to find myself forced to occupy a seat poised somewhere directly over Heather Harper's head (yes: she was on the stage; I wasn't) for the first act: after that I found myself a much better one from among the considerable number of unoccupied places in the stalls (the performance was officially 'sold out' by the way). Somehow I get the feeling that not only were they not particularly keen for me to review what must have been regarded as a major new work, but that it wasn't being made particularly easy for the public to pay to see it either, though the Garden can't be blamed if people buy seats or even obtain comps and then don't occupy them, which I gather is what sometimes happens.

My reaction on reading the libretto was relief that I understood at least something of what it was all about and that, despite the usual and much-commented-upon jarring and outdated colloquialisms ('What's bugging you man?/Cool and Jivey once:/Now, touchy and tight./You're a drag, Hannah's with it - and the others' is a fair sample), it seemed to hang together in a way that was likely to be more comprehensible on the stage (at least on one viewing) than *The Knot Garden*, the libretto of which I found very hard to take both reading it beforehand and on the stage. Even, that is, if the political issues of the new work seemed confused, or at least confusing, and (a related issue, of course) it seems hard to believe that anyone speaks or spoke in that language anywhere but in Tippett's mind: it's an easy question to ask, but think it must be asked whether Tippett is really in touch with present-day political realities, and whether he ever was with those of the 60s where the text seems to have its origins.

My reaction to the performance, economically produced by Sam Wanamaker and apparently excellently conducted by Colin Davis, was basically disappointment: concern over issues arising from the libretto certainly, but even more so a great disappointment with the music which lacked entirely or almost entirely, it seemed to me (Hannah's Act Two aria was the obvious possible exception in its rich-toned lyricism), the inventiveness, memorability and lyrical virtues of *The Knot Garden* score. The plot itself and any detailed criticism I have no space for: the piece has been well worked over in the press long since, of course, and I can recommend, with reservations, two articles in *Music and Musicians* as a starting point for the curious who didn't see the opera.<sup>11</sup> A fairly strong cast coped personfully (?) with all the problems, though I thought John Shirley-Quirk as Lev, the (presumably Russian) exile united with his family in a new land (presumably America), didn't have sufficient strength of character or of voice (both unusual for him) and, more seriously, Clyde Walker had the physique but not the voice for the 'black champion' Olympion. Beverly Vaughn (no, it's not a misprint unless it originated so early that everyone used it) as Olympion's girl friend Hannah practically stole the show with a strong and believable personality and a ravishing voice, though it must be said that Tippett gave her more chances than anyone else. At the time of going to press I've yet to hear the new Fourth Symphony, premiered in Chicago in October, but we will be having a preview of it in *Contact* before its British premiere at the Proms next summer.

#### Tuesday July 12

I didn't go specifically as a reviewer to either of the two July events involving new scores by Harrison Birtwistle, but

## CONTEMPORARY MUSIC NETWORK

### HENRY COW

Experimental Rock

#### February

- 3 Aston, Centre for the Arts, Birmingham
- 4 Hurlfield Campus, Sheffield
- 5 Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester
- 6 Christ's College, Liverpool
- 7 Huddersfield Town Hall
- 8 Foxhills School, Scunthorpe
- 10 Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol
- 11 Bridgwater Arts Centre
- 13 Warwick University

### GIL EVANS ORCHESTRA and STAN TRACEY

#### February

- 20 Colston Hall Bristol
- 21 Guildhall Southampton
- 23 Peoples' Theatre, Newcastle
- 24 Town Hall, Birmingham
- 26 London
- 27 Free Trade Hall, Manchester

### STEPHEN SAVAGE and ROGER SMALLEY (pianos)

Ligeti Monument, Selbstportrait, Bewegung  
 Debussy En blanc et noir  
 Smalley Accord

#### March

- 1 York Arts Centre
- 2 Leeds College of Music
- 3 Huddersfield Polytechnic
- 4 Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol
- 6 Aston, Centre for the Arts, Birmingham

