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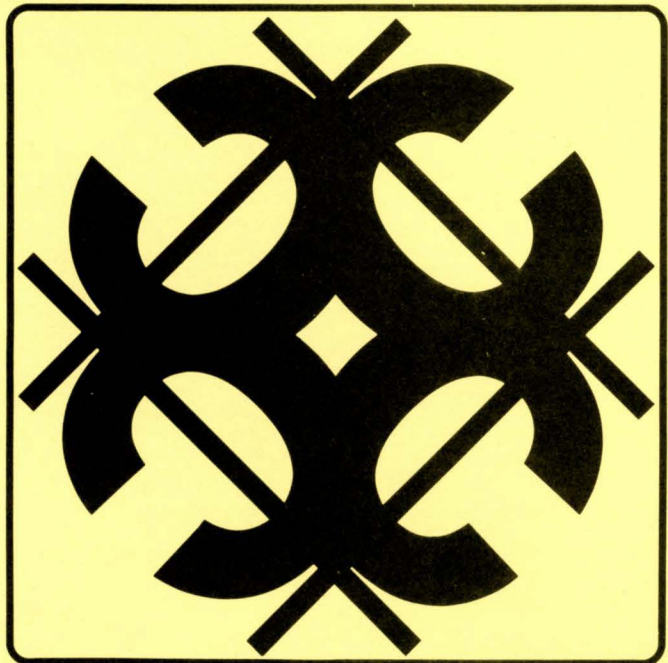
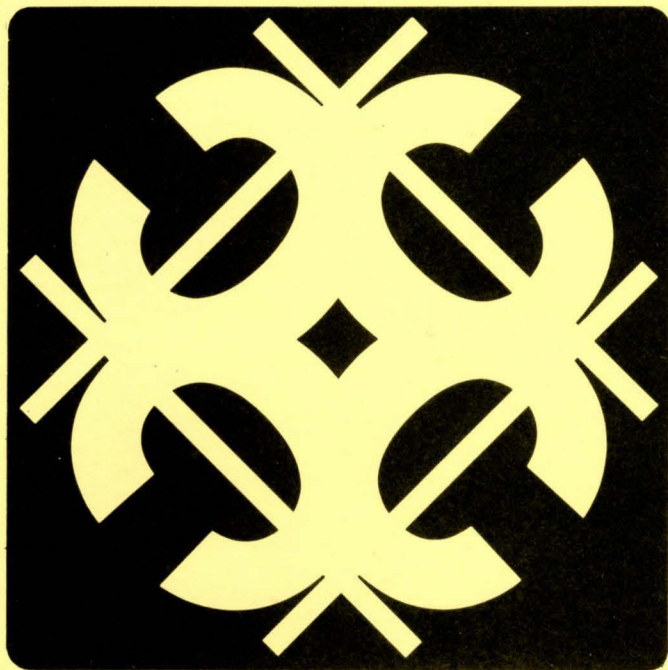
# CONTACT

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Today's Music

No 23  
Winter 1981 £1/\$3

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## Articles

Aldo Clementi

Mauricio Kagel

Louis Andriessen

## Reviews & Reports

including

Zagreb Biennale

Maxwell Davies

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# CONTACT

## WINTER 1981

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Edited by Keith Potter, Hilary Bracefield, David Roberts, Rosemary Roberts.

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# A Commentary on my own Music

Personally, and on a purely aesthetic level, I don't have much to say that has not already been said in the various performance notes that preface my pieces, and in one or two articles, discussions, and interviews. It has been my conviction for a number of years that Music (and Art in general) must simply assume the humble task of describing its own end, or at any rate its gradual extinction. The logical corollary of this is that every work is merely a *fragment* of production as a whole – or at least of everything produced within this frame of reference: and furthermore that production is only a *detail* writ large. As is well known, there is no place any more for exceptional Works, nor for artistic Beauty: for some time sounds have been mere pretexts, even if there are as many pretexts as there are people. Misunderstandings arise only with those who even unconsciously think of Music as discourse, and therefore unwittingly take it as the caricature of an arc describing a useless orgasm. Exaltation and depression have had their day: however you disguise them, they are modest symbols of a dialectic that is already extinct. A *forte* followed by a *piano*, a *high* note followed by a *low* one, a *gentle* timbre followed by a *harsh* one: all per se dialectic, the germ-cell of a larger Sonata form. How can one avoid all this?

This question began to obsess me towards the end of 1961; (at the height of the crisis, in the summer of that year, I had cheerfully adopted the role of the student, and followed one of Stockhausen's courses). It could be the subject of a much longer study; finding a response to it has been the dominant theme of my last twelve years' work (and not of mine alone, be it said). The introductions to my works illustrate, albeit briefly, how I have resolved it; to juxtapose some brief comments will perhaps give a cooler and more just perspective, leaving purely musical phenomena aside.

All this may well give rise to objections as legitimate as they are facile: does it not represent an anti-historic ambition to start again from scratch? Is it ultimately anything more than a useless facsimile of oriental stasis? The first point can be met by reiterating that the problem is how to end, not how to begin. As to the second, there is no exact geography of the human spirit.

I think that my most important works have been produced between 1956 and the present – and particularly from 1961 on. Up to 1959 I had worked on long or short *structures* governed by *measured* accelerations and decelerations, thus determining differing zones of density and tension. From 1959 to 1961 the same problems were resolved with structures that were not built up rationally, but determined by chance, although they were always 'translated' into specific notation: there was a need to suggest the various sound-agglomerates *visually* that was prompted by a certain type of painting current at the time, along with an investigation of silences as ('full') constructive elements, constituting a second dimension imposed upon the first. From 1961 new ideas began to develop, particularly influenced by informal abstraction in painting. The need to avoid hearing individual intervals or any other *detail*, and to wipe out any type of *articulation* led towards a sort of static attention to material (*materismo*), achieved by a close-knit counterpoint around a cluster that provided a pan-chromatic continuum, blotting out the perception of individual movements within it – though these in turn guaranteed a constant vibrancy. From 1966 on (*Reticolo: 11*), this counterpoint became more optical-illusory than

material.

The most characteristic aspect of the composers of those years (i.e. of a vast sector of the New Music from around 1953-61) is their objectivisation of the materials and systems employed: the composer brings his own works into being automatically, determining their destinies while they are still in the bud: almost as if he were deriving masochistic amusement from *not being their author* – revelling in an unnatural and self-wounding situation. The 'direct' mode of procedure, fundamental to all previous Music, repels him. He is fascinated by the ferocity that springs out from the *unforeseen* – well aware, and not merely from the craftsman's viewpoint, that if (whether by chance or by laws created on the spot, arbitrary yet complicated and subtle) he places A next to B, superimposed on C, countered by D, distancing itself from E, and massacred by F, out of it will come *in every instance* an exciting, unknown, diabolical monster. Much of that music, seen in score, simulates a hypocritical rectitude, a polished aptness, but it is angelic to the eyes alone!

Others (and not a few), entirely unaware not only of these inscrutable automatistic games but also (quite simply) of the cruel laws of Structuralism (nothing to do with literature, need I add?!) – a logic derived from the serial decomposition already under way in Webern – wrote *horizontally*, employing analogous amalgams *directly* and narratively, thereby falling into the same dilletantism as those who aspire to write counterpoint without knowing the rules.

A particular type of material-orientated Informality: a constellation spurting into life in a few seconds; either a single matrix imperceptibly 'varied', or several of them, brought together without concern for continuity. Avoid the episodic motet (another illness of those years: all those Suites!), the interval (caught in the raw – an insupportable historical *corpus delicti*!), 'formal' exaltations and depressions, the rhetorical *Höhepunkt* – all of them vices and nervous tics of the soul, presumptuous wishful thinking from false prophets. And what about ornamentation?! Think of all those closet Couperins!

In terms of craftsmanship it was necessary to start from scratch, and from the stylistically ineffable: a finely-wrought compound made from microscopic, jumbled details, an aimless continuum, a texture, a first-class cloth that could not only guarantee a fine garment if placed in the hands of a good tailor (though what a contradiction!), but could also stand up to being torn, abused, or daubed and disfigured. The close-knit complexity (and deliberate intricacy) within it could also legitimate any arbitrary incursions from outside.

All of this could only be obtained through an extremely dense counterpoint, relegating the 'parts' to the shameful role of inaudible, cadaverous micro-organisms.

The march of events must express only itself: great fluctuations only obstruct it. They are the residual caricature of a senseless dialectic.

Everything flows equally even in the most absolute immobility. Around us reality already moves more than enough: why try to imitate it?

The *end* germinates naturally from saturation and fatigue, but it is never definitive: through a desolate familiarity we suddenly fall into the infinite and eternal.

Aldo Clementi. Rome, September 1973  
translated by David Osmond-Smith



DAVID OSMOND-SMITH

## Au creux néant musicien: Recent Work by Aldo Clementi

For over 20 years Aldo Clementi has been proposing a cheerful, but unflinchingly negative view of the composer's task. Working from the premise that music is gradually approaching extinction (an assertion whose force the current mania for retrospects does nothing to diminish), he has produced a series of beautifully crafted sound-objects, teeming with inner life, whose outward conservation of a steady state denies the listener any cathartic illusions. So that when it became known that this long-standing enemy of dramatic indulgence was preparing an opera – or, as he describes it, a one-act rondeau, *ES* – critical curiosity was more than a little piqued. Although initially intended for the Rome Opera, *ES* was finally given this spring at La Fenice, Venice – and despite some cries of alarm from subscribers, the critics were warm in their applause.<sup>1</sup> Its run had hardly ended before Florence's Maggio Musicale began to make preparations for another of Clementi's music-theatre pieces, *Collage 4*, an abstract work involving mimes and visual materials.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A reaction undoubtedly aided by the fact that Italian opera houses actually cultivate contemporary music-theatre. In the last season alone, quite apart from Clementi at Venice and Florence, the Italians could hear Stockhausen at Milan, Berio at Rome, Bussotti and Petrassi at Turin . . . The pallid pragmatists who run equivalent British institutions on a diet of safety-in-nostalgia might care to take note.

<sup>2</sup> Thus reaffirming the precedent established by his only other theatrical work, *Collage 1* (1960), built around visual materials by Achille Perilli.

But although, as all this activity would suggest, Clementi's stature has by now come to be generally acknowledged within Italy and France, the perennial timidity of concert organisers in the face of aesthetic challenge has kept his music well out of earshot on this side of the Channel. So the debut of *ES* offers an appropriate opportunity to try and give the readers of *Contact* some idea of what they are missing. I propose to concentrate on his more recent work, but it may be as well to supplement the account that he gives of his own development in the preceding essay with a minimal stylistic biography.<sup>3</sup>

Born in Catania in 1925, Clementi's advanced musical studies led him first to Alfredo Sangiorgi (an ex-student of Schoenberg) and then, from 1953 to 1954, to Petrassi, whose sober, intricately worked neo-classicism provided a congenial model for his own marked inclination towards abstraction. But it was his encounter with Maderna – and through Maderna, with Darmstadt – that first alerted him to the potential of a more radical idiom. In this he was not alone: such contemporaries as Donatoni, Nono, and Berio had all responded enthusiastically to these influences in the early and mid-fifties – producing in Donatoni's case as in Clementi's a sharp

<sup>3</sup> For a much richer survey of Clementi's work up to the late 1960s see Mario Bortolotto's *Fase seconda* (Turin: Einaudi, 1969), pp. 170-192. Useful supplementary information may be found in Claudio Annibaldi's article on Clementi in the *New Grove*.

Example 1

The musical score for Example 1 consists of three staves. The top staff begins with a 5/8 time signature and contains several measures of music with dynamics like *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *ff*, and *fff*. The middle staff also starts with a 5/8 time signature and features a variety of notes and rests, with dynamics including *f-p*, *sf*, *pp*, *mf*, *p*, *f*, *ff*, *mf*, and *pp*. The bottom staff begins with a 5/8 time signature and includes a large slur over several measures, with dynamics such as *pp-mf*, *ppp*, *p*, *mf*, and *p*. The score is densely notated with many accidentals and articulation marks.



Example 2

change of stylistic direction. But Clementi embraced the formalism of this period far more serenely and wholeheartedly than did his three northern contemporaries, remaining quite untempted by the expressionist undercurrent that pervaded so much of the New Music. For a while he explored the control of fluctuating densities within a pointillist texture, but with *Triplum* (1961) for flute, oboe, and clarinet<sup>4</sup> he began moving towards a fascination with aggregate textures obtained through complex interweaving of parts. Example 1 shows a characteristic extract.

This device rapidly established itself as a basic feature of his style, and through the 1960s he produced a series of works – *Informels 1, 2, and 3*, *Varianti A and B*, and *Reticoli* for various numbers of players – that proposed a single, densely complex structure rotating upon itself. At first the ear was encouraged to delve into this either by throwing other, randomly generated events against it, as in *Informel 2*,<sup>5</sup> or by hollowing out a differing succession of empty spaces within it at each repetition, as in *Informel 3* and the *Varianti*. The enormous forces required for these pieces (*Variante A* has 72 vocal parts and 72 instrumental parts – all independent of one another, and all continuous save for cancellations) gave way to the more modest resources of the four *Reticoli* – each labelled according to the number of performers involved. But as numbers became less extravagant, continuity within the polyphonic magma grew, until with the *Concerto per pianoforte e sette strumenti* (1970)<sup>6</sup> he achieved a completely seamless texture within which rhythmic density is the only large-scale variable.

This piece is worth closer attention, for many of its features are characteristic of a wide body of Clementi's work. Space forbids reproduction of a whole page of the score, but Example 2, a few bars from the right hand of the piano part, will suffice to illustrate the principles

involved. The notation is deliberately skeletal, recording only pitches, attacks, and changes of tempo – so that the eye, ranging over the whole score, will be immediately directed to large-scale pitch retrogrades and the deployment of isorhythm at differing tempi. All other parametric processes are accounted for in introductory notes, so that the score literally analyses itself. (Clementi insists upon an absolute union between aesthetic and conceptual coherence: not for nothing does Brahms occupy the same cardinal position within his private pantheon that Mahler did for Berio during the 1960s.)

But the detail encapsulated here is equally revealing. Clementi is as fascinated by virtual as by real counterpoint – so that although the score consists of a piano part notated on six lines, plus six more lines for two interchangeable groups (three violas in one, clarinet, horn, and bassoon in the other – while the harmonium, here as in several other works, sustains a *ppp* cluster throughout), each line contains two parts notated by tails in opposite directions. The accompanying instruments articulate this virtual polyphony by choosing one line each to play continuously, while the other line is realised as a series of *staccato* interjections. But the pianist has to find other means. The twelve voices of the piano part are equally distributed among four pitch areas, each tuned at a different variant from concert pitch, and with three out of the four variously prepared.<sup>7</sup> Thus the two voices on the middle staff of Example 2 belong to different pitch and timbre areas. Within each area the pianist must differentiate between voices by assigning to each a different dynamic (*mf/p/ppp* – the range is typical), and though in a two-hand version the pedal must be held down continuously, in a four-hand performance the notes of each voice must be held for a different proportion of their duration (minimal/roughly half/whole). A closer look at the lower two staves of Example 2 will reveal the need

<sup>4</sup> Published by Suvini Zerboni – as are all the other scores discussed here. I am most grateful to the publishers, and to Silvio Cerutti in particular, for generous help in lending scores and supplying information.

<sup>5</sup> Recorded on ITL 70045.

<sup>6</sup> Recorded on CBS S 61455 and ITL 70031.

<sup>7</sup> The blurring of both pitch and timbre recurs frequently in Clementi's work. The *Concerto per pianoforte, 24 strumenti e carillons* of 1975 reverses the process adopted here by having strings and woodwind diverge to either side of the piano's concert pitch. It also represents one more in a substantial series of pieces involving a prepared piano, to whose literature Clementi has contributed with unusual generosity.

Example 3



for all this differentiation. They pursue pitch-class canons, of which the whole structure is a complex tissue.

The resultant aggregate, with its blurred, muted turmoil of canonically interacting lines, has remained characteristic of much of Clementi's music to the present day. But in one respect this Concerto marks a boundary within his work, for in the same year he was asked to write a piano piece based on the familiar musical version of Bach's name. He decided to fulfil this commission by employing materials from Bach's own work — though duly immobilising them within a closed system. A brief extract from *B.A.C.H.* is shown in Example 3. The piece establishes a constantly changing *staccato* interplay between three rising scales (two of them chromatic) played in different registers and at different dynamics — the whole to be executed as fast as possible. Over this a Bach fragment (of unspecified origin) is projected in slow, irregular motion, and the B-A-C-H motif, plus one of its permutations, is accented when the middle scale reaches the appropriate notes in successive ascents. A series of other B-A-C-H pieces developed from this witty, mesmeric conception — but at the same time the experience of working once more with materials of tonal origin alerted Clementi to their plastic qualities as contrapuntal elements. He accordingly began to construct his pieces from (usually anonymous) tonal fragments arranged in a polytonal canonic counterpoint that ensures near-continuous chromatic saturation — with which the potential individuality of each line stands in permanent, but only fleetingly audible, tension. (Throw dialectic out of the door, and it will fly in through the window.) These impeccable monuments to the death of music that simultaneously testify to an obdurate afterlife include a notable series of concertos for piano (1975), double bass (1976), and violin (1977), each accompanied by an instrumental group and a continuous chorus of toy carillons, as well as a number of other chamber and solo works.

The sea-changes suffered by these fragments from a more lively past had in fact been anticipated by one of Clementi's most extraordinary electronic works. *Collage 3 (Dies Irae)* (1966-67) took three Beatles songs and transformed them, quite beyond recognition, into an acrid, 23-minute sound-barrage: no more devastating antidote to the Mellers syndrome could have been devised. A decade later, acknowledgment of the semantic proliferation always implicit in the use of *objets trouvés* has resurfaced in *ES* — but to more subtle and humanistic effect. Clementi found his verbal materials for the work in a play by Nello Saito with the same Freudian title, and built from these fragments a single dramatic proposition, perpetually rotating upon itself. Three women — Tuni, a secretary, Rica, a housewife, Mina, an artist — fantasise about their relationships with a shadowy Don Giovanni, whose actual existence is in perennial doubt. From this self-renewing gyre there is no more possibility of exit than there is from the cycle of their daily routines — encapsulated in the symbolic single object from each of their environments that is forever falling over, and forever being replaced upright, in parallel with the myth of Sisyphus.

Rather than solicit a dubious empathy with fully formed 'characters', Clementi, mindful of the three typological axes with which Osgood seeks to define the components of such seductive dramatic fictions in his theory of semantic differential, uses three singers for each woman represented, assigning to each a single, fixed characteristic. Thus the three sopranos who sing the part of Tuni are required to be respectively infantile, neurotic, and tender, and so forth. As the work proceeds, further multiplication of each character takes place through replicas and mirrors. The staging at La Fenice (by Uberto Bertacca) visually amplified the same conception, providing parallel environments for each version of the same woman, placed one above the other, with flights of stairs separating each character-trio from the next — the

whole designed in the 1930s style demanded by the composer, and echoed in the dance fragments to be discussed below.

The tragic immutability of these women's situation is reflected in every level of the music. Clementi originally wanted to write an operetta (or even what he describes as a 'Music Hall'), and although he declares himself as yet 'insufficiently mature for so ambitious a project', its shadow nevertheless permeates the work. Thus although his initial material is in this instance a 16th-century Protestant chorale each of whose six lines generates one of the six scenes, the material is transformed into a series of nine-part counterpoints in waltz rhythm, to be played in canon by up to four different nine-part choirs (voices, high woodwind and two groups of strings — all in the treble clef to reinforce the female tessitura of the work). Since each scene follows the same overall structure — a waltz-canon followed by a dance collage and a brief, consolatory berceuse — a more detailed examination of the first scene will serve to exemplify procedures throughout the opera.

Example 4 shows the eleven-bar unit that forms the material for the first waltz-canon. The individual lines all reflect their derivation from a diatonic source, but since they are variously transposed, and subjected to a good deal of octave displacement (and, clearly, rhythmic reorganisation), they combine to generate Clementi's characteristic pan-chromatic magma. Canon entries are organised systematically: woodwind first, followed in the next bar by voices, which are followed two bars later by one string choir, which are followed three bars later by the other.<sup>8</sup> This first canon establishes a pattern of entering and deleted layers that remains constant, in alternate prime and retrograde forms, for the five succeeding ones. Since each canon ceases at the 17th gyre, the pattern can be summarised as in Example 5. From the fourth gyre of version A the vocal contribution to the canon is gradually reduced, leaving the instruments to provide a canonic backdrop (with entries consequently spaced at regular three-bar distances). Against this, the voices project materials in speech, Sprechgesang, and laughter. In the course of the six scenes, the order of entry for these materials is exhaustively permuted, with song coming before or after according to the direction in which Example 5 is being pursued. Each type of voice production is gradually infiltrated by the next, with entries from the top downwards in one scene being balanced by entries from the bottom upwards in the next, from outside to middle by middle to outside, and so forth.

But the variety achieved by these means would not be sufficient to sustain a large-scale musical structure were it not for Clementi's meticulous control of density, tessitura, and aggregate rhythm in successive waltz-canons. Tessitura describes a simple arc upwards and downwards throughout the work, but density is given a complementary, but more complex role. It will be clear from Example 4 that contrasting levels of density are an important feature of the materials for Canon A, which contains two tutti passages, one six bars after the other. The canonic entry scheme described above means that where woodwind and first strings play together (compare Example 5) at three bars' distance, their combination will create a relatively stable density and a clear alternation in timbre. But where the three instrumental choirs play together, one tutti from the second strings (six bars behind the woodwind) will coincide with and thicken the other from the wind, thus creating a more fluctuating density pattern, while toning down the contrast in timbre. Canon B preserves the same scheme in outline, though allowing for more agile movement within the parts. Canons C and D define the contrast between full and thin textures even

<sup>8</sup> Which, in accordance with the Fibonacci series, is followed five bars later by the return of the woodwind to their starting-point.



# Example 4



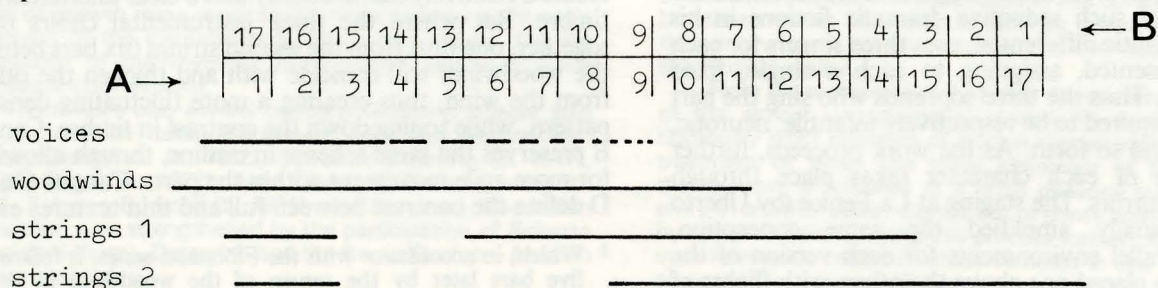
further; Canons E and F, on the contrary, dissolve into a continual interplay of overlapping parts, with F reduced to a sparse, seven-part texture throughout. Tempo is controlled in a simpler, more systematic fashion. Each canon starts faster than, and gradually slows down to  $\text{♩} = 120$ , but whereas Canon A starts from  $\text{♩} = 180$ , each successive scene starts at a metronome mark ten points lower than the last, so that by Canon F we have reached  $\text{♩} = 130$ .

Each waltz-canon is followed by one of two alternating sets of superimposed dances – both of them derived, with typical parsimony, from Canon A. A comparison of Example 6 – Clementi's autograph of the first group of dance fragments – with Example 4 will illustrate the process. Pitches from each line are combined with a rhythm taken from one work in the operatic repertoire, and with words from another to form a

constantly repeated module. (I leave the tracing of sources to masochist opera buffs with an idle hour to spare.) Each singer has her own piano, saxophone, or accordion behind the scenes, to accompany her at her own specific tempo, and she gyrates mechanically towards and away from the audience at the points indicated by the arrows – though just occasionally sketching in the proper step for her dance. All this activity is surrounded by a cloud of strings, playing the complementary half of Canon A as a six-bar canonic gyre, imitated after one and then two bars.

Each dance relapses into an instrumental berceuse – a series of ever denser canons upon the lulling theme given in Example 7. Starting from a nine-part canon at the unison from woodwind in Berceuse A, three string choirs successively add their own versions at different transpositions and rates of movement in Berceuses B–E.

## Example 5





# Example 6

Example 6 is a musical score featuring multiple staves with vocal lines and lyrics in French and English. The score includes tempo markings such as *lento*, *moderato*, and *allegro*, and various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The lyrics are in French and English, with some lines being repeated or modified. The score is written for a large ensemble, with parts for Soprano (T.), Alto (II), Tenor (III), Bass (R.), and various instrumental parts (I, II, III, M., TI, TII, TIII).

Finally, in *Berceuse F*, the voices join in to create a *pianissimo*, 45-part canon. Each berceuse is longer and slower, as well as denser, than the previous one, and their mournful quiesis is shot through with three layers of accordion clusters, ebbing and flowing at different rates on the very threshold of audibility.

Although *ES* is certainly Clementi's major achievement of the past few years, he has also been remarkably prolific in his work for the concert hall. His oblique contract with musical history has proliferated in many directions, allowing strange games of frustrated connotation to play themselves out between the tonal originals, specifically evoked in such titles as *Collage 4 (Jesu meine Freude)* and the canons on *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland* for three trumpets and two trombones (1980), and their unrecognisable, pan-chromatic issue. The ensemble itself may provoke such tensions, as in *Otto*

*frammenti* (1978) for soprano, countertenor, organ, lute, and viola da gamba, as may the titles that he assigns to his instrumental works. These have moved from the austere abstractions of the 1960s, and the simple *Concerti* of the late sixties to mid-seventies to such evocations as *Capriccio*, *Berceuse*, *Madrigale* and *Elegia* – the last a remarkable work for solo flute with bassoon, horn, and trombone choirs, pursuing in a lower, darker register the canonic obsessions of *ES*. Is Clementi's tutelary deity quietly changing from Brahms to Mahler as he draws ever more of the surrounding world into his implacable games? (And will some kind, courageous concert promoter give us the chance to find out for ourselves?)

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## Example 7





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## Mauricio Kagel: Filmed Music/Composed Film

*This article is the text of a talk given in the Waterloo Room of the Royal Festival Hall on November 13, 1978. The talk was preceded by a showing of the film of Match; later in the evening Ludwig van and 1898 were performed by the London Sinfonietta under Kagel's direction in the Queen Elizabeth Hall.*

Approaching the work of Mauricio Kagel, the commentator or critic is immediately confronted with a distressing lack of homogeneity. He must pick his way through works for both standard and unheard-of instrumental combinations, pieces of instrumental theatre, and theatre where music as conventionally defined has almost evaporated. He must come to terms with numerous radiophonic productions, and more than a dozen films and discs which are anything but simple documentations of musical performance.

Kagel wrote in 1968 that 'Europeans have as a time-honoured custom been in the habit of codifying musical history far too quickly.'<sup>1</sup> In innumerable manifestos and articles, after the illusory solidarity of Darmstadt serialism broke down, composers and academics have relentlessly defined schools, assigned influences, and attached aesthetic labels to phenomena which grow ever more distant from the comfortable, conventional terminology. This profusion of descriptive and critical language aims at masking (but is actually a symptom of) a basic impulse: the desire to construct categories into which the musical phenomenon can painlessly disappear. What is dynamic is thus made static. Transient oppositions are converted into permanent ones, but on the other hand objective contradictions can be conveniently obliterated.

All of Kagel's output stands opposed to such classification and to a large extent eludes it. This is in no way, as for example in the case of Cage, the result of an attempt to erase memory, to begin afresh. Each of Kagel's works is inseparably bound to tradition, more specifically to a musical one. But whether working with a genre (such as opera or the string quartet), re-examining another composer (such as Bach, Beethoven, or Brahms), or analysing the mechanisms of ensemble playing or the role of the conductor, Kagel neither blindly perpetuates nor contemptuously dismisses this tradition. The large-scale *Staatstheater* (1967-70)<sup>2</sup> is certainly no opera, nor an anti-opera in the spirit of dubiously resurrected Dadaism. *Ludwig van* (1969)<sup>3</sup> is significantly subtitled 'homage from Beethoven'. The conductor of the film *Solo* (1966-67)<sup>4</sup> conducts to no one except, occasionally, the mute and inanimate musical instruments resting in their places on the stage in front of him.

This resistance to categorisation, then, is an index of Kagel's compositional attitude, which might be described as the radical and meticulous dissection of musical

conventions. And insofar as these conventions have become formalised and frozen to the point where they are taken for granted, the compositional method that seeks to expose and transcend them cannot be dictated by some higher theory which itself threatens to become ossified.

Kagel, though he writes and talks extensively about music, has frequently made clear his anti-theoretical bias. If one sees that as an anti-authoritarian mark, then maybe also as a lasting reaction to the political conditions of his native Argentina, where he lived from 1931 to 1957. Ten years ago he wrote of the 'uninterrupted political catastrophe that has choked Argentina for almost 30 years... the series of miserable régimes and dictatorships... the endless chain of miscalculations, self-pity, betrayal, deficiencies and imperfections accomplished by those men, unworthy of humanity, who surround themselves with jack-boots and hierarchically polished metal, whom one simply terms "the military".'<sup>5</sup> But more than this, Kagel's residence in Cologne for more than 20 years can only have deepened his empathy with a characteristically German mode of thought. In Germany (more than in France, and in direct contrast to Anglo-Saxon countries) dialectical thinking has since Hegel been an official (if not always *the* official) philosophical tradition whose hallmark, from Marx to Marcuse and beyond, is the refusal to accept the existing order as the only and permanent one. But in an increasingly administered society the inherently anti-systematic character of dialectical criticism grows more pronounced. Adorno's aphoristic collection *Minima Moralia* is perhaps the most extreme expression of this tendency. There Adorno writes:

Limitation and reservation are no way to represent the dialectic. Rather, the dialectic advances by way of extremes, driving thoughts with the utmost consequentiality to the point where they turn back on themselves, instead of qualifying them. The prudence that restrains us from venturing too far ahead in a sentence, is usually only an agent of social control, and so of stupefaction.<sup>6</sup>

It is, I think, in this context that Kagel's often startling musical formulations are to be understood, rather than as a perverse celebration of the irrational or as the wilful pursuit of novelty. What might be termed Kagel's 'systematically unsystematic' approach is evident in each individual work. His works generally display indifference towards the traditional categories of unity, stylistic purity, absence of inner contradictions. Musical analysis whose conventional role is the uncovering and confirmation of precisely those categories can find no foothold, or at best a precarious one. Each work rejects a situation that Kagel had already described in 1964:

The preparation for composition has lost the character of a sketch and is already burdened with the character of the subsequent analysis. The work thus becomes the realisation of the analysis that preceded it. Analyses of such pieces rarely actualise the theoretical preparation since the dismantling of

<sup>1</sup> Mauricio Kagel, 'Über J.C.', *Tam-Tam: Dialoge und Monologe zur Musik* (Munich: R. Piper & Co. Verlag, 1975), p.87.

<sup>2</sup> Mauricio Kagel, *Staatstheater* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1971), UE 15197.

