



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

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Citation

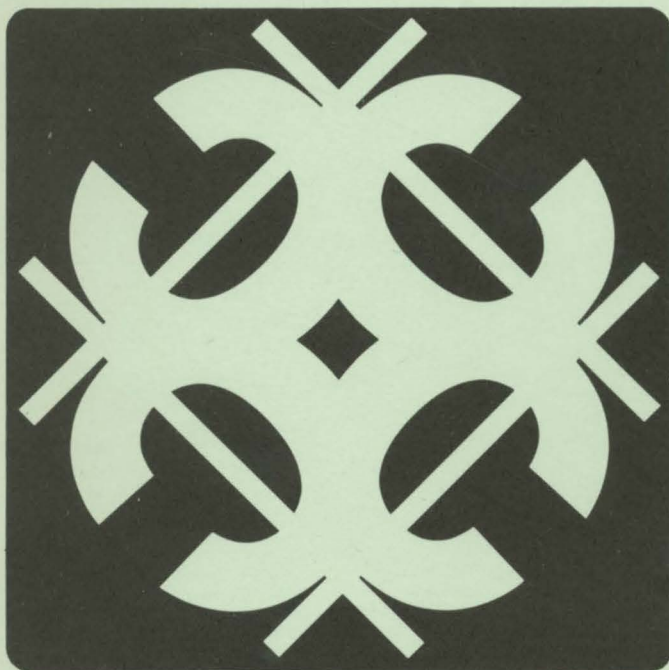
Potter, Keith et al, eds. 1978. *Contact*, 19. ISSN 0308-5066.

CONTACT

Today's Music

No 19
Summer 1978

45p



- Zygmunt Krauze
 - Tony Coe
 - 2nd Viennese
 - Irish Traditionalists
 - Electronic Scots
 - Reviews & Reports
-

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Overseas (air mail):	
Europe	£4.50
N and S America	\$11.00/£5.00
Rest of the world	£5.50

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- 11 North American issue. Contemporary Music in Canada — 1 (Alan Gillmor); articles on George Crumb (Richard Steinitz), Miles Davis (Lyndon Reynolds) and Philip Glass (Dave Smith).
- 12 Contemporary Music in Canada — 2 (Alan Gillmor); Transition and Transformation in the Music of Lutosławski (John Casken); Music Co-ops (Jan Steele); York University Electronic Music Studio (Richard Orton).
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- 17 Electronic Music Issue. Tim Souster on the history of Intermodulation, David Roberts on Hugh Davies, Simon Emmerson on Ring Modulation and Structure, Barry Anderson on the West Square, London, Electronic Music Studio. The Scottish Music Archive (Paul Hindmarsh).
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FUTURE ISSUES

Contact 20 will appear in the autumn; *Contact 21* in the spring. Copy date for editorial copy for *Contact 21* is December 16, for advertising January 20. No copy received after these dates can be guaranteed consideration for the issue.

CONTACT 19

The editors of *Contact* would like to apologise to our regular readers and also the advertisers in this issue for the late appearance of *Contact 19* which has largely been caused by an overworked staff trying, as usual, to attempt the impossible. Due partly to this, some reviews that should have appeared in this issue have been held over to *Contact 20*: these include a number of concert reviews, a special review of Dutch music, an updated examination of periodicals and some more updated comment on SPNM activities.

In addition to these and our usual range of reviews, the main articles in *Contact 20* will be as follows:

a composite review-article by four contributors on the music of Brian Ferneyhough

'Freedom from the Music': an article on aspects of music and dance by Stephanie Jordan

an examination of some of Stockhausen's recent work in his 50th year by Simon Emmerson

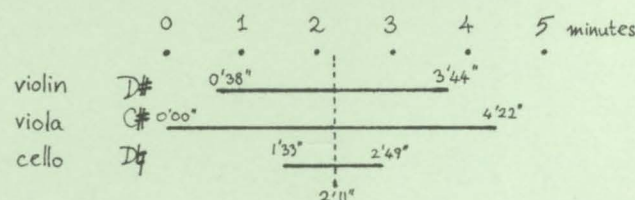
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CORRIGENDA

The following corrections should be made to Dave Smith's article 'Following a Straight Line: La Monte Young', which appeared in *Contact 18*: (1) p. 4, col. 2, l. 17, the pitches of the 'dream chord' should read G—C—C sharp—D; (2) p. 5, Example 2 should now read:



(3) p. 5, Example 3: all the Bs should be flattened; (4) p. 7, col. 1, ll. 46—48, the 'sentence' beginning 'In time, however ...' should have read: 'In time, however, the pitches will "drift" slightly despite the accuracy of the equipment. Amongst other things this causes the volume of each pitch to drift as well.'

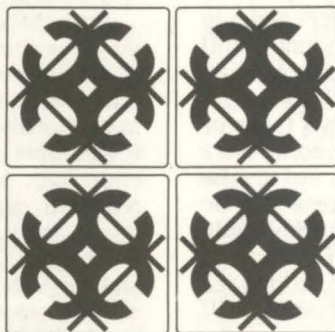
Contact is printed by K. P. & D. Ltd., Metrohouse, Third Way, Wembley, Middlesex; tel. 01-903 4331/2

CONTACT

No 19 SUMMER 1978

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

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DISTRIBUTOR'S ADDRESS for subscriptions and back numbers: Philip Martin Music Books, 22 Huntington Road, York, YO3 7RL, England.

ADVERTISING ADDRESS for rates and other information regarding advertising: John Shepherd, Institute of Advanced Studies, Manchester Polytechnic, All Saints Building, Oxford Road, Manchester, M5 6BH, England.

BUSINESS ADDRESS for any other business: Mrs Hilary Bracefield, Department of Music, The Northern Ireland Polytechnic, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, BT37 0QB, Northern Ireland.

Contact is published by the Editors of the magazine, who gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

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ISSN 0308-5066

Too Soon or Too Late?

Schoenberg, Berg, Webern: the current state of writing

THE MASS OF WRITING about atonal and twelve-note composers and their music shows how important it is to writers that the composers and the music be understood through the medium of words, however much the composers themselves may have affected to dislike such exposure. Naturally, the 'founding fathers' of this 'school' are the most written-about of all; but now that Schoenberg, at least, has been sanctified as both Modern Master and Master Musician,¹ it might be thought that understanding is broad and deep enough to make the constant cataract of words redundant. After all, no sensible person can really expect such complex music ever to become very widely accepted: audiences will always be small, despite Schoenberg's longing to be hummed in the street.

Is it time, then, for apologists and analysts to dry up? Apparently not. The better we get to know this music, it seems, the less we agree on what it 'means', or on how to write about it: contrast the reviews by Paul Griffiths² and Hugh Wood³ of Malcolm MacDonald's 'Master Musicians' Schoenberg study. The disagreement of the experts is complemented by the refusal of more than a minority of the serious-music audience, performers and promoters, to take these composers to their hearts. So it looks as if words will be with us for a long time yet: for as long as a case remains to be argued.

But as time goes by it begins to play curious tricks. Old, or old-fashioned, books surface alongside hermetic theoretical articles and monographs; the former engaging the music as if it were new and radical, if not actually still to be written down, the latter giving it the microscopic treatment proper to an intriguing archaeological discovery. The reading audience for these two types of material cannot be the same, even though the composers and the music with which the material is concerned are the same. So writing which comes too soon for some may be far too late for others: some find the assumptions made about the orthodoxy or even conservatism of this music unacceptable, while others eagerly scan the horizon to see what the future has in store. Writers, of course, will always believe in what they are doing, and all writers have to imagine that they have a private line to the composer and a special, uniquely perceptive code of intercommunication, which makes all their toil worth while and subsequent criticism irrelevant: but the private line from writer to composer is in itself no guarantee that the reader will receive the right connection and, as the cost of these three-way contacts increases, the more economy, accuracy and value for money seem to matter. A reader may still learn something from a bad book, but a badly edited book is an insult to the reader's mind as well as to his wallet.

The most substantial publication devoted to Schoenberg currently in progress, the complete edition of

his works,⁴ is well under way but still has far to go: to date the keyboard music, songs, concertos, chamber symphonies, some choral music and some arrangements have appeared, as well as the one-act opera *Von heute auf morgen*. This complete edition is, appropriately, a product of the age of conservation, designed to be definitive and irreplaceable and therefore especially vulnerable to the frailties and failings of editors and printers. Authoritative reviews are, therefore, all the more important and all too rare.⁵ But while the scholarship of this edition will inevitably be argued over, its cost is unarguably enormous, and the decision to produce study scores in reduced format, with no editorial annotations, is as dangerous as it is understandable: one has only to inspect the recent score of the Violin Concerto alongside Anne C. Hall's discussion of variant readings and the problems of arriving at an authentic text⁶ to find oneself in the middle of a musicological minefield, which no amount of ritualistic obeisance before the traditional, expressive qualities of the work itself will cause to disappear. Is it still too soon to start producing 'definitive' editions and biographies, when so much material remains to be collated, catalogued and analysed, and when 'publication' often seems to mean 'oversimplification'? And should there not be a more realistic application of that most sacred of trades union principles, the need for demarcation? The world's best cataloguer may be the world's worst analyst.

Jan Maegaard's *Studien zur Entwicklung des dodekaphonen Satzes bei Arnold Schönberg*⁷ is a publication of major bibliographical importance, and in many respects displaces the catalogue by Josef Rufer⁸ as a meticulously researched source-book sorting out some of the complex 'which-came-first' problems that beset the enquiring Schoenbergian. Maegaard may not have rendered all sabbatical pilgrimages to Los Angeles unnecessary, but he has certainly rendered some of them less urgent. The trouble is that he did not stop with lists and dates, but launched himself, head over heels, into the wild whirlpool of analysis. As George Perle notes, 'Where his chronological and descriptive catalogue can serve as a model of method, organization and comprehensiveness, from the analytical portion of his work one could derive a compendium of the misleading procedures, illogical classifications, and invalid inferences that must be avoided in any attempt to explain the technical character of this or any other music.'⁹

⁴Ed. Josef Rufer, *Sämtliche Werke* (Mainz: Schott/Vienna: Universal Edition, 1966-).

⁵For one relatively recent example, see O. W. Neighbour's discussion of the choral music volume, *Music and Letters*, Vol. 57, No. 4 (October 1976), pp. 443-446.

⁶A Comparison of Manuscript and Printed Scores of Schoenberg's Violin Concerto', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Fall-Winter 1975 [c1977]), pp. 182-196.

⁷Copenhagen: Wilhelm Hansen, 1972.

⁸*Das Werk Arnold Schönbergs* (Kassel, Bärenreiter, 1959), trans. Dika Newlin, *The Works of Arnold Schoenberg* (London: Faber and Faber, 1962).

⁹*The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (April 1977), p. 276.

¹Charles Rosen, *Schoenberg* (London: Fontana/Collins ['Modern Masters' series], 1976); Malcolm MacDonald, *Schoenberg* (London: Dent ['Master Musicians' series], 1976).

²*The Musical Times*, Vol. 118, No. 1609 (March 1977), p. 212.

³*The Times Literary Supplement*, June 10, 1977, p. 702.

It is, of course, in the field of methodology for the analysis (or even the mere description) of pre-twelve-note atonal music that there are the greatest number of pots ready to proclaim the blackness of any single kettle. Perle's own efforts have been described by Allen Forte (in a footnote, naturally) as 'insufficiently detailed and often contain[ing] mistakes'.¹⁰ As for Forte himself, readers of the American reviews of *The Structure of Atonal Music*¹¹ will be aware that the arrogant tone and at times cavalier manner of his theoretical discussion have not gone unrebuked.¹²

On this side of the Atlantic, meanwhile, there has been little or no serious consideration of such issues as the criteria for segmentation or the accuracy of Forte's computer calculations. For many Europeans these theories are apparently even more in the future than the music to which they have been applied. Instead, Forte has been much chided for appearing to impose a pre-twelve-note compositional system on Schoenberg, as if he actually composed with a table of pitch-class sets (complete with interval vectors) at his elbow.¹³ It may indeed seem remarkable that Forte should have been willing to provide such a conveniently simple target for attack, but there is still no sign that attempts to base a consistent terminology for compositional procedures in this music on what might be regarded as the composer's own approved terminology or method can ever result in more than an incoherent mixture of grammars and dialects reading like a peculiarly debased Esperanto. And when Forte writes that 'it is tempting to compare Schoenberg's detailed way of segmenting the musical continuum with the traditional diminutions of tonal music. Both are hierarchic, but they are essentially different with respect to the concept of musical space',¹⁴ we are reminded that the Monostatos of the set complex is also the Sarastro of Schenkerian tradition. It is emphatically not too soon to yield to the temptation which he offers here.

It is nevertheless a relief to turn to the calmer waters of analytical writings on Schoenberg's twelve-note music. The pressing need for thorough-going studies of individual works, which contain an explication of the relationship between the 'actual' music and the twelve-note material, is at long last beginning to be met: a recent example is *Reihentechnik und musikalische Gestalt bei Arnold Schönberg: eine Untersuchung zum III. Streichquartett op. 30* by Christian Möllers.¹⁵ Möllers may not be as theoretically liberated as some would like (his sources are principally European) but, after the ritual quotation of Schoenberg's remark about stressing what the music is rather than how it is done, he proceeds to justify the view that the doing and the being are inseparable. All the facts are here, and even if Möllers' interpretation of them is not the only possible one, they are clearly and carefully set out.

The book by Möllers is at the opposite extreme from two large volumes recently published by John Calder, each at £12.50. To read Luigi Rognoni's *The Second Vienna School: Expressionism and Dodecaphony* is to find oneself plunged back into an era when the air from

another planet was a heady mixture of Leibowitz and Adorno, the former the apparent apostle of a new technical tradition, the other the modish philosopher of modernism's inherent and apparently incorrigible inadequacies.

Far from blazing a trail, this book is now itself a historical document, for it originated in Rognoni's *Espressionismo e dodecafonìa*,¹⁶ as expanded into *La scuola musicale di Vienna*.¹⁷ If the reader is out of sympathy with a writer who can quote admiringly such statements of Adorno's as 'His [Webern's] particularization which was expressed both in his unreflective uncertainty as a craftsman and in the strain put on his own imagination for a single purpose, reached the point where he, as a creator generally speaking, was unable to keep abreast of himself as a particular artist', he or she is not going to be coaxed into a more sympathetic stance by a translation which often reads ineptly or by a presentation which, for all the lavish inclusion of music examples, is riddled with misprints and out-of-date information. Robert Mann, the translator, even gives us 'transportation' for 'transposition' at one point. We also read that, in *Von heute auf morgen*, 'the rhythmic configuration is clear and almost rudimental', and that, in Webern's String Trio, the development of the twelve-note series 'is carried out in abysmal reaches'. Rognoni's style is such that it must be very difficult to translate either the letter or the spirit: indeed, it often appears to be aiming for an expressionism as intense as that of *Erwartung* or *Wozzeck*. It can also be alarmingly imprecise, claiming that 'The first tangible move towards dodecaphonic structure does not . . . appear until 1923', and that 'a series never constitutes a melodic or thematic idea in itself'. Bartók's String Quartet No. 3 should be dated 1927, not 1926, and the 'rocking' third at the end of the *Lyric Suite* is major, not minor. A particularly unfortunate misprint in a musical example adds a D to the octave Bs of the great climax in the interlude between scenes 2 and 3 of *Wozzeck* (Act III) — this stands uncorrected from the Italian original.

Rognoni can be much more stimulating and perceptive in his more general, cultural-historical comments, as when he links Schoenberg and Webern to Husserl, or describes *Moses und Aron* and Schoenberg's drama *Der biblische Weg* as reflecting a period of history when 'action could render every concept of liberty, of civilisation and human progress dangerously ambiguous'. He also argues, interestingly, that it was Webern's search for 'immediacy of expression' and his 'craving for purity' which led him to shun Sprechgesang. But the drawbacks already detailed, together with the complete absence of any post-Moldenhauer information about Webern, or post-Maegaard facts about Schoenberg, mean that the book is of little practical use to students today. Made available when new, it would have been stimulatingly comprehensive and idiosyncratic: today, both tone and content are anachronistic. It has come too late.

Calder's other publication is also a translation in which one is continually made aware of how difficult that task was: it, too, is well garnished with misprints and lacks any sign of firm editing. H. H. Stuckenschmidt's *Arnold Schoenberg: His Life, World and Work* first appeared as *Schönberg: Leben, Umwelt, Werk* in 1974,¹⁸ when it was criticised for its diffuseness and laboured style. Even the experienced hands of Humphrey Searle have failed to transform these defects into virtues and there are moments when one can only suspect that Mr Searle has deliberately inserted an awkwardness simply to liven up the leaden prose. Why else would he describe Zemlinsky as 'one of the most peculiar musicians of his generation', or refer to the performance of *Erwartung* by 'a singer and

¹⁰'Sets and Nonsets in Schoenberg's Atonal Music', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Fall-Winter 1972), p. 43.

¹¹New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.

¹²See particularly William E. Benjamin's essay in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Fall-Winter 1974), pp. 170-190, and the comments of Hubert S. Howe, Jr. in *Proceedings of the American Society of University Composers*, Vols. 9 & 10 (1974-5), pp. 118-124.

¹³See especially Forte's article 'Sets and Nonsets in Schoenberg's Atonal Music', *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Fall-Winter 1972), pp. 43-64.

¹⁴Op. cit., p. 63.

¹⁵*Beihefte zum Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 17 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977).

¹⁶Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1954.

¹⁷Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 1966.

¹⁸Zurich: Atlantis-Verlag.

a producer', or to the fact that Marya Freund 'spoke and sang *Pierrot Lunaire*'? Mr Searle is even forced to divert himself, and us, by imitating Germanic English and describing the 'tendency to the compression of the forms'. Simply in terms of factual accuracy, the book is a considerable achievement, though those with specialised information have pointed to minor errors,¹⁹ and the author evidently did not have access to Maegaard's work on, for example, the dating of the Five Piano Pieces, op. 23. Yet, in spite of the multitude of facts which the book contains, there is a pervasive vagueness or evasiveness when it comes to considering why certain events took place and, in particular, what drove Schoenberg to act in the way he did. In one respect, this blankness serves a purpose: there is so little discussion of Schoenberg's motivation that one senses the simple inevitability of even his most extreme leaps into the future: he merely did what was necessary and right. Yet such apparent certainty of purpose emerged from a sequence of conflicts, crises, illnesses and upheavals which gives Schoenberg's life an almost heroic quality. Perhaps fin-de-siècle Vienna, or Berlin in the 1920s, was an improbable location for heroism, but the individuality and integrity, as well as the arrogance and impossibility of the man, all but disappear in the grey pages of the Stuckenschmidt-Searle narrative.

Fortunately, there are some good things to reward the patient reader. The author quotes liberally from unpublished letters such as those to Richard Strauss and Walter Goehr, as well as from Schoenberg's Berlin Diary. Stuckenschmidt can draw on his own long memory when discussing the fluctuations of Schoenberg's finances, recalling that in 1924 the composer was again 'able to assume an elegance in his clothes which he had not been able to afford for many years'. And if the author, in his role of official biographer, is irritatingly pious in failing to clarify the nature of the composer's many personal disagreements and quarrels, he leaves us in no doubt about the greatest tragedy of all: Schoenberg simply had too little time for composition: 6,000 pages of orchestration of other composers' scores in Vienna, heavy teaching commitments in Berlin and America. No wonder he was often ill and invariably bad tempered. But the official biographer is always in a difficult position, with living relatives and associates to placate. In this sense, and with the archives presumably far from exhausted, it is still too soon...

The dangers of premature conclusions (particularly of those which either damn or canonise) are even more evident in the case of Alban Berg. George Perle has already put Bergians deeply in his debt through his analytical work, the most recent example of which, 'Berg's Master Array of Interval Cycles',²⁰ is of particular fascination, but there can have been no more readable articles on any of the twelve-note composers than his 'The Secret Programme of the Lyric Suite'.²¹ At times these articles seem to combine the best of *Perspectives of New Music* with the 'best' of the *News of the World*. Such revelations naturally postpone the completion of any would-be definitive life and works, while making the worthy efforts of Redlich, Reich and Carner seem that much more prehistoric. I've already heard the first rumbles from those disposed to dispute some, if not all, of Perle's interpretations of this new evidence, however, so the subject is far from closed, and should absorb the attention while we wait for Cerha's completion of *Lulu* to be unveiled by Boulez and Chêreau in Paris — an event now scheduled for February 1979.

Boulez' own reiteration, in his *Conversations with Célestin Deliège*,²² of the failings of Schoenberg and Berg (and Webern most of the time) in fighting the good modern fight, ending with his statement of belief in the need to dismiss one's heritage lock, stock and sonata form, is good, knockabout stuff, even if it leaves his own positively derivative *Rituel* in a question-mark shaped spotlight. Nor did it prevent the indefatigable bearded of tradition from attending the official opening of the Schoenberg Institute in America. This establishment has already produced three issues of a new journal,²³ offering a few tempting scraps of analysis and biography, though as yet nothing to match the grandly protracted centenary tributes which have been appearing in *Perspectives*. With such an enterprise as Jane Coppock's 83-page article 'Ideas for a Schoenberg Piece'²⁴ (on the third of the Five Orchestral Pieces, op. 16) it is difficult to know which to admire more, the industry of the author or the ingenuity of the printer. Fortunately such efforts preclude glib summary and premature assessment. A final, very different, European Schoenbergian exercise may be included here, however. Giselher Schubert's *Schoenbergs frühe Instrumentation: Untersuchungen zu den Gurreliedern, zu op. 5 und op. 8*²⁵ may appear to be yet another earnest thesis, yet it is rather more comprehensive than its title suggests, with brief discussions of the structural role of instrumentation in opp. 22 and 36: it also has one of the most interesting general bibliographies to be found in any specialised Schoenberg publication, with rare dissertations and articles which range some way beyond the central subject-matter of the book.

In his later years as a performer, Boulez has seemed to give greater emphasis to Schoenberg and Berg than to Webern, and so have writers, deterred, perhaps, by the pre-emptive strike of Hans Moldenhauer in the mid-1960s: it's remarkable that the Moldenhauer-Irvine *Perspectives*,²⁶ the short study by Wildgans,²⁷ the Searle translation of Kolneder's first effort²⁸ and the volume of sketches²⁹ all appeared between 1966 and 1968. The journals have not been silent, of course, and there has been much activity in the Nibelheim of the dissertation writers. Some theses have been of great interest, even if the largest to achieve publication, Friedhelm Döhl's *Weberns Beitrag zur Stilwende der neuen Musik*,³⁰ is actually an unrevised reproduction of a 1966 thesis and therefore not as up to date with periodical and thesis literature as its date of publication suggests. Walter Kolneder's second study of Webern — *Anton Webern: Genesis und Metamorphose eines Stils*³¹ — is a sad disappointment, with its tilting at analytical windmills, which may not have been totally imaginary in the days of *Die Reihe*, but which have long since disappeared save from dusty minds. Much more rewarding have been the

²²London: Eulenburg, c1976.

²³The *Journal of the Arnold Schoenberg Institute* appears three times a year. Information on subscription rates is available from the Arnold Schoenberg Institute, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California 90007.

²⁴*Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Fall-Winter 1975 [c1977]), pp. 3-85.

²⁵Baden Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1975.

²⁶Comp. Hans Moldenhauer, ed. Demar Irvine, *Anton von Webern: Perspectives* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966).

²⁷Friedrich Wildgans, trans. E. T. Roberts and H. Searle, *Anton Webern* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1966).

²⁸Walter Kolneder, trans. H. Searle, *Anton Webern: An Introduction to His Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968).

²⁹Anton von Webern, *Sketches (1926-45): Facsimile reproductions from the composer's autograph sketches in the Moldenhauer Archive* (New York: Carl Fischer, 1968).

³⁰Munich: Katzbichler, 1976.

³¹Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag für Unterricht, Wissenschaft und Kunst, 1974.

¹⁹See Hans Keller's review in *The Spectator*, Vol. 239, No. 7793 (November 12, 1977), pp. 22-23.

²⁰*The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (January 1977), pp. 1-30.

²¹*The Musical Times*, Vol. 118, Nos. 1614-1616 (August-October 1977).

exemplary criticisms of the published editions of pre-op. 1 material in C. A. Dimond's 'Fourteen Early Songs of Anton Webern'³² and Reinhard Gerlach's 'Die Handschriften der Dehmel-Lieder von Anton Webern: textkritische Studien'.³³ Another relevant and thought-provoking study is William Wilsen's 'Equitonicity as a Measure of the Evolution towards Atonality in the pre-Opus 1 Songs of Anton Webern'.³⁴ Nor should the student of Webern overlook the three articles by Roger Smalley on the published sketches.³⁵

The fact that this essay has only been able to mention a small proportion of the more substantial, more valuable or simply more recent material might be taken as sufficient indication of a healthy state of affairs. The music itself may still not be played all that much, though records appear now and again (most recently, the Juilliard's gripping set of the Schoenberg quartets).³⁶ The

vastly enlarged version of Schoenberg's *Style and Idea* has been out since 1975³⁷ and a translation of the complete *Harmonielehre* is promised in the very near future.³⁸ Even those final arbiters of intellectual respectability, GCE and degree syllabuses, include atonal and twelve-note music. So, even if, because of the vagaries of publishers, some material appears too late to be accurate or illuminating while other material appears too early even for prevailing academic tastes, the sheer distance between the two extremes is a measure of vitality as well as of confusion. Perhaps this will only be reduced by, not fewer words, but fewer words about words? I have certainly written more than enough on this occasion; and even if you read every word of the writers I've written about, the music will still be waiting patiently when you've finished, using its own language to make its own sense. To misquote and mangle Wordsworth and Schoenberg's Moses: the word is too much with us — let us learn to enjoy the lack of it.

³²DMA diss., University of Oregon, 1971; University Microfilms, 72-14,722.

³³*Archiv für Musikwissenschaft*, Vol. 29 (1972), pp. 93-114.

³⁴PhD diss., Florida State University, 1975; University Microfilms 75-15,510.

³⁵'Webern's Sketches', *Tempo*, Nos. 112-114 (March, June, September 1975).

³⁶CBS Masterworks 79304 (three records).

³⁷Ed. Leonard Stein, trans. Leo Black (London: Faber and Faber, 1975).

³⁸Trans. R. E. Carter, *Theory of Harmony* (London: Faber and Faber, forthcoming, estimated price £22.50).

SCORES RECEIVED

Malcolm Arnold

Two John Donne Songs (Roberton Publications)

Christopher Brown

Hexham Mass (Roberton Publications)

John Buller

Proenca (G. Schirmer)

The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies (G. Schirmer)

George Butterworth (collector)

The Ploughboy's Glory (The English Folk Dance and Song Society)

John Cage

Etudes Australes (Edition Peters)

Lyell Cresswell

Drones IV (Arts Lab Music Publications)

George Crumb

Dream Sequence (Images II) (Edition Peters)

Four Nocturnes (Night Music II) (Edition Peters)

Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III) (Edition Peters)

Peter Maxwell Davies

Ave Maris Stella (Boosey & Hawkes)

Dark Angels (Boosey & Hawkes)

Five Klee Pictures (Boosey & Hawkes)

Miss Donnithorne's Maggot (Boosey & Hawkes)

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Stevie's Ferry to Hoy (Boosey & Hawkes)

Symphony (Boosey & Hawkes)

The Two Fiddlers (libretto) (Boosey & Hawkes)

Vesalii Icones (Boosey & Hawkes)

Westerlings (Boosey & Hawkes)

Simon Emmerson

Variations (Arts Lab Music Publications)

Brian Ferneyhough

Four Miniatures (Edition Peters)

Sieben Sterne (Edition Peters)

Sonatas for String Quartet (Edition Peters)

Time and Motion Study I (Edition Peters)

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Vendre le vent (Edition Peters)

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Interview with Zygmunt Krauze

I FIRST MET Zygmunt Krauze at The Ohio State University in the spring of 1972 after an interesting lecture-recital he had given on new literature and notational systems for the piano. The following autumn I received a Fulbright-Polish Government Grant to work in the Experimental Music Studio of Polish Radio, Warsaw and got to know him much better. Krauze is quiet, good-looking and very intense. He has a pianist's hands and a steel grip. There seems to be a kind of Lisztian magnetism about him but although he has many acquaintances he has only a few close friends.

