Contact

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

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Christopher Fox

Walter Zimmermann's Local Experiments

In the summer of 1982 I went to Darmstadt for the Ferienkurse. One of a number of reasons for going was a curiosity about the German composer Walter Zimmermann, who had been invited to give a concert and to lead an *atelier* (effectively to be a composer-in-residence) during the course. My curiosity was founded on a little knowledge of his music[1] and an awareness that his Beginner Studio is the only regular venue in Cologne for improvised and experimental musics; I had also heard of, but not been able to find, *Desert Plants*, his book on American experimental music—all evidence to suggest that Zimmermann might be an example of that rare breed, the German experimental composer. What follows is intended as further evidence to support that suggestion.

Experimental music can perhaps be defined as occupying the territory between Cage's *4'33"* and *0'0"*; at one extreme music open to every sound, at the other music of extraordinary restriction. Common to both is an aesthetic that requires that sounds be heard as themselves rather than as elements within composerly constructs, an aesthetic that requires composers to distance themselves from the sounds that constitute their music.

Of course, if *4'33"* and *0'00"* represent the ultimate experimental music, all other experimental music must involve more composerly elaboration; the 'emptiness' (to use Michael Nyman's word)[2] of *4'33"* is at some remove from, for example, Gavin Bryars's version of Tom Phillips's *Irma* or Philip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*. Nevertheless, all share the same characteristically experimental distancing of creative will from created sound—as the convoluted compositional games described on the sleeve of *Irma*[3] and the remorseless processes of *Einstein* ensure—and all reject the possibility of music as a direct and immediate outpouring of the creative will, striven for by composers such as Wolfgang Rihm. If Rihm's strivings are perhaps typically European (and particularly German) then the experimental attitudes of Cage, Bryars and Glass may be seen as typically American, and Zimmermann's *Desert Plants* can be seen as the account of a journey of clarification, undertaken to establish the degree of interconnection between the freedom and openness of the experimental tradition and the freedom and openness (in constitutional spirit at least) of America, and eventually to determine whether, and how, an authentically European experimental music might be produced.

Zimmermann went to the United States in 1975 to talk to American composers, 'at least to find out what they have in common besides being different',[4] and it was to John Cage he went first. Cage gave him names and addresses of subjects for further interviews and so *Desert Plants* became, like Nyman's *Experimental Music*, a book about 'Cage and beyond'. In order of appearance the composers involved are Morton Feldman, Christian Wolff, John Cage, Philip Corner, Jim Burton, Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Robert Ashley, Alvin Lucier, Joan la Barbara, Pauline Oliveros, David Rosenboom, Richard Teitelbaum, Larry Austin, James Tenney, Conlon Nancarrow, La Monte Young, Charlemagne Palestine, Charles Morrow, Garrett List, Frederic Rzewski, John McGuire, and Harry Partch. Partch (who died in 1974 and to whose memory *Desert Plants* is dedicated) is represented by Ben Johnston's reminiscences of him, and (since Zimmermann's trip was financed on a shoestring) Nancarrow, who lives in Mexico, is discussed by J. B. Floyd, while La Monte Young—who wanted money before he would talk—is represented by a photograph of his front door and a transcription of the brief telephone conversation in which he refused to be interviewed. Similarly, the record of a phone-call to James Tenney in California has to stand in place of a projected but abandoned trip to the West Coast.

For anyone interested in American experimental music, *Desert Plants* is invaluable, a uniquely extensive survey. Of course, the Cage interview covers some ground familiar to readers of *For the Birds*,[5] the Lucier interview cannot offer as comprehensive an account of his work as *Chambers*,[6] Lucier's book of scores and interviews with Douglas Simon, and Steve Reich had time only to jot down the same remarks as constitute the sleeve note of *Music for 18 Musicians*.[7] But much of the rest of the book provides information found nowhere else, not even in *Source* or *Soundings*.[8] Zimmermann also includes a number of the composers' pieces—Wolff's song *After a Few Years*, three pages from Cage's *Songbooks*, Oliveros's 'ceremonial opera' *Crow Two*, and others—as well as copies of sketches by Ives, Nancarrow, and Feldman.

Zimmermann's approach is refreshingly unjournalistic (though there may be some who would describe it as irritatingly unprofessional); his usual technique as an interviewer is to begin by seeking information about specific pieces or performances of which he already knows something, before going on to discuss the ideas that lie behind the music. But because he is interested not only in drawing information out of the composers but also in testing his own ideas about music, many of the interviews develop a momentum that draws them away from the classic model for the in-depth interview. In place of patient, carefully researched questions provoking the composers to give an account of themselves, one finds real conversations full of digressions, misunderstandings, sometimes even disagreement. Nor have the interviews been tidied up for publication: Zimmermann says:

> I know that the realistic transcriptions of the dialogues, leaving in the background sounds, the 'ums', 'ahs', 'likes', the coughs and the laughters sometimes makes it harder to understand what we want to say. However it strengthens the attention to far more interesting things, namely allowing the reader to follow the flow of CONSCIOUSNESS. [pp.x-xi]

Robert Ashley says to Zimmermann:

> You know, if you record conversations with fifty composers in the United States about their ideas, and if you get into each conversation deeply, then at the end you'll have one about me and one about Steve and one about Jim Burton, and so on. But you'll have fifty about yourself! [p.127]

Coming to *Desert Plants* with a knowledge of what followed—*Lokale Musik*—the truth of this prediction is borne out and one of the underlying motivations for the book becomes even more apparent. As Zimmer-

mann writes in his introduction: 'Meeting all these people made a lot clear in myself, about my view of American musicians and what I'm going to do as a musician returning to Europe.' [p.xi] In particular, the book shows him exploring ideas about the artist's relationship to his culture and the extent to which it is possible or useful for an artist to rid himself of his cultural inheritance or to adopt ideas from another culture. Early on Philip Corner says:

> You can accept being one hundred per cent where you are, but that single place where you are both geographically and in your consciousness, radiates out ... you're only an American as a kind of localized aspect of a consciousness which ... doesn't see America or Germany ... as a boundary, but like a place from which you look out. [p.91]

Later, Garrett List expresses a similar idea when he says:

> The only way for a one-world kind of feeling is where each nationality, each locality, has its own strength. So that people don't have a need to take from another place, but can have what they need where they are. Then exchange really does become possible. [p.297]

But it is in Zimmermann's conversation with Frederic Rzewski, the one that comes nearest to developing a real dialectic, that these ideas are most extensively discussed. Rzewski is anxious to expose the political dimension of a thesis that has previously been debated in abstract, almost metaphysical terms, while Zimmermann is equally anxious to distinguish between his developing idea of the use of a cultural locality as the basis for new music and a politically motivated rejection of the internationalism of the post-war avant garde. Their arguments sometimes seem to be at cross-purposes, the conversation sidestepping from a discussion of jazz as an international music to a spirited defence by Rzewski of Cardew's *Thälmann Variations*; but the exchange once more confirms Zimmermann's belief in 'the necessity now to again find out more about the music where you yourself geographically come from', as he puts it to Rzewski, to which comes the reply: 'I think if you did something like that you would probably find that this music that you're talking about is not dead at all ... I bet you'd find it if you went to Bavaria, especially to small villages and so on.' [pp.315-16]

If then, as Ashley suggests, *Desert Plants* can be read as 23 conversations about Zimmermann, it is clear that by the end of his American journey he had formed a definite idea of how to proceed as a composer. It is also clear that *Lokale Musik,* written between 1977 and 1981, is a realisation of that idea. Indeed Rzewski's remark comes remarkably close to prophecy, since it was to his native Franconia, a district of Bavaria, that Zimmermann turned for material for *Lokale Musik*, exploring existing collections of the region's traditional dance music. But in one respect Rzewski's prediction was wrong—the music had died, at least insofar as it no longer survived as a developing art form in the community in which it originated; the tunes and their arrangements had either become fixed and formalised or had been commercialised in what Zimmermann describes as 'awful beerhouse music'.[9]

Lokale Musik could not, then, be an essay in the adoption and extension of a living musical language, but had rather to attempt to create a new music out of fossilised material. Zimmermann's approach is quite close to that of composers such as Vaughan Williams, Holst, and Grainger, but whereas they simply imposed on their borrowed material the current European art music practice, Zimmermann sees his treatment of Franconian dance tunes in *Lokale Musik* as an attempt 'to open up this locality to the whole planet'.

Lokale Musik consists of well over two hours of music, arranged in four cycles, with a prologue and epilogue;[10] the instrumentation ranges from single instruments to large orchestra. In its entirety the work runs thus (the outline given here is Zimmermann's own for use with English-speaking audiences):

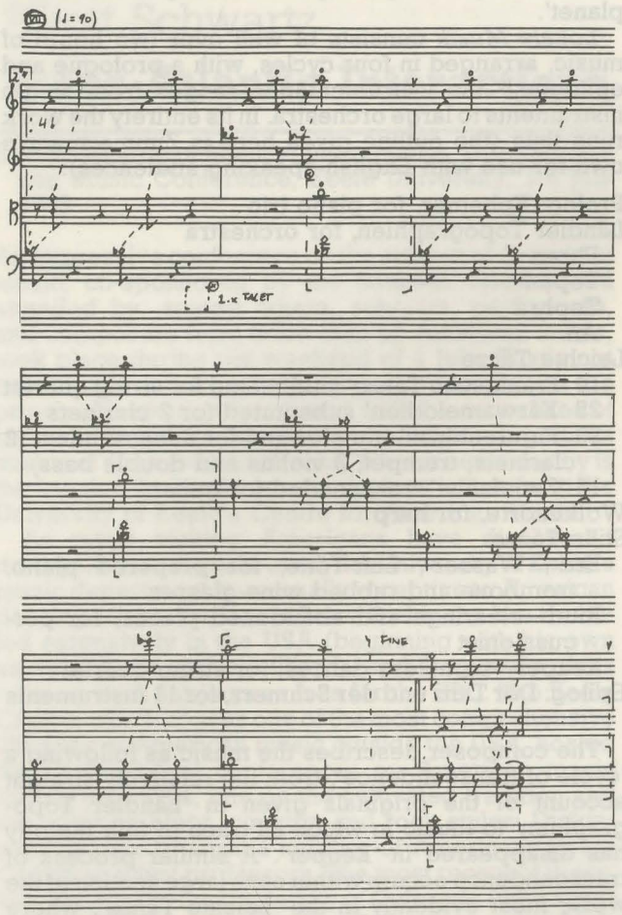
Prolog: Ephemer, for piano trio
Ländler Topographien, for orchestra
  Phran
  Topan
  Tophra
  An
Leichte Tänze
  10 'Fränkische Tänze' sublimated for string quartet
  25 'Kärwamelodien' substituted for 2 clarinets
  20 'Figurentänze' transformed for 6 instruments (2 clarinets, trumpet, 2 violins and double bass)
  15 'Zwiefache' transcended for guitar
Wolkenorte, for harp
Stille Tänze
  Erd-, Wasser-, Luft-Töne, for prepared piano, trombone and rubbed wine-glasses
  Riuti—clearings and abandoned places, for percussionist
  Keuper—nameless dances, for string quartet
Epilog: Der Tanz und der Schmerz, for 11 instruments

The composer describes the music as following a 'cycle of transcendence', from the relatively straight account of the originals given in 'Ländler Topographien' to music in which all trace of folk melody has disappeared in 'Keuper'. A similar process of transcendence occurs within each large section of the work, most evidently in the 'Leichte Tänze', where Zimmermann's description of each set of pieces (''Fränkische Tänze'' sublimated', and so on) indicates the different stages of this process and the type of dance tune used. In this development Zimmermann intended to create a musical analogy for a gradual extension of consciousness from existence within the confines of a single culture to an apprehension of the all-embracing 'multi-versal'.

Zimmermann's strategy for achieving this sense of progressive transcendence is to feed the dance melodies into compositional filters from which they emerge in ever more unfamiliar form. Thus, in 'Phran' the melodies retain their pitch and rhythmic identity and are played by an orchestra rich in timbres characteristic of Bavarian town bands—a large wind section including saxophones, E-flat trumpet, and baritone horn, and a collection of tuned metal percussion; but the detail of the orchestration is determined by an elaborate process that involves assigning two or three pitches to each of a group of instruments, which can then 'scan' an eight-bar melody containing these pitches. The result is a series of intricate *Klangfarbenmelodie* arrangements, using a sort of hocket technique which, as Zimmermann says, 'is a very basic and elementary form of polyphony, of making music together—you find it from Africa to Java, all cultures of high or folk art have this technique because it's a very elementary social form'.

Hockets occur again in the 'Fränkische Tänze', but now the music is predominantly monophonic and the strings are transformed by *scordatura* tunings that allow all the pitches of the ten dance tunes to be played as natural harmonics (Example 1). One of Zimmermann's aims here is to create a situation in which the players cannot 'control the sounds too much'. He describes the use of harmonics as a

Example 1 'Fränkische Tänze', section VII



technique of 'non-control' since the player cannot 'intonate a sound and form it and control it and give it emotion . . . so he becomes someone who just lets the instrument vibrate and doesn't project himself onto it'. An almost inevitable consequence of this total reliance on natural harmonics—and Zimmermann requires the higher, more precarious ones—is that mistakes are made; but he argues that since the term 'mistake' implies a failure to achieve control, and since his aim is 'non-control', unintended notes are not mistakes. The use of harmonics lends the music a tentative, hesitant quality, not unlike that produced (albeit by quite different performance requirements) in Christian Wolff's *Exercises*.

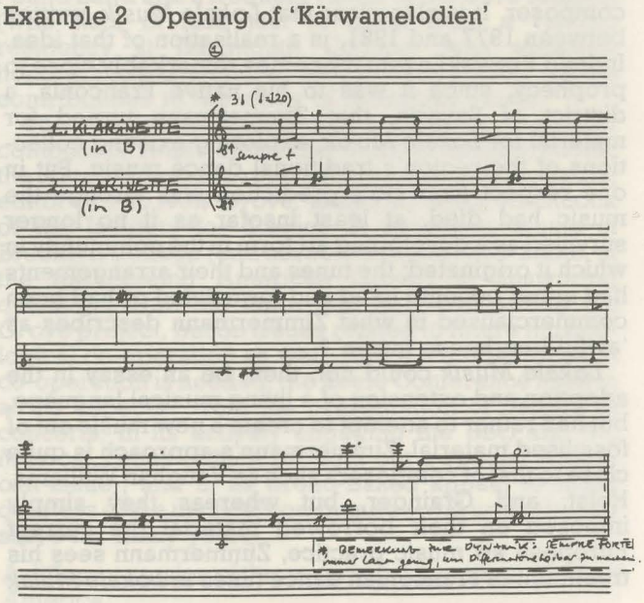
In his notes on *Lokale Musik*[11] Zimmermann suggests that the 'Leichte Tänze' are concerned with a confrontation between culture and nature, exemplified in the 'Fränkische Tänze' by the suppression of the tempered tuning of the original melodies and its replacement with the natural tuning of the overtone series. This exploitation of natural acoustic phenomena continues in the 'Kärwamelodien', where the melody is articulated by the difference tones resulting from two-part clarinet writing. Like the natural harmonics, some difference tones sound more strongly than others, so that the resulting 'shadow melody' comes and goes, its intensity depending on the interaction of variables such as dynamic level and the acoustic of the performance space.

The music most immediately called to mind here is Cage's work of the late 1940s and early 1950s—an influence acknowledged by Zimmermann—where in pieces such as the String Quartet and the *Six Melodies* for violin and piano there is a similar limitation of the gamut of available sounds and a similar exploration of *scordatura* and harmonics; and, just as Cage's use of proportional rhythmic structures served to distance him from the music, so Zimmerman's use of existing melodies gives his work comparable anonymity. In particular, the 'Quodlibet' finale of Cage's Quartet has a robust vigour very close in spirit to that of the 'Figurentänze' and the 'Kärwamelodien' (Example 2).

Cage's influence is also evident in the fourth cycle of *Lokale Musik*, especially in the solo percussion piece 'Riuti'. As the name 'Stille Tänze' (Silent dances) implies, the dance tunes are now filtered out of all recognition; in fact 'Riuti' is based on place names rather than melodies, the vowels and consonants having instrumental equivalents established so that the names can be transliterated into percussion sounds. Like the messages instrumentally articulated in the music of Vinko Globokar,[12] the litany of names in 'Riuti' is incomprehensible to the innocent ear. Zimmermann says, however, that it is not important to hear the words behind the sounds, but suggests that 'It's a bit like a talking drum—you don't really know the meaning but you have the sense that there's a message'. In effect, then, the words become, like the melodies elsewhere in *Lokale Musik*, a grid in terms of which a restricted range of instrumental sounds can be ordered, a compositional device.

Although the most audible reference that *Lokale Musik* makes to the Western art music tradition is to Cage's work of the late forties and early fifties, it is nevertheless possible to hear references to a number of other composers. In particular, 'Wolkenorte', the solo harp piece that comprises the third cycle of the work, seems close to the world of Christian Wolff's music of the 1970s, not only because the harpist must sing[13] as well as play (like the pianist in Wolff's *Accompaniments*) but also because the predominantly chordal writing inhabits a harmonic world which—like that of Wolff's *Braverman Music*—is neither tonal nor atonal. In both, this ambiguity is achieved by superimposing tonal phrases without apparent regard for the harmonic product of the superimposition. But whereas Wolff's music is politically motivated (the source of its tonal material is the German anti-Nazi resistance song *Die Moorsoldaten*) Zimmermann's has an essentially spiritual purpose: the 3:4 numerical proportioning that determines the superimpositions of the various melodies symbolises the relationship between heaven and earth (recalling the medieval equation of

Example 2 Opening of 'Kärwamelodien'



triple time with the divine Trinity and duple time with Man) (Example 3).

'Wolkenorte' lies at the heart of *Lokale Musik*, at the point where the Franconian melodies are poised between their shadowy existence in 'Leichte Tänze' and their dissolution in 'Stille Tänze': like *Lokale Musik* as a whole, it lies halfway between art music and folk music. As Zimmermann says:

> It's like John Cage said once about the comparison between him and Harry Partch, when he said 'Harry Partch tries to make folk music into art music and I try to make art music into folk music.' I worked with these two concepts, on the middle ground at the meeeting of folk music and art music.