<sup>3</sup> Mauricio Kagel, *Ludwig van* (London: Universal Edition, 1970), UE 14931.

<sup>4</sup> Mauricio Kagel, *Solo* (Hamburg: Norddeutscher Rundfunk, 1967). The author acknowledges with thanks Mauricio Kagel's loan of the shooting-book for the film.

<sup>5</sup> Mauricio Kagel, 'Denke ich an Argentinien in der Nacht', *Tam-Tam*, p.11.

<sup>6</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), p.86.



the composition has already taken place. In this case not an analysis but only a description is possible.<sup>7</sup>

The form of each of Kagel's works, on the other hand, is defined only in the highly detailed working-out of a specific, concrete situation or complex of issues. But the need to examine each work on its own terms can obscure the fact that, as Dieter Schnebel pointed out in 1969,<sup>8</sup> 'the individual pieces of Kagel's output increasingly tend to be stations of an overall compositional process, are parts of a kind of "work in progress" '.

But when, in a section of *Staatstheater* called 'Repertoire', an actor appears on stage with a gramophone record in front of his face and proceeds to scratch it viciously, the very concrete nature of the action can provoke a one-dimensional analysis, such as that the audience is shocked when the disc is scratched because society is only concerned with consumer products. Kagel's response to this is characteristic:

Well, I will never make an interpretation of my actions in this way. I will never be so concrete to make prose of my poetic, because I don't think you can translate the poetic metaphor which I have composed into prose — and prose with a license... Of course, when you see a man who has no face but a record as a face, you start thinking of the problems of the consumption of music... And I will say that this plays a role in the theme of my work, but it's not exactly this. I will not be so narrow, because the actions are more complex than one meaning.<sup>9</sup>

If it often seems appropriate to discuss Kagel's work negatively, in terms of what it is not, it is because, working with the means of the culture industry, he aims to find the holes within it that might allow a temporary space for a criticism which that industry continually threatens to neutralise. This constitutes an explicit attempt to draw his audience out of the conventional mode of passive contemplation and consumption into one of active criticism of the ways in which music is usually produced, transmitted, and received. If my discussion of the films *Match* and *Solo* is provisional, speculative, and incomplete, that is an acknowledgment of such an attempt and a consequence of it.

The film *Match* was made in 1966 for Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Cologne. Its model is the concert piece of the same name, written in 1964, for two cellists and percussionist.<sup>10</sup> Kagel has described how he dreamt this piece three times in ten days, in remarkable aural and visual detail, and interrupted his other work to write it in seven days.

*Match* is a further development of the notion of 'instrumental theatre' with which Kagel has been concerned for some time. This 'instrumental theatre' may be regarded as a reaction to the deterministic traits of both integral serialism and the mechanical reproduction of sound on disc and tape, both of which aim at the reduction of music to pure acoustic result. Kagel is well aware of the ideology of such a reduction, with its implications of so-called 'objectivity' and the 'definitive' musical performance, but he does not seek a return to pre-technological innocence. He might, I think, acknowledge Walter Benjamin's classic observation that 'for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipated the work of art from its parasitical dependence on

ritual'.<sup>11</sup> Mechanical reproduction robs the work of art of its 'aura', which it has by virtue of its uniqueness and authenticity. The musical work, it is true, appears through repeated mechanical reproduction to lack this uniqueness of the visual art object. Conventional musical performance responds by reconstituting and confirming the aura of the musical work in the ritual of each concert. Kagel's instrumental theatre penetrates musical performance and breaks up its homogeneity, aims therefore at demystifying the ritual.

The interpersonal and psychological relations of musical performance are brought to light as ambiguous and often involuntary theatre. This fact marked in the early sixties a crucial shift of compositional focus from pure acoustic result to the actions of sound-production. In the music of *Match* the notational pursuit of the sounds of Kagel's dream results, in spite of itself, in the composition of actions. As an example (by no means the most extreme one) — at one point one of the cellists must play, *tremolando*, a number of harmonics articulated by continuous bowing transitions from *sul ponticello* to natural position, from *col legno tratto* to normal bowing, all at a dynamic of *ppp*, while continually varying the density of the tremolo.<sup>12</sup>

Superficially, therefore, Kagel seems to perpetuate the virtuoso tradition, but in fact he makes a direct attack on it. This he does not only by exposing, in the performers' struggle to produce the denatured sounds of *Match*, the conflict between virtuoso performance and the ideal of euphony — implicit 150 years ago, incidentally, in Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge*; more fundamentally, he demolishes the myth that the elaborate gestures of the virtuoso are essential for the transmission of musical meaning. In Kagel's instrumental theatre the gestures are the inseparable consequence of the process of musical production, rather than gratuitous superimpositions upon it. But the falseness of the virtuoso tradition, with its mélange of gesture and sound, can only be overcome by according to each its full value. That is why in the concert piece, and even more in the stark black and white of the film, gesture and sound almost demand to be perceived separately. Only then can their truly integral and reciprocal (i.e. dialectical) nature be grasped.

It is evident that *Match* has extra-musical connotations, relative to earlier pieces, though these are not as fully fledged as those, for example, in the large-scale music-theatre piece *Tremens*, which was completed in 1965.<sup>13</sup> Both concert version and film characterise the cellists as sporting combatants and the percussionist as umpire. But the axis of conflict rapidly swings round to the point where the cellists form a more or less united opposition against the percussionist. This shift is brought about by the unstable character of the percussionist umpire, by turns dictatorial, deliberately misleading, absent-minded or simply incompetent. That the resolution of conflict is spurious is conveyed at the end of both concert piece and film by the obverse of sporting convention: cellist and percussionist shake hands left-handedly.

It was this complex and equivocal role of the percussionist, the epitome of irrational authority, that forced Kagel, as he says, to 'make the formal construction of *Match* dependent on genuine musico-dramatic situations'.<sup>14</sup> The unity of music and drama in *Match* is to be understood as a dialectical one, since each is at the same time product and instrument of the other.

<sup>7</sup> Mauricio Kagel, 'Analyse des Analysierens', *Tam-Tam*, p.56.

<sup>8</sup> Dieter Schnebel, *Mauricio Kagel — Musik, Theater, Film* (Cologne: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1970), p.314.

<sup>9</sup> 'Mauricio Kagel, Interview with Adrian Jack', *Music and Musicians*, vol.22, no.12 (August 1974), p.42.

<sup>10</sup> Mauricio Kagel, *Match* (Vienna: Universal Edition, 1964), UE 14543.

<sup>11</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), p.224.

<sup>12</sup> *Match*, p.17, cello I, system 2, bar 2.

<sup>13</sup> Mauricio Kagel, *Tremens* (London: Universal Edition, 1973), UE 13505.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Schnebel, *Mauricio Kagel — Musik, Theater, Film*, p.158.



Now film, as Schnebel has pointed out, 'stands both in a closer and more distant relationship to music than theatre does'.<sup>15</sup> Basically, Kagel sees no great distinction between his activities as composer and film maker. That is a result, as he says, 'of the specific condition of the visual medium, which is the articulation of *temporal* processes'.<sup>16</sup> For a composer who has worked in the electronic studio (as he did to make the earlier works *Transición I* (1958-60) and *Antithèse* (1962) the techniques of editing, montage, superimposition, slowing down and speeding up, etc. lend themselves equally well to the transformation of sounds or images. But whereas, as in *Match*, drama may be directly drawn out of music by the intensification of the always latent theatre of performance, film (or television) in itself has neither stage nor performers and as a medium its visual configurations cannot be immediately deduced from a musical continuity, even where, as in *Match*, musical performance provides its image material.

The horns of this dilemma have speared music, film, and television directors from the earliest days of the visual mechanical reproduction of music. Thus the first television performances employed discreet camera work, long static shots, presumably intending to avoid the disturbance of aural concentration with visual clutter. Most directors seemed to be unaware of the significant psycho-physiological differences between aural and visual perception. Perhaps also they did not care to acknowledge that, at least since McLuhan, there is no question that the perception of the message is largely conditioned by the intrinsic nature of the medium, whose structure is itself manipulated by the administrators of communications technology. It was soon realised that insufficient visual message does not create more space for the ear, but on the contrary produces a discomfort that usually results in distraction.

So, working with the principle of pointing the camera where the action is, one arrived at a filming of music where every musical theme, every drenching cymbal clash was conveyed in loving close-up. In accommodating themselves to the dominant media conception of experience as a sequence of edited highlights and action replays, film and television directors usually seemed oblivious of the fact that the logic of a musical work is rarely one-dimensional and is often being worked out at less obvious levels than that of first and second subject.

The recognition that even this distorted grasp of musical continuity does not automatically produce a coherent film continuity leads to further musical mangling, where the film or television director, equipped with the entire technical arsenal of the medium, transforms the shots of musical performance into visual pyrotechnics which he then hopes to mould into an autonomous and coherent sequence. The result is perhaps inevitable: the package is consumed as a rich visual cake with atmospheric acoustic icing.

As Kagel says, the fact that in approaching *Match* as a film director he did not need to consider the feelings of the composer of the piece did not in itself answer the question of how the filming of music was to be tackled. Eventually 'I decided on the *mise-en-scène* of the musical continuity and thus on the dramatic interpretation of the instrumental continuity'.<sup>17</sup> Almost all details of the concert version remain intact, but are raised to a higher power, as it were. For example, towards the end of the piece, the two cellists are reduced to silence and complete apathy by the hopeless inconsistency of the percussionist, and fall asleep as if shot by the crisp snare-drum stroke.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp.301-302; see also Dieter Schnebel, 'Sichtbare Musik', *Denkbare Musik* (Cologne: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1972), pp.326-328.

<sup>16</sup> Mauricio Kagel, *Über 'Duo' und 'Hallelujah'* (unpubd manuscript).

<sup>17</sup> Mauricio Kagel, programme note on *Match* for the Internationale Musikfestwochen Luzern, 1970, p.1.

Their rebellious indifference is evident in the next image, of the cellists with instruments reversed, so that only the backs can be seen, without fingerboards or strings.<sup>18</sup> At another point in the score the percussionist is required to use the Chinese clatter-drum on all available instruments and surfaces. In the film this broadening of activity is visually inverted in a shot where the percussionist remains static while various instruments converge on him as if drawn by invisible threads.<sup>19</sup>

The camera's ability to intensify musical contexts, its capacity to focus the ear by visual selection, is rarely used in *Match* for the tautological purposes of conventionally filmed music. Even where individual actions are filmed, they are often shot in such close-up that the relation between sound and image can only be grasped in a conscious act of synthesis. As often as not, the camera draws attention to the origin of an action sequence, or its eventual outcome, or ignores obvious musical gestures altogether. The dissociation of aural and visual factors, which is latent in each instrumental action, thus becomes the principle underlying the entire film: the continual conflict between what the spectator hears and what the listener sees.

At this point, I think it is important to realise that the musical and dramatic dimensions are integral, but not, however, synonymous. The double meaning of the title gives a clue: 'Match' can imply similarity (as of a pair of cellos) or conflict. The opening bars of the concert version and the ping-pong soundtrack of the film's title sequence set up a clear dramatic situation of sporting combat which strongly conditions the listening viewer's response to all that follows. I shall make the rather generalised point that in *Match* an alternation of musically similar material forms a gesture of antagonism only by virtue of the theatrical situation that determines it.

This distinction between musical and dramatic levels is pursued in matters of timing, for example in the castanet sequence.<sup>20</sup> Here the musical material is quite capable of sustaining a duration of some 70 seconds but by the criteria of theatrical convention such a build-up to a punch line would probably seem over-lengthy. At this point in the film Kagel somewhat alleviates this tension between musical and dramatic pacing by varying the shots, though these themselves re-establish a conflict between sound and image with distorting-mirror effects, facial close-ups, even a leisurely glide around the pages of the score.

The non-identity of musical and dramatic levels is made more complex in the film by the manipulation of cinematic time. On the one hand time may be suspended by the use of one film-frame of an action as a still shot; on the other the several frames of a continuous action may be superimposed onto a single, punctuating frame, which is the technique (now illegal) of subliminal advertising. Eventually film time seems to break through the limits of the piece itself and one sees photos of the performers in adolescence, or their images are distorted or dis-integrating. The states of Innocence and Experience, as it were, separated by the trauma of *Match*.

Since in *Match* musical time is articulated extremely precisely, it would have been inconsistent to superimpose a relatively independent visual continuity onto the musical one. On the contrary, as Schnebel says, 'the images of the film seem to well up from the music as if they were its visual expression'.<sup>21</sup> This expression is of course highly mediated, and the Surrealist quality of much of the film is undeniable. One might detect echoes of Cocteau, René Clair, possibly Buñuel. Bearing in mind the dream origin of *Match*, what the French poet

<sup>18</sup> *Match* p.23, system 1, bar 1.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.19, system 2, bar 1.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.11, system 1, bar 1.

<sup>21</sup> Schnebel, *Mauricio Kagel — Musik, Theater, Film*, p.304.



Supervielle wrote in 1925 seems very apt: 'Until now we have never known anything that could so easily assimilate the unlikely. Film does away with transitions and explanations, it confuses and makes us confuse reality with unreality. It can disintegrate and reintegrate anything.'<sup>22</sup>

But the undoubtedly subjective character of most of the film shots should not lure the listening viewer into the belief that the visual continuity is an arbitrary flight of fancy. As always Kagel is in rational control of his imagination. The transformation of a closed musical work into an autonomous filmic one could be accomplished, as he says, 'only by the application of a strict compositional principle to both film scenario and montage. This compositional principle structures all the filmic elements according to musical criteria and moulds the movements of camera and performers, changes of camera angle, visual form of each image, and the synchronisation or non-synchronisation of hearing and seeing into a formal unity.'<sup>23</sup>

But the nature of this unity must be precisely understood. *Match* does not seek the fusion of film and music in the conventional sense, which as Brecht well understood with regard to the theatre arts can only result in their equal degradation. Nor does it aim at their peaceful co-existence which, for reasons I have already given, is a fiction based on false assumptions of visual and aural parity and the alleged 'objectivity' of the reproductive medium. Rather, film and music achieve through rigorous composition a unity whose dialectical nature can only be preserved in their dissociation, which in turn results in a continual tension between them.

To return finally to Surrealism, I would like to quote René Clair who wrote in 1925 'What interests me in surrealism are the pure, extra-artistic values it unveils. To translate it into visual image, the purest surrealist conception, one would have to submit it to cinematic technique, which would entail for this "pure psycho-automatism" the risk of losing a great part of its purity.'<sup>24</sup> It is as if Kagel had taken Clair's reservation as a premise, since the subjective images of *Match* are the product of rigorous composition. But at the other extreme, since in *Match* filmed music is only actualised in the composition of film, the neutral, documentary character of the medium is undermined.

The startling result of these processes is that in the film of *Match* the distinction between dream and concert version is liquidated. As Kagel wrote: 'The reality of the performance may appear to be normal or completely distorted: the difference remains entirely imperceptible.'<sup>25</sup>

*Solo* is, as the credits state, 'a free adaptation of the graphic score "Visible Music II" by Dieter Schnebel'. *Visible Music II* (also entitled *Nostalgie*) for solo conductor, and *Visible Music I* for conductor and instrumentalist were composed between 1960 and 1962.<sup>26</sup> In 1966 Kagel staged and directed both these pieces in Munich, with the actor Alfred Feussner as the conductor. As a result of these performances Kagel was commissioned by Norddeutscher Rundfunk to make films based on the two Schnebel pieces. *Solo*, made in 1966-67, and *Duo* (1967-68) are the third and fourth films in Kagel's European output.

If in *Match* Kagel films music, then in *Solo* he films

its absence, since Schnebel's *Nostalgie* is a highly detailed topographic score for conductor alone, comprising 22 gestural complexes. The conductor projects his gestures onto an imaginary screen erected between him and the audience. Each page of the score defines a certain area of this screen within which the conducting movements are very precisely located. Using a symbolic notation, Schnebel meticulously choreographs the movements of fingers, hands, and arms. Written instructions further define changes of tempo, bodily posture, eye movements. Lastly, the musical character of each gestural group is defined by Italian nomenclature as is customary in traditional music.

Schnebel distinguishes five different methods of conducting which in *Nostalgie* he has composed as if they were pure music.<sup>27</sup> Since the gestures of the conductor in *Solo* are to be understood in this context, I think they are worth mentioning:

First, the pure and somewhat unconductorlike painting of music – of pitches, time-values, intensities, sounds.

Second, painting of music which turns into conducting – where gestures of a conducting nature are woven into the pure painting of music. Third, conducting movements that are inspired by the music, e.g. conducting in the swaying movement of a waltz, projecting the stillness of an adagio – as if the conductor were directing and surveying a large ensemble.

Fourth, conducting movements of a stimulating and even authoritarian nature towards an ensemble at some distance.

Last, conducting as self-indulgence – fanciful movements with closed eyes.

In describing the relation of the film *Solo* to Schnebel's score, Kagel said: 'I behaved like a typically irresponsible film maker: I took the idea from the composer Schnebel, and orchestrated it in many directions, sometimes metaphorically, sometimes with a fundamental alteration of the visually conceived continuity.'<sup>28</sup> *Solo* replaces the absence of decor in *Nostalgie* by a dense clutter of objects and ornaments. Whereas Schnebel's conductor is rooted to the spot, Kagel's is almost always on the move. The 22 gestural groups in Schnebel's piece, though interrelated at many levels, do not form a linear or narrative continuity. *Solo* on the other hand moves inexorably if erratically towards its apocalyptic climax.

The immediately striking aspects of *Solo* are the space in which it is filmed and its decor. A surprisingly small studio, some 60 feet square, is decked out in the style of Art Nouveau, crammed with statues and pictures of the female nude, characteristically coy and yet sexless, with ornately framed mirrors and a huge, obtrusive chandelier. After the opening sequence the camera leads the viewer into a small auditorium, reminiscent of a turn-of-the-century concert hall, with neat and empty raked seating. But this decor does not remain static. The footage for *Solo* was shot in 22 blocks (the numerical correspondence with Schnebel's gestural groups is perhaps coincidental), and for each block the elements of decor were repositioned. Moreover, the actor in *Solo* assumed a different role on each of the five days in which the film was shot, with a corresponding change of facial appearance and dress.

In Hollywood, the obsessive attention paid to continuity of props and costume serves the illusion that a given sequence was shot in real time, naturalistically therefore, rather than having been painstakingly assembled from dozens of separate takes. Just as in other works Kagel redefines the limits of a musical space for

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Jacques B. Brunius, 'Experimental Film in France', *Experiment in the Film*, ed. Roger Manvell (New York: Arno Press, 1970) p.93.

<sup>23</sup> Programme note on *Match*, p.1.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Brunius, 'Experimental Film in France', p.94.

<sup>25</sup> Programme note on *Match*, p.1.

<sup>26</sup> Dieter Schnebel, *Abfälle I* (Mainz: Schott, 1970), Edition Schott 6484 (*Visible Music I* is part 2 of *Abfälle I*); *Nostalgie* (Mainz: Schott, 1970), Edition Schott 5704.

<sup>27</sup> Schnebel, *Nostalgie*, pp.6-7.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Schnebel, *Mauricio Kagel – Musik, Theater, Film*, p.205.



each successive section, here he continually recomposes his film space. The result is typically anti-cathartic, breaking the viewer's identification with the camera eye, drawing attention to the camera technique and the process of film making as a whole.

This continually varying film space is articulated by the camera movements. The tracking of the meandering camera is precisely controlled, as are the many close-ups, medium and long shots, pans, tilts, and dolly shots. Schnebel's principle of 'visible music' is extended to encompass not only the gestures of the conductor but also the glances of the mechanical eye that sees him. While in *Match* the requirements of filmed music hold the recalcitrant camera in check, *Solo*, not bound by precisely predetermined timings, grants it considerable independence. The autonomy of the quasi-melodic camera work is, however, deceptive: what crosses the field of vision is rarely a matter of chance. Kagel calculates particularly thoroughly the images produced by filming the anti-objects of decor, the mirrors, prisms, sheets of glass. Just as in all of Kagel's works the compositional process operates only in the ceaseless dialectic of technique and material, so here the camera movements articulate the space but are at the same time determined by it.

In the oppressive labyrinth that the camera lasciviously reveals, Alfred Feussner plays five roles. Any resemblance to persons living or dead may or may not be purely coincidental. One might spot the young Richard Strauss, Nikisch, Toscanini...? At any rate, the five figures are so frequently intercut within a more or less narrative continuity that they appear more as aspects of a multiply schizophrenic prototype than as autonomous roles. Schnebel's musical composition of gesture is continued in *Solo*, but the gamut of actions is vastly expanded to include the pluck of a moustache at one extreme and highly undignified mid-air oscillations at the other. And, like the camera movements, the actor's tortuous routes through the set are carefully mapped out, revealing an analogous but rarely parallel quasi-musical organisation.

*Solo* may thus be seen in terms of the independent musicalisation of various filmic dimensions, though these are themselves in perpetual transition between the states of heterophony, unstable polyphony, and total fusion (the last, for example, where the discontinuity of the actor's mirror images becomes indistinguishable from the actual process of film editing).

If the word 'film' were substituted for 'theatre', what Kagel said in 1966 apropos of the premiere of *Pas de Cinq* (1965) would apply equally to *Solo*:

As a composer I feel I have an increasing duty to non-aural materials. In this I see no substitute for actual composition, but on the contrary assert that the definitions... of the word 'composition' as 'setting together' or 'mixing' may be as consciously accepted as the more usual 'tone setting'. But apart from terminological speculations, the application of musical thought to purely theatrical thought presents itself as a foregone conclusion. Words, lights, and movement are articulated in the same way as tones, timbres, and tempi: the meaning or meaninglessness of all scenic processes cannot be effectively represented without musicality, since the means of formulation of the true 'homme de théâtre' are more readily inspired by genuinely musical compositional methods than by any other.<sup>29</sup>

This musicalisation of film which *Solo* carries out has a drastic impact on the conventional relationships of filmic elements. The ornamental function of decor is transformed by the camera work into a dramatic one (a particularly pointed shift considering that Art Nouveau is decorative art par excellence). The composition of

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.163.

gestures, however, is effectively a process of reification, which is perhaps why the conductor in *Solo* often seems to be no more than a kinetic object. *Solo* brings these mutations into focus and releases a network of metaphors as labyrinthine as the set in which the film is shot. Sexual connotations of music making predominate. The camera pans down from the conductor's pigeon-toed stance to the androgynous couple of Peter Behrens's picture *The Kiss*. A violin serves as a fig-leaf for one of the statues. A horizontal double-bass, over whose waist the conductor furtively peeps, mimics the lifeless eroticism of the nude female figurines. The cigarette smoke with its snaking line, so typical of Art Nouveau, might trigger a subconscious connection with the whip as instrument of domination and torture. The connection between musical and sexual domination is made explicit in the conductor's attempted rape of a painted nude. And the sounds that the actor produces are themselves ambiguous, can be heard both as the product of strenuous conducting effort or as the expression of unfulfilled lust.

I think it is no coincidence that Kagel's conductor finds himself surrounded by the decor of Art Nouveau, since the emergence of that artistic movement coincided in the last decade of the 19th century with the advancement of the bandmaster, whose primary function was simply to beat time and maintain precise ensemble, to the position of autocratic maestro who took charge of all details of interpretation and dictated them to the orchestra.

The musical necessity for such a shift might be traced back to Berlioz who, in expanding and extensively subdividing the groups of the Classical orchestra, drew the musical consequences of the industrial rationalisation of the division of labour. But this increasing differentiation of compositional means brings an always latent conflict of ensemble music out into the open. Since the orchestral musician can hear only imprecisely or not at all everything else that is happening around him, his performance directly contradicts the compositional principle of 'unity in diversity', a fundamental tenet of bourgeois music whose clearest expression is sonata form.

The compositional integration of detail and whole can no longer be spontaneously realised but must be achieved through the mediation of the conductor. And so fresh contradictions arise. The conductor's integrating function could of course be completely realised in rehearsal and in performance he would revert to the simple beating of time. But thrust into the limelight yet alienated from the physical process of actual sound-production he must demonstrate with every gesture his total and 'spontaneous' control, without which the performance would (supposedly) fall apart. Facing the orchestra, his gestures are aimed at the audience. Masquerading as complete commitment to the musical work, his utterly superfluous gestures are antagonistic to the real process of musical performance, which is nothing less than, as Heinz-Klaus Metzger put it, 'the total translation of a score analysis, which has been taken to its utmost limit, into correlates of instrumental technique'.<sup>30</sup>

Both *Nostalgie* and *Solo* set out to demolish this false myth of the conductor.<sup>31</sup> Schnebel splits open the assumed identity of gesture and sound by removing the object of the conductor's gestures altogether, then reconstitutes the relationship by composing gestures as if they were musical material. From this premise Kagel elaborates an allegorical maze, pinpointing alienation and frustration as products of domination and repression, with the connection between musical and political

<sup>30</sup> Heinz-Klaus Metzger, 'Zur Beethoven-Interpretation', *Beethoven 1970* (Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag, 1970), p.9.

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the conductor-orchestra relationship see Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), pp.104-117.



domination never far from the surface. As Adorno laconically remarked, 'The histrionics at the podium are easy to credit with the dictatorial capacity for frothing at the mouth at will.'<sup>32</sup>

Apropos of *1898* (1973) Kagel once said that it has the atmosphere of the imminence of catastrophe.<sup>33</sup> *1898* could even be heard as the music that the conductor of *Solo* has lost, so to speak. Some years after *Solo* was filmed, Kagel dedicated his piece *Zwei-Mann-Orchester* (1971-73) 'to the memory of an institution that is in the process of extinction — the orchestra'.<sup>34</sup> The First World

War may have put an end to Art Nouveau, but today, supported by the mechanisms of affirmative culture, the cult of the conductor continues to flourish (Karajan!). After the cataclysm of *Solo* the conductor refuses to accept his own obsolescence — the closing sequence of the film is a copy of the opening one. On a clear, empty floor, one hears footsteps approaching. It is left to the soundtrack to negate the comfortable reprise. The conductor is walking on broken glass.

Thank you.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.106.

<sup>33</sup> 'Mauricio Kagel, Interview with Adrian Jack', p.44.

<sup>34</sup> Mauricio Kagel, *Zwei-Mann-Orchester* (London: Universal Edition, 1975), UE 15f848.

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## The Music of Louis Andriessen: Dialectical Double-Dutch?

A visit to the opening of this year's Holland Festival allowed me to see and hear the first two performances of Andriessen's *De tijd (Time)* on June 1 and 2 and to interview the composer. Andriessen was billed as the festival's first 'pivotal composer and commentator' in a new scheme designed to allow contemporary music to 'become accepted as a normal phenomenon as opposed to the exclusive preserve of specialists: just a part of daily life to be listened to from time to time'; it is planned to have one featured composer-commentator at each festival in future. The first beneficiary under the scheme received considerable attention this year, including a major retrospective concert presenting several of the works mentioned below as well as a new piece, *Anfang/Ende* for recorder and piano, played by Frans Brüggen and the composer; there was also a performance of his major music-theatre piece *Mattheus Passie (Matthew Passion)*.

A commentary on Andriessen's work is particularly timely for English readers, since his group *Hoketus* will be touring this country on the Arts Council's Contemporary Music Network this winter. In addition to Andriessen's own *Hoketus* (the piece after which the group is named), the programme will include Frederic Rzewski's *Coming Together* and Michael Nyman's *Think slow, Act fast*. Starting at the Round House, London, on November 15, the group goes to Southampton (17th), Cambridge (18th), Bradford (19th), Birmingham (20th), Llantwit Major (21st), Huddersfield (23rd), Liverpool (26th), Nottingham (28th), and Manchester (29th).

Like every good European composer, Louis Andriessen has seemingly read his Adorno. When he dies the word 'dialectics' may, conceivably, be found engraved on his heart.

The desire – the need, indeed – to look at everything from both the positive and negative points of view is something that the more empirical Englishman finds hard to understand. Too often this Hegelian double-think ends up either as the negation of everything positive ('too positive in its negativism') or looking suspiciously like having your cake and eating it. When this approach is applied to the complicated range of techniques and aesthetics that emerged in continental Europe after 1945 as the New Music, it becomes even more inscrutable.

Take, for example, Andriessen's *Séries* for two pianos of 1958. When he wrote it the composer was just 19 (he was born in Utrecht on June 6, 1939). While at school he had studied composition at home with his father Henrik, a highly respected composer and, for many years, an elder statesman of Dutch music (he was born in 1892 and died early this year). In 1957 he had gone to the Royal Conservatory of Music in The Hague, where he studied with Kees van Baaren (1906-70), the first Dutch twelve-note composer.

So far so provincial-looking. But the young Andriessen must already have been touched by the ebb and flow of new ideas coming at him from both east and west: from Stockhausen in Cologne and Boulez in Paris. Indeed, on the face of it the title and instrumentation of *Séries* tell all: this must be a *Structures*, Book I sound-alike, surely? There were, after all, plenty of other imitations of total-serial Boulez going the rounds in the middle and late fifties, even after the Darmstadt fashion parade had moved on to open forms, graphic scores, and John Cage (1958 was the year of the latter's triumphal re-

entry into Europe). *Séries* is even proudly presented in the recent Donemus brochure for Andriessen as 'one of the first Dutch serial compositions':<sup>1</sup> that is, presumably, one of the first Dutch total-serial compositions. A small step for a single composer, but a large leap for Dutch musical history, duly to be recorded in the annals thereof.

If the composer's own word is to be taken for it, however (and I confess that I've had no opportunity either to hear the piece or to study the score), *Séries* is both more and less than the sum of its number systems: '*Séries* is less than my musical expression; it is my music about serial music. I cannot judge finally: that's not my task. But I have the feeling for myself that my approach ... is a kind of objectivism.'<sup>2</sup> An 'objective' (or, as Andriessen himself also likes to call it, a 'Classical') approach to musical materials can, of course, be interpreted as being identical with that of Boulez when he was composing *Structures*, Book I (1951-52). Andriessen has said that 'music is always about other music' and that too can be seen as indicating a direct response to a received musical technique and musical aesthetic, on the level of what we normally call imitation.

But what Andriessen is here suggesting is that his two-piano piece, composed at the age of 19 in a country that had not so far evinced much involvement with the New Music of France, West Germany, and Italy, is actually a reinterpretation of total serialism in total-serial terms. Boulez had taken musical material from Messiaen's *Mode de valeurs et d'intensités* and manipulated it as an 'exercise' (his own word for it) in extending the technical principles of Messiaen's experiment. Andriessen's *Séries* does not, so far as I know, draw on Boulez' *Structures*, Book I, for its actual musical materials. But it uses the technical sophistry of *Structures* as the starting-point for a commentary on the value of that technical sophistry and the aesthetic on which it is based. If this is so – and, as I said earlier, I don't as yet have the means of judging it – then *Séries* may be an achievement every bit as remarkable as Kagel's *Anagrama*, written two years later, which presents 'serialism deliberately taken to absurd extremes'.<sup>3</sup> And every bit as inscrutable. (If it seems so now, how much more must it have been then?)

If the suggestion that *Séries* achieves a dialectical critique of *Structures*, Book I, in particular and post-Webernian total serialism in general seems a little far-fetched, it is at least instructive to pursue aspects of Andriessen's subsequent output and career with it in mind. On leaving van Baaren in 1962, the composer went to study with Berio in Milan and Berlin (1962-65). The works of his from the mid-sixties that I have heard follow the lines of European avantgarde development that one would expect from a Berio pupil; and they do so with more than a hint of Berio's technical flair and his ability to make avantgarde ideas more 'accessible'.