Krauze had been unknown to me either as a composer or a pianist before I met him on his 1972 tour of the USA and I am sure that at that time he was unknown to the majority of American new music audiences. That autumn when I arrived in Warsaw I found to my surprise that he, together with several other young Polish composers, were practically household names. All his music was published and several recordings of his music, as well as of his performances both as a soloist and with his ensemble, The Music Workshop, were available. His large orchestral work *Folk Music* was performed at the Warsaw Autumn Festival that year and his ensemble played to enthusiastic standing-room-only crowds. I was impressed. It was certainly a far cry from the lonely recital I had heard him give in the USA a few months earlier.

At this time I was new to the European contemporary music scene and, while I was impressed with Krauze's popularity in Poland, I suspected that his work was not well-known elsewhere. However, during the year and a half I spent working in Poland and travelling abroad to festivals in both Eastern and Western Europe I began to realise that his name appeared on the programmes of nearly all of them. Also about this time his works began to be published not only by PWM, the Polish publishing house, but by West European publishers: Edition Modern, Moeck and Universal. New recordings also seemed to be coming on to the market continually.

Over the course of several years performing at festivals and new music centres on the Continent I have been able to observe that Zygmunt Krauze is currently one of the most sought-after composers on the European contemporary music scene. His music has been performed at nearly every major festival in Europe and he currently has more commissions than he can complete. But in spite of his great popularity on the Continent, he remains largely unknown in Britain. A tour with his ensemble that is planned for the near future should help introduce him and his music to this country.

Krauze was born in Warsaw in 1938. He studied the piano with Maria Wiłkomirska and composition with Kazimierz Sikorski (father of another interesting young Polish composer, Tomasz Sikorski) at what was then the Warsaw Conservatory and later did postgraduate work with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. In 1966 he won the Gaudeamus Competition for Interpreters of New Music. In the mid-1960s he organised an ensemble of four musicians which grew out of work he and others had been doing with Josef Patkowski at the Experimental Music Studio of Polish Radio; the group took its title from this organisation and became known as *Warsztat Muzyczny*, 'The Music Workshop'. He has received many prizes and awards for composition including a year as a composer-in-residence in West Berlin on a DAAD grant. At present he lives in Warsaw with his actress wife Ewa and divides his time between composing and touring, both as a piano

soloist and with his ensemble.

The following 'interview' is compiled from conversations I have had with Krauze over the past few years; the various excerpts do not necessarily appear in chronological order.

STEPHEN MONTAGUE What are your plans at present? I know that in the past you have done quite a lot of touring as a piano soloist. Are you planning to continue or are your composing commitments becoming so great that you will phase this out of your career?

ZYGMUNT KRAUZE No, I don't plan to stop playing. I will keep performing as a soloist, especially a programme I call 'The Last Recital' which is a kind of pot-pourri including more than 40 different works.

SM In one concert!

ZK Yes. Classic, Romantic and contemporary works. But I don't play all of the pieces: I sometimes play just part of a piece or repeat a section of it in various ways. I combine some of these segments with pre-recorded tape. It's a kind of retrospective of my entire experience as a pianist: doing theatre music, 'happenings', normal playing like Brahms, Chopin, Rakhmaninov and the new repertoire. It lasts about 50 minutes. But I don't consider 'The Last Recital' my piece, it's just something I put together. I've performed it in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Budapest and Cleveland. In Copenhagen, for example, I did it each night for eight nights and each time I performed it was interesting for me because it was slightly different.

SM Would you tell me a little about the development of your ensemble, The Music Workshop?

ZK We started in 1963 organising concerts of new music and improvisation with the radio. At that time the group was quite large and the number of performers varied with each work we did. I realised after a time that this was not the best way to make performances, so I formed a group consisting of four musicians: Edward Borowiak (trombone), Witold Gałaska (cello), Czesław Pałkowski (clarinet) and myself as the pianist. I selected musicians who were enthusiastic about performing new music and who were not solely interested in making money. This was in 1967. At that time there was, of course, no repertoire for this kind of group, so I asked my composer friends to write music for us. By the following year, 1968, we had several pieces, mostly by Polish composers who have since become internationally known: Kotoński, Szalonek, Dobrowolski, Serocki and Górecki. I kept asking people to write for our group and now we have enough music for ten different concerts! Some internationally known composers who wrote for us are: Feldman, Kagel, Ferrari, Nørgård, Nordheim, Lorentzen, Chiari, Denisov, Globokar, Rzewski and Erb. We worked in that way with repertoire written especially for the group from 1968 to 1971. We never perform pieces which do not use all of us in some way. What surprised me though was that for such a difficult combination of instruments each of the pieces that was written for us was quite unique: that was very satisfying. After about 1971 I became increasingly interested in folk music. I started to collect folk instruments in 1972. The group now has more than 30, among them are hurdy-gurdies, bagpipes, folk violins, bells, fifes, etc.

SM Are all of these instruments Polish? And are they old or especially built for your group?

ZK All of them are Polish and all of them have been made especially for us by Polish folk artists. Some of the instruments are quite rare: for instance, the hurdy-gurdy made by an old man in Zywiec — he is the only person in Poland that still knows how to make this instrument. I wrote a piece for these instruments [*Idyll*] which also uses a pre-recorded tape taken from the sounds of nature. I used these instruments in *Fête galante et pastorale* which was done for the 1974 Graz Festival at the Schloss Eggenberg in a spatial version, and at the 1975 Warsaw Autumn Festival in the concert version using a symphony orchestra and a group of four musicians playing folk instruments.

SM Where does the group go from here? Are you going to continue working with your other repertoire as well?

ZK We will continue playing our other repertoire since we have many good pieces in it, but we are also going to be doing more with folk instruments. I would say at present our typical programme would consist of standard pieces for the first half of the concert and works using folk instruments in the second half. This season [1975] we are using this programme for our tour of Germany, Belgium, Holland, the USA and Canada.

SM Would you tell me a little bit more about the work you were commissioned to produce for the Graz Festival?

ZK It was a piece for the 26 rooms of Eggenberg castle. There were 13 tape recorders which transmitted the music (via loudspeakers) to 13 rooms. In addition there were live performances by six chamber groups placed in six other rooms. Thus, there was music in 19 rooms and silence in the remaining seven. *Fête galante et pastorale* as it was called, was performed eight times during the festival and each performance lasted about 50 minutes. Many kinds of music were important to me in writing this piece: gypsy music, Italian folk music, primitive music, cembalo, religious music and Mahler-like music. The idea was that people could walk through the various rooms and listen to what they wanted for as long as they wanted. The pattern they chose for walking through the rooms created their own personal structures for the piece.

SM Your Piano Concerto was commissioned for the Donaueschingen Festival 1976 and performed by you at the 1977 Warsaw Autumn Festival. Could you describe the piece?

ZK The piece evolves from some basic material which is tonally related and interconnected, but quite static in its movement. It is first of all, however, a virtuoso concerto for a pianist, and that was my first consideration. I wanted it to be a logical extension of the long concerto tradition from Chopin, Hummel and other Romantic composers.

SM When you say that it has a kind of static fabric, is it in any way an outgrowth of your *Orchestra Piece No. 1* or *No. 2* in which a large band of sound shifts very slightly internally while maintaining a kind of basic outer shape?

ZK You may see it as an outgrowth, but I think it is somewhat different. First of all the piano part varies quite extensively and the orchestra imitates the piano part; however, there are no real contrasts in the piece. It consists of seven sections and each section is rather homogeneous. The sections are not posed as contrasts, but rather blend into each other.

SM You mentioned the use of folk instruments in several of your works. Is there any use of folk material in the Piano Concerto?

ZK No. But I still intend to work with folk music, particularly Scandinavian folk music at the moment.

SM I understand that you wrote the Piano Concerto knowing that you would be playing the solo part.

ZK Yes, and I must say it is quite different for me and

quite difficult to compose when I know that I will play the solo part myself. I feel that not only could I have written the piece much faster, but that it would also be easier for me to compose if someone else were to play it. Since I will be the soloist I must make it practical and really 'playable' for myself.

SM How did you set about writing the Concerto?

ZK I started writing it by improvising ... I think for more than a year. I repeated the fragments I liked best and finally recorded the ones that pleased me. Then from the recording I transcribed these fragments. Finally I arranged these passages in the most comfortable and practical order. That was the process I used in creating the solo part.

SM When you compose do you think of a sound you would like to create and then find the instruments which might produce it, or do you let the available instruments determine the sounds which you might use?

ZK I am always close to real sound: when I write I'm thinking of the groups that I am going to write for.

SM What do you consider your most important work to date?

ZK The Piano Concerto.

SM Is there a recording of it?

ZK Warsaw Autumn Festival makes recordings of all the Polish composers' works played at the festival.

SM All the works I know of yours do not involve electronic sounds other than electric guitar or organ or something amplified. Are you interested in synthesizers or any other kind of so-called electronic music?

ZK No. Maybe that's because I am a pianist constantly playing with a chamber group, but I really have no feeling for these machines. It may be foolish to say so, but I feel that I cannot control them and the sounds they produce; I can control the buttons, etc., but somehow I feel that I cannot control the music.

SM How do you view the influence of electronic music? Do you think that new music is developing toward the electronic field or perhaps away from it?

ZK I think that electronic music is only one way and not a very wide one at that. What is really important is the quality of the music itself. It doesn't matter whether or not it is electronic.

SM Sometimes it is interesting and often times an enlightening insight to a composer to ask him what composers or works of other composers he finds interesting.

ZK That's an embarrassing question, but ... OK. For example, thinking of the festival which we've just heard [1975] I enjoyed the pieces by the Danish composers, particularly Per Nørgård's *Waves* for percussion solo: a very good piece. I also liked Arne Nordheim's *Dinosaurius* for accordion and tape. I thought Tomasz Sikorski's *Other Voices* was good ... fine. Let's see, what else. I admired Nono's piece very much: *Como una ola de fuerza y luz* for soprano, piano, tape and orchestra.

SM Are you interested in political music? Do you feel that your music makes or attempts to make any kind of political statement?

SK No, I don't see my music as a vehicle for political expression.

SM Could you tell me a little about a composer's life in Poland? How does he get started?

ZK The young composer studies composition for five years at the conservatory. In the third year he can apply to become a candidate member of the Polish Composers' Union. The Union organises concerts of music every few months for its members, so by joining the member has the opportunity to have his works performed, and, of course, to meet the older members of the Union. At the end of his studies there is an annual competition organised by the

Union. The first prize is a year's study abroad. The second prize is a two-week trip to one of the socialist countries.

SM You studied in Paris after you finished conservatory. Did you go to study specifically with Boulanger?

ZK It's a kind of tradition here: she is a kind of mother to Polish composers.

SM To many of the older generation of American and English composers too. But anyway, back to the third prize from the Composers' Union.

ZK Oh yes, the third prize. That's not too impressive, it's free tickets to the Warsaw Autumn Festival. But it's important to have the prize to discover and reward talent. But anyway, back to the Composers' Union. When a student finishes and becomes a full-fledged member of the Union he can then apply to the Ministry of Culture for a grant to write music.

SM How does the Ministry determine who gets the grants?

ZK All members of the Union get grants, but what actually happens is that a composer asks the Ministry once or twice a year for a grant. He can't get a second grant until he finishes his score and turns it in to the Ministry. Many composers do other work like writing for the radio, but it is possible to live on the money from these grants.

SM Does the Ministry have any regulations concerning what kind of music you produce for this money, or is it carte blanche?

ZK Carte blanche — 'absolutne'. There are no regulations. There is a jury that decides to whom to award the grant, but this jury consists of members of the Union and of course the Ministry. The discussion though is not about style, but about dividing the money they have with the number of applicants.

SM How do they decide what to pay you? Do they pay more for an orchestral score than a solo flute score?

ZK Yes, that's fixed in a kind of price list. It sounds awful, but ... the price depends on the number of instruments and the length.

SM Would this then encourage composers to write more orchestral music than chamber or solo works?

ZK No, I don't think so.

SM So any member of the Union can just apply for these grants one after the other?

ZK Yes, well you know our friend Tomasz Sikorski. He's been on these grants for years. There is also the possibility of doing a piece first then taking it to the Ministry and having them award you the money just the same as the other way round.

SM Could we go back to the Composers' Union for just a minute? Who determines the young applicant's credentials? How does he finally get in?

ZK There is a jury of the most prestigious composers. This jury looks at the applicant's music and determines its worth. To become a member of the Union each candidate first becomes a member for a trial period. Later the membership can be permanent.

SM How many composers are there in the Union?

ZK About 200, including musicologists. The rules are essentially the same for musicologists: they must be active in musicological activities to be a member of the Union. There is also a union for light, popular music.

SM What are the advantages of being a member of the Composers' Union?

ZK A member has free medical care, transportation in Poland: there are special resort places for members, etc.

SM Composers who are not members of the Union are paid less than Union members for the same job, for instance, in doing the music for a film. I think it's about

half the Union's scale.

ZK Yes, that's about right.

SM Does the Union help you get your music published?

ZK Only perhaps indirectly, since several members of the Union are on the board of PWM. PWM too has a kind of tradition of publishing everything that is performed at the Warsaw Autumn Festival. As you know, all the Polish pieces are recorded and usually issued on disc the day after the concert.

SM Are recording contracts controlled by the Union?

ZK Yes, this is controlled by the Union. I was here in the Composers' Union lounge yesterday and I noticed there was a meeting of the Polskie Nagrania [Polish Record Company] jury to determine what was to be recorded, and most of them were from the Composers' Union. But the situation is not ideal yet: we would like to have more new music recorded and we are pushing Polskie Nagrania's directors more and more.

SM In the discussions I've had with you these few times, I've gathered that Poland takes pretty good care of its composers. Are there any disadvantages to being a Polish composer in the 1970s?

ZK We are still not happy with the amount of new music the Warsaw Philharmonic plays although you say that you have heard a new or relatively new Polish work on the programme nearly every week. I think there is some feeling of isolation here, but certainly the Festival dispels much of that. All things considered, being a composer from a small country like Poland has greater advantages than being a composer from a large country such as the United States where there is less interest in the creator of new music and almost no governmental support for him.

Two works by Zygmunt Krauze — *Idyll* and *Soundscape* — will be played by the composer's own group, the Warsaw Music Workshop, on their Arts Council Contemporary Music Network tour of eleven British cities, October 15-29.

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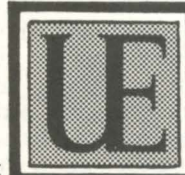
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Tony Coe's 'Zeitgeist'

THE IDEA of a musical work based on the concept of the spirit unfolding through time might seem admirable, if potentially gargantuan, or it might seem absurdly pretentious. Words, however, do not remain fixed in their meaning: 'Zeitgeist' has been transformed from its original Hegelian, dynamic origin into a static concept concentrating on an era or, more particularly, a closely defined stage of development that, despite the 'Geist', is not necessarily spiritual.

That a former sideman of Humphrey Lyttleton should be responsible for a work thus titled (and relevantly so, despite jazz composers' notorious attitudes towards such fineries), a work, moreover, that most successfully fuses knowledge of a number of techniques of composition and performance so that it may be characterised as neither 'jazz' nor 'straight' (nor even one of those curious hybrids) might well cause surprise depending upon one's view of Lyttleton or jazz players in general. But Tony Coe is very much a musician who defies categorisation: he has worked with both John Dankworth and Alan Hacker — a saxophonist whose musical reading centres on Forte and Perle. Coe is a quiet individual, unassuming to the point of reticence; he was sufficiently influenced by his experience of National Service to adopt beliefs verging on anarchism. His composed music has the same qualities of individualism: this is particularly true of *Zeitgeist*.

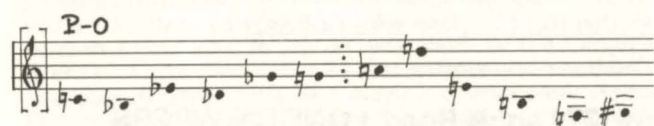
Zeitgeist was written four to five years ago with the aid of an Arts Council bursary. These awards are not so newsworthy now as far as jazz musicians are concerned, though undoubtedly still too few. It is not unheard of for, say, Don Rendell or Stan Tracey to obtain one; whether lesser lights are so lucky is another matter.

Coe's piece owes a lot to the Arts Council since they also made the recording possible. This fact is not made clear on the sleeve (the sleeve-notes by Coe, Richard Rodney Bennett and Sue Stedman-Jones are otherwise exemplary), which is a pity when it is considered how much stick that body has to take — doing good by stealth is all very well, but ... The recording was made in 1976 and released late in 1977 (EMI Lansdowne Series, EMC 3207, £3.89). Despite a pressing fault in some of the early copies the record sold reasonably well in its early months of issue though it received little critical attention.

The lack of attention from the critics arises from the difficulty of categorising the work. For example, the (favourable) review in *Records and Recording*¹ was written by Kevin Stephens, the 'straight' contemporary music reviewer, while in *The Observer*² Dave Gelly reviewed it in company with *Elvis Presley In Concert* and *Out of their Skulls* by The Pirates. Gelly found it 'formidable ... but ... a kind of landmark'.

Zeitgeist is based on a twelve-note series (Ex. 1) and, more particularly, its two hexachords. The work alternates fairly closed sections with transitional

Example 1



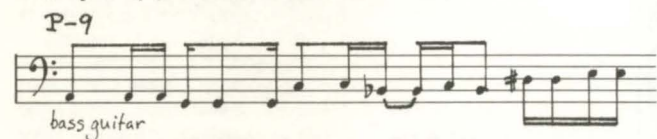
¹ February 1978.

² January 29, 1978.

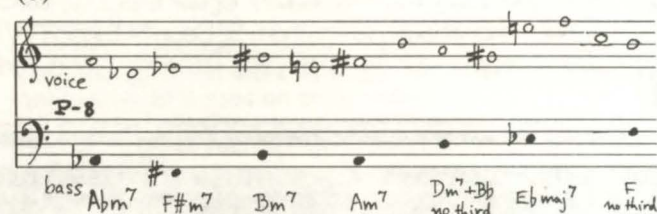
interludes. Two illustrations the use of the series are shown in Ex. 2: (a) is an accompaniment in rock style that characterises the second of the main sections; (b) gives the pitches of the tune and bass from the beginning of the fifth section — the potential hit single from the album/the positive poetic centrepiece of the work/the changes around which there is the most jazz-based improvisation. That Ex. 2(b) is all of these and more will demonstrate the flexibility of Coe's approach to the work and its constituent parts; the problem of categorisation is inevitable.

Alban Berg, to whose memory Coe has dedicated the

Example 2(a)



(b)



work, was a similarly open-minded composer. Bennett writes on the sleeve: 'Berg's music grew from a brilliantly fertile imagination controlled by a ... planned and articulated structure'. He believes that *Zeitgeist* has this balance, something that will be confirmed by listening to it. It is a fitting tribute to Berg in its openness of technique, whether in the use of the series, the improvisation sections, or, most significantly of all perhaps, the personnel on the record. Coe has made use of his experience in all forms of music to produce a true synthesis rather than the all-too-common glue bond: it is this experiential aspect of the composition and performance that gives the work its conviction.

Berg is honoured in other, more accidental ways. The drowning of Wozzeck finds an echo in the imitative chromatic lines towards the end, while there is a splendid out-of-tune piano accompaniment to the inversion of the melody in Ex. 2(b) later in the same section. Coe intended the latter to convey a 'night-club' atmosphere; the recording certainly helps this impression. The work falls into sections based on Jill Robin's poems separated by transitions and interludes of varying kinds and varying definition: a clarinet cadenza at one point, an ensemble 'tumult' at another, a rhythmic pattern at a third. There may be a definite break between sections (just before 'Love Song') or a gradual merging (the first transition). There is, too, a variable amount of interrelationship between setting and transition.

The poems comment on modern civilisation in a generally pessimistic way although the work ends on a note of hope. Coe has not used work-painting in any thoroughgoing way, although the opening pitch and its gradual absorption by the other eleven symbolises a doomed flower at the start and the eternal spirit of man at the close. The first transition is, says Coe, 'expressive of

Table 1

Section	Poem	Music
Introduction	Take this flower (spoken)	Exposition of series material merging into
I	Ah, this world (hummed — solo song)	First tune
Transition		Polyrhythmic texture merging into
II	Join the dance (duet)	Bass riff (Ex. 2(a))
Transition		Upward chromatic lines continue, interspersed with rhythmic reminiscences of II
III	I am confused (spoken)	
Transition		Improvised duet for trumpet and bass clarinet leading into
IV	Brother and sister (duet)	
Transition		Notated duet for chromatic timpani
	(side 2)	
V	Love me now (duet)	Ex. 2(b). Most nearly closed form of all the sections. Verse; solos (guitar, flugelhorn); verse inverted; verse original.
Transition		Clarinet cadenza (Hacker)
VI	We are together (duet)	Verse; solos (soprano sax; trumpet; vibes; guitar); verse merging into
Coda		A disintegrative section in which texture of VI is overwhelmed by 'chorale-like' canon which, in retrograde, ends the work on the note with which it began.

the dissonance and relentlessness of our industrial age and also symbolises the vicissitudes of modern life'.

The rough scheme of the work is given in Table 1. ('Verse' here refers to the poetic verse rather than verse as opposed to chorus.) The earlier sections are short while V is quite extended. The 'song sections', V, VI and, to a lesser extent, IV are tunes with harmonic accompaniment derived partially or fully from the initial series. The melodic writing in these songs is varied but totally convincing in its context. It may be argued that the scheme set out in Table 1 makes too much reference to the poems and makes too many divisions in the earlier part of the work. However, each of the sections (and, for that matter, the transitions) has a musical character which distinguishes it strongly from its surroundings though it is linked to them by the use of twelve-note technique.

Twelve-note technique is omnipresent in both accompaniments and textural sections (the music is often triple-layered; melody; accompaniment (harmonic); further accompaniment (textural)) and is a feature of several of the solos, e.g. the notated duet for chromatic timpani and in the improvisatory duet for trumpet and bass clarinet. In the latter the series is the basis for improvisation over an ensemble which enters to deny the soloists successive notes of the series; this culminates in a twelve-note chord from which the two soloists descend into the beginning of the next section.

In such a flexible work, however, there is no slavish adherence to the technique. Coe says of the opening: 'keeping strictly to the series (apart from treating it as two separate hexachords) would have produced this at the opening: [Ex. 3(a)]. I felt that the dissonance [Ex. 3(b)] was not poignant enough, preferring [Ex. 3(c)] which necessitated the unfolding of the series, in *this* case, in rough order: [Ex. 3(d)].' In this empiricism the example, if not the influence, of Berg may once again be seen.

Another interesting example of Coe's use of the technique occurs throughout the work. A hexachord is outlined in one part, often melodically; the other hexachord then enters with a double function: to

Example 4

P-10

6 5 3

voice

3 4 2

clarinets

7-12

piano

The musical score for P-10 is written for three parts: voice, clarinets, and piano. The voice part is in treble clef with a common time signature. It begins with a half note G4 (labeled 6), followed by a quarter note F#4 (labeled 5), and then a half note E4. A triplet of eighth notes (D4, C4, B3) is marked with a bracket and the number 3. The clarinets part is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a half note G4 (labeled 3), followed by a quarter note F#4 (labeled 4), and then a half note E4 (labeled 2). The piano part is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a half note G4 (labeled 7-12), followed by a quarter note F#4, and then a half note E4. A triplet of eighth notes (D4, C4, B3) is marked with a bracket and the number 3. The piano part also features a block of chords in the final measure.

Example 3(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

complete the series but also to substitute for a tonal chord in a jazz context, perhaps leading into and thus emphasising the first beat of the next bar, perhaps as accompaniment (Ex. 4).

The piece moves predominantly in regular pulse; there is no organisation of the durations save that dictated by textural demands, either purely or associated with the type of pitch manipulation mentioned above, although canon and its associated techniques is a frequent and vitally structural feature of the music.

Coe's mixture of tonal progressions, textural writing and twelve-note technique may seem like recipe for an indulgent mishmash; in fact these techniques are balanced

very deftly. In this he is helped considerably by the poems and also by the performance.

In this work the performers are on crucial importance and here Coe is very fortunate. Although mentioning individuals in an ensemble context such as this is invidious, special mention must be made of Daryl Runswick on string and Fender basses, who provides exactly the right support in every section and uses both as *musical* instruments. The two vocalists, Mary Thomas and Norma Winstone are superb, while all the instrumental solos, whether notated or improvised, are taken with a distinction befitting some of the best musicians in the country. The mixing and production are a joy to listen to. Coe wrote many of the parts with individuals in mind, e.g. Alan Hacker's wide range of techniques is exploited in the last transition.

The mixture of Matrix on one side and Norma Winstone and Kenny Wheeler on the other works very well; this is one aspect of the calculated balance of dichotomies that, with a lesser creative imagination than Coe's, would disintegrate into meaninglessness. Given that it's an ensemble situation, however, Coe is once again fortunate in his conductor, Bob Cornford, who binds the work together very well.

To an audience hardened to the intricacies of total serialism, systemic music or a historicist viewpoint, *Zeitgeist* could seem simple, almost naive. Coe's use of the series, even given his canons and retrogrades, is not particularly difficult to hear: he is concerned more with communicating through the medium of his experience than with hermetic technique. It would be a pity if direct communication of this sort became a vice when it is as coherent as it is here. The same could be said of the poems: somewhat naively anti-urban in their imagery, they are nonetheless justified and integrated into the work by their setting; in that they are a representation of the spirit of the time, the somewhat static development of the concept, they give the work its title.

The comparative simplicity of technique and 'message' is completed by the dependence of the work upon performance. This puts it into the context of jazz, along with works such as *Kaleidoscope of Rainbows* by Neil Ardley³ and the extended scores of Graham Collier, Kenny Wheeler and Barry Guy.⁴ Within this general area, however, it has its own distinct place. It has a substance of flexibility missing in Ardley's stricter work and mixture of textures not to be found in those of the other composers. This is not to decry the others, who are attempting different things with different materials, very successfully, too. The 'jazz' epithet is justified in the case of Coe's work by the emphasis placed on performance and, in this instance, by the performers themselves: the tone of the sustained notes at the opening — slightly inflected and 'dirty' — reveals that particular background. But these performers break out of this jazz categorisation and take the work *as heard* with them (the work *as composed* had already stepped outside the genre). There is thus a sort of tangled relationship between *Zeitgeist* and 'jazz', both affirming and denying; it is to the performers' credit that the potential gap between Coe's intention and their realisation of its never appears.

Coe is excellent at drawing unusual sounds from his ensemble. Quite apart from the use of the voice, and particularly Norma Winstone's improvisation, there are many instrumental sounds that reveal an ear for colour that unites his experiences with his imagination, e.g. an almost heterophonic use of electric piano, vibes, electric guitar and marimba foreground with a wind background in the third transition.

³ Gull Records.

⁴ For example, Graham Collier, *Darius* (Graham Collier Music, GCM 741), Kenny Wheeler Big Band, *Song for Someone* (Incus Records, Incus 10), Barry Guy with the London Jazz Composers Orchestra, *Ode for Jazz Orchestra* (Incus Records, Incus 6/7).