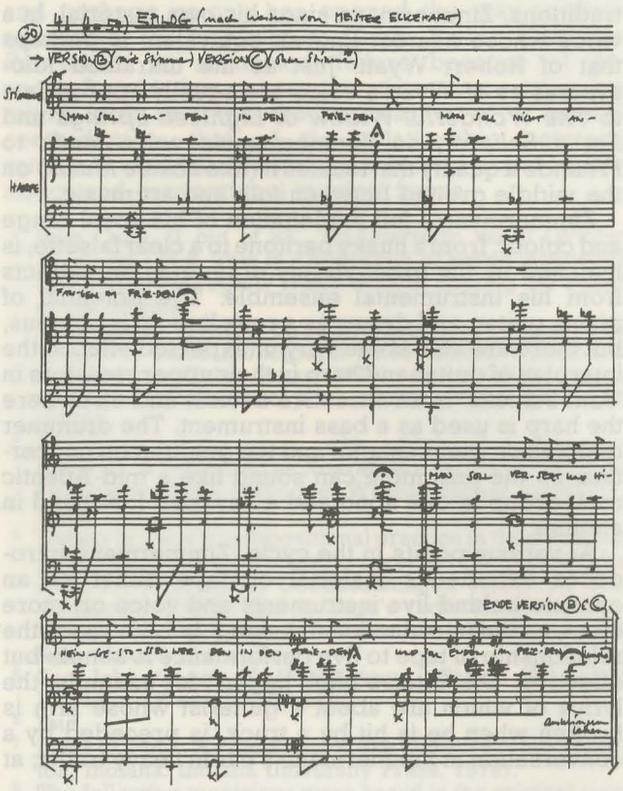
However, although *Lokale Musik* is an extraordinary achievement, it cannot really be seen as a final solution to the problem with which Zimmermann confronted himself in *Desert Plants*—the development of a new music from his own culture—simply because the traditional music of that culture is, as Zimmermann admits, 'no longer a living art'. His next project, the *Schalkhäusser-Lieder*—two song-cycles, of which the first, *Freunde*, was completed in 1981—addresses this problem anew. The musical locality chosen here is described by the composer as 'an ambiguous combination which goes into many corners . . . a rock band but not a real rock band'. The ensemble consists of Zimmermann (piano and vocals), a harpist, an electric guitarist, and a drummer, and the title *Freunde* has a double significance, referring both to Zimmermann's friends in the ensemble and to the friends he portrays in the music, through settings of letters and conversations. Whereas the physical locality of *Lokale Musik* was the whole of Franconia, that of *Freunde* is Zimmermann's circle of friends in Cologne.

Again Zimmermann's intention is to open the chosen locality to other cultures, and in so doing he establishes a parallel with Cologne itself, since musically the city is distinctly cosmopolitan. Kagel's music-theatre class at the Hochschule für Musik is as notable a mecca for composers today as Stockhausen's composition course there was in the sixties and seventies, and the influx of composers from the rest of Europe and America is matched by a similar influx of players. There is, then, a high proportion of immigrant composers working in Cologne, a relative freedom from the dead hand of neoromanticism, and an openness to innovation in fields as diverse as computer music (Klarenz Barrlo, for example),[14] electroacoustic music (the Feedback Studio composers), minimal/systems music (John McGuire), music theatre (Chris Newman), and ethnic music (Zimmermann and Kevin Volans). There is also a fascinating cross-fertilisation of ideas: Zimmermann's rehabilitation of Franconian dances, for example, provided Barlow with material on which to base his research into metric cohesion.[15]

The 18 movements of *Freunde* are:

1 Muckn-Blues (text by Fitzgerald Kusz)
2 Carol's Dream (Carol Byl)
3 Ami-Schicks (Gabriele Schreimel)
4 Geburtstagsgrüsse (anonymous)
5 Die Gitarre blieb liegen (Zimmermann)
6 Drums weg (Zimmermann)
7 Der Aztekenstein (Herbert Henck)
8 Miss TL (Zimmermann)
9 Über das einzelne Weggehen (R. D. Brinkmann)
Interlude: 40 Chords for Jon
10 Krikel-Krakel (Zimmermann)
11 Sang (anonymous Dutch poet)
12 Quasi-Swazi (Zimmermann)
13 Zwischen den Stühlen (Zimmermann)

Example 3 Ending of 'Wolkenorte'



14 Kein Tanzbär mehr sein (Zimmermann)
15 Thumbstrasse 68 (Zimmermann)
16 lich moch di fei immer nu (Godehard Schramm)
Coda: Kehraus Galopp (Hassidic Rabbi)

The music is, if anything, even more open than *Lokale Musik*: 'These are portraits of my friends', Zimmermann says. Each of them is very different and so this was a challenge for me to produce all kinds of styles and juxtapose them.' The styles range from the utterly unadorned 'Drums weg' (the text of which is intoned on a single note almost throughout, with an accompanying piano chord for each syllable) to the boogie-based 'Ami-Schicks' (a recycling of the chord sequence from America's hit, *Horse with no Name*), from 'Kein Tanzbär mehr sein', which has a grand rhetorical sweep reminiscent of Jacques Brel, to the *musique concrète* postlude to 'Sang'. The music also draws further on Zimmermann's Franconian researches—covertly in its creation of another form of shadow melody, where the rhythmic identity of a folk tune is preserved but its intervallic contour inverted, and openly in, for example, the use of the tune *An der Saale hellem Strande*[17] as a whistled postlude to 'Krikel-Krakel'.

The lyrics are equally diverse: from the jive babble of 'Ami-Schicks'—'I got my shit grouped/ that ain't no shit man/ that shit don't cut it/ that shit don't get no fly high'—to a summary in 'Quasi-Swazi' of Kevin Volans's recent compositional manner—'No more chromatic scales/ legato/ fast repeating pp chords/ extended major/minor/ . . . African extravagance with European harmony.' The settings of these lyrics once more recall Cage's and Wolff's treatments of text, for they are far from conventionally elegant: one has the sense of music and words pursuing independent courses, despite the fact that one is sung to the other. Only occasionally does Zimmermann resort to the mimetic devices of traditional word-setting.

Nor do these songs receive conventionally elegant

vocal performances, for, like the singer-songwriters of the French *chanson* and German *Liedermacher* traditions, Zimmermann sings his own material, in a voice whose nearest English equivalent is perhaps that of Robert Wyatt. Just as the untrained idiosyncrasies of Wyatt's voice are equally appropriate to *The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* and *I'm a Believer*, so Zimmermann's voice lends to *Freunde* a quality that locates it (like *Lokale Musik*) on the middle ground between folk and art music.

Zimmermann's full exploitation of his vocal range and colour, from a husky baritone to a clear falsetto, is matched by the great variety of timbres he extracts from his instrumental ensemble. The potential of piano, guitar, and drums as a rock line-up is obvious, but there are also some very unexpected effects: the interplay of guitar and harp in their upper registers in 'Ami-Schicks' is an attractive device, and elsewhere the harp is used as a bass instrument. The drummer doubles on glockenspiel and the guitarist on concertina, so the ensemble can sound like a mid-Atlantic rock group in one song and a Bavarian folk band in another.

At various points in the cycle, Zimmermann introduces extraneous material on tape either as an ostinato behind live instruments and voice or, more often, as the introduction to a song. In both cases the relationship of tape to live performance is simple but effective: 'Die Gitarre blieb liegen', for example, the lyrics of which are about a guitarist whose arm is broken when he is hit by a truck, is preceded by a conversation in Zimmermann's car in heavy traffic; at the end of the conversation, during which the accident is described, one of the passengers in the car plays a chord sequence on guitar, which is then taken up, live, by the harp. The effect of this switch from the informal, but frozen, guitar playing on the tape to the formal, but alive, harp playing in concert is fascinating; it recalls the moment in *Hymnen* when Stockhausen interrupts the piece by interpolating a recording of a conversation with his assistant in which he discusses how next to proceed. At the same time, one is also reminded of the studied informality of *Desert Plants*.[18]

There is, of course, no shortage of composers in search of fame, fortune and an acceptable alternative to the insularity of the new music scene.[19] But, unlike so many others, Zimmermann has not turned back to tonality as a way out of the élitist world of the post-war avant garde. The genuine accessibility of *Lokale Musik* and *Freunde* is the result of a carefully considered exploitation of the associative resonance inherent in particular musical cultures; but at the same time, the music retains the objectivity of approach to sound that characterises the experimental tradition.

WALTER ZIMMERMANN list of works 1975-1984

ANFÄNGER SEIN (to be a beginner) 1975/1979-81
1 Beginner's Mind (for one pianist)
2 Freunde (friends) 17 songs (for voice with piano)

EPHEMER (for piano trio) 1977/81

LOKALE MUSIK (local music) 1977-81
1 Ländler Topographien (for orchestra)
2 Leichte Tänze 2.1 1o fränkische Tänze (for stringquartet)
2.2 25 Kärwa-Melodien (for 2 clarinets)
2.3 20 Figurentänze (for 6 instruments)
2.4 15 Zwiefache (for guitar)
3 Stille Tänze 3.1 Erd-Wasser-Lufttöne (for trombone,piano,
3.2 Riuti (for one percussionist) glasspiel)
3.3 Keuper (for stringquartet)
4 Wolkenorte (for harp)

FLECHTWERK 1982-84
1 Glockenspiel (for one percussionist)
2 Klangfaden (for harp,glockenspiel, contrabassclarinet)
3 Lieder Weben (for voice, percussion, flute-quartet) .
4 Ghiordes-Knoten (for 4x9 instruments)
5 Saitenspiel (for 18 instruments)

VOM NUTZEN DES LASSENS 1982-84 -nach Meister Eckhart-
1 In der Welt sein (for tenorsax)
2 Loslösung (for viola,cello,contrabass & baritonesax)
3 Abgeschiedenheit (for piano)
4 Garten des Vergessens (for piano trio & altosax)
5 Selbstvergessen (for sopranosax)

publications
1 books: DESERT PLANTS (Vancouver 1976)
INSEL MUSIK (Köln 1981)
Katalog FELDMAN (Bonn 1983)
2 records: BEGINNER'S MIND (Köln 1977)
LOKALE MUSIK -3LP-(Frankfurt 1982)
Ländler-Topographien T1.1 (Bonn 1983)
3 cassette: FREUNDE (Köln 1982)

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1 Herbert Henck played *Beginner's Mind* in February 1980 during the Goethe Institute's now sadly defunct Anglo-German Contemporary Music Series; Zimmermann and his Ensemble Beginner-Pool played most of the chamber music pieces from *Lokale Musik* in 1981 during the 1980–81 season of Adrian Jack's (gloriously undefunct) MusICA.

2 'the so-called silent piece . . . is the most empty of its kind and therefore . . . the most full of possibilities'. Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (London: Studio Vista, 1974), p.2.

3 Tom Phillips, *Irma* (Obscure Records OBS9).

4 *Desert Plants: Conversations with 23 American Composers* (Vancouver: A.R.C. Publications, 1977), p.xi.

5 John Cage, *For the Birds: John Cage in Conversation with Daniel Charles* (London: Marion Boyars, 1981).

6 [Alvin Lucier], *Chambers: Scores by Alvin Lucier, Interviews with the Composer by Douglas Simon* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1980).

7 Steve Reich, *Music for 18 Musicians* (ECM Records ECM 1-1129).

8 The American magazine *Soundings*, of course, not its Cardiff-based namesake. Incidentally, *Soundings*, no.12, pp.60-78, reprints the whole of the 'Fränkische Tänze' from *Lokale Musik*.

9 This remark, together with all other unattributed quotations from Zimmermann, is taken from a conversation I recorded with him in Darmstadt on 19 July 1982. All 'ums', 'ahs', and 'likes' (as well as the background sound of the Arditti Quartet rehearsing Xenakis!) have been omitted.

10 Despite its cyclical construction, Zimmermann does not object to performances of only a few, or even single movements from *Lokale Musik*.

11 'Lokale Musik: eine Projektsbeschreibung', *Insel Musik* (Cologne: Beginner Studio Recordings Press, 1981). *Insel Musik* comprises Zimmermann's collected writings to date, including *Desert Plants* in German and in English.

12 I challenge any innocent ear to make sense of the texts embedded in pieces such as *Discours II* for five trombones (1967-8) or *Voix instrumentalisée* for amplified bass clarinet (1973).

13 Though Zimmermann states at the head of the score of 'Wolkenorte' that only Gabriele Emde, the work's dedicatee, may perform those sections of the piece that require singing: all other harpists must present an alternative voiceless version!

14 For Clarence Barlowe's numerous alter egos, represented by ingenious respellings of his name, see also my review of the 31st Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik, Darmstadt, 11-28 July 1982, in *Contact 25* (Autumn 1982), p.50.

[15] Clarlow, *Bus Journey to Parametron* (Cologne: Feedback Studios, 1978), p.38.
[16] I am indebted to my mother, Barbara Fox, for pointing this out (and for her help in translating the more impenetrable passages of the essay 'Lokale Musik').
[17] The dedication of *Desert Plants* to Harry Partch reminds one that Partch, like Zimmermann in *Freunde*, composed a number of pieces in which he set 'non-literary' texts: an example—a setting of a letter to Partch from a hobo friend—is printed at the end of *Desert Plants*.
[18] This insularity was shown in the hostility that greeted the performance of *Lokale Musik* at Darmstadt. Zimmermann had also been invited to play *Freunde*, but, probably wisely, he turned down the invitation.

Chronology

1949 Born Schwabach, Central Franconia, West Germany
1968-70 Pianist in the Ars-Nova-Ensemble based in Nuremberg
1970-72 Studied composition with Kagel in Cologne; studied electronic music and the theory of musical cognition at the Institut voor Sonologie, Utrecht
1973 Studied ethnomusicology at the Ethnomusicologisch Centrum Jaap Kunst, Amsterdam; played in the Javanese gamelan of the Institut voor de Tropen
1974 Studied computer music at the Colgate University, New York
1975 Travelled extensively in the USA
1976 Recorded ethnic musics in Egypt and the USA
1977 *Desert Plants* published
1978 Started the Beginner Studio in Cologne
1981 *Insel Musik*, his collected writings, published
1982 Participated in the Music-Ecology Project in Manila; led an *atelier* at the Ferienkurse at Darmstadt; taught composition at the Conservatoire de Liège; toured North America performing *Freunde*

Works

Zimmermann's music is published by Beginner Press, Cologne.

Akkord-Arbeit, orchestra, 1971
Einer ist keiner, ensemble, 1972
In Understanding Music the Sound Dies, 1973
Beginner's Mind, piano, 1974-5; recording by Herbert Henck (Beginner Recordings R7709)
Lokale Musik, ensembles, orchestra, 1977-81; recording by Ensemble Beginner-Pool, Gabriele Emde (harp), Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra (Edition Theater am Turm)
Schalkhäusser-Lieder, I: Freunde, 1979-81; recording by Zimmermann, Gabriele Emde, Gerd Leibeling, Guido Conen (Beginner Recordings)
Glockenspiel, 3 percussionists, 1982
Saitenspiel, several ensembles or orchestras, 1982-
Schalkhäusser-Lieder, II, 1983-

Adrian Thomas

The Music of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki: the First Decade

The practice among writers on music of grouping composers by nationality and generation and of singling out the most representative figure of a certain place or time is perhaps inevitable; indeed without it the history of music would be unmanageable. But useful, even necessary, as it sometimes is, it can be damaging to select one composer as the leading voice of his age. In Poland Witold Lutoslawski (who celebrated his 70th birthday on 25 January this year) is the sole remaining member of his generation still in the prime of his compositional life, though had Andrzej Panufnik (b. 1914) stayed in Poland, instead of leaving in 1954, the story might have been different. But if we look at Polish composers 20 years Lutoslawski's junior we must face the fact that one composer, celebrating his 50th birthday this year, has cornered the international market to the virtual exclusion of his Polish contemporaries. The skilful and determined way in which Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 23 November 1933) has sustained his appeal contrasts sharply with the self-effacing career of another Polish composer, two weeks younger than him, who, I would contend, is just as deserving of attention.

Henryk Mikołaj Górecki was born on 6 December 1933 at Czernica, near Rybnik, some 40 miles to the south-west of Katowice in Poland's southern coal-mining belt. Penderecki and Górecki both studied composition from 1955 in a State Higher School of Music (PWSM) in southern Poland—Penderecki in Kraków with Artur Malawski (1904-57) and Stanisław Wiechowicz (1893-1963), and Górecki in Katowice with Bolesław Szabelski (1896-1979). (As John Casken pointed out in an earlier article in *Contact*,[1] the compositional achievements stemming from Kraków and Katowice have closely rivalled if not surpassed those of the PWSM in Warsaw.) After graduating with first-class honours in 1960, Górecki furthered his studies for a time with Messiaen in Paris. He has since lived and worked in Katowice, travelling rarely; between 1975 and 1979 he was rector of the PWSM in Katowice, matching Penderecki's appointment in 1972 to the rectorship of the PWSM in Kraków.

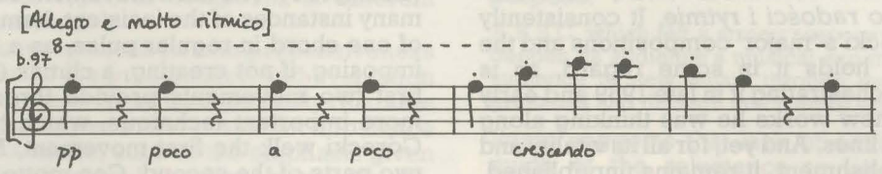
Górecki came to composition a little later than most, having become a primary teacher on leaving school in 1951. Between 1952 and 1955 he took up music studies on a regular basis in the education department of the Intermediate School of Music in Rybnik. When he was assigned to Szabelski at the PWSM in Katowice he can scarcely have imagined how influential his teacher was to be. Szabelski was very much the practical craftsman, steeped in Baroque and Classical procedures, but he had also had the rare benefit of Szymanowski's insights (particularly into orchestration) while he was a student at the Warsaw Conservatory in the 1920s. Szabelski's own predilection, up to the mid-1950s, for modal and polymodal writing was to resurface significantly in his protégé's work of the late 1960s onwards. Undoubtedly Szabelski made a powerful and immediate impact on Górecki's thinking through his ready adoption of twelve-note procedures in his *Sonety* (Sonnets) for orchestra (1958). Outside the classroom the two men developed a close father-and-son relationship; I well remember the pride with which the younger composer took me in 1972 to meet the 75-year-old Szabelski, then physically ailing but with new music yet to come, including *Mikołaj Kopernik* (1975), his delayed tribute for the 500th anniversary of the birth in 1473 of the great Polish astronomer.