There are graphic scores (*Registers* for piano, 1963; *A Flower Song II* for oboe, 1964), pieces with Italian

<sup>1</sup> Louis Andriessen (Amsterdam: Donemus, 1978); Universal Edition is now the British agent for Donemus.

<sup>2</sup> This and all following quotations not individually acknowledged are taken from my conversation with the composer.

<sup>3</sup> Glyn Perrin, 'Mauricio Kagel', *Contact 15* (Winter 1976-77), p. 16.



titles, Berioesque instrumentations and a suggestion of Berioesque incest in onion-shaped unions (*Ittrospezione III (Concept I)* for two pianos and three instrumental groups, 1964; *Ittrospezione III (Concept II)* for mixed ensemble, 1965), and, later, electronics (*Hoe het is* (The way it is) for strings and live electronics, 1969). Perhaps most interesting of all, there are at least three cases of severe multiple quotation: the aptly entitled *Anachronie I* for orchestra (1966-67), the ambiguously and sinisterly entitled *Contra tempus* for mixed ensemble (1967-68) — mysteriously not in the Donemus catalogue — and the predictably entitled *Anachronie II* for oboe and an orchestra devoid of woodwind and heavy brass (1969).

Here we are on Berio's happiest hunting ground, with a myriad of opportunities to be all things to all men and as dialectical as you choose at the same time. *Anachronie I* is described in the Donemus catalogue as 'a doll-like collage of style quotations' (a definite candidate for double-Dutch). It is dedicated to the memory of Ives who was, I think, the subject of revivalist hysteria in Holland at the time (when he was also becoming known over here). Brahms, pop music ... the mixture is very Ivesian and also a bit like Berio.

*Contra tempus* and *Anachronie II* both reveal, even more clearly than *Anachronie I*, that love-hate dialectical relationship with the past that started to become a disease in the late sixties and was eventually to be metamorphosed into neo-romanticism in the seventies. The former is strewn with bits of medieval debris (Andriessen was very much into Machaut at this time),<sup>4</sup> while the latter is an 'oboe concerto that describes three centuries of oboe music'.<sup>5</sup> We can work it out, the composer seems to be saying, if only we can work out where it's at (and possibly where it came from).

Putting aside for a moment the precise nature of the composer's relationship with his material, the story of Andriessen's development so far follows a path fairly typical for a European composer, perhaps even for a British or American composer, of his age. Early involvement with the ideas of total serialism shortly gave way to an immersion in the much cloudier waters of the new trends of the sixties. The clear-sighted confidence now usually attributed to composers of the New Music in the fifties soon proved unfounded. The seeds of doubt were really, I think, sown in the very inflexibility of total serialism itself as well as some of the modifications that quickly followed it. Whether these modifications are represented by the changes Boulez underwent between *Structures*, Book I, and *Le marteau sans maître* or by the supposed pieces-as-critiques of Andriessen and Kagel, it soon became apparent that serialism had undermined itself anyway and that its nature could not long withstand the construction of dialectical critiques purporting to be based upon it. By opening up the past once more, composers raised again the question of style.

Or did they? If composers such as Berio and Andriessen posed a question about style in the music they wrote in the sixties, perhaps it was not 'What style should I compose in?' but rather 'How important is style anyway?' Or to put it another way 'Isn't the approach you have towards your chosen musical material more important than the actual musical material you choose?' Having moved in the mysterious ways of the sixties

<sup>4</sup> Dutch-speaking readers may wish to investigate this in Andriessen's article 'G. de Machaut en de Messe de Nostre Dame', *De gids* (January 1968), pp. 53-58. This appears to form part of a series of articles on Stravinsky's relationship with various composers (Gesualdo and Webern are others) which was published in *De gids* before planned publication in book form. For further on Andriessen's concern with Stravinsky see later in this article. For more information on his published writings see the entry on Andriessen in John Vinton, ed., *Dictionary of Twentieth-Century Music* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> From the Donemus catalogue.

which suggested overtly dialectical answers to these questions, which would undoubtedly have appealed very immediately to him, Andriessen grew more and more fascinated as the decade drew to a close by the music and ideas of a much older composer who had provided his own solutions long before: Stravinsky. In addition he also now points to the pre-19th-century composer's approach to these problems, aligning himself with the 'Classicists' and not with the 'Romanticists' whose principal concern was expression:

The musical material which I use changes over the years, because I have other musical interests. But my approach will not change, it will always be the same.

The best example is the approach of someone like Igor Stravinsky, who doesn't really care about something like style or personality, but who cares about *music*. I think that's more or less the ideal approach towards the profession: that you care more about what you think you have to tell about music than how to express yourself. In that sense I'm a Classicist and not a Romantic.

Or — an English example. In a letter, I think it was, from Purcell about his trio sonatas he writes: 'Faithfully endeavoured in the Italian style'; that is, as well done as possible in a style which was alien to him. And I feel very much at ease with such an expression, I like that approach ... And of course now we say that Purcell's trio sonatas are much more interesting than the Corelli ones ... But he did not care about that: he just tried to write as well as possible in that style. It was the same with Mozart.

Before I discuss the changes in Andriessen's musical material of the last ten years or so, it is necessary to mention one other aspect of his activities, which had already begun in the sixties. Andriessen's fellow students at the Hague Conservatory included four other Dutch composers who were also pupils of van Baaren: Misha Mengelberg, Peter Schat, and Jan van Vlijmen (all b. 1935), and Reinbert de Leeuw (b. 1938). They became known as 'The Five' and their attempts to change Dutch musical life since the mid-sixties have been notable if not always very influential.

In 1966 they attempted to get Bruno Maderna appointed chief conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra. The aim was 'to reinvigorate that fossilized institution and transform it into a major centre of living music'.<sup>6</sup> It didn't succeed; Bernard Haitink was appointed and the orchestra's commitment to new music has remained minimal.

Their other principal campaign had potentially much wider implications. Acting in the wake of the 'revolutionary' climate that existed in much of Western Europe after the events in Paris of 1968, the group organised the 'Nutcracker Campaign' the following year. It involved public demonstrations against the bourgeois stranglehold on Dutch musical life in general and the policies of the Concertgebouw Orchestra in particular. In 1969 the five composers also collaborated on an 'anti-imperialist opera and morality' called *Reconstructie* (Reconstruction), the hero of which was Che Guevara.<sup>7</sup> Its anti-US nature led to the group's being blamed for the fact that President Nixon bypassed Holland on his European tour that year. In 1970 a sit-in staged in the Concertgebouw resulted in the arrest and prosecution of a large number of musicians and others.

Political activity has been a motivating force behind Andriessen's work since that time. It is undoubtedly part

<sup>6</sup> Rudy Koopmans, trans. Gary Schwartz, 'On Music and Politics — Activism of Five Dutch Composers', *Key Notes*, no. 4 (1976/2), p. 22. This article is a valuable introduction to the activities of these composers in the 1960s and early 1970s; it includes documentation and interviews with all five.

<sup>7</sup> The work is available on STEIM Recording Opus 001.



of the reason for the development of his views on musical material and style as outlined above. It has also caused him to look for alternatives to conventional kinds of music-making in general and to the symphony orchestra in particular. He has not written for anything resembling the standard symphony orchestra since 1970; and even then the conventional line-up, for a Beethoven bi-centennial piece called *The Nine Symphonies of Beethoven*, was suggestively augmented by an 'ice-cream vendor bell (with four pop musicians)'.<sup>8</sup>

These alternatives have so far taken three concrete forms. The first was the group called De Volharding, which gave its first concert in 1972. Its name means 'perseverance' and it arose out of the so-called 'Inclusive Concerts' begun by Andriessen and others in 1970. These were free concerts designed to break through 'the traditional barriers between music genres, between types of the audiences [sic], between performers and composers'.<sup>9</sup> A notable feature of De Volharding is its mixture of 'straight' players (some of them ex-Concertgebouw members disillusioned with the dreary round of classical bourgeois concert life) and jazz musicians.

This mixture in itself reflects one of the more refreshing aspects of Dutch musical life: the extent to which the music that most people call 'free jazz' is accepted in Holland, despite the repressive tendencies mentioned earlier; also the extent to which composers and improvisers – and thus composition and improvisation – mix in ways they rarely do in Britain – or even, I think, in the States. De Volharding was, indeed, set up 'with the aim of doing away with the ludicrous discrepancy between the two forms of music, jazz and classical',<sup>10</sup> to perform Milhaud's *La création du monde*.

Andriessen's works for De Volharding (which include a piece of the same name written in 1972) derive in part from further investigation of the fruitful lack of discrepancy between jazz and classical styles already explored by Stravinsky, Milhaud, and others in the early 20th century. It is here, too, that American minimalism first features as an influence on the composer's style. This becomes of greater significance in the works composed for Andriessen's second group (of which more below). But already in pieces such as *De Volharding*, *On Jimmy Yancey* (1973), and *Hymn to the Memory of Darius Milhaud* (1974)<sup>11</sup> we find a vigorous, even abrasive, use of repetitive techniques in music that the composer describes as 'much more earthy; it has not the cosmic sound of those pieces which Reich and Glass wrote at the same time'. His works for De Volharding include not only compositions suitable for concerts, but political songs and pieces for public demonstrations. A number of other Dutch composers such as Mengelberg (better known nowadays as an improvising pianist) and Klaas de Vries have also written for the ensemble; the prevailing manner is loud and punchy, using some dozen musicians on wind instruments and piano in an exhilarating and often relentless tutti. Andriessen used to be the group's pianist but no longer plays with them.<sup>12</sup>

But it was with the founding of his second group,

Hoketus, for the performance in 1977 of a piece bearing the same name that many of Andriessen's preoccupations came together in a way that seems especially exciting. The piece *Hoketus* had its origins in a project on minimal music that the composer started when teaching at the Hague Conservatory in 1976; it was finished the following year. The choice of instrumentation itself might suggest an interest in the repetitive music of La Monte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass: the work is scored for two groups, each consisting of pan-pipes, Fender piano, piano, bass guitar, and congas. It reflects Andriessen's concern both to work with forces not associated with 'serious' music and to build the act of performance into the composition of the piece in ways that could never be done with a symphony orchestra. In the sleeve notes to the recording of the work he writes:

*Hoketus* is proof of the fact that the quality of the performance is essential when judging a composition. Some of the musicians in the group have considerable experience in folk and pop music. This is one of the essential qualities of the work and it influenced the composing of the final version which emerged after 18 months of rehearsals. With different musicians it would have been a different composition. And that is how it ought to be. One aspect of thinking about music in 'political' terms is that the composer asks himself who he is actually composing for, and who will listen to the result. The musicians performing his work are his first listeners, and are at least as important as the audience. I hope I'll never write another work that musicians in paid employment will be forced to play against their will.<sup>13</sup>

These politically influenced ideas seemed to fit particularly well with the minimalist techniques on which *Hoketus*, in common with much of the composer's output since about 1973, is based. One of the best things about Andriessen's minimal music is that it doesn't sound anything like that of the American minimalists, though of course it is influenced by them to varying extents and would not have been possible without them. The composer himself thinks that his approach to minimalism in *Hoketus*, and also perhaps particularly in *De staat* (1973-76), may be compared to his approach to total serialism in *Séries*.

The dialectical critique of minimalism offered in *Hoketus* takes a number of different forms. Andriessen reacts positively to the ways in which minimalism allows an 'objective' approach, enabling the composer to go beyond personal expression and explore a small amount of musical material in a non-narrative, non-linear, non-developmental way. It is significant that Terry Riley's *In C* is the American minimalist piece that he considers to have influenced him most. It's not simply that the piece was one of the first repetitive compositions and has long since taken on the quality of a contemporary classic. *In C*'s 'people process'<sup>14</sup> allows an interaction between composer and performer through the freedom for improvisation that is built into the structure of the piece; this must, in the light of the above quotation, be particularly attractive to Andriessen, though the precise nature of the 'people process' is not something he has chosen to emulate very closely. Freedom of repetition on the part of the ensemble as a whole is, however, a strong feature of *Hoketus*, in which a bar or a group of bars may be repeated as often as the players wish. (Example 1 shows

<sup>8</sup> From the Donemus catalogue.

<sup>9</sup> Koopmans, trans. Schwartz, 'On Music and Politics', p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> From the De Volharding brochure as quoted in Gij's Tra, trans. Ruth Koenig, 'De Volharding, "an offbeat jazz group or a crazy band of wind players"', *Key Notes*, no. 7 (1978/1), p. 10.

<sup>11</sup> These three works are included on an LP, De Volharding 002. There is also an EP of arrangements (including Eisler's *Solidaritätslied*) and Andriessen's composition *Dat gebeurt in Vietnam* (That happens in Vietnam) of 1973.

<sup>12</sup> De Volharding visited England in May 1978, immediately after a trip to Chile during which seven members of the group were arrested while playing at a May Day protest march. An account of this is given in Tra, trans. Koenig, 'De Volharding'.

<sup>13</sup> Donemus, Composers' Voice CV 7702. *De staat*, *Il principe*, *Il Duce*, and *Hoketus* are all on this two-record set.

<sup>14</sup> The term used by Michael Nyman in *Experimental Music: Cage and beyond* (London: Studio Vista, 1974), pp. 5-6. Nyman actually discusses *In C* under the heading 'Repetition processes' as well as elsewhere, but his definition of 'people processes' as those that 'allow the performers to move through given or suggested material, each at his own speed' seems to apply to Riley's piece.



# Example 1

**A**

- the flutes play the encircled notes ...
- the bass guitars play the lowest notes.
- the keyboard instruments each choose approximately the same chord from the given pitch material.
- the congas are tuned identically, both pairs in approximately a major second or a minor third.

the opening of the work.) The recording of the piece lasts some 25 minutes while live performances usually last about three-quarters of an hour.

The extent to which Andriessen's repetitive music is a positive rather than a negative reaction to American minimalism will of course be determined in part by the listener's interpretation of the American repetitive repertory itself. It is clear to me that if Andriessen's latest scores are in any sense objective, then so is Riley's *In C*. (The situation undoubtedly becomes more complicated with the recent music of Reich and Glass, for example, the increasingly opulent nature of which has been influenced by materials and structures that could be interpreted as much more subjective.) Andriessen's minimal music certainly has a rawness about its dissonance very different from the soft curves of the dissonance arising from most performances of *In C* (the latter inhabits the world of 'drug-culture' according to Cornelius Cardew). Elmer Schönberger considers that 'In *De Staat* Andriessen has tried his strength against minimal music and has succeeded in subordinating those techniques to new expressive objectives which are almost the exact opposite of the ethereal minimal style of Terry Riley for example.<sup>15</sup> In that case the dialectics of the composer's minimalism are much easier to understand, especially bearing in mind the 'earthy' rather than 'cosmic' approach mentioned above: a point that can apply to the music for *Hoketus* as well as that for *De Volharding*.

In 'testing his strength against minimal music' Andriessen has enlisted the help of the aesthetic/political critique that aided his search in the sixties (if not the fifties) for the composer's role in society; he has also turned to another previous involvement: medieval music. Association with the music of an age in which the expression of a composer's personality was even less a stylistic factor than in Purcell's day is clearly of significance in terms of the above deliberations on musical objectivity. But here I want to investigate its more purely technical role in Andriessen's dialectical critique of minimalism.

It is, I suppose, obvious that a piece with the title *Hoketus* is going to be based on the medieval technique of hocket. Andriessen's study of Machaut in the mid-sixties later led him to assert that 'Though [hocketing] went out of use in Western music round 1400, it reached an advanced stage of development in many different forms of folk music, with equal groups of instruments each

playing one note of the melody in turn.'<sup>16</sup> Here he has attempted to reclaim the technique for contemporary concert music. Though it should be said that he is not the first 20th-century composer to have used it, few if any have done so with more consistency and rigour over such a long time-span.

*Hoketus* requires its two identical groups of instruments to play practically identical chords in quick alternation. These chords bounce between the groups, the number of their repetitions determined by the players, until a powerful climax is reached; the hocketing continues right to the end. On record, particularly with headphones, this is mesmerising. The composer says: 'The recorded performance approaches such perfection that the listener will have to keep reminding himself that the two groups never play two consecutive chords but continually play one chord in turn.'<sup>17</sup> A live performance should have all the drama and the feeling of incipient mayhem held in check by cruel discipline that are characteristic of, say, a performance of Reich's *Drumming*.

Andriessen here uses the principle of hocketing as a kind of filter through which many of the techniques familiar from American repetitive music may be passed. The rhythmic 'filling-in' technique used at the beginning of *Drumming*, the additive processes of Glass, and, in the coda, the abrupt transformation of the harmonic vocabulary of the main part of the piece into a jazzy chord sequence finally reduced to its origins: all these are fed into the 'hocket machine' that the composer has devised. The resulting minimal mince clearly comes from the body of music that we call repetitive, but it has been crucially, critically, transformed. A distancing relationship has been achieved which allows minimal techniques to be used as the basis for a dialectical discourse on the genre itself.

The groups *De Volharding* and *Hoketus*, each with its eponymous piece representing a repertoire of considerable substance and variety, are two of Andriessen's three alternatives to conventional music making; the other is the collection of works not written for either. Among these is a triptych of compositions dealing with politics of which *De staat* is the first. 'They are all', says the composer, 'settings of texts which are politically controversial, to say the least, if not downright negative.'<sup>18</sup> *De staat* (The Republic) is a setting of words

<sup>15</sup> From the Donemus catalogue.

<sup>16</sup> From the sleeve notes by Andriessen (trans. Elizabeth Haig) to CV 7702.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. <sup>18</sup> Ibid.



from Plato's *The Republic* in the original Greek for four female voices, wind instruments, two electric guitars, bass guitar, two pianos, two harps, and four violas. *Il Duce* is a tape piece dating from 1973; originally entitled *Prix Italia*, since it was commissioned by the Netherlands Broadcasting Corporation to be entered for the Italian radio competition of that name, the work subjects a tape loop of a radio speech made by Mussolini in 1935 to over-dubbing and feedback (somewhat in the manner of Alvin Lucier's *I am sitting in a room* of 1970); this is followed by a coda consisting of the famous opening bars of *Also sprach Zarathustra*: Mussolini linked to Richard Strauss via Fascism. (The piece was, perhaps not surprisingly, never entered for the *Prix Italia*, but it was used in 1975 for a TV film by Hans Hulscher called *Il Duce* after the title taken by Mussolini himself.) *Il principe* for two choirs, wind instruments, bass guitar and piano (1973-74) sets quotations from the book of the same name by Machiavelli. It includes a quotation from Gesualdo's last book of madrigals 'written at a time when the attention of the musical avant-garde was focused on 31-tone temperament and other post-tonal problems that (unfortunately?) were again lost sight of through the advent of tonality and opera'.<sup>19</sup>

Andriessen's examination of conception, production, and consumption (his 'three aspects of the social phenomenon called music')<sup>20</sup> via Plato in *De staat* is expanded in three later music-theatre works: *Mattheus Passie* (1976), *Orpheus* (1977), and *George Sand* (1979-80). All were written for and first performed by the BAAL Theatre Group, an important Dutch company whose post-Brechtian work should be known over here. A kind of Brecht-inspired alienation lies at the root of Andriessen's music-theatre pieces, an element that clearly adds a further dimension to the dialectical nature of his output.

*Mattheus Passie* sets up a critical relationship with Bach's work in order 'to alienate the Passion culture by replacing the story of Picander with one entirely new'.<sup>21</sup> Willem Jan Otten and Elmer Schönberger explain that

While Germany has its Bayreuth Festival, Austria its Salzburg Festival and Poland its Krakow Theatre Festival, the Netherlands is afflicted by the Sufferings of Christ in the week between Palm Sunday and Easter. Up and down the country, in the tiniest of hamlets – even in Naarden near Lake Yssel – the Passion is sung. This prodigious number of performances is perhaps the most authentic expression of our theatrical consciousness, without so much as a single actor appearing on the scene. To get the true picture, just imagine the following: a village church packed with the Sunday faithful; a massed choir, pressganged soloists from the surrounding region who look anything but Divine; an organ pealing forth from above; and a splenetic orchestra conducted by the local solicitor. Attendance implies a certain measure of mortification. So edified is the congregation-cum-audience at the end that there isn't even any applause. (The Passion culture may be regarded as the northern Protestant counterpart to the southern Catholic carnival.)

The Passion culture naturally has nothing to do with alienation, still less with irony, and that is why it is such a dramatic event by Dutch standards: one simply forgets that there is a gap between reality and illusion, between the back of the shop and the display window, between the position and the person. The solicitor wielding the baton is a solicitor wielding the baton; the members of the choir are members of the choir; and the

audience is transported to higher realms.<sup>22</sup>

The 'gap between reality and illusion' and the unintended alienation effect that results from it are explored, dissected, and transformed by Andriessen and his librettist Louis Ferron. Musically *Mattheus Passie* is a 'minefield of irony, parody, paraphrase – in short, a commentary',<sup>23</sup> which brings in quotations from many sources but hinges on a kind of dialectical relationship between the composer of the original *St Matthew Passion* and the one with whom Andriessen appears almost obsessed: 'Bach? Stravinsky? is the question repeatedly posed by the music of the *Passion*. Sometimes the answer is Bach via Stravinsky, and sometimes, though less frequently, Stravinsky via Bach, with Andriessen himself moving into range every now and then.'<sup>24</sup> In addition, the use of the BAAL Theatre Group's untrained singing voices and the music students, jazz horn player, and gypsy violinist, chosen by the composer in preference to 'normal' orchestral musicians, draw attention to the alienation processes at work by 'playing about' with the performing styles on which the piece is purportedly based. The avoidance of 'classical' professionals and the way in which the act of performance is built into the composition so as to form a fruitful dialogue with the notes on the page are by now familiar aspects of Andriessen's work.

*Orpheus* also reconstructs, reconstitutes, and at the same time both accepts and denies the past in a dialectical relationship the more complex and perhaps also the more incisive for the comparisons that may be made with musical history's previous attempts to catch the essence of this myth of musical creation before it vanishes, Eurydice-like, for ever. The piece, which has a libretto by Lodewijk de Boer, is described as 'another step up from the Hades of the opera tradition, with as the point at issue its ever more hermetic and electrified music'.<sup>25</sup> In appropriately narcissistic fashion, it sets itself up as a 'polemic against official opera practice',<sup>26</sup> not only by being an operatic look at the failure of operatic realities but through the ambiguity of its hero's resemblance to Mick Jagger and an exploration of the 20th-century set of myths that this suggests. Jazz-rock, Shirley Bassey, and the theme tune of *Kojak* are among the musical starting-points; there is also a 'Grand ballet en mi-bémol majeur avec chœur with respectful greetings to Steve Reich, Phil Glass and the others', described as 'minimal titling [sic] typical of American art galleries'.<sup>27</sup> 'Nevertheless,' say Otten and Schönberger, 'in the opera as a whole the alluder has come out on top of the allusion'.<sup>28</sup>

About *George Sand* I know far less. Its librettist, Mia Meijer, has apparently compiled a series of snapshots of the author's life based on the available documentation. Strangely, Chopin is not mentioned in the only review of the piece I have seen, but the 'orchestra' seems to consist of 'four grand pianos, numbered on the back, played by four reincarnations of Liszt who collectively produce a sound which could hitherto only have existed in the common dreams of Pleyel, Steinway, Yamaha and Bechstein: the roar of the Eight-Handed Manual, the Sound of Eight Feet Pedalling, the Octopus in Sound'.<sup>29</sup>

*De tijd* (1980-81), which I saw at this year's Holland Festival, is also part of a trilogy. In this case there is some overlapping, however, for *De staat*, the first of another set of three works, is also the first of this one; the second is *Mausoleum* for large ensemble (1979); *De tijd* is the third. All three are concert works for voices and instruments; all three draw on repetitive techniques without, I think, any quotations from the past; and all three set complex texts

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> For an explanation of these see the sleeve notes to CV 7702.

<sup>21</sup> Willem Jan Otten and Elmer Schönberger, trans. David Smith, 'Louis Andriessen's Matthew Passion and Orpheus', *Key Notes*, no. 7 (1978/1), p. 24.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 24.      <sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 25.      <sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 31.      <sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 32.      <sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>29</sup> Wilhelm Schön, trans. Sonja Jokel, 'Music Drama at the Holland Festival: The Venice of the North Incarnate', *Key Notes*, no. 12 (1980/2), p. 6.



in 'difficult' foreign languages. Each work is in a very definite sense 'about' its text (that for *De tijd* in particular seems to have involved its composer in a fantastic amount of research), but the words themselves are made largely inaudible by the nature of the musical presentation: you simply have to do your homework if you want to appreciate these pieces at anything deeper than the surface level of what they sound like.

*De staat* is a lengthy setting of some of Plato's words from *The Republic* which suggest that musical innovation represents a danger to the state. Andriessen's rejection of Plato's argument ('There is no such thing as a fascist dominant seventh')<sup>30</sup> is countered, in the composer's mind at least, by his regret that musical innovation is not in fact a danger to the state and his realisation that what Plato really wished to ban was the effect of musical material once it is ordered, 'becomes culture and, as such, a given social fact'.<sup>31</sup> The musical material of *De staat* is based on tetrachords (probably the work's only connection with Ancient Greek music as such) and this concern with the number 4 is also reflected in the scoring, in which homogeneous groups of instruments are treated as individual units: four oboes (the third and fourth doubling cor anglais), four trumpets, four horns, four trombones, four violas, four women's voices, etc. Repetitive techniques are much in evidence, though the higher level of dissonance that Andriessen achieves compared with most earlier, American minimal music, and the fact that he writes out the score in full, contrast with previous repetitive norms. The latter allows much subtle variation from repetition to repetition: 'always the same, but always never the same', as the composer says. Even the look of the score suggests, to its composer at least, that a crucial modification of the original minimalism has taken place: one that might well also produce a different psychological effect on the player.

*Mausoleum*, the second piece of this trilogy, sets words by the Russian revolutionary anarchist Mikhail M. Bakunin. Just to confuse matters, it appears that some of the material of this work also finds its way into *George Sand*.<sup>32</sup> But it is with *De tijd* itself, the final composition of the trilogy, that I wish to conclude, particularly since it seems to sum up so many of its composer's current preoccupations.

First, the text of *De tijd*. In an interview about the piece recently published in English, Andriessen says: 'What stimulated my writing the piece was a unique experience which gave me the feeling time had ceased to exist; the sensation of an eternal moment. It was more than perfect inner peace. A euphoria which was so potent that I later decided to write a piece about it.'<sup>33</sup> No doubt wisely, the composer leaves us to guess at the precise nature of this experience. What we do know, however, is that it resulted in an enormous amount of reading, in order both to find out more about what had been written on the subject of time and to choose a suitable text. Two years elapsed before he began writing the music:

What I did do during those two years can scarcely be reconstructed at this point. It started with Dijksterhuis' *The Mechanization of the World Image* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* and ended with Dante's *Divine Comedy* and St. Augustine's *Confessions*. In between lie stacks of books on seven centuries of ideas on time and a trip to Florence where, apart from peace and quiet, I was after a philosopher contemporary of Dante's.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> From the sleeve notes to CV 7702. <sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> See Schön, trans. Jokel, 'Music Drama at the Holland Festival', p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> With Elmer Schönberger, 'Louis Andriessen: On the Conceiving of Time', *Key Notes*, no. 13 (1981/1), p. 6. This interview was originally published in Dutch as 'Over het ontstaan van "De tijd"', in *De revisor* (1981/2), pp. 24-32.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

Andriessen became not only a 'composer of the post-Einsteinian era looking back to the late Middle Ages'<sup>35</sup> and thus taking up again his involvement with the medieval period, which began in the 1960s; he also tried to read more recent scientific work on what many consider to be the central question of philosophy, realising eventually that he 'was after a philosophical unknown — which it actually is again since Einstein and Gauss'.<sup>36</sup> He finally surfaced with an extract from the eleventh chapter of the eleventh book of St Augustine's *Confessions*, which he set in the original Latin; he prefaced his piece with two lines from Dante's 'Paradiso' which seemed to sum up his experience of time standing still:

... mirando il punto  
a cui tutti li tempi son presenti  
(... gazing on the point beyond  
To which all times are present.)<sup>37</sup>

Second, the staging. Unlike *De staat* and *Mausoleum*, *De tijd* is conceived as theatre as well as music, though there is no one on the stage. The entire 'action' of *De tijd* is provided by mechanical representations of time: a slowly expanding colour projection, a huge pendulum that swings the whole width of the stage from a fulcrum high in the flies, an hour-glass spewing sand, a large clock. These images of time passing (the work of Paul Gallis, Theo Jeuken, and Paul Vermeulen) powerfully complement the great surges of sound issuing from the orchestra in the pit.

Third, the music itself, which is performed by a choir of eight female voices and an orchestra of 44, consisting of Andriessen's by now familiar non-symphonic line-up (here including six trumpets, two pianos, two harps, and seven percussionists). It seems to me that Andriessen has quite brilliantly solved the problems of dealing with such a subject and setting an apparently unsetting chunk from a philosophical tract by seizing on the ambiguities of tonal motion and resolution that already exist in the so-called 'new tonality' with which he has been working for some years. A good Schenkerian would refuse to allow most repetitive music the status of 'tonality' at all because it frequently lacks the directed motion and the techniques of preparation, suspension, and resolution that are the fundamental characteristics of 'common practice period' tonality. Not only, however, is the minimalist composer, working with the building-blocks familiar from common practice tonality, able to rely to some extent on the ways in which his audience's lifetime habits of listening will bend essentially static material in tonally directed ways; he can also modify his approach to consonance and dissonance, preparation, suspension, and resolution, to produce a new balance between ways of hearing, between the 'old' tonality and the 'new':

The task I had set myself was to create a situation characterized by a combination of tensions and non-tensions difficult to describe. In principle, it is possible to accomplish two things at the same time in music. If you have harmony in mind, it is natural to be thinking about the dominant seventh chord because the dominant seventh is a chord that asks for resolution. When you build the resolution in by adding a fourth — i.e. the tonic — you have at your disposal, in theory at least, a consonance which has to be resolved and yet is already resolved. It then depends on the context whether the thesis-like character of the chord — the resolved chord — or its arsis-like character — the chord asking for resolution — predominates. Technically speaking, one could call *Time* a chain of

<sup>35</sup> Schönberger's words, *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>37</sup> As quoted by Schönberger, *ibid.*, p. 8. (The translation is by Laurence Binyon.)



## Example 2



initial idea for the chord

dominant seventh with both major and minor third but no fifth



final basic chord

dominant seventh plus tonic but no fifth



extension of this harmonic idea

two dominant sevenths (without fifths) a fifth apart

dominants; an eternally postponed resolution which is nevertheless there all along.<sup>38</sup>

The material presented in Example 2 gives some idea of what this means in practice; the *Key Notes* interview provides much more detail and further discussion of the composer's approach. It does not seem to me too far-fetched to suggest that Andriessen has here achieved something like a new and dialectical approach to the 'new tonality' and therefore to the notion of tonality itself. His concern to use more dissonant material for his repetitive processes has resulted in the beginnings, at least, of systems that take the visual symmetries of the avantgarde and the aural realities both of the old tonality and the new into account.