The achievement of *Zeitgeist* is one of balance: balance between twelve-note composition (which it *is*) and jazz-based improvisation (which it *does*); the balances between verses and transitions and between all the sections; the integration of the words into the work and their simultaneous organisation of it. Jazz composers tend to be frightened of words: not so Coe. *Zeitgeist* is a courageous piece, typical in its quiet insistence of the composer.

Originally taught the clarinet by a straight musician, he found himself (after the loathed Army) playing jazz with Lyttleton and Dankworth and leading his own quintet (there is a record, now deleted, from the early 1960s of the Tony Coe Quintet). He also found himself having composition lessons with Alfred Nieman and Nicholas Maw, found himself invited to join Matrix and now finds himself invited to join Matrix and now finds himself leading an excellent small group called Axel and contemplating another extended work. In talking to Coe one gets the impression that the deliberate and essertive side to his character is largely reserved for his music, written and performed⁵ and that he discovers himself in situations rather than engineering them. This is not to say that he is anybody's fool: quite the reverse, he has merely sorted out his priorities. He remains very much a working musician: on tour with the Kenny Wheeler Big Band one month (another Arts Council funding), with Axel another and much in demand in the recording studio. Clearly all this activity is necessary to him as a complete musician: the balance is reflected in the music of *Zeitgeist*.⁶

All this, tunes too, and — as an 'essential bonus' — *Zeitgeist* swings.

Music examples by express permission of the composer.

⁵ For example his solo in *Rainbow 5* on the Ardley record mentioned above.

⁶ Further information on Coe may be found in his entries in *Jazz Now*, the Jazz Centre Society Guide, ed. R. Cotterrell (London: Quartet Books, 1976) and in the *Encyclopaedia of Jazz*, ed. Leonard Feather (New York: Bonanza, 1970). He is also mentioned in Ian Carr's *Music Outside* (London: Latimer, 1973). Credited or not, Coe appears on many records, particularly those concerned with contemporary jazz.

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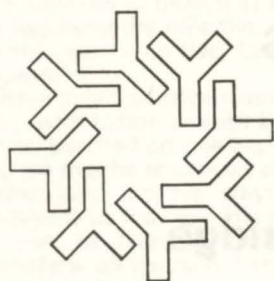
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Music and Society-4:

The Survival of Irish Traditional Music

IN AN EARLIER ARTICLE in this series,¹ Jim Sharpe contested the customary view that the coming of the industrial society dealt a death-blow to the folk music of England. He summarised his conclusions thus:

Firstly, . . . the industrialisation of this country did not produce a musical desert in which rustic ballad singers were replaced by a commercial entertainment industry and passive consumers. Secondly, . . . 'folk' or 'traditional' art, except perhaps when it is moribund, is never static: I suspect that the history of English traditional music is one of steady change, with new material, styles and instruments being absorbed at one end and old ones being discarded at the other.

In discussing recent developments in the traditional music of Ireland I shall be adding my support to Sharpe's point that it is in the nature of a healthy folk tradition for it to undergo change. It is my contention that the Irish folk music revival has resulted in something more than the resurrection of a music of purely antiquarian or curiosity value, but has led to the creation of a new and culturally valid genre.

My remarks will be centred upon the pioneering work of Seán Ó Riada (1931-1971) who with his band, the Ceoltóirí Chualainn, spearheaded the Irish traditional music revival. The large number of traditional artists and bands that have emerged in the past 20 years, becoming well known in both Ireland and Britain, owe him a considerable debt for his work in rescuing Irish traditional music from the grasp of a few Celtomaniacs and moulding it into a widely-heard and vital genre. My more general observations will be applicable not only to Ó Riada and the Ceoltóirí but to such bands as The Chieftains, Clannad, Planxty, The Boys of the Lough, and the Breton Alan Stivell.

Ó Riada's obscurity outside Ireland is countered in his native land by a wealth of myth and exaggeration which has rapidly shrouded his life and work. He was trained as a classical² composer (his large output includes orchestral, choral and vocal music, a three-act opera and a considerable quantity of incidental music to films and plays); in addition he was an able jazz pianist and also displayed a wide variety of non-musical talents.

In 1955, while honeymooning on the Dingle peninsula, Ó Riada met Seán d'Horá, a fisherman and *amhránaíocht ar an seán nós* singer (*seán nós* being the ancient Irish traditional singing style, characterised by its free rhythm and dense ornamentation). He quickly realised that he was more at home with what he termed the 'cyclical' (i.e. varied strophic) forms of Irish traditional music than with the classical forms of sonata and fugue which he had been taught at University College Cork, and claimed that 'the cyclic aesthetic of Irish art brings us close to modern music with its anti-classical basis'.³ He learnt to speak

Irish Gaelic, began styling himself Seán Ó Riada (he had been born John Reidy), read Irish literature avidly and absorbed as much as he could of the methodology and meaning of Irish traditional music.

The influence of traditional material and formal procedures permeated his classical music. For example, in his score for George Morrison's film *Mise Éire* (1956) he wrote variations on the popular air *Róisín Dubh* using the full colouristic resources of a symphony orchestra; conversely in his orchestral *Hercules dux Ferrariae* (1957) his serial material is submitted to folk-like variation procedures. He frequently used ornamentation of a traditional character in his classical work, often compressing linear ornaments into compound figurations: an example of this is to be found in his *Night Songs I*, where the common traditional device of striking the note immediately above the melody note to add emphasis before dropping to the main note is condensed to produce a series of clashing seconds.

By 1956 his home in Galloping Green, Dublin, had become a meeting place for sessions of traditional music: it was here that the Ceoltóirí Chualainn were assembled. They made their first public appearance as on-stage musicians in a production that year of Bryan Mac Mahon's *The Song of the Anvil* at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, where Ó Riada was musical director.

The most immediately noteworthy thing about the formation of the Ceoltóirí is that they were brought together as an ensemble: flute, tin whistle, Uilleann pipes, concertina, *bodhrán*, bones, harpsichord and fiddle. Hitherto, with a notable exception, traditional music had been an exclusively solo art.

The music in the living tradition is a solo art. For its effect it depends totally on its treatment of the melodic line, or ornamental and rhythmical diversity and on melodic variation.⁴

The exception, the only previous step in the direction of uniting Irish traditional music with ensemble performance, had been made by Séamus Clandillon when he formed the first ceilidh band in 1926. The ceilidh bands adapted Irish tunes to a popular music style of presentation. Originally these bands employed unison playing only, rendering the tunes in a highly simplified form, omitting the characteristic ornamentation, but by Ó Riada's time they had become integrated into the popular tradition, with harmonisations of the tunes and the introduction to the ensembles of piano, guitars, banjo, accordions, jazz kit, etc. Ceilidh bands play principally for dances and marches; in this they differ from the Ceoltóirí and their successors, who have performed on the concert platform and in the recording studio. Although some traditional musicians have little but disdain for ceilidh bands, all the members of the Ceoltóirí, most of whom were trained in such bands, rise to their defence. Michael Tubridy, flutist of the Ceoltóirí writes:

In my opinion there have been some excellent ceilidh bands in this country. The Ceoltóirí Chualainn merely produced a

¹ Jim Sharpe, 'The Impact of Industrial Society on English Folk Song — some observations', *Contact* 15 (Winter 1976-77), pp. 23-27. For the remaining articles in the series see *Contact* 14 (Autumn 1976), pp. 3-10 and *Contact* 18 (Winter 1977-78), pp. 10-15.

² Throughout this article the term 'classical' should be taken to mean 'composed art music'.

³ Sleeve notes to *The Vertical Man* (CSM 1).

⁴ Brendan Breathnach, *Ireland Today*, Bulletin of the Department of Foreign Affairs [Eire] No. 908 (May 15, 1977).

different sound and was presented in a different way. Ó Riada's primary aims behind the formation of the Ceoltóirí were (a) to provide an opportunity for the individual musician to express himself while performing within the overall structure of a group, (b) the introduction of instruments which had hitherto been lightly regarded by many people, such as the tin whistle, bodhrán and bones.⁵

Some investigation is obviously necessary if one is to determine the critical frame of reference to be adopted when listening to traditional music of the sort conceived of and performed by Ó Riada. The music calls upon the structures and forms of Irish folk music and makes use of traditional instruments, yet it is patently something other than folk music as it has been understood. Ó Riada was first and foremost a classical composer, and brought with him classical attitudes to performance. In addition, the mode of presentation is largely styled upon that of popular music.

Just what is folk music? It is tempting to follow Louis Armstrong's definition: 'All music's folk music: leastways I never heard of no horse making it.' However, in 1954 the International Folk Council drafted the following, somewhat narrower, definition.

Folk music is the product of a musical tradition that has been evolved through the process of oral transmission. The factors that shape the tradition are: (i) continuity which links the present with the past; (ii) variation which springs from the creative individual or the group; and (iii) selection by the community, which determines the form or forms in which the music survives.

The terms can be applied to music that has been evolved from rudimentary beginnings by a community uninfluenced by popular and art music, and it can likewise be applied to music which has originated with an individual composer and has subsequently been absorbed into the unwritten living tradition of a community.⁶

Some criticisms of such a definition must be put forward. It is derived from a formula outlined 60 years ago by Cecil Sharp⁷ and suffers from his somewhat insular conception of the nature of folk music. It was, in his terms, 'song created by the common people'. By 'common people' he explained that he meant 'the non-educated ... the unlettered whose faculties have undergone no formal training whatsoever, and who have never been brought into close enough contact with educated persons to be influenced by them'.⁸ Such a view is more than a little idealised: it ignores the importance of the 'broadside' ballad-selling of the 15th-18th centuries, the cosmopolitan nature of many medieval troubadours, the proficient musical literacy of many Scottish and Irish fiddlers and the *cránntaireáhd* notation of many Gaelic tunes. Indeed it is usually the literate members of rural communities who are the singers and instrumentalists. The American folk lorist Phillips Barry maintains that: 'No greater mistake was ever made than to suppose that ballads survive best among the most illiterate and ignorant.'⁹

These reservations noted, the Folk Council's definition is a useful beginning. How might we formulate in similar terms the essential ingredients of classical music? The following three factors must surely be fundamental.

(1) The basic requirement is literacy: transmission is not oral but by means of notation. This determines many aspects of the music itself: notation may act both as a limitation upon the classical composer's imagination and

as a tool to assist his intellect. For example, the complexities of twelve-note composition could scarcely exist without the medium of manuscript paper. Dave Laing makes the following comment about the relationship between music and its notation.

Those decisions, about scales, chords, keys, quavers, crotchets, and semibreves, have formed a whole musical tradition in literate Europe and white America, to the extent that anyone defining himself as a composer in that tradition *thinks* music in terms of these categories, and literally writes music ...¹⁰

The level of complexity available to the composer of traditional music (accepting Van Gennep's contention that even traditional tunes begin as the inspiration of a single composer) is limited by his memory, technical proficiency with his instrument or voice (since he must perform his own music), and the determinants of the culture within which he works, e.g. *ceol mor*, *ceol beag*, dance, song, lament.

(2) Classical music is a centralised, urban phenomenon entailing patronage and a high degree of professionalism. These circumstances lead in turn to a strict division between performer and audience, with a subsequent invocation of the economics of supply and demand. Traditional music, conversely, is a rural phenomenon with no strict patronage system and a mode of composition and performance far removed from the capitalist world of classical (and popular) music. In the particular case of Ireland, economic determinants loom large. Beckett¹¹ has noted the existence in Ireland of a dual economy: six counties of Ulster and the eastern seaboard from Belfast to Cork are dependant upon a maritime economy closely linked with England, while the economy of the entire centre and west coast is feudal. This is reflected in the wealth of folk material from central and, in particular, the western counties such as Clare, Meath, Mayo and Leitrim. Conversely the eastern seaboard is relatively poor in folk material and supports a programme of classical music. (The industrial work songs of the Ulster mills are a hybrid genre falling between folk and popular music and are beyond the scope of this article.)

(3) Largely as a function of its being written down, a piece of classical music has, within certain limits, a firmly fixed identity. Traditional music is much more fluid, and relies heavily upon an elaborate system of formulae (what A. L. Lloyd refers to as the *maqam* style of composition), which may be highly formalised as in Scottish *piobaireáhd*, or less strict in the case of Irish melodies. Consequently the folk performer rarely has a rigid melody line in mind, even during a performance. Bertrand Bronson suggests that

what they have in their minds is not a note-for-note accuracy of a written tune; but rather an ideal melody, or melodic idea, which is responsive to the momentary dictates of feeling or verbal necessity.¹²

Re-creation is an integral part of the traditional performer's task and therefore composers of individual tunes are soon forgotten; this is not the case with classical composers, whose music remains intact despite the number or quality of performances.

It is clear that Ó Riada's music, together with a substantial portion of contemporary folk music, fulfils the Folk Music Council's primary requirements of oral transmission, historical continuity, individual variation, and selection by the community. But a second look

⁵ Personal communication.

⁶ *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, Vol. 7 (1955), p. 23.

⁷ Cecil Sharp, *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions* (London: Mercury Books, 1965).

⁸ A. L. Lloyd, *Folk Song in England* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), p. 13.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 21.

¹⁰ Dave Laing, *The Sound of Our Time* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1969), p. 35.

¹¹ J. C. Beckett, *The Making of Modern Ireland 1603-1923* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), pp. 243-244, 349.

¹² A. L. Lloyd, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

compels the conclusion that it fits equally comfortably into the category of classical music.

The characteristic heterophony of Irish traditional music is undermined by modern concepts of harmonic tension, concord and discord. Irish traditional music, dating principally from the 17th and 18th centuries, is monodic, conceived in terms of a single line: this may be tested by attempting to harmonise a tune without damaging something vital within it. The concertina, the first naturally harmonic folk instrument, did not become common in Ireland until after 1880. Ó Riada did not share the same unhampered, non-literate sense of harmony, rhythm and form as did many true traditionalists. Performances under his direction were determined in many ways by his classical training and literate thinking. He imposed a diatonic (major/minor) harpsichord continuo upon every tune in performance, justifying this practice by insisting that everyone, even traditional musicians, by now automatically associated melody with harmony and that he was merely adding the harmonies that would otherwise have been added subconsciously. He frequently ignored the use of gapped scales, twin tonics, non-tonal endings and the implications of tonic and flat leading-note drones — all factors idiomatic of traditional music.

Despite this unintended distortion, his treatment of tunes was by no means unsympathetic. He employed genuine traditional instruments and accomplished traditional performers, and undertook extensive study of his material. Nevertheless, a review of Ó Riada's treatment of traditional material betrays it to be more classical in conception than folk-like: (1) Even when dealing with traditional musicians he could not abandon the habits of musical literacy. With the Ceoltóirí he would record the individual parts on tape for each member of the group to learn. The tapes thus acted merely as an alternative to written notation. (2) He expanded the harmonic and textural vocabulary of traditional music and introduced parameters of variation that would not have been feasible in the strict folk tradition. (3) With the exception of his *bodhrán*¹³ playing, he never played a traditional instrument on any of his recordings, confining himself to the harpsichord, decidedly *not* a traditional instrument. (4) He removed traditional music from its cultural context and placed it on the concert platform; his arrangements were never intended for actual dancing, lamenting, or singing. (5) He introduced his music into industrial society, employing modern urban modes of patronage: radio, television and recording.

Naturally, Ó Riada and his successors have been the object of a fair amount of criticism. Their fiercest critics have not, however, been those who object to the classical elements in his work, but those who resent the presentation of traditional music as if it were popular music. Many folklorists would insist that the removal of a folk song from its natural context deals a death-blow to the spirit of that song, and in many respects they are right. Folk music is more than the entertainment music of a simple peasantry; it fulfils a vital cultural function. Alan Lomax has summed it up in the following way:

Each performance is a symbolic re-enactment of crucial behaviour patterns upon which the continuity of a culture hangs, and is thus endowed with the emotional authority of the necessary and the familiar.

Behavioral norms crucial to a culture are then set forth and reinforced in such terms that the whole community can accept them and join in their restatement. Singing and dancing share a major part of the symbolic activity in these gatherings, and come to represent those roles, those modes of communication and of interaction which the whole community agrees are proper and important to its continuity. Song and dance style then represent and summarize attitudes

and ways of handling situations upon which there is the highest level of community consensus.¹⁴

Removed from its context, folk music can easily become merely a succession of tuneful ditties; if its symbolic function is ignored it may become socially redundant. Such issues are musically important since, as has been pointed out, folk and popular cultures determine very different types and styles of composition. The histories of the performance determinants of popular and folk cultures are, like their structures, distinct though parallel.

The very act of recording traditional tunes has important consequences. Ó Riada recorded them not for posterity or for study, as most folklorists do; rather, he did so for commercial purposes. By devising complex non-traditional arrangements of melodies and by utilising the full resources of the modern recording studio, such as mixing, splicing, dubbing, fade-in and fade-out, echo, etc., he produced a degree of expertise derived from, and demanded by, popular music culture. This expertise has come to be accepted as a static criterion of judgement for subsequent performances by the Ceoltóirí and indeed for other bands. In classical music a performance is judged largely by its approximation to the composer's intention as expressed in the score; no such criterion is available to folk music. By entering the world of recording, Ó Riada allowed his music to become entangled in the cult of the ideal performance: as with contemporary rock music, subsequent live performances were judged according to their fidelity to the recorded version. Working to such a rigid critical yardstick stifles the freedom of variation that is demanded by any folk tune.

Another adverse facet of the recording process is its normative effect. Folk music, despite exchanges of material between adjacent regions or areas, is essentially parochial in nature. Ó Riada ignored the provenance of his material and performed all tunes in a similar manner: Kerry reels, Clare reels and polkas may all be played as a single melody. It is also noteworthy that Ó Riada's brand of traditional music has become located upon a small number of urban centres along the east coast (Cork, Dublin, Wexford, Belfast, etc.) while western rural areas that provide most of the material have remained largely unaffected.

But Ó Riada did succeed in achieving some kind of balance between the opposing cultural determinants of folk and popular musics. To begin with he chose to work with the very best folk musicians available and never dictated to them *how* any tune should be played with regard to ornamentation, phrasing, or style: the Ceoltóirí insist that they were allowed complete personal freedom in these parameters. Ó Riada did, though, arrange (countermelodies, harmonies), orchestrate (instrumental combinations, voice leading, solos taken, tempi) and direct each performance. He thus reached some sort of satisfactory combination of traditional performance with popular presentation.

Having achieved this compromise Ó Riada began to present it to an urban audience, utilising all the tools of the urban mass media.

The music is now a markatable commodity. It has a public willing to pay to have its tastes indulged. It is even regarded as a tourist attraction.¹⁵

Ó Riada also carried out an extensive public relations exercise to make the urban population of Ireland aware of their historical position, convincing them as he had convinced himself that such music lay in their blood, was part of their heritage and was thus somehow more natural to them than other musics. His 'Our Musical Heritage' series on Radio Éireann advanced this theory, often 'at the

¹³The *bodhrán* is a shallow single-headed drum, consisting of goatskin stretched over a circular frame. It is played with a double-headed stick or bone.

¹⁴Alan Lomax, *Folk Song Style and Culture* (Washington: Plimpton Press, 1968), pp. 8, 15.

¹⁵Brendán Breathnach, *op. cit.*

expense of historical and theoretical accuracy'.¹⁶ In this way he reduced the level of 'cultural noise' that would otherwise have prevented a sympathetic reception for his music.

In response to the diehard traditionalists who accused him of commercialism and pseudo-traditionalism, he argued that traditional music must progress or die. Dr Charles Seeger puts the case eloquently:

Rather than say 'the folk is dead' and attempt to keep folk song alive as something quaint, antique and precious, let us say 'The folk is changing — and its song with it' and then help what it is changing into — which may be the whole people welded into one by the new media of communication — not to be ashamed of its ancestors, but to select the makings of a new, more universal idiom for the more stabilized society that we may hope is coming into being, from the best materials available, whether old or new. Better than to lament the loss of ancient gold will be to try to understand its permutation into another metal which, though it may be baser, may still surprise us in the end by being nobler.¹⁷

¹⁶Interview with Prof. Aloys Fleischmann, University College Cork.

¹⁷Charles Seeger, 'Folk Music in the Schools of a Highly Industrialised Society', *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, Vol. 5 (1953), p. 44.

By ignoring the more precious qualities of folk music (those beloved of the folk song collector) and by thrusting it into the commercial urban world as a strong, self-sufficient and original genre, he may have breathed new life into it and saved it from a deadening obsession with ethnic purity. Possibly the hybrid tradition of urban music will reject this folk music revival: such is its prerogative. A primary requirement for the survival of folk music in any context is its selection by the community: if the community chooses to take nothing from the traditional repertoire then no amount of artificial respiration will prevent its perishing.

Discography

Ó Riada's classical work is represented by *The Vertical Man* (Claddagh, CSM 1), which comprises *Hercules dux Ferrariae* and various songs for contralto with piano. His work with the Ceoltóirí appears on *Ó Riada sa Gaiety* (Gael-Linn, CEF 027) and *Ceol na nUasal* (Gael-Linn, CEF 015).

□ STEPHEN ARNOLD

Electronic Music Studios in Britain-9:

University of Glasgow

THE PROBLEMS OF ESTABLISHING a large electronic music studio at a time of economic difficulty for universities can well be imagined. It took five years from the decision by the music department of Glasgow University to appoint a lecturer with special responsibility for electronic music to the opening of a working studio in purpose-built premises. In the course of these five years we were fortunate to receive substantial grants from the Court of the University for equipment and building and from the Scottish Arts Council for equipment.

The studio premises are part of a complex of music department rooms in the Main Building which comprises a concert hall seating approximately 300, green room, artists' changing rooms, toilets and washrooms, main electronic music studio and technician's workshop/small studio. Both the concert hall and the green room may be used as recording studios with the main electronic music studio functioning as a control room. The technician's workshop is reasonably spacious and allows the accommodation of an independent small electronic music facility.

To discuss in detail all of our equipment would not be especially enlightening since much of it is standard (see list) and in common use elsewhere. I shall therefore deal with only two machines, the EMS Synthi 100 and the EMS Computer Synthi. While the standard Synthi 100 is a well-known device by now, the Glasgow machine has been extensively modified to give improved performance and extended facilities. All frequency controls have been replaced by genuine, locking ten-turn potentiometers making the setting-up of accurate frequencies a much less hit-and-miss affair; all inputs and outputs have been restructured to give better signal-to-noise ratios, increased panning possibilities and less manual patching;

reverberation circuitry has been improved; every quad-log-modulator pcb has been replaced with a low-noise 'state-of-the-art' design, allowing greatly improved amplitude modulation; sensitivity controls have been added to the envelope triggering; six inverting buffers have been added; a patching system linking the audio and control matrix boards allows any signal to function as a control voltage. Many additional points of modulation have been provided, e.g. every oscillator has not only frequency modulation, but amplitude and shape modulation as well (one no longer has to waste output channels to perform amplitude modification). Other alterations will include a further restructuring of outputs and a redesign of the sequencer to make its operation more straightforward.

The EMS Computer Synthi is a device which many will not know, since there are only three in existence, at Glasgow, Paris and Oxford. Ours has a DEC PDP-8A processor with 4K core, 24 analogue-to-digital converters, 24 digital-to-analogue converters, crystal clock, 16 sliders, 64 push buttons, a display and a dual digital cassette system. As at present conceived (further programming development is contemplated), it 'analyses' by means of the ADCs control voltages from the Synthi 100, stores them and outputs them via the DACs back to the Synthi 100. Depending on the desired resolution of data, a single layer sequence of up to about 40 minutes can be obtained! At the moment the Computer Synthi is best viewed, in terms of its potential musical function, as a vastly extended EMS sequencer, but with greatly improved editing and the possibility of inputting data directly from the push buttons (not just getting it from the Synthi 100). I hope, however, that programmes will be developed which will allow for computer-automated

mixdowns and for an extension of the Moog type of sequencer.

The original justification of the studio's existence was that it was necessary to provide students with direct experience of electronic music and recording techniques. This has meant the institution of a full course which involves work over three terms. It is now compulsory for all third-year BMus students. The work they do is submitted for assessment at the end of the year. Students also sit a three-hour degree examination covering the History, Theory and Practice of Electronic Music. To accommodate this course means, in effect, that the studio has to be closed to outside users during term-time.

Out of term, however, and particularly during the summer vacation, outside users are welcome to make bookings. Composers working in Scotland may apply to the Scottish Arts Council for bursaries to cover the costs involved. In order that more composers may become familiar with electronic music techniques and the Glasgow studio in particular, courses for small groups of composers are envisaged. Again, the Scottish Arts Council may be able to offer financial assistance in the form of bursaries.

Another interesting educational function which is helping develop studio facilities involved collaboration with the Department of Electronics and Electrical Engineering. Final-year students in that department have to spend one term on an approved practical project. The studio this year contributed suggestions for three such projects, two of which have been followed up. One involves the design and building of a complex, voltage-controllable, variable speed control for all our tape machines, the other a comprehensive remote control for the Ampex 16-track tape machine.

Many of the jobs that remain to be done are of a quite unspectacular nature and the fact that they have not been done already is a reflection of shortage of both funds and manpower. We need, for instance, to install a full permanent communications system between the concert hall, green room and studio; to purchase a portable mixer for 'live' electronic music and for the performance of tape music; to modify the acoustics of the rooms and improve soundproofing; to develop improved interfacing of our current studio equipment; to purchase higher-quality two- and four-track tape machines and a wider range of microphones. Less mundane projects involve the further development of certain digital controls, and possibly a digital synthesis system.

At the time of writing the studio is without a technician, since Graham Hinton resigned to take a post with EMS. Naturally we aim to fill this vacancy as soon and as well as we can.

So far, the output of compositions from the studio has been modest. Most have been student works, about 15 to date. But some half dozen or so works, most involving pre-recorded tape plus live performer(s) have been completed by other composers, notably Lyell Cresswell, Edward Maguire, Ian McIntosh and the present writer.

Electronic Music Studio
Department of Music
University of Glasgow
Glasgow
G12 8QQ

Current Personnel

Director: Stephen Arnold

Technician: Full-time Grade V post vacant

List of main studio equipment as at January 1978

Electrosonic 16-in 4-out mixer with EMS QUEG (four quadrapans)
Two Quad 405 power amplifiers
Four Quad 50E power amplifiers
Two Quad 303 power amplifiers
Four Spender BCII monitor speakers
Four Lockwood Major monitor speakers (Tannoy 15-inch Monitor Gold drive units)
Two Tannoy 15-inch HPD85 speakers in Amesbury enclosures
EMS Synthi 100, with modifications
EMS Computer Synthi
EMS Synthi VCS3 MkII, with modifications
EMS Synthi DK2 keyboard, with modifications
Four Grampian Ambisonic 666 spring reverberation units
Four Dolby A361 noise reduction units
Four Dolby CAT.22 modules in special purpose rack, wired for 19 CAT.22s
Ampex MM1000 16-track tape recorder
Teac A3340S four-track tape recorder
Teac A3340 four-track tape recorder
Revox A700 two-track tape recorder
Five Revox A77 two-track tape recorders (various models)
Ampex III bulk eraser
Four AKG D202 microphones
Four AKG D190 microphones
Tektronix 465 oscilloscope
Advance 051000A oscilloscope
Orbit 'Tic meter' frequency counter
Fluke 8040A digital multimeter
Farnell AC/DC TM2 millivoltmeter

HAROLD ALLEN

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DICK WITTS

If any country clearly exposes the dumb notion of nationalist culture, it's Switzerland. Distinctive features are its inhabitants' wealth (houses built like banks), arts patrons such as Sacher from Hofmann-La Roche ('Bartók acknowledges the support of Valium') and its concentration-camp treatment of immigrant labour, 'guest workers'. Aside from that, the composers could be living anywhere, even Britain. Problems of creativity are a question of harmony, hardly parochial.