As the list of works at the end of this article indicates, the first two years of Górecki's studies with Szabelski were relatively prolific; all the works but *Pieśni o radości i rytmie* (Songs of joy and rhythm) op.9 (1956) are for one or two performers. Only the Sonata for two violins op.10 (1956) was published early on (in 1963)—the other works from this period have appeared in print (if at all) only during the last eight years. This hesitation to publish early works is typical of many composers; in Górecki's case the pieces he wrote under Szabelski's tutelage are particularly revelatory and are far from incidental to the main thrust of his development.

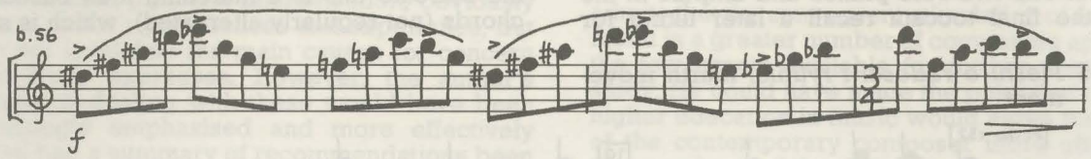
As one would expect, the compositions of 1955-6 show an assimilation of techniques prevalent in Poland in the post-war decade: a Classical control over form and a Parisian approach to style. At worst this can result in fairly desultory, four-square melodic phrases, as in the Sonatina op.8 (1956); at best it produces an impressive handling of changing metre and a rhythmic vitality, as in the first movement of the unusually scored Quartettino op.5 (1956). Folk elements are not overly intrusive, though the Lydian mode is favoured (in the simple slow movement of the Quartettino, for example). The earliest published work, the short Toccata op.2 (1955), wears its influences confidently on its sleeve—Bartók's Bagatelles, early Stravinsky, and a touch of Poulenc's brand of *moto perpetuo* brought together in a brash amalgam. The Lydian melody that dominates the second half of the Toccata (Example 1) is a close relative of the theme of the Passacaglia in Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra* (1954), while the melodic extension shown in Example 2 is not far removed from techniques Górecki was to encounter in his studies with Messiaen. The most noticeable feature of the Sonata op.10 is its deliberate, aggressive dissonance. The opening Allegro molto begins in a fashion not dissimilar to the beginning of Schoenberg's Third String Quartet (but without the twelve-note context), and its essentially neoclassical origins are at times ferociously disturbed (Example 3). It is an early example of an aspect of Górecki's musical personality that was to be realised most tellingly in the orchestral *Scontri* (Collisions) op.17 (1960) and in *Elementi* for string trio op.19 no.1 (1962).

The only surviving vocal work among this early group, *Trzy pieśni* (Three songs) op.3 (1956), is also revealing. Two sombre poetic fragments by Juliusz Slowacki (1809-49) are offset by the third song, 'Ptak' (Bird), a delightfully light-hearted setting of a poem by Julian Tuwim (1894-1953), whose work was to feature in *Epitafium* op.12 (1958) and *Dwie piosenki*

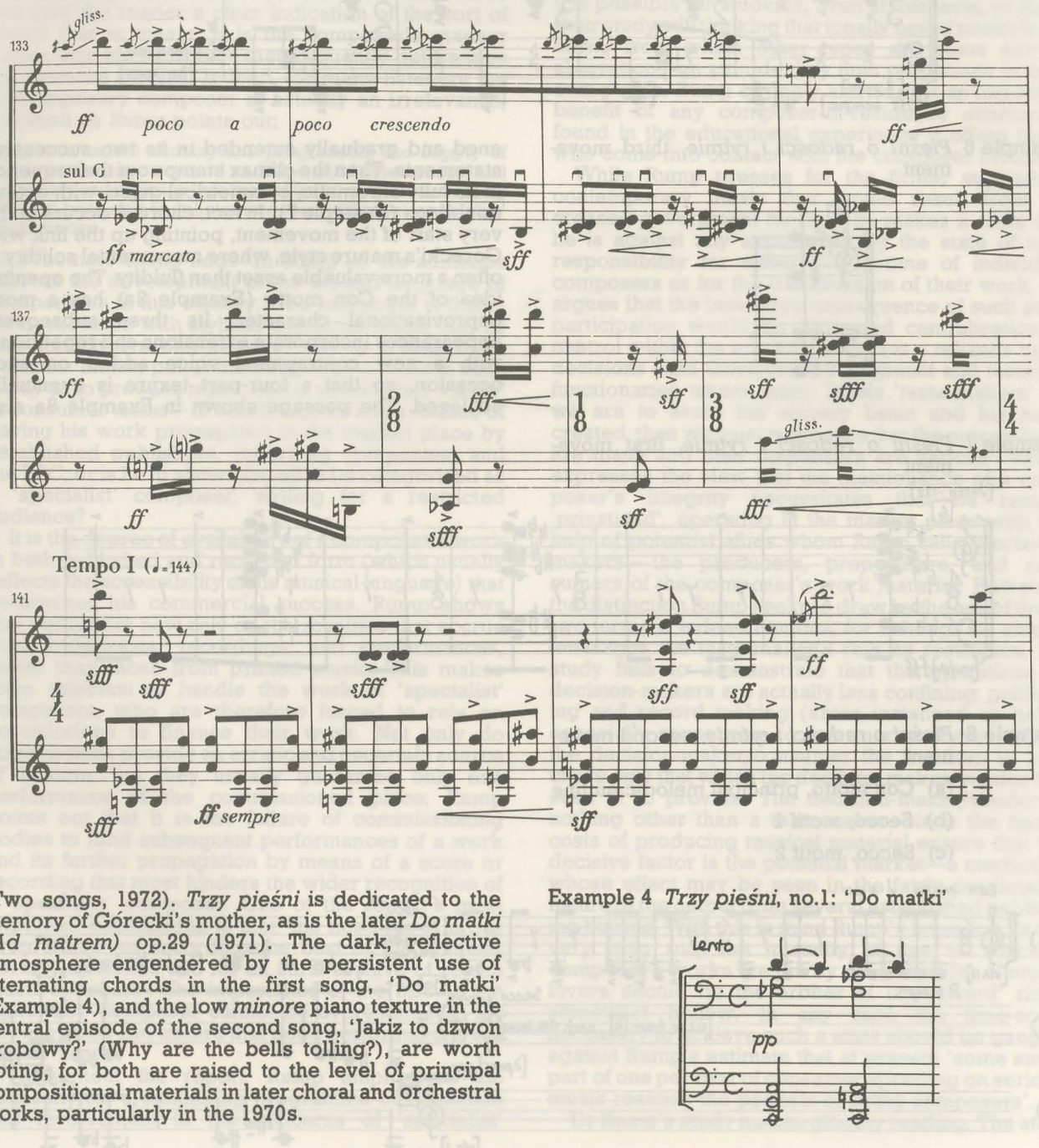
Example 1 Toccata, bars 97-100



Example 2 Toccata, bars 56-9



Example 3 Sonata, first movement, bars 133-44

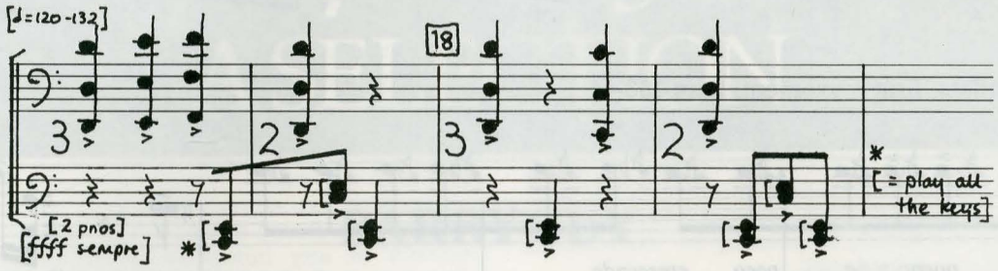


(Two songs, 1972). *Trzy pieśni* is dedicated to the memory of Górecki's mother, as is the later *Do matki (Ad matrem)* op.29 (1971). The dark, reflective atmosphere engendered by the persistent use of alternating chords in the first song, 'Do matki' (Example 4), and the low *minore* piano texture in the central episode of the second song, 'Jakiz to dzwon grobowy?' (Why are the bells tolling?), are worth noting, for both are raised to the level of principal compositional materials in later choral and orchestral works, particularly in the 1970s.

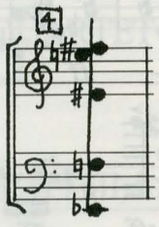
Example 4 *Trzy pieśni*, no.1: 'Do matki'

But if any of these early pieces deserves a hearing today it is the one orchestral work, the four-movement *Pieśni o radości i rytmie*. It consistently heads lists of Górecki's 'major' compositions and the composer clearly holds it in some regard, as is proved by his reorchestrating it in late 1959 and early 1960 when in his new works he was thinking along much more radical lines. And yet, for all its vitality and consistent accomplishment, it remains unpublished. It is, however, an important work, for each movement contains indications of directions to be followed in later years. The two solo pianos and timpani in the coda of the final toccata recall a later liking for low sonorities and modal or minor-key inflexions (Example 5). The third movement contains the first of many instances of the insistent, hammered repetition of one chord in regular pulse, as a direct method of imposing, if not creating, a climax (Example 6). The first two movements provide three examples of a more important technique, which has since served Górecki well: the first movement, Marcato, and the two parts of the second, Con motto and Secco, each derive their momentum entirely from the accumulation of statements of a single extended phrase. In the Marcato this is a marching idea based on two chords (not regularly alternated), which is strength-

Example 5 *Pieśni o radości i rytmie*, fourth movement

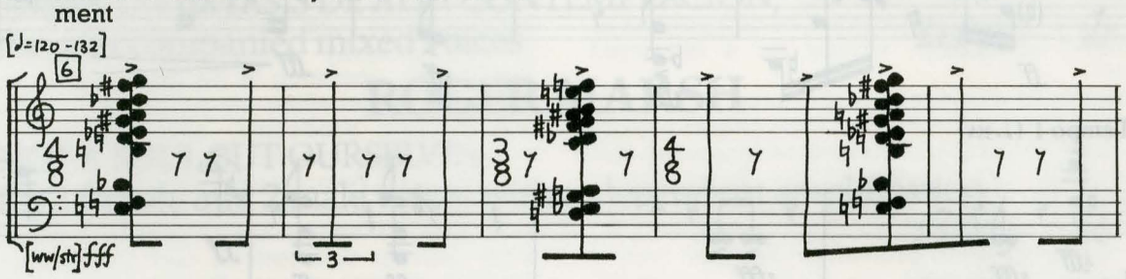


Example 6 *Pieśni o radości i rytmie*, third movement



ened and gradually extended in its two successive statements. Then the climax stamps out the sequence in its fully chromatic, symmetrical guise, with octave doublings (Example 7). In fact, chord A occurs at the very start of the movement, pointing up the link with Górecki's mature style, where monumental solidity is often a more valuable asset than fluidity. The opening idea of the Con motto (Example 8a) has a more improvisational character. Its three subsequent appearances incorporate extensions and repetitions, with a new contrapuntal voice added on each occasion, so that a four-part texure is eventually achieved. The passage shown in Example 8a also

Example 7 *Pieśni o radości i rytmie*, first movement

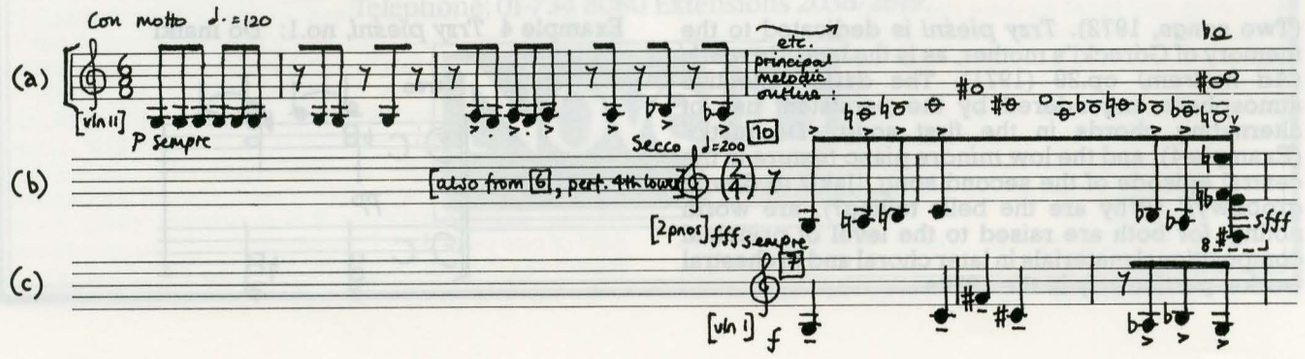


Example 8 *Pieśni o radości i rytmie*, second movement

(a) Con motto, principal melodic outline

(b) Secco, motif 1

(c) Secco, motif 2



provides the pitch material for the two ideas of the Secco section of the movement: a seven-quaver phrase outlining the upper half of the melodic minor scale (Example 8b) and a longer-breathed countermelody (Example 8c). The way in which Górecki builds up the texture here, by the methods mentioned above, is truly exhilarating, transcending what may seem to be rather simple material. But then, it is one of the intriguing trademarks of Górecki's mature style that it so often amounts to far more than the sum of its parts.

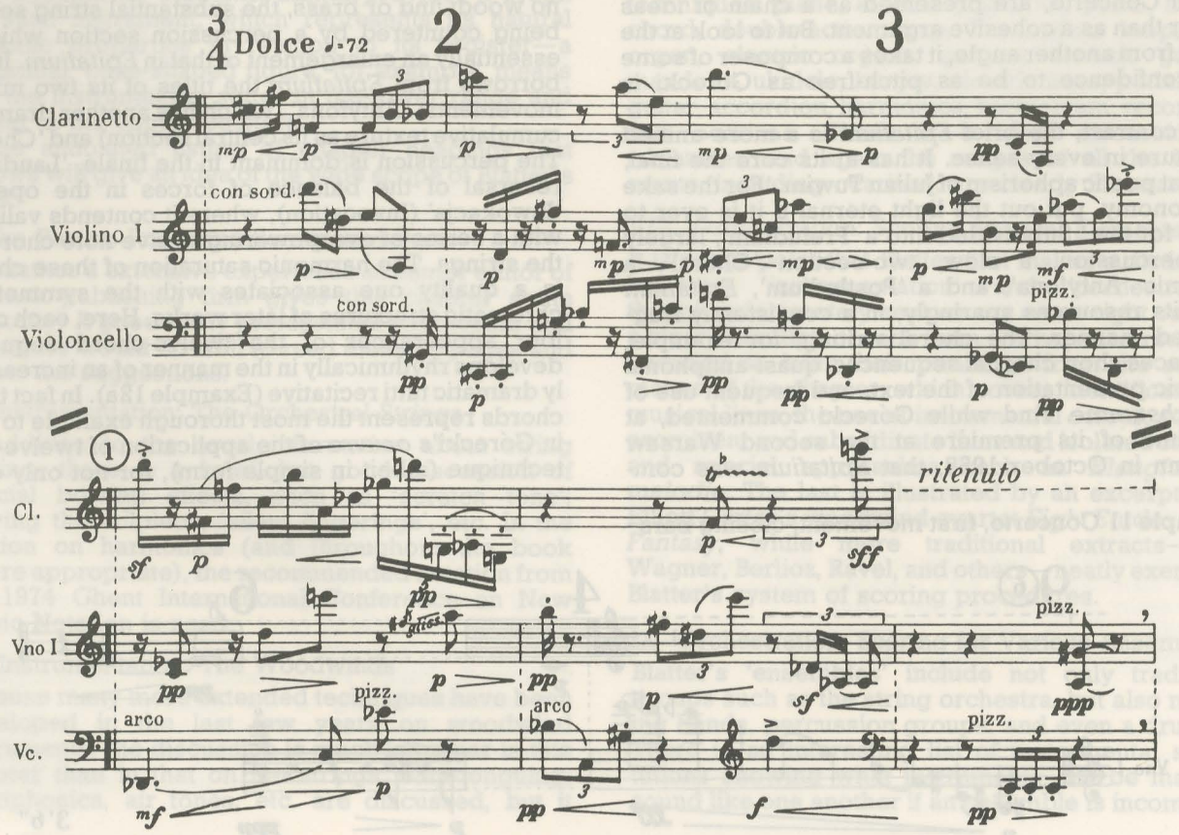
If I have dwelt at length on these early 'apprentice' works, it is for the very reason that they bear a closer relationship to the compositions of the mid-1960s onwards than do the intervening pieces for which Górecki is possibly better known. The seven remaining years of the first decade, 1957-64, can be divided into two distinct periods, the first culminating in *Scontri*, the second consisting essentially of the three parts of *Genesis* op.19 (1962-3), and *Choros I* op.20 (1964), which Górecki at one time regarded as a fourth member of the *Genesis* cycle.

When Tadeusz Baird (1928-81) and Kazimierz Serocki (1922-81) successfully organised the first Warszawska Jesień (Warsaw Autumn) in October 1956, they not only initiated a crucial change in general musical life in Poland, creating conditions that still more or less pertain today, but they also provided for composers and performers, not to mention audiences, the most wide-reaching forum for contemporary music anywhere in eastern Europe. In the early days of this new era visits by composers such as Cage, Nono, and Stockhausen were matched by exhibitions of new scores of contemporary music from the West. While most of this activity was inevitably centred on Warsaw, the compositional grapevine disseminated the new information rapidly. In Katowice it was not only the young Górecki who began to explore the possibilities of the twelve-note method: so did Szabelski, then in his early sixties, whose *Sonety*, *Wiersze* (Verses) for piano and orchestra (1961), and *Aforyzmy '9'* (Aphorisms '9') for nine instruments (1962) are among the most successful examples by any Polish composer of a consistent application of twelve-note technique.