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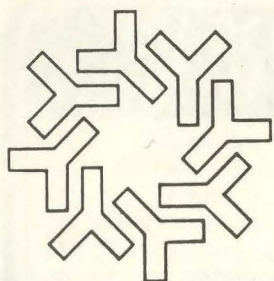
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# YORKSHIRE ARTS

## NORTHERN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CIRCUIT – YORKSHIRE DATES 1977/78 SEASON

**Gillian Weir Organ Recital:** Huddersfield Polytechnic School of Music 4 October, Leeds St. Bartholomews Armley 6 October

**BBC Northern Singers:** Bradford Cartwright Hall 8 November, Giggleswick School 13 November, Keighley Temperance Hall 15 November, Richmond Comprehensive School 26 November

**Brighouse and Rastrick Band** – Ampleforth College 13 November, York Temple Anderson Hall 20 November, Ingleton Ingleborough Community Centre 20 January, Leeds Town Hall 21 January, Huddersfield Town Hall 5 May

**Leonardo Piano Trio.** Scarborough Public Library 22 November, Horbury School 26 November

**Great Jazz Solos:** Barnsley Civic Theatre 22 November, Dewsbury Town Hall 23 November, Sheffield Hurlfield Campus 26 November, York Arts Centre 27 November, Ingleton Ingleborough Community Centre 3 December, Leeds Astoria Centre 4 December

**Lindsay String Quartet:** Huddersfield Polytechnic 12 January, Keighley Music Club 17 January, Leeds University 18 January, York Arts Centre 19 January, Richmond Comprehensive School 21 January

**Rijnmond Percussion Ensemble with Frans can de Wiel, Flute** (by arrangement with Gaudeamus Foundation Holland): Scarborough Technical College 23 January, Leeds University 24 January, Halifax Heath Grammar School 25 January, Wentworth Woodhouse Lady Mabel College 26 January, York Arts Centre 28 January

**Peter Donohoe Piano Recital:** Huddersfield Town Hall 6 February, Scarborough Public Library 7 February, Leeds City Art Gallery (lunchtime) 8 February, Sheffield Hurlfield Campus 14 February, Bradford Central Library (lunchtime) 16 February

**Richard Markham Piano Recital:** Leeds City Art Gallery (lunchtime) 1 March, Bradford Central Library (lunchtime) 2 March, Huddersfield Town Hall (lunchtime) 7 March, Doncaster Danum Grammar School 9 March, Sheffield Hurlfield Campus 10 March

**Dreamtiger Piano Trio:** Huddersfield Polytechnic 13 March, Keighley Temperance Hall 14 March, Sheffield University 15 March, Wentworth Woodhouse Lady Mabel College 16 March, York Arts Centre 17 March, Ingleton Ingleborough Community Centre 18 March

For full details of programmes, and copies of the special contemporary music leaflet, contact Richard Phillips, Music Officer, Yorkshire Arts Association, Glyde House, Glydegate, Bradford 5 (Bradford 23051).

## NORTHERN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CIRCUIT 1978/79 SEASON

Details of tours under the Circuit are available to promoters from regional arts associations music officers in the North *now*.

## CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL

Plans are being made to hold a festival of contemporary music in Huddersfield centred on the Polytechnic there with the help of Kirklees Leisure Services and the Yorkshire Arts Association in September 1978, and the third competition for young Yorkshire composers will be tied in with this event. For further information contact Richard Phillips, Music Officer, Yorkshire Arts Association, Glyde House, Glydegate, Bradford 5 (Bradford 23051).