39-year-old Urs Peter Schneider¹ lives near Bern where he teaches and began the group New Horizon a decade ago. He's known mainly for anarchic works that combine sound and action: in the effective *Quirinius*, which I heard and saw at the 1974 Lucerne Festival, the Neue Horizonte members struck both a wall-like sheet and semaphore-signal postures, producing muted resonances from the tuned gongs mounted behind the sheet.

As well as the music-theatre events he'll now and again create delicate, epigrammatic pieces which may be collected over several years to form an aural diary, similar in scope to Stockhausen's *Klavierstücke*. The *Song Book* (*Liederbuch*) is such a collection. Schneider intends to have 'ten parts on ten texts of German poets (11th-20th centuries), each of the texts composed in one, two, six or thirteen manners'. There will be 35 songs, meaning that each of the ten parts will contain different settings of the same text composed at different stages of his career. Most of his work has an immense gestation period: *20 Situations* (1960-69), *Babel* (1961-67), *Crosses* (1964-67), etc.

The first four parts of the *Song Book* are already completed. The texts are as follows:

1. 'Apart', a secular poem by Robert Walser (1878-1956), a Swiss writer who lived in Schneider's resident town of Biel (two versions).

2. 'Reason', a sacred poem by Angelus Silesius, really Johann Scheffler (1624-1677), a key proponent of the Counter-Reformation, a Lutheran turned Catholic (six versions).

3. 'Waltz', a two-stanza secular poem by Novalis, really Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772-1801), known chiefly for his mystical writings (two versions).

4. 'Nostalgia', a sacred poem by Heinrich von Lauffenberg (c1390-1466) (one version).

This makes eleven songs, all but the last on single sheets of manuscript paper. The piano part is limited to the treble staff. All songs employ diverse aspects of serial technique; the *Song Book* is serial in all senses. It's altogether a domestic affair: Schneider is a fine pianist and his wife Erika Radermacher a fine singer. The book is made 'für Erika', and they've included some of these songs on a recently-recorded L.P. Notice too that Schneider states the sacred or secular nature of the texts. Much of his music has ironic religious connotations: *Spiritual Exercises for people of all sexes*, *Jesus Music*, *Babel*, etc. Traditionally all ruling-class music is absorbed with theology (Perotinus to Kagel): something to dwell on sometime, but for now we must pass by on the other side.

Due to limitations of space, I want only to tell you a little more about the second part of the *Song Book*, the six settings of Silesius' verse with its personal-punning title (*Ursach/Urs sagt*).

Sag, allerliebste King
Bin ich's, um den du weinst?
Ach ja, du siehst mich an,
Ich bin's wohl, den du meinst!

Say, dear child
Is it me that you're crying for?
Ah yes, you're looking at me,
It's me that you mean.

24 syllables, 2x12 or 4x6. A suitable case for twelve-note treatment, one pitch per syllable. Here's basic information on the six settings:

1. (Feb 1956) One pitch per syllable; equal durations, but with tempo modification.
2. (Apr 1957) Two pitches on the fourth, sixth, tenth, 16th, 20th, and 24th syllables only.
3. (Mar 1959) Two pitches on even-numbered syllables only; rhythm: ♪♪.
4. (Mar 1967) Two pitches on last syllable only; rhythm: ♪♪ with tempo modification.

Example 1

URSACH I II 56

5. (Aug 1969) Two pitches per syllable; unequal durations.
6. (Jun 1974) One pitch per syllable; rhythm: $\dot{J} \dot{J} \dot{J}$.

Each song is constructed serially, but with exciting variety. The most directly Webernised setting is the fourth (1967), while the first (1956!) employs triads in neotonal formations. This first setting is shown in Example 1. There are 15 keyboard dyads for each line of text, all major thirds or minor sixths. The voice supplements the dyads to make major triads by adding the fifth. The roots of the dyads and triads form the series shown in Example 2; notice the preponderance of perfect fifths and minor thirds (and their inversions) which produce imbedded triads.

Example 2



If the series shown in Example 2 is P-O, then the series associated with the remaining three lines of text are, respectively, I-6, RI-8 and R-2. The transposition of the second half by a tone heightens the singer's answer to her opening question. It also redistributes the constituent pitch classes while retaining the neotonal bias that places this song in such a distinctive harmonic netherworld. The strongest tonal references are achieved through duplication of pitch-classes: Example 3a shows the 15-note series reduced to a 10-element pitch-class set. Notice how, the endorse the hierarchy in the overall structure, the transformations of the series allow duplication of the same pitch-classes: F-C-G, themselves a sequence of fifths (Ex. 3a-d). As a whole, this song is a worthy union of systematic harmonic construction and text. The retrograde retracing in the second half matches the self-reflecting nature of the answer. Sensitive stuff.

Example 3



Compare the second setting of two years later (Ex. 4). Here the material is restricted to two sets, five pitches of the first half, seven for the second, repetitions of which undergo a process of subtraction (Ex. 5). To imply that textual answering mentioned earlier, the second half retrogrades and exchanges the division of contour between pianist and singer, and employs reformed cyclic sets. Throughout the book there's this marvellous marriage of piano line and voice. Such subtle interplay is explored to expose further resonances in the construction of the text. Anyhow, the above extracts should give you some idea of a fascinating collection of songs that has a lot to offer us.

Time and space now only for a brief account of *Zeitraum* (1977), another reflective, still, eloquent work for string or wind quartet (or mixture). Its twelve sections are separated by long spaces as though etching a series of monoliths. Each section is a twelve-pitch series presented four times in succession, distributed over a four-octave span in different dispositions at each presentation. The equal halves of each

Example 4

URSACH II IV 57



Example 5



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And there are other resonances. *Lingua Press* asked each author whose work is published in Collection Two for a response to the following invitation:

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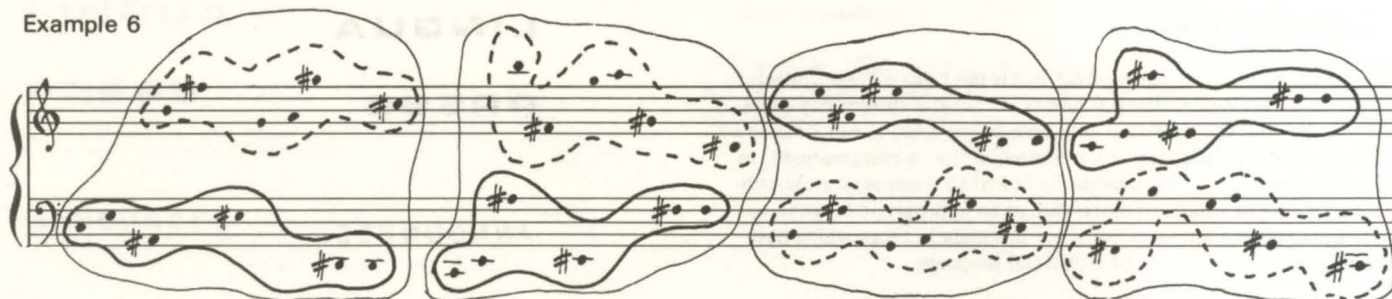
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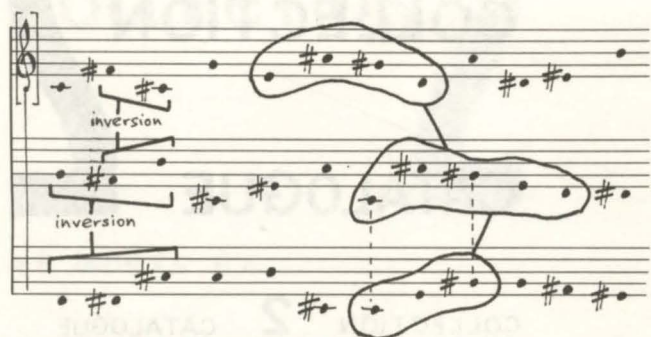
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Example 6



series are clearly separated into treble and bass staves (Ex. 6). Each series is disconnected. However, motivic connections and permutations occur as slowly dissolving traces of the past. Examine the last three sections (numbered from zero) (Ex. 7). Incidentally, section 9 is formed of tritones, the most systematic of the series.

Example 7



The musicians share out the 48 pitches of each section to invent an almost intangible four-part harmony. Certain pitches are punctuated by interior rhythmic repetitions or their component harmonics highlighted, and rates of vibrato are varied. But this inner lighting — timbral polyphony — serves to emphasise the overall finesse and sense of slow floating. Its serene concentration is quite singular, and that's why I recommend *Timespace* to you, as an amiably social piece to penetrate. It takes up perhaps 20 minutes of your time. It may be attempted by groups of any standard. Even the Amadeus could cope with it, if they cared.

NOTE:

¹For further information on Schneider see his entry in John Vinton (ed.), *Dictionary of Twentieth-century Music* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974). (Ed.)

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Dear Sirs,

In his article 'Intermodulation: A Short History' (*Contact* 17), Tim Souster provides a list of 'inspirations'. Unfortunately, some of the information is incorrect. Firstly, the Stockhausen concert featuring *Mikrophonie I* and *Prozession* took place in 1967, not 1966. Secondly, the performance of Cardew's *Schooltime Compositions* at the International Students' House should be dated 1968, not 1969. Thirdly, and finally, the work by Terry Jennings in the long concert at the Round House was a String Quartet, not a String Trio. This last mistake is curious because Tim Souster himself was playing second violin!

Yours faithfully,
Howard Skempton
27 Waldeck Road
London W13 8LY

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES: AVE MARIS STELLA

Boosey & Hawkes 20338, 1976 (£2.50)

DARK ANGELS

B. & H. 20296, 1977 (£1.50)

FIVE KLEE PICTURES

B. & H. 20360 (HSS 301), 1978 (£1.75)

MISS DONNITHORNE'S MAGGOT

B. & H. 20337, 1977 (£7.00)

STEDMAN DOUBLES

B. & H. 19964, 1978 (£2.75)

STEVIE'S FERRY TO HOY

B. & H. 20396, 1978 (£0.40)

STONE LITANY

B. & H. 20304, 1975 (£9.00)

SYMPHONY

B. & H. 20390 (HPS 915), 1978 (£8.00)

VESALII ICONES

B. & H. 20286, 1978 (£6.00)

WESTERLINGS

B. & H., 1977 (£3.75)

WORLDES BLIS

B. & H. 20299, 1975 (£12.00)

DAVID ROBERTS

Since this is a rather large batch of scores I have had to talk about most of them in more general terms than I should have liked. However I have attempted to give a more detailed treatment to some of the musical processes involved in *Ave Maris Stella* which I hope will compensate in some measure for the relative superficiality of the remainder.

The most recently published of the batch was in fact the earliest to be written. *Stedman Doubles* was composed in 1956 while Davies was still studying at the University of Manchester and the Royal Manchester College of Music. At that time, and related to his interest in Messiaen, the composer was much preoccupied with the music of India (upon which he wrote his Mus.B. dissertation) and the work is explicitly built upon an Indian model. The title is taken from the well-known change-ringing method upon which, we are told, the serial material of the work is based. (The precise nature of this relationship between bell-peal and set is obscure, at least to me, though I know of several instances in other works where permutation patterns are based on bell changes.) In its original scoring the piece was for clarinet and three percussionists, in which version it was never performed. Davies revised it in 1968, condensing the three percussion parts to a single part and modifying the clarinet part to take account of Alan Hacker's performing capacities, thus producing a highly virtuoso work. The published version, though dated 1968, differs slightly from the one in which the work was given its first performance in that year.¹ On that occasion certain sounds were 'modified electronically in performance' — at least, so ran the programme note; the rudimentary electronics, which contributed little to the overall effectiveness, have disappeared from the published score. *Stedman Doubles* has been performed but infrequently, and together with the Trumpet Sonata (1955) and the Five Piano Pieces (1955-56)

— exciting and energetic works all — is of interest primarily as part of the juvenalia of a composer whose later output is of an immensely greater stature. Clarinetists are likely to find the masterly *Hymnos* for clarinet and piano (1967) (another work that shows affinities for Indian musical techniques) a more rewarding vehicle for their virtuoso proclivities.

Also published in a revised version is *Five Klee Pictures*, written in 1960 for the orchestra of Cirencester Grammar School while Davies was Musical Director there. By one of those strange quirks that always makes good copy for a programme note the music was thought to be lost until a set of parts recently came to light, thus allowing the composer to reconstruct and somewhat modify the score in 1976. The five movements are based, logically enough, on pictures by Paul Klee: 1. A Crusader (an interestingly early example of process music), 2. Oriental Garden, 3. The Twittering Machine, 4. Stained-Glass Saint, 5. Ad Parnassum. Without condescension, Davies accommodates the limited techniques and limited emotional and interpretative capacities of children, but otherwise produces what is simply a scaled-down and more robust version of his 'adult' music. For example, the work has a serial basis, but compared with the manifold procedural complexities of the String Quartet, written in the following year, that basis is extremely simple: the greater part is clearly founded upon a three-note cell comprising a minor second followed by a major second. (The same cell is employed in *O magnum mysterium* (1960), another work using young performers, most consistently in the culminating Organ Fantasia.) *Five Klee Pictures* should be well within the reach of good school and other youth orchestras and is certainly worth the effort.

A more recent piece for young players is *Stevie's Ferry to Hoy* (1977), three short pieces for piano solo: 1. Calm Water, 2. Choppy Seas, 3. Safe Landing. In contrast to *Five Klee Pictures* this does depart radically from Davies's customary musical language as, it's straightforwardly diatonic, even going so far as to end with a V—I cadence. Metrically it's rather dull and it doesn't reach the standard of, say, Bartók's music for young pianists, but it has great charm. And even I can play it.

1969 saw the appearance of two revolutionary music-theatre pieces based on the Fires of London (then the Pierrot Players) instrumentation: *Eight Songs for a Mad King* and *Vesalii Icones*. *Eight Songs* is, to be sure, a seriously flawed work, just holding together by the skin of its teeth, but it is nevertheless an indispensable part of my (and I guess many other people's) musical experience. *Vesalii Icones*, which it has tended to overshadow, is a better constructed work with greater musical substance, but scarcely any less harrowing in its dramatic impact. Davies's idea of superimposing Andreas Vesalius's series of anatomical drawings of 16th-century gallows-birds upon the Stations of the Cross was a stroke of imaginative genius. The resulting work is the more disturbing for the persistent uncertainty whether the whole thing is merely a choice piece of grotesquery or really an attempt to discredit Christianity at its very source. If it were clearly one thing or the other it would lose dramatic power: the musical and dramatic question-mark with which the work ends, following the resurrection of the Antichrist, would become merely rhetorical. The rather belated appearance of this beautifully clear score is a particularly welcome adjunct to the recording that has long since been available.²

Miss Donnithorne's Maggot occupies a somewhat anomalous position in Davies's career. It was designed as a companion-piece to the earlier mad scene, *Eight Songs* (Randolph Stow wrote the texts for both), and composed in 1974, after the end of his 'psychological' phase proper and while the series of more reflective Orkney works was under way. A thoroughly craftsmanlike piece of musical writing, less febrile than *Eight Songs*, it's ultimately of less interest than the earlier work due to a fundamentally weaker dramatic point of departure. As well as being an investigation of madness and our reactions to it, *Eight Songs* was a *reductio ad absurdum* of autocracy: under such a system, if the man at the top is off his head there is precious little his subjects can do about it. When the King sings 'I shall rule with a rod of iron. Comfort ye.', the effect is chilling: George III was in fact held in check; not all despots are. But with *Miss Donnithorne* there is no psychological, philosophical or political point to be made: we are simply presented with the unedifying spectacle of a crazy old maid

cavorting about the stage. The thing has the air of a rather sick piece of anti-feminist propaganda: I trust that that was not the intention.

Since 1971, when he set *From Stone to Thorn* (an entirely different treatment of the Stations of the Cross), Davies has drawn extensively on George Mackay Brown's poetry for the texts of *Fiddlers at the Wedding* (1973-74), *Dark Angels* (1974), *The Blind Fiddler* (1976) and *Westerlings* (1976). Brown's prose has formed the basis of the librettos of *The Martyrdom of St Magnus* (1976) and *The Two Fiddlers* (1977). The Orcadian poet's stark, unaffected writing has drawn from Davies a matching simplicity and directness in word setting. How effective this paring down to essentials can be is nowhere better illustrated than in *Dark Angels* for voice and guitar, settings of two sombre poems, 'The Drowning Brothers' and 'Dead Fires', with a brief guitar solo separating them. The work has been performed frequently by Mary Thomas and Timothy Walker at Fires concerts, but the recording that was recently issued³ is by Jan DeGaetani and Oscar Ghiglia. More elaborate is *Westerlings* for unaccompanied chorus. It's a largish work in nine movements: movements II, IV, VI and VIII are settings of Brown's verses on the typical theme of migration in search of a fertile land; I, III, V and VII are wordless 'seascapes'; IX is the setting of a Paternoster in Norn (a dialect of Norse formerly used in Orkney). Having missed the broadcast performance earlier this year, I find it difficult to gauge its effectiveness as vocal writing, other than to say that in its treatment of the voices it's utterly unlike anything I've seen before, quite different from the composer's previous choral writing. I should imagine that it's a really tough work to bring off, and only within the grasp of professional singers. The published score, a reproduction of Davies's autograph, is uncharacteristically difficult to read (it rather looks as if it had been written in ballpoint), the only score of the batch that is at all deficient in this respect.

An Orkney work *without* words by Mackay Brown (it is in fact a setting of Viking graffiti) is *Stone Litany* for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (1973). It is one of Davies's most approachable scores and has deservedly received quite a number of performances. The timbral combinations are beautifully judged: I always fall for the last section, 'Max's signature' as it were, with the crooning vocal line emerging out of a background of tremolando marimbas and strings, with rubbed wineglasses on pedal timpani casting a shimmering halo about the whole.

I'm a great believer in music that is hard to listen to, that, to use Charles Ives's dictum, makes you 'Stand up and use your ears like a man!' (always setting aside Ives's anti-feminism). It is for this reason that I have a particular admiration for all Davies's orchestral music, especially *Worldes Bliss* (1966-69), an awesome listening experience. The people who walked out of the original Prom performance in 1969, even if they were musical softies, certainly got the point: it's not music that's meant to be likeable. The Symphony (1975-76) is, in terms of the complexity of its musical argument, every bit as uncompromising as *Worldes Bliss*, but the unremitting pessimism of that work is entirely absent. Most obviously, it is the orchestral surface that has changed: *Worldes Bliss* is alternately gloomy and shrill; the Symphony maintains in its tone of utterance an almost perfect equilibrium. Indeed, in this problematic score, the lucidity and precision of the instrumental handling is one of the few elements about which there can be little controversy.

The hoo-ha that attended the first performance of the Symphony by the Philharmonia under Simon Rattle earlier this year (February 2, RFH) was at times more than a little reminiscent of the medieval nominalist/realist controversy, with a totally disproportionate amount of attention being paid to the work's title. One of the more silly comments about the work was: 'a lot of us have long known an important secret: a composer reaches maturity exactly when he stops writing things called *Synthesis Two* — and starts writing Symphonies.'⁴ Silly because at this neck of the historical woods neither 'Symphony' nor *Synthesis Two* (not that Davies ever has ever used a title remotely like that) can be taken as implying anything at all in themselves. What musical conservatives of course hope for is that by writing a so-called symphony Davies is showing signs of settling down to become the respectable figurehead of British music. And I write 'so-called symphony' because,

debts to Schumann and Sibelius notwithstanding, Davies's work is not a symphony in any pre-existing sense: it is too original for that. The *Second Taverner Fantasia* (1964) came much closer to traditional symphonic forms and gestures; the Symphony in its turn might legitimately have been called something like *Fantasia on Ave Maris Stella* — but more of that anon.

Davies has, in recent programme notes and public pronouncements, referred a number of times to his use of 'magic squares' in compositions, yet has avoided describing them other than in vague and allusive terms. Since I find an understanding of the working of these squares helpful in coming to terms with the music behind which they lie, I thought it would be of use to give a brief description of the operation of the square in *Ave Maris Stella* (1975), an instrumental sextet for the Fires of London, to be played without a conductor. I should stress that the following account is my own deduction from the music and may well differ from the composer's own interpretation.

In his programme note to the work, Davies writes: 'The well-known Ave Maris Stella plainsong forms the backbone of the music ... "projected" through the Magic Square of the Moon.' Ex. 1 gives the result of this process; *Ave Maris Stella* is based virtually in its entirety upon this matrix of pitch-classes and durational values.

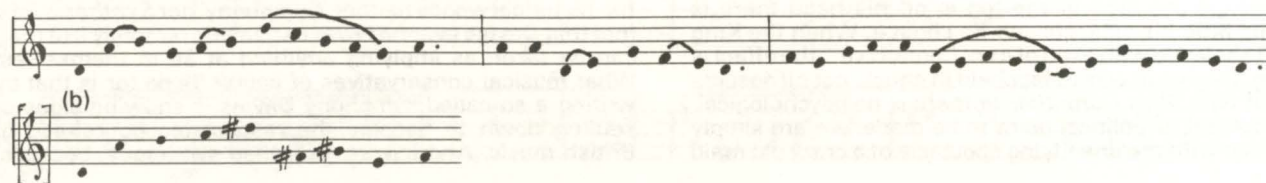
Example 1

C#	F	C	E	B	G#	A	F#	D
1	6	2	7	3	8	4	9	5
A	G#	C	G	B	F#	D#	E	C#
6	2	7	3	8	4	9	5	1
D#	B	A#	D	A	C#	G#	F	F#
2	7	3	8	4	9	5	1	6
G	E	C	B	D#	A#	D	A	F#
7	3	8	4	9	5	1	6	2
G	G#	F	C#	C	E	B	D#	A#
3	8	4	9	5	1	6	2	7
D#	C	C#	A#	F#	F	A	E	G#
8	4	9	5	1	6	2	7	3
A#	F	D	D#	C	G#	G	B	F#
4	9	5	1	6	2	7	3	8
D	F#	C#	A#	B	G#	E	D#	G
9	5	1	6	2	7	3	8	4
C#	D#	G	D	B	C	A	F	E
5	1	6	2	7	3	8	4	9

Expanding upon Davies's note, the matrix comes about in the following way. Ex. 2(a) shows 'the square of the Moon'.⁵ To quote the classic text on the subject, W. S. Andrews, *Magic Squares and Cubes*:⁶ 'A magic square consists of a series of numbers so arranged in a square, that the sum of each row and column and of both the corner diagonals shall be the same amount'. In addition this square is a member of the class of 'associated or regular magic squares, in which the sum of any two numbers that are located in cells diametrically equidistant from the center of the square equals the sum of the first and last terms of the series'. The square of the Moon is not used in this form, but transformed into Ex. 2(b) by repeatedly subtracting 9 from each cell until only the integers 1 through 9 remain. This new square retains the properties of addition possessed by the previous one, though it of course violates the convention that all the cells should contain different, consecutive numerals. These numbers govern durations in the work.

Accepting Davies's note as an accurate statement of the case, the pitch material of the matrix is drawn from the plainsong hymn Ave Maris Stella (Ex. 3(a)). However, it is clear that there is some considerable distance between the hymn and the nine-note series (Ex. 3(b)) that underlies the

Example 3(a)



Example 2(a)

37	78	29	70	21	62	13	54	5
6	38	79	30	71	22	63	14	46
47	7	39	80	31	72	23	55	15
16	48	8	40	81	32	64	24	56
57	17	49	9	41	73	33	65	25
26	58	18	50	1	42	74	34	66
67	27	59	10	51	2	43	75	35
36	68	19	60	11	52	3	44	76
77	28	69	20	61	12	53	4	45

(b)

1	6	2	7	3	8	4	9	5
6	2	7	3	8	4	9	5	1
2	7	3	8	4	9	5	1	6
7	3	8	4	9	5	1	6	2
3	8	4	9	5	1	6	2	7
8	4	9	5	1	6	2	7	3
4	9	5	1	6	2	7	3	8
9	5	1	6	2	7	3	8	4
5	1	6	2	7	3	8	4	9

matrix. A possible midway stage may be seen in the alto flute melody at the beginning of the second movement of the Symphony, in which fragments of the hymn are successively transposed by a major third. Ex. 3(b) would appear to be a 'condensation' of this melody. The 'projection' of this nine-note series into the matrix may be conceptualised in the following way.

(1) Ex. 4(a) read row-by-row shows the result of taking in turn the notes of the series as the first notes of successive transpositions of itself. (This is one of Davies's favourite structuring devices, particularly in his earlier compositions, e.g. *Stedman Doubles*.)

(2) If we label the columns of the matrix in Ex. 4(a) 1 through 9 and then re-order them as 1,6,2,7,3,8,4,9,5 (i.e. the top row of Ex. 2(b)), the result is Ex. 4(b).

(3) Successively rotating each row of the matrix backwards by one position, Ex. 4(c) is obtained.

(4) If we now rotate Ex. 4(c) through 180° along its vertical axis and superimpose these pitch-classes upon the durational values of Ex. 2(b), we obtain Ex. 1. Quod erat demonstrandum.

What then is the compositional application of Ex. 1? *Ave Maris Stella* is quite literally an exploration of this matrix: various pathways through it give rise to the musical material. Movement I is the most straightforward. Using the quaver as durational unit the cello plays through successive rows of the matrix (the path shown in Ex. 5(a)); this line forms the structural basis of the movement rather in the manner of a cantus firmus. Various pitches of the cello line are picked out by the marimba and sustained to form a kind of harmonic aura about it; other pitches give rise to unmeasured melismas on the alto flute (drawn more freely from the matrix). The viola and piano play retrograde mensural canons with this main voice (5:3 and 4:1 respectively). This kind of orientation around a principal line is typical. In Movement II it is the clarinet that holds the cantus firmus; this time it is the diagonals of the matrix that are traversed (Ex. 5(b)). The main line in III, handed between

Example 4(a)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
D	A	B	C	C#	F#	G#	E	F
A	E	F#	G	G#	C#	D#	B	C
B	F#	G#	A	A#	D#	F	C#	D
C	G	A	A#	B	E	F#	D	D#
C#	G#	A#	B	C	F	G	D#	E
F#	C#	D#	E	F	A#	C	G#	A
C#	D#	F	F#	G	C	D	A#	B
E	B	C#	D	D#	G#	A#	F#	G
F	C	D	D#	E	A	B	C	G#

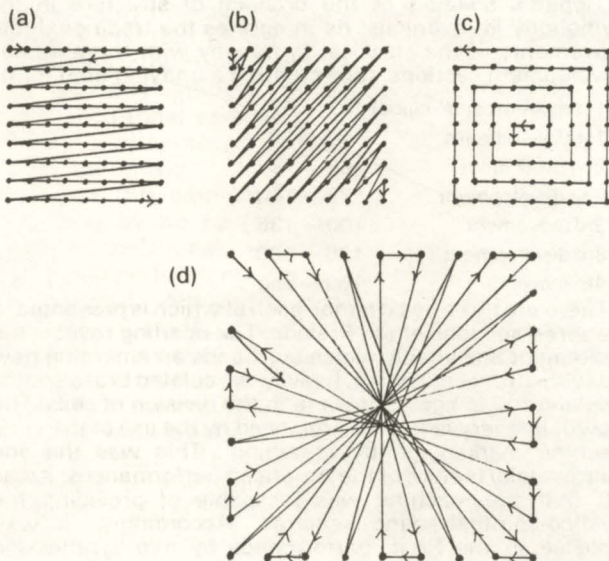
(b)

1	6	2	7	3	8	4	9	5
D	F#	A	G#	B	E	C	F	C#
A	C#	E	D#	F#	B	G	C	G#
B	D#	F#	F	G#	C#	A	D	A#
C	E	G	F#	A	D	A#	D#	B
C#	F	G#	G	A#	D#	B	E	C
F#	A#	C#	C	D#	G#	E	A	F
G#	C	D#	D	F	A#	F#	B	G
E	G#	B	A#	C#	F#	D	G	D#
F	A	C	B	D	C	D#	G#	E

(c)

D	F#	A	G#	B	E	C	F	C#
C#	E	D#	F#	B	G	C	G#	A
F#	F	G#	C#	A	D	A#	B	D#
F#	A	D	A#	D#	B	C	E	G
A#	D#	B	E	C	C#	F	G#	G
G#	E	A	F	F#	A#	C#	C	D#
F#	B	G	G#	C	D#	D	F	A#
C	D#	E	C#	B	A#	C#	F#	D
E	F	A	C	B	D	G	D#	C#

Example 5



marimba and clarinet, describes a spiral path from the centre of the matrix (Ex. 5(c)). The pattern is more complex in IV (in which the durational unit is the semiquaver); by means of an elaborate hopping motion the path works from the outside inward (Ex. 5(d) gives the beginning of this process). The interested reader should have no great difficulty in discovering how the matrix is used in the remaining movements, which work along similar lines.