It is certainly true that processes of a similar nature have been the recent concern of the original American minimalists. The huge, improvised canvases drawn in

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

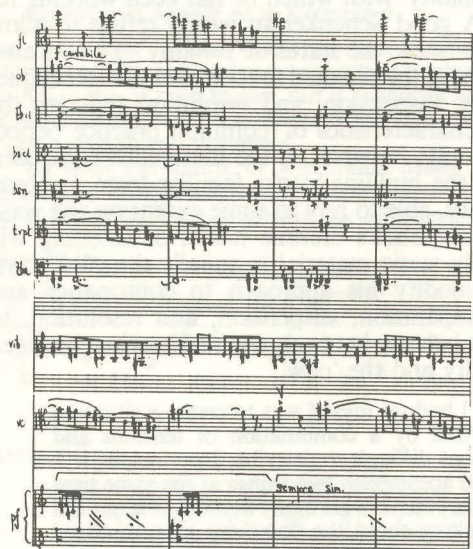
simple, 'tonal' material and crucially coloured by the use of just intonation in Young's *The Well-Tuned Piano*; the increasingly sophisticated approach to harmonic resource that characterises Glass's *Einstein on the Beach* and *Another Look at Harmony* and Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*: all these and others indicate that Andriessen is not alone in this new harmonic field. But a European cannot help reflecting on the possible significance of the continuing influence of Stravinsky on Andriessen's music: a reflection here animated by the composer's description of *De tijd* at any early stage as 'an image of a *Threni*-type piece; reserved, without expression, precisely notated and governed from beginning to end by strict numerical relationships.'<sup>39</sup>

It was with *Threni* that a European living in the United States finally achieved a new fusion of tonal hierarchies and twelve-note methodology: a synthesis that perhaps is theoretically impossible. 25 years later it may require a European, influenced by American models but with a European's highly developed sense of history as well as his sense of tonal practice, to provide the almost century-old question 'Tonal or atonal?' with the next answer — simple-sounding, neat, but most certainly dialectical — 'Both'.

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Scores and records of Louis Andriessen's music may be obtained from the Donemus Foundation, Paulus Potterstraat 14, 1071 CZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Readers in Britain may obtain them through Universal Edition, 2-3 Fareham Street, London W1V 4DU, who are now the British agent for Donemus. In addition, brochures etc. and copies of the magazine *Key Notes* (in English) may be obtained free of charge by all readers outside Holland on application to either Donemus or Universal Edition.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 8.



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# Reviews and Reports

## BORAH BERGMAN: THE AESTHETICS OF AMBIDEXTERITY

MARK LOCKETT

Liszt, under the mantic and poetic influence of 19th-century sentiment, once expressed his vocation as a virtuoso thus:

He breathes life into the lethargic body, infuses it with fire, enlivens it with the pulse of grace and charm. He changes the earthy form into a living being, penetrating it with the spark which Prometheus snatched from Jupiter's flesh. He must send the form which he has created soaring into transparent ether: he must arm it with a thousand winged weapons; he must call up scent and blossom, and breathe the breath of life.<sup>1</sup>

Such images of a different age may seem quaint and comical applied to the music of today, though the fascination with the virtuoso has always remained alive. Virtuosity is extraordinary, quite outside the accepted sphere of normal, mundane activity – a phenomenon for lesser mortals to wonder at. Yet in other cultures music customarily has an 'ecstatic' function. From Bali to Brazil, through India, the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and many parts of Africa, music is associated at some point with possession trance. New improvised music has evolved independently of the abstract functions of harmony, melody, and architectonics, favouring instead an aesthetic of unlimited sound-exploration. At the same time it has come to be, through the American free jazz of the mid-sixties, a vehicle for the free expression of states of exhilaration.

Borah Bergman is a true virtuoso and a highly original voice in spontaneous piano music. Comparison with Cecil Taylor reveals superficial resemblances. Both pianists demonstrate a characteristic physical energy, emotional intensity, a similar predominance of atonality (though neither would condone the application of such a misused term); but there stylistic similarities cease. More important, both have deliberately reintegrated the processes of intellectual thought into the ecstatic and spontaneous, though the ways in which they do this are utterly different. Bergman's pianistic conception is contrary to Taylor's careful constructionism. His playing is a continuous chain of intermediary states that tap the energy and flow of his thoughts as they rush by. There is no pre-structuring, but an intellectual process – the fabrication of elaborate mental images, changing relations, metaphors, fleeting visual scenarios influenced strongly by abstract expressionist painting – which fuels the fire of the music. And, as with the martial arts, the aim is always to reduce the gap between thought and action.

When asked how he felt immediately after a recent performance at the Roulette loft in New York City, Bergman replied simply, 'Calm.' For him performance is a kind of exorcism, a sudden release that follows a period of methodical, disciplined practice and accumulation of ideas and mental images. As in some other musics associated with the onset of trance, a connection with dance is evident, in this case a dance of the hands as they both roam the entire keyboard with a strange, illusory autonomy. To draw a parallel: the tarantella cures the victim of the tarantula bite not because of a particular virtue but because it is dance music. The physicality of movement at the keyboard allows Bergman to dip into the frantic stream of continuing ideas, to 'cure' and contain the demonic force of his mental energy. As a dance the tarantella cures not only because of its psycho-physiological effects, but because it allows the victim to identify with the tarantula that bit him. Bergman's 'tarantula' is his own background in jazz piano, towards which his feelings are ambivalent. While drawing inspiration from aspects of rhythm and articulation, he has rejected conventional jazz-piano technique because of the inequality of the hands. Traditionally almost all forms of piano music have assigned a melodic, soloistic role to the right

hand and a harmonic accompanimental one to the left. Bergman's philosophy, however, stems from the premise that this division of labour is both irrelevant and inhibiting to the development of an improvisatory virtuoso technique. He has consciously abandoned these roles and has developed the hands independently of each other, so that each is capable of tackling any idea or type of material. Ambidextrousness, he believes, is the fundamental issue of contemporary keyboard improvisation.

The consequences of this system are wider than they might at first appear. First, it has led to Bergman's developing, by conventional standards, an extraordinarily powerful and facile left hand. To prove this he has displayed his skills on recordings of solo left-hand performances. Second, he has achieved such a degree of manual independence that his two hands are, in effect, two separate instruments, dissociated from each other, meeting, overlapping, tossing gestures back and forth, scurrying separate ways, each equally powerful but each having inherent individual traits. Third, in this music, which is deeply involved with stamina and callisthenics, the continuous momentum, the illusion of the indefatigable is maintained even when one or other hand rests for a few moments. The texture is thinned out but the essential musical thread is unbroken.

There seems to be something profoundly correct about this dialectical approach. The two hands considered thus become a reflection of our dual forms of experience. We perceive the world in terms of inner/outer, light/dark, rational/irrational, and so on, and these dualities are an unavoidable product of the bilateral symmetry that characterises the physiognomy of Man. Musico-dialectics are implicit in our biological form and in the physiology of the brain, whose different functional areas can be considered along three axes: upper/lower, the newer, upper part controlling conscious thought-processes and movements, the lower, older part the automatic nervous system, reflexes, and unconscious body-processes; front/back, the front part being the seat of the individual ego, and the back that of the intuitive self; and right/left, the right hemisphere being the centre of vision and left-hand movement, and the left hemisphere being the verbal centre and governing right-hand movement.

The keyboard is really the ideal medium for a colloquy of hands for here they are performing ostensibly the same function. One hand is an automorphism of the other: that is, we can make a mirror image of one, an illusory back-to-front reversal, and we see two hands exactly the same. But how can this be reconciled with the fact that the keyboard represents a linear tonal range from low (left) to high (right)? The symmetry of the keyboard is not aural (the African mbira comes close to that), it is one of formal relations only. But because of the nature of Bergman's playing this 'split' does not necessarily manifest itself as an extra weightiness of the bass register. The hands, liberated from their usual pianistic roles, are freed also from their specific domains. Each has the entire keyboard at its disposal and yet the shapes of the phrases in one hand will always be different from those in the other. It is partly this inexhaustible dialogue that provides intellectual interest (in terms of improvisatory form) and forwards momentum.

Bergman's unique style of phrasing can be heard on his second record, *Bursts of Joy*.<sup>2</sup> There is a curious rhythmical jaggedness within these irregular torrents of notes which seems to refer back to a much earlier period of jazz history; it has an entirely different musical effect from the more regular, two-handed pummelling that has become something of a trade-mark of free jazz piano playing. Bergman dismisses this technique of fast, percussive hammering with alternate hands as rhythmically uninteresting and un pianistic, claiming that it does not realise the true potential of two hands, ten fingers, and the possibilities of a more sophisticated interaction. As the hands glide over the keyboard surface they outline certain shapes, and the fingers, ready to strike at any time, can make



any complex composite movement irrespective of the particular location. Bergman emphasises the importance of being close to the keys, for only by being so and by exercising the necessary control and digital strength can one achieve variety of attack, sustain, and touch control, and realise the true piano/forte capacity of the instrument.

The concept of an intrapersonal dialogue would seem to border on the schizophrenic, but the split personality is not an invention of modern psychiatry. Among some tribal peoples a man is believed to have a number of souls. Jung writes: 'Many primitives assume that a man has a "bush soul" as well as his own, and that this bush soul is incarnate in a wild animal or a tree, with which the human individual has some kind of psychic identity.'<sup>3</sup> With Bergman the dissociation is twofold; between the right and left hands, and between the conscious will and the reflexive, auto-kinetic movements of improvising. He sees close affinities between his own art and that of Jackson Pollock and the other abstract expressionists. They are all concerned with colours, shapes, and kinetic energy. Like Pollock, he works in a trance-like state of heightened awareness; thus the mental concentration goes beyond and is able to override physical problems of stamina and strength.

'The antic activities of the left hand offer gifts to the right for closer scrutiny.' The metaphorical basis of Jerome Bruner's work of cognitive psychology, *On Knowing*, is the symbolic differences between right and left hands – the one the doer, the other the dreamer.<sup>4</sup> The right represents order, logic, and lawfulness; the left the darker side, intuition, and spontaneity. Traditionally the left hand has been considered an awkward or clumsy counterpart of the right, its character questionable (it gave rise to the word 'sinister'). Indeed the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines 'left' as 'Distinctive epithet of the hand which is normally the weaker.'

Bergman believes that the left hand has been misused and neglected in piano literature, and that it has inherent talents that the right cannot reproduce. He therefore gives over the second side of *Bursts of Joy* to three solo left-hand improvisations. He actually considers the left hand to be superior in some respects to the right, not so much because of its symbolic associations but because of its construction – the thumb is on the right and therefore the weight of the hand is angled towards the highest part. Ravel explored the potential of this in the Concerto for Left Hand, particularly in the cadenza, where the theme is played by the thumb and is supported by a 'ghost harmony' of runs and arpeggios from the other fingers. The left hand is well suited to producing by itself the complete melodic/harmonic framework as can also be seen in other compositions – Skryabin's Prelude and Nocturne for the Left Hand op. 9, Leopold Godowsky's Prelude and Fugue on B – A – C – H, and the many transcriptions by the renowned one-armed pianist Paul Wittgenstein.

The musical substance of Bergman's left-hand solos is as solid as that of the two-handed music. The texture is thinner yet the virtuoso element is heightened by a sense of visual drama. There is a connection between the highly developed left hand and the visual aspects of piano playing that is more than coincidental. Both, we are told, are under the control of the right hemisphere of the brain. Recorded sounds create situations or landscapes in the mind's eye; we think beyond the sound to the source, and our knowledge of that source can radically alter the way in which we perceive the sound. Bergman freely associates visual images with his music. 'The piano', he says, 'is a very physical instrument.' There exists a concept of physical design relating to dance and other kinetic arts forms, which has little to do with actual sound. The clavier (dummy keyboard) is an invaluable practice tool in this respect. (Bergman owns several claviers, including a home-made portable one that fits into a small shoulder bag so that he can practise on walks and on the subway!)

Bergman recognises a certain madness in his playing, an exhilarated expressionism held in check only by a thorough background of self-evolved technique and a certainty of practice methodology and artistic aims. His prodigious facility has been built up through a rigorous system of exercises, drawing upon many different sources. Though he is an accomplished jazz (bebop) pianist, his technique is derived as much from Classical sources as from jazz. But here also he maintains a personal slant on the material and a healthy irreverence for the pedagogical tradition. Thus he will play Philippe exercises substituting expanded jazz progressions for the diminished seventh chords, apply different fingerings, conceived independently of the musical task (complex permutative systems of numbers 1-5), to scales and Hanon

exercises. This develops mental attention as well as facility with awkward hand positions. Many exercises involve stretching, such as the playing of runs in parallel fifths and sixths with double-thirds fingering, or in legato ninths. The most valuable exercises, he finds, are those that involve keeping one or more fingers down while the others of the same hand play or improvise round them. This is sometimes extended to dividing the hand into two areas (1 2 (3) 4 5), which become the two parties in a one-handed dialogue. The purpose of this is to develop the capacity for polyphonic improvisation in each hand – an ideal, in fact, not far removed from Leopold Godowsky's vision of an extraordinary left-hand technique; in his preliminary remarks to his *53 Studies on Chopin's Etudes* Godowsky wrote:

The pianoforte should benefit by the important strides which modern composition and instrumentation have made in the direction of polyphony, harmony, tone coloring, and the use of a vastly extended range in modern counterpoint. If it is possible to assign to the left hand alone the work done usually by both hands simultaneously, what vistas are opened to future composers, were this attainment to be extended to both hands!<sup>5</sup>

Borah Bergman lives and works in New York City. He has recently toured Europe and recorded for Black Saint in Italy. Though he works mainly as a solo artist he is interested in sharing and extending his theories of musical dialectics and his experience by teaching and playing with other musicians. He is something of a recluse, and while he has been highly praised by some critics he has been overlooked by the majority. Perhaps it is for this reason more than any other that he is in the paradoxical position of being one of the world's great unknown talents.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Arthur Friedheim, *Life and Liszt: Recollections of a Concert Pianist* (New York: Taplinger, 1961), p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Chiaroscuro Records CR 158. The only other recording by Bergman available at the time of writing is *Discovery*, Chiaroscuro CR 125.

<sup>3</sup> Carl G. Jung, 'Approaching the Unconscious', *Man and his Symbols*, ed. Jung and M.-L. von Franz (London: Aldus Books, 1964), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> See Jerome S. Bruner, *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 2-8.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted from Bergman's sleeve notes to *Discovery*.

#### TADEUSZ BAIRD:

PLAY, Edition Peters 8169, c 1972 (£6.25)  
 VARIATIONS IN RONDO FORM,  
 Peters 8444, c 1979 (£3.50)  
 CONCERTO LUGUBRE, Peters 8381, c 1978 (£24.00)  
 OBOE CONCERTO, Peters 8324, c 1975 (£15.50)  
 SCENES, Peters 8442, c 1979 (£12.00)  
 PSYCHODRAMA, Peters 8187, c 1973 (£12.00)  
 ELEGEIA, Peters 8246, c 1975 (£8.00)  
 GOETHE-BRIEF, Peters 8167, c 1972 (£7.25)

#### RAYMOND MCGILL

*Since this review was written the death of Tadeusz Baird has been announced. (Ed.)*

Born in 1928 in Grodzinsk Mazowiecki, Baird studied at the State Higher School of Music in Warsaw with Piotr Rytel and Piotr Perkowski; he also studied privately with Bolesław Woytowicz and Kazimierz Sikorski. With Kazimierz Serocki and the conductor Jan Krenz he founded the Group 49; which represented an effort to unite against the older and more established generation of composers who included Lutosławski



(b. 1913), Panufnik (b. 1914), and Bacewicz (1909-69). The younger composers brought about a more folkloristic approach to music coupled with the taste of late Romanticism in a style that represented a continuation of the Szymanowski tradition. Baird was one of the few composers in the 1950s who had enough courage and self-confidence to oppose formalism, although it was only with the rise of the Gomułka era after 1956 that a truly avantgarde school of Polish music grew up. The year 1956 also saw the establishment of the Warsaw Autumn festival, which is an annual event devoted to the promotion of contemporary music, and owes its existence chiefly to Baird and Serocki.

The strongest influences on Baird's music were Debussy, Szymanowski, Mahler, and Berg. The pessimistic spirit of Mahler is particularly striking in many works, and is very strongly felt in the Second Symphony of 1952, in strong contrast to the First Symphony of 1950, which is imbued with Szymanowskian ecstasy. These early works at once reveal the underlying principles governing Baird's musical thought processes, which were the expression of his spiritual and emotional life. In this sense his music is highly subjective, with less concern for formal perfection. Early works reflect the neo-classical qualities that were very much in evidence in a lot of Polish music at this time (much of the music of Bacewicz provides a striking example of such stylistic tendencies). As his style developed Baird experimented with serial techniques and the String Quartet of 1957 and *Four Essays* for orchestra of 1958 are both fine examples of his approach to these techniques. However, the emotional value and content are still of paramount significance. A flair for lyrical writing placed Baird in a position almost without rival among his contemporaries, and this is clearly exemplified in the large number of vocal works and works for a solo instrument and orchestra that he wrote. Literature and drama acted as sources of inspiration for Baird, and he composed a number of scores for theatrical productions, in addition to the one-act opera *Jutro* (Tomorrow), which is based on the short story of the same title by Joseph Conrad.

Both *Play* (1971) and *Variations in Rondo Form* (1978) are for string quartet and reveal the essential features of much of Baird's music, in the use of tightly controlled forms, and an economical use of instruments. Both works are in one continuous movement and represent yet another direction in which Baird's music moved. *Play* was written for the Danish Quartet and lasts about 11½ minutes; *Variations* was first performed in Paris by the Warsaw Quartet and is more substantial, lasting about 18½ minutes. Both of these works are divided into contrasting sections in different tempi, using a wide variety of ideas. Virtuosity is a feature common to both, particularly in the writing for cello which is often at the extreme upper range of the instrument's compass. Here Baird integrates the colour of the cello with the violins and viola and sometimes all four instruments play in unison or thirds. It is in the rich chordal passages, where multiple stopping is used, that the entire range of the instruments is exploited, and in such sections Baird writes for all the instruments in rhythmic unison. The contrasting passages are linked with aleatoric sections, usually derived from the thematic ideas presented as solos (frequently by the viola). Instruments are pitted against each other in contrary motion, often moving in small chromatic steps with contrasting wide leaps.

One of the most recent solo instrumental works is the *Concerto lugubre* for viola and orchestra. This was written in 1975 to a commission by the Philharmonic Orchestra of the City of Nuremberg and is in memory of Baird's mother who died in 1974. The first performance was given in Nuremberg in May 1976, with Stefan Kamasa as the soloist. It is a Classical work, 'Classical' referring not only to the Classical - Romantic patterns of musical narration - the course of tensions - but also to the whole expressive structure of the piece. The work is a continuous movement lasting about 20 minutes and falls into three clear sections: the first is dramatic, the middle section is intensely lyrical, while the Finale is very aggressive. Conceived in a mood of funereal gloom the *Concerto* opens with restrained *pizzicati* on the solo viola; the texture thickens as dynamics increase. The predominant referential sonority, the note E flat, is firmly established, while the soloist presents the main theme. Variations of this theme provoke the orchestra into explosive utterances. The first part of the work dissolves into silence, from which increasingly frequent and incisive timpani strokes reiterate E flat. The influence of Mahler and Berg is particularly apparent in this work which comes to rest after the final entry of the soloist, dying away *al*

*niente*, in a state of elegiac peace.

Using an equally large orchestra, including a substantial battery of percussion employing five players, the Oboe Concerto dates from 1973, just two years before the *Concerto lugubre*. The Oboe Concerto was the result of a request from the oboist Lothar Faber, and the work is dedicated to him. Like the *Concerto lugubre*, the Oboe Concerto is conceived in one continuous movement but it falls into four sections which are clearly differentiated in mood and tempo. The work opens quietly with percussion instruments to which are added two harps. As momentum is gained the soloist is allowed to enter tentatively. The oboist frequently plays while little else is happening, another parallel with the *Concerto lugubre*. String writing in multiple parts is common to both concertos, the resulting effect creating a band of sound against which the soloist is placed. Tremendous technical demands are made on the oboist, although these are not made simply to create a bravura display, for musical ends are always given, and achieve, priority.

Although not called 'concerto', *Scenes* for cello, harp, and orchestra is a single-movement work described by the composer as 'a talk, an argument and a reconciliation', and is effectively a concerto. The solo instruments represent the two voices set against an orchestral background of largely sustained sounds, with just a few explosive 'comments'. The work was written in 1977 to a private commission from Helga and Klaus Storck, and the solo writing very much reflects the tremendous virtuosity of this partnership, similar to that of Ursula and Heinz Holliger.

Both *Psychodrama* (1972) and *Elegeia* (1973) are single-movement orchestral works. In these works expression of emotion and feeling is most concentrated, being conveyed purely instrumentally. Between the very sustained and peaceful sounds that characterise *Elegeia* and the cataclysmic Finale of *Psychodrama*, one experiences the whole gamut of emotions. Commissioned by the Norköping Symphony Orchestra in Sweden, *Psychodrama* is scored for 48 soloists and a Classical orchestra, to which are added a harp, harpsichord, piano, celesta, and percussion. It is one of Baird's most compact and concentrated works (lasting about 8 minutes), and also one of his bleakest; parallels may be drawn with the Finale of Mahler's Sixth Symphony. Employing a fairly large orchestra, *Elegeia* was commissioned by the National Arts Center Orchestra of Canada for the 500th anniversary of the death of Copernicus. The work is continuous and is in the form of a series of dialogues between one section of the orchestra and another: slow-moving music is answered by lively arabesque-like figures. The dynamic level is kept to a minimum throughout, with the result that the *fortissimo* outbursts and the massive unison passage for strings near the end of the work (marked 'con passione') are doubly magnificent.

The correspondence between Goethe and Charlotte von Stein provided the inspiration for the last work in this batch, the cantata *Goethe-Briefe*. Dating from 1970, *Goethe-Briefe* is scored for baritone, chorus, and orchestra and was the result of a commission by the Dresden Philharmonic: it was written some 15 years after another major work for solo voice and orchestra, *Love Sonnets*. Besides their literary origins, these works have in common lyricism and a neo-romantic spirit. The theme of *Goethe-Briefe* is love, and the work is infused with the spirit of Wagner (parallels may be made with *Tristan*), Mahler, and Berg. The text consists of sentences taken from the letters of Goethe and Charlotte von Stein; the result is an almost documentary and strikingly suggestive record of their love. Baird's music does not detract from the text, but rather complements it with lyrical commentary. As the word expresses more than a tutti can achieve, the orchestra is abandoned. This is the effect at the end of the work - the parting - where Baird achieves a masterpiece of expression almost through understatement.

*Goethe-Briefe* is undoubtedly Baird's greatest vocal work, and indeed one of the finest works in his entire oeuvre. Baird was one of the original voices in modern Polish music and has justifiably achieved international recognition. From his somewhat eclectic works of the immediate post-war period, Baird slowly evolved a style that is unique and highly personal. He embraced all musical forms and employed a wide variety of forces, and this diversity is represented in these eight works dating from the 1970s. Each is inventive and displays superb craftsmanship; despite severe demands made on both soloists and orchestral players, Baird never resorts to virtuosity for its own sake.



#### PETER MAXWELL DAVIES:

- GABRIELI: CANZONA  
J. & W. Chester, c 1980 (£2.20)  
TWO PIANO PIECES  
Chester, c 1980 (£1.75)  
POINTS AND DANCES  
Boosey & Hawkes, c 1978 (£1.60)  
BUXTEHUDE: CANTATA: ALSO HAT GOTT DIE  
WELT GELIEBET  
Chester, c 1980 (£3.80)  
TENEBRAE SUPER GESUALDO  
Chester, c 1980 (£3.40)  
FOOL'S FANFARE  
Chester, c 1980 (£1.75)  
RENAISSANCE SCOTTISH DANCES  
B & H, c 1979 (£2.50)  
PURCELL: FANTASIA UPON ONE NOTE  
Chester, c 1980 (£1.55)  
THREE ORGAN VOLUNTARIES  
Chester, c 1979 (£1.40)  
THREE STUDIES FOR PERCUSSION  
Chester, c 1980 (£5.50)  
ANAKREONTIKA  
Chester, c 1981 (£3.80)  
A MIRROR OF WHITENING LIGHT  
B & H, c 1978 (£6.25)

#### DAVID ROBERTS

Stravinsky, the arch-plunderer of musical tradition, diagnosed his condition memorably: 'Whatever interests me, whatever I love, I wish to make my own (I am probably describing a rare form of kleptomania).' <sup>1</sup> That word 'kleptomania' gives us a flash of insight into the involuntary, compulsive nature of his raids on others' musical property. It is not hard to see the same kind of compulsion behind Maxwell Davies's – let us be genteel – borrowings.

Davies's predilection for borrowing is of course scarcely a secret: for a large number of his works it is obvious enough from their titles, programme notes, and musical substance that they incorporate borrowed material. Often such borrowings are easily explained as the means of making some definite dramatic, philosophical, or other 'point' through the music: placing recognisable material in an unfamiliar environment or transforming it in some not-too-radical way enables the composer to manipulate listeners' emotional responses to that material. It matters little whether the recognition is precise – there can be few listeners who fail to identify the bits of *Messiah* in *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (1969) – or whether it is comparatively vague – there can be few listeners who will know the anonymous 15th-century mass that is the starting-point for *Missa super L'homme armé* (1968, revised 1971), yet most will be able to identify it with more or less exactness as 'old music' and respond accordingly. At other times, when the borrowings – despite hefty hints from titles and programme notes – are far from obvious, no such simple explanation is available. I find it all but impossible to imagine, for example, how even someone who goes out of his or her way to become familiar with the rather obscure 15th-century carol on which the *Ricercar and Doubles* on 'To Many a Well' (1959) are based (and I can assure the reader that every note does come from the carol) could by ear alone correctly identify its role in that work. Then again there are borrowings for which there are no external clues in title or note. Perhaps the most interesting of these are the self-borrowings. For example, though there are several obvious spin-offs from *Taverner* (1956-70, main years of composition 1962-68) – the two *Fantasias* (1962, 1964), *Seven In Nomine* (1963-65), *Points and Dances* (1970) – who is to suspect that a work like *Revelation and Fall* (1965-66), which has no explicit connection with the opera, is in fact entirely based on *Taverner* material? (Nearly all to be found in the 'first movement' of the *Second Fantasia*.)

A variety of different kinds of borrowing, from the overt to the esoteric, is exemplified in the miscellaneous collection of recently issued scores I am reviewing here. I shall deal with them in order of composition.

The *Canzona* (1969) is about the closest thing to a 'simple' arrangement that you will find in Davies's work. Giovanni Gabrieli's *Canzon septimi toni octo vocum* from the *Sacrae symphoniae* of 1597 is reorchestrated for wind quintet and strings so as to interpose the minimum amount of Davies

between the original and the listener. There is not a single dynamic, the sole performance direction is the word 'short', and for pages at a time there is quick passage-work where the complete absence of slurs and other articulatory marks makes it appear as if the engraver had the score snatched away from him before he had quite finished the job.

The *Two Piano Pieces* are *Sub tuam protectionem* (1969) and *Ut re mi* (1970). The first of these is based on a keyboard arrangement from the Buxheim Organbook of a motet by Dunstable. This remains recognisably intact for most of the piece and is allocated to the left hand (the restricted compass of the original makes this a reasonably manageable proposition); the right hand superimposes some wickedly difficult mensural canons.

The three brief, *pianissimo* movements of *Ut re mi* are broken up on the page into short fragments, each of which may use more than one notational convention: (1) neumatic plainchant notation (four-line stave); (2) 16th-century keyboard notation (diamond-headed notes on a six-line stave); (3) strictly measured modern notation; (4) proportional notation. For most of the time types (2) and (3) or (2), (3), and (4) are used simultaneously. One of the many difficulties these combinations produce for the pianist is the frequent necessity to look backwards to read the second pitch of the two-element neumes.

*Ut re mi* shows Davies at his most perplexing: the title obviously refers to the 16th-century tradition of keyboard pieces based on a cantus firmus of solmisation syllables, but though there is a passing resemblance between the opening and that of one of John Bull's settings of *Ut re mi fa sol la*, the piece makes only the scantiest of acknowledgments to the motif. Identifying the plainsong that runs through the piece doesn't particularly help matters either. It turns out, from a consultation of *An Index of Gregorian Chant*,<sup>2</sup> to be *Quodcumque in orbe*, a hymn to St Peter. The words do not provide any conspicuous clue to why it should have been chosen (as they often do for other works). My best guess at its significance concerns its place in the liturgical calendar. The first performance of *Ut re mi* was given by Stephen Pruslin, the work's dedicatee, on January 19, 1970. Now the feast at which the hymn *Quodcumque* is sung falls on January 18, but curiously enough, in the *Liber usualis*, all but the first line of the hymn appears on a page headed 'Festa Januarii. 19'. Whether the composer misread the date (as I confess I did when I first looked at it), whether he found the closest chant to the 19th he could (there being none uniquely associated with that day), whether he wrote the piece on the eve of the concert (a rather far-fetched theory, admittedly), or whether the date has no bearing at all I wouldn't like to say.

The *Points and Dances* have been available on record<sup>3</sup> for some years and should be quite well known. The piece is an adaptation of material from *Taverner*, Act 1, Scene 3, and Act 2, Scene 2. The main focus of attention in these scenes is on the voices; the dances – very easily recognised as modelled on Renaissance originals – are, in the composer's happy phrase, a kind of 'muzak behind the arras', and much of their detail is lost. Various small adaptations are made in their arrangement as a concert item, most obviously in the instrumentation: the subdued colouring of the Act 1 music (guitar and strings) is brightened through the use of a more diverse, Fires-type ensemble, and the gloriously raucous Renaissance wind band of Act 2 (great double quint pommer and all) is toned down through the use of modern instruments.

*Also hat Gott die Welt geliebet* (1970) is a very simple arrangement for the Fires of London of a cantata attributed to Buxtehude (though its authenticity is doubtful). Into the middle of this jolly but harmless piece is inserted a kind of ghostly commentary on what are just about recognisable snippets from the cantata. It's a formula that I don't find particularly successful since the effect, which one might expect to be disturbing or thought-provoking, is just rather odd.

The plan of *Tenebrae super Gesualdo* (1972),<sup>4</sup> another piece for the Fires, is much more successful in its juxtaposition of contrasted musical idioms: three short fragments of Gesualdo's *Tenebrae* responses, adapted for solo voice and guitar, are sandwiched between four slow, quiet commentaries. I have not analysed the work in any detail to find how dependent the commentaries are on Gesualdo, but I do see that the work incorporates material that in one form or another is fundamental to *Worldes Bliss* (1966-69), *Hymnos* (1967), *Stedman Caters* (1968), and *Hymn to St Magnus* (1972).

Such interconnections between works as diverse as these are unlikely to be suspected by the listener. Someone with a



quick ear who knows his Maxwell Davies is much more likely to recognise that *Fool's Fanfare* (1972) – a rather slight setting for speaker, brass, percussion, ukelele, and banjo of bits of fools' and clowns' speeches from Shakespeare – actually begins with the same music as the masque *Blind Man's Buff* (1972). (Another work on the same material is the short *Canon in memoriam I.S.* (1971).)