I should like to put on record my considerable enthusiasm for both of them. Ballet Rambert's Round House programme included Birtwistle's *Pulse Field* as the score for Jaap Flier's choreography for a piece called *Frames, Pulses and Interruptions*; indeed (and this of course brought all kinds of problems for its creators) an attempt was made to conceive the music and dance together and the musicians (on trombones, double basses and percussion) were incorporated to a limited extent into the stage action. The music was simple, strange and very beautiful; the dancing zany and often funny. This programme also included a neo-Debussian, rather than neo-Schoenbergian, score by Jonathan Harvey to Norman Morrice's *Smiling Immortal* (Morrice is now with the Royal Ballet, incidentally) and Christopher Bruce's *Echoes of a Night Sky* to three movements from George Crumb's *Music for a Summer Evening*. All the pieces were fairly new and the Morrice/Harvey collaboration had actually been premiered the night before.

### Wednesday July 13

Birtwistle's attempts to integrate music and theatre take a further step forward in *Bow Down*, which I saw in one of its last performances in the Cottesloe auditorium of the National Theatre the following evening as part of a triple bill with Rene Clair's famous film *Entr'acte* from the ballet *Relache* with music by Satie, the latter here arranged and played live by an ensemble under Dominic Muldowney, and a good attempt at a version of Mauricio Kagel's incredible *Repertoire* arranged by Muldowney, Glyn Perrin and others.

*Bow Down* explores the common territory of actor and musician, and is one of the countless refrains in only one version of the traditional and ancient ballad of *The Two Sisters*, says the programme note. This relates the work's origins clearly to similar sources in Birtwistle's own past, but instead of writing virtuoso music for virtuoso musicians as part of a music-theatre experience (as with, for example, the ten-year-old opera *Punch and Judy*, long overdue for a revival), the composer here attempts a simple, chiefly rhythmic and percussive kind of music played by musicians sitting in a circle around the actors and once again making some gestures in the direction of blurring the distinctions between the two: both actors and musicians speak, for example, at various points. As music-theatre *Bow Down* was magical and, I think, very successful: it augurs well for the future as the first-fruits of Birtwistle's and Muldowney's attempts to involve actors and musicians at the National in the creation of new kinds of music-theatre.

### Sunday July 31

The Creative Associates of the Centre of the Creative and Performing Arts of the State University of New York at Buffalo (can't they think of a shorter name?) gave a concert on an extremely hot Sunday afternoon to a packed upper room at the Whitechapel Art Gallery with Morton Feldman ('The Boss'). Arranged at very short notice, it was part of a brief visit to this country which also took in Dartington and the Harrogate Festival.

The group last came to Britain in February 1974. This time their programme was much better, though the performance of Satie's *Socrate* by Martha Hanneman (soprano) and Nils Vigeland (piano) left a lot to be desired. There was a new piece by Feldman, *Instruments 3*, which said nothing new really, and the composer himself played a group of early piano pieces including the very fine *Extensions III*. Typical of the mixed programming of this ensemble was the inclusion of Xenakis alongside Satie and Feldman with a piece for oboe and percussion called *Dmaathen* dating from 1976: this I liked very much even though the conditions weren't right for it, and it was notable for the very fine playing of Nora Post (oboe) and also Jan Williams (percussion).

But pride of place went to the flautist of the group Eberhard Blum's vocal virtuoso rendition of Kurt Schwitters' *Ursonata* (1922-32), a staggering and very musically structured piece of what we'd now call sound poetry which put everything else on the programme in the shade and was taken up as a curiosity by Radio Three's 'Music Now'. I hope a recording of this will be made: both the piece and Blum's performance certainly deserve it.