The use of this particular square is not confined to *Ave Maris Stella*: material derived from it is employed in *The Martyrdom of St Magnus* and it is a fundamental basis of the Symphony. Orthodox Babbittians will doubtless question the methodological coherence of this kind of serial writing (though interestingly there is at least one work by a Babbitt follower that uses similar procedures).⁷ Even if the principle of working with this kind of matrix were lacking in theoretical cogency (and I'm not sure that it is), it would find ample empirical justification in the amazing work that *Ave Maris Stella* is, a work packed with textural and gestural invention and having an uncanny sense of formal balance: the marimba cadenza and the nail-bitingly slow final movement are for me among the most extraordinary things in all music.

NOTES:

¹The first performance did not, as the note in the score erroneously claims, take place at Cardiff University, but in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

²Unicorn RHS 307.

³Nonesuch H71342.

⁴Hugh Wood, *Radio Times*, July 26, 1978, p. 44.

⁵I have taken this from John Michell, *The View over Atlantis* (London: Abacus [Sphere Books], 1973), p. 103.

⁶New York: Dover Publications, 1960, p. 1.

⁷Charles Wuorinen's *The Politics of Harmony*; see William Hibbard's review in *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Spring-Summer 1969), pp. 155-166.

TIPPETT'S FOURTH SYMPHONY

ROBERT HALLEY

For Sir Michael Tippett the recent past has been extremely productive. 1977 saw the premiere of his latest opera *The Ice Break* and his Fourth String Quartet is scheduled for the 1979 Bath Festival with the Lindsay String Quartet. As part of this year's Proms, the British premiere of his Fourth Symphony was given on September 4. Commissioned by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for the celebrations of their 80th anniversary, the Symphony was premiered in Chicago on October 6 last year under Solti and was hailed by the press as a triumphant success.

The Fourth Symphony marks an important point in Tippett's output, being a synthesis of old and new. In terms of structure it incorporates procedures from the period prior to *King Priam* (1961) yet reconciles them with later features, in particular the mosaic-like structure typical of the Second Piano Sonata.

The Symphony is in one continuous movement (shades of Sibelius's Seventh?) and lasts about 35 minutes. It is scored for large orchestra with a particularly expanded brass section and a colourful battery of percussion including wind machine. Tippett treats the sections of the orchestra as choirs or layers of sound which stimulate and react against each other rather than form a fused unity of sound.

For Tippett, the inevitable outcome of the procedures employed in the Second Piano Sonata involved a thorough reappraisal and working-out of the problem of structure and the character and potential of musical material: both issues directly resulting from the change of stylistic direction in the Sonata. Indeed the problem of structure is one which has exercised him considerably in the non-dramatic works since *King Priam*.

In earlier works, the first two symphonies, for example, he remained faithful to the classical four-movement plan, rooting the harmonic language very firmly in the power of the major triad. The purely dramatic requirements of *King Priam*, however, necessitated an altogether harsher harmonic language to express convincingly man's plight in a world of violence and conflict. The opera therefore engendered a style wherein the dramatic content, in musical terms, resulted in juxtaposed blocks of conflicting and contrasting material in a mosaic-like structure. The music moved forward by the statement of contrasts and varied repetitions rather than the dynamism created by a more linear technique: to this extent, the style is non-developmental and, in traditional terms at least, anti-symphonic. To continue to deploy this new abrasive style raised the troublesome problem of structure: namely, how to reconcile the mosaic-like, anti-developmental structure with the requirements of symphonic form.

The Third Symphony (1972) abandoned the traditional four-movement plan and adopted a two-part scheme which, while remaining sectional, nevertheless expanded the blocks to more satisfying proportions than the earlier works. The rationale behind this structure, which can only loosely be termed 'symphonic', involved the fivefold presentation and progressive extension of an 'Arrest-Movement' polarity followed by a 'Discontinuity-Continuity' polarity. Part 2, on the other hand, consisted of a 'play of five contrasted musics', a vocal setting of four contrasting 'songs of innocence and experience', the quotation and distortion of the Finale from Beethoven's Ninth and

transformed Blues. Having introduced specifically dramatic material in the vocal setting and employed such a novel plan anyway, Tippett neatly avoided for the moment the crucial issue of reconciling his new style with symphonic structure.

One solution to the problem emerged in the Third Piano Sonata (1973). The work is cast in three movements: a sonata-allegro ('a statement of contrasted materials' combining violently linear material with the vertical static structures of his recent style), a set of four variations on a theme (17 elaborate chords) and finally an ABA-shaped toccata. The adoption of a traditional sonata plan and the incorporation of inherently more satisfying and intensely lyrical passages (particularly in the slow movement) reflected a willingness to return to traditional formal procedures and suggested a realisation that contrasting blocks of material are not, on their own, sufficient to sustain a convincing and imaginative large-scale structure.

This then is the position at which Tippett had arrived before the Fourth Symphony and, as before the Third Piano Sonata, the issue of structure and style remained to be resolved. For Tippett a fundamental element of the symphony is 'the dramatic'; indeed he has said that he envisages the symphony as occupying a middleground between purely instrumental works ('abstract sound pieces') and the drama of stage works. It is the idea behind the Symphony which at once suggests a possible structure and also provides the potential for 'the dramatic': that idea is Growth.

At a symposium on the evening before the first performance at Winnetka's Music Centre of the North Shore, Tippett apparently spoke about the genesis of the work. He recalled seeing in the 1920s a speeded-up film of the process of mitosis (cell division) in a foetal rabbit. In the stages before division little appears to be happening, then the division occurs, quickly, and at that point the whole cell structure appears to undergo a colossal upheaval and shudder like a jelly before being transformed into two separate cells: a vivid and vital process, the memory of which he translated into musical terms at the beginning of the Symphony. Although parallels have been drawn with Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* — indeed the composer calls the work a 'birth-to-death piece' — it is not programmatic or autobiographical in the sense of the 19th-century tone poem; rather, the germinal idea of foetal growth is

expanded to encompass the notion of man's passage through life from his first breath at birth, via a psychological crisis, to death. However, this idea remains essentially at a protogenic stage and offers us more an insight into Tippett the composer than the 'meaning' of the Fourth Symphony; in the process of composing he envisages the music in verbal terms in the early stages and it is therefore to be expected that these verbal sketches should be articulated at some point in terms of an idea such as the development through life of the human psyche. Pursuing this idea a little further, it is worth noting that it is very much related to the earlier works in that it reflects Tippett's constant concern, albeit this time at a more abstract level, with the problems of man's being in the world. In Heidegger's terms man is 'thrown' into the world and forced either to come to terms with it or suffer alienation. Tippett suggests this crisis of 'coming to terms' at the climax of the Symphony before the Scherzo; thus a protogenic plan reveals birth — growth — psychological breakdown — integration — full participation in the dance (Scherzo) of life — death.

Tippett's solution of the problem of structure in the Symphony is ingenious: he integrates the traditional four movements of the classical symphony with three related development sections, thus creating a unifying arch form.

1st movement (Prelude)	0 — 52
1st development	52 — 68
2nd movement	68 — 78
2nd development	78 — 100
3rd movement	100 — 136
3rd development	136 — 160
4th movement	160 — end

There are three basic tempi, each of which is presented in the three sections of the Prelude. The opening reveals the excitement and vitality which surrounds an emerging new life with strong, pulsating, heavily-articulated brass chords recalling the image of new life in the division of cells. The growth imagery is further enhanced by the use of the wind machine marked 'gently breathing'. This was the one controversial feature of the American performances: it was felt that the machine was incapable of providing the mystico-spiritual sound required. Accordingly, it was replaced in the Prom performance by two synthesised

MICHAEL TIPPETT

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The dynamism of Tempo 2 contrasts with the rather halting opening, its strident, soaring brass figures marked 'power'. After a climactic and dense brass chord the strings emerge with a vigorous, uneven perpetuum mobile which dovetails neatly into the third section, introducing the third thematic idea, a marvellously supple melody shared between woodwind and percussion, marked 'lyric grace'.

After this exposition of the basic materials and tempi, the first movement proper emerges, reordering, redefining and transforming the earlier material. The opening, a short motivic transformation of Tempo 1 (later transposed and repeated) is followed by a brief exploration of the implications of the string accompaniment of Tempo 3. Subsequently a more weighty section develops the brass/string contrasts of Tempo 2, and finally a transformation of the 'lyric grace' theme from Tempo 3.

The first development asserts its derivation from Tempo 1 (a literal repetition of Fig. 21 transposed up by a semitone) and thereafter follows its own discursive path recalling briefly motives and figures from earlier material.

The slow movement, dominated by two simple themes on oboe and cor anglais, creates the world of 'magic, dream, nostalgia and tears' suggested in the sketches. Marked 'expressive, sad', the melody is accompanied by a wonderfully clear and transparent texture creating the most beautiful and intense moments of the work.

Tippett describes the climax of the second development as 'the knot of Life'. Based on the violent events of Tempo 2, the musical disintegration parallels the nervous breakdown of a man at odds with the world. Reintegration is symbolised in the third movement by a lively scherzo, the dance of Life, which leads into a highly integrated form: a fugue for strings based on a three-part fantasia by Orlando Gibbons.

The last of the three discursive passages begins with an exact repetition of the first development transposed up by a minor third for increased tension; thereafter the main ideas of the Symphony are reworked and reintegrated, forming, as it were, a summary of events experienced on the road from 'birth to death'.

The final movement repeats the Prelude material, presenting it as the end of life rather than the beginning by means of progressively longer series of sober chords which interrupt the smooth flow of the music. The music finally recedes away to nothing with only the sound of 'gentle breathing' remaining.

Throughout the Symphony, but particularly in the discursive episodes perhaps, the large orchestra is handled with masterly confidence. Particularly memorable is the virtuoso role assigned to the brass in general and the horn sextet in particular, and the consistently subtle and effective employment of the colourful array of percussion.

The integration of symphonic structure with the stylistic traits of his more recent style is convincingly accomplished by the combination of the classical four-movement plan with the three development passages. Technical procedures such as the familiar Tippett technique of repeating (varied?) large sections at higher transpositions to maintain tension, and the additive procedures of works like the Second Piano Sonata, are combined in the Fourth Symphony to produce the necessary 'dramatic' quality.

Certainly a success for Tippett. It will be interesting to see what happens in the new String Quartet.

MUSIC SINCE THE FIRST WORLD WAR, by Arnold Whittall
Dent, 1977 (£7.95)

BARBARA WINROW

One should not, it is said, judge a book by its cover. But though the score of *Circles* which decorates the dust-jacket of *Music since the First World War* was no doubt chosen for its looks (Berio actually occupies less than two per cent of the text) the straightforward, explicit nature of the title does give a foretaste of the businesslike and systematic way in which Arnold Whittall sets about the somewhat daunting task of giving a reasonably comprehensive account of the vast assortment of music written over the last 60 years. This approach somewhat resembles that of the dedicated naturalist: collecting, describing, classifying — all with an air of enquiring interest and sincere objectivity. Whittall is

more concerned to present his material in its own right and in an orderly sequence than to use it as fuel for or ammunition against any particular thesis. Having grouped his selected composers into broad categories, he works his way steadily through 50 of them, one by one, taking their main works in what is generally speaking chronological order and giving quite detailed analytical treatment to certain particularly interesting or representative examples.

All historical writing, since it implicitly aims to illustrate new situations in terms of receding ones, is faced with the embarrassing problem of where to start. Quite apart from the circumstance that *Music since the First World War* and Jim Samson's recently published *Music in Transition: A study of tonal expansion and atonality, 1900-1920*¹ complement one another rather happily in their choice of period, Whittall's selection of 1918 (the year of Debussy's death and already sufficiently removed from the present for there to be no more than a handful of people alive with a mature memory of it) as a starting point is at least as rational as the turn of the century would have been. As Whittall says in his preface, 'To begin a discussion of modern music in that year is clearly not to begin at the beginning', but it was a point at which the threads had to be picked up again after the European cataclysm and music stood on the threshold of the burst of '-isms' that would characterise the middle two quarters of the century. Any composer who continued to use the tonal language or bases of construction (and a considerable number did, in various ways and in varying degrees, so continue) could hardly do so in unquestioning acceptance but was compelled to find anew his own justification for them.

Whittall devotes Part I, 'The Survival of Tonality', to this group, using for 'tonality' fairly broad criteria, embracing virtually all structurally significant polarity or tension between certain pitch centres, such as Lendvai's theory of the 'axis' system in Bartok's work. He identifies Nielsen's 'most powerful technique' as 'the harnessing and directing of forces which at first create ambiguity, until they become agents of resolution'. Vaughan Williams he describes as having 'strong roots in a language in which a modality and thematic character closely related to folk music were brought into fruitful confrontation with the much more dramatic resources of modern tonal chromaticism'. In this section Stravinsky and Bartok are each given a complete chapter; other composers are discussed in the course of one chapter on 'Opera' and two on 'Symphonic Music'.

Part II, 'Twelve-note Music', deals with a movement which, as one of the most explicitly logical and coherent of the century, is readily amenable to Whittall's systematic approach and analytical flair. He quite simply devotes one chapter to each of the Viennese Three and a further one to 'The Spread of Serialism' which continues the saga of Stravinsky and follows up with Sessions, Gerhard, Dallapiccola and Babbitt. He brings out with admirable lucidity the different forms that serial, like tonal, language can assume in the hands of different composers and also the important distinction between atonality and athematicism.

In Part III, entitled more obscurely 'From Past to Future', he comes up against the real problem of imposing order on the flourishing 20th-century jungle. This jungle, it is true, provides a rich and colourful area for the naturalist collecting mixed specimens: Whittall's individual accounts, though in many cases only brief précis, are still generally apt and shrewd. But while it is a paradise for those who want to discuss artistic and philosophical theory, it is much less amenable to the broad, straightforward classification which formed the background to the individual studies of Parts I and II. Part III may be seen as a collection of all those composers who defied classification in the previous two Parts — and who largely continue to defy it here. Nevertheless, at least a gesture is made in the direction of categorisation by grouping the very diverse material into three chapters, namely 'The Radical Aesthetic' (Satie, Varese, Cage plus brief mentions of Partch, Riley, et al), 'Three Individualists' (Tippett, Messiaen, Carter) and 'Seven Europeans' (the Rest).

It is impressive that throughout this marathon tour Whittall unfailingly maintains his quasi-scientific blend of detachment from and dedication to his material. In spite of the widely differing amounts of space devoted to composers (some have a chapter or more to themselves, some a few lines) he never takes a partisan stand. Rather he attempts to present each composer from the point of view of that individual's own terms and aims, almost as though he were

writing testimonials — necessarily honest but avowedly positive in intention. In the preface he says that 'Omissions are obvious and extensive . . . the most detailed attention is given to those who work is complete and whose importance is incontestable'. I think however that this requires some qualification. In the light of the title of the book, I should say that the only really obvious total omission (apart from a brief mention in the Introduction) is the whole scene of jazz and pop; the most serious partial one is electronic music, which receives little more than a passing mention. These arise, almost inevitably, because as an analyst his natural field of operation is the composed score. This is almost certainly also a contributory factor in his allocation of 'the most detailed attention'.

It is the fact that Whittall is essentially an analyst that is really the key to the whole work. Within the framework of individual studies much of his detached neutrality dissolves and he analyses with fascinating skill and enthusiasm to reveal the structure of the work as he clearly 'feels' as well as 'sees' it. As he himself says of his own discussion of *Oedipus Rex*: 'Like any interpretation of facts, this summary is clearly a "slanted" one. . . . but it does isolate what I believe to be a factor of special importance'. This tends to make the book easier reading in individual sections than as a whole — which is not to say that any of it is easy in a 'popular' sense (in spite of the reasonably plentiful musical illustrations, the reader needs scores to follow the analyses adequately) or that it is not a very valuable, logical and welcome collection of material as a whole. It is written, as the author says, particularly for 'advanced students and the approach is, primarily, a technical one'. It has all the characteristics of a good text-book, with clear comprehensive indexing and a useful, selective bibliography. Though the book leans slightly towards being a collection of linked essays, this means that any loss of the sense of a propelling overall 'narrative' or argument is strongly compensated for by the facility with which particular topics may be found. One small but very useful point is the unusual thoroughness and consistency with which dates are quoted at the first reference to a new composer or work.

It is in fact a surprise at the end to find that such a wealth of material has taken less than 300 pages. For the remarkably small amount of space it will take up on the shelf this book should prove a rewarding investment for anyone with a serious interest in the musical scene of his own century.

NOTE:

¹For a review of this see *Contact 18* (Winter 1977-78), pp. 28-31.

TWENTIETH CENTURY HARMONY: CREATIVE ASPECTS AND PRACTICE by Vincent Persichetti
Faber, 1978 (£2.95)

EDWARD GREGSON

At £2.95 this book seems, on first appearances, to be a bargain for the student composer. However, on examining it a little closer, doubts start to develop. Firstly, it is a paperback reprint, without revision, of the version that originally appeared in 1962. This is a pity, for in the source materials that appear throughout the book, many examples of the intervening 16 years might have been added to advantage. This leads me directly on to the second point, which is that, quite frankly, too much of this source material is geared to the American scene, of which the 20th-century musical diet is obviously quite different from our own. For the life of me, I don't know where I could easily lay my hands on copies of Bruno Bettinelli's *Sinfonia breve*, Guido Turchi's *Preludi e fughette per pianoforte*, Easley Blackwood's *First Symphony* or Hugo Weisgall's *Purgatory*, but then perhaps that is my loss. This is one obvious drawback in transferring such a book as this to another market, though to be fair many of the examples suggested are very sensible and well-known. (Stravinsky, for example, is cited over 30 times.) But it is a sign of the book's dated quality, that in the section on clusters, Penderecki is not mentioned, though of course Cowell is.

The whole point of this book is that its function is practical. 20th-century harmonic techniques are here meant to be explored by putting pen to paper. (In this respect

it differs from Wilfrid Dunwell's *The Evolution of Twentieth Century Harmony*, which is purely historical and analytical, and which, to be honest, I much prefer for its all-round conciseness and clarity.) At the end of each chapter there is a list of 'applications' to be tried out by the eager student. Many of these are very sensible and are the sorts of exercises that teachers give composition students anyway. Unfortunately, the chapters themselves are often unnecessarily complicated and tend to be dull.

Aspects dealt with include such basic matters as chord-building by seconds (including clusters), by thirds (up to 17ths), and by fourths (including multi-note chords), polychords (both triadic and non-triadic), as well as digressions on 'Harmonic Directions' and 'Embellishment and Transformation'. The most spurious chapter is that on serial harmony, and the best (one that should be expanded) is that on rhythm and dynamics.

One is loth to dismiss a book such as this, particularly as there is such a shortage of relevant material for the student, but it must be explored with great care. I certainly cannot agree with the over-generous blurb which states that is 'one of the most important books on contemporary music to appear in this century'. I wonder who could have written that?

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

KEITH POTTER

After a period during which it seemed to me that other musical matters were providing the 'right ways' forward, I've myself become re-involved with improvisation over the past two or three years. But I'm quite certain that it's not *only* this that is leading me to the conclusion — and taking full account of all the talk of the composed, fully-notated 'no messing, no illusions, no tricks' music of the 1970s having entirely supplanted the anarchic, improvisatory work of the 60s — that free improvisation still has an important part to play in the New Music Scene.

What Malcolm Barry has referred to as the 'flurry of activity at the improvising (only possible?) end of what used to be called (when we had one) the avantgarde',¹ seems to continue apace with the work of, among others, the London Musicians' Collective (see further on in this issue for a report on current activities from their secretary). Ducking, for the moment, the ongoing debate about the currency (in, as ever, at least two senses) of the word *avantgarde*, I will at least stake my personal belief in the increasing force and relevance of free (as well as not quite so free) improvisation on firmer ground than I would have thought possible even two years ago.

The upsurge of activity and the 'higher profile' of improvised music point to more than just its indisputable value as a form of music-making in its own right. (And anyway, there's not enough space here to state a case which improvisers themselves have long since ceased to feel *needs* to be stated every time improvisation is mentioned.) This, in the immediate context of the present review, is the most important thing. So I'm not in any way denigrating improvisation as an independent and valid activity if I also draw attention to its potential for being a catalyst in the evergrowing and overlapping areas of what we used to call 'fusion music'. (This is perhaps an unfortunate term to use these days, since it has acquired connotations which are both pejorative and *wrong*. But to me the potential for the bringing together, the confrontation and sometimes the merging, of different styles and areas of music-making that improvisation offers is one of its 'assets' for the future, despite the failed 'fusion' attempts of the past, such as 'Third Stream'.) Not merely, then, an end in itself, but also a means to many other ends.

A few of the composers who flirted with what they thought was 'improvisation' or 'intuitive music' in the 60s have perhaps given any type of 'performer freedom' a bad name in some quarters. But this doesn't seem to me to deny the vast potential of what is anyway and already something of a melting pot: a fruitful ground (to mix my metaphors) where musicians and also non-musicians from many different backgrounds (musical, theatrical, performance art, etc.) may work for a long time to come.

I'm aware that reviews like this, while setting an important context for discussion, might also detract from the consideration of the music itself. Or rather, in this case, from consideration of the musical artefacts, the products which these discs and sleeves sitting beside me on my table as I write, have inevitably become. (And since the problems of recording improvised music have also been discussed in these pages before,² I'll not start on *that* one again.)

There are, though, two related problems involved here. The musical object demands attention through the 'usual' channels in the 'usual' ways: reviews, advertising — all promotion to sell the product. The musicians involved with Incus records, two of them having set up the label and having continued to run it themselves, wouldn't have it any other way (well, they *might*, but they're stuck with it).³ So:

(1) All the words in the world won't convey *any* musical experience *really* (if they did, then why bother with the musical experience?). And when it's improvised music, with its claim to be even more 'quintessentially' the music of live performance, of the here-and-now, than any other, the 'objectivisation' of it on record is perhaps going to relegate it even further to a mere documentation (though that's important and recognised as an important and, in one sense, *vital* part of Incus's function by Bailey and Parker, its instigators) and thus relegate any writing about recorded improvised music to a stage even further removed from the musical experience than other musical criticism. And

(2) The words seem harder to write about improvised music as such in any case. This is perhaps only to say that reactions to it are very 'personal', as all writing, just as all music, must be. But there's a vocabulary problem even in *talking* about improvised music (and conversation is improvisation too), let alone in writing about it. Hence the recourse to the Big (Improvised) Debate.

So, belatedly as before, to the records themselves, released over the last two or three years. Incus 17 is indeed of particular and peculiarly documentary value, being made from tapes of the Music Improvisation Company eight and nine years ago before they disbanded after a final concert with Paul Lytton in 1972. While Bailey and Parker, guitarist and saxophonist respectively, have since become and remain best known for their free playing as exemplified here, and Davies's own instruments and his playing of them have also become known both in Britain and abroad,⁴ the fourth member, Jamie Muir, who formerly played percussion with King Crimson and also with a group called Boris as well as MIC, has apparently since become a Tibetan monk.

The playing on this disc is violent and relaxed by turns. *Untitled 3* (track two) has more space in it and allows Davies's electronics to 'speak' more effectively than *Pointing* (track one): the instrumental combination does not easily favour his more delicate sounds when all are playing.

Bedrest, as its title may imply, is more relaxed in parts, while the first piece on Side Two is even somewhat 'programmatic' (at least in retrospect: apparently it wasn't deliberate), being something to do with a water rat which is 'imitated' in the music. (This, by the way, is more lifelike than they perhaps realised: my cat — who, I may say, doesn't like improvised music — couldn't take it at all...) In *the Victim's Absence*, the final track, is presumably some kind of requiem for it...

Music Improvisation Company also made a record for ECM, later than the tapes issued here. The value of issuing such old material may be doubted, despite the record's obvious documentary significance, but there are plans for a second MIC Incus record of material dating from the same time as that on their ECM disc.

'All compositions by Tony Oxley published by Compatible Recording and Publishing Ltd © & © 1977.' The name of the company is an alias for Incus, but the use of the word 'composition' indicates Oxley's somewhat different attitude to improvisation from that exhibited by many of the younger, 'second generation' improvisers or, for that matter, by Music Improvisation Company. Like Barry Guy's *Statements* on Incus 22, Oxley's Incus 18, entitled *February Papers* and recorded in February 1977, consists of 'pieces' as much as/more than 'improvisations': at least the individual tracks are built very much around Oxley's playing (on violin, percussion and electronics). Nothing wrong with that, you may say, and not even anything more 'compositional' and less 'improvisatory' about it either: most traditional jazz is built around a solo player or players and much of it is 'composed' to varying degrees. Yet I have heard Oxley described as 'the only fascist improviser': an indication, perhaps, of the difference in attitude to improvisation on the part of many of the younger musicians currently involved with the London Musicians Collective as opposed to those who ran the old London Musicians Co-operative which included Oxley and Guy.

Certainly Oxley's *Quartet 1*, with which Incus 18 begins, sounds in parts like a poor man's Xenakis, with its glissandi on three violins (Oxley, David Bourne and Philipp Wachsmann), bass (Barry Guy) and electronics (the latter also controlled by Oxley and only evident some way into the piece). But then Xenakis often sounds like a rich man's improvisation group... (Now my cat really *does* take exception to Xenakis...) *Sounds of the Soil 2*, which follows (there is no *Sounds of the Soil 1*, on this record at least), has a nervous, almost frantic and incidentally more electronic energy that I find quite appealing; Oxley is now on percussion while Wachsmann's violin is joined by Ian Brighton's electric guitar.

Three pieces — *Brushes*, *Combination* and *On the Edge* — are for Oxley solo on percussion and electronics (the latter, by the way, are a live electronic extension of his percussion kit which is itself quite extensive: Oxley appears to have been the first to surround himself with such a battery of acoustic and amplified gear in this way, though to my mind Paul Lytton makes a much more interesting and more musical use of a similar set-up). Inevitably (?), these pieces present a more unified conception. (*Brushes*, for example, uses only brushes.) Composition or improvisation? In a way it doesn't really matter here. The composer has the freedom to play what he wants. And the improviser to compose (pre-structure?) as much as *he* wants...? Though the variety of different sound sources and methods of playing combined in *Combination* sound not only as though several tracks have been put together but as though several different players *could* have been responsible, such is Oxley's dexterity. *On the Edge* (dedicated 'to E.P.: electronics made to sound like Evan Parker's soprano saxophone?) is another multiple sequence of regular repeated patterns, faded out at the end.