All these devious and bewildering interrelationships are absent from the *Renaissance Scottish Dances* (1973),<sup>5</sup> a group of arrangements of anonymous originals, which despite the title includes several songs. In an unobtrusive, economic fashion Davies adds emphasis to the humour, boisterousness, pathos, and Scottishness of the pieces. The *Dances*, written for the Fires, appear in Boosey's Exploring Music Series, which is directed towards the educational market, and some leeway is given in the matter of instrumentation. One of the things that always appealed to me about the Fires' performances of the work was the sight of Stephen Pruslin, their virtuoso pianist, sitting patiently through the piece in order to play the simplest of drone parts in the final dance on a melodica or other fixed-reed instrument: I'm disappointed to find that the drone is omitted from the score, but it shouldn't take too much ingenuity to restore it.

Not so frequently performed as the *Fantasia and Two Pavans* after Henry Purcell (1968), but similar in spirit if gentler and less satirical in its humour, is the adaptation (again for the Fires) of Purcell's *Fantasia upon One Note* (1973).<sup>6</sup> This is by far the most radical of the ostensible arrangements under review, dressing Purcell in a succession of different disguises. One of the delights of the piece is finding out in what unlikely place the single-note cantus firmus (C sharp) will turn up next. Another is the breaking down of lines of demarcation between the players: the harpsichordist has at times to rub the rim of a brandyglass and play the open string of a cello (both tuned to the cantus note); the percussionist is called upon to play, as well as his accustomed crotales, marimba, and rototoms, the banjo; the violinist joins the harpsichordist to play four-handed. The remaining three players, flautist, clarinetist, and regular cellist, must be presumed to have enough to cope with in the natural course of things, for they confine their activities to their usual instruments.

The *Three Organ Voluntaries* (1974) are the precursors of the better-known ensemble piece *Psalm 124* (1974), which makes few changes to them beyond instrumentating them and placing between them two new sections for guitar. Each of the voluntaries, which in form resemble chorale preludes, draws material from a different piece in the Musica Britannica volume *Music of Scotland 1500-1700*,<sup>7</sup> which has provided the point of departure for a number of Davies's pieces since he went to Orkney. The second and third voluntaries make minor borrowings from John Fethy's *O God Abuse* and the anonymous *All Sons of Adam* respectively. The first claims to be based on David Peebles's setting of Psalm 124; however, a close look at Musica Britannica reveals that Davies has used the tune not from Peebles's setting but from that by Andrew Kemp, which appears lower down on the same page. An easy mistake to make, and a fairly trivial one since the tunes are very similar. The work should be well within the capabilities of most amateur organists.

Both the *Three Studies for Percussion* (1975) and *Anakreontika* (1976) make use of the matrix derived from the magic square of the Moon and the plainchant *Ave Maris Stella* – I described this in some detail in *Contact* 19.<sup>8</sup> Thus they belong to a group of works that also includes *Ave Maris Stella* (1975), Symphony no. 1 (1973-76), and *The Martyrdom of St Magnus* (1976). However, unlike these three works, neither makes any direct reference to the plainchant *Ave Maris Stella*; this produces the interesting paradox that via the matrix the plainchant, certainly in the *Three Studies* (I am less certain how far the influence of the matrix extends in *Anakreontika*), generates all the notes, yet is quite inaudible.

The *Three Studies* were written for Gosforth High School and for my money contain the most interesting 'music for young people' that Davies has composed in recent years. The ensemble comprises instruments for eleven players: four xylophones, two glockenspiels, two metallophones (all these of different sizes), woodblock, temple block, and cymbal. The music requires a fair amount of mallet technique and a pretty advanced rhythmic sense. Each of the first two studies is based on a different 'pathway' through the matrix (see my earlier review); the third superposes the two pathways, realising them in new ways. The third study is in essence the same music as that appearing between rehearsal numbers 16

and 21 in the first movement of Symphony no. 1; it would be a highly instructive exercise for a student composer to compare the two to see how the same material can be treated in such different ways.

*Anakreontika* is an extremely attractive setting of Ancient Greek lyrics for soprano, alto flute, cello, and harpsichord. It has not been performed all that frequently, though it deserves to be.

In attempting to understand Davies's imaginative world, sooner or later one comes up against his involvement with various occult systems of thought, notably alchemy. It would be unwise to dismiss these as silly hocus-pocus, though there is a great deal of foolishness on such subjects in print. For Davies the key lies in Jung's psychology. Jung, who wrote on the subject extensively,<sup>9</sup> saw alchemy not as a primitive blundering towards modern chemistry but as a symbolic representation of aspects of the unconscious. One thing at least that even the most sceptical (among whom I place myself) must admit is that the symbols and images of alchemy have great potency. A rationalist explanation of their power might be that they very obviously stand for something, but what that something is is obscure; hence one's imagination – conscious or unconscious – steps in and supplies its own subjective interpretation. The I Ching and Tarot cards may be explained in much the same way: they are tools for gaining access to the unconscious, for suggesting possibilities, for overcoming mental blocks.

A central image in Davies's work is the alchemical transmutation of base metal into gold. The implications for working with borrowed materials are fairly evident: a musically trivial fragment may be transformed into a large, imposing work that is wholly different in character, yet paradoxically identical in substance. The contrary image, that of the transformation of gold into dross, is matched by the cheapening and coarsening of a fine piece of music for dramatic or philosophical ends (for example, the *Fantasia and Two Pavans*). One can go so far without being rashly speculative, but it seems not unlikely that for Davies the analogies between alchemical and musical processes go deeper than this.

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In his programme note to *A Mirror of Whiteness Light* (1976-77) for chamber orchestra, the composer writes of the work's alchemical programme:

The title 'Speculum Luminis Dealbensis' is alchemical, referring to the purification or 'whitening' process, by which a base metal may be transformed into gold, and, by extension, to the purification of the human soul. It also refers to the Spirit Mercurius, or Quicksilver, the agent or generator of this transformation process . . . Suitably enough, the 'agent' of the work, in the alchemical sense, is the magic square of Mercurius . . . The number 8 governs the whole structure, and the sharp listener who knows his 'Liber Usualis', will recognise emerging from the constant transformation processes at key points, 8 note summaries of the plain-song *Veni Sancte Spiritus* and *Sederunt Principes*, whose implied text (if you are prepared to play my game!) have some bearing on the implied alchemy involved.

Since such a number of people expressed interest in my brief account in *Contact 19* of the use of the matrix derived from the magic square of the Moon in *Ave Maris Stella*, I shall follow it up here with some parallel details of the square of Mercury in *A Mirror of Whiteness Light*.

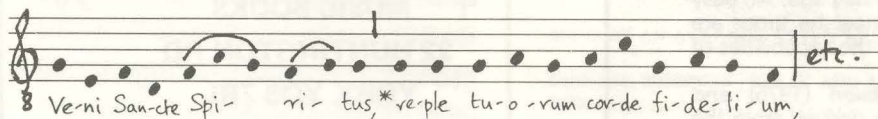
The starting-point is the plainchant *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (Example 1(a)) which Davies mentions. (This, it should be noted, is not the famous sequence for Whitsunday, but an isolated antiphon labelled 'Ad invocandum Spiritum Sanctum' in the *Liber usualis*.) The eight-note 'summary' is shown in Example 1(b). The following recipe generates the square:

- (1) Transpose the 'summary' eight times so that each transposition begins with each successive pitch class of the summary.
- (2) Enter this 8x8 transposition square in a square grid with cells numbered 1-64 (Example 2).
- (3) Reorder these cells so that the numbers make up the magic square of Mercury (Example 3);<sup>10</sup> the pitch classes will now (with exceptions) be ordered as they are in Example 4.
- (4) From each of the numbers of the square of Mercury repeatedly subtract 8 until they all fall between 1 and 8; the numbers (which represent durations) will now (with exceptions) appear as in Example 4.

The exceptions in Example 4 are the two pairs of cross-hatched squares, which have exchanged positions. Why they should do this is hard to say, but it produces an imbalance in the otherwise symmetrical (possibly too symmetrical) systems of pitch classes and durations.

As with the matrix of *Ave Maris Stella*, Example 4 is explored by diverse pathways to produce the greater part of the material. Example 5 shows six different pathways that

Example 1(a)



Example 2

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| G  | E  | F  | D  | F# | A  | C# | C  |
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  |
| E  | C# | D  | B  | D# | F# | F  | A  |
| 9  | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| F  | D  | Eb | C  | E  | G  | F# | A# |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| D  | B  | C  | A  | C# | E  | D# | G  |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 |
| F# | D# | E  | Db | F  | Ab | G  | B  |
| 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 | 40 |
| A  | F# | G  | E  | C# | B  | Bb | D  |
| 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 |
| C# | F  | F# | Eb | G  | Bb | A  | C# |
| 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 | 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 |
| C  | A  | Bb | G  | B  | D  | C# | F  |
| 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 |

(b)



Example 3

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 8  | 58 | 59 | 5  | 4  | 62 | 63 | 1  |
| 49 | 15 | 14 | 52 | 53 | 11 | 10 | 56 |
| 41 | 23 | 22 | 44 | 45 | 19 | 18 | 48 |
| 32 | 34 | 35 | 29 | 28 | 38 | 39 | 25 |
| 40 | 26 | 27 | 37 | 36 | 30 | 31 | 33 |
| 17 | 47 | 46 | 20 | 21 | 43 | 42 | 24 |
| 9  | 55 | 54 | 12 | 13 | 51 | 50 | 16 |
| 64 | 2  | 3  | 61 | 60 | 6  | 7  | 57 |

generate important cantus-firmus-like lines: (a) starts at rehearsal letter F and is shared by bassoon and english horn (see Example 6(a) for the opening); (b) starts at J and is shared by trombone, horn, trumpet, and double bass (see Example 6(b)); (c) starts at Q and is shared between clarinet and trombone; (d) also starts at Q and is taken by the cello; (e) starts at W and is shared by bassoon and trombone; (f) starts at Z and is taken by the flute. Subordinate material is generated from the matrix in more complex ways.

There is nothing magical about the employment of a magic square as an aid to composition. In the case of *A Mirror of Whiteness Light* the use of the Mercury matrix is immensely successful, for it contributes to one of the composer's very finest works; in the case of *Westerlings* (1976) the same matrix does nothing to prevent the work from being one of Davies's most disappointing. Systems may help to load the dice, but they guarantee nothing. On the other hand, it is, I think, an error to condemn a system simply because it entails arbitrariness, 'juggling with numbers', or some wholly untenable theory: as intellectually unpalatable as the means may be, it is the ends that matter.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Igor Stravinsky, 'Memories and Commentaries', *Stravinsky in Conversation with Robert Craft* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> John R. Bryden and David G. Hughes, compilers, *An Index of Gregorian Chant* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

<sup>3</sup> Recorded on Argo ZRG 712.

<sup>4</sup> Recorded on Unicorn KP 8002.

<sup>5</sup> Recorded on L'Oiseau lyre DSLO 12.

<sup>6</sup> Recorded on Unicorn KP 8005.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Elliott, ed., *Music of Scotland 1500-1700*, Musica Britannica, vol. 15 (London: Stainer and Bell, 2nd, rev. edn, 1964).

<sup>8</sup> *Contact 19* (Summer 1978), pp. 26-29.

<sup>9</sup> In particular see *Psychology and Alchemy, Alchemical Studies, and Mysterium coniunctionis*, The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, vols. 12-14, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

<sup>10</sup> Of the enormous number of magic squares (arrays of numbers whose rows, columns, and long diagonals add up to the same total) it is possible to form, seven have been associated with the seven planets of the Ptolemaic universe (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon). The earliest extant document in which they are tabulated is *De occulta philosophia*, a book on magic by the Renaissance polymath Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim published in 1531. Though Agrippa was probably following an older Cabalistic source, there is little evidence to support the extreme claims that are often made for the antiquity of the planetary squares.

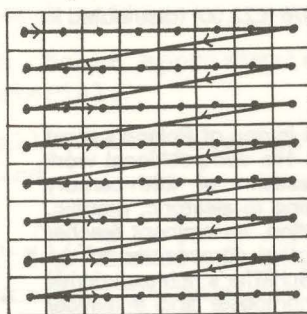


Example 4

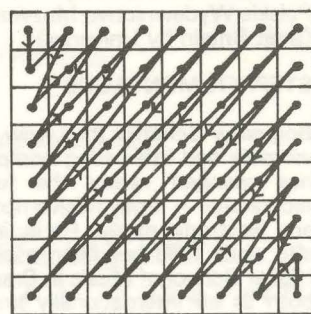
|         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| C<br>8  | A<br>2  | A#<br>3 | F#<br>5 | D<br>4  | D<br>6  | C#<br>7 | G<br>1  |
| C#<br>1 | F<br>7  | F#<br>6 | D#<br>4 | G<br>5  | D<br>3  | C#<br>2 | C#<br>8 |
| A<br>1  | F#<br>7 | G<br>6  | E<br>4  | D<br>8  | D#<br>3 | D<br>2  | C#<br>5 |
| G<br>8  | D#<br>2 | E<br>3  | C#<br>5 | D<br>1  | C#<br>6 | G<br>7  | A<br>4  |
| B<br>8  | B<br>2  | C<br>3  | F<br>5  | C#<br>4 | E<br>6  | D#<br>7 | F#<br>1 |
| F<br>1  | A#<br>7 | B<br>6  | C<br>4  | E<br>5  | G<br>3  | F#<br>2 | A#<br>8 |
| E<br>1  | A<br>7  | A#<br>6 | B<br>4  | D#<br>5 | F#<br>3 | F<br>2  | A<br>8  |
| F<br>8  | E<br>2  | F<br>3  | B<br>5  | G<br>4  | A<br>6  | G#<br>7 | C<br>1  |

Example 5

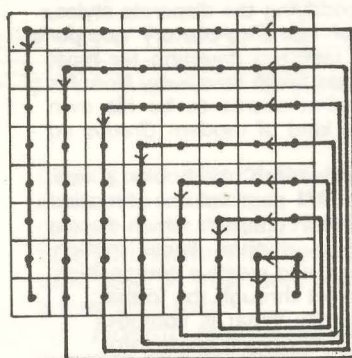
(a)



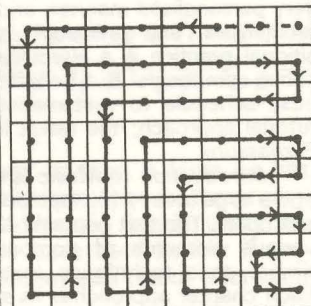
(b)



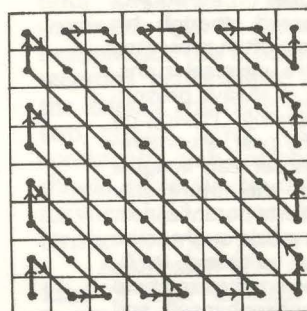
(c)



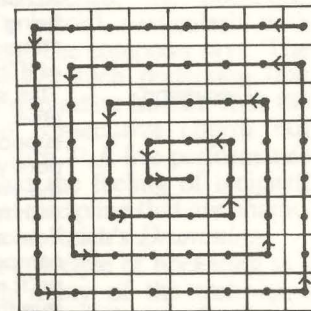
(d)



(e)



(f)



Example 6(a)

Example 6(a) Andante  $\text{♩} = c60 \pm$   
bn

(b)

poco a poco più animato  
tbn



**INTRODUCTION TO COMPOSITION** by Bogusław Schäffer, translated by Jerzy Zawadski, edited by Stefan Ehrenkreutz and Ludomira Stawowy  
Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1976 (£22.00) (distributed in Great Britain by Universal)

#### STEPHEN MONTAGUE

Bogusław Schäffer (b. Lwów, 1929) is one of Poland's most versatile and interesting composers. His compositional work has spanned nearly the full spectrum of 20th-century techniques – from twelve-note writing to aleatoric, graphic, and electronic music. He is, in addition, an eminent teacher and since 1963 has been a professor of composition at the Higher School of Music in Cracow. Schäffer's rich experience both as an internationally known composer and a teacher created a good deal of anticipation when his *Introduction to Composition* first became available in the West. Few well-known composers have written books on composition, and for good reasons: the teaching of composition is usually done on a one-to-one basis between student and composer in a very personalised manner; and codifying the disparate styles, techniques, and philosophies of late-20th-century compositional practice is a Herculean task too daunting for most active composers. But Schäffer has taken time away from his busy schedule to systematise what seems to be his own tutorial approach; the result is a kind of modern *Gradus ad Parnassum*.

*Introduction to Music* is divided into two books: a text, and a large (nearly 1½ feet long!), 471-page volume of musical examples. The text contains 120 short chapters which discuss various elements of composition: rhythm, linear motion, timbre, serial techniques, textures, and creative composition. Each chapter approaches its subject through the format:

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Question    | for example 'What is composition? How does it come into being? What is a composition's basis?' (p.7)   |
| Information | This usually consists of Schäffer's ideas on the subject being discussed, though his statements are often presented as if they were universal truths.  |
| Discussion  | This section is always provocative. For example 'Having no support in the past, a contemporary composer can imagine the music of the future only with regard to its potentialities. Tomorrow's music ought to be composed by us today!' (p.7), or 'It must be emphasized here that the composer himself, and not the reviewers of music or the audience, is to decide what is good, to decide about aesthetic issues. After all, our artistic taste today has also been moulded by composers, not reviewers.' (p.12) |
| Exercise    | The exercises deal with analysis of the musical examples in the large volume.  |
| Composition | This is the final project in each chapter, in which the student assimilates the previous material in the form of a short composition.  |

The volume of musical examples uses some 170 excerpts, of which 39 are from Schäffer's work, about half are by well-known composers such as Boulez, Cage, Stockhausen, Stravinsky, and Webern, and the rest are by rather lesser-known figures such as Chou Wen-chung, Betsy Jolas, Goffredo Petrassi, Dieter Schnebel, and Marek Kopelent. Interestingly he takes only two examples from other Polish composers (Barbara Buczkowna and Zbigniew Lampart), and only two from other Eastern European composers (Marek Kopelent and Natko Devčić).

The book is aimed at a rather advanced student of composition and is designed to be used under the supervision of a composer – tutor. Its goals, as expressed by the author, are threefold:

- 1 to show methods of composition from the still difficult and not readily accessible technical aspect,
- 2 to acquaint the reader with individual solutions in the various parameters of music, by means of examples drawn (primarily) from the author's own compositions and the works of those composers who most extensively influenced the metamorphoses of contemporary musical language.
- 3 to awaken and encourage the creative imagination and the capacity for formulating ideas of the apprentice composer. (p.5)

The first thing one notices in reading the text is the awkwardness of the translation. Critics love to carp about translations, but a poor one can obstruct an important point, render meaningless a pithy remark, or totally distract the interested reader by its clumsiness. This translation manages to stumble into most of the pitfalls pretty consistently. Polish is a verbose language and evidently the translator Jerzy Zawadski chose to keep the translation as close as possible to the original syntax – to my mind a big mistake. There is a cultural difference: a text for English readers should be clear, concise, and not obscured by long, awkward sentences; good textbook English does not use all the circumlocutions found in good Polish. For instance, what exactly is 'an authentically intentional way of operating with metric change for the sake of compositional ends of a higher order?' (p.20), and what can be meant by the statement 'Rich results may be obtained even within simple metres by incessantly annihilating their supremacy.'? (p.23) – 'incessantly annihilating their supremacy' sounds more like a line out of *The Life of Genghis Khan* than a text on simple metres. To be fair, Schäffer was aware of the minefield that his technical treatise represented for the translator, and asked three British and American musicians to vet the text. The 'verification of the text from the linguistic and musical point of view' (p.6) was done by Roy Wrightman (England), Adrian Thomas (Northern Ireland), and Stefan Ehrenkreutz (USA), with Ehrenkreutz and Ludomira Stawowy (Poland) as the editors. I find it hard to understand, though, how any native English speakers could let this kind of writing go to print:

Nowadays polymetre may only be regarded as one of the factors of change in material, and the effects it produces (for instance when polymetre is combined with other techniques such as the serialization of other elements) are slight even in respect of the dynamics of movement alone. This notwithstanding, it can be useful as a matrix for rhythmic values for inspirational, if no other, reasons (more interesting co-situations emerge out of a metrically complex groundwork of movement than out of a simple one). (p.23).

Many authors of new texts coin words or phrases that can become a permanent part of the musician's vocabulary, but I am not sure that was Schäffer's purpose with the titles that come out in translation as: 'Automization of Composition', 'Denaturalization of Sound', and 'Selection and Particularization of Tone Colour'. Moreover the average music student would probably have to use a dictionary for words such as 'antinomies' or 'presentiment'; this may not be a bad idea, but in the context they read more like words from a translator's lexicon than efficient tools for making a point. What the book really needs is a good editor to give a second edition the chance to become the textbook it is supposed to be.

Schäffer has done a lot of teaching and his projects are quite interesting. The sections of 'information' and 'discussion' contain a great deal of material, and while there are lots of points that other composers would certainly argue, this is really part of the book's function. Statements like 'Although it has never been emphasised, history proves irrefutably that one of the fundamental canons of true compositional creativity is originality.' (p.11) are highly contentious. Does history really prove this irrefutably? There could be some lively discussion on that point.

In spite of the irksome translation, the book is an important addition to a difficult field. Schäffer is a unique individual and his book is worth the trouble of translating from 'English' into English.



## THE MUSIC OF ALEXANDER GOEHR

edited by Bayan Northcott  
Schott, 1980

MICHAEL HALL

To some, Alexander Goehr is an enigma. They fail to understand why a composer once so daring, so radical, should now want to write tonal fugues and chaconnes — especially in such a cloistered, cosy environment as Cambridge. There is an incompatibility, a mystery in need of explanation. These people will probably be middle-aged: younger folk may be unaware that Goehr has been anything other than a member of the establishment. To them Bayan Northcott's collection of essays may arouse only a deferential respect.

But by the older, Goehr must surely be remembered as the catalyst of their generation, the man who seemed to have all the ideas. Ask Birtwistle, Maxwell Davies, Tony Gilbert, David Lumsdaine who led the way when they were students in the fifties, who kindled the flame, and they will unhesitatingly tell you it was Goehr. With his cosmopolitan background, charisma, and intellectual vigour he generated much of importance at the time. Among other things it must never be forgotten that, tentative though it is, his *Fantasia for Orchestra*, first performed in no less a place than Darmstadt, in 1956, gave to English music what was subsequently to become one of its most salient features — the structural monody. Out of the discussion arising from his *cantus firmus* technique there came, two years later, the much more sophisticated *Alma Redemptoris Mater* of Maxwell Davies. Since then the structural monody has been endemic.

However, side by side with the innovatory ideas lay the seeds of reaction to them. 'All art is new art and all art is conservative' was the slogan of Goehr's 1960 article in *The Score*<sup>1</sup> attacking the continental view that the only way forward was through 'the discovery of the single note'. What led Goehr forward was not the single note, but 'something that had to do with harmony', as he now puts it. This had already been evident in *The Deluge* (1957-58), but became increasingly so until in his television piece *Bauern, Bomben und Bonzen* of 1973 he derived his harmony not from a serial but a tonal matrix — a fragment of Schumann. But although 'harmony is the most important thing in music' it should only be regarded as a symptom of his conservatism. In itself, harmony is always necessary. The real issue, the issue that puzzles those of his middle-aged contemporaries who care, is why so many of the important radical ideas have been abandoned.

Inevitably the issue haunts this symposium; and yet none of the contributors dares to face it openly. The only critique comes from Robin Holloway, a former student who has made the grade and is presumably deemed diplomatic enough for the purpose. Three of the articles, Hugh Wood's survey of the choral music, David Drew's 'Why Must Arden Die?' (a short study of the opera), and Bayan Northcott's piece about the recent music, are reprints or revisions of previous publications. But the rest have been specially commissioned. They include Bill Hopkins on the piano music, Peter Paul Nash on the chamber music, Julian Rushton on the orchestral music, and Melanie Daiken on the *Triptych* (1968-70). Their pieces are descriptive — this book has no place for detailed analysis — but Bayan Northcott has made sure that none of them falls short of the competent. As well as his own article, he includes two interviews with Goehr and an excellent catalogue. What is lacking is an overall assessor, other than an editor, someone who can place Goehr more firmly in the culture of our time, someone who dares to tackle the big issue. But perhaps the most significant thing of all is the lack of enthusiasm. Only Melanie Daiken with her self-conscious, highly punctuated style, which seems to mirror the music she is discussing, imparts the feeling that it has really excited her on some occasion.

Nevertheless, if the reader wants a wider and deeper perspective he must turn to Robin Holloway. 'Goehr's central concern has been with a concept of music not as mystical stimulation or political exegesis but as a medium of ideas in itself, a human activity like reading a book.' Holloway argues that it is the notion of music as a quasi-linguistic phenomenon, a medium of ideas, the vehicle for something beyond itself, that limits Goehr as a composer. He can never yield to sound as such. 'A general picture emerges of a composer, very thoughtful and subtle, too self-conscious quite to trust to his truest intelligence which lies in his intuition.' But the

thoughtfulness and subtlety that starve the medium of notes and deprive it of sensuality — the sound as such — can turn parsimony to expressive advantage. It can become extremely poignant. Therein lies Goehr's strength. As an example, Holloway cites the Piano Trio (1966). 'Its first movement disperses and re-combines his typical "punctuation-mark" material through an ever-shifting range of possibilities to open up a form of cumulative power and perpetual surprise. And in the Lento his typical parsimony of notes actually produces the effect of abundance; material apparently limp and tentative is isolated in just these qualities until it achieves an extraordinary degree of inevitability — rock-hard yet tender and intimate — something comparable to Debussy's "chair nue de l'émotion".'

When Goehr achieves this condition it no longer matters that he tends to compose in concepts rather than sounds. His intellectual powers have transcended his limitations. Perhaps this is a clue to the enigma of him. To follow it, the reader should turn to the interviews where Goehr fills in the background to his work and discusses the people and ideas that have influenced it. He may be surprised how often Goehr refers to his father, the well-known conductor, once a pupil of Schoenberg. It is hammered home that Walter Goehr had a low opinion of his son's musical ability and did his best to discourage him from taking up composition. Whatever gifts he possessed they were not musical. Goehr needed guts, considerable will-power, and courage to withstand his father's scorn and overcome the obstacles he placed in his way. Even after he had established himself as a composer and, at long last, his father began to take an interest in his work 'this took the form either of extremely negative harangues about how bad he thought my pieces were, or grudging approval (which was the most one could ever get out of him).'

At this stage the reader may be bold enough to claim that he has possibly solved the mystery. Perhaps the whole of Goehr's efforts have been an attempt to gain his father's approval. Is it a coincidence that probably his most poignant piece is the *Little Symphony* (1963) composed in memory of his father? And is it also a coincidence that he, too, is a Schoenbergian? If he is not a natural musician, as his father claimed, then by sheer effort he has mastered those things that characterise one. But to do so he was forced to become conservative, a traditionalist. It will give him profound satisfaction to read Robin Holloway's remark that he has 'the ability to put together small elements into a larger grammatical order, that makes him, at whatever distance, a true heir of Haydn, Beethoven and Schoenberg.' But not only is he heir to the German tradition, by occupying the Cambridge chair he is also heir to the English tradition. Only musicians of proven ability receive this accolade. Nobody can say that Goehr has not triumphed over nature's reluctance to endow him with musical gifts. It is manifest that he has.

### NOTE:

<sup>1</sup> 'Is there only one way?', *The Score*, no. 26 (January 1960), pp. 63-65.

**LUTOSLAWSKI AND HIS MUSIC** by Steven Stucky  
Cambridge University Press, 1981 (£21.50)

ADRIAN THOMAS

Having been immensely depressed by the inadequacy, unhelpful generalities, and plain inaccuracies in the *New Grove* article on Lutosławski, I found it a pleasure to turn to Steven Stucky's new book on the composer. And that is not least because it has an excellent catalogue of works, discography, and bibliography (although I notice that John Casken's article 'Transition and Transformation in the Music of Witold Lutosławski', *Contact 12* (Autumn 1975), pp. 3-12, is missing). What the bibliography does make clear is that the time is ripe for a comprehensive survey and analysis of the music that will appeal to as wide an audience as possible. And by and large Steven Stucky, who is Assistant Professor of Music at Cornell University, has fulfilled this brief. His style is admirably concise and lucid even at its most concentrated, his terminology — a mixture of American and English usage — is generally clear, and the Polish and English proof-reading is of a high standard (although I do not care for 'postromantic', and several bar numbers in the structural synopses are incorrect).

Steven Stucky's central concern is naturally the music, but



he has not neglected to fill in biographical details where they are available and fitting. The opening three chapters cover the years up to 1960, intermingling biography and musical analysis effectively. A different and eminently sensible plan is adopted for the last 20 years: a fourth chapter mainly on the career, a fifth and central chapter elaborating on the main elements of the late style, and a final chapter consisting of 'summary discussions' of between four and nine pages on each of the principal compositions from *Jeux vénitiens* (1960-61) to *Mi-parti* (1975-76). Throughout, Stucky draws openly on the analytical work of other writers (Lidiia Rappoport on the early music, Wilfried Brennecke on *Muzyka żałobna* (Funeral music, 1954-58), Christian Martin Schmidt on the String Quartet (1964), etc.) and quotes extensively from existing interviews, including some, like the analytical sources mentioned above, that are not available in English. Here for example is a revealing comment made by Lutosławski in 1958 about his composition teacher in the early 1930s, Witold Maliszewski: "[He] instilled in the student a rigorous attitude toward one's materials and a sense of responsibility for every note one wrote. He was merciless in ferreting out the haphazard and illogical" (p. 5). For the lesser-known early works there are adequate quotations from the scores and neat, tabulated structural synopses. On the assumption that scores of the later works are more readily available, the balance of presentation in the later chapters switches to harmonic reductions.

Although Lutosławski is probably best known for his music of the last 20 years, Stucky quite rightly sees the earlier music as integral to a true understanding of his achievements. He is particularly good at placing the composer in the political and social contexts prevailing in Poland before 1960 but largely foregoes any detailed musical comparison with other contemporary composers (this is equally true of the later period). When it comes to the discussion of individual works in the early periods (and all are given fair treatment) Stucky's observations are basically sound. He highlights the odd harmonic premonition of later techniques but passes no comment on the remarkable solo cello writing in the Overture for Strings (1949) which comes into its own in the Cello Concerto begun 20 years later. Stucky's criteria for analysing tonal functions are not always clear. He asserts that in *Preludia taneczne* (Dance preludes, 1954) 'each movement conveys a clear tone center: E-flat, F, B-flat, G and E-flat' (p. 59), yet with regard to the middle three movements they are neither clear nor do they centre on the given pitch classes. His analysis of the use of folk sources in the Concerto for Orchestra (1950-54) on the other hand is illuminating, though I would have welcomed an attempt to discuss why these particular tunes might have been chosen.