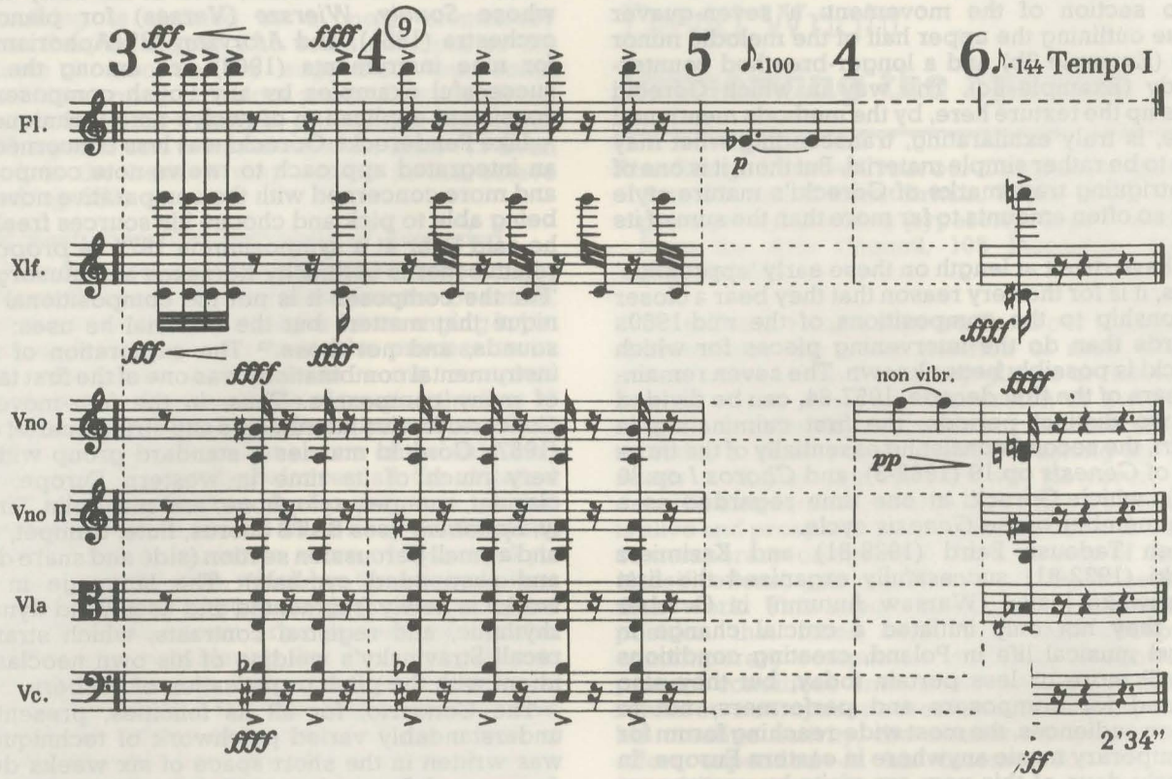
Like Penderecki, Górecki was less concerned with an integrated approach to twelve-note composition and more concerned with the comparative novelty of being able to pick and choose his sources freely. As he said later at a symposium in 1977 (*à propos* the relative merits of Rimsky-Korsakov and Musorgsky): 'For the composer it is not the compositional technique that matters but the material he uses: these sounds, and not those.'[2] The exploration of novel instrumental combinations was one of the first targets of many composers. Thus, in the four-movement Concerto for five instruments and string quartet op.11 (1957) Górecki marries a standard group with one very much of its time in western Europe: flute, clarinet, trumpet, xylophone, and mandolin. Similarly, *Epitafium* uses SATB chorus, flute, trumpet, viola, and a small percussion section (side and snare drums and suspended cymbals). The language in both works is newly fragmented and uses vivid dynamic, rhythmic, and registral contrasts, which strangely recall Stravinsky's welding of his own neoclassical idiom with the pitch organisation of Webern.

The Concerto, for all its felicities, presents an understandably varied patchwork of techniques. It was written in the short space of six weeks during August and September 1957, but waited nearly two years for its first performance, which took place in June 1959 in Katowice. The second movement, Dolce—Animo—Feroce is the most successful, not least for its imaginative textures and rhythmic drive. It begins with a distinctly Webernian trio texture, though without Webern's clearly defined pitch organisation (Example 9), and then proceeds through the

Example 9 Concerto, second movement, bars 1-7



Example 10 Concerto, second movement, closing bars

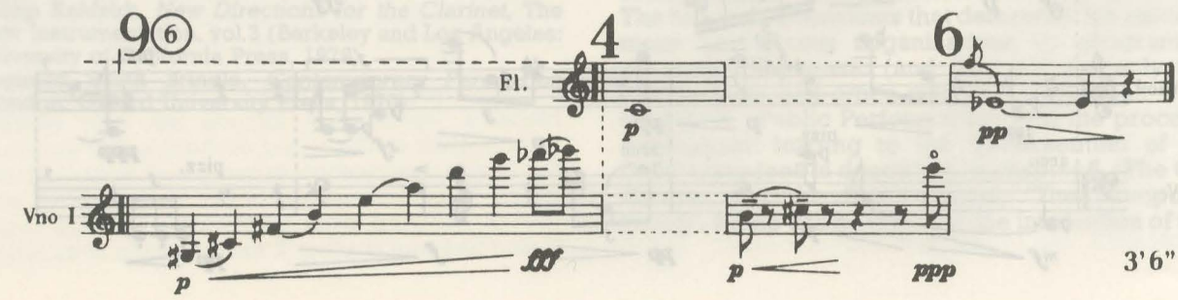


Animo and Feroce to challenge this idiom with strong chordal repetitions (Example 10). Elsewhere, the Concerto is slightly less assured. The first movement presents the problem in a nutshell. The somewhat disparate elements of an opening flute solo (shades of *Densité 21.5*), a regular viola ostinato (pizzicato *d*, *e* flat, *c* sharp) underpinning the central section, and a sequence towards the end (Example 11), in which Schoenberg's *Kammersymphonie* op.9 meets Berg's Violin Concerto, are presented as a chain of ideas rather than as a cohesive argument. But to look at the work from another angle, it takes a composer of some self-confidence to be as pitch-free as Górecki is here.

By contrast, the brief *Epitafium* is a more unified structure in every sense. It has at its core the final, offbeat poetic aphorism of Julian Tuwim: 'For the sake of economy, put out the light eternal if it is ever to shine for me.' Subdivided into a 'Preludium', largely for percussion, a slow, two-section 'Choral', a dynamic 'Antyfona', and a 'Postludium', *Epitafium* uses its resources sparingly, in a consistently fragmented manner. The choral writing, for example, embraces short chordal sequences, quasi-antiphonal syllabic presentation of the text, and frequent use of *Sprechstimme*. And while Górecki commented, at the time of its première at the second Warsaw Autumn in October 1958, that *Epitafium* was composed using 'a free serial technique', much of its source material is more readily identifiable than is the case with the Concerto. The work is an evocative tribute to a poet who made a deep impression on many Polish composers.

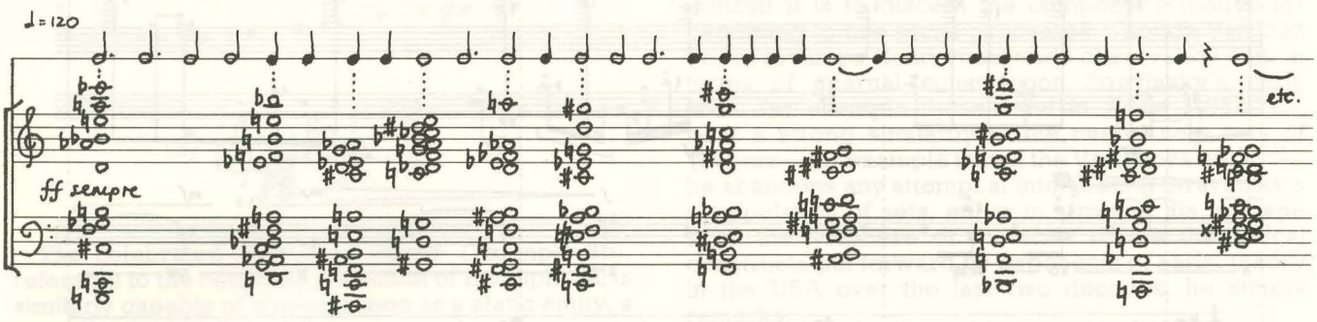
The *I Symfonia '1959'* op.14 (dedicated to Szabelski) was Górecki's first orchestral work of this period and demonstrates uncommon mastery of a deliberately restricted instrumental palette—there is no woodwind or brass, the substantial string section being countered by a percussion section which is essentially an enlargement of that in *Epitafium*. It also borrows from *Epitafium* the titles of its two middle movements: 'Antyfona' (which has another dramatic, cumulative texture as its central section) and 'Choral'. The percussion is dominant in the finale, 'Lauda'—a reversal of the balance of forces in the opening 'Inwokacja' (Invocation), where it contends valiantly with a series of overpowering twelve-note chords in the strings. The harmonic saturation of these chords is a quality one associates with the symmetrical chromatic structures of later works. Here, each of the four appearances of the twelve-chord sequence develops rhythmically in the manner of an increasingly dramatic tutti recitative (Example 12a). In fact these chords represent the most thorough example to date in Górecki's *oeuvre* of the application of twelve-note technique (albeit in simple form), for not only does

Example 11 Concerto, first movement, closing bars

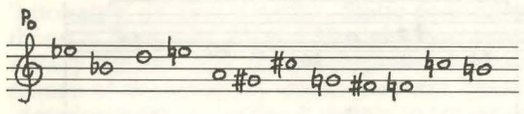


Example 12

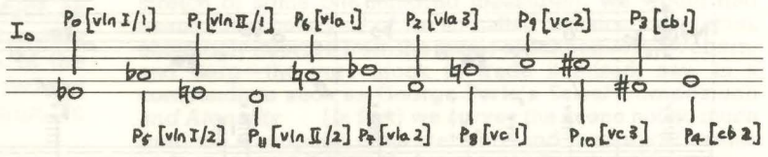
(a)



(b)



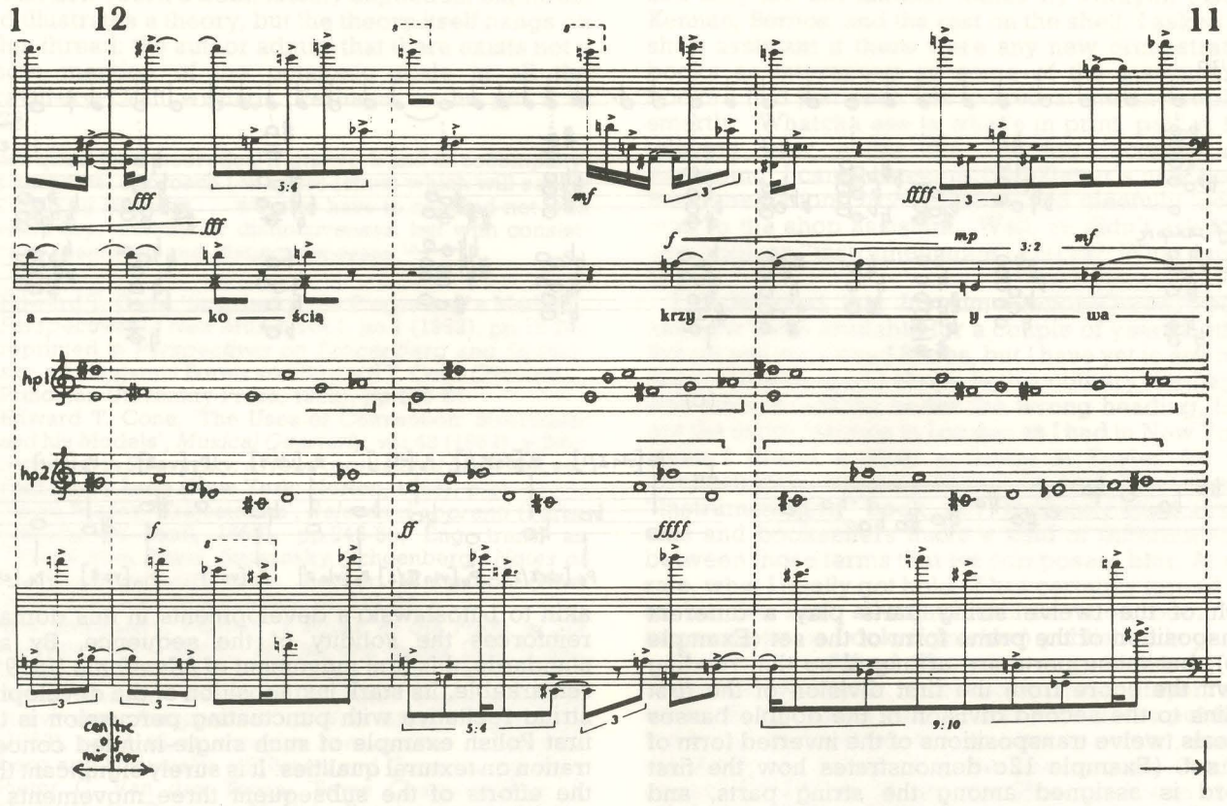
(c)



each of the twelve string parts play a different transposition of the prime form of the set (Example 12b), but these parts are arranged so that reading down the score from the first division of the first violins to the second division of the double basses reveals twelve transpositions of the inverted form of the set. (Example 12c demonstrates how the first chord is assigned among the string parts, and identifies the set transpositions that each part plays.) Registral displacement varies the inevitable parallelism in this massive texture, though the consistent emphasis on limited interval content in the chords, akin to Lutosławski's developments in this domain, reinforces the solidity of the sequence. By any standards, this first movement of *I Symfonia '1959'* is remarkable. Its stark juxtaposition of the developing string recitative with punctuating percussion is the first Polish example of such single-minded concentration on textural qualities. It is surely significant that the efforts of the subsequent three movements to conjure up a pointillistic fabric never totally succeed, as references to the string chords in each movement all too firmly emphasise.

This stylistic struggle was not yet over, for in

Example 13 *Monologhi*, no.2



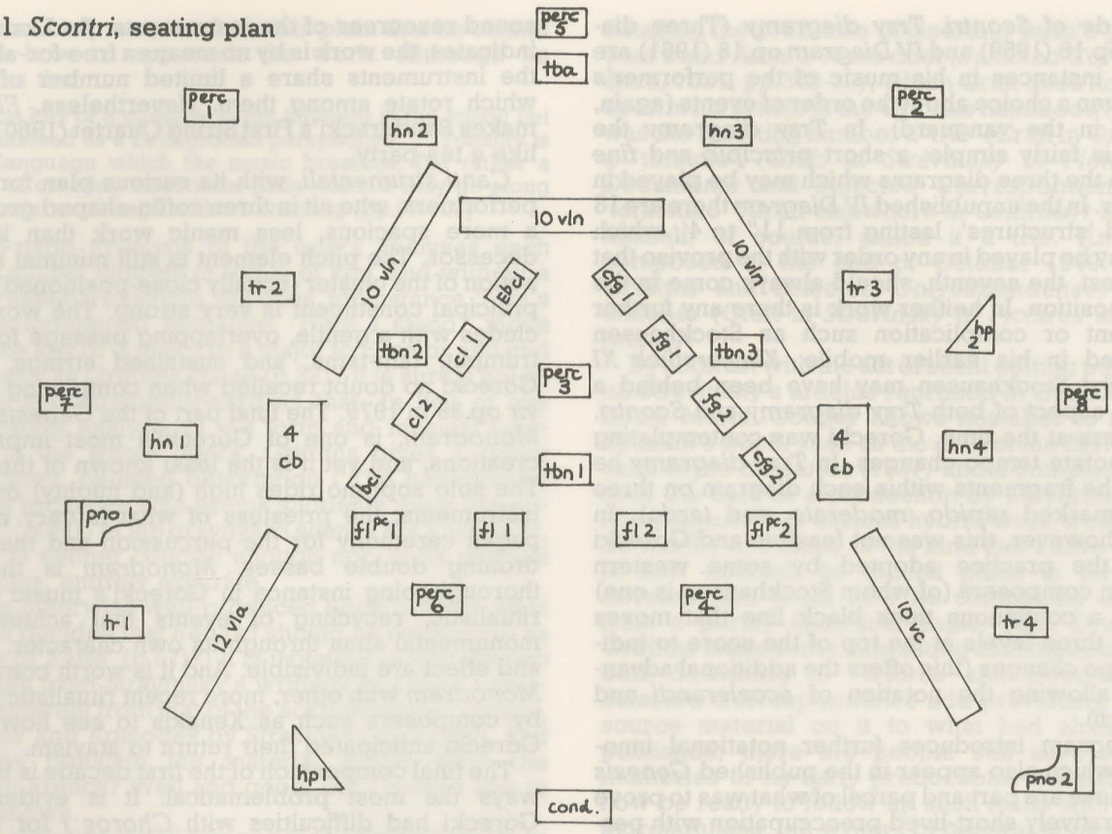
Monologhi op.16 (1960) Górecki allowed the influence of the western European avant garde a fuller (and final) rein, treading the path of Boulez, Berio, and Nono confidently; his achievement was recognised by the Polish Composers' Union when it awarded *Monologhi* the first prize in its Young Composers' Competition for 1960. The first performance of the work, however, did not take place for another eight years, by which time Górecki had reverted to ideas that had germinated in the 'Inwokacja' of *I Symfonia '1959'*. The forces required for *Monologhi* continue the trend away from traditional ensembles, particularly in the importance accorded to the percussion department (tubular bells, marimba, and vibraphone, with an enlarged assembly of metal percussion: six cymbals, three tam-tams, and three gongs); the group is completed by two harps and solo soprano. The brief text (Górecki's own) plays with word association in a Joycean fashion and the soprano is essentially a verbal *prima inter pares*. The central monologue of the three is among the most delicate pieces Górecki has written. It shows him using substantial mirror structures for individual paragraphs in order to strengthen the formal design. One of these (Example 13) also demonstrates Górecki's free use of the twelve-note principle: here the two harps freely permute seven pitch-classes apiece (G sharp and E flat are common to both). Viewed in the long term *Monologhi* may not be central to an understanding of Górecki's total output, but it is a striking example of Polish experimentation and brings out the now obscured fact that Górecki, more than any of his contemporaries, led the way into new, uncharted territories.