Chant — *Quartet 2* is more continuous than *Quartet 1*; a regular and incessant scrubbing, which later returns, begins the piece before it becomes more 'electronic'. *Trio 2* (no *Trio 1* here) has qualities of energy deriving from the instrumentation (same as *Sounds of the Soil 2* but with Oxley also on violin). The music on this disc is nicely paced and varied from track to track, though violins and/or percussion are omnipresent.

Since Bailey and Parker founded and continue to run Incus, it's perhaps not surprising or unreasonable that more than two-thirds of the label's releases so far contain an appearance from one or other of them, quite often both. Incus 16 is a duo record, nos. 2 and 12 are Bailey solo and the present disc, Incus 19, is Parker solo. It's interesting

that while Bailey has avowedly moved away from solo playing in the last few years, Parker has apparently moved more towards it, though at least one important reason for this has been the effective break-up of the duo he had for several years with Paul Lytton when the latter moved to Belgium.

I have in fact usually heard Parker in duo work in the past, either with Lytton or with Bailey. He normally stands in a corner, perched on one leg; his manner would lead one to suppose that he is entirely oblivious of everything going on around him, did his playing not frequently prove the opposite to be the case. His solo improvisations on this disc are just as rivetting and full of character, or rather characters: all his own, I should hasten to add.

The four improvisations recorded in 1975 on Parker's usual soprano saxophone are entitled *Aerobatics 1-4*; nos. 1 and 4 (the latter recorded some months after the first three) are on Side One, 2 and 3 on Side Two. The first one consists of violently expressive outbursts of apparently random events, splurging all over the instrument almost, or indeed actually, simultaneously (contrapuntally even), or concentrating mercilessly on some poor unfortunate area of the instrument's range and squeezing all the juice out of it. No. 4, following this, is particularly vital: a short, screwed-up piece of overflowing energy, unchannelled in any 'conventional' terms but forced into 3' 48" as though into a tube far too small for the force it is made to contain. Time in inverse proportion to space? Or the other way round? A (paradoxically?) long 3' 48" ...

Aerobatics 2, commencing Side Two, includes some excruciatingly long, high held notes and high-flown melodies tossed into the air to be spun around; just a few notes for what seems like an eternity. But I can hear why Parker should want to end the record with No. 3, which in terms of sheer virtuosity and stamina outdoes even the others, with its rhythmic elements that occasionally proclaim a jazz background in an otherwise almost unclassifiable idiom.

In Parker's playing sounds seem to 'suck' as well as 'blow': a result of his circular breathing, of course, but while I'm quite sure he is capable of making all the notes sound the same if he wants to, he draws on the opportunities inherent in this particular technique to extend the range of his playing. Sound is no mere object, (i)ve result of Parker's playing, but merged with his personality to become a subject(i)ve force. But when the wind blows through the not-quite-sealed-up cracks in my front room window frames, as it did on the Sunday afternoon I played this record, it makes a sound which nicely complements Parker's sax.

Incus 20 consists of duo improvisations by Derek Bailey and Tristan Honsinger recorded on two consecutive days in February 1976. Bailey, whose playing is pretty familiar here now, uses a 'Waiswich Crackle box' (I think the inventor's name should read 'Waiswicz') as well as his guitars. The Dutchman Honsinger, whose playing I think I heard for the first time at last year's Company Week,⁶ is a cellist whose frequently totally frenetic style of playing has qualities quite unlike those of any other improvising cellist — and I'm tempted to say of any other improviser on any instrument — whom I have heard.

The reasons for Honsinger's individuality lie at least partly, I think, in the apparently contradictory elements in his playing. His total and almost manic involvement in the wild outbursts which, often carrying on for much longer than one might suppose possible, are a particular characteristic of his performances, tend to make him croon somewhat raucously to himself while playing. In turn this tendency seems to have led naturally to the use of his voice — barking, shouting, screaming — as an occasional but usually integral part of his performance. This might not seem specially unusual in a 'free improviser' who quite naturally makes use of whatever resources his instrument(s) and his body allow. But at the same time he exhibits a formidable virtuoso technique of cello playing that has its roots placed firmly in his classical background in that he confines himself to a considerable extent to discreet, even often equally tempered, pitches, the virtuosity of his playing arising in an almost 'traditional' way from his use of a high degree of articulation in scale and arpeggio type patterns, rather than from the perhaps more familiar kind of 'instrumental extension' in improvised music which opens up all the sound possibilities of an instrument and puts 'conventional' and 'unconventional' modes of playing on a more equal basis.

This is not necessarily to say that more 'unconventional' modes of playing are less virtuosic: for a start, it depends on what 'convention' you're talking about. Derek Bailey's guitar playing — both electric and acoustic, on this record and on many others on the Incus label — could hardly be described as 'conventional' in any sense other than that his style of playing has now become so familiar (and sometimes, I can't help feeling, so predictable) that it has itself become a 'convention', almost an institution ('conventional'?). And yet his playing is frequently virtuosic in character and aim, it seems, as well as in sheerly technical ('means' rather than 'ends') terms. (At the same time, some of what have become known as the 'second generation' improvisers in this country have eschewed all kinds of 'virtuosity' as being irrelevant to their aims.) But Honsinger's approach to improvised virtuosity gives his playing a unique quality and a very specific kind of result in terms of the relationship between the performer and his instrument, pointed out by Peter Riley in his perceptive review of this disc in *Musics*:⁷ 'Even the "correct" tuning is insisted on, and that too becomes no more than a refusal to be sidetracked into easily available contemporary effects. The stance is basic: the musician goes into action *between* the instrument and the sound, creating there an arena of privileged liability as the emotive and mental objectification of time — the opposite of the interpreter, who stands behind the sound-box feeding codes into it. This is more important than "instrumental exploration".' Incidentally, Riley's concept of 'total improvisation' as put forward again in this review and actually occasioned by hearing Incus 17, and his mention of 'objectification' come up against fundamental issues concerning improvised music, and I'm not at present entirely sure whether *my* earlier remarks about 'subjectivity' in Evan Parker's playing complement, qualify or reject what Riley has to say on these. Further discussion of this area would, I think, be fruitful.

This concentration on Honsinger at the possible expense of Bailey in this review is, I think, justified, since not only is the latter's playing better known here and it appears on many other Incus records, but Honsinger appears for much of the time on Incus 20 to be the dominant force, with Bailey sometimes acting more as an 'accompanist', if such a concept is relevant to this sort of improvisation, which I'm not sure it is. Some of Honsinger's more subtle 'vocal extensions' actually turn out to be snatches of conversation during what seems to have been an especially casual concert from which most of this disc derives. Listen to the second track on Side One, *Duo (Part 1)*, for example, which begins with him talking, and *Performance* at the beginning of Side Two, which is refreshing (after listening to a whole side of manic activity, from the cellist in particular) in its solo guitar opening followed by Honsinger's voice before the fuller texture sets in again. Or, for more fully fledged 'vocal extensions', listen to the first track on Side One, *The Visit*, with its more 'overt' vocalisations. And while a 'tune' emerges and subsides just as quickly in, for example, *Duo (Part 1)*, only in the frenzied *The Shadow* on Side Two does Honsinger use the body of the cello as a direct sound-source, and then only briefly.

Barry Guy is, like Honsinger, a player with a classical background, though in his case he has kept up his classical bass playing (from continuo for the Monteverdi Orchestra to avant-classical concerts with, for example, the soprano Jane Manning, with whom he has an established duo) to add to his myriad other activities as free jazz musician (he has played regularly for some years with, for example, Howard Riley and Tony Oxley, and formed Iskra 1903 with Derek Bailey and Paul Rutherford) and composer (jazz: as on Incus 6/7 with his *Ode for Jazz Orchestra*; and avantgarde: as with his several commissioned works from the BBC and Donaueschingen).

One of the best examples of the merging of backgrounds, styles and disciplines active in the world of free improvisation, Guy at the same time seems to have an attitude towards free music today similar to that of Tony Oxley (with whom, indeed, he plays on Incus 18), and also that of Howard Riley, though the most memorable adjective I've heard applied to his playing is not 'fascist' but 'Fauvist' (and this time I'll reveal my source).⁸ For despite his attempts to avoid 'a pre-arranged plan' in his recording session of several hours from which these pieces (his word) were chosen, *Statements V-XI* for double bass and violone sound as though they could have been composed. They might well have been carefully considered in advance from among Guy's range of wizardry with the foot pedal as well

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as with the bow and structured from these 'effects' to produce 'effective' pieces, rather as an after-dinner speaker might carefully prepare the content and timing of his 'off-the-cuff' (i.e. partially notated?) statements to gain the greatest effect.

From at least one point of view there's nothing wrong with this: if the results are musical, interesting and perhaps even new, what does it matter how the music was put together? On the other hand, it seems to me that the results that Guy has achieved on this occasion have lost out both on the care and 'quality' (of 'kind', not of 'superiority') that should go with composition and on the spontaneity of improvisation. At the same time it should be said that Guy's interaction with his instrument, and the range of his 'effects' is still widening and deepening after several years of playing in this way. Particularly fruitful are the ways in which he interacts between the 'surface' sounds necessary to put the instrument in vibration and the deep resonances of the bass which are thereby set in motion: both areas of operation are linked at both the fundamental and obvious level of the means necessary to produce the acoustic vibrations to play the thing and also at the more subtle and potentially still extendable level afforded by the 'equalisation' of those sound sources in terms of dynamics through the use of amplification. But in one very important sense, this all remains mere 'instrumental extension', mere 'effects', when compared with Honsinger's approach to *his* instrument.

This is to some extent a retrospective review, since some of these discs have been available for some time. Even so, the numbers on the records don't correspond exactly with the order in which they were issued, and Guy's Incus 22, for example, came out only at the beginning of this year, whereas the first two Company recordings, Incus 21 and 23, were available over a year ago. Partly because we've already reviewed these latter,⁹ I propose to make a somewhat briefer mention of the other Company records so far available, though of course the character of each is very different and determined entirely by the personalities involved: Company, another of Derek Bailey's conceptions, is described by him as 'a pool of improvisors from which different groupings are drawn for different occasions and settings'.

Incus 25 and 26 are both duo records with Bailey as one half of each duo, and were recorded before the first Company Week which took place in May/June 1977.¹⁰ Incus 28 was recorded during that week and consists of duo, trio and ensemble improvisations from a total of seven out of the ten players who took part in the Week at the ICA and the Round House. Two further records of music from the Week are promised for the future, while it appears that no recordings were made during this year's Company Week (also May/June at the ICA) which had a largely different line-up.

The other main reason for spending less time on these three discs is that, by and large, I find the playing on them far less impressive than on most of the others under review, in particular Incus 19 and 20. Since Company 3 and 4 are in one respect an extension of Bailey's duo activities represented so excitingly on Incus 20, this might appear strange, especially so, perhaps, with Incus 25 which features Bailey with the Dutch percussionist Han Bennink.

If Honsinger is manic in one way ('classically' manic?), Bennink is twice as manic in (quite?) another: even the backgrounds from which he works pretty well defy description, as is to some extent revealed by the instruments which he plays on this record — 'drums, violin, banjo, clarinet, voice and home-made junk'. It's been said that only his compatriot the pianist Misha Mengelberg can begin to curb ('control' would probably be too strong and wrong a word) Bennink's playing, and I think it would be reasonable to say that Bailey doesn't even begin to try. Despite (or maybe more likely *because of*) this, he is to some extent a more equal partner to this particular difficult Dutchman than to Honsinger; certainly I managed to focus to a greater extent on Bailey's own contribution to his (new-found?) interest in duo work than with Incus 20.

Some of the track titles on Incus 23 seem to point to a 'greater significance' in terms of background, and foreground, references, but actually untangling them seems at the moment somewhat hard. References there certainly are, however: to many different kinds of music, to semiology, to Woody Allen (the latter two pieces of information derived from the sleeve-note, I must confess, rather than from the music). In *the Dead of Night I gotta go*

Where You Are, the first track, just has to have something to do with Spike Jones and his City Slickers but I'd be hard put to it to describe what it is. The second track, *The Song is Ended (medley)* uses the two players' more popular backgrounds to more bizarrely obvious effect with Bennink, the dominant partner here, on clarinet (he appears to play *anything* that's pushed into his hands and a few things that are pushed elsewhere ...).

Several tracks on this disc are indeed particularly good illustrations of just one aspect of my earlier point about the working out from many different musical vantage points that free improvisation allows: towards new ends if not in fact to new starting points. This is not consistently achieved on Incus 23; while a track called (to me quite inexplicably) *Stanley* has a nervously dense (or is it densely nervous?) quality to it which is more turgid than manic, the final track *Tether End 2* (there is a *Tether End 1*) even has a few sounds on it which I am unable to identify easily as belonging to any of the listed instruments (even Bennink's usual 'home-made junk' category appears transcended. ...). 'Instrumental extension' of the more interesting kind ... (and you can tell when *this* review was written).

Company 4, Bailey's duo record with the American saxophonist Steve Lacy, raises similar issues in interesting conjunction with another discreet-pitch approach to an instrument which even traditional jazz musicians have tended to 'bend' more than most others. Much of the playing on Incus 26 is much sparser than on Bailey's previous duo records; Lacy is the careful cultivator of what at first seems a narrower field to Parker's wild sower of the seeds of a much wider and wilder style on good and stony ground alike. First impressions are to some extent belied by later experiences on this disc and information about Lacy's activities in general tend to detract from this view as much as re-inforce it.¹¹ Yet, contradictory though this may be, it is Parker's playing which, while having in some respects the greater range, also has the greater 'coherence' in the end, for Lacy's playing doesn't focus on the instrument itself or its player in the same way. And while Lacy's approach to his instrument can in some ways be compared with Honsinger's to his (though Lacy's individual approach to what he has termed 'toonsville' is fairly specifically post-avantgarde, 'post-free'), he's like a slow bowler to Honsinger's fast one (if I may be permitted yet another metaphor).

Side One of Incus 28 consists of a single seven-man ensemble improvisation from the 1977 Company Week line-up omitting what some would no doubt regard as the more 'freakish' participants (i.e. Han Bennink, Steve Beresford and Lol Coxhill) who I hope will feature substantially on the other 1977 discs yet to be released. Though there are one or two exhilarating ensemble moments, the 'norm' state of this 25 minutes or so is too dense and too un(der)characterised, too uncontrolled in parts, to produce consistently interesting musical results.

The duo playing of the two more 'traditionally'-minded saxophonists Lacy and Anthony Braxton on the first two tracks of Side Two presents resourceful and very musical explorations of the possibilities of this unusual duo combination, but the invention never really takes off as far as I'm concerned. Braxton also appears on tracks three and four in a trio combination with Parker and Honsinger which is predictably much more fraught. The second, much shorter, one of these might present an interesting test to try out on someone who doesn't know: composition or improvisation? I know precisely the why / could be fooled in the early stages but not by just past the middle; the nature of the detailed explanation of why and the detailed discussion which might follow would, I think, help to expand our understanding of the differences and similarities between composition and improvisation on a deeper level than anything possible here, and maybe even our perception of the many different natures of musical organisation. Try it for yourselves.

NOTES:

¹ In his review of Incus 21 and 23, *Contact 18* (Winter 1977-78), p. 36.

² E.g. by Malcolm Barry, op. cit., pp. 36-39 and by David Roberts in the same issue, pp. 39-40.

³ For further on this with specific reference to records, see Dick Witts, Tony Friel, Trevor Wishart and Richard Boon, 'Music and Society — 3: The State of the Nation — a

functional primer', *Contact 18* (Winter 1977-78), pp. 10-15.

⁴ For further on Hugh Davies see David Roberts, 'Hugh Davies: Instrument Maker', *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), pp. 8-13.

⁵ For further on cats and music and with reference to Incus 26 see the interview with Steve Lacy entitled 'I'm not much of a hooper myself', *Musics 12* (May 1977), pp. 4-9.

⁶ See the New Music Diary, *Contact 18* (Winter 1977-78), p. 50.

⁷ *Musics 12* (May 1977), p. 23.

⁸ Leroy Cowie's review of a Bertram Turetzky concert in London, October 14, 1973 in *Contact 7* (Winter 1973-74), p. 45.

⁹ See footnote 2.

¹⁰ See footnote 6.

¹¹ See footnote 5.

SPNM COMPOSERS' WEEKEND, UNIVERSITY OF YORK

JULY 15-18, 1977

STEPHEN MONTAGUE

The SPNM Eleventh Composers' Weekend had as its principal lecturer the American composer Jacob Druckman; Cornelius Cardew and David Blake were guest lecturers. The guest artists included Jane Manning, soprano; Barry Guy, double bass; Ronald Lumsden, piano; Ed Pillinger, clarinet; and the Medici String Quartet. Nicola LeFanu, Richard Orton and Paul Patterson each presented analyses of various works. In co-operation with a new cultural exchange agreement between Holland and Britain, a group of Dutch student composers and performers, organised by the composer Theo Loevendie, was invited for the Weekend.

The Weekend brought together some 70 student, amateur and professional composers along with others interested in contemporary music. The participants came from throughout the British Isles as well as several from the Continent (in addition to the Dutch group). The Weekend consisted of four days of tightly scheduled lectures, seminars, discussions, rehearsals and concerts often running parallel two or three deep. The participants were comfortably housed in the university dormitories. The organisation was excellent, the atmosphere pleasant and the cafeteria food very good.

In dramatic contrast was David Blake's mellifluous apology of his compositional and emotinal struggle in returning to tonality and all those eternal verities of music. His spiel was as slick as a second-hand car dealer's, the anecdotes beautifully timed, and a contagious energy generated. Until, alas, he played the music — Alban Berg, 1936. By the finale of this virtuoso lecture one got the distinct impression that behind all this verbal glitter was a very insecure composer really trying to justify more to himself than to his audience his recent 'grand jeté' backward into the arms of the post-Romantics and Berg. But, nevertheless, it was an entertaining hour and a fine performance. Predictably during the question period the arrows flew, but no one could match his rapier-like wit. I mean, who could possibly continue a serious, effective frontal attack when you thrust, challenging one of his rash statements, with something like, 'Then why not just theorise it instead of bothering to write it down?' And instantly he parries with, 'I'd rather do pornography than think it!'

It is always interesting to meet a well-known composer for the first time. The expectation is generally high and the anticipation of reinforcement usually positive. Getting to know the composer either propagates that interest or diminishes it. Jacob Druckman presented several talks about his music illustrated by both live performances (two works) and four excellent recorded performances of larger works. His music is elegantly crafted, some of the orchestral scoring quite dazzling, and *Animus II* for voice and percussion a gem, but somehow his position as the Weekend's central guru seemed difficult to maintain. During the first couple of days he seemed to answer all the basic questions about his music and philosophy and for the

remaining days prompted very little further interest. Perhaps it was just the wrong context, York instead of New York.

On the Sunday afternoon Cornelius Cardew spelled out his Maoist views on music and the bourgeoisie. Unfortunately I heard only the end of the talk, but from the animated climate and room temperature when I did arrive, it seemed to have been the most heated discussion of the Weekend with secondary shock waves continuing throughout the remaining days. The Weekend could have profited much by that kind of fillip in the other areas as well.

Each of the four evenings had a special concert. The first was Jacob Druckman's lecture-recital which contained live performances of *Animus I* for trombone and electronic tape, not one of his best works, but played very well by Roger Williams, and *Valentine*, a theatrical, virtuoso bass piece played with gusto by Barry Guy. The following evening was the Dutch student composers' concert which included a programme of works by Ton Edel, Kees Schoonenbeek (the only non-student), Guus Janssen, Jos Post, Rob Nasveld, Paul Termos, and Charles V. D. Leeuw, most of them in their early- and middle-twenties. Their works had a kind of youthful directness about them which some members of the audience found more interesting than others, but it was a very long evening. There was also a concert for the group-composition exercises. On the first day Peter Wiegold organised four groups of twelve members each for group-composition. Each group decided whether the group was to have a group leader and if so who and then the groups set about grouping together each day in a solid group effort to produce group-composition. The frustration of trying to make group decisions with everyone in the group asking group permission and group advice drove some of my group and groups from other groups away from the group-composition groups. The Medici String Quartet bore the brunt of this party game and to their great credit entered into the spirit of the farce with a fine attitude and remarkable professionalism. The only interesting group was the one led by Richard Orton which arrived at a soliloquy for clarinet (played by Ed Pillinger) punctuated by a laughing chorus. It was really a very funny theatre piece. The others, however, were as impoverished as one might expect from this kind of music-education project. After all, even Liszt, Chopin, Czerny and friends could not do too much better with their group-composition 140 years ago, but our Composers' Weekend's result seemed to indicate, however, that many heads sometimes produce a Hydra and not even a *Hexameron*.

Saturday evening was a surprise impromptu concert which included Preston Trombly's *Kinetics III* for flute and tape, Peter Wiegold's *Sing Lullaby* (1974) for soprano and double bass, and Barry Guy's *Statements II* for amplified double bass and electronic treatments. *Kinetics III* was given an excellent performance by the American flautist, Nancy Ruffer, with Jacob Druckman controlling the sound projection, but the work, produced in 1971 at Yale University, suffers the lack of real individuality which seems to be the bane of so many solo flute pieces written since Varèse's. *Sing Lullaby* has been performed numerous times by the Jane Manning/Barry Guy duo in the last few years, so it was interesting to see how the duo came to grips with this kind of ensemble piece on short notice. The balances were not always just right and Barry Guy's new foot switches were sometimes quite noisy, but the performance showed that they have obviously worked together a lot over the years. The concert ended with Barry Guy's virtuoso performance of his own work, *Statements I*, a kind of Lisztian blockbuster for amplified bass and his new 'black box' of electronic tricks. The final concert on Monday night included works selected from the numerous scores read and rehearsed during the Weekend. The concert had a distinctly conservative flavour about it reflecting the compositional interests of the majority of the Weekend's participants. The concert was composed of Janet Graham's *The Dream* for soprano and string quartet, Barbara Winrow's *Soliloquy* for solo clarinet, Alex Manassen and Timothy Coleman's nice realization of one of the group-composition scores for soprano and string quartet, Julia Usher's farcical theatre piece *Exits and Entrances* for double bass solo, Andrew Pegg's solo clarinet work performed during the interval down by the lakeside, Michael Maxwell's quodlibet *Metamorphosis a la Recherche du Temps Perdue* for string quartet, Peter Carr's *Strings by the River* for soprano and string quartet, George Nicholson's String Quartet and a work of my own,

Strummin' for the piano harp, electronic tape and light.

The Weekend was rounded off by a surprise beer bash in the Medici's rehearsal studio which, after a couple of hours, spread to the dormitories and on into the wee hours of the morning. It was this kind of social interaction that was perhaps the Weekend's greatest asset. It served as a kind of catalyst by bringing groups of people together with vastly divergent interests and backgrounds and providing an ambiance in which small groups and individuals could exchange ideas. In this aspect the Weekend was nearly totally successful and a worthwhile stimulus for all the participants, but hopefully the 1978 Composers' Weekend will improve upon its current format by inviting an articulate spokesman from the musical 'left' to provide the input, stimulation and controversy that was sadly lacking from this year's.

Due to lack of space we are unfortunately unable to publish more updated comment on the activities of the SPM and in particular a response to this review. We have therefore asked for further comment, including an appraisal of the 1978 Composers' Weekend, for the next issue.

MUSICANADA 77

JOHN SHEPHERD

This Festival of Canadian Contemporary Music, which took place at St. John's, Smith Square, between November 4 and 15, left me with mixed feelings. In fact, it gave rise to a strong sense of cultural schizophrenia. Having lived in Canada for some time, I was pleased to see so much effort being put into the promotion of Canadian music in this country, and was anxious to see these efforts come to *successful fruition. On the other hand, I was concerned that* few countries have such a wealth of excellence in the field of contemporary music as to be able to sustain a six-concert, 37-work festival in one of the world's largest musical centres. In the event, my English-born cynicism proved more appropriate to the occasion than my Canadian-inspired optimism. So from a position moderately west of the Azores, and on the basis of attending three concerts (my real geographical location north of the Trent prevented me going to the three week day concerts), I will attempt to resolve my schizophrenia and provide a balanced account of the proceedings.

The most successful works in the opening concert (given on Friday November 4 by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conductor Mario Bernardi) were R. Murray Schafer's *Son of Heldenleben* and Jacques Hétu's Piano Concerto. *Son of Heldenleben* is a satirical tribute to Strauss's tone poem. Its basic motivic material is two series derived from the opening theme of the original, while direct quotations become increasingly obvious and amusing as the piece progresses. With the enormous forces it requires (a full symphony orchestra with a 35-instrument percussion section — not to mention a piano and prepared tape), the work at times gave rise to a texture reminiscent of Polish colourism, and against the background of Schafer's soundscape work it was not difficult to imagine Strauss's flowing melodies and conventional harmonies struggling to be heard through the cacophony of the modern-day world. Hétu's Piano Concerto owes a clear debt to mainstream neo-classicism and a Bergian dodecaphonism, and lacks the originality of *Son of Heldenleben*. Yet with the possible exception of an undeveloped fugal entry in the slow movement, it is a finely conceived work which was more than suited to showing off pianist Robert Silvermann's Lisztian abilities.

Two concerts were given during the following week, one by La Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec (Tuesday November 8), and the other by the Quebec Wind Quintet (Wednesday November 9). The next concert I was able to attend was given by the Canadian Brass on Friday November 11. For an hour and a half these five superb performers (the playing of trumpeter Ronald Fromm in particular leaves one lost for superlatives) joked, clowned (and played) their way through an evening of amusingly inconsequential works. Indeed, it was possible to detect a sense of relief when it was encore time and the Brass could throw themselves into Bach's Little Fugue in G minor. Tuba player Charles Daellenbach's verbal preface to

this encore verged on a surrealism worthy of Woody Allen. Is there a composer of strong enough disposition to write a piece for the combined talents of the King's Singers and the Canadian Brass, one wonders?

The following concert (The Festival Singers of Canada — Sunday November 13) had the strongest programme of the three I attended. It began with Clifford Ford's Mass, a sensitively conceived neo-Renaissance work of impressive dimensions which gave the world-famous choir ample opportunity to stamp their authority on the concert. At the close there was Harry Somers' *Five Songs of the Newfoundland Outposts*. The work incorporates many original vocal effects (such as the 'chin' or 'mouth' music used by singers to imitate unavailable instruments) and, with its sparse harmonies, unadorned lyricism and clean-cut rhythms, provides a good example of Somers' striking musical language. It is a magnificent setting which provided a suitable climax to the evening.

Bruce Mather's *La lune mince* and Istvan Anhalt's *Cento* made the most lasting impression among the remaining pieces. *La lune mince*, with its emphasis on vertical sonorities, betrays an extremely delicate ear for fluid musical timbres (particularly in the handling of soprano voices). By contrast *Cento* (scored for twelve voices and magnetic tape) explores the inherent sonic qualities of words by shuffling and scrambling its text — sometimes beyond recognition. The total success of *Cento* was unfortunately compromised by a preoccupation with the rhythmic possibilities of the harder consonants.

There was some good music to be heard during *Musicanada*, but there was also much that was mediocre or just plain uninteresting. From this point of view the festival was badly conceived. Although Canadian music has come a vast distance in the last twenty years (there was little but Edwardian pastiche in the early 1950s), it has not yet reached the stage where a major incursion onto the international scene is warranted. Only one Canadian composer is internationally known, and that reputation rests as much on work in education and environmental philosophy as it does on composition.

It would be realistic to say that Canada now has a solid base from which younger composers can reasonably expect to make an impact on the world of contemporary music. It would also be true to say that over the last 20 years Canada has produced a number of interesting figures. Against this background, it would perhaps have been better to put on two or three concerts which combined the country's obvious talents in performance, and presented carefully chosen works representative of the best that Canada has to offer.