When it comes to the transitional works preceding *Jeux vénitiens*, Stucky provides as perceptive a guide as one could reasonably hope for. His résumé of the uncompleted project that was eventually to emerge as the Three Postludes (1958-60) is typically informative, and his elucidation of the somewhat oblique motivic processes in the 'Metamorphoses' section of *Muzyka żałobna* is excellent. From time to time, however, general observations do prove inadequate when one looks at the imaginative fine details in the score. While Stucky accurately stresses the seminal pre-eminence of the Five Songs (1956-57) in the development of Lutosławski's concept of harmony as the crux of his mature compositional thought, he largely ignores the subtler touches where important developments in the poetic text (see the climax of *Wiatr* or the final lines of *Żima*) are enhanced by finely judged changes in harmony, register, and rhythm. It is precisely such moments that breathe life into the patterned chromatic partitioning which is to become the technical mainstay of the later music. Occasionally, too, a thesis can misleadingly overreach itself. Later in the book Stucky talks about Lutosławski's fondness for the (unordered) hexachord comprising the successive interval classes 1:1:4:1:1:4. He states that this 'construction guarantees thirdless harmony' (p. 161). It does not. In *Muzyka żałobna* (an early example), where 'beginning with the fourth canon, interval class 4 (but never 3) does occasionally occur vertically' (p. 71), you will find over half a dozen harmonic instances of ic 3 from bar 23. More importantly, in later works Stucky fails to see that though at any one moment the harmony may be thirdless the melodic distribution will frequently emphasise the inherent ic 4 of the hexachord (Second Symphony, 1965-67: 'Hésitant', double reed refrain; Cello Concerto, 1969-70: brass interruptions from fig. 5). Indeed, Lutosławski extends this concept of

horizontal-vertical duality: 'It may occur that the chord never actually sounds in its entirety — it is supplemented by our memory and imagination.' (p. 120)

For many readers the most interesting chapter will be the one on elements of the late style, which Stucky divides into 'four broad aspects': microrhythm and limited aleatorism; pitch organisation and aleatory counterpoint; texture; macrorhythm and form. Such divisions are not comprehensive, but they do succeed in indicating the main compositional areas with which Lutosławski is preoccupied. The section on microrhythm includes a useful chart of notational devices used at various times by the composer, but there is insufficient attention given to the complex and vivid ways in which Lutosławski uses pulse. It is not just a question of pinpointing basic rhythmic patterns or of aleatory passages merging or contrasting with a regular metre, but more a matter of discovering how the inner rhythmic life consistently lends an immediate cogency to the musical argument. The Cello Concerto and Preludes and Fugue (1970-72) are excellent cases for such analysis.

Stucky's overriding interest in the book is the fundamental role of harmony. In themselves the harmonic blocks are amazingly varied and Lutosławski, in constructing them along consistent intervallic lines, has touched an aural nerve which so many have found refreshing. In the section on pitch organisation Stucky treads warily in the minefield of analysing the effect of different chords, apart from saying that they 'offer a rich and flexible source of harmonic expression' (p. 116). He does give plentiful examples from different works of the various basic types of construction (rehearsal numbers would have been useful), although less regulated chords get scant attention and there is no consideration of multiple chromatic passages such as the three-tiered climax of the second of the *Trois poèmes* (1961-63). The major shortcoming is the lack of an in-depth analysis of a substantial movement or even of a complete composition which would go at least part of the way to explaining the long-term function of such chords and their satellites within an overall harmonic and structural design. We have many of the materials but are short on their contextual motivation. Despite the absence of harmonic considerations in the section on form, Stucky writes well about Lutosławski's long-standing exploration of what he typifies as 'end-accented form' (but beware: the macrorhythmic *accelerando* cited with regard to the Second Symphony (pp. 128, 162-164) is a macrorhythmic *ritardando*, as shown by John Casken).

Here, as elsewhere in this crucial chapter, there lay a valuable opportunity for drawing substantial comparisons between compositions, even if it meant a depletion of the final chapter where each work is dealt with separately. As it is, Stucky has chosen to devote some 60 pages, virtually the last third of the book, to the 'summary discussions' of the ten most recent pieces, excluding the *Novelette* (1978-79) and the Double Concerto for oboe and harp (1980). In many ways this is where Stucky is at his best, providing a succinct and readable guide to further listening and reading, and tying in some of the technical aspects with the more elusive aesthetic aura of each work. Of course there are gaps, as in his discussion of *Jeux vénitiens*,<sup>1</sup> and errors (the harmonic summary 6.10 of part of the String Quartet (p. 150) is misleadingly incomplete), but Stucky generally weds argument and fact persuasively. The passage on *Livre pour orchestre* (1968) is particularly sure-footed and he tellingly encapsulates the essence of the unusual idea behind *Mi-parti* (while he affirms that in the opening sections 'melody . . . reigns supreme' (p. 190), there is no follow-up discussion of melodic style: is Lutosławskian melody simply a by-product of harmony?). Moreover, Stucky is not afraid of the occasional criticism. Of the final flourish in Preludes and Fugue he says tersely: 'musically it is a mistake' (p. 184).

The section on Preludes and Fugue is, I think, characteristic of the book as a whole: fluent and informed if sometimes reluctant to explore the consequences of Lutosławski's principal compositional techniques and decisions (here, for instance, Stucky avoids assessing the effect or success of the variable structure of Preludes and Fugue, a feature unique in Lutosławski's output). Reservations notwithstanding, this is an important book (at an important price!) and, with the scores close at hand, it is what Steven Stucky diffidently calls a 'hint at strategies for deeper study'.

#### NOTE:

<sup>1</sup> Adrian Thomas will discuss some unusual aspects of *Jeux vénitiens* in a future issue of *Contact*. (Ed.)



**COMPANY 6**

Incus 29

**COMPANY 7**

Incus 30

Obtainable from Incus Records, 112 Hounslow Road, Twickenham TW2 7HB

**RED BIRD** (Trevor Wishart)

YES 7

**BEACH SINGULARITY** and **MENAGERIE** (Trevor Wishart)

YES 8

Obtainable from Trevor Wishart, c/o Electronic Music Studio, University of York, Heslington, York YO1 5DD

**THE SOLO TRUMPET 1966-76** (John Wallace with Lysis)

SOMA 781

**DUALYSES** (Lysis)

SOMA 782

Obtainable from Soma Distribution, 23 Westfield Terrace, Longford, Gloucester GL2 9BA

**AWAKENINGS** (Tim Wheeler)

Reflection Records RR 0101

Obtainable from Reflection Records Ltd, 11 Pond Street, London NW3 2PN

**DESCRIPTIVE IMPROVISATIONS** (Dave Maddison)

MADD 1

Obtainable from Dave Maddison, 5 Andrew Street, Easington Colliery, Co. Durham

**FROM SCRATCH PERFORM RHYTHM WORKS** (Philip Dadson)

From Scratch PRA 905

Obtainable from Scratch, PO Box 6298, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1, New Zealand, or Philip Dadson, 16 Glenfield Road, Birkenhead, Auckland 10, New Zealand

**THE LONGEST NIGHT** (John Stevens, Evan Parker), Vol. 1

Ogun OG120

Obtainable from Ogun Recording Ltd, 35 Eton Avenue, London NW3 3EP

**MUSIC FOR CONTRABASS QUINTET** (John Voigt)

Baker St. Studios BSS 101

Obtainable from Baker St. Studios, 1072 Belmont St, Watertown, Massachusetts, USA

**VICTORIAN TIME MACHINE** (Richard David Hames, Barry Conyngham, James Fulkerson)

MOVE MS 3028

Obtainable from Move Records, Box 266, Carlton South, Victoria 3053, Australia; individual copies £4.00 from Jim Fulkerson, Barton Workshop, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6EJ

**HILARY BRACEFIELD**

After Keith Potter's philosophic survey of the improvisatory music scene in his review of Bead records in *Contact 21*,<sup>1</sup> I have, I'm afraid, space for short reviews only of this mixed bag of records. The notes to Keith Potter's review refer to many previous *Contact* record reviews and in those you may read several other views of the wisdom of committing modern experimental music to plastic. I will not add to that discussion,

merely observing that my main feeling after I had listened to all twelve records was one of wonder and admiration for all those who launch themselves into a business so risky nowadays that even the record giants are teetering. I note, however, that the Arts Councils here and in Australia and New Zealand are prepared to support some of this activity – Company, Trevor Wishart, From Scratch and Victorian Time Machine all acknowledge help.

I start, for the reason that I enjoyed them the most, with the Company records. Here we have the two final records of the Company series made during Company Week 1977. (Again, see Keith Potter's *Contact 21* review for details of information on this group in *Musics*.) The ten musicians who came together in that week are all featured on these two records, although the most that perform together at any one time is five – unless an occasional one has slipped in uncredited: it's not always easy to tell. Each record has one side of music played in front of audiences and one of music played without an audience – there's no discernible difference; some tracks are 'selections' from longer pieces; all are free improvisations. The immediacy of live performance is, of course, lost, and if one is not prepared to listen very closely it's likely that the lack of organised form allows the attention to drift; but I found I wanted to play this music more than once. It certainly does not work as background music – a definite compliment.

The extracts appearing on these two records exhibit a high degree of rapport between the players (occasionally, though, antipathy sparks off material, as in *Company 6*, side 2, track 1) and may have been chosen for that reason. The editing procedures are, of course, a mystery, and it's sad that there must be lots of other music not being released. The 'manic' nature of the work of Han Bennink, Tristan Honsinger and others is not as evident as I expected, but this could be a consequence of not *seeing* what the percussion player is doing or of being able to control the sound volume oneself. So on record it's the music that matters, and most tracks bear repeated hearings. Try the long extract on *Company 6* featuring Leo Smith, a Braxton – Parker duo on *Company 7*, a quintet on the same disc with Honsinger talking away, or the four saxophones taking off on side 2.

The degree of commitment to exciting improvisation that these records show made the disc by Lysis, a group whose work I respect, seem much less rewarding. The eight tracks here are termed 'compositions', but to what extent they are written down pieces or more improvisational structures I would be interested to know. Certainly they all *sound* very like the free improvisation in which Lysis indulge in concert. A problem of Lysis's work is the length of the pieces. On the record they are all between four minutes and eight and a half minutes, and it is that period of time which can make improvisational or experimental pieces seem most nebulous. A lot can be said concisely in two minutes, or to exhaustion in 14 or 20 or so, but often nothing definite comes out of that period in between. As the title *Dualyses* implies, most pieces are duos – Roger Dean and Hazel Smith on bass and violin with some ring modulation, Roger Dean with Ashley Brown (bass and percussion), and one percussion solo piece. Lysis seem wary of exploiting the ranges of tonal possibilities of their instruments or of exploiting an idea to its fullest. What comes across is a timidity, a lack of conviction.

As a complete contrast, and to complement the Company records on which he appears, try Evan Parker on *The Longest Night* in a duo with John Stevens (percussion and cornet). No timidity here! 'Evan and I are two of the most skilled interpreters... of this highly specialised form of improvisation of which this extended performance, covering two volumes, is an excellent example', says Stevens on the sleeve. No timidity in the music either. Three tracks altogether of Parker's obsessed, brilliant exploration of his instrument, with Stevens knowing when to join in, when to accompany, and when to shut up. I don't feel I *like* the soprano saxophone by the end of the record, but I feel I know nearly everything Parker can do with it.

The Parker – Stevens duo recorded their album on the longest night of 1976. A record from the other side of the world features an ensemble, From Scratch, who regularly perform a drumming event in the crater of an extinct volcano in Auckland on the longest night of the year in New Zealand (i.e. in June). It's open to all. This record of their music includes drumming pieces for four people. The pieces are long, the ideas for the use of pitched drums, chimes, tubes and bells carefully thought out, and the permutations gone through. It all comes out, however, rather bland and dull, *too* regular, without the blood-stirring that 26 minutes of



drumming should produce. The group, incidentally, would welcome correspondence, information, and exchange of ideas with others. Write to Philip Dadson, who was, by the way, a member of the Scratch Orchestra, at the address above. On first hearing the end of side 2 of the record I thought that either there was something wrong with my record-player or there was a bird twittering somewhere. Subsequent playings revealed the sound to be high-pitched bells in the music.

In *Awakenings* by Tim Wheeler, however, the bird noises on the second track are real. By the end of this disc I felt as if I had been pulled slowly through a bath of warm liquid turkish delight and then rolled gently over and over in violet-coloured sugar. Wheeler is a flautist who has discovered heights of sweetness that James Galway hasn't yet touched. He plays flutes, bells, gongs, vibraphone and synthesizer himself (over-dubbing used), and is even moved to sing his mystic experiences by the end of side 2. The birds were recorded at dawn, and he is joined on two live tracks by Paul Donovan (guitar) and Yuki Horimoto (bass). The titles – 'Awakenings', 'Perfumed Garden', 'The Wanderer', 'To Ecstasy', etc. – will give you an idea of the sounds of this record and whether it is for you.

Dave Maddison is unknown to me. As an electric-guitar player he is concerned to explore the possibilities of the instrument along paths nearer to the improvisational player than the rock experimenter. He has used his titles to good effect to spark off his improvisations. There's some obviousness about 'Derbyshire Caves' and 'Largo for Whales', and by the end of side 2 one feels that he is repeating material, but there is a measure of real inventiveness in Maddison's work which makes me hope he is continuing his explorations.

A curiosity that arrived at the *Contact* office was the record by John Voigt, bass player from Berklee College of Music. 'Slum Settings for Five Basses?' 'Bingo: A Game for Contrabass Quintet & Chorus of Elderly Women's Voices?' Well, 'Bingo' should be of interest to sociologists. Tape of American ladies playing the game and their phlegmatic caller (no calls of '66, clickety-click' and such-like in the USA) is interrupted by basses responding to the calls with their own musical bingo card instructions. A nice idea, but there isn't enough interest in the bass parts for it to work. 'Slum Settings' presents Voigt's intimate honey-dark voice reading extracts from an Olympia Press book (with bass accompaniment). Your reviewer was quite surprised at this slightly pornographic bonus.

On, hastily, to two records of 'composed' music. Trumpeter John Wallace, who appears regularly with Lysis, is heard in music for solo trumpet by Henze, Rautavaara, Wolpe and Justin Connolly (with tape), for trumpet and piano with Roger Dean (Iain Hamilton's *5 scenes*), and Wallace's own *Rhapsody* for trumpet and bass. (There is also a track of Christian Wolff's *Edges* with Lysis.) It is very hard to make solo trumpet music sound unlike trumpet exercises, and most of these pieces don't quite manage it. The Connolly work is the only one to exploit the jazz potential of the instrument, as well as pitting its virtuosity against itself and other elements on the tape, and Wallace's own rather improvisation-like piece also held my interest. I'm glad, in spite of what I have said, that the modern repertoire for solo instruments should be heard and recorded.

Another record from the other side of the world is *Victorian Time Machine*. From the rather messy cover information one gradually gleams that this is an ad hoc group in Melbourne based on the Victorian College of the Arts. Three works by composers working in the city are presented. In Richard David Hames's *Nuper rosarum flores*, Dufay's motet (sung first in a rather breathy performance by the college's Renaissance Ensemble) is used as the reference point of Hames's own meditation on its elements for instrumental ensemble. Slow-moving and beautiful pointillistic sounds cohere in an ending where the motet's own final section for voices merges with the ensemble. *To Be Alone* by Barry Conyngham explores in Ligeti-like fashion semi-improvisatory parts by the soloists (soprano, tenor, trombone and cello) against a tape background of long chordal lines divided up by sharply-struck bell tones. Most of this worked together well, and a live performance would be quite exhilarating, but the characterisations of loneliness by the soloists were often to me embarrassing rather than convincing. James Fulkerson's *Music for Brass Instruments III* is a deliberately unambitious piece which handles the sound of the twelve brass instruments well. It uses a quiet Feldman-like chordal basis

for slow or sudden excursions from the norm, building up to a climax, but tailing off disappointingly. The record is not faultless, most players and singers presumably being students, but it is to be commended for offering work being done in Australia to a wider public.

Trevor Wishart's efforts in promoting his work deserve recognition, but his music can, of course, stand on its own. Of the music on the two records being considered here, I was not happy with the presentation of *Beach Singularity*. The music is too strongly related to the whole events of the day on the beaches on which the performances were done to succeed in this potted form. It can be considered only a souvenir of those events. *Menagerie*, however, I am glad to welcome on disc. If you did not see an exhibition of the collection of assemblages by performance artists for which Wishart composed the tape music, then the record insert gives pictures of and information on the six 'sculptures'. I enjoyed the exhibition when I saw it at the Birmingham Arts Lab in 1975, and still find the music inventive: 'Musical Box' with its cracked record of dreams, the under-water bubbling and breathing of 'Aqualung' (long before Kate Bush), the domestic sounds of 'Still Life', and the wittiness of 'Spam Guitar'.

The appearance of this disc at the same time as that of *Red Bird* brings home how far it was, in fact, an earlier exploration of some of that material. Trevor Wishart's own assemblage for *Menagerie* – 'Vision' – and the music for it, play with the word 'reasonable', as does *Red Bird*; and the nightmares of 'Dreamer', and the eruptions of the real world outside into 'Still Life' are direct links with later work, an earlier manifestation of a political conscience which is concerned to use musical terms for its ideas.

If Wishart's earlier *Journey into Space* took one away from the world's problems, the protagonist in *Red Bird* tries to escape, or for sanity has to escape, in his dreams, but is always brought back to reality. In the context of the piece, the bird sounds, at first seeming rather trite transformations of the vocal sounds, become gradually almost unbearable symbols of freedom. Carefully worked out the whole design may be, and the fascinating accompanying booklet (available for £3) gives very great detail on all of it, but it is the cumulative musical effect which makes this work such an achievement. It is not only the bird sounds that could remain trite, but Wishart, in his determination to make the listener become part of his 'political prisoner's dream', utilises the obviousness of much tape sound, forces it further, and combines it with natural sounds and the potency of words to present a musical document that cannot be ignored.

#### NOTE:

<sup>1</sup> Keith Potter, 'Free Improvisation: a Review', *Contact* 21 (Autumn 1980), pp.18-23.

## THE MACDOWELL COLONY FOR CREATIVE ARTISTS

STEPHEN MONTAGUE

The artists' colony is a unique product of a rather dubious American tradition: the US Government's continuing financial neglect of its artists. The National Endowment for the Arts (the US equivalent of the Arts Council of Great Britain) was founded in 1965; under the Reagan administration it has been driven to the dossiers' house by a 50% bite out of its £88 million budget – already a pauper's purse by European standards. (The Arts Council budget for 1980-81 was £80 million – for a country with a quarter the population). The traditional American attitude towards government support of the arts was summed up in the Reagan administration's pre-budget statement:

For too long, the Endowments have spread federal financing into an ever-wider range of artistic and literary endeavor, promoting the notion that the federal government should be the financial patron of first resort for both individuals and institutions engaged in artistic and literary pursuits. This policy has resulted in a reduction in the historic role of private individual and corporate philanthropic support in these key areas. The reductions would be the first step toward reversing this trend.<sup>1</sup>



On a trip to the USA at about the time this statement was made, I happened to be sitting next to the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee (the powerful government committee that deals with taxation). I confronted him with the well-publicised fact that under the new budget, more money would be spent on military bands than on the National Endowment for the Arts. His view (and he is a liberal Democrat) was that the NEA was a luxury long overdue for trimming, and that military bands are also an important part of the country's artistic environment – a point I guess I had not considered.

These are views of the vast majority of Americans, and they create the atmosphere into which the American artist is born. The arts are simply not yet as important as they traditionally have been in Europe. If an American artist works in a field that is not commercially rewarding, he is left to his own devices and resourcefulness to make ends meet. In the past he has had few choices: survive on air and water, find a wealthy patron, or get a 'proper job' and do his own thing after working hours. Charles Ives somehow managed to compose in between writing out life-insurance policies, but Edward MacDowell, like most American composers, spent most of his time teaching. For MacDowell the only real creative time was the summer, when he could leave his teaching commitments at Columbia University and retreat from the city to work.

In 1896 Edward MacDowell and his wife Marian bought a farm in Peterborough, New Hampshire, about a six-hour train ride north-west of New York City. As a surprise birthday present, Marian had a small log cabin built in the woods on a nearby hill. There MacDowell was able to rest, work in tranquillity, and triple his creative output. He and his wife talked of expanding their facilities so as to be able to invite other artists to share the same benefits. In 1906 a fund was started in honour of MacDowell 'the first internationally known American composer', and contributions came from many prominent men of his day: Grover Cleveland, Andrew Carnegie, Victor Herbert, J.P. Morgan, and others. But in 1908 at the age of 46 Edward MacDowell died of syphilis (or, as the 1954 *Hallmark Hall of Fame* television documentary portrayed it, a very bad headache). The continuation of the project was left to Marian; with her tremendous energy, she brought it to fruition shortly afterwards. Many of her early guests became well known in later years and the reputation of the Colony spread; but it was plagued by the financial problems of capricious private funding. Each winter Marian would tour America, playing Edward's music and lecturing on his life and work, and on the Colony – the place where composers, poets, painters, sculptors, playwrights, and novelists work in seclusion and the congenial environment her husband enjoyed. She died in 1956 at the age of 98 with the future of the Colony finally secure.

Today the MacDowell Colony has about 500 acres of beautiful wooded land in the foothills of southern New Hampshire. Scattered through the woods are 30 artists' studios; in the centre are the residence buildings and Bond Hall, the communal meeting-place. Each studio is equipped for a particular discipline: composers have grand pianos (mostly Steinways); painters have large floor spaces and northern light; printmakers and photographers have dark-rooms and equipment for intaglio, lithography, and serigraphy; and, in addition, each studio is furnished with a large, overstuffed chair in front of a fireplace with plenty of wood, a large writing-table, bed, toilet facilities, running water and central heating. On the walls are 'tombstones', the wooden plaques signed by artists who have used the studio over the past half-century. No studio is within sight of another, and all have wonderful views. Each one has a unique design: Alexander studio, for example, is built like a medieval castle; Watson looks like a Greek temple; and Adams could be something out of *Hansel und Gretel*.

When an artist arrives he is given a studio and a room in one of the residence houses. This room is smaller than the studio, but is also furnished with a writing-table and bed, and has a bathroom. The residence houses are near Bond Hall, the studios are between 10 and 25 minutes' walk away. The Colony Fellow can live either in his room in the residence house, or in his studio; both are available for his exclusive use. All Fellows take breakfast and dinner together in Bond Hall. Lunch is delivered to the studio in a picnic basket so that the artist will not be disturbed during the day. When I was there the evening meal was the highlight of the day. It was served by candlelight in front of the fireplace. After dinner there was always a ping-pong match and 'Cowboy Pool' – a pool game

so complicated that no one could write down the rules. Often after dinner one of the Fellows gave a presentation of his work. This usually took place in the library, a wonderful stone building with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, an excellent Steinway grand piano, heavy, stuffed chairs on a large Persian rug, and a fireplace at one end of the room.

There are 20 artists working at the Colony during the winter (since only 20 studios are 'winterized'), 25 artists in the autumn and spring, and 31 in the summer months. The residencies last between one and three months, but the average stay is about six weeks. In the 1980-81 season there were 199 Fellows: 100 men and 99 women. Most were from North America, but there were a few from other parts of the world. Some of the more famous artists who have worked at MacDowell in the past are Aaron Copland who wrote *Appalachian Spring* there in 1944, the playwright Thornton Wilder who based *Our Town* on Peterborough, Stephen Vincent Benet whose *John Brown's Body* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1929, Leonard Bernstein, Virgil Thomson, Alec Waugh, James Baldwin, and Milton Avery.

The budget for running the MacDowell Colony is about £250,000 per year. Almost all of this is from private sources. (The NEA was contributing 16% before the recent government cuts.) The staff consists of the director (Chris Barnes), two secretaries, a cook and manager, a book-keeper, a housekeeper, four maintenance men, and a part-time staff of ten. In New York City there are a full-time fund raiser and two secretaries, who spend all year raising money for the Colony. Working at the Colony is essentially free to any artist who is accepted,<sup>2</sup> but Fellows are asked to make a donation if they can. The actual cost of maintaining each Fellow is £26 per day. A donation of £5 per day is suggested, but the average Fellow contributes about £3 per day.

My residency at the MacDowell Colony in March and April 1981 was one of the most productive times of my life. The conditions are frighteningly ideal. There is almost a sense of panic that under such ideal conditions perhaps one will not be able to produce, and that does happen: one composer could not stand the silence and left after only a week; one of the writers was there for six weeks and did not keep a word he had written. It is not everyone's Utopia, but for the vast majority of artists it is a uniquely profitable experience.

On returning to Britain after such an experience one naturally asks why something like MacDowell can't be done here. It certainly can. In many respects Britain is in a much better financial position than the US to sponsor something like this, and there are numerous stately homes belonging to the National Trust that would serve such a purpose magnificently. The United States now has some 20 artists' colonies, not all as grand as MacDowell but all serving the artist in a similar way. Britain should establish at least one.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> *American Music Center Newsletter*, vol. 23, no. 2 (Spring 1981), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> For further information and application forms write to: Admissions Secretary, 680 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021, USA.

#### SONORITIES: NORTHERN IRELAND'S FESTIVAL OF 20TH-CENTURY MUSIC QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, BELFAST, APRIL 24–27, 1981

##### HILARY BRACEFIELD

20th-century music festivals abound these days, but there's a lot to be said for an attractively packaged, short, concentrated dose of new music, which makes people feel rather adventurous and curious to attend. Last Easter saw the first attempt at such a festival in Belfast. Billed as Sonorities: Northern Ireland's Festival of 20th-Century Music, this four-day venture was devised by a small committee chaired by George Newson, The Queen's University composer-in-residence, and funded jointly by the university's music department and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.



Out-of-the-way contemporary music is given an airing only rarely in Northern Ireland – in occasional concerts at Queen's University and the Polytechnic and in the annual Belfast Festival; the odd item crops up elsewhere, but mostly it's shamefully neglected. There is a lot to be done in presenting even major 20th-century works, so a four-day festival is but a drop in the ocean. But the Sonorities Festival was an important first step. It showed that interesting programmes, reputable artists, and the continuity of a weekend event can attract an audience for 20th-century music. It provided an important showcase for a number of composers to present new works. And most important it gave a shock to our somewhat over-insular attitude to music making by the engagement of visiting performers whose attitude to and meticulous preparation and performance of the new music they offered taught us a salutary lesson. The work of Lontano (directed by Odaline de la Martinez), Linda Hirst, and Barry Guy and Paul Rutherford was of great importance, both in concert and in the master-classes given by Linda Hirst and Barry Guy.

Readers have probably forgotten the great snowstorms of last Easter, but they trapped me in Scotland and prevented me from hearing the opening concert of the festival by the Ulster Orchestra conducted by John Carewe; I was not the only person who failed to get there, and the audience was reduced calamitously for what on paper looked an attractive programme including works by Ravel, Stravinsky, and Webern. (In future, though, if the Ulster Orchestra is to be used, the concert will probably have to be incorporated into its subscription series.) I was particularly sorry to miss the premiere of George Newson's *Concertante*, commissioned by the Ulster Orchestra and the major work of his three-year residency at Queen's. People who were at the concert have praised it to me, and I hope that the orchestra will not allow it to disappear from their repertoire.

One fault of the festival, I thought, was the programming of too many completely new works in such a short space of time. (In addition to the Newson, there were six other premieres in three days.) It was certainly a drawback to the concert by George Newson's Belfast Music Assembly, whose attempt to play three premieres as well as Varèse's *Octandre* in one concert was doomed to disaster and obviously suffered from too little rehearsal for such an ambitious programme, not to speak of its demands on the audience.

Eibhlís Farrell's *Quadralogue* for cor anglais, clarinet, bassoon, and trumpet, a festival commission, was a closely-written, composerly work, using some interesting lyrical material punctuated by more chordal textures, and concerned very much to explore the sounds of its four protagonists. It suffered, however, from a blandness of both pitch and rhythm and too slow a working-up to its climax. Both composer and group would have benefited from consultations at the rehearsal stage, when the composer could have helped the performers to reach a fuller understanding of her intentions.

The work by Colin Griffith (b. 1952), *Paternoster* for wind septet, also appeared, from this performance, to need some tightening, but again it may not be fair to judge by the account it had. Its eleven sections have family significance for Griffith and there was some wry humour about it which pleased.

The Persian-American composer Hormoz Farhat has been a visiting fellow at Queen's University of Belfast. His *Partita* for wind quintet, written for the Belfast Music Assembly, displayed in its five movements an assured modified twelve-note technique, with a melodious use of rows and strong movement to cadences. A pleasant piece in lighter vein, it served only as an introduction to Farhat's music, and it seems a pity that more of his work has not been played while he has been in the United Kingdom (though the main reason for his sojourn was his ethnomusicological knowledge).

The three other premieres of the festival were all conducted by Adrian Thomas and performed by Lontano in their two concerts. Two of the new works were for voice (Linda Hirst) and chamber ensemble.

David Byers (b. 1947), in his *Moon Shadows*, a setting of nine poems by the 19th-century Belfast poet Joseph Campbell, was placed at something of a disadvantage by the juxtaposing of his atmospheric music against Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, given in the same programme; an appreciation of his work was further handicapped by the decision not to perform four of the settings. Byers has been inspired by the naive poetry of Campbell to some delightful effects and an interesting variety in his accompaniments. It was unfortunate that the more vocally exciting songs were not heard, for the

cycle sounded more sombre than the poems themselves suggested and the vocal part appeared over-declamatory.

*Narcissus* by Philip Hammond (b. 1951), a BBC Radio 3 commission, was a powerful and effective setting of three poems by George Baker. The instruments were thought of less individually and were more supportive of the voice than in the Byers. The poems were in any case more closely allied to one another and their intensity was well captured by the composer and by the performers.

The final premiere was of the work, for Lontano, that won the Young Composers' Competition associated with the festival, *Aurora Borealis* by Piers Hellawell (b. 1956). Hellawell was not trapped by the title of his work into mere picturesque writing, for his short three-movement work had a pleasing momentum. Densely written, it was not concerned to allow instruments much individual say, although all made their presences felt. Hellawell has recently been appointed composer-in-residence at Queen's University in succession to George Newson.

The intention of the festival was to juxtapose these seven premieres against music by established composers. The only other theme was the presentation of a number of works by Berio – the trombone, voice, and flute *Sequenze*, and *Gesti* for recorder, all of which, of course, give a very good idea of his experiments with instrumental technique. Lontano's performance of *Pierrot Lunaire* impressed for the rapport of the group, who played from memory, and for the singing of Linda Hirst, lyrical though losing something of the menace of the middle section – she has still to grow further into this work, I suspect. The other piece particularly liked by the audiences was George Crumb's *Eleven Echoes of Autumn* which was impressively played by Lontano and whose unfamiliar sound-world seemed to be enjoyed immediately. The fascinating jazz-improvisation work of Barry Guy and Paul Rutherford, however, was along too advanced a path for local aficionados and mystified them completely. Some introduction to less esoteric trends in the improvisation scene seems called for.

It was good to find, in a concert by students of Queen's University Music Department directed by George Newson, a performance of Webern's Concerto Op. 24 which captured much of its spirit. A sizable audience had gathered to see their performance of Cage's *Theatre Piece* in which two large groups of student instrumentalists took two of the parts and a teenage theatre group the other six. I could not say that the performance was of Cage's score, but I think Cage would have enjoyed the happening that evolved instead.