In one respect this pioneering spirit had an overtly visual aspect. Starting with *Epitafium*, Górecki specified the seating plan for the performers; in *I Symfonia '1959'* and *Monologhi* he introduced new sophistications to fulfil the desire for a dynamic spatial dimension. With *Scontri* his concern for this aspect of performance reached its most extravagant expression (Figure 1): while the families of instruments (percussion, brass, etc.) are in many instances dispersed around the playing area, Górecki mostly scores for the normal family groups, thus emphasising the spatial displacement (it is worth remarking that the orchestra entirely omits oboes, and gives further evidence of Górecki's addiction to extensive percussion resources). The sight on stage of an apparent jumble of musicians must have sent a shiver of anticipation round the National Philharmonic Hall in Warsaw on the occasion of *Scontri*'s première during the fourth Warsaw Autumn in 1960. Few members of the audience can have forgotten the *succès de scandale* that followed (one venerable critic, Jerzy Waldorff, suggested that in his next work Górecki might include dead rats, to be flung at the audience . . .). But whatever the critical brickbats, here was a genuine first: a composer, recently graduated, throwing caution to the winds and letting fly. There could be no more apt title for this piece, for it is action music and its intense dynamism realises the futurist manifesto more effectively than anything produced earlier in the century.

This is not to suggest, however, that *Scontri* is a perpetual assault. In fact there is little that comes near to a complete tutti except between figures 6 and 8, where woodwind and brass chords, percussion rolls, and a slowly writhing, three-and-a-half-octave string cluster are brutally interlocked (did Lutoslawski recall this passage, I wonder, when he came to write the second of his *Trois poèmes d'Henri Michaux* in 1963?). Elsewhere, there are substantial passages of slow and soft textures created by ensembles of almost chamber proportions. There is, however, little sign of the pointillistic texture of *Monologhi*—the solitary note has become the more muscular cluster, be it small or large, close-positioned or spread wide, introduced and quitted suddenly or by stealth.

The most astonishing aspect of *Scontri* is the sheer fertility of its invention, the teeming forth of ear-catching ideas, which in a lesser hand might have

Figure 1 *Scontri*, seating plan



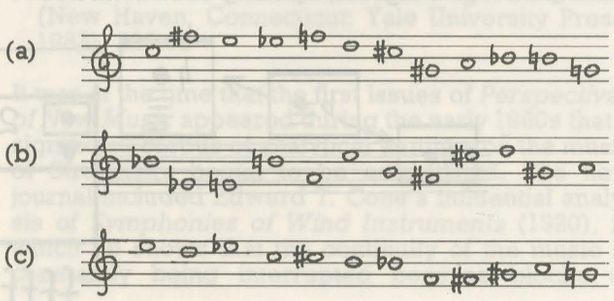
broken up under the weight of their own vitality. But Górecki's sense of contrast on both small and large scale enables the listener to perceive the main paragraphs without difficulty. The first of the six principal sections, up to figure 8, piles on the collisions at a furious rate; but Górecki contains the shock of the new within a rondo structure defined by interlocking dynamic and textural ideas. The ensuing respite (until two bars after 11) develops string ideas intimated at the very opening, and the third section (up to figure 15) elaborates a familiar technique, the gradual accumulation of a string texture ending with twelve stabbing iterations of the resulting twelve-note chord. The fourth section (figures 15-18), very much an interlude, is eclipsed by the fifth and most substantial section (figures 18-25), which not surprisingly is dominated by the eight-man percussion group. The short climactic coda is terminated by a marked unison *e'* on the brass, which sends the strings scurrying into the ether like some fleeing genies.

Two further points may help to put the achievement of *Scontri* into context. First, on a purely technical level the serial influence is still strongly felt, though it is a material means and not a stylistic end. Górecki felt free to make use of several twelve-note sets (Example 14), occasionally juxtaposing them as in the fourth section, and he was still drawing very much on past experience. The matrix-like technique observed in the string chords of the first movement of *I Symfonia '1959'* (see Example 12) resurfaces in exuberant form in the opening section of *Scontri*. It appears first in the woodwind (in the sixth bar after figure 2), neatly intercut with punctuation from the strings—a clear anticipation of the central section of *Refren* (Refrain) op.21 for orchestra (1965). The passage shown in Example 14a provides the pitch material and continues to do so until the apotheosis of the chordal sequence already mentioned (between figures 6 and 8). The slow string build-up of the third section utilises the material of Example 14b, stating the notes of the set singly, then in twos, threes, and so on, until the full twelve-note texture is achieved shortly after figure 14. And it cannot go unnoticed that the serial control over durations and dynamics is another fundamental element in the total design.

The second point to be noted in *Scontri* is the experiment with unpitched string textures, which one tends to associate principally with Penderecki. In fact Penderecki's *Wymiary czasu i ciszy* (Dimensions of time and silence, 1960) also received its first performance at the fourth Warsaw Autumn, so the two composers were working closely in parallel on this aspect of their technique. But whereas Penderecki sought to homogenise these new effects, Górecki was using them as but one part of a much more colourful palette. We should not perhaps forget that *Scontri* and *Wymiary czasu i ciszy* (which Penderecki immediately withdrew for major surgery) both antedate the first performance of 'the' Polish piece of the early 1960s, Penderecki's *Tren* (Threnody, 1960).

Górecki's introduction of new string techniques in *Scontri* was shortly to lead him to further and more searching explorations in *Genesis* op.19 (1962-3). But before discussing that major work it is worth turning aside to look at the two pieces that Górecki wrote

Example 14



either side of *Scontri*. *Trzy diagramy* (Three diagrams) op.15 (1959) and *IV Diagram* op.18 (1961) are the only instances in his music of the performer's being given a choice about the order of events (again, Górecki in the vanguard). In *Trzy diagramy* the formula is fairly simple: a short *principio* and *fine* embrace the three diagrams which may be played in any order. In the unpublished *IV Diagram* there are 13 so-called 'structures', lasting from 11″ to 4′, which again may be played in any order with the proviso that the longest, the seventh, should always come in the central position. In neither work is there any further refinement or complication such as Stockhausen introduced in his earlier mobile, *Klavierstück XI* (1956). But Stockhausen may have been behind a different aspect of both *Trzy diagramy* and *Scontri*. Like others at the time, Górecki was contemplating how to notate tempo changes. In *Trzy diagramy* he notates the fragments within each diagram on three staves (marked *rapido*, *moderato*, and *tardo*). In *Scontri*, however, this was not feasible and Górecki follows the practice adopted by some western European composers (of whom Stockhausen is one) in using a continuous thick black line that moves between three levels at the top of the score to indicate tempo changes (this offers the additional advantage of allowing the notation of *accelerandi* and *ritardandi*).

IV Diagram introduces further notational innovations, which also appear in the published *Genesis* cycle. These are part and parcel of what was to prove a comparatively short-lived preoccupation with performer freedom. The example Górecki elucidates at the front of the score of *IV Diagram* is the opening of structure 11 (Example 15). He explains it as follows:

> All the notes from d^{II} to e^{IV} are available [play freely in an irregular order], but d^{II}, e flat^{III}, and e^{IV}, should dominate. Employ durations ● [$^1/_6$″–$^1/_{12}$″] and ▼ [$^1/_2$″–$^1/_5$″], the former being dominant. Place two pauses ▽ [$^1/_2$″–$^1/_5$″] freely during the nine seconds. Everything *ffff*.

IV Diagram is a fine piece and should by rights take its place alongside the better-known items in the solo flute repertory.

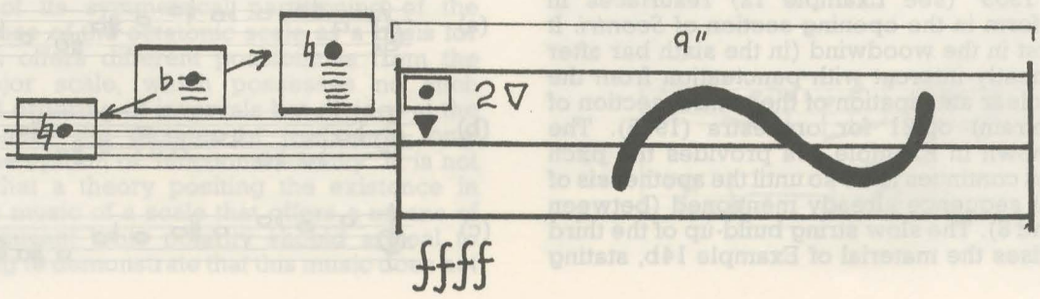
The title *Genesis* suggests, perhaps, that Górecki wished to go back to basics after the energetic adventure of *Scontri*. And indeed, gone are the huge orchestral forces and colourful instrumental palette; in their place *Elementi* (1962) uses a string trio, *Canti strumentali* (1962) a larger band harking back to the Concerto and *Epitafium*, and *Monodram* (1963) a soprano (much as in *Monologhi*), metal percussion, and six or twelve detuned double basses.

There can be few string trios like *Elementi*. From the outset it presents a bleak, internalised aggression, largely unrelenting and violent. Górecki is intent on obtaining, literally, a gut reaction from his players. The emphasis moves away from pitch to pure percussion and the notational ideas broached in *IV Diagram* are here used to call up all the potential sound resources of the instruments. As Example 16 indicates, the work is by no means a free-for-all, since the instruments share a limited number of ideas, which rotate among them. Nevertheless, *Elementi* makes Penderecki's First String Quartet (1960) sound like a tea-party.

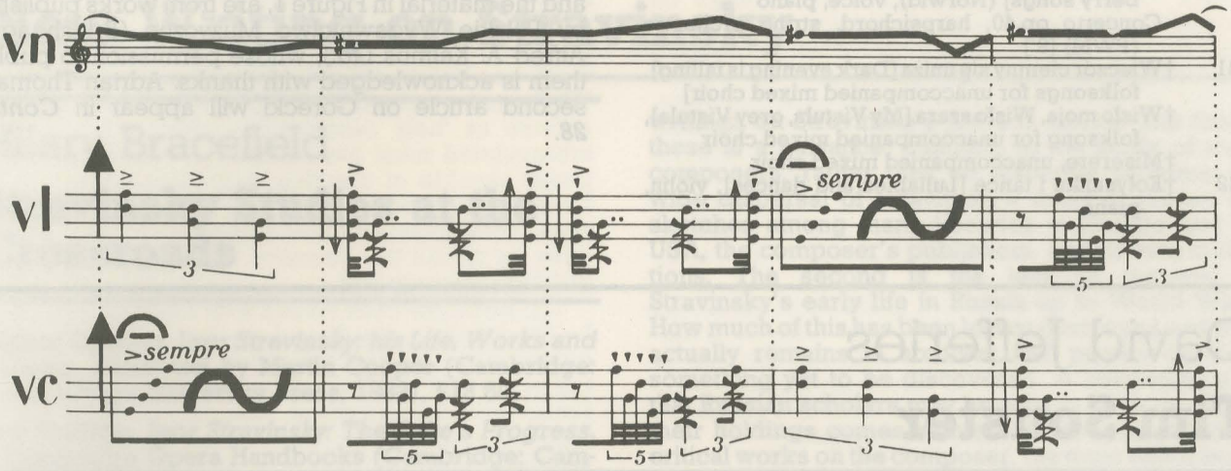
Canti strumentali, with its curious plan for the 15 performers, who sit in three coffin-shaped groups, is a more spacious, less manic work than its predecessor. The pitch element is still minimal and the notion of the cluster (usually close-positioned) as the principal constituent is very strong. The work concludes with a gentle, overlapping passage for flute, trumpet, tam-tams, and sustained strings, which Górecki no doubt recalled when completing *Beatus vir* op.38 in 1979. The final part of the *Genesis* cycle, *Monodram*, is one of Górecki's most impressive creations, and yet it is the least known of the three. The solo soprano rides high (and mighty) over the instruments, the priestess of what is very much a pagan ceremony for the percussion and the deep, droning double basses. *Monodram* is the first thoroughgoing instance in Górecki's music of that ritualistic, recycling of events that achieves its monumental aims through its own character. Cause and effect are indivisible. And it is worth comparing *Monodram* with other, more recent ritualistic pieces by composers such as Xenakis to see how much Górecki anticipated their return to atavism.

The final composition of the first decade is in some ways the most problematical. It is evident that Górecki had difficulties with *Choros I* for strings op.20 (1964). There are substantial differences between the published score and the Polish Composers' Union tape of the first performance: many of the changes are cosmetic, but some are considerable. The central, characteristic build-up between figures 36 and 52 is insufficiently charged in the earlier version; in the published score this section is strengthened and extended. Elsewhere, as at figure 12, what had been regular triplet quavers (the hallmark of the work) were later rewritten in looser, space–time notation in order to provide rhythmic variety. The difficulties run still deeper. There is a tired, almost jaded air about *Choros I*. It represents a virtual abandonment of the element of choice and its associated notation, and a whole-hearted return to pitched material and a pure string texture without percussion. The registral upper limit is *a*″ flat, but the general tessitura is far lower, a feature typical of many of Górecki's highly successful later compositions; but here it seems simply to intensify the monochrome gloom. *Choros I* revolves obsessively around close clusters of three semitones (like those noted in the first movement of the Concerto), and these are matched by an insistent triple-time rhythmic patterning, which pervades the work without imparting much sense of forward movement. Górecki seems to have driven himself into a corner of his own making. What is surprising is that *Choros I* should follow, and not precede, the invigorating *Genesis* cycle.

Example 15 *IV Diagram*, opening of structure 11



Example 16 *Elementi*, figure 17



Like so many of his compatriots, Górecki had travelled much further since 1955 than most composers outside Poland. The Poles felt the inescapable need to 'catch up', to explore as many avenues as were open to them. It is particularly fascinating to discover how each composer eventually reached an identifiable *persona*. Some, like Penderecki, found their way forward with relative ease and sensibly kept to it. Górecki was, during the period covered by this article, one of the most inquisitive young composers, on both the technical and expressive levels; he was not one to sit on his laurels—hence the thorough exploration of those new influences that interested him. A constant and rigorous self-examination lies behind the music of the first decade and this sometimes painful process resulted in 1965 in *Refren*, the work that paved the way for yet more individual achievements in the next 20 years.

[1] John Casken, 'Music from Silesia', *Contact 5* (Autumn 1972), pp.21-6.

[2] *Spotkania muzyczne w baranowie*, 2/I: *Muzyka w muzyce* (Kraków, 1980), p.145.

Works

This list is arranged as nearly as possible chronologically by date of composition. The principal publisher of Górecki's music is Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne (PWM), but some scores are co-published in the West by Schott (S); unpublished works are marked with an obelus. An asterisk indicates that a work has been recorded, usually by the Polish state recording company, Muza. Timings are approximate.

1955 †Cztery preludia [Four preludes], piano [8′]
Toccata op.2, 2 pianos (PWM) [3′]

1956 Trzy pieśni [Three songs] (Juliusz Słowacki, Julian Tuwim) op.3, voice, piano (PWM) [4′]
†Wariacje [Variations], violin, piano [8′]
Quartettino op.5, 2 flutes, oboe, violin (PWM) [8′]
†Sonata no.1, piano
†Kołysanka [Cradle-song], piano [3′]
Sonatina op.8, violin, piano (PWM) [3′]
†Pieśni o radości i rytmie [Songs of joy and rhythm] op.9, 2 pianos, orchestra [14′]; reorchestrated 1959-60
Sonata op.10, 2 violins (PWM) [16′30″]
†Nokturn (Federico Garcia Lorca), voice, piano [mentioned only in Mieczysława Hanuszewska and Bogusław Schäffer, eds., *Almanach polskich kompozytorów współczesnych* (Kraków, 2/1966)]

1957 Concerto op.11, 5 instruments, string quartet (PWM) [11′]

1958 *Epitafium (Julian Tuwim) op.12, mixed choir, instruments (PWM) [5′]

1959 †Pięć utworów [Five pieces], 2 pianos [8′]
I Symfonia '1959' op.14, string orchestra, percussion (PWM) [20′]
*Trzy diagramy [Three diagrams] op.15, solo flute (PWM) [6′]

1960 *Monologhi (Górecki) op.16, soprano, 3 instrumental groups (PWM) [17′]
*Scontri [Collisions] op.17, orchestra (PWM) [17′30″]

1961 †IV Diagram op.18, flute [7′30″–10′30″]

1962 *Genesis I: Elementi op.19 no.1, 3 string instruments (PWM) [12′42″]
*Genesis II: Canti strumentali op.19 no.2, 15 players (PWM) [8′04″]

1963 Genesis III: Monodram (Górecki) op.19 no.3, soprano, metal percussion, 6 or 12 double basses (PWM) [10′]
*Trzy utwory w dawnym stylu [Three pieces in old style], string orchestra (PWM) [10′]

1964 *Choros I op.20, strings (PWM) [18′]

1965 *Refren [Refrain] op.21, orchestra (PWM) [16′–17′]

1967 †Muzyczka I [Little music I], 2 trumpets, guitar [10′]
*Muzyczka II op.23, 4 trumpets, 4 trombones, 2 pianos, percussion (PWM) [7′30″]
Muzyczka III op.25, violas (PWM) [14′]

1968 Kantata, organ [12′]

1969 *Muzyka staropolska [Old Polish music] op.24, orchestra (PWM, S) [23′]
Canticum graduum op.27, orchestra (PWM, S) [12′]

1970 Muzyczka IV op.28, clarinet, trombone, cello, piano (PWM, S) [9′]

1971 *Do matki (Ad matrem) op.29, soprano, mixed choir, orchestra (PWM) [10′–11′]
Dwie pieśni sakralne [Two sacred songs] (Marek Skwarnicki) op.30, baritone, orchestra (PWM) [5′]; arranged for baritone, piano, as op.30a

1972 II Symfonia 'Kopernikowska' (psalms, Nicolas Copernicus) op.31, soprano, baritone, mixed choir, orchestra (PWM) [35′]
Eunte ibant et flebant (psalms) op.32, unaccompanied mixed choir (PWM) [9′]
Dwie piosenki [Two songs] (Julian Tuwim), 4-part choir (PWM) [4′30″]

1973 Trzy tańce [Three dances], orchestra (PWM) [12′]

1975 Amen op.34, unaccompanied mixed choir (PWM) [8′]

1976 *III Symfonia 'Symfonia pieśni żałosnych' [Symphony of sorrowful songs] (anonymous) op.36, soprano, orchestra (PWM) [54′]

1979 †Szeroka woda [Broad river], folksong for unaccompanied mixed choir
*Beatus vir (psalm verses), op.38, baritone, choir, orchestra (PWM) [33′–35′]

1980 †Błogosławione pieśni malinowe [Blessed raspberry songs] (Norwid), voice, piano
Concerto op.40, harpsichord, string orchestra (PWM) [9']
1981 †Wieczór ciemny się uniża [Dark evening is falling], folksongs for unaccompanied mixed choir]
†Wisło moja, Wisło szara [My Vistula, grey Vistula], folksong for unaccompanied mixed choir
†Miserere, unaccompanied mixed choir
1982 †Kołysanka i tańce [Lullabies and dances], violin, piano

The passages quoted in Examples 1-4, 9-11, 13, and 16, and the material in Figure 1, are from works published by Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne (British agent Alfred A. Kalmus Ltd.), whose permission to publish them is acknowledged with thanks. Adrian Thomas's second article on Górecki will appear in *Contact 28*.