### Thursday August 4

Among the several riches of non-Western theatre and dance which were available at various times during the summer in London, I chose to go to Sadler's Wells Theatre, a regular venue for such things out of the main season, to see *Les danses sacrées de Bali* (no real justification for the French title that I can see) on their first British visit. The music and the dancing were marvellous, but as is so often the case when a unique and complex foreign art form is presented in thoroughly 'Western' circumstances, I felt more an observer than a participator, peering through the proscenium in an effort to transcend barriers that I knew really couldn't be transcended in these circumstances. When there *did* seem to be a real communication between performers and audience — most obviously the 'ooh-aah!' reaction to the entry of the beautiful and very young girls (most of the dancers were men) — I for one felt that it was of the wrong, or at least partly irrelevant, kind. Perhaps I shouldn't have worried so much and I might have enjoyed myself more. And the last thing I should wish to do would be to say anything against 'authentic' groups like this coming to Britain: the more we see them and the more we learn how to accommodate them (in our minds as well as in our theatres) the better.<sup>12</sup>

### Proms 77

I went to eleven Proms this year and heard at least parts of several more on radio or TV. This in itself reflects the, for me at least, much higher quantity of interesting programmes as compared with the 1976 season when, admittedly not living in London, I didn't go to a single one. Quantity of interest didn't necessarily result in quality of music or of performance, and at least one enlightening decision — that to bring the entire Cologne Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus to this country for a single performance (the British premiere) of Berio's *Coro* under the composer's direction (September 1) — must be considered to have been an expensive mistake, especially when the only other visiting foreign orchestra this season was the Rotterdam Philharmonic, a worthy band, no doubt, but not in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw's class (which, by the way, went to the Edinburgh Festival the week before the Rotterdam orchestra played at the Proms: couldn't some way have been found of getting them to the Albert Hall too?). But overall it was a very worthwhile season, and 20th century, if not necessarily new, music fared particularly well, certainly by comparison with recent BBC form.

I'm not able to mention everything: indeed I didn't get to everything. So I'll be very selective here and start with the commissioned works. What some seem to have found the best of these I unfortunately had to miss, being away at the time and not able to get to a radio. John Buller's *Proença* (Sarah Walker (mezzo-soprano), Timothy Walker (guitar), BBC SO/Mark Elder; August 6) looked an intriguing work from the score and promised to be at least as good as his *Le Terrazze* which I much admire. It's amazing that Buller is 50 this year, but gladdening that the BBC have now 'taken him up' and he at last has a publisher (Schirmer). I still haven't managed to get to hear this piece, so I hope a second hearing will be made possible: I gather a recording was made before the first public performance.

The other major 'BBC Jubilee commission' was Maxwell Davies's second opera *The Martyrdom of St. Magnus* (The Fires of London and soloists directed by Murray Melvin and conducted by the composer; July 25). This had actually received its first performance on June 18 at the first St. Magnus Festival in Kirkwall, in St. Magnus Cathedral where the saint's remains are supposed to have been embedded right in the pillar next to which Davies stood while conducting the work (how's that for local colour?), but for everyone who hadn't a few hundred pounds to spare or wasn't paid to join the metropolitan invaders of what was 'officially' a festival for the Orcadians themselves (some hope), this was their first chance to see it and a packed Round House was the result (incidentally quite justifying two performances which would have provided a much securer box office draw than did Henze's *The Raft of the Medusa* in the Albert Hall three days later and allowed the BBC to provide your reviewer with a complimentary ticket).

One of my editorial colleagues was among the lucky invaders and so I'll direct you to him for a detailed review.<sup>13</sup> For my own part, I added another work to my list of

'disappointing British operas seen this summer', since the whole thing seemed so unmemorably lacking in continuous musical interest and dramatically flat and unengaging. If Davies was trying to write 'the fourth church parable' (if this seems a crazy notion, try to get to one of the Contemporary Music Network's performances of it in January and you'll both see and hear what I mean), then he needs a canner sense of the ways to integrate music and drama if he's to match, or even come anywhere near matching, Britten (whose works I have never been accustomed to fall over myself about in the past). Perhaps a better production would help: the dramatic timing seemed all wrong (for instance at Blind Mary's exit at the end and in general in the way scenes ended and succeeding ones began). Each singer took several roles quite convincingly, but Mary Thomas, spending most of her time as Blind Mary, the central figure of the opera and far more dramatically telling than Magnus himself (which itself seems almost a flaw), stood out by virtue of her performance as well as the roles she undertook.