The excuse could be made that the festival's intention was to present an overview of Canadian composition since the mid-1950s, but this is not an adequate defence. 'Workings in the margin' (and two pieces in the opening concert came into this category) are of interest only to musicologists. It seems more likely that the festival's shape derived from a current fit of cultural chauvinism. In the sense that Canadian composition is more than capable of standing on its own two feet, the chauvinism is about ten years overdue. But in the sense that the music has yet to 'go places', it has given rise to a degree of unreality.

The result of the festival might well be to hinder the future promotion of Canadian music in this country. That would be a genuine pity. However, in their attempts to throw off the remnants of a cultural inferiority complex, the powers that be (and it is unlikely that these are the composers and musicians themselves) seem unable to distinguish between that which is Canadian and good, and that which is simply Canadian.

REPORT ON LONDON MUSICIANS COLLECTIVE (FEBRUARY 1978)

PAUL BURWELL

The London Musicians Collective has occupied its premises at 42 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1. The space is approximately 2,000 sq. ft., is located on the first floor and shares a front door with the London Film Makers Co-op. Prior to the opening the space was cleaned and various minor alterations made. The lighting was rewired, with house lights put on a dimmer, and some spotlights fitted, also on a dimmer. An office was constructed which is

shared by *Musics* magazine (N.B. all future mail for *Musics* should be sent to Gloucester Avenue). By the time *Contact* goes to press soundproofing and heating should have also been installed.

Before the LMC found its own premises its main activities centred on the organising of concerts and events and on meetings at which the problems facing the improviser and experimental musician were discussed. Many events were staged: a series of ten lunchtime concerts at Action Space, a GLAA-sponsored concert at the Cockpit, a three-day festival at Battersea Arts Centre, a series of informal performances at the Wood Green Arts Centre, two benefit concerts at the Teatro Technis and several others.

The opening of the LMC premises on December 22 (with a Christmas party) was an important event in the development of those musics that lie outside the commercial and accepted alternative spheres. For the first time there is a space devoted totally to developing improvised and collective music, experimental music, radical structure sound-sculpture, environmental music and other areas of soundwork. People involved in working in these areas have faced and still are facing many different problems concerning lack of support, lack of general understanding, lack of facilities, lack of sympathetic venues, lack of contact with other musicians and lack of funds. The Collective was formed in an attempt to solve these problems and the provision of a permanent space was seen as the most effective way of dealing with them. In this context the setting-up of the Collective as a legally-constituted organisation was also seen as essential.

The building functions as a permanent focus for musicians and audience. The performance space is being made as flexible as possible so that different forms of presentation can take place and so that it is available for rehearsal whenever there are no performances. With low-budget advertising for individual concerts at different venues no cumulative effect is possible, but by having a regular venue it becomes possible to develop an identity and to attract a regular audience.

The best way to describe the work of the Collective is to give some examples of past and projected work at the space. The first event after the opening was *Co-Performance* by the American dancer Patty Giovenco and myself. We presented three pieces (or rather a performance in three parts) that we had evolved during rehearsals in the space. We attempted to find forms and actions that would move the performance away from the traditional 'music accompanying dance' or 'dancing to music' and even the more modern 'music and dance ignoring each other' yet still allow ourselves the use of our respective skills. In the new year an Italian quintet, *Musica Improvisata*, rehearsed in the space and presented a performance with Evan Parker. *Music for Socialism* staged a conference on grants in January. Later in the month there were performances by the Garry Todd Quartet, David Toop, Charles K. Noyes and myself. February saw performances by Miru Music Club, John Russell/Roger Turner/Steve Beresford/Derek Bailey and two performances by Evan Parker and friends. On February 11 there was a one-day Book/Record/Magazine/Cassette Fair devoted to independent and little presses, record companies and magazines covering art, music, poetry and dance. Among those taking part were *Contact*, *The Ley Hunter*, *Musics*, *New Dance*, *Spare Rib*, Incus Records and the Association of Little Presses. During the day there were poetry readings and music.

Events still in the future at the time of writing include a two-day presentation of video, film and performance work by George Saxon, an evening of 'Whirled Music' pieces for the families of whirled instruments by Max Eastley, performances by Linsey Cooper, Fred Frith, Georgie Born and Steve Beresford and in the summer an Environmental Music Festival. A visit by the Canadian Creative Music Collective is being negotiated and a Music/People/Performance Festival is being planned. By the time this is in print some workshops, seminars and courses should be under way. This is a neglected area in experimental and avantgarde music work; the encouragement of such activities can help develop greater understanding and interest and help redress the balance in the present educational system. Compared with Fine Art, New Music education just doesn't exist.

The collective open meetings still happen on the first Sunday of each month at 2.00 p.m.; all are welcome.

To end up with, some mention of the voluntary work that has gone into the Collective and the space. Thanks must be

extended to Annabel Nicolson for her donation of so much building material (including her kitchen door for the office), to Ben Kern for his gift of a grand piano, to Blank Tapes for their donation of profits and to all the individual members that have made small contributions on top of their membership fees, to Rigby Allen and John Hanson for doing most of the building and to Richard Beswick and Max Eastley for rewiring the lights and their continuing efforts to make the space as good as possible. David Toop and Steve Beresford (and me, I reckon) have put a lot of time and energy into all aspects of the Collective, from building, organising concerts and negotiating grants, as have Phil Wachsmann, John Russell and others, who seem to be getting too numerous to mention.

REPORT ON SPECTRO ARTS WORKSHOP MUSIC (MARCH 1978)

JOLYON LAYCOCK

At the end of its first full financial year of operation at the new Bells Court premises in Newcastle upon Tyne, this seems a good moment to offer a report on music activities at Spectro Arts Workshop.

Spectro began its life in shop premises at Whitley Bay in the summer of 1969. It operated principally as a small gallery specialising in photography, with darkroom facilities provided for local artists. These activities were expanded to include electronic sound courses and events and performances by visiting musicians, theatre groups and performance artists. I first worked with the organisation in September 1975, running a short course in electronic music using equipment lent under the Northern Arts loan scheme. These courses proved popular and were extended on a termly basis in 1976.

In September 1976 the workshop moved into the new building site, which has now, by sweat and toil, been made into a well-equipped arts resources centre. From the tiny shop in Whitley Bay to the present 11,000 sq. ft. custom-designed building was an enormous change of scale. Many of our problems over the past 18 months have been partly due to the psychological adjustments required in making such a move.

For some months, the music department was housed in a small room on the ground floor where I continued to run courses in electronic music with the help of an assistant. At this time our activities were confined to providing a studio facility of modest proportions which was open daily (including weekends) from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. Users were asked to become Associate Members of the workshop for a small subscription fee, and were entitled to up to six hours free studio time per week, with tuition and guidance if required. We also ran a weekly experimental music workshop. By April 1977 the upstairs music studio was sufficiently complete for us to move into what is now our permanent area. Then began the job of installing our new studio equipment, purchased with the help of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. In addition Northern Arts agreed to allow us to use their equipment permanently and this provided us with a good basis on which to establish our studio. In September we were fully operational, though it took some months before our reputation was wide enough to draw a large response. This process is still continuing and every week our membership grows.

Basically the sound studio has four different functions: electronic studio, semi-commercial sound recording service, education and performance presentations. In speaking of the electronic studio, I am reminded of Trevor Wishart's remarks regarding 'communalised electronic studios'. . . . In the community, instead of the universities'.¹ Spectro's studio is just that: an open-access electronic studio available to the community at large. One hopes that the accessibility of the large studios in this country will increase as a result of the continuing discussion instigated by the meeting of the studio directors at the Arts Council on October 28 last year and the weekend conference at York University at the end of March this year.

Our small performance studio is used principally for commercial recording work. This provides a considerable proportion of our income and supplements our grant aid which would not otherwise be sufficient to finance such an ambitious programme.

The education programme takes the form of evening classes run in conjunction with the adult education department of Newcastle University. We offer courses in such subjects as electronic music (history, theory and practice), studio recording techniques and experimental music. Members of the workshop are given tuition in electronic techniques free of charge. We also provide day-release facilities for students from one or two fine-art departments in the region.

In January we launched a pilot series of twelve events at the gruelling rate of two concerts per week. This has paid dividends — not in financial terms, for the concerts in the main only broke even — but in terms of an enormous upsurge of public interest in the centre as a venue for a wide variety of contemporary music. Our programme goes right across the board and presents all that is new, though not always good: jazz, jazz-rock, punk, improvised music, avantgarde, etc. Much of it is local material, for Tyneside has long been a spawning ground for musical talent, mostly in the popular vein. Among the more outstanding concerts I would mention The Big G, a Newcastle New Wave band, who kicked off the series on January 19, with The Meekons, a Leeds group, as support. Our February 9, 10, 16 and 17 concerts were all jazz-related events, and we collaborated with Jazz North East in presenting Evan Parker, Hugh Davies, Paul Burwell and Peter Cusack on February 16.

In terms of response from the public, the concerts of February 23 and 24 were the most successful of the series, both playing to capacity audiences and creating something of a sensation. *Mogadishu*, an electronic performance in memory of Andreas Baader, provoked a fierce press reaction sparked off by a letter in the *Evening Chronicle* from an 'Art Lover' objecting to what was described as a poison of revolutionary politics spreading upwards through the Northern Arts tree. In spite of a reply from director Mike Tilley, several other local papers carried feature articles couched in a similar vein, and there were veiled threats of a public enquiry and 'questions in the House'. All good stuff of the 'wasting the taxpayers' money' sort, and all before the concert had even taken place. The performance, given by Peter Maben, our technician, and Euan Scott-Batey, a Spectro member and studio user of long standing, hardly seemed to justify the publicity. It was an imaginative and moving performance by two young and inexperienced musicians whose work, though at the moment very derivative, is laden with unrealised potential. The Baader-Meinhof in memoriam section was only one of three 'movements', the others being 'Lebensraum' and 'Full Moon'. It was 'in memory of Andreas Baader' in the same sarcastic sense that Beethoven's 'Eroica' is a memorial to Napoleon, a man who betrayed his revolutionary ideals by declaring himself emperor.

The concert by the new Newcastle group Punishment of Luxury on February 24 had my unqualified enthusiasm. These five musicians, led by singer and lyricist Brian Rapkin, a writer of great and bizarre originality with evident organisational ability, offer a brand of music described as 'theatre-rock'. Most of the music is their own material; much is written by lead guitarist Neville Atkinson, whose incredible (and I mean incredible) technical agility matches the ingenious side-stepping harmonic progressions and intricate additive time values of which he is fond. Yet the music has a raw vigour which belies its intellectual framework; one is astonished by the group's command of a wide variety of musical styles. With their weird make-up and extrovert presentation the impression is of a kind of sophisticated punk. The audience was delighted with them.

My own function at the studio as composer-in-residence is to initiate and stimulate activities and at the same time to continue my own work as an audio-visual artist. During my time with Spectro I have been almost exclusively occupied with the project *Tyrannos*, an audio-visual environment based on the myth of Oedipus. *Tyrannos* finally completes its tour of six galleries in this country with a four-week presentation at the Spectro gallery in March and April. The other venues in the tour were: Sunderland Art Centre, D.L.I., Durham, the Air Gallery, London, Aberdeen Art Gallery and Mappin, Sheffield.

In the new financial year we plan to initiate a scheme for visiting composers and artists who will be invited to work at the studio for limited periods. These short-term residencies will be financed by the workshop from its grant aid revenue. Artists and musicians working in such fields as electronic music, mixed media, audio-visuals, sound-sculpture and other media-intensive fields should look out in a few

months time for our advertisement inviting project submissions. Successful applicants will be invited to spend about a month at the workshop. During this time they will also be asked to give public talks and demonstrations of their work and to run workshops for Spectro members and for local schools and colleges.

NOTE

¹'The State of the Nation — a functional primer', *Contact 18* (Winter 1977-78), p. 13.

THE BRITISH ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC MUSIC ASSOCIATION

SIMON EMMERSON

A new association has been launched to promote and develop electro-acoustic music in Britain. The term 'electro-acoustic' covers all acoustic phenomena requiring an electronic component, thus embracing all the old terms 'electronic music', 'musique concrete', 'tape music', 'live electronic music', etc. Membership of BEAMA will be open both to studios and individuals as well as industrial and media interests and will, we hope, become the umbrella organisation for a whole range of services for composers, performers, promoters, educational authorities, commissioning bodies, industry, etc.

To sketch the short history of this idea: last summer I was invited by the Arts Council of Great Britain to organise the agenda for a one-day meeting of studio directors. The preliminary stage involved the collection of details about each studio — equipment, finance, availability to composers. (A summary of this is to be made available to composers through the Arts Council and BEAMA to enable them to contact studios most appropriate to their needs.) Results of the questionnaire revealed the expected weaknesses all too clearly — a vicious circle of lack of interest, experience and finance. Yet the meeting of October 31 revealed that there was considerably more activity than many had realised and that the development of a performance tradition and more open programmes allowing composers much more studio experience were feasible and realistic aims even within the apparent limitations of the financial climate. This was perhaps the first occasion at which so many studio organisers had got together: this alone was a substantial step.

Those present at this meeting — which inevitably attempted to cover four or more areas, each of which alone could have occupied a weekend — immediately advised that such a survey be extended to many non-university studios and that future gatherings include representatives from industry and the media. By some stroke of luck (or Zeitgeist!) Richard Orton had already planned a weekend for studio users in York and readily offered the booking to the Arts Council for a continuation of the discussion. So from March 31 to April 3, 1978 an expanded group, involving also composers and Arts Lab directors, met in York at the invitation of the Arts Council. Between the two meetings the twin ideas of BEAMA and a Centre for Electro-Acoustic Music (possibly in London) had been developed and formed the basis around which other topics revolved.

It is perhaps not so remarkable that the one issue upon which musicians from a wide variety of backgrounds can agree is that of performance: yet the degree of unanimity of purpose which was felt throughout the two-day meeting was nonetheless striking. Working groups were formed to advise on specific services for the Association. The establishment of a performance centre would be a major undertaking involving the raising of capital and income for a substantial period. Comparison with IRCAM is inevitable but misleading. The Paris group are concentrating on composition research (admittedly with an advanced performing space) while plans for the British centre (at present in their first stages) envisage a more exclusive concentration on performance and communication. The Centre might furnish equipment for performances anywhere in the country and thus not act as an unnecessary drain on regional developments. Such an ideal centre would house social facilities — eating, drinking and meeting places — and research libraries; there would possibly also be a small production unit for scores, tapes and discs for public sale.

Another working group will try to establish common standards of tape presentation and playback equipment which will enable networks of tape exchange to be more reliably organised. Already a directory of suitable spaces on the one hand and suitable equipment owners on the other is being drawn up. The Association will try to bring the two together to promote regular low-cost (yet carefully prepared) concerts. Box office criteria and audience figures will therefore be of little importance, enabling a large number of tape programmes (if and when suitable works become available) to be circulated throughout the country. Trevor Wishart has planned a Northern Contemporary Music Network series of tape (with slide) concerts for January 1979 which is the model for some aspects of the larger venture.

Yet another working group is drawing up a catalogue of electro-acoustic works, possibly to be housed at the British Music Information Centre. From this the Association could produce promotional literature which will hopefully stimulate much greater interest among promoters, radio producers and others to sponsor, commission and broadcast such work.

Having broken down the feeling of isolation to a great extent throughout these two meetings, the establishment of a newsletter, perhaps at some later stage developing into a journal, is an obvious priority. Discussions of technical standards, aesthetics, news of research, details of new works, bursaries, commissions, etc. could already furnish material for several issues.

BEAMA must from the start be an organisation open to all interested groups: there is no doubt that the domination of university studios can now give way to a more common programme in which networks of facilities, from schools and colleges, adult education centres, arts centres and galleries can involve far larger number of people. I have written in general terms: in the near future the formulation and publication of some of these plans will be seen. The enthusiasm we found generated at these two meetings can now lead into sustained long-term action in this neglected area of British music.

Anyone who is interested in BEAMA and would like further information, or who has any views or ideas to contribute is invited to contact Simon Emmerson at 71 Ladbroke Grove, London W11 (tel. 01-221 4085) or at the Music Department, The City University, St John Street, London EC1 (tel. 01-253 4399).

DIARY: HOW TO WRITE ABOUT MUSIC IN LONDON (YOU WILL ONLY END UP WRITING ABOUT SOCIETY) AUTUMN 1977

MALCOLM BARRY

I. Not that this is a complete review. Not having the energy, enterprise or leisure of youngish Potter I found myself going to fewer events than he normally manages and these were probably of more conservative aspect, given our respective predilections. Many of the interesting gaps have been filled by other contributors to this section (described by Adrian Jack in his characteristic 'two cheers for' manner as 'jarring with the academic tone of the rest of the magazine').¹

One of the most interesting features of the contemporary music scene is that as much interest is generated by extra-musical phenomena concerned with music as by music itself. The popular music industry has its associated rag trade while straight music has a 'rag' trade all to itself. Look at the journals, both 'learned' (i.e. those in which you can appear with academic respectability) and those less so. Book reviews etc., the rest of this and, just published, the *Triumph of Style*.²

II. Quiz.

1. Which new British opera 'should not be treated naturalistically nor thought of as specifically American Indian'?
2. Which new British opera had a very naturalistically American Indian — costume, war paint and all?
3. Which popular ex-avantgarde composer was heard to say, on leaving the theatre at the end of a new British opera, 'It was better after the African cooled down.'?
4. Which was the opera?
5. To whom might he have been referring?³

Nicola LeFanu's *Dawnpath* was one half of a double bill presented by the New Opera Company at the Collegiate Theatre, September 29, 30 and October 1; the other work was Elizabeth Lutyens' *Infidelio*. The latter was a stark and simple piece about the course of a relationship and its link with the seasons of the year. Written in 1954, it was given its stage première by this company in 1973; it was good to see a company doing *second* performances, at least as important as the first. The aridity of the characters' situation was well matched by the bleakness of the staging and the intensity of the music.

Dawnpath was no light relief. LeFanu's libretto was based on two Amerindian myths of the primeval that proved stronger than the music, a flaw which removed the music to third in importance behind the libretto and the staging. This may have been LeFanu's intention but there was insufficient musical personality evident to counter the impression that the composer was peripheral to the whole enterprise. The choreography, devised and executed by William Louthier, seemed mannered and rather fussy (though one person seemed to have enjoyed it, or part of it)⁴ and the staging did not help to make the myth universal.

III. 'Are you writing that gossip column?' My interlocutor was a contributor to *Musics*, a periodical licensed to fracture the English language and described as 'less sedate' by Mr Jack. I had to confess, thinking how curious was the gap between intention and appearance.

The occasion was the first in a series of concerts of experimental music at the Air Gallery. It was an enterprising set of events presenting systemic and political composers and two gifted soloists, Lily Greenham and Evan Parker. The trouble is that the Air Gallery, with or without powercuts, is an inhospitable place for the passive contemplation of music. I hope the pictures find the environment more congenial than some of the human beings (including at least one of the performers). Cardew was good in the first of the series; at least his recent music has some communicable commitment and conviction even if it represents a dubiously worked-out viewpoint. In the second concert the Personality Cult was shown to be alive and well: the influence of Cardew is still clearly strong and Howard Skempton smiled a lot (justifiably) as his pretty pieces sounded through the gloom (a blown fuse) while Michael Parsons did not. First pick your personality for Cardew is now involved in the production of a magazine⁵ which, in developing and disseminating 'new art and literature that serves the working people' and 'publishing examples of the new vigorous revolutionary culture springing up from the youth in this country', ignores fundamental conventions (is communication a bourgeois vice?) of the English language. With its split infinitives and shrill assertions it reads like an embarrassing school magazine. A pity, since there's a good idea there trying to get out.

The most interesting comment on the conjuncture between contemporary music and politics is to be found miles away from the journals, learned or otherwise, or the cabals of the avantgarde. 'Punk', writes Lucy Toothpaste (sic) in the book of the same name,⁶ 'isn't gonna change the world. But punks might, one of these days.' A valuable corrective to the quasi-sociological academicism that seems to affect both New Wave and the politicisation of the avantgarde, and a reasonable statement applicable to other sectors of music. The book itself, a collection of interviews, comments and photographs, contains some of the sanest writing on New Wave there's been, perhaps because it's 'by the fans for the fans. And anyone else who's interested'. (And the publisher's bank balance, presumably.) At least the thing is put together with enthusiasm.

Reading this made me realise that the average London drummer (in a New Wave band, at least) would be unlikely to be agreeing that associations are culture-bound too (and that *that* is an ambiguity in itself) and discussing the finer points of minimalism. These bands consist actually (rather than as an academic conceit) of working-class people though without the political sophistication that wishful thinking sometimes imposes upon them.

The Autumn was distinguished by the rolling forward of the New Wave. There were several publicised gigs at the Battersea Arts Centre (e.g. The Plague) and the Albany Empire in Deptford but, more important, the grass roots aspect — the pubs and clubs — held together. If they *want* to avoid being corrupted by the business (some of the musicians would be quite happy to be corrupted by money —

none of this nonsense of selling out) they need to avoid at least as much the emotional capitalising, me-too-ism and vicarious involvement by cryptos.

'Drum a bit — anyone can drum.' An appropriate slogan.

IV. One prominent figure connected with Punk (significantly, a manager) has been described to me as 'one of the few people irredeemably evil'. But then Wagner was no saint and we don't know whether Brian Ferneyhough is good to his mother, kind to animals, etc. What is sure, and there was a rare moment of critical agreement (or bandwagoning) on this, is that Ferneyhough is a major musical thinker. This of course distinguishes him from the minor, non-musical thinkers and affirms him as one not frightened by music and the power of the intellect to organise it. No hiding behind relentless systems, naive politics or feeble empiricism for him. *Transit*, given a performance preceded by an 'explanation' by the composer at the QEH on November 16, is clearly a major work.

There were some unconvincing moments in an apparently excellent performance by the London Sinfonietta under Ferneyhough: a badly-calculated balance between bass flute and ensemble in 'Verse 1' and a feeling that Boulez does the tumultuous a bit better in 'Tutti 2'. Overall, and in parts, however, the work hangs together with a rare conviction and, moreover, with a use of sound, both vocal and instrumental, that is absolutely compelling. Five months that included *Transit*, *Jacob's Ladder* and Tony Coe's *Zeitgeist* can't be all bad.

V. It is always ironical when others acting (apparently) in line with one's beliefs prevent one's beliefs being communicated. Having hawked his somewhat expensive conscience around the jet set circuit it is possible that not too many people were overtroubled when Henze's opera *The Bassarids* was shut down by industrial trouble last season. Problems of a similar order for another avowed Marxist, David Blake, whose *Toussaint* was caught by the power-workers' unofficial dispute. It was reported as being quite long; certainly the libretto is quite thick. I hope it is revived for it treats a difficult problem and treats it more thoughtfully, I think, than the somewhat glibly pessimistic *We Come to the River*. It has been suggested that Blake might profitably take up the pruning shears before any further performances.

VI. Two concerts by the BBC SO almost convinced the Festival Hall that we were back in the confident halcyon days of the late 60s, cond. P. Boulez. In the first, on November 23, *Jeux*, Schoenberg's Orchestral Variations and the *Firebird* framed *Le soleil des eaux* (revised version). This last is a worthy successor to the French tradition. Surrounded by its mighty companions it seemed dwarfed; it was a pity that it could not have been repeated. Jane Manning was rather overwhelmed by the tumult but this did not seem to matter too much as the entire sound rippled around the hall. It was odd to think that this piece might, at one time, have been considered 'difficult'. No trace of 'difficulty' in this performance and, just as encouraging, the piece did not sound at all dated.

The other pieces received strong performances, Schoenberg's gritty Variations demonstrating (if justification was needed) that it's all very well theorists (Boulez among them) pontificating on the contradictions in Schoenberg's later works but it's the end-product, the music, that counts. The *Firebird* was a little hard to take after that, even with a cup of cold GLC coffee in the interim. *Jeux* had got the concert off to a reasonable start after a somewhat hesitant opening.

No hesitation a fortnight later (December 7) as the BBC Singers and Chorus launched into *The Meeting of the Apostles*, a rarely performed piece of early Wagner in the key of triumph. The main item was a splendid performance of Schoenberg's *Jacob's Ladder*. A particular word of praise for two of the soloists, Siegmund Nimsgern as Gabriel and John Shirley-Quirk as the Chosen One and another for the playing of the orchestra.

However temporary it was, there was real achievement during Boulez' tenure with the BBC SO: modern music sounded like repertoire. This, and his works, make his current preoccupations all the more regrettable.⁸ Regrettable too was Hugh Wood's seizing upon the programme note as a polemical vehicle for anti-contemporary prejudices in an otherwise excellent introduction to *Jacob's Ladder*.

VII. If Boulez and the BBC SO have provided some of the most memorable music in London concert life in the last few years, then the London Sinfonietta has provided most of the rest. January 24 was the tenth anniversary of their first performance. Their concert to mark the occasion proved that they have not lost their commitment to a certain brand of modern music⁹ albeit with resources strained in such a way as only a society that cares little for music can contrive.¹⁰ Perhaps banning television plays that have cost £120,000 is a more suitable activity in the climate engendered by the Great Debate.¹¹

The anniversary concert opened with the premiere of Birtwistle's *Carmen arcadiae mechanicae perpetuum*. The composer's preoccupation with relatively static blocks of sound and the juggling of time within these is becoming rather an *idée fixe*. Nothing wrong with that when the instruments are used so well and the piece is so convincing as here. *Idées fixes*, however, can become clichés. That would be a pity.

It was strange how dated Berio's accomplished essay in live/electronic textures, *Différences*, sounded (particularly in comparison with *Le soleil des eaux*). It was written in 1959. The apparent rate of change has certainly accelerated since 1945; this was confirmed in his newer piece, *Points on the curve to find* (1974). The piano part was composed in its entirety before the orchestral accompaniment was begun; though history will doubtless categorise and extrapolate 'style' and 'conformant elements' existing between the two works, it was difficult to relate the later work to the earlier in terms of recognisable identity. Both were convincing in their own terms (perhaps a necessary corrective to the totem of historicism still being propped up in the Paris sewers, by Berio among others). The later piece was simpler, more tonal, more accessible and more likely to 'last'. There might be those who would say it was more ephemeral. Katia Labeque was the excellent soloist.

A performance of Tippett's prolix *Songs for Dov* (with Gerald English as soloist) proved him to be possibly the most open-minded composer working in Europe today. The concert concluded with Lutosławski's Preludes and Fugue for 13 solo strings (1972). It was good to see the greatest Polish composer getting the attention he deserves and in such a context: there have been moments during the first ten years of the Sinfonietta's history when devisers of sound effects threatened to overshadow his reputation. For once content triumphed over packaging. It is to be hoped that this will continue and that the Sinfonietta will be at the forefront of the movement. All the elements of Lutosławski's piece — pitch and texture, strict and free writing, homophony and polyphony — were held in a constructive balance that contributed to a powerful experience which, though extended (a six-subject fugue, etc.), contained enough material to warrant its length.

VIII. There were other concerts and events too, notably the continuation of the Fires of London series (three at the QEH), mixing new pieces by British composers and an established stage work by Maxwell Davies, and a concert featuring music by Henze, Zender and Webern at the new Guildhall School. There were two benefit performances for the London Musicians Collective on November 5 and 12 to raise money for conversion of premises with many of the stars of the improvised music scene taking part. A nice irony: they took place just around the corner from where Cardew is now living. So near and yet so far. The Air Gallery was proud to announce A Whole Day of Music (including two 'machines') by John White on November 21.