David Jefferies
Tim Souster

Not so long ago, the name 'Tim Souster' could be seen flashing onto the television screen as the arranger of the theme tune to the popular BBC science-fiction fantasy *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. By contrast, those members of the British music fraternity who are wont to tune in to Radio 3's Music in our Time will remember the much-talked-about broadcast in 1980 of his Sonata for cello, piano, seven wind instruments, and percussion (1978-9).

Souster was educated at New College, Oxford, where he studied the history of twelve-note technique with Egon Wellesz (a pupil of Schoenberg); he later had composition lessons with Richard Rodney Bennett (a pupil of Boulez) in London. He then entered the BBC as a Radio 3 music producer; this position gave him his first contact with Stockhausen, as well as Barraqué, Berio, Cardew, Feldman, and Henze. He left the BBC in 1967 and, with the help of an Italian scholarship, spent part of 1968 composing in Siena. In 1969 he became composer-in-residence at King's College, Cambridge. During the period after he left the BBC he made his first experiments with electronics, and wrote a rather adventurous piece for soprano, three choruses, three orchestras, piano, and harp, which went under the remarkable title of *Tsuwamonodomo* (1968).

Intuitive music

Souster's position at King's College gave him the opportunity to form, with fellow-composer Roger Smalley, the live-electronic ensemble Intermodulation, in which they enlisted two music undergraduates, Andrew Powell from King's and Robin Thompson from London. (Powell later left the group and was replaced by Peter Britton.) Souster had conceived the idea of forming such a group as far back as 1966 after attending performances of Stockhausen's *Prozession* and *Kurzwellen*. He revived the plan in 1968-9 as a result of taking part in two realisations of Stockhausen's *Plus-Minus*, one of which, organised by Gavin Bryars, reflected the influence of the Fluxus movement; other inspirations came from the work of Soft Machine, Cream, and The Who, a performance of Smalley's *Pulses for 5 x 4 Players* at the QEH, and the partnership between John Cage and the dancer Merce Cunningham. In what amounts to a mini-manifesto, published as part of an article on Intermodulation in *Contact 17*, Souster states that 'the group ... was formed with the intention of developing techniques of integration and intercommunication in the field of live-electronics', and that they always played 'a wide range of music, from semi-improvised pieces, with only a few instructions given by the composer in advance, to pieces with fully notated scores. This stems from the ... belief that ... exclusivity is futile'.[1]

Taken in a broader context this last statement seems to sum up Souster's own artistic philosophy, for in the course of his career he has worked in very diverse areas and with a wide range of materials. This openness—characteristic of many English experimentalists in both music and the visual arts—is reflected in his response to different conceptual stimuli. He has found room in his work for all sorts of cultural cross-fertilisation, denying that the codified forms of 'establishment' culture, or for that matter any individual 'culture', should be dominant, or that there is any validity in the outmoded idea of a 'selected tradition'.[2] His style draws on a large number of musical sources, employing 'multitudes of conflicting sounds',[3] by means of which he can work indirectly on the attitudes and listening habits of his audience. He acknowledges the influence not only of composers such as Delius, Stravinsky, Wagner, and Schubert, but also of the Grateful Dead, Charlie Parker, and Charles Mingus.

Intermodulation's repertory contained much intuitive music, including Souster's own *Chinese Whispers*, *Break*, and *Aubade* (1969-74), which together he called 'an anthology of intuitive music', and Stockhausen's 17 texts for intuitive music, *Für kommende Zeiten* (1969-70), Souster's English translation of which was published with the score in 1976. Like those of Stockhausen, La Monte Young, and others, Souster's intuitive pieces are usually based on a short text which, in Roger Smalley's words, 'stimulates players by means of analogy'.[4] In *Break* Souster asks his performers to 'survey [their] past' in musical terms and then to 'continue only when [they] have found a new way'. The first half of Intermodulation's performance of the piece was acoustic; the second half made use of electronics—an apt realisation of conversion to the 'new way'.

During this active period with Intermodulation, Souster completed, in 1970, a second version of his *Triple Music*, which reveals his ideas about intuitive music at that time. The original version of *Triple Music* was an environmental work that used coloured slides of food, footballers, and political events. *Triple Music II* (commissioned for the Proms) is concerned with the spatial distribution of sound and is scored for three orchestras, one of which is amplified; here Souster's interest lay in transforming the symphony orchestra rather than developing it historically. The idea behind *Triple Music* is that it should be a

working out of the instruction 'make triple music'. The number three is central to the piece. In *Triple Music II* there are three musical elements: melody, regular rhythms, and irregular rhythms, with which the three orchestras make interplay. There are three orchestral groups: strings; woodwind and brass; and a hybrid, amplified group of two pianos, vibraphone, two harps, two organs, and electric bass guitar (these are given an electric cadenza). The piece uses Fibonacci proportions (further evidence of Stockhausen's influence) to determine, for example, the number of pizzicato chords to be played by the string group; the harmony is based on the same proportions. Included in the music are quotations from, among other works, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, Debussy's *Jeux*, and Stockhausen's *Gruppen*, though Souster claims that 'nobody has traced their presence up to now'.[5]

Triple Music II is intended to be educative: Souster hoped that in it the symphony orchestra could be 'transformed in the heads of the players'. The work embodies his belief at the time in the political role of improvisation.

> It's my musical conviction that playing semi-determined and intuitive music will up-grade the player (and indeed the listener) in musical life so that all links in the musical chain will be of equal importance. (*Triple Music II* ... is dedicated to this end.)[6]

Souster saw the necessity for performers to develop an aural tradition rather than to rely totally on notated directions, which brings into question all the accepted roles in the composer-performer-listener relationship.[7]

Since the completion of *Triple Music II* (which was itself withdrawn and revised in 1974), Souster's interest in intuitive music has altered, partly because he found that this type of playing tended to have set stylistic consequences. (Whatever Souster's later reactions may be, recordings from the 1970s of his improvisations with Smalley and co.—in *Break* for example—reveal some highly inventive and sensitive playing.) He has come to the revisionist conclusion that

> no matter how strong the empathy between players there is still no substitute for a widely accepted and understood musical framework, or culture against which intuitive playing can be understood as a coherent statement.

Developments in electronics seem also to have contributed to this change of views: 'the precision of digital transformation processes has deflected composers' attention away from intuitive processes'.[8] So, although he has not repudiated 'free' playing, he sees it as an element that is best employed in an appropriate compositional context.

Tape works

1974 saw the completion of *World Music* for tape and four musicians, which was written for Intermodulation; the instrumental sections were composed in 1971 and the tape part was realised at the studios of Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Cologne. (The piece was revised for tape and eight players in 1980.) The structural proportions of the tape part in *World Music* are determined by geography. Souster drew three 'orbits' around the globe and each division, physical or political, over which an orbit passes sets off a musical reaction. Each of the three orbits is associated with a particular instrument and musical tradition, and takes as its departure point a place with which that tradition is closely connected: the electric guitar is associated with rock music and Seattle (the birthplace of Jimi Hendrix, to whom the piece is dedicated); the viola with Classical music and Vienna; the gong with Oriental music and Bali.

In the same year he composed in Berlin what was to be his last piece for Intermodulation—*Zorna* for soprano saxophone, tape-delay system, and 'three perambulating drummers'. Like many of his works, *Zorna* is about sound in real space, a concern that has now become part and parcel of electronic music. The three drummers add an important element of music theatre to the piece: with their drums strapped about their waists (like military musicians) they start from the back of the hall, playing different and unsynchronised rhythms. While they gradually move around and through the audience on their way to the stage, the soprano saxophone—which imitates the nasal quality of the Turkish shawm, or 'zurna', a recording of which was one of the sources of inspiration for the work[9]—freely creates its own dialogue with a tape-delay system, giving four different versions of the same material, often with only microtonal changes; because of the freshness of the saxophone's role, the familiar and predictable results of conventional tape-sequencing processes are avoided. By the time the drummers arrive on stage their rhythms are synchronised both with those of one another and those of the saxophone. The composer is insistent that the piece should be performed very loud.

A work in which the music-theatre element is even stronger, and which benefits from a theatrical director, is *The Music Room* for trombone and stereo tape. It was commissioned by the trombonist Jim Fulkerson and first performed by him at the Wigmore Hall in December 1976. Paul Griffiths, writing about *Zorna* in *The Times*, rightly noted that the work 'carries a social message ... expressing vehement protest';[10] that message, though, is transmitted in code. The political statement in *The Music Room*, on the other hand, is explicit. The trombonist wears a boiler suit and a black bag over his head—suggestive of the garb of a torture victim; his assistant is dressed as a military doctor and carries a stethoscope. The tape bombards the trombonist with white noise, which builds in intensity, and a combination of very high frequencies producing beats. This material comments on and imitates the use in the late sixties by the British army in Northern Ireland of techniques of sensory overload to weaken prisoners, and the broadcasting of very high frequencies by riot police on the Continent to disorientate participants in political demonstrations. The trombonist improvises in response to the tape, which gradually begins to play the regimental march *Lilibolero*. The work ends as the trombonist is dragged off the stage. (Souster used the same combination of solo brass instrument—this time tuba—and tape in another, though rather less elaborate, music-theatre piece, *Heavy Reductions*, written in 1977.)

The concomitant ideas of transformation and unity have long interested Souster and they are neatly encapsulated in another work involving tape—*Song of an Average City* (1974) for small orchestra and natural sounds (the title derives from Delius's *Paris, Song of a Great City*, which made a strong impression on Souster when he heard it at the age of 13).[11] At the time the work was written Souster saw transformation as the key device for demonstrating unity in music: 'it has become a habit of thought, a mannerism. It has come to imply: if everything is one, why bother to change anything?'[12] He came to the conclusion (reminiscent of Stockhausen) that the function of music is 'to hasten the achievement of the ultimate oneness in things, musical and otherwise, by heightening our consciousness of the divisions in our

experience'.[13] Techniques of transformation are used in the work for the surreal illustration of opposites—taped sounds of a guillotine turn into those of a road leveller, a cash register into a gun. These and other musically useful concrete sounds employed in the tape part are categorised as personal sounds, group and domestic sounds, and mass public and natural sounds. A direct link between tape and orchestra is achieved through the rhythmic structure of the piece—the rhythm of a diesel pumping engine, for example, is exactly imitated by the orchestra. In all respects Souster is concerned with drawing parallels between the instrumental and 'natural' sounds, and the principle of pulling diverse, unlikely sounds into a legitimate compositional context is strongly at work here.

Live-electronic and computer works

Souster is in his element when writing for small ensembles or solo instruments in conjunction with live electronics. The most successful example is his intriguing *Spectral* for viola, live electronics, and tape-delay system (1972).[14] The piece is an evocation of the humpback whale:

> The title Spectral relates not only to the sound/colour spectrum used in the music, but also to the ghostly character of the song in which the whale seems to be singing of its own passing.[15]

It is a colourful soundscape, with a profusion of electronically transformed glissandos, harmonics, tremolos, and melodic gestures. At times the sounds of the viola are bare and crudely gestural; at others they are thick-textured and hauntingly melodious.

Spectral was written as the result of Souster's coming across a newly available recording of the calls of the humpback whale at the time when he began experimenting with electronic effects on the viola. His first move was to listen to the whale-song and notate its frequencies. He then took these numerical values and used them as the frequencies of light waves, which provided him with colour equivalents of the original sounds. Applying this 'coding' he notated the whales' songs or 'arias' and a series of echoes (to be created on tape) suggested by 'the whales' submarine acoustic environment'.[16] The result is a score that consists chiefly of a multi-coloured graphic notation which is not so much a prescription for improvisation (though of course it is intended to be realised) as a transcription of the music of the whales; it resembles the notation of Cage's *Aria*, and like that cannot be 'read' in the usual sense. The work is in 28 sections, which make up an aria, six 'echoes', and a final 'decay'; Echo IV and the Decay are the only conventionally notated parts of the score. Technically *Spectral* is an exercise both in extended methods of playing the viola and in electronic manipulation of the instrumental material. The electronic circuit includes low-pass filters, digital harmonisers, band-pass filter, ring modulator, envelope shaper, digital delay, and sine-wave oscillators. The range of the viola is extended by tuning the C string down to G; the resulting sounds are then transposed further by digital means.

In its use of live electronics *Spectral* again shows the influence of Stockhausen. That this should be so is hardly surprising because at this period (1971-3) Souster was Stockhausen's teaching assistant at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Cologne. While he was there Souster and Intermodulation took part with Gentle Fire and several German musicians in the first performance (in June 1971) of Stockhausen's *Sternklang*, an environmental ('sacred') piece for five groups, intended as a 'preparation for beings from other stars and for the day of their arrival'. As in many of Souster's own works, physical movement and separation of sound sources in space are important ingredients of *Sternklang*: a carrier transports musical ideas between the five spatially separated groups and the listeners move among them too. (One of the reasons why Souster was involved in the work seems to have been his knowledge of electronics and the reliability, proven on tour, of Intermodulation's sound systems.)

Among Souster's many other electronic compositions, I shall mention only two more: *Music from Afar* (1977) and *Driftwood Cortège* (1978-9). *Music from Afar* is a short work for a digital speech synthesizer, programmed to simulate human speech in recitations of poems by Keats and Hafiz, and the strange-sounding 'Elfriede's Clockwork Heart'. It is an unusual feat, a mixture of the mechanical with the electronic to produce a rather off-beat, delicate, and whimsical piece. Although the synthetic production of speech was not, even in 1977, entirely new, in the six years since *Music from Afar* was made electronic techniques of voice simulation have advanced so far that the piece now seems something of an interesting oddity.

Some of the sounds in *Music from Afar* are not unlike those of John Chowning's *Turenas* (1972), a computer-generated work realised at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford University, California. *Driftwood Cortège* is the product of Souster's own period of study at the Center in 1978-9.[17] The work is a four-track tape of computer-generated 'instrumental' sounds, some of them percussive. At the outset the index of modulation is such that the precise pitches are distorted, but soon the listener is able to hear the individual voices of eight tonally based harmonies, which articulate the work. A major preoccupation is the slow spatial movement of sound in a very large imaginary acoustic; the electronic medium creates such impressions by means of amplification and transformation, which have the effect of reorientating the listener's perception of the position and proximity of a sound source. Another changing element is that of tone colour and hence texture, which produces different emphases within each of the eight chords as they are repeated.

The rock experience

Souster has always been interested in rock music, and wrote about it from the mid-sixties. Part of the impetus to form Intermodulation came from going to gigs in London by the English bands Soft Machine (with whom he was later to be on the same Prom date) and The Who. In fact Pete Townshend personally installed Intermodulation's first P.A. rig, which dominated the show owing to its massive output.

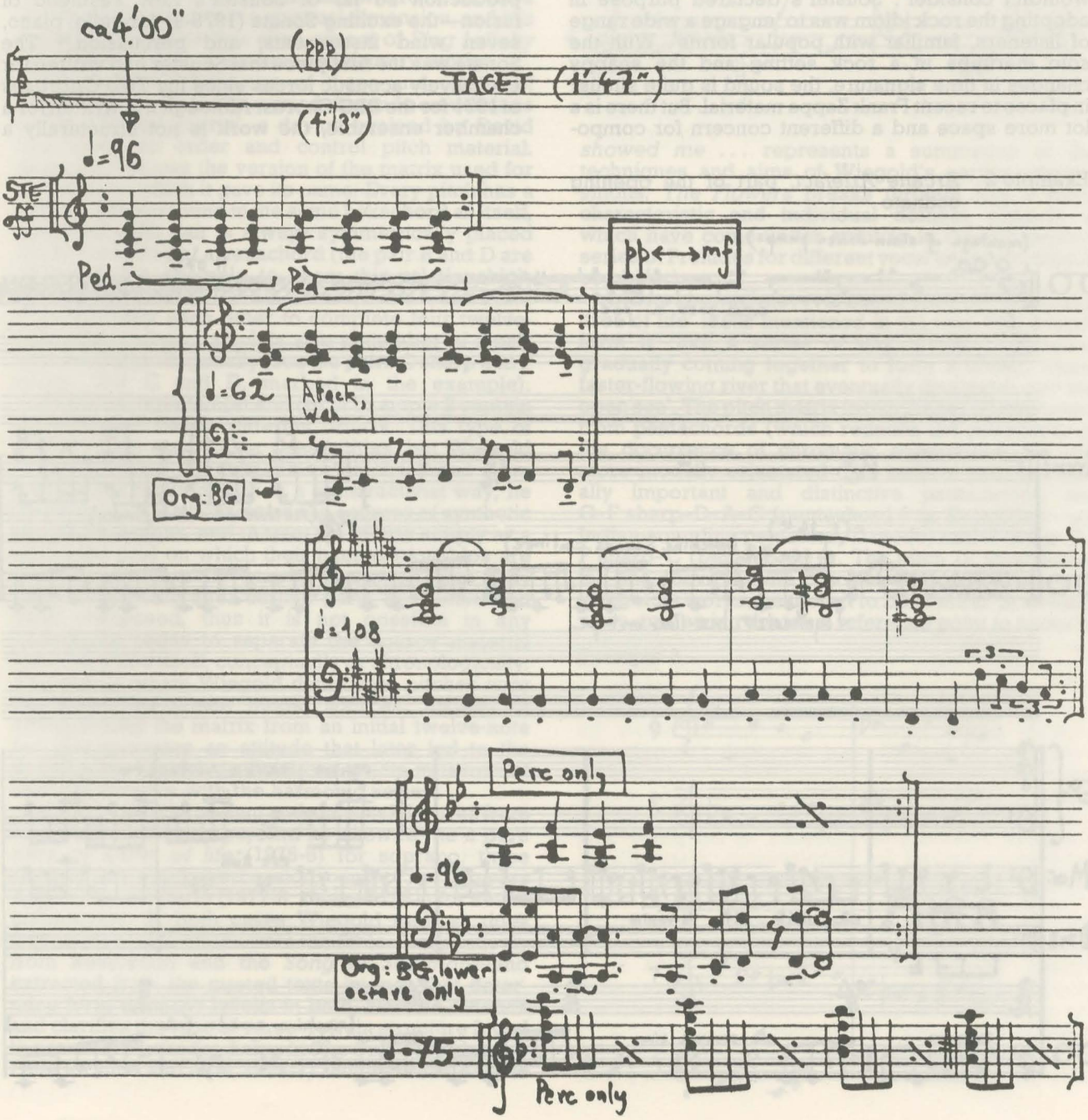
American rock is a particular interest of Souster. At the First American Music Conference held at Keele University in 1975, he gave a paper called 'The Rock Influence',[18] illustrating the links between the progressive rock of the 1960s and the American avant garde. In the same year a music textbook, to which he had contributed a section on the use of electronics in rock music, was published in Cologne.[19] In Souster, however, the interest in rock music does not seem to go hand in hand with a left-wing stance (as is often the case), or at least if it does, he isn't letting on. At a round-table discussion held at the Keele conference Souster reiterated his interest in seeking out heterogeneous material and using it in his own compositions.