Richard Rodney Bennett's *Acteon* for horn and orchestra received its world premiere on August 12, which I did not hear, but the only other commissioned work was a worthy but very unremarkable orchestral piece from Edwin Roxburgh called *Montage* (RLPO/Charles Groves; July 23). Finished only just in time for the performance and, it seems, well coped with by the Liverpool orchestra, the piece was responsible for this year's most enduring 'Promenaders' remark': 'Don't worry, it'll be all right on the night'. (This was *after* the performance, by the way. Or perhaps the best one came after Birtwistle's beautifully desolate *Melencolia* for clarinet, harp and strings on August 13: 'If that's melancholia, give me depression'.)

On to British premieres next. The two most 'notable' (ie. most prestigious and most expensive) of these each took up a whole concert in the 'Contemporary Masterworks Series' of four programmes which represented yet another variation on the attempt to make the Prom audience take contemporary music seriously. If the size of the audience for any of them except, predictably, for Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage* (which received a concert performance excellent in every respect except for some fluffs in the brass from the Welsh National Opera Company under Richard Armstrong on August 19) was an adequate judge of the success of this idea, it'll bite the dust, which may be a pity. (Back to Glock's old 'Schoenberg Violin Concerto and Beethoven 7' formula with which he packed 'em in in 1961 and 62.)

Henze's *The Raft of the 'Medusa'* received an astonishingly well-prepared and committed performance (well, certainly for a Prom programme) from BBC forces and soloists consist of the magnificent Phyllis Bryn-Julson (Boulez' favourite soprano) as Death, John Shirley-Quirk (baritone: yes, *again*) as Jean-Charles and Gerald English (also ubiquitously) as the Narrator, the whole thing co-ordinated by David Atherton who deserves a medal for his dedication to Henze (and will probably get one). But it left me absolutely cold, unable to get involved on any level other than the vaguely curious: why does he do it? The background to the piece<sup>14</sup> is more interesting than the piece itself, it seems to me. But I seem to have been making an occupation of failing to understand Henze this summer, being totally baffled by the recently-released record of his *Tristan*.<sup>15</sup> (And HWH's Italian festive goings-on in the name of socialism seem more suspect than PMD's second Aldeburgh.)

I seem to be having trouble with Berio too, whose *Coro* (already alluded to; September 1) struck me as a surprisingly badly-calculated, even badly timed, even downright flat and dull and certainly incomprehensible, offering from this master craftsman, aural trickster and normally impeccable new-timer. I can understand at least *something* of the musical, even the political, reasoning behind Henze's *Raft*, but what is Berio trying to achieve in *Coro* other than to fail (for it must be equally obvious to him that it's not another *Cries of London*) to write yet another piece that is both accessible and avantgarde, to use the already overworked terminology? What has been described as 'Berio's inability to escape from the narrow world of post-serial complexity'<sup>16</sup> left his profusion of folk texts and Pablo Neruda standing, not naked in the glare of the composer's razor-sharp interrogation-lamp (if one can have such a thing, Berio assuredly *has* one) but fully clothed with confusion. Nudity would have been more interesting; just a *little* clothing

would have been most revealing of all.

Sandor Balassa's Quartet for Percussion (The London Percussion Ensemble/Lionel Friend; August 15) was incidentally interesting rhythmically, occasionally texturally, but completely overshadowed by Barraqué's *Chant après chant*, despite a less than adequate performance which was, I think, not very accurate and felt more like a sight-reading (hope it wasn't ...) than a performance and surprised me by revealing Jane Manning's bad French pronunciation (confirmed by a French-speaking acquaintance). And completely so by a wizardly performance of Bartók's Sonata for two pianos and percussion by Dezső Ránki and Zoltán Kocsis (pianos) and James Holland and Tristan Fry (percussion) in the second half of this Round House concert. But in some ways this programme was better than the other Round House offering on August 29 (London Sinfonietta and BBC Singers/Elgar Howarth and Kerry Woodward), which contained some very substandard playing and singing of works by Messiaen, Boulez, Stockhausen and Xenakis. The only other British premiere was a desultory orchestral Sinfonia by Tristan Keuris (Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra/Edo de Waart; September 14): good that the orchestra should bring a native work by a young composer as well as, on the previous evening, Diepenbrock's *Entr'acte: Marsyas* (whose turn-of-the-century amalgam I rather enjoyed), but there are much better contemporary Dutch pieces than this.<sup>17</sup>