The latest in a long series of variations on that theme by Paganini¹² was previewed by the composer in conversation with Melvyn Bragg in the new arts programme from London Weekend Television, 'The South Bank Show'. This programme is bad news for anybody concerned with either the arts or even good television. I suppose that it's coincidence that the franchises for the commercial channels are coming up for renewal and that the new culture bit is on now. In any case nobody will watch it as it coincides with 'Match of the Day' so no harm is done, except to the subject matter it's supposed to be exposing. Perhaps the rather inept production will improve as time goes on. At all events tunesmith Andrew Lloyd Webber, fresh from his admirable and lucrative encounters with Jesus Christ and Eva Peron, was not equal to the task of writing an extended instrumental composition even within the simple jazz-rock-classical-nonsense style that he

adopted and given some accomplished musicians. Mr Bragg seemed suitably impressed. Five months that includes this can't be all good.

The five months *did* see piece rescued from a classic-before-its-time atrophy. On November 21, Gregory Rose's enterprising vocal group gave a performance of Stockhausen's *Stimmung* at the Round House. It was quite a change from the Collegium Vocale's by now 'classical' and fixed version, presumably just as faithful to the letter if somewhat less awesome to the spirit of the piece. Given the construction of the score, Singcircle's fresh approach can only do the work good. Their performance has also been broadcast more recently. As a vocal group they are well worth listening to in themselves; though overshadowed by other groups, they have a distinctive style and, more to the point, Rose has a courage vis-a-vis the repertoire that should earn him more attention, both from critics and audiences.

NOTES

¹'Metrognome', *Time Out*, No. 394 (October 14-20, 1977), p. 59.

²Hans Keller, *1975(1984 minus 9)* (London: Dobson, 1978).

³Answers: 1. Nicola LeFanu, *Dawnpath* (instruction from the libretto). 2. Nicola LeFanu, *Dawnpath*. 3. Richard Rodney Bennett. 4. Nicola LeFanu, *Dawnpath*. 5. The instrumentalists were static on the stage; the mobile performers were Jane Manning soprano, Tom McDonnell, baritone, William Louthier, dancer.

⁴R. R. Bennett.

⁵*Cogs and Wheels*, Journal of the Progressive Cultural Association. Available from 7 Agar Grove, London NW1. My copy of Vol. 1, No. 1 cost 25p.

⁶Ed. J. Davis, *Punk* (London: Millington, 1977).

⁷Ibid.

⁸See Dick Witts, 'IRCAM: Le Marteau sans Matiere?', *Contact 18* (Winter 1977-78), pp. 16-19.

⁹Keith Potter argues in *Classical Music Weekly* (sic), January 21, 1978 that this brand is rather narrowly specialised.

¹⁰See Peter Heyworth, 'The Birthday Party', *The Observer*, January 29, 1978.

¹¹See W. Stephen Gilbert, 'The Case for Scum', *The Observer*, January 29, 1978.

¹²Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Variations*, MCA records.

EDWARD COWIE'S PIANO CONCERTO

JOHN SHEPHERD

For those who like to speculate on how structure and significance in music might interrelate, Edward Cowie is an interesting figure. There is in his life a symbiotic relationship between time spent composing and time spent studying different forms in the natural world. Cowie is, for example, an elected member of the British Ornithologists' Union, and has previously written a series of works which takes the volcano as its point of inspiration. However, the composer's preoccupation with natural phenomena also finds expression beyond music. He undertakes research for its own sake, writes, and paints watercolours.

Cowie comes across as a sort of latter-day Renaissance man, and this is important in understanding the relationship between his music and other activities. For the interest in natural phenomena is not simply a prop for musical thought. It forms an integral aspect of perceiving the world in its experiential totality. Cowie's world is therefore one in which 'almost all... visual experiences are coupled with a complementary hearing experience.'¹ It is through studying the formal relationships inherent in a group of experiences that up until recently Cowie provided himself with a set of compositional possibilities. Cowie has described this pre-compositional process in the following way: 'My notebooks are as full of scraps of text, drawings and paintings as they are of musical sketches. This enables me to study all these aspects of a group of experiences, and

to weigh up their formal possibilities in relation to a compositional process. The composing of notes is not subordinate to these extra-musical factors, but is passed through them as if through a set of filters.'² The evolution of these filters or systems has been aided through an affair with serialism which resulted from a period of study with Alexander Goehr in the mid-1960s.

This process has reversed itself of late, probably as a result of Sir Michael Tippett's influence. Cowie referred to this change in a recent conversation with Michael Oliver: 'when you write systematically in serial music you, as far as I'm concerned, have to hang the hearing process on a very strong, almost draughtsmanship-like way of ordering those materials. Admittedly when you've composed these numerically or mathematically oriented formulae, you then superimpose a hearing process over it. But I think I can very clearly say the difference with my work now is that I hear first and analyse afterwards.'³

Cowie clearly feels that the attempt to express himself in a freer, more personal manner will not result in the abandonment of order. The order will arise instinctively from his long and intense work on systems. However, on a first hearing of his Piano Concerto (premiered in a BBC Master Concert at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on December 6 by Howard Shelley and the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra, conductor Sir Charles Groves), the question of instinctive order remains an open one. The overall impression left by the three-movement work was that of a fertile and resourceful mind searching for a settled musical identity. The Concerto (which is for orchestra as well as piano) is nothing if not rich in ideas and stylistic references. In line with a rejection of total organisation, it revolves round different tonal centres which are used in a static, non-argumentative fashion. Yet behind the translucent and impressionistic textures that often resulted, it was still possible to detect a complex cerebral element at work. And there were times when stiffer serial sonorities were insinuated into the harmonic web.

The Concerto has many good moments. The dissipation of a considerable harmonic tension at the end of the first movement is masterfully achieved, for example. However, the attempt in the final movement to draw together threads derived from the opening movement seemed to stretch the music's fabric unduly and gave rise to a certain fussiness. It was moments such as this which threatened the success of the work as an organic entity. Yet if the experience was not a totally satisfying one, it was one that was interesting and refreshing, and it will be instructive to see how Cowie's style develops in the immediate future.

NOTES

¹'Edward Cowie writes about volcanoes and his own work', *The Listener*, Vol. 89, No. 2303 (May 17, 1973), p. 659.

²Ibid.

³In 'Music Weekly', BBC Radio 3, Sunday December 4, 1977.

FIVE CONCERTS

GEORGE BROWN

Wednesday January 25

At St John's, Smith Square 'a choral and orchestral concert of twentieth century music' given by 'the music department of the University of Surrey' (with a small amount of 'stiffening'), I have been wondering about the motives behind repeating this departmental concert in London. Was it to give the student performers the experience of working under professional conditions or were we witnessing the more mercenary sight of a department using the occasion as a shop-window to play the tertiary education version of the numbers game?

The programme order seemed a little eccentric, living composers being separated from the dead by the interval. The first item was a very down-tempo version of

Messiaen's *Oiseaux exotiques*. The solo piano part was played by the University's 'chief piano teacher' but, because of Sebastian Forbes' control of the ensemble's dynamics, Martin Hughes never seemed to achieve the type of interplay with the ensemble that can make this piece so exciting. The slow tempo was probably intended to help the student wind players but resulted in their playing Messiaen's flamboyant lines in a rather laboured, every-note-must-count way.

Next came the pleasant surprise of the evening: *Psalmos* for choir, brass, organ and timpani by Odaline de la Martinez, a Surrey PhD student. As the title suggests, it consists of a setting of four psalms. At the beginning there is a declamation of the motif G-D-E flat-A by solo timpani; this is then slowly transformed to produce the material for all four movements. I found the third movement, which sets Psalm 23, the most interesting of all with its slow periodicity set up by the interchange of instruments and voices. *Psalmos* is a simple yet effective choral piece that should be brought to the attention of conductors of amateur choral societies looking for a new work within their capability.

Another composition written by someone from Surrey was Sebastian Forbes' eleven-year-old Chaconne for Orchestra. The composer/conductor writes, 'the effect of the music is symphonic, even dramatic, rather than academic'. After pondering upon these apparently mutually exclusive states, I think if this is to be the result then give me academe — it does not have to be a pejorative term.

There followed a well-prepared but accident-prone reading of Webern's *Das Augenlicht* and the performance concluded with Shostakovich's First Cello Concerto played by Ross Pople with the orchestra sounding more homogeneous under Nicholas Conran's baton.

I could not help feeling that this concert was a more successful venture than could have been mounted by all but a few music departments. But when one thinks of the high standards that have been set in the past by such people as Edwin Roxburgh with RCM students (*Gruppen, Pli selon pli*, etc.) one realises that Surrey still has a long way to go.

Monday February 6

Members of the BBC SO presenting a Joycean evening at the Roundhouse. Why do people put on concerts at this awful place? Before the performance one is aware of the inadequacy of the refreshments and during it every quiet passage is accompanied by the noise of the gas heating and high speed trains. The plastic chairs are beyond comment.

The first music inspired by Joyce was the Berio *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* for stereo tape. In the halcyon days when BBC Roundhouse audiences were treated to a short talk beforehand and a discussion afterwards, I could see the point in including a tape piece. However, this just felt like a bit of programme extending. It was good to hear this 20-year-old work now, as I found it still sounding relevant in a way that instrumental works by Berio from about this time do not.

After this highly imaginative music, which takes the Ormond Bar scene of *Ulysses* as its point of departure, we were given John Buller's version of the 'Children's Night Games' section of Part II of *Finnegans Wake*, entitled *The Mime of Mick, Nick and the Maggies*. Much has been written about this piece already, both before and after its performance. Buller, who has a highly-informed interest in the musical possibilities inherent in Joyce's writings, states in his programme note:

I felt it was essential to keep in mind the total forms of the singing games/play/music-hall of this section of the book, for (in Joyce's words) it is 'filled with the rhythms of English singing games'; and for these reasons again my piece had to be music 'theatre', in the sense that freedom must be allowed for the musicians to 'act it out' — or at least, interact; adults are playing children, singers are playing adults, children are playing angels and devils, and the edges remain blurred.

I have been wondering why I dislike the piece so much: I think the answer lies in Buller's attempt to translate ideas from one art form to another. We know that Joyce was much influenced by music; however, when he uses a musical idea (e.g. the fuga per canonem of the Ormond Bar scene) he transforms it into something new. This, combined with borrowings from his own art, in an attempt to heighten human consciousness, produces a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, and transcends all of them. Buller's attempt to create the same type of effect in music is

too simplistic. Pastiche, whether it is Kurt Weill or Ligeti, sounds as it is. One of the few cases of this idea working in music must surely be Maxwell Davies's *Taverner*.

The Mime . . . did get a very good performance (the questionable balance in the hall having been rectified on the delayed transmission). Special mention must be made of Christine Messiter's flute playing and the superb performance (complete with Irish accent) of Jane Manning. My programme informs me that it was staged by Murray Melvin — perhaps he decided on the colour of the lighting and arranged the music stands. I do hope the BBC will manage a repeat sometime.

Thursday February 9

OdB at Peter Gill's Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, W6 (Hammersmith Underground). Before mentioning the concert, I should like to take the opportunity to recommend the Riverside Studios to audience and promoters alike. If promoters are looking for venues other than the usual established places, forget those cold churches and trendy local authority complexes and go to Riverside. The reasonably-priced pre-concert food and drink is marvellous, tickets for some events are reduced on the night with the production of a NUS card, it's warm and friendly and seems to get good audiences.

The personnel of OdB is Tim Souster (electric piano, synthesizer, viola), Peter Britton (tuned percussion, piano, synthesizer) and Tony Greenwood (percussion and synthesizer). The group was formed after the disbandment of Intermodulation.¹ My reactions to this concert are probably as mixed as those of others to whom I have spoken. I very much enjoyed the first part: Riley, *Dorian Marimba* (very well played by Peter Britton), and Souster, *Afghan Amplitudes* and *Arboreal Antecedents* (premiere). Both Souster pieces were played with the panache and tight ensemble of a good rock group and achieved a similar effect. Very entertaining and appreciated by most people there. After the (as it turned out) first interval, the group played their arrangement of Debussy's *Reflets dans l'eau*. I did not really come to terms with this as Souster's arrangement seems to have added very little to my perception of the piece but removed a lot. Perhaps I was thinking of Intermodulation programme-planning for, by now, I really wanted something that was more than entertainment. A piece such as Smalley's *Zeitebenen* would have been just right but it was not to be; instead two more Souster pieces, *Song for Instruments* and *Arcane Artefact*, followed (this time with real Beach Boys quotes).

This was to have been the end of the concert. However, after a referendum, the audience decided that it would like to hear, after a second interval, Stockhausen's *Japan*. (This was programmed to follow the first interval but we had been told it would be omitted). Audience reaction during this second interval was a good deal less enthusiastic. Comments ranged from 'I didn't know it was going to be a rock concert!' to 'I'll go back in if you're sure I'm not going to hear *Awful Aberrations* by the guy on the ego-trip!'

Whereas I have some sympathy for some of these criticisms as well as the incestuous ensemble fear, it was wonderful to go to an electronic music concert where all the equipment not only worked well, but continued to do so without a single hitch.

Monday February 20

Members of the BBC SO and back to the stark realities of the engine shed (it was not even very successful as such). The British premiere of Robert Saxton's *Reflections of Narziss and Goldmund* started the evening. As seems currently fashionable in certain English circles, this piece is based structurally upon one idea from Hermann Hesse's novel. If the programme note is to be believed, Saxton was emulating the idea of producing a series of non-progressing sections circumnavigating the hint of any climaxes until an 'artificial' climax, close to the end. This monumental gesture (which I almost missed) is achieved by having a crescendo which is 'unsupported by any other climactic organisation of material' and followed by 'a dispersive final section avoiding the rhetoric of closure'. We are assured that Saxton is not trying to recreate the 'atmosphere or the psychological content' of Hesse's novel, so why use it to justify such a simple idea? Listened to in terms of these intentions, his work is superbly successful. As music that 'develops on its own, abstract terms' I did not so much

dislike this diminutive offering as really hate it, almost everything about it from its inchoate opening, through its pretentious central solo oboe sections, to its cessation. What I am really so annoyed about is the sight (or rather sound) of a 25-year-old composer being so seemingly content with such vacuous formulae — even if they do produce such nice pieces.

Bruno Maderna's *Giardino religioso* was given a most unsympathetic performance. The embarrassed way Lionel Friend approached his role as an improvising participant (in addition to being conductor) typified for me his relationship with the work as a whole. Did he never observe Maderna's own dedication to the compositions of others when he conducted? Perhaps we were only observing a younger conductor's penance before moving on to the museum masterpieces.

After the interval, the orchestra was joined by Cathy Berberian and Swingle II for a performance of Berio's *Laborintus II*, conducted by the composer. It was a shame that the BBC gremlins caused the sound system to fail, thus leaving the audience to wait 20 minutes for the piece to restart. The second half sounded like a different concert with a different orchestra. It had all the vitality and conviction that one has now come to expect from everyone involved.

Thursday February 23

The RPO conducted by Elgar Howarth at the Festival Hall. They began with a controlled performance of Stravinsky's 'Dumbarton Oaks' Concerto. Although I should have preferred a harder edge to the outer movements, Elgar Howarth's reading rewarded us with some wonderfully lyrical moments, particularly from the horns.

Cathy Berberian joined the orchestra as soloist for the next two items. The first of these was Berio's beautiful *Calmo* (In memoriam Bruno Maderna). Because of the error of placing the 'offstage' second trumpet (who echoes the soprano throughout) on stage (actually closer to Cathy Berberian than the leader was), the balance of the small ensemble was nearly upset in this delicately woven piece. I am constantly amazed by Berio's ability to control the dramatic gesture, in this case the image of calm in Homer's 'Like a singer who knows how to play the lyre, and calmly touches the strings'. Berio produces a touching nenia for his close friend. In the orchestrated version of Ravel's *Three Hebrew Songs* Cathy Berberian had more opportunity to project her considerable talents. She characterised each one in a totally different and equally convincing way, producing, with the orchestra, a most satisfying account of this not very well-known work.

Lutosławski's *Livre pour orchestre* followed. This is not a work to which I am partial but Howarth made this playing of it convincing enough to make me almost change my mind.

The final work was Birtwistle's *The Triumph of Time*. Originally a RPO commission, this has not really featured very often over the last six years so I was looking forward to hearing it again. Although originally inspired by an allegorical painting by Pieter Bruegel, it is no simple tone poem. I find Birtwistle's preoccupation with the various aspects of time — whether he is playing upon the difference between clock time and perceived time or portraying in music the type of time one associates with memory over a lifetime (often heightened by a personally forceful event such as the death of someone close to one) — fascinating and at its most successful in this piece. During certain sections some of the playing seemed unnecessarily fussy — perhaps this was a result of Howarth's constant subdivisions of slow beats — but, overall, it was a magnificent performance with the difficult dynamic levels being realised as they are indicated. Each orchestral section seemed to give all it had to give; special honours go to the oboe, cor anglais and soprano saxophone.

This concert was both the most satisfying and enjoyable of all those I attended recently. Paradoxically, it was given by an orchestra that I do not really associate with 20th-century music. I hope they give us many more of this calibre.

NOTE

¹See Tim Souster, 'Intermodulation: A Short History', *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), pp. 3–6.

CHORAL MUSIC

JOHN POTTER

In the week when the London Sinfonietta was packing them in at its tenth birthday concert at the QEH, choral music (an apparently little-known form of music-making) was also proving itself to be alive and well just across the river. The BBC Singers under John Poole continued their much-praised series of mainly French and German music at St John's on January 23 with a programme which included the British premiere of Gilbert Amy's *Récitatif, air et variation*, composed in 1970. The late 60s and early 70s were fertile times for composers investigating language, as Amy does in this piece, and looking at it across the eight-year gap between its composition and arrival here, it was interesting to speculate on who got what from whom. The work, for 16 solo voices, is an exposition of the physical origins of language. Based on texts taken from the Surrealist poet René Daumal, it begins with two principal elements, voice and breath, which mate (it was quite an evening, what with Strauss's *Die Göttin* and Messiaen's *Cinq rechants*) to produce syllables and then words. After a suitable gestation period the text itself emerges through some appropriately ravishing textures. It then starts to disintegrate and returns to its elemental state, ending with a brief burst of claves and maracas.

It was, I think, the Singers' first real excursion into music-theatre. The entries and exits were written into the score and there was some attempt at spatial effects by regrouping the performers while singing. I was surprised that Amy didn't make more of this, and surprised too by the percussion effects which seemed a rather simplistic way of representing Daumal's 'ultimate discipline'. Nevertheless it was an exciting performance of a difficult score, the singers deploying a comprehensive range of techniques involving unpitched sounds and delicate *senza vibrato* chords, as well as more full-bodied soloistic lines. Willingness to put the demands of the music before one's preconceived ideas about singing is crucial to works of this kind. It was good to see the BBC Singers doing just that.

A similar attitude is required for Rolf Gehlhaar's *Isotrope*, an astonishingly adventurous commission by the Saltarello Choir, who gave the work its premiere under Richard Bernas on January 26, again at St John's. Although Gehlhaar claims that Stockhausen is not a strong influence on his present work the spirit of the master was never very far away, not least in the galactic conception of the piece. *Isotrope* was inspired by two conflicting theories of the origin of the universe. Both state that it is expanding isotropically ('evenly in all directions'), but each predicts a different outcome. The musical material is related to both theories by two sets of proportions governing all parameters from individual tone colours to the form of the whole piece. The vocal writing is relatively straightforward but to compensate for this the singers have to play pitch-pipes, whistle (there are some ace whistlers in the choir), clap their hands and produce a long list of pitched and unpitched sounds. Two things struck me about this event: one was that Gehlhaar could express complex ideas in a very 'performable' way; the other was the commitment and competence with which the choir tackled the work, in many ways rendering the distinction between professional and amateur meaningless. Food for thought.

It would be interesting to hear an amateur choir having a go at Xenakis's *Nuits*, performed by that most professional of ensembles the John Alldis Choir a month later in the same building. The work, which is textless, was written to commemorate 'unknown political prisoners' but the composer suggests that it can also be seen as 'an exercise in vocal devices'. I imagine most of the audience opted for the latter though the choir seemed more on the side of the prisoners, which made me feel a bit guilty for so desperately wanting to laugh in the 'doing-doing' bits. The performance was suitably monolithic, with some convincing quarter tones, but I can't help feeling that the almost oversophisticated sound of trained singers gets in the way of the 'uprearious' interpretation Xenakis asks for. It's less a case of losing one's inhibitions than of literally losing one's voice, something that professionals are naturally rather reluctant to do.

The programme also contained a Kyrie and Agnus Dei by Malcolm Singer and Birtwistle's *Narration*, both of which were sung with the usual meticulous attention to detail. But

the most exciting work, and it really did seem to have the audience gripped, was Brian Ferneyhough's *Missa Brevis*. I suspect that part of the fascination lay in wondering just how long the choir could keep up an apparently faultless performance of such a fiercely difficult score. Ferneyhough chose to set the mass because of the resilience of its text (a useful quality for most of his texts I would guess): the words were often deliberately inaudible, seemingly implied rather than stated. Despite the acknowledged lack of religious motive, the gradual transformation from the strictness of the Kyrie to the relative freedom of the Agnus Dei is presumably of more than musical significance. The performance was stunning, especially of the soprano parts which were often cruelly high.

The concert ended with *The Golden Wine is Drunk* by David Bedford. Few contemporary composers would choose to set Dowson and fewer still would get away with it. The sentiments expressed in the poem and the layer upon layer of simple musical motifs that make up the heavy pianissimo chords are more often to be found in rock music (where all the Romantics have gone?). Multi-tracked on melotrons, the piece wouldn't be out of place on a Genesis album. The difference is in the singing: the melting lines need a delicacy which only live voices can give. It was a lovely end to the evening.

MARCH ON THE SOUTH BANK

HELEN FAULKNER

March was the most healthy month for contemporary music in London since last year's Proms. This desirable state of affairs was most evident on the South Bank where, apart from the continuation of the La Salle Quartet's complete cycle of Second Viennese quartets, there were two important concerts devoted to the works of single composers — Tavener and Messiaen — visits from Elliott Carter and György Ligeti for performances of their own works, and the première of a Viola Concerto by the young British composer Simon Bainbridge.

This last concert, given by the London Sinfonietta under Michael Tilson Thomas at the QEH on March 21 was beset by practical problems, yet was in many ways the best of the month. The pitifully small but very enthusiastic audience settled back, or hunched forward over the few vast (in physical size only) scores available for the Concerto, which started only to stop again after an unnervingly late arrival by a member of the orchestra. Thomas made a good decision in restarting the work, ensuring the best possible performance; the tension created by this false start actually seemed to benefit the piece. Certainly the concentration from orchestra, soloist (Walter Trampler) and, not least, the audience was very intense. Bainbridge's musical style still shows the limitations of youth, but he has a quite astonishing ability to draw from a few ideas a dynamic and coherent formal whole. The technique of fanning out from a single note is by now familiar, but his wealth of colourful invention is less common. The soloist is, throughout the work, the main protagonist. In the first movement, however, he never overshadows the forever subtly changing colours in the orchestra. The second movement is in a variation form: a viola melody recurs to different accompaniments, the last a combination of the preceding two. The soloist is contrasted with two offstage violas who play complex melodic ostinati. The accompanying textures show a keen ear for delicate instrumental colour. First low strings with cor anglais, then low winds with brass and an ornate dialogue between solo viola and alto flute. Finally the soloist takes off into a virtuosic cadenza answered by vigorous orchestral flourishes which abruptly end the work. Bainbridge's musical voice is not radical but it is individual and promises good things for the future.

The second half of this concert nearly didn't happen at all due to the dearth of ondes martenot players in this country. John Morton being indisposed, Jeanne Loriot had to be imported to perform the part in Messiaen's *Trois petites liturgies de la Présence Divine*, arriving only in the interval. Though perfectly adequate it was perhaps easy to overrate a rather routine performance in the face of such drama.

Messiaen was given a 70th-birthday present of a retrospective concert by the BBC SO under Serge Baudo (RFH, March 29). While he was much moved by the two

ovations given him, he cannot have been so thrilled by the choice of programme. The highlight of the evening was Felicity Palmer's sensuous singing of *Poèmes pour Mi*, though the orchestral playing was nothing special. This was preceded by a rarity: the early *Hymne au Saint Sacrement* (1931). Although the inclusion of what is really a student work in a retrospective concert was perhaps unwarranted, it was interesting to hear many of Messiaen's later characteristics in embryo. The second half of the concert started with *Oiseaux exotiques*; this receives fairly regular performances here, and surely, with another performance to come at the beginning of May, we could have heard something else? The inclusion of the final work was sheer folly. *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum* is not designed for, nor does it benefit from, a small concert-hall performance in which there was no attempt at the grandeur and spatial distribution that are essential to this work. There weren't even the stipulated pauses between movements. It was simply a bash through the notes. *Chronochromie*, for example, would have been a much better choice.

On March 1 Elliott Carter visited the RFH for a performance of his dense and uncompromising Piano Concerto. I must admit that I feared the worst after hearing members of the orchestra complaining that there had been too much time wasted on rehearsing one work and that it hadn't had enough rehearsal time for a good performance. In the event they really pulled it off, with Charles Rosen an inspired soloist and Charles Mackerras a perceptive director. Even in such a finely-judged performance as this, the work makes enormous demands on all concerned because of its dense textures and few moments of repose.

The 'pop' work in this concert, Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra, slipped through the programming net again on March 31 in a concert of Hungarian music at the RFH, one of two concerts containing music by György Ligeti. On March 20 Florian Kitt gave a virtuosic performance of the latter's very limited Cello Concerto. The later concert by the LPO under Elgar Howarth contained the much more rewarding Double Concerto for flute and oboe. The soloists, Martin Parry and Roger Winfield, made much of their rather traditional roles and the orchestra seemed to relish the bright sounds, particularly in the dialogues among the winds. This is players' music of the best kind, good to experience on all levels. When set alongside *San Francisco Polyphony*, as at this concert, it is clear that Ligeti's style is still developing. It is to be hoped that we soon get the chance to hear *Le Grand Macabre*, his new opera, in this country. It will be enlightening to hear how he forms a really large-scale structure.

On March 8 at the QEH the London Sinfonietta celebrated its tenth anniversary by repeating the work first performed at its inaugural concert, Tavener's *The Whale*. This work originally reached a very wide audience after its release by the Beatles' Apple label. Its direct style and mixture of fantasy and religious mysticism were very much things of the 60s, and though it still packs a punch, it has lost the gloss of radical brilliance that it wore then. The essentially confined and static structures are more obvious now. It is still dramatic, even stirring, but Tavener has moved on, or rather back, from the bombast of *The Whale* towards a style that was only hinted at in its more contemplative sections. The title of his new work, *Kyklike kinesis* is Greek for 'circular movement'. More broadly it is the 'circular movement bringing the soul back to God'. Scored for solo soprano and cello (superb performances from Elise Ross and Christopher Van Kampen) with small chorus and an instrumental group of twelve solo players, the work is in four approximately equal sections. An ethereal opening for soprano is followed by a cello section representing, by more agitated movement, the soul setting out on its journey. It is only in this section and the central part of the third section that the otherwise tranquil atmosphere of the work is disturbed. The last section is a cello echo of the opening soprano song over a chordal instrumental canon. There is just too much peace and calm about this piece, unless one can accept at face value the mystical background, in which case I imagine it could be stirring. Now that his musical style and vocabulary have been so far pared down it is hard to predict where Tavener might now be going. Static structures are very limiting, but at least Tavener has cleared the way to develop from them.

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3 Americans in Europe

Christian Wolff was here in England on sabbatical until the end of April. Performances of some of his recent works were given in London, Keele and elsewhere and have generated new, revived interest in this leading experimental composer.

John Cage, consistently challenging although for long the best-known living American composer, was here in June.

George Crumb is planning a visit to Europe in the autumn. Exotic and inventive, the direction of his music lies 'away from the dissonant, intellectually complex and severe... towards a recapture of innocence and the sheer beauty and joy of musical sound.' Recent publications include:

Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III) (1974)
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