> It's possible . . . to take stimuli from far-flung parts of the

world and to gain new experiences in this way. The fact that this kind of cross-fertilisation can happen is something which gives me a certain amount of guarded hope.[20]

In 1976, after the demise of Intermodulation, Souster formed OdB,[21] a band that delved into experimental as well as more orthodox types of rock playing. The line-up was synthesizers, mallet instruments, and drum-kit; the other members were Peter Britton and Tony Greenwood. *Song* for instruments and four-track tape (1977), which first appeared in a shorter version as *Surfit*,[22] was written for OdB. The source material—an unusual mixture of Beach Boys' songs (*I can hear Music, Do it Again, Good Vibrations*) and model pop riffs and chord sequences—is taken from its normal context and put to work under a different, essentially alien, aesthetic, in the form of harmonic and rhythmic loops. The work begins with a recording of the voice of Carl Wilson of the Beach Boys giving a radio interview. The tape part shows how arduous a task is involved in multi-tracking in the pop studio (a reminder, should we forget, that 'serious' electronic musicians are not alone in using complex studio techniques), and the layered combinations of riffs create interesting timbral effects. All the same the composition is in many places perversely sterile. Perhaps this is because the pop riffs are put into a formalist structure, as is apparent when one looks at their lay-out in the score (Example 1). As in *Zorna* and *The Music Room*, movement is composed into the piece: about halfway through, at the climax of the piece, one of the three players walks from the back of the auditorium through the audience to the stage, following a 'meandering path through the hall'.

Example 1 *Song*, p. 3

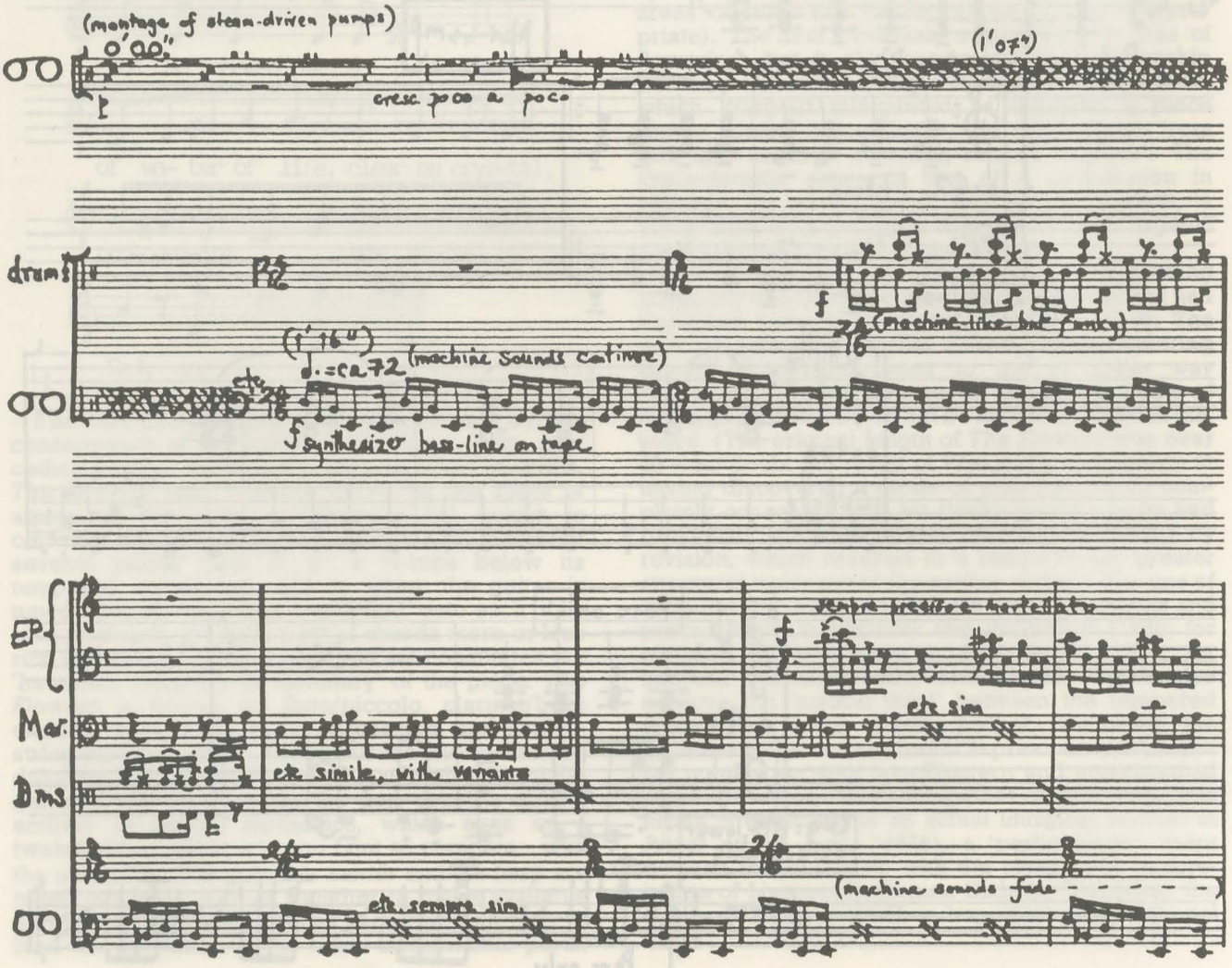


Another rock-influenced piece, *Arcane Artefact* (1976) is experimental in a different, perhaps less radical way. Souster felt that the avant garde had become far too involved in 'aperiodic, discontinuous rhythmic structures';[23] *Arcane Artefact* is a determined attempt to move away from this extreme compositional position. It opens with a montage of the sounds of a steam-driven pump (from the old Brighton and Hove pump-house), which is phased into a typically jazz-rock, busy bass line, alternating between 24/16 and 8/16 (this is on the tape, but it can be played on the synthesizer; Example 2). The purpose of this *perpetuum mobile* bass line is to act as an 'autonomous, machine like music'. (More interconnections: the application of montage in *Arcane Artefact* is similar to the opening of *Song of an Average City*; the *perpetuum mobile* idea first appears in *Waste Land Music* (1970), and a similar ostinato occurs in Sonata (1978-9)). *Arcane Artefact* was partly composed by Souster and partly worked out in conjunction with the percussionist of OdB, Tony Greenwood; but Souster was intent on using rock and jazz rhythms 'in a way that perhaps rock musicians wouldn't consider'. Souster's declared purpose in adopting the rock idiom was to 'engage a wide range of listeners, familiar with popular forms'. With the solo marimba in a rock setting and the snappy changes in time signature, the sound is quite similar in places to recent Frank Zappa material. But there is a lot more space and a different concern for compositional needs than are found in rock music. The work is not the essence of rock music, but a sort of hybrid, as Souster is aware; in fact at the time of its first radio broadcast in 1979 he spoke of it as moving in the direction of some 'new fusion . . . a new harmony'.

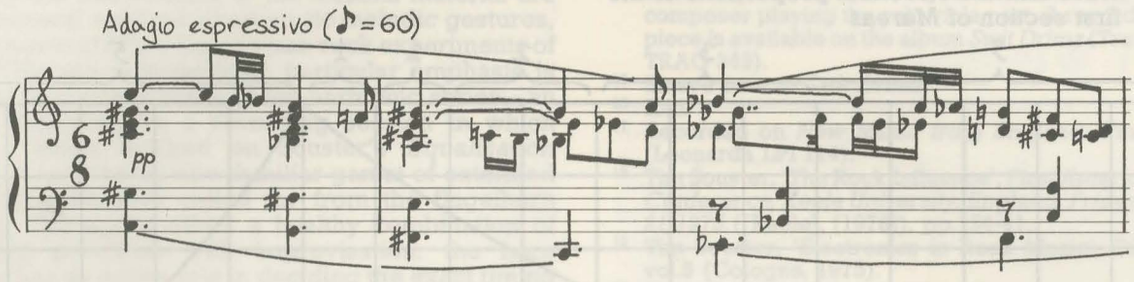
New fusions

Souster, then, is motivated by a deep interest in cultural cross-fertilisation, which leads inevitably to the need for reconciliation by compositional means of the disparate elements in his material. In one way or another this challenge, 'the integration of many different kinds of highly contrasted music into a new unity',[24] has intrigued Souster since his Intermodulation days, but in recent works his eclecticism has taken new and more copious turns, and the problems of fusion have become correspondingly more acute. Critics have levelled at Souster the accusation that though his ideas are powerful his music never matches them in strength and effectiveness. No such discrepancy between theory and practice exists, however, in the most attractive production so far of Souster's new aesthetic of fusion—the exciting Sonata (1978-9) for cello, piano, seven wind instruments, and percussion.[25] The Sonata was the first piece that Souster had written for exclusively acoustic forces since his *Two Choruses* of 1971 for the BBC Chorus. Although it is written for a chamber ensemble, the work is not structurally a

Example 2 *Arcane Artefact*, part of the opening ostinato



Example 3 Sonata, opening



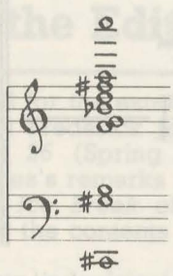
Classical sonata; in fact the title derives again from a memory—this time of Souster's experience as an undergraduate of playing Beethoven's cello sonatas with Christopher van Kampen (who was the cellist with the Nash Ensemble in the original BBC recording of Souster's piece in 1980.)

The influences at work in the Sonata are multifarious. It contains a great deal of contrasting consonant and specifically 'non-tonal' material, much of which originates in the 'vocabulary' of American popular forms. The piece was composed partly in Manhattan and partly in California: Souster's reduction of heterogeneous elements to fit a common frame of reference has some parallels with the familiar image of the USA as a 'melting pot'. Numerous stylistic references flash by—to American repetitive music, for instance (at one point Reich's Octet comes to mind), and jazz (a fleeting echo of Duke Ellington's *Mood Indigo*)—and there is great textural and timbral variety.

The overriding characteristic of the Sonata is not, however, that the composer uses fragments of different types of music, but that he exploits culturally conditioned systems of expectations to produce particular moods and effects. The temporal proximity of disparate material, the implying of other codes, and the importance given to timbre (to which at times tonality is subservient), work together to create a unique and surprisingly accessible form of expression, in which diverse elements come to fruition within a single framework. Expectations are relentlessly dashed: for long stretches, material is mulled over at leisure, only to be interrupted by a burst of activity; where one anticipates development or elaboration of a melodic idea, for example, there is instead an abrupt halt and, with a 'sudden dramatic gesture', the piece turns into a cross between a Stockhausen 'moment' and the Chicago Art Ensemble in busking mood. The music swings to and fro between states of dynamism and stasis—so violently, indeed, that it has been referred to as the music of a schizophrenic. This kind of sudden change is of course a characteristic of purely minimalist compositions, but Souster uses it to achieve his own, rather different and idiosyncratic compositional ends. Keith Potter suggests that it is important to Souster 'to be able to surprise listeners in ways which they can comprehend, as opposed to baffling them with the manifold complexities of an avant-garde approach'.[26] Souster achieves the 'comprehensible surprise' by playing with codified and familiar forms, but there is still a problem as to how one should respond (after acknowledging the initial shock) to the juxtaposing of these blocks of diverse material, for in this music there are no compositional 'rules' governing degrees of musical difference. Michael Nyman, in discussing a sudden change of musical material in his own minimalist piece *Think Slow, Act Fast*, disputed phlegmatically that such moments are more 'meaningful' than any other.[27] This contrast of musical textures in Souster's work may be a product of the 'Stockhausen experience' as Potter dubs it, but the importance of timbre is something that he probably also owes to the rock experience.

The Sonata is not all sudden change. There is an important harmonic group in each of the two movements. In the first, the piano's opening statement (Example 3) is constantly adapted, extended, curtailed, or transformed into a more traditional jazz-ensemble sound—an excellent example immediately precedes the cello cadenza. The harmonic basis of the second movement is a ten-note chord (Example 4), the source of which is 'the magnificent "apocalyptic" chord in the first movement of Mahler's 10th Symphony'.[28] It first appears before the soulful jazz-style variation in the first movement, just mentioned; but it is not fully exploited until the second movement, where it is gradually encouraged to reveal itself, slowly emerging out of the basic interval of a 5th. Even the violent section (the one described above as being in 'busking' style) has piano clusters derived from the chord. The attractive flashback 'disco' coda, based on a keyboard ostinato that is first heard in the cello cadenza, derives all its harmonic expansions from the dissonant chord, and includes a glorious chromatic shuffle down from a C sharp tonal area to C minor, which first appeared with the third melodic idea of the movement; the harmonies used in this final section originate from the chord sequence in *Driftwood Cortège*.

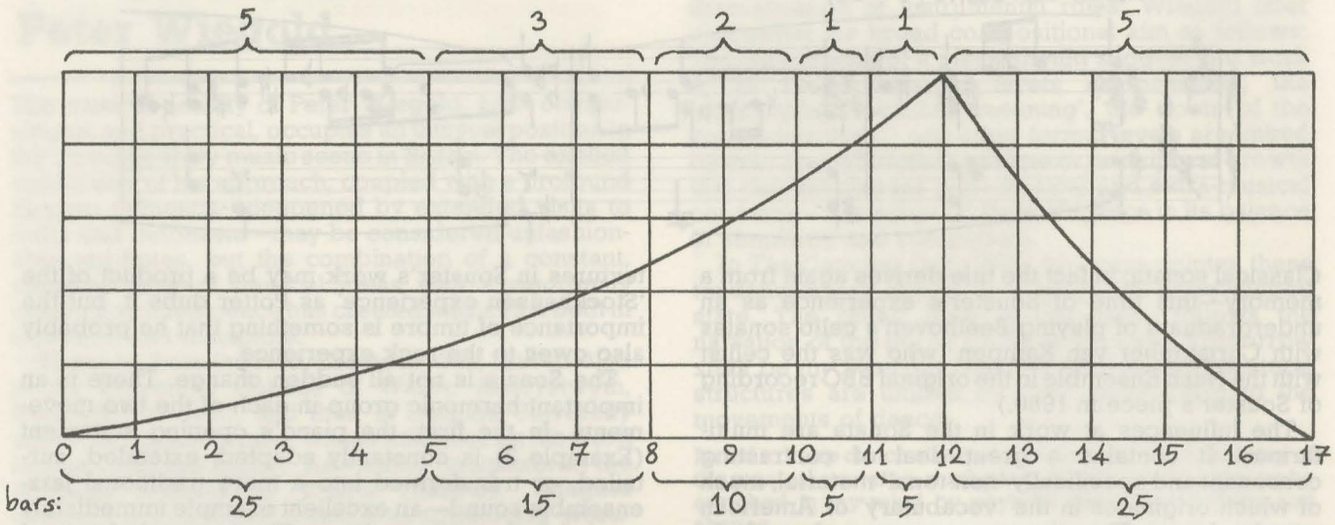
Example 4



A different and in some ways more conventional type of fusion technique is used in *Mareas* (1980), a work for four voices and four-track tape based on the texts of two poems by Pablo Neruda—*Mareas* (Tides) and *El mar* (The sea).[29] The structural proportions of the work are governed by numerical values derived from measurements of the speed, height, and duration of the *tsunami* tidal wave. The source of Souster's data, and indeed of the whole concept of such a structure, was a book by the American Willard Basconi, *Waves and Beaches—the Dynamics of the Ocean Surface* (1964), which was recommended to him by Gordon Mumma.

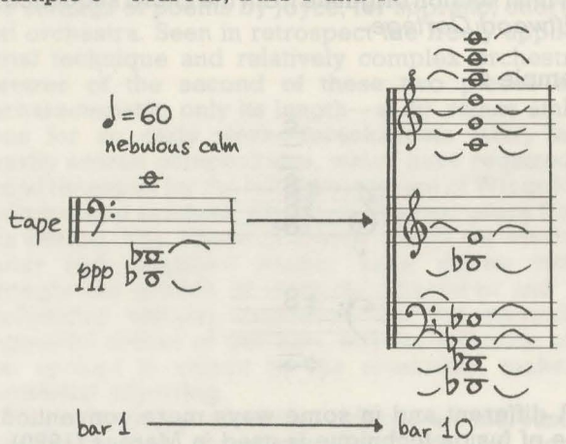
The contours and duration (17′) of Souster's model wave not only shape the overall form of the piece (*Mareas* reveals rather holistic tendencies in

Figure 1 The relationship between the *tsunami* tidal wave and the structural proportions of the first section of *Mareas*

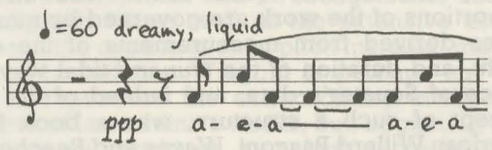


Souster) but the internal proportions of some of the sections. The first section, for example, is based on the number 17 (the duration of the *tsunami*) divided into two segments at the point where the wave peaks (12 + 5). The first segment is then further divided according to the Fibonacci series to create the proportions of the subsections (Figure 1), which are articulated by the vocoder part on the tape. In each subsection the ebb and flow of the wave are more loosely reflected in the slow piling up of repetitions of the same interval to cover a wide spectrum, before a quick dissolution (Example 5). The basic interval is reduced in successive subsections (perfect 4th, major 3rd, minor 3rd, major 2nd, minor 2nd) and the final cluster covers an accordingly narrower range.