Other notable performances included Maxwell Davies' *St. Thomas Wake* (BBC SO/Groves; August 9) which I saw in all its gaudy 20s glory (hammed up by the players) when it turned up on TV; an evening of Schoenberg ('The Song of the Wood Dove' from the *Gurrelieder* and the First Chamber Symphony) and Stravinsky (*Pulcinella*, complete with voices) and a Mozart hors d'oeuvres, all mostly very well performed to an almost empty hall (London Sinfonietta/Simon Rattle; August 22); a very laudable attempt on Gerhard's Concerto for Orchestra (which still comes up fresh; why don't they reissue the record which uses the same forces?) but a very scrappy Schoenberg *Verklärte Nacht* (BBC SO/Norman del Mar; August 30); and two BBC SO/Boulez programmes in the final week (September 12 and 15) which were most notable for another chance to hear Boulez' own perplexing and still to my mind not entirely successful *Rituel: in memoriam Maderna* and some sparkling Bartók (Michel Béroff in the Second Piano Concerto) and Stravinsky (the complete *Firebird*).

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> See Spencer Bright, 'Inward Bound', *Time Out*, No. 368 (April 15-21, 1977), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> For reviews of some of Rosenboom's work see *Contact 14* (Autumn 1976), pp. 34-35 and *Contact 16* (Spring 1977), pp. 23-25.

<sup>3</sup> The address of the Spectrum Research Institute is P.O. Box 1584, Palo Alto, CA 94302, USA. Readers are invited to send there for a free catalogue. The record I have, called *Spectrum Suite* (SRI 770), is, according to information on the sleeve, distributed by SRI Records, 231 Emerson Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301, USA. I have no information to hand on prices. The record sleeve advertises its contents as 'The Meditation Environment Recommended by ESP Magazine, New Directions, Yoga Journal & New Age Journal'.

<sup>4</sup> See New Music Diary, *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> See New Music Diary, *Contact 16* (Spring 1977), p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> BIS LP-18. The quartets and the Ten Pieces for Wind Quintet are also available on record; all except the First Quartet (BIS LP-53) are in the *Gramophone Classical Catalogue* (September 1977).

<sup>7</sup> Michael Nyman, 'The Experimental Tradition', *Art and Artists*, Vol. 7, No. 7 (October 1972), pp. 44-49.

<sup>8</sup> David Cunningham, '2 Concerts of Experimental Music, Monday 23rd May 1977', *Musics 13* (August 1977), p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> There is extensive coverage of Company Week in *Impetus 6* in the form of interviews with the musicians and further information in *Musics 13*; also in *Time Out* (see Malcolm Barry's review in this issue).

<sup>10</sup> For more information on the West Square Studio see Barry Anderson's article in our 'Electronic Music Studios in Britain' series, *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), pp. 24-26.

<sup>11</sup> David Fingleton, 'The Ice Break', *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 25, No. 11 (July 1977), pp. 28-30; review by Andrew

Clements, *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (September 1977), pp. 42-44.

<sup>12</sup>A useful introductory article to both the music and the dancing of this group is Jan Murray and David Toop's 'Dance of Worship', *Time Out*, No. 383 (July 29-August 4, 1977), p. 13.

<sup>13</sup>David Roberts, 'Maxwell Davies in Orkney', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 118, No. 1614 (August 1977), pp. 633-635.