## 11TH ZAGREB MUSIC BIENNALE MAY 9-16, 1981

KEITH POTTER

Invited at rather short notice to Yugoslavia's principal festival of contemporary music, I set out with two related preconceptions; they stemmed largely, though by no means completely, from ignorance. In the event they turned out to be both true and false, though, I think, more false than true. The first was that the Zagreb Biennale is a kind of poor relation of the better-known Warsaw Autumn festival, reviewed fairly regularly in these pages over the past six years. The second was that Yugoslav contemporary music is mostly a set of watered-down, second-hand reactions to contemporary developments elsewhere; in particular to the various stopping places along the path to the New Music as already mapped out by the history books: the tonal-to-atonal-to-twelve-note-to-serial-to-aleatoric-and-back-to-tonal hitchhikers' guide to the millennium.

The second point will have to await a future article for a detailed consideration. For the moment I will risk the submission that contemporary Yugoslav music is of more interest to the foreigner than my preconception might lead him to suppose, and I produce two pieces of evidence as proof of this. Exhibit A, the Yugoslav content of this year's festival, will be examined in part here. Exhibit B, records of some 60



pieces by Yugoslavs, which I brought back from Zagreb and have listened to since my return, will have to await retrieval as mentioned above; the case comes up in a future issue of *Contact*.

As to my first preconception: well, a number of points of comparison can quickly be made. In several senses the Zagreb Biennale is Yugoslavia's answer to Poland's Warsaw Autumn. It consists of just over a week of new music, by no means all of it from the host country but certainly giving the foreigner as well as the native an opportunity to hear what appears to be a reasonably representative sample of the local product. This year's Biennale confined itself largely to mid-evening and late-night events each day, though some of the concerts that started at 7.30 were of what Zagreb calls the 'Non-Stop' variety and went on past midnight, and there was sometimes at least one other event going on somewhere else. In the absence of the 5 p.m. concerts that take place in Warsaw, the sheer bulk of music on offer was inevitably smaller in Yugoslavia than in Poland, though apparently there has been more in the past; besides, as visitors to Warsaw have found, the human mind can only stand so much.

Zagreb's festival began in 1961, five years after Warsaw's, and was undoubtedly to some extent modelled on its already quite illustrious predecessor. And since it is held every two years, this year's was only the eleventh festival (though incidentally the Biennale's 20th anniversary). Warsaw, annual since its second festival in 1958, has, quirkily, managed to celebrate both its 25th festival and its 25th anniversary this year.

Zagreb's Biennale does not, I think, have quite the international reputation of Warsaw's Autumn, though I can't really see why it doesn't, certainly why it shouldn't. They are both good festivals, valuable to the local population for whom they're primarily intended and to the international participants and listeners who go there. Both are hospitable and extremely friendly to the foreigner; and the Zagreb press office carries informal and idiosyncratic charm to new heights.

The Biennale, it was suggested to me while I was there, has been better in the past: there has been more music-theatre, more environmental work, and the first festivals were among the most exciting of all. Responsible for this impression is a mixture difficult for the outside newcomer to disentangle: a strong element of basic truth, the particular enthusiasm and feeling of innovation that must have surrounded the festivals of the 1960s, a certain amount of rose colouring in the spectacles through which the past is viewed, and, last but not least, the less radical, and therefore to some less exciting, state of new music generally in the last few years compared with the immediately preceding ones. But then the same observations have been made at Warsaw.

One aspect of both festivals' importance, which is often overlooked or at least misunderstood, is the precise function of each in the cultural matrix of its own country. We know that the cultural thaw made possible by the political thaw in the years immediately after Stalin's death in 1953 gave rise to the first Warsaw Autumn, allowing not only the composition of music in more 'advanced' styles but the opening up, the internationalising, of musical life that helped to make the Polish music of the last 25 years possible. And the present situation in Poland makes it more obvious than it has probably ever been since those first exciting years how important it must be for Polish composers and others involved with new music to have an annual international gathering acting as a shop window to the world for the latest Polish compositions and as a means of cultural interchange which can serve to emphasise independence from the Soviet Union and connections with the West.

The situation in Zagreb is both simpler and more complex. Simpler because, since Stalin expelled Yugoslavia from the Cominform and hence effectively from what we usually call the Eastern block in 1948, the country has been non-aligned, though it practises its own brand of Communism. This should have resulted in an independence from Soviet Socialist Realist thinking even sooner and even more extensive than in Poland. Why then didn't Zagreb's Biennale precede Warsaw's Autumn? What was going on musically in Yugoslavia between 1948 and 1961? These are undoubtedly more complex questions than they seem, and they require more complex answers than space allows here. Besides, I don't as yet have anything like complete answers.

I was, however, told a few things during my visit which may help to explain why the Biennale began when it did. That it began at all seems to have been owing to the work of one

man. Milko Kelemen (b. 1924) is a Croatian composer who now teaches in West Germany but travels quite freely and extensively in Eastern and Western Europe — as, indeed, do the better-known of the Poles. (He had, for example, just come back from Moscow's First International Festival of Contemporary Music, an event of peculiar significance which I hope we may be able to investigate in the future).

I don't know whether Kelemen's Theme with Variations in C sharp major of 1949, included on a record I brought back of solo piano music played by the young whizz-kid Yugoslav Ivo Pogorelić,<sup>1</sup> is typical, but if it is, then Kelemen's early music lies at the conservative end of the neo-classical line: less advanced than Stravinsky or even Hindemith. Its mixture of wry beauty and moments of quite indulgently Romantic pianism, its severe sense of form and balance, and its expert writing for the piano sometimes recall Shostakovich's 24 Preludes or 24 Preludes and Fugues (the latter composed after Kelemen's piece). Kelemen himself told me that the music of Debussy, for example, was generally regarded in Yugoslavia as suspiciously modern until into the 1950s: a situation much less likely in Poland at that time, though admittedly Szymanowski's version of the Debussy revolution did not exactly meet with instant approval earlier in the century. And while Hungary had the example of Bartók for radical as well as not so radical composers of the immediate post-war years to follow, nearly all Yugoslavia's music until the 1960s seems to have been a much more watery mixture of folkloristic and vaguely neo-classical tendencies.

Kelemen, who studied with, among others, Messiaen for a year in Paris (1954-55), did a great deal to put Yugoslavia in touch with the Western avantgarde and made it unafraid of regular contact with and influence from the music of Messiaen, Boulez, Stockhausen, and Cage; the Yugoslavs were also encouraged to keep a beady ear open for the emerging Polish colourist composers. A diplomat of something approaching genius, as well as a good composer, he was instrumental in founding the Zagreb Biennale. There had been nothing like it in Yugoslavia before and there was no money to start it. Undeterred, Kelemen paid visits as a private citizen to Moscow, Washington, and a good few points in between, cleverly playing off East and West so that each was encouraged to spend the maximum on the Biennale in order to impress upon the other its influence on and goodwill towards Yugoslavia.

Nowadays there are composers of all kinds in Yugoslavia, from the Socialist Realist composers who wrote appropriate music for the first anniversary of Tito's death, recently commemorated, to a group of minimalists from Belgrade who are heavily into Steve Reich and Philip Glass. But it seems that even so 'enlightened' a Communist government as the rotating collective Tito left behind him would look on Yugoslavia's avantgardists and experimentalists with much more suspicion than it does if the Socialist Realists were not there to act as a buffer, as the acceptable cultural face of Yugoslavia's Communism.

What most readers of *Contact* would, I imagine, regard as the 'real' new music of Yugoslavia survives, though hardly thrives, on state support. For a composer to be a Catholic and not a member of the Communist party is not dangerous, but it's not advisable either; 'real' new music's relationship with the state seems to be an uneasy one. The present function of the Zagreb Biennale is still to wave the flag for contemporary music in Yugoslavia, to say that new music of all kinds still happens there and that it's allowed to happen; it also tells the outside world of this and brings that outside world in. In its way the Zagreb Biennale is clearly still just as important to Yugoslavia as the Warsaw Autumn must be to Poland.

One other point must be made before I move on to discuss some of the music I heard at this year's Biennale. Yugoslavia is not a country in the sense in which most of us use the word; it is a collection of federal republics whose peoples are more divided than united by their racial, historical, and geographical backgrounds. Belgrade, ostensibly the capital of the whole country, lies in Serbia, the Orthodox state that covers a large part of the north and east of Yugoslavia and has, I'm told, a somewhat oriental feeling about it. Zagreb is the capital of Catholic Croatia, the western state that borders on Austria and Italy. Its architecture, its women's fashions, its culture are all very Westernised. Whether for that reason alone — or again for a whole complex of reasons too difficult to unravel on a single visit — the Yugoslav music we hear or hear of in Western Europe tends to be Croatian. Undoubtedly, too, the Zagreb Biennale has a good deal to do



with this, for no matter how much it may officially be the contemporary music festival of Yugoslavia in general, it turns out to be a contemporary music festival of Croatia in particular. Most of the music described below as Yugoslav is thus Croatian; I heard very little Serbian music and almost none from the smaller republics such as Slovenia in the north and Macedonia in the south. Whether such a policy is justified by the superior quality of Croatian music is something I am as yet in no position to judge. Perhaps Belgrade or Ljubljana should have its own festival too.

In this year's Biennale I heard neither Yugoslav Socialist Realism (unless the 'Folk' Symphony by Boris Ulrich (b. 1931), which was used for the Sarajevo Ballet's production on the opening night, falls into that category) nor any Yugoslav minimalism. But I did hear pieces by quite a wide range of composers working in between, as it were. Kelemen himself was represented by *Mageia* (1977), an orchestral composition inspired by a trip to Mexico. His use of what he called a 'prototype rhythm', a simple, repeated structure that alternated with another more complex and constantly varied one, gave some idea of how Kelemen has worked his way through the techniques of European avantgardism to achieve a personal style; he is currently in the process of reintegrating some more 'traditional' gestures into a manner which by no means throws out the techniques – both of note manipulation and of orchestration – acquired earlier. At the risk of forcing the Polish analogy too far, I would say that Kelemen has something of the technical fastidiousness of Lutosławski and the orchestral flair of Penderecki. As a composer he sounds not remotely like either (their mean age, by the way, is very close to his own) but his music is more individual than even the most well-meant emphasis on his craft might suggest.

There is, I think, no composer who is the equivalent of Lutosławski or Penderecki in terms of the history of Yugoslav music, no matter how tempting it might be to the outsider to look for one. Their equivalents in terms of foreign recognition are hard to find too, for although Kelemen has an international reputation, it has not, for instance, yet travelled as far as Britain. Of the older Yugoslav composers who, somewhat like Lutosławski, changed styles in reaction to the work of the European or American post-war avantgarde, only Natko Devčić and Branimir Sakač were represented in this year's Biennale.

Formerly a folkloristic neo-classicist, Devčić (b. 1914) responded to the new music he heard at the early Biennali by exploring new sounds, including electronics; he spent 1967–68 in the USA, including six months at Columbia University where he made a tape piece called *Columbia '68*. The Zagreb Dance Ensemble did some beautiful things to a rather fine tape piece by Devčić called *Entre nous*; more than merely functional, it nevertheless may not suggest the real scope of his work.

Sakač (b. 1918) seems to have struggled earlier than Devčić towards a more 'advanced' style; as a writer on contemporary music as well as a composer he helped prepare the ground for the first Biennale. He was also the first Croatian electronic composer: his *Three Synthetic Poems* date from as early as 1959, thus seeming to contradict earlier impressions I have given about the state of Yugoslav music in the fifties. I missed Sakač's 'Matrix' Symphony at the festival, owing to my enthusiasm for Sylvano Bussotti's *Le Racine* (see below), but fortunately it's on record and I have heard it since my return. Composed in 1972, the Symphony seems already almost to have attained the status of a Yugoslav classic. A masterpiece it isn't, I think, but it's fairly easy to appreciate why it has attracted attention. Three quite short movements – the work lasts only 14 minutes – present a range of ideas with a depth unusual for a shortish piece with such pretensions. Admirers of Stockhausen, particularly British admirers, will be amused by the titles of the first and third movements – 'Ylem' and 'Gentle Fire' – names that reflect the 'primary archetypes' that apparently form the bases for the work's 'matrices'. But it is the second movement, entitled 'Caspar Casparius', that is the least ambiguous, since it contains a spoken text compiled from Peter Handke (the play *Kaspar*), Aimé Césaire, and Antonio Machado on the subject of the power of perseverance over 'the destruction of personality'. Most of the work is 'modern' in idiom, though the C minor thematic substance of the Finale could fit into a piece by Elgar were it not surrounded by a transparent but quite complex web of very undiatonic figurations which offset it.

Besides Kelemen, the only Yugoslav composer born in the 1920s to have made any kind of international reputation that I know of is Ivo Malec (b. 1925), who has lived in Paris for many years and was unrepresented in this year's festival. Of the many composers born in the early 1930s whose music was played, I single out two for contrast as well as unusual talent. (Vinko Globokar (b. 1934), perhaps the best-known Yugoslav composer in the West and also for many years a French resident, was unrepresented this year, though he has received considerable attention from the Biennale in the past.)<sup>2</sup>

Stanko Horvat (b. 1930) was President of the festival's Artistic Council this year. His previous works seem to have ranged from serial to colourist to neo-tonal, but his piano piece *Accordes*, played by Pavica Gvozdić, approached a minimalist stance in its use of chordal repetition 'within extremely simplified formal outlines'. Horvat typifies the composer of around 50 who has lived with the changing fashions of the European avantgarde for many years and drawn much from them, but who now seems to be moving away – whether from a neo-romantically motivated sense of despair or what I am not entirely sure. If his position sounds too close for comfort to the 'second-hand reaction' syndrome I outlined at the beginning of this review, then I can at least point to Horvat's very real achievement within these confines. My impression, also, is that it is more correct to regard him as an open-minded individualist. The best Yugoslav composers of this type have perhaps mined more than one stylistic seam in the course of a lifetime, but have remained truer to themselves because of it. They face very much the same issues as British composers, with a tolerance of their particular difficulties that in itself compels admiration.

Composers like Horvat develop in public, baring their stylistically inconsistent souls for our general edification. The result is not always a pretty sight, but the type is familiar to British listeners and no doubt to others as well. The opposite approach seems represented in Yugoslavia by Vladan Radovanović. Born in 1932 in Belgrade, he was one of the few non-Croatian composers represented at the 1981 Biennale. Radovanović runs the electronic music studio at Radio Belgrade and has been composing electronic music for the past 20 years. His output seems small, for he is the type of composer, often found in the electronic studio, whose preoccupations range far outside the domain of music as most musicians understand the word. He is a frequent writer on topics that fall into such interdisciplinary areas as semiology and synaesthesia studies.

The precise intentions of his non-electronic pieces entitled *Transmodalisms 1* and *2* (1979) eluded me, partly because of the language barrier, though their execution was actually extremely simple. Radovanović's analysis of an art object in terms of twelve 'modalities' here took the form of a single note as sung or played (by a single voice or instrument), as seen (in musical notation or other descriptions hung in sequence on the wall and revealed one by one; or in a silent glimpse of the clarinet that played it) or as spoken about (by the composer himself), etc. The effect was bizarre, but I should like to know more about what motivates a composer seemingly so far removed, not only from the musical fashion parade but from the so-called 'higher level' operations that most composers perform as a matter of course before considering calling what they produce a 'composition' at all.

Among the composers born in the 1940s and 1950s whose music was played in the Biennale this year, I should again like to mention two. Marko Ruždjak (b. 1946) is clearly considered by some of his compatriots as the most interesting 'younger' Yugoslav composer around. In the move from 'promising' to 'established', however, his output seems to have declined, and his present preoccupations are not entirely clear to me. His development, like that of all the Yugoslav composers of around his age, has taken place in the immediate aftermath of the avantgardism of the early Biennali. A revealing passage in the sleeve notes to the record of Ruždjak's music on Jugoton points out that 'His beginnings as a composer came at a relatively happy time when it had become clear that the "coup" of the avantgarde in 1961 actually had extinguished fewer household fires than was surmised at first glance.'<sup>3</sup> The reassertion of certain pre-avantgarde values, and in particular the return to a folksong heritage that is especially rich in this part of the world (as Bartók, for example, had earlier discovered) are features of the work of many of the most interesting young Yugoslav composers.

The way in which Ruždjak uses traditional gestures in



music that speaks in a straightforward language which the listener steeped in the Classical-Romantic heritage will easily understand, and which nevertheless usually manages to say something remarkably fresh and new, calls to mind nothing so much as the work of the British composer Nigel Osborne; it isn't at all surprising to discover that these two are enthusiastic about each other's music, especially as Osborne is already known for his Slavic sympathies. Ružđjak's *Swing Low* for percussion quartet (1981) was, however, rather disappointing. A composer who, on the evidence of other works I have heard, has a pronounced gift for melodic variation, often based on folk sources, would, I should have thought, have made much more of the 'sweet chariot' connection half given away in the work's title. But the piece obstinately, drily, refused to take off.

Much more immediately appealing was *Contro a bas* for double bass and tape delay by Frano Parać (b. 1948), which Barry Guy played in the foyer of the Vatroslav Lisinski main concert hall as part of the first Non-Stop programme. The cramped conditions were, frankly, insulting to any musician (and this was not the only instance of English performers being forced into inappropriately confined spaces during the week), but this work did not seem affected; indeed technically I understand it was the best performance yet. Tape delay can be boringly, stultifyingly predictable, but Parać's piece overcomes the limitations of the technique quite brilliantly. Not only are the technical manipulations highly sophisticated and therefore more interesting than usual, but the musical material itself is extremely distinguished, cleverly designed for consistently interesting results on delay and with a splendidly folk-like tune in the middle. I am keen to hear more music by this gifted and original young Croatian.

The main theme of the 1981 Zagreb Biennale was ostensibly 'the contemporary musical theatre in the broadest sense of the term', to quote Horvat's introduction in the festival brochure. (This jumbo-sized offering, by the way, was far too large to carry around; and it was additionally distinguished, if that's the word, by a pair of jumbo-sized ears on the covers. Just as well, perhaps, that it was too large to put under the arm, for to flaunt it in the street was inviting comment!) This 'musical theatre' theme has not yet emerged in my discussion of the Biennale since the Yugoslavs themselves made relatively little contribution to it. Ulrich's 'Folk' Symphony-turned-ballet, already mentioned, did fall within the theme's orbit, as would have Darijan Božić's opera *Lizistrata* 75 had it not sadly been cancelled.

Nor did the theme exactly swamp the festival in general, and several of the theatrical events that did take place lowered standards a good deal. Ivo Cramér's Riksteatern ballet company from Stockholm presented a fairly excruciating evening of kitsch and water; some of both choreography and music was by Cramér himself, who is Yugoslav but now lives in Sweden. The Gelsenkirchen opera company from West Germany presented a one-act chamber opera entitled *Jakob Lenz* by Wolfgang Rihm, the darling of the young German neo-romantic school. It was well performed but the music laboured expressionistically until most of the credibility was gone; the hero's resemblance to Frankenstein was extremely disconcerting.

Also well performed, and quite stunningly produced, was an operatic offering from East Germany, Udo Zimmermann's *Der Schuhu und die fliegende Prinzessin*, performed by the Staatsoper, Dresden, where the composer is 'collaborator - dramaturge'. The Schuhu is a kind of Peter Pan, a bird-man who never grows up, and this long three-acter is a kind of upmarket Socialist Realist pantomime ('the new Socialist Realism', I heard it called). We have become used to the near genius that East German opera producers sometimes manage through the work of several of them in Britain. One of them, Harry Kupfer, was the producer here, and he made a masterly job of *Der Schuhu*, backed by brilliant designs by Peter Sykora. No opportunity was lost for a theatrical effect and in the first act alone there were several that approached the level of *coups de théâtre*. I saw only the first act since I wanted to get to one of the Canadian programmes elsewhere. If the music of *Der Schuhu* had been half as good as the production I would have been sorely tempted to stay. But Kupfer's brilliance was wasted on Zimmermann's music, which sometimes approached the pleasant by way of pastiche of various sorts but was mostly swept from the attention by what was happening on the stage; it simply didn't have the strength to resist, still less to add anything meaningful.

But the real eye-opener, and ear-opener, of the week's theatrical offerings was Sylvano Bussotti's chamber opera in three acts entitled *Le Racine* (1979-80). A full-length opera though put on as a late-night event, it was performed by the Piccola Scala, Milan. As is the composer's custom, he himself was responsible for scenery, costumes and production; as is also often the composer's custom, all were lavishly camp. Information on the piece was hard to come by on the opera's first night. This being also the first night of the festival, it was doubly difficult to concentrate on what was going on and try to work it out only a few hours after a long journey followed by two hours of ballet. No one even seemed sure how long the work would be or how many acts there were: many left after the first and by the last only a handful of us remained, some more asleep than awake. In the circumstances the only thing to do was to go to the other performance the following night, which I did.

Even after two visits, though, there was still a lot I didn't understand. A note published in the press bulletin that arrived too late to go in the programme book explains that the composer 'imagined a member of the Comédie française who retires from the stage where she used to play Phèdre and is now the owner of a cafe which a certain Monsieur Jean Racine visits regularly'. (There are apparently three public places in Paris called 'Le Racine': a cinema, a hotel and a cafe.) 'In a room covered with mirrors (obligatory), he happily dresses up in the costumes of all the characters from *Phèdre*, looking at himself in the mirrors and while doing so meeting all the different "Hyppolites" of his imagination. Faithfully following the original story, the whole thing, quite naturally, comes to a tragic end: in a closed courtyard behind the cafe the characters die as they do in Racine's play, or rather just as was foreseen in ancient times by the Greeks.' The opera has a basis in *Oedipus Rex* and other Greek myths as well as in Racine.

The action progresses, I later gathered, through a single night, moving from drag to 'normality': hence the many changes of lurid and sumptuous costumes. Phèdre herself (Halina Niekarz) dominates the action, each act centring on one of her confessions. The French libretto is drawn in its entirety from Racine's *Phèdre*: apparently about a fifth of the original play is used. Words can apply in the opera to different situations from those in which they occurred in Racine, and they are anyway very difficult to follow. Also central is the character of one Monsieur Fred. He is the bar pianist in the cafe and is on stage for much of the time. There being no orchestra, Monsieur Fred (played by Yvar Mikhashoff) is responsible for accompanying much of the singing and also performs quite extended solos.

The music itself is as lurid and sumptuous as the costumes and decor. The final sentence in the press bulletin note made the somewhat suspect-sounding observation that the use of Racine's dodecametric verse for the libretto 'has facilitated the triumphant return of dodecaphonic technique'. I have it on good authority that *Le Racine* is, indeed, extremely serial, though just how 'totally' I have no idea. What I do know is that it is very powerful stuff. Some of the harmonies absolutely reek of French perfume and Italian operatic lyricism is very much to the fore. But much is also strong and sinewy: imagine Boulez in drag and wearing Chanel No. 5.

I write, I might say, as one who has only rarely been sympathetic to Bussotti's music in the past. I don't think all my ways in this regard were foolish (anyone who heard the much vaunted *Rara Requiem* in the QEII last December will surely know what I mean). But I must admit I was glad to hear that there will be a half-hour piano piece based on material from *Le Racine* entitled *Piano Bar*; and even more that *Le Racine* is itself just a 'study' for an opera, to be called *Phèdre*, for the large house at La Scala. Will someone at least bring the piano piece to Britain? Mikhashoff is not only the obvious choice, he's also a very good pianist (as those who heard his 'Concord' Sonata at the ICA in January will remember).

Perversion of a very different sort was on offer one evening in the concert hall, in the form of two pieces by Ladislav Kupkovič (b. 1936), a Czech composer now teaching in West Germany. I was prepared for it since a friend had only a month before played me a tape of Kupkovič's recent music, including the *Requiem for my Suicide* for two pianos, which was performed at Zagreb. Declaring that 'Atonality, to which I dedicated all my energies, has been exhausted.', Kupkovič has seemingly retreated into the past with a vengeance. Almost everything in the *Requiem* could have been written in the 19th century; almost everything in the Sonata for violin and piano



in F major could have been written in the 18th. Deviation from stylistic norms of the past takes the form only of an unexpected and uncharacteristic change of key or something like that. Strong men known to me personally as long-serving champions of the avantgarde left the hall in disgust. Whether it was not avantgarde enough or *too* avantgarde for their tastes I never found out. Whether Kupkovič's recent music is a ridiculous anachronism or not, I must confess I loved it.

The English presence in Zagreb was augmented after Barry Guy's performances by visits from two groups of musicians playing works by Trevor Wishart and Michael Nyman that have already been seen in this country; both contributed to the music-theatre theme. Wishart's familiar recent works went down very well with the Yugoslav audience.<sup>4</sup> Nyman brought his music for *The Masterwork* (1979) complete with video of the Riverside Studios' live performance staged by Bruce McLean and Paul Richards. Both groups were shoe-horned into a tiny theatre in the local student centre; Wishart survived but Nyman's amplified band sounded a little peculiar in such a confined space and hardly anyone could see the video. None of the Yugoslav composers was treated like that. Hardly cricket, eh?

Other performances that qualified in the music-theatre category were those of a group from Toronto calling itself Soundstage Canada; they gave several programmes which were considerably enlivened by their use of dance, slides, the musicians' theatrical antics, and some splendid playing; Michael Pepa, a Yugoslav now living in Canada, was the group's director; his own *Mockingbird* combined dancers, slides, and music in a gratifyingly coherent way, and the music was strong enough to come through in its own right. Victor Davies's *The Musical Circus* (1981) had the long-suffering musicians dressed as circus animals with the soprano Mary Morrison as ring-master; it was better than it sounds.

And, finally, a confession. It does seem perverse if one lives in London to attend one's first rock concert in Zagreb; but that's what I did. I'm afraid I thought the three punk bands, including our own Gang of Four, with which the Biennale concluded, were pretty awful. I must be more old-fashioned than I thought. Serbo-Croat is the only non-oriental language I know of that has a word for music that is not patently some version of our own (usually it's 'musica' or some such). In Yugoslavia the most common word for music is 'glazba'. I'm really not sure whether punk is 'glazba' at all. Sorry about that.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Jugoton LSY 66035. This also contains Prokofiev's Sixth Sonata and Debussy's *Bruyères*.

<sup>2</sup> For example in the 1977 Biennale, which is the only one we have previously reviewed: see Odaline de la Martinez' discussion of it in *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), p. 38.

<sup>3</sup> Jugoton LSY 66080. The five works by Ružđjak on this record are *Trois chansons de geste* for baritone, orchestra, and tape; *Madrigal* for female choir; *Yours Sincerely* for solo clarinet; *Musette* for woodwind trio; and *Classical Garden* for string quartet (no dates given).

<sup>4</sup> For a review of the works performed on this occasion see Brigitte Schiffer's 'New Music Diary', *Contact 22* (Summer 1981), p. 47.

## LA ROCHELLE FESTIVAL

JUNE 25 – JULY 11, 1981

GRAHAM HAYTER

On arrival at this year's La Rochelle Festival I was immediately struck by the warmth of the welcome and the professionalism of the directorship, both artistic and administrative. I have come to expect this of such events in France, having attended the Metz Festival in 1980, and it compares favourably with the less pleasant atmosphere of far less enterprising festivals in Britain. The differences between La Rochelle and Metz, however, are marked. The latter, a four- to five-day event only, concentrates on large-scale orchestral and music-theatre works and is consequently rather formal. At La Rochelle there was greater opportunity to meet others and exchange ideas; informality is actively encouraged.

The festival has been subject to severe financial restrictions, but the directors are determined not to allow this to compromise the planned four-year period of development (1980-83), and continue to maintain its fundamental characteristics. Local institutions have intensified their financial support; the directors lay great stress upon implanting the festival in the existing cultural context of the town and the surrounding region – involving the regional public as much as possible. Though developing on these lines, local interest in the music programme was, sadly, minimal and audiences were small. Such an idyllic setting seemed at times incompatible with the 'grittiness' of much of the music performed and one became aware of the inevitable distance between the intensity of the musical activity and the stillness of the surroundings.

The music programme this year was divided into two sections – June 25–29 and July 3–6; it included a number of first performances, provided opportunities for young or unknown composers, and enabled one to assimilate specific musical developments of the past decade or more through the 'retrospectives' of composers such as Brian Ferneyhough and Franco Donatoni. The result was a stimulating mix of concerts (from solo works to larger ensemble pieces), public lectures, composer forums, exhibitions, etc.

Six of Brian Ferneyhough's major works had been scheduled in this second of a three-year cycle, but of these, three were cancelled: *Sonatas* for string quartet (1967) and the Second String Quartet (1980) (Irvine Arditti of the Arditti String Quartet was seriously ill), and *Time and Motion Study III* for 16 solo voices, percussion, and electronics (1974) (there was some disagreement with the Schola Cantorum Stuttgart over the preparation of another piece). All his works were therefore given in one concert, beginning with *Epigrams* for piano (1966), performed by Massimiliano Damerini, who then gave a quite remarkable first performance of Ferneyhough's new work for piano entitled *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (1981).

This title refers to a poetic form, the *emblemata*, cultivated during the first half of the 16th century, most notably by the Italian poet Alciati. This later developed into a tripartite structure composed of a title, an image (verbally described or, in later versions, actually depicted), and a short text in verse or prose which reveals the inner connection between the two preceding components. When translated into musical terms, the degree to which the third part, as a sovereign statement, can imply the initial germinal idea (image) is something Ferneyhough questions: 'The idea of "explication" of musical states via recourse to other musical states is, for its part, probably also an idealistic vision here depicted rather than achieved.' The conflict lies between relatively stable material and more fragmentary surface gesture, the latter constantly trying to assert itself, the former holding the reins. This generates extreme tension, culminating in a forceful declaration of control over events – a very ugly seven-note chord marked *fffff*, *tutta la forza*, at the end of the opening section. The central 'Icon' section is by contrast static; here there is greater concentration on the expressive content of individual pitches and rhythms, the shorter, *staccato* notes having a somewhat subversive, derisory character, a polyphony of them leading into a reconstruction of the main elements ('Epigram'). Ferneyhough set out to write an essentially pianistic work whose gestures are entirely derived from a 19th-century vocabulary; he succeeded to such a degree that one is reminded of certain well-known works of the 19th-century piano repertory, though it would be misleading to suggest any direct connection.

In the absence of the Arditti Quartet, the Second String Quartet was rather unsatisfactorily introduced by means of a





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*Freeman Etudes I-XVI* (1978/79)  
for solo violin  
P66813a

*Thirty Pieces for Five Orchestras* (1981)  
P66879. Performing material on hire  
First performance: 22 November 1981, Metz Festival

## TADEUSZ BAIRD

*Concerto Lugubre* (1976)  
for viola and orchestra  
P8381. Performing material on hire

*Variations in Rondo Form* (1978)  
for string quartet  
P8444. Performing material on hire

## MAURICIO KAGEL

*Variété* (1976/77)  
Concert-Spectacle for  
artists and musicians  
P8407. Performing material on hire

*Klangwölfe* (1978/79)  
for violin and piano  
P8443.

## BRIAN FERNEYHOUGH

*Second String Quartet* (1980)  
P7229. Performing material on hire

*Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (1981)  
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score in preparation

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tape of a BBC studio recording made earlier this year.