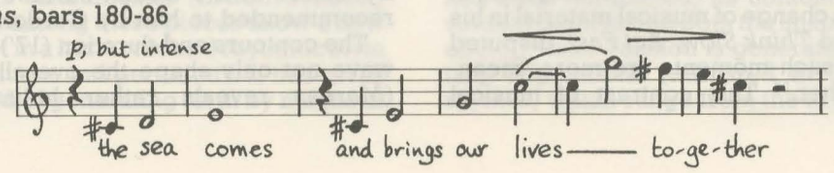
Example 5 *Mareas*, bars 1 and 10



Example 6 *Mareas*, opening bars of the soprano part



Example 7 *Mareas*, bars 180-86



The voices likewise begin the section with open 5ths and end it with semitones (Example 6).

The rising and falling waveshape pervades the work in other less integral ways as well. The transition from section 1 to section 2, for instance, is made by a synthesised noise cluster which dissolves slowly upwards, the low frequencies being eliminated first; this is answered later by a cluster that dissolves slowly downwards, the high frequencies being eliminated first. Much of the intervallic material, particularly in the central, unaccompanied section of the piece, also reflects the waveshape (Example 7).

The use of language in *Mareas* is interestingly varied. In the first section of the work the voices begin by singing only the vowel sounds of selected words: 'a e a' from *mareas*, 'o u o' from *molusco*, 'a o a' from *sal rota*, and so on. Not until the fifth subsection do they make tentative moves towards whole words and only in section 2 does anything like conventional text setting begin. Another element is the prominent part accorded on the tape to a vocoder, a device that modifies a human voice (it is much used in the pop world, for example by Herbie Hancock and Laurie Anderson); the vocoder 'speaks' Neruda's poetry alternately in the original Spanish and in Souster's English translation—the single text opening up two different sound worlds. In places both taped and live voices are modified electronically, and at one point sea sound effects are produced by filtering the slow singing of the word 'motion' by the mezzo-soprano.

Souster's most recent work was commissioned especially for an Arts Council tour, Electronic Music Now, early in 1983, which he and trumpeter John Wallace fronted. *The Transistor Radio of St Narcissus* is a flamboyant work for flugelhorn and live electronics. It takes its title from a passage in Thomas Pynchon's novel, *The Crying of Lot 49*, in which the heroine experiences a moment of insight into the inexplicable correlation between the appearance of the lay-out of circuitry in a transistor radio and the design of a Californian settlement estate. Souster interprets this moment musically by creating 'nodal points' (in several cases, tonal triads) which are arrived at from a diversity of sound textures.

As usual the influences on the work and consequently the components of the musical material are from several sources: short scalic melodic gestures, reminiscent of Miles Davis's jazz-rock experiments of the 1970s are incorporated; particular emphasis is placed on the overtones of the harmonic series—an idea stimulated by a recording session in which Equale Brass worked on Souster's *Equalisation* (1980);[30] and the by now familiar gamut of extended playing techniques called for from the flugelhorn player. The score offers a healthy combination of extreme precision with improvisation: the horn player has an active role in deciding the exact timing of some of the material, though the order is given; and at certain points he sets in motion electronic processes such as pitch transformation, digital acceleration, and other electronic modifications of the sounds he produces.

Once again both instant contrasts and long-term transformation (from dissonance to consonance, for example) are at work in *St Narcissus*, for it begins as one thing and ends as another. The binding factor here, as in Sonata and *Mareas*, is Souster's attempt to 'create a coherent but flexible musical language in which consonant and dissonant intervals are given equal value'.[31] In fact the work ties up many of the threads that have run through the music discussed here: the intuitive/improvisational element, the jazz-rock experience, the paradox of transformation and unity, the recent Californian connection—'[there's] a Californian myth which I feel that I'm part of'.[32] Most significant of all it demonstrates the continuing fundamental importance to Souster of the electronic dimension of sound, under which all the other influences are subsumed:

> The magnetic attraction of electronics continues to grow and electronic music can now be said to reflect the influence not only of the avant garde of the Western world but also of Japanese and Indian traditional music, of rock music and jazz.[33]

1 Tim Souster, 'Intermodulation: a Short History,' *Contact 17* (Summer 1977), p.4.
2 Raymond Williams, 'Tradition', *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana/Croom Helm, 1976), p.269.
3 Composer's Portrait, BBC Radio 3, summer 1979.
4 BBC Radio 3 broadcast, mid-1970s, introduced by Roger Smalley.
5 Ibid.
6 'Tim Souster Writes about his New Composition for Three Orchestras "Triple Music II"', *The Listener*, vol.84 (1970), p.222.
7 Here Souster's approach to the creative and social functions at work in musical performance parallels that of Christopher Small, who has criticised the subjugation of new creative means to traditional notational precepts: see Small, *Music—Society—Education: a Radical Examination of the Prophetic Function of Music in Western, Eastern and African Cultures with its Impact on Society and its Use in Education* (London: John Calder, rev. 2/1980), p.31.
8 Letter to the author, summer 1982.
9 *Uzun hava* played by Deben Bhattacharya on *Music from Turkey* (Argo ZFB 46).
10 *The Times*, 31 July 1974, p.9.
11 In a letter to the author (May 1983) Souster speaks of having been 'bowled over' by the Delius work.
12 From a talk given by Souster on BBC Radio 3 in 1973, quoted in Michael Nyman, ' "Song of an Average City"—Tim Souster's Answer to Delius', *The Listener*, vol.92 (1974), p.312.
13 Nyman, ' "Song of an Average City" ', p.312.
14 *Spectral* was given its first performance at St John's, Smith Square, in 1972, by Intermodulation, with the composer playing the solo viola part. A recording of the piece is available on the album *Swit Drimz* (Transatlantic TRAG 343).
15 Sleeve note to *Swit Drimz*.
16 Ibid.
17 Recorded on *New Music from England: Tim Souster* (Leonarda LPI 114).
18 Tim Souster, 'The Rock Influence', *First American Music Conference, Keele University, England, Friday April 18-21 1975* ([Keele], [1978]), pp.134-41.
19 Tim Souster, 'Electronics in Rock Music', *Die Garbe*, vol.5 (Cologne, 1975).
20 [Round-table discussion], 'The Americanness of American Music', *First American Music Conference, Keele University*, p.197.
21 'OdB' is a reference level for amplitude of signals in a recording studio. In 1980 Souster started his own publishing company called OdB Editions, which publishes his music, and his own commercial recording studio.
22 Recorded on the *Swit Drimz* album.
23 This and the quotations in the remainder of this section are from Souster's remarks in Composer's Portrait on BBC Radio 3 in the summer of 1979.
24 Souster, 'Intermodulation', p.4.
25 Recorded by the Capricorn Players on *New Music from England*, and by the Nash Ensemble on *Tim Souster* (Nimbus 45020).
26 Keith Potter, 'New Music', *Classical Music* (7 February 1981), p.15.
27 Music in our Time, BBC Radio 3, 1983.
28 Souster, sleeve note to Nimbus 45020.
29 The work was commissioned by Electric Phoenix with funds made available by the Arts Council.
30 Nimbus 45020.
31 Souster, sleeve note to Nimbus 45020.
32 'The Americanness of American Music', p.197.
33 Music in our Time, BBC Radio 3, 1978.

Letter to the Editors

I am very grateful for the extended and stimulating review by Robert Frederick Jones of my book on Tippett (*Contact 26* (Spring 1983), pp.31-3). In particular, Mr Jones's remarks on the Second Piano Sonata and *The Ice Break* offer quite individual perceptions as to the contents and format of these works.

Mr Jones detects 'indecision' in my book as to the level of awareness and technical knowledge required by its readers. Surely, though, to have duplicated David Matthews's excellent introductory volume would have been pointless? Early on, also, my book states that it is 'the first attempt to consider all of Tippett's music in some depth'; this implies something more demanding.

As regards the misprints, an erratum slip should accompany each copy of the book, correcting the plan of the Third Symphony and reinstating clefs in the quotations. Evidently, no erratum slip accompanied Mr Jones's copy, and any reader similarly deprived should write to the publishers.

Meirion Bowen

(London)

Richard Barrett
Peter Wiegold

The musical activity of Peter Wiegold, both compositional and practical, occupies an unusual position in the contemporary music scene in Britain. The explicit spirituality of his approach, coupled with a profound Eastern influence—deepened by extended visits to India and Indonesia—may be considered unfashionable attributes, but the combination of a constant, unforced flow of musical ideas with a rigorously controlling intelligence has created music rich both in invention and discipline.

Wiegold, born in Ilford, Essex, in 1949, first studied at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, from 1967 to 1972, and then at Durham University under David Lumsdaine, whose influence on his work is deep and continuing. As visiting composer at the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol (1976-8), Wiegold developed a practical interest in organising workshops where people of all degrees of musical experience (including none) can become creatively involved together in composition and performance. Since 1973 his activities as director of the chamber group Gemini have been increasingly important in determining his attitude towards all practical and creative aspects of music.

The confluence of these concerns and experiences, together with a consuming interest in the development of a 'natural' way of looking at harmony partly inspired by his knowledge of non-Western musical traditions, has played a major part in shaping Wiegold's compositional style. However, his first acknowledged works, composed before his move to Durham, were innocent of any of these formative influences: they are *Dove sta amore* (1971), a setting for soprano and three instruments of a poem by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and *Rain has Fallen* (1972), five settings of poems by Joyce, for soprano, chorus, and orchestra. Seen in retrospect the freely applied serial technique and relatively complex orchestral textures of the second of these two pieces are uncharacteristic; only its length—at 30′ rather ambitious for an early work—foreshadows later, less heavily scored compositions, which have required a broad timespan for the full development of Wiegold's technical and aesthetic precepts. Another piece from this period, *The Circle of Forms* (1972) for electric guitar and amplified double bass, shows more strongly the growth of clear-cut structures and an uncluttered vertical dimension, but the inevitably ungrateful timbre of this duo, and the inclusion of a text spoken in unison by the musicians, make it somewhat offputting.

The next group of works reflects an increasing confidence with the chosen methods, no doubt strongly catalysed by Wiegold's study with David Lumsdaine. Indeed, the insistence on organic harmonic development and on recognisable cadential configurations, as well as the extensive use of matrices in the organisation of pitch material, may be traced to Lumsdaine. Wiegold is perhaps not disposed to reproduce the extraordinary intellectual toughness of Lumsdaine's works, but, beginning with his Durham compositions, he substituted a growing awareness of what is 'fundamental' (in both senses!) in music. The earlier among these pieces show a new linearity of form, cast in a harmonic and rhythmic style of constant development and permutation; this gives way later to a method of generating form by means of contrasting perspectives on a harmony (implied rather than explicit) based on overtone series, rhythm based (analogously) on a fundamental pulse, and the dramatisation of instrumental roles. Wiegold later expressed his broad compositional aim as follows: 'the central idea of a piece should suggest and work at as many different levels as possible'; the 'philosophical/spiritual meaning', the 'roots of the sound-structure',[1] and other formal levels are linked by their shared basis in a shape or principle of growth that can encompass both musical and extra-musical concerns—a concept of great elegance in its balance of simplicity and complexity.

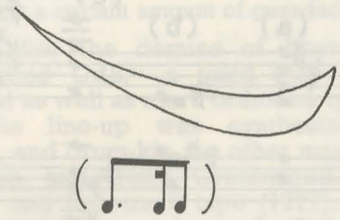
In *The Dancing Day* (1973) for brass quintet, these tendencies are shown in a relatively undeveloped state. The broad form of the piece follows the narration of the life of Christ in the carol *Tomorrow shall be my Dancing Day*; the metrical and gestural structures are unified by their relationship to the movements of dance:

> I tried to keep dance always in mind so that the imagining of the musical gestures, rhythms and shapes could always be enriched in my mind by physical gestures, rhythms and shapes.

Dance is associated in the music with shifting accentual patterns in a given metre, usually applied cyclically; the larger sections also depend on the cyclical permutation of events. Wiegold was unhappy about the linearly cumulative form of this work, which (in common with its source material) builds to a single climax; and indeed the timespan (20′) is perhaps too long for the listener not to lose his bearings along the way. Also, the intended effect of the shifting accents is partly masked by the lack of a clearly audible metrical frame upon which such relative changes may be projected. The subsequent development of 'relatively static reference points from which to observe long journeys' arose from this dissatisfaction. *The Dancing Day* is basically lacking in the foreground-background relationships that impart the essential depth to musical form.

The central ideas in the next pieces permeate the planning of every salient aspect of the composition. In *Gemini* (1973) for two clarinets and percussion (two players), the central idea is, not surprisingly, that of the opposition of pairs (of instruments or players), which undergo a process of interaction, meeting, and fusion; the same sequence governs the piece as a whole, which describes an unwinding of tension, the gradual homogenisation of an initial state rich in contrast and conflict. The stylised instrumental drama thus generated is set against a refrain, which returns at the very end to lead the music from motionlessness to a new balance and reconciliation of the elements of its harmonic and gestural vocabulary. *Sing Lullaby* (1974), for soprano and amplified double bass, pushes further the concept of a single idea shaping both the piece and its constituent parts: the overall form, the form of each section, and that of many smaller-scale events may be represented by a single abstract shape—a movement from 'distant, unfocussed, unpitched, complex, high in the harmonic series' to 'close, clear, full-toned, low in the harmonic series', followed by an 'afterbeat period'; the same shape is implied by the archetypal rhythm of the lullaby and by the outline of a cradle (Example 1; after Wiegold). Although the text of *Sing Lullaby* was added to the music after the essential composition had been completed, its content (traditional lullaby verses) determined both the shape and the substance of the music. Tension is generated again by elementary oppositions (mirrored in the imagery of the rhymes, which range from the idyllic to the spitefully

Example 1

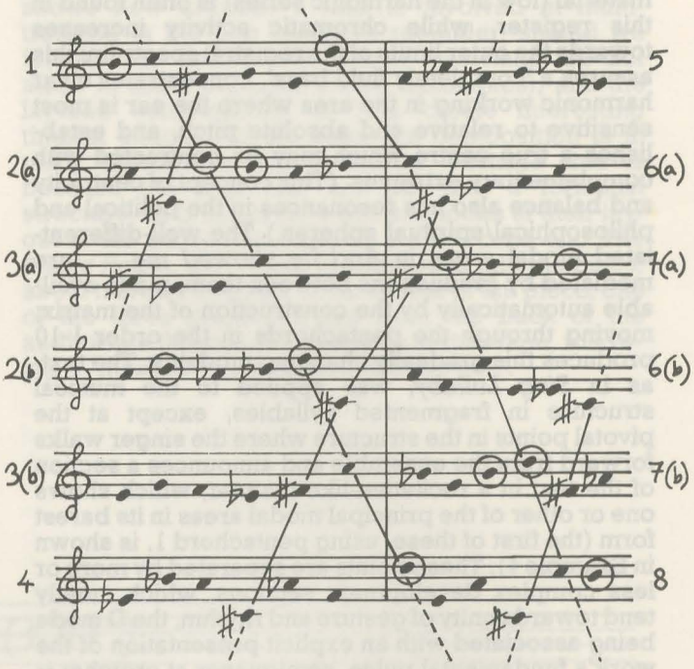


violent—'go to sleep or else . . .'); but the resolution of dualities is here achieved not by fusion (as in *Gemini*) but by the containment of one element within another (symbolically matching the cradling of the baby in its mother's arms, or the subconscious desire of the adult to escape conflict by a return to the safety of the womb). The words are fragmented into syllables, whose arrangement is directed towards clarifying the musical structure rather than the import and meaning of the text. Although this is also true of other pieces by Wiegold, the use of words primarily to satisfy structural concerns is unusual; elsewhere he chooses and sets texts to project a spiritual dimension, and it is perhaps this somewhat alien aspect of *Sing Lullaby* that makes it one of his less satisfactory works.

The harmonic language of these and others of Wiegold's works in this period depends on versions of the 'Gemini matrix', a device evolved by David Lumsdaine to order and control pitch material. Example 2 shows the version of the matrix used for the piece to which it gave its name. Every pitch has a partner, always found in the same hexachord as itself, and each such pair is always symmetrically placed about the centre of a hexachord (the pair B and D are ringed in the example to show this relationship); further, hexachords 1 and 4, 2 and 3, 6 and 7, and 5 and 8 complement each other to complete four twelve-note sets; and each pitch is also a member of a pair that alternates diagonally (see the pairs C sharp and F sharp, and C and D, marked in the example). Hexachords labelled (a) and (b) in Example 2 contain the same pitches in different orders. This type of matrix offers many other possibilities, but Wiegold does not utilise the available symmetries and complementary relationships in a constructivist way; he prefers to use the hexachords as sources of synthetic modal formations, and to treat the matrix simply as a reference grid on which their interrelationships are mapped. In fact the matrix illustrated was fully constructed only after certain parts of *Gemini* had been composed, thus it is not possible in any meaningful sense to separate the source material from the piece itself, conceptually or chronologically. The way in which Wiegold distributes pitches over the matrix to create modal sources, instead of extrapolating the matrix from an initial twelve-note set, demonstrates an attitude that later led to the abandoning of such artificial constructs in favour of working directly with the harmonic series.

The two most important and successful works from this phase are, perhaps, *And he showed me a pure river of water of life* (1975-6) for soprano, three clarinettists, and percussion, and *The Flowers Appear on the Earth* (1977-8, revised 1981) for seven instruments. In both cases Wiegold took as titles fragments of quotations from the Bible—respectively from *Revelation* and the *Song of Solomon*—and extracted from the quoted texts images that determine form on many levels; in both, also, he extends and clarifies the type of verse-refrain structure found in previous works (and also in *The Soft Complaining Flute* for flute and tape, 1974-7). But whereas *And he*

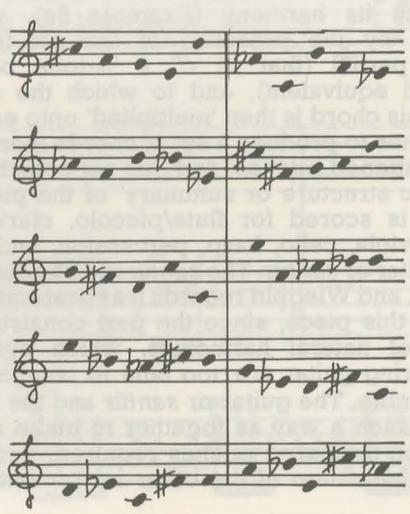
Example 2



showed me . . . represents a summation of the techniques and aims of Wiegold's earlier compositions, *The Flowers* breaks through into a more characteristic and individual domain, aspects of which have come under scrutiny in the subsequent series of Preludes for different vocal and instrumental combinations.