<sup>14</sup>For an examination of this see Kevin Stephens, 'The Raft of the Medusa', *Music and Musicians*, Vol. 25, No. 11 (July 1977), pp. 24-26.

<sup>15</sup>DG 2530834.

<sup>16</sup>Brian Dennis in his review, *The Musical Times*, Vol. 118, No. 1617 (November 1977), p. 934.

<sup>17</sup>I shall be reviewing some Dutch music, including Peter Schat's new opera *Houdini*, in the next issue of *Contact*.

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

**Dave Smith** Composer and pianist. Formerly a member of the Scratch Orchestra. Member of a keyboard duo with the composer and pianist John Lewis.

**Dick Witts** Alias Richard Witts. Drummer (at last he's admitted to it ...).

**Tony Friel** Bass guitarist of the punk group The Fall.

**Trevor Wishart** Freelance musician. At present 'community composer' for the North West Arts region. A co-author of *Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages* which has just been published by Latimer New Dimensions.

**Richard Boon** Manager of the New Wave group The Buzzcocks and producer of the independent record label New Hormones.

**Keith Potter** 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.

**Annette Morreau** Music Officer at the Arts Council of Great Britain in charge of the Contemporary Music Network.

**Arnold Whittall** Reader in Music at King's College, University of London. The author of *Schoenberg Chamber Music* (BBC Music Guide) and *Music Since the First World War* (Dent, recently published), he is now editing a symposium on British music since 1914 for the Athlone Press and planning an analytical study of the music of Britten and Tippett (Cambridge University Press). A regular reviewer for *The Gramophone* and *Music and Letters*.

**John Hopkins** Composer. At present organising the music and dance programmes at the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol. Is working on two scores for dance groups in London and Cambridge and a further piece for the Fires of London.

**Michael Nyman** Runs the Campiello Band.

**Guy Protheroe** Conductor, arranger and writer. At present the conductor of Spectrum ensemble, the English Chamber Choir and several other groups and BBC Music Presentation Editor.

**Charles Alexander** Administrator of the Jazz Centre Society. At present a member of the Music Panels of the South East Arts Association, the Greater London Arts Association and the London Borough of Camden.

**Tim Souster** Composer, viola player and writer on contemporary music. Formerly Stockhausen's teaching assistant in Cologne and then composer in residence in West Berlin on the German Academic Exchange scheme. Now Leverhulme Research Fellow in Electronic Music at the University of Keele. A member of the ISCM British Section committee and the Music Panel of the Arts Council. Has been awarded a USA/UK Bicentennial Fellowship for study in the USA in 1978. His new group OdB appears on his first commercial solo album *Swit Drimz* (Transatlantic TRAG 343) and in the present season's Contemporary Music Network tours.

**Ronald Lumsden** Pianist. Has performed in several Contemporary Music Network tours, most recently in Stockhausen's *Kontakte*.

**Ian Carr** Jazz trumpet player, composer and leader of the group Nucleus. The author of *Music Outside: contemporary jazz in Britain*, he is at present writing a biography of Miles Davis. A member of the ISCM British Section committee and the Music Panel of the Greater London Arts Association.

**Robin Maconie** New Zealand composer and writer on contemporary music. Part-time lecturer in Music at the University of Surrey. The author of *The Works of Karlheinz Stockhausen* (OUP), he is at present a regular contributor to *The Times Educational Supplement*.

**Ian Bartlett** A Principal Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. Previously taught in secondary schools in Nottingham and Banbury and at Bretton Hall College of Education, Yorkshire.

**Stephen Arnold** Lecturer in Music and Director of the Electronic Music Studio at the University of Glasgow. Joint author with Graham Hair (of La Trobe University, Melbourne) of an unpublished book on the music of Milton Babbitt. Awarded a 1976 Winston Churchill Memorial Fellowship to visit electronic and computer music studios in the USA and Canada.