With *Time and Motion Studies I* for bass clarinet (1977) and *II* for solo cello and electronics (1976) we returned to the period of Ferneyhough's most intense exploration of performance difficulty and the performer – notation relationship. Bass clarinetist Harry Sparnaay gave once again a breathtaking performance of *Time and Motion Study I*, a work which, because of its innate theatricality, benefits from being seen, as does *Time and Motion Study II*. Of this 'image of man in the grip of a technological nightmare' we were privileged to hear an extraordinarily accurate realisation by Pierre Strauch with the assistance of IRCAM's technical expertise. These performances provided a fitting climax (in view of the considerable interest in Ferneyhough) to the first half of the music programme. Any devotee of his music should obtain a copy of *Cahier musique*, no. 2, a festival publication, which contains Ferneyhough's own introduction to the *Time and Motion Studies*, his own analysis of the Second String Quartet, and a detailed analysis of *Time and Motion Study II* by Claudy Malherbe.<sup>2</sup> Malherbe also gave a public lecture – demonstration on this work with the assistance of Pierre Strauch. The other composers featured in *Cahier musique*, no. 2 are Pascal Dusapin (b. 1955), Gérard Geay (b. 1945), Emmanuel Nunes (b. 1941), and Franco Donatoni.

The Ensemble InterContemporain under the direction of Sylvain Cambreling gave two concerts; works by Hugues Dufourt (b. 1943), Anton Ruppert (b. 1936), and Nunes in the first, Busoni, Tod Machover (b. 1953), and György Kurtág (b. 1926) in the second. The memorable performances were of Dufourt's *Mura della città di Dite* for 17 instruments (1969) (my first encounter with his music) and Kurtág's *Messages de feu demoiselle R. V. Troussova* for soprano and chamber orchestra (1976-80). Dufourt's work has well stood the test of time. It sets in opposition wavering blocks of material in which the instruments are used in groups, and more static murmurings in which the instruments are treated individually. The aggressive, arresting opening subsides into a smoother texture within which there is much intricate exploration of the cross-fertilisation of instrumental timbres. Kurtág's *Messages* is a setting of 21 poems by the Russian poet Rimma Dalos – a sort of 'Frauenliebe und -leben'. What I was unable to understand from the French translations was more directly conveyed by the music, through its vitality and a sensuousness verging on eroticism.

Less impressive was Machover's *Soft Morning, City!*, a setting of the final monologue from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* for soprano, double bass, and tape. In this performance the soloists were Jane Manning and Frederic Stochl. The rich polyphonic text (music enough perhaps) is here paralleled by the assemblage of vast and complex sounds, through which the double bassist's contribution was rarely perceptible.

The music of Emmanuel Nunes was also new to me. *Nachtmusik I* (1977-78), perhaps not the best introduction, is one of a family of works entitled *The Creation*, which to date also includes *Einspielungen I, II, and III* for solo violin, cello, and viola respectively, all of which were performed at La Rochelle. *Nachtmusik I* is scored for an unusual combination of viola, cello, cor anglais, trombone, bass clarinet, tape, and three synthesizers. We heard a second version without the synthesizers. The whole work is based on only eight notes which strictly determine all intervals, rhythmic patterns, tempo relationships, etc.; the result is a monotonous texture of obstinately sustained or repeated pitches and a variety only of dynamics and articulation.

Objective judgment of Nunes's music is inhibited by one's reaction to his extreme physical disability. He was at each performance very well received. Particularly moving was his brave delivery of a public lecture on the three *Einspielungen*. These interrelated solo works are, like *Nachtmusik*, obsessive in their pitch centrality, but a strong rhythmic drive and a sense of growth make them wholly more absorbing. Nunes's treatment of the instruments is traditional, except that the complexity of the rhythmic development produces some impossible counterpoint.

There were also several concerts featuring smaller solo works, in which Italian composers were well represented: Niccolò Castiglioni (b. 1932), Salvatore Sciarrino (b. 1947), Camillo Togni (b. 1922), Aldo Clementi, Bruno Canino (b. 1936), Sylvano Bussotti (b. 1931), and Donatoni. The Italian connection was strengthened by the participation of Roberto Fabbriciani (flute), Damerini, and the Bruno Canino – Antonio Ballista piano duo.

Canino and Ballista gave the opening concert, which

began with the juxtaposition of Donatoni's *Black and White No. 2* (1968) and Canino's *Black and White No. 2 di Donatoni* (1972). Donatoni's work comprises a succession of 120 ten-finger exercises for any number of performers, beginning on any page of the score, and of indefinite duration. The execution must be spontaneous and in no way predetermined. Only the fingerings, the colours of the keys (black or white), and two extremes of dynamic (*fff* or *ppp*) are indicated. Canino believes that the delegation of such responsibility to the performer can often result in a subtle sado-masochistic relationship with the composer. The performer, tired of the constraints made by the concept and the material, may take vengeance and begin to impose his own particular interpretation. Such an infringement of the dogma of absolute spontaneity led Canino in his work (version) to add a structure, in the form of themes, development, and reprise, that produced quite different music!

The new work in this programme was Castiglioni's *Hommage à Edouard Grieg* (1981), an example of the current neo-romantic trend in contemporary Italian music. Grieg, 'one of the most formidable poets of all piano literature' and 'master of fantasy' is here evoked by means of light, ethereal sonorities, mainly in the upper register of the piano. The music is precisely matched by the sentimentality of the composer's programme note: 'Ce monde rêveur et doux, délicat et fait de fine poussière . . .'. The concluding 'retour à la nature' is a quotation from a popular song, the spring song of a cuckoo. The concert ended with a brisk, businesslike performance of the piano-duet version of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

The least enjoyable of the concerts I heard were of music for solo flute and solo bass clarinet, despite the virtuosity and interpretative geniuses of Roberto Fabbriciani and Harry Sparnaay. Sadly I was unable to attend the second phase of the music programme, featuring music by Michel Redolfi and Kund Viktor (b. 1924) (performed by the États Généraux du Bruit and including a 'Concert subaquatique!'), Claude Foray, Dusapin, Geay, and Donatoni, not to mention the dance, theatre, and cinema programmes, but my short visit was well rewarded. I would highly recommend this festival to laymen and professionals alike.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Walsh reporting on the La Rochelle Festival in the *Observer Review* (July 5, 1981), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Cahier musique*, no. 2, is available from Festival de La Rochelle, 4 rue de la Paix, 75002 Paris, price 15 francs.

#### IANNIS XENAKIS, MISTS

##### BRIGITTE SCHIFFER

*Mists*, the new work for piano solo by Iannis Xenakis, was given its first performance by Roger Woodward, its dedicatee, at the Queen's Hall in Edinburgh on April 16, 1981.

Whatever calculations may have gone into its making, nothing will dispel the impression of traditional polyphonic writing in what (for lack of a better word) I will call its 'exposition', and the listener's approach cannot help but be conditioned by that impression. The writing immediately brings to mind Bach's Goldberg Variations but the pianistic challenge is new, since what was played on the two keyboards of a harpsichord in Bach's time has here to be fitted on to the single keyboard of a piano, without sacrificing the wide sweep of the lines. Xenakis has succeeded in this compositional feat, but those waves of notes, so tellingly drawn on paper, are daunting when it comes to translating the visual image into the musical reality.

From the technical point of view there is also the problem of the almost unperformable complexity arising from the rigorously strict imitation of pitches, linked with a diversified treatment of time. The initial statement of the subject – theme – row is followed at a short distance by the canonic entry of another voice, slightly out of phase with the first one; by systematically carrying this process further, Xenakis builds up a four-voice canon in which 16 notes in one voice are set against 14 in another, 15 in a third, and 17 in a fourth. These are all (to borrow Xenakis's description) 'arborescences', that



is 'bushes of melodic lines, that undergo various rotations in the pitch – time space'. Since they all stem from the same root their form is identical, but the rotations result in these phase dislocations that are so puzzling to the ear and so demanding on the hand.

*Mists* is neatly divided into three sections; the second one starts at bar 40 of the piece and exactly matches the first for length but displays a completely different character, much more Xenakis-like in its visual aspect. The idea underlying this section is 'the exploitation of non-octavating pitch-sieves (scales) and their cyclic transpositions . . . Their sonic exploitations are made either melodically or by means of stochastic distribution . . . in order to produce soundclouds of defined density.' Through a detailed system of pedalling and dynamics these sound-agglomerations of varying density, which are separated by long silences, take, in turn, the aspects of haze, mists, and clouds, creating a unique sound-world, magic and disturbing, in which certain gestures, such as quickly repeated single notes, function in a way like signposts.

In the third section the two ideas, the linear and the pointillist, combine in what, traditionally speaking, one would call a recapitulation. It takes the form of a close competition between the two principles, which, though both familiar from other works by Xenakis, are shaped here in a new and exciting way. After a final flourishing of arborescences, very close and very lucidly exposed since the pedal has been withdrawn, the piece, gathering passion and urgency, draws to what Woodward calls its 'tragic end'.

In the course of the concert, given by The New Music Group of Scotland and conducted by Edward Harper, the two performances of the new work were separated by György Ligeti's lovable Ten Pieces for wind quintet (1968) and Edgard Varèse's truly prophetic *Octandre* (1923). The memorable evening ended with an impressive performance of *Eonta* (1963-4, for two trumpets, three trombones, and piano) by Xenakis, a work of formidable stature that will never cease to surprise, subdue, and cast its spell. For the Scottish audience it was a first performance, and they responded with spontaneous applause.

## NEW MUSIC DIARY

Regular readers will notice the absence of the New Music Diary from this issue. It has been a feature of *Contact* since 1976 and has, we hope, drawn both British and foreign readers' attention to a wide variety of new music mostly, but by no means solely, through reviews of performances in London.

The omission of the Diary from this issue has been sadly occasioned by the serious illness of our diarist Brigitte Schiffer. She is now, we are glad to report, well on the way to restored health, but her absence from both the concert scene and her typewriter for several months has caused a hiatus that has determined us to think once more about how we can best use our available resources to comment on the gratifyingly large amount of new music that comes our way.

We have therefore decided to discontinue the Diary format and instigate a range of review articles in its place. The nature of these will be determined by the material to be covered, which may well be a mixture including new scores, records or even books in addition to concert performances. The range of contributors will be wide – and will, we hope, include Brigitte Schiffer; we shall encourage an equally wide range of 'reviewing' approaches which we hope will offer something that by their very nature the dailies, weeklies and even monthlies cannot.

The beginnings of this approach – which is anyway a simple extension of what *Contact* has been attempting for several years – may be seen in the present issue but will not be fully apparent until *Contact* 24. We apologise to promoters, composers, performers and readers who hoped to find reviews of events not already covered by the Diary up to *Contact* 22, and we trust that the opportunities offered by the new format will speedily make up for the loss.

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## CORRECTION

In Karen Jensen's article on Joan la Barbara in *Contact* 22, Example 2 on p. 22 is printed incorrectly. The circular diagram from the score of *Circular Song* should be rotated anticlockwise through 90° so that the capital I's are clearly readable as such at the bottom of the example. We apologise to the composer and the author.

Readers may like to know that a performance of *Circular Song* is included on a record of pieces by Joan la Barbara sung by the composer. Entitled *Voice is the Original Instrument*, it also includes *Voice Piece: One-Note Internal Resonance Investigation* and *Vocal Extensions*. The recording is on Wizard Records RVW 2266, which can be obtained either direct from Wizard Records at 127 Greene Street, New York NY 10012 or from JCOA/New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York 10012.



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## MATERIAL RECEIVED

Material received was last listed in *Contact 21* (periodicals, books, and scores) and *Contact 18* (records); the present list includes all material received that has not been reviewed. (Ed.)

## PERIODICALS

Composer: Magazine of the British Music Information Centre (Spring 1981)

Dansk musik tidsskrift, vol. 55, nos. 5-9 (1981)

Key Notes: Musical Life in the Netherlands, no. 12 (1980/2)

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Outlook: the Creative Music Quarterly, vol. i, no. 2 (September-December 1979)

Parachute: art contemporain, no. 20 (Autumn 1980)

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Tempo, nos. 133-141 (April 1980 - August 1981)

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Michael Kennedy, Britten, The Master Musicians Series (London: J. M. Dent, 1981)

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Vivian Perlis, Two Men for Modern Music: E. Robert Schmitz and Herman Langinger, I.S.A.M. Monographs, 9 (New York: I.S.A.M., 1978)

Bruce Saylor, The Writings of Henry Cowell: a Descriptive Bibliography, I.S.A.M. Monographs, 7 (New York: I.S.A.M., 1977)

Sherman Van Solkema, ed., The New Worlds of Edgard Varèse: a Symposium, I.S.A.M. Monographs, 11 (New York: I.S.A.M., 1979)

John S. Weissman, Goffredo Petrassi (Milan: Suvini Zerboni, rev. edn 1980)

## SCORES

Hans Abrahamsen, Preludes 1-10: String Quartet No. 1 (Hansen)

Walden: Woodwind Quintet No. 2 (Hansen)

Jurriaan Andriessen, Pastorale d'été, for flute (Peters)

Christopher Brown, Magnificat (Chester)

Trio, for flute, bassoon, and piano (Chester)

John Cage, Circus on \_\_\_\_\_: means for translating a book into a performance without actors (1979) (Peters)

A Flower, for voice and closed piano (1950) (Peters)

Forever and Sunsmell, for voice and percussion duo (Peters)

Hymns and Variations, for 12 amplified voices (1979) (Peters)

Our Spring will come: Music for the Dance by Pearl Primus, for prepared piano (1943), ed. Richard Bunger (Peters)

Two Pieces, for piano (ca. 1935), revised 1974 (Peters)

Two Pieces, for piano (1946) (Peters)

Sonata, for two voices (Peters)

The Unavailable Memory of: Music for the Dance (1944), ed. Richard Bunger (Peters)

Peter Maxwell Davies, The Lighthouse (libretto) (Chester)

Brian Ferneyhough, Funérailles, for seven strings and harp (Peters)

Second String Quartet (Peters)

Ingolf Gabold, Two Texts in Music, for mezzo-soprano and piano (Hansen)

Vinko Globokar, Concerto Grosso, for 5 soloists, 23 players, and chorus (Henry Litloff's Verlag)

Daniel Goode, Circular Thoughts, for clarinet (Theodore Presser)

Mogens Winkel Holm Aiolos: Symphony in One Movement (Hansen)

Vagn Holmboe, String Quartet No. 15 Op. 135 (Hansen)

Mauricio Kagel, Variété: Concert-Spectacle für Artisten und Musiker (study score) (Henry Litloff's Verlag)

Ingvar Lidholm, Kontaktion, for orchestra (Hansen)

Bent Lorentzen, Colori, for piano (Hansen)

Cruor, for organ (Hansen)

Granite, for cello (Hansen)

Quartz, for violin (Hansen)

Witold Lutoslawski, Novelette, for orchestra (Chester)

Elizabeth Maconchy, The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo (Chester)

Tilo Medek, Albulblatt mit Randbemerkungen, for guitar (Hansen)

Eine Stele für Bernd Alois Zimmermann, for cello (Hansen)

Schattenspiele, for cello (Hansen)

Miroslav Miletić, Cantus-toccata, for organ (Udruženje Kompozitora Hrvatske)

Hvarska litanija, for organ (no publisher)

Proporcije, for 6 instruments (Savez Muzičkih Društava i Organizacija Hrvatske)

String Quartet No. 4 (Društvo Hrvatskih Skladatelja)

Tri kajkavske na tekst Gorana Kovačića, for baritone and piano (Društvo Hrvatskih Skladatelja)

Marc Neikrug, Kaleidoscope (Hansen)

Arne Nordheim, Greening, for orchestra (Hansen)

Nachruf, for strings (Hansen)

Spur, for accordion and orchestra (Hansen)

Per Nørgård, Anatomic Safari, for accordion (Hansen)

Singe die Gärten, Mein Herz, Die du nicht kennst, eight-part choir and piano (Hansen)

Spell (1973), for clarinet, cello, and piano (players' score) (Hansen)

Wie ein Kind, for mixed choir (Hansen)

Ib Nørholm, Day's Nightmare: Symphony No. 3 Op. 57 (Hansen)

Marcello Panin, Dechiffage: Twelve Partimenti, for one or more performers (Peters)

Anthony Payne, Paraphrases and Cadenzas, for clarinet, viola, and piano (Chester)

Roger Reynolds, Less than Two, for two pianists, two percussionists, and tape (Peters)

Sven-David Sandström, Agnus Dei, for unaccompanied choir (Nordiska Musikförlaget)

A Cradle Song: The Tyger, for unaccompanied choir (Hansen)

Dmitri Shostakovich, Preludes from Op. 34, for violin and piano (Musikverlag Hans Sikorski)

Alexander Skryabin, Piano Concerto Op. 20 (arr. for two pianos) (Peters)

Soundwork (folder of compositions and other publications by LeRoy Backus, Huntley Beyer, Ron Dewar and James Knapp, Jay Hamilton-Nunnally, Eric Jensen, David Mahler, Delores Edwards Martin, Thomas Peterson, Sue Ann Roberts, K. Michael White, Michael Winkler, Adam Woogl) (and/or)

Helmut Walcha, Choralvorspiele für Orgel IV (Henry Litloff's Verlag)

Michael J. Winkler, Geometrisons: a Visual Exploration of Tonal Organization (and/or)

Christian Wolff, Duett II, for horn and piano (Peters)

Charles Wuorinen, Six Pieces, for violin and piano (Peters)

## RECORDS

Acezantez Ensemble (Jugoton LSY 66020)

William Albright, Piano Music: Five Chromatic Dances (1976); Pianoagogo (1966) (CRI SD 449)

Alterations, Up Your Sleeve (IQuartz 006)

AMM III, It had been an ordinary enough day in Pueblo, Colorado (JAO 60031 2360 031)

Louis Andriessen, De staat; Il principe; Il Duce; Hoketus (Composers' Voice CV 7702)

Mattheus Passie (BVHAAS 009)

Louis Andriessen and others, Reconstructie: een moraliteit (STEIM Recording Opus 001)

Robert Ashley, Automatic Writing (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 1002)

Perfect Lives (Private Parts), an Opera in Seven Episodes: The Bar (Episode Four) (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 4904)

Private Parts, with Settings for Piano and Orchestra by 'Blue' Gene Tyranny: The Park, The Backyard (Lovely Music LML 1001)

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sergiu Comissiona - Leslie Bassett, Echoes from an Invisible World; Henri Lazarof, Concerto for Orchestra (CRI SD 429)

David Behrman, On the other Ocean; Figure in a Clearing (Lovely Music LML 1041)

Jacques Bekaert, Summer Music 1970 (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 1071)

Bruno Bjelinski, Concertino; Candomblé; Symphony No. 5 (Jugoton LSY 66022)



'Blue' Gene Tyranny, *Just for the Record* – Paul DeMarinis, *Great Masters of Melody*; John Bischoff, *Rendezvous* (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 1062)  
 'Blue' Gene Tyranny, *Out of the Blue* (Lovely Music LML 1061)  
 Ton Bruynèl, *Electronic Music with the Utrecht Symphony Orchestra* (Composers' Voice CV 8003)  
 John Cage, *Chorals*; *Cheap Imitation* – Paul Zukofsky, violin (CP2 Recordings CP2/7)  
 Milo Cipra, *Pet preludija*; *Musica sine nomine*; *Aspa lathos*; String Quartet No. 5 (Jugoton LSY 61273)  
*Detoni plays Detoni* (Jugoton LSY 63095)  
 Dubravko Detoni, *Grafika VI*; *Gimnastika za grupu*; *De musica* (Jugoton LS 66005)  
 Natko Devčić, *Igra riječi II*; *Panta rei*; *Sonata*; *Prolog*; *Non nova* (Jugoton LSY 61202)  
 The Dial-A-Poem Poets, *Big Ego* (Giorno Poetry Systems GPS 012–013)  
 Loek Dikker and Waterland Ensemble, *Domesticated Doomsday Machine* (Waterland WM 002)  
 —, *Tan – Tango* – (Waterland WM 001)  
 —, *The Waterloo Big Band is Hot!* Volume I, Volume II (Waterland WM 008, WM 009)  
 Rudolf Escher, *Symphony No. 2*; *Sonata*, for clarinet; *Nostalgies*, for tenor and orchestra; *Sinfonia per dieci strumenti* (Composers' Voice CV 7704)  
 Bogdan Gagić, *Sonatas Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4*, for piano; *L'été de nuit*; *Piano Concerto No. 1*; *Symphony* (Jugoton LSY 66046)  
 Jon Gibson, *Two Solo Pieces* (Chatham Square Records LP 24)  
 Peter Gordon, *Star Jaws* (Lovely Music LML 1031)  
 Jon Hassell, *Vernal Equinox* (Lovely Music LML 1021)  
 Stanko Horvat, *Sonnant*; *Rondo*; *Taches*; *Hymnus*; *Perpetuum mobile* (Jugoton LSY 66015)  
 ICP 10-TET, *Tetterettet* (ICP 020)  
 Leroy Jenkins, *Solo Concert* (India Navigation IN 1028)  
 Tom Johnson, *An Hour for Piano* – Frederic Rzewski, piano (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 1081)  
 Jo Kondo, *Standing*; *Sight Rhythmics for Piano*; *Under the Umbrella* (CP2 Recordings CP2/11)  
 Igor Kuljerić, *Figurazioni con tromba*; *Solo-solisti*; *Balade Petrice Kerempuha*; *Impulsi II*; *Omaggio a Lukačić* (Jugoton LSY 61250)  
 Joan La Barbara, *Reluctant Gypsy* (Wizard Records RVW 2279)  
 —, *Tape Songs* (Chiaroscuro Records CR 196)  
 —, *Voice is the Original Instrument* (Wizard Records RVW 2266)  
 George Lewis, *Chicago Slow Dance* (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 1101)  
 —, *The George Lewis Solo Trombone Record* (Sackville 3012)  
*Live Recordings* – Gijs Hendriks – Stan Tracey Quartet with Bert Van Erk and Michael Baird (Waterland WM 011)  
 Theo Loevendie, *Orlando* – Theo Loevendie Quartet (Waterland WM 003)

—, *Six Turkish Folkpoems*; *Strides*; *Incantations*; *Timbo* (Composers' Voice CV 7802)  
 Alvin Lucier, *Music on a Long Thin Wire* (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 1011-12)  
 Keshavan Maslak, *Maslak One Thousand: Keshavan Maslak Trio in Holland* (Waterland WM 004)  
*Mayhem in our Streets* – Keshavan Maslak, Loek Dikker, Mark Miller, Sunny Murray (Waterland WM 005)  
 Miroslav Miletić, *Folklorne kasacije*; *Diptih*; *Ples*; *Tišina*; *Fontana del tritone*; *Međimurska suita*; *Četiri aforizma*; *Monolog*; *Koncertantna fantazija* (Jugoton LSY 61178)  
 Meredith Monk, *Key: Invisible Theatre* (Lovely Music LML 1051)  
 David Moss, *Terrain* (Cornpride 007)  
 Gordon Mumma, *The Dresden Interleaf 13 February 1945* (1965); *Music from the Venezia Space Theatre* (1964); *Megaton for W.M. Burroughs* (1963) (Lovely Music/Vital Records VR 1091)  
 Netherlands Saxophone Quartet – Wim Petersma, Saxophone Quartet; Peter-Jan Wagemans, Saxophone Quartet; Tristan Keuris, Saxophone Quartet; Klaas de Vries, *Two Chorales*; Robert Heppener, *Canzona*; Joep Straesser, *Intersections V* (Composers' Voice CV 8002)  
 Evan Parker, George Lewis, *From Saxophone and Trombone* (Incus 35)  
 Ivo Pogorelić, piano – Prokofiev, *Piano Sonata No. 6 Op. 82*; Debussy, *Prelude No. 5*; Milko Kelemen, *Tema a varijacijama* (Jugoton LSY 66035)  
 Pro Arte, Zagreb – Miroslav Miletić, String Quartet No. 2 'Dalmatinski'; Dvan Mane Jarnović, String Quartet 'Koncertantni'; Adalbert Marković, String Quartet No. 2 (Jugoton LSY 61057)  
 Ruben Radica, *Dramatska epigrama*; *Per se II*; *Concerto abbreviato*; *19 & 10 interferencije* (Jugoton LSY 66014)  
 Marko Ruždjak, *Trois chansons de geste*; *Madrigal*; *Yours sincerely*; *Musette*; *Klasični vrt* (Jugoton LSY 66080)  
 Branimir Sakač, *Matrix-Symphony*; *Ad litteram*; *Barasou*; *Synthana* (Jugoton LSY 61134)  
 Stjepan Šulek, *Sixth Symphony* (Jugoton LSY 66016)  
 Boris Ulrich, *Sinfonia* – *Vespro*; *Eho*; *Koral*; *Scena* (Jugoton LSY 61217)  
 Glen Velez, Charlie Morrow, *Spontaneous Music* (Other Media, no number)  
 Paul Zukofsky, violin, Ursula Oppens, piano – Morton Feldman, *Spring of Chosroes*; Artur Schnabel, *Sonata*, for violin and piano (CP2 Recordings CP2/8)  
 Paul Zukofsky, violin – Giacinto Scelsi, *Anahit*; Iannis Xenakis, *Mikka*; *Mikka 'S'*; Philip Glass, *Strung Out* (CP2 Recordings CP2/6)  
 1814-1914: *100 Jahre Mechanische Musikautomaten, Sammlung Ivan Gerersdorfer* Zagreb (J & Co 1009)

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

**Hilary Bracefield** Senior Lecturer in Music at the Ulster Polytechnic and director of the Mushroom Group which performs experimental and improvisatory music.

**Michael Hall** Founder of the Northern Sinfonia Orchestra and formerly producer of BBC Invitation Concerts, he is now a lecturer at the University of Sussex and is the author of a forthcoming book on Birtwistle.

**Graham Hayter** Manager of the Editorial and Promotion Departments, Peters Edition Ltd., London.

**Mark Lockett** Pianist and composer. At present completing a thesis on contemporary jazz improvisation at The City University. Member of the London Composers' Collective.

**Raymond McGill** Works at the BBC where he is involved with non-BBC orchestras employed in BBC work. He has travelled in Poland and has a particular interest in contemporary Polish music, on which he has given several talks.

**Stephen Montague** Freelance composer and pianist based in London. He has toured extensively in Europe and the Americas and has recently had works performed at the Edinburgh Festival, the Warsaw Autumn, the International Festival of Electronic, Video and Computer Arts, Brussels, and the Tokyo Festival.

**David Osmond-Smith** Lecturer in music at the University of Sussex. He has just completed a monograph on Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* and is currently writing a general introduction to Berio's work.

**Glyn Perrin** Postgraduate student at the University of York studying with Richard Orton for a DPhil in composition.

**Keith Potter** Composer, performer, and writer on contemporary music. Lecturer in Music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. At present completing a thesis on aspects of 20th-century musical notation. Member of the Executive Committee of The New Macnaghten Concerts.

**David Roberts** Lecturer in music at the University of Sussex.

**Brigitte Schiffer** Music critic and writer specialising in contemporary music. Contributor to many journals in both English and German.

**Adrian Thomas** Conductor and composer. Lecturer in music at the Queen's University of Belfast.

We apologise to Roger Heaton for a mistake that appeared in his entry in 'Contributors to this Issue' in *Contact* 22; he is pursuing his research at King's College, University of London, and not at Goldsmiths' College as stated.



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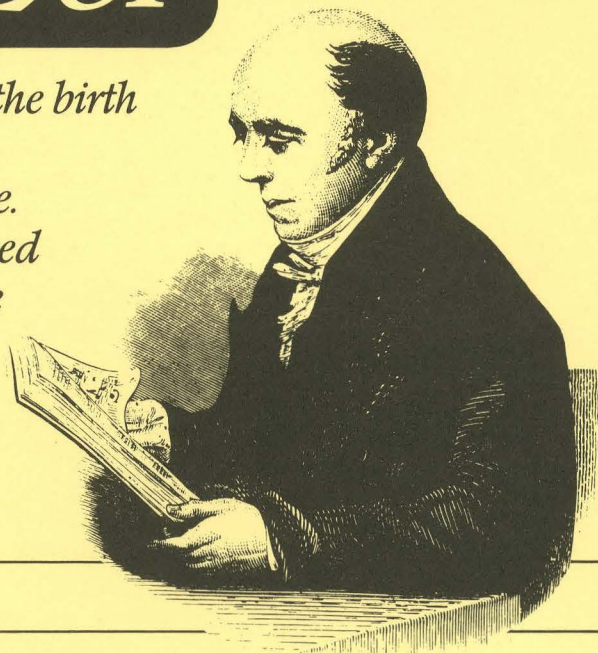
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## SELECTED U.K. PREMIÈRES 1981

|                               |                                  |   |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Richard Rodney Bennett</b> | Horn Sonata                      | <b>Barry Tuckwell, Bennett/London*</b>                      |
|                               | Isadora                          | Royal Ballet/London   |
| <b>David Blake</b>            | Capriccio                        | Lumina Ensemble/York & London                               |
|                               | Clarinet Quintet                 | Alan Hacker, Fitzwilliam Quartet/Bradford                   |
| <b>Martin Dalby</b>           | Octet                            | Nash Ensemble/London  |
| <b>Barry Guy</b>              | Insect Music (ballet)            | Eltham Children's Dance Theatre/Greenwich                   |
| <b>John Joubert</b>           | The Turning Wheel                | Jane Manning, John McCabe/Birmingham                        |
| <b>Nicola LeFanu</b>          | Like a wave of the sea           | University Choir & players/Nottingham                       |
|                               | Trio                             | Lontano Ensemble/London                                     |
| <b>Kenneth Leighton</b>       | Columba                          | RSAM Opera/Glasgow  |
|                               | Fantasy on an American Hymn-tune | Wallfisch Trio/London*                                      |
|                               | Mass Op. 81                      | St Leonard's Mayfield School/London                         |
|                               | Missa de Gloria                  | John Birch/London   |
|                               | Organ Concerto                   | John Birch, TCM Chamber Orch./London*                       |
| <b>John McCabe</b>            | Desert II: Horizon               | Philip Jones Brass/Ripon                                    |
| <b>Anthony Milner</b>         | Canticle of Joy                  | Gillian Weir/St Albans                                      |
| <b>Thea Musgrave</b>          | A Christmas Carol (17 Dec.)      | Royal Opera Company/London                                  |
|                               | RPO Commission (2 Nov.)          | Royal Philharmonic Orch./London                             |
| <b>Stephen Oliver</b>         | A String of Beads                | Milton Keynes Chorale & Orch./Newport Pagnell               |
|                               | Nicholas Nickleby Suite          | RSC London Brass Ensemble/London                            |
|                               | Ricercare 2                      | Whispering Wind Ensemble/Canterbury                         |
|                               | Sonata for Guitar                | Carlos Bonell/Oxford & London                               |
|                               | Trinity Mass                     | Cathedral Choir/Norwich                                     |
| <b>Aulis Sallinen</b>         | Song around a Song               | Three Choirs Jun. Festival Chorus/Worcester                 |
|                               | Dies Irae                        | Three Choirs Festival Chorus & BBC Northern Orch./Worcester |
| <b>Giles Swayne</b>           | Pentecost Music                  | BBC Northern SO/Manchester                                  |
| <b>Michael Blake Watkins</b>  | Quintet                          | Capricorn Ensemble/Cardiff                                  |
|                               | Violin Concerto                  | Yfrah Neaman, London Mozart Players/London*                 |
| <b>Judith Weir</b>            | Ballad (17 Sept.)                | Scottish National Orch./Glasgow                             |
|                               | Isti Mirant - Stella             | Scottish Chamber Orch./Orkney                               |
|                               | Thread!                          | New Music Group of Scotland/Stirling                        |

\* London première

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