**Michael Taylor** At present engaged in research on Berg's *Wozzeck* at the University of Southampton.

**George Brown** Composer and conductor. Lectures at the West London Institute of Higher Education, and at Goldsmiths' College, University of London where he is one of the staff responsible for the running of the Electronic Music Studio. Director of the Birmingham-based ensemble *Intégrales*. As an editor for Universal Edition he has worked with many prominent composers.

**Paul Hindmarsh** Assistant Librarian of the Scottish Music Archive. At present completing a thesis on the music of Frank Bridge. Tenor soloist with the Scottish Early Music Consort and member of the John Currie Singers.

**John Shepherd** Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Manchester Polytechnic. A co-author of *Whose Music? A Sociology of Musical Languages* which has just been published by Latimer New Dimensions, he is currently writing a book for secondary schools on Tin Pan Alley to be published as part of a series by Routledge and Kegan Paul.

**Malcolm Barry** Music Organiser, School of Adult and Social Studies, Goldsmiths' College, University of London.

**David Roberts** Musicologist. Lecturer in Music at the University of Sussex.

**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. A member of the editorial team of *Musics* magazine.

**Melvyn Poore** Tuba player and composer. Music Director of the Birmingham Arts Laboratory and leader of the Arts Lab's chamber ensemble ANOMALY.

# News from Faber Music

## Anne Boyd

has just returned to her native Australia, after spending some years in England. They have been highly profitable years for composition, including *Bencharong*, a 15 minute string work commissioned by the Festival Strings of Lucerne; *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams*, a hauntingly beautiful, mesmeric choral piece (for 3 x SATB unaccompanied) which won a Radcliffe Award and has been toured abroad by the John Alldis choir; and a new children's opera, *The Little Mermaid*, which is nearing completion. Recent publications: *Angklung* for solo piano (£1), much played by its dedicatee, Roger Woodward; *As far as Crawls the Toad*, a 20 minute semi-staged piece for 5 percussionists (playing score £1.50).

## Jonathan Harvey

has now joined the growing number of younger composers with Faber Music. This summer has brought two major premières. *Smiling Immortal* is the title of his new ballet for the Ballet Rambert, choreographed by Norman Morrice, which takes the birth of Venus as its central theme. It was first presented in London in July and is now in the Rambert repertoire. The Cheltenham commission, *Inner Light II* for voices and chamber orchestra, was premièred by the London Sinfonietta and will shortly be broadcast by the BBC. "An unfailingly intense piece of self expression", wrote the Guardian. "It makes compelling listening." He is currently completing a String Quartet for the Arditti Quartet and a Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis for next year's Southern Cathedrals Festival.

## Oliver Knussen

Trumpets for soprano and 3 clarinets is featured in the current Network tour by Matrix. This is one of the works to be published in 1978, together with *Rosary Songs*, settings of Trakl poems for soprano and chamber ensemble, and *Autumnal* for violin and piano. He has just completed an Oboe Quartet for Janet Craxton and the London Oboe Quartet, and is currently working on a Koussevitsky commission and a new work for the London Sinfonietta. We shall be hearing a lot more of Oliver Knussen in the future.

## Colin Matthews

Last year's London première of his Fourth Sonata for orchestra brought much praise for this talented 30-year-old composer. And his recent work for chamber orchestra, *Night Music*, more than fulfilled the high expectations at its first performance in May this year. Paul Griffiths in *The Times* referred to its "sophisticated craftsmanship and musical appeal, distinctive colours and sure harmonic movement." The same qualities were apparent in the Rilke song-cycle, *Five Sonnets: To Orpheus*, recently premièred by Peter Pears and Osian Ellis (harp). Two instrumental works, *Partita for Solo Violin* and *5 Studies for Piano* are now published at £1.50 each. His *Specula* for chamber ensemble has been chosen for next year's ISCM Festival.

For more information please write to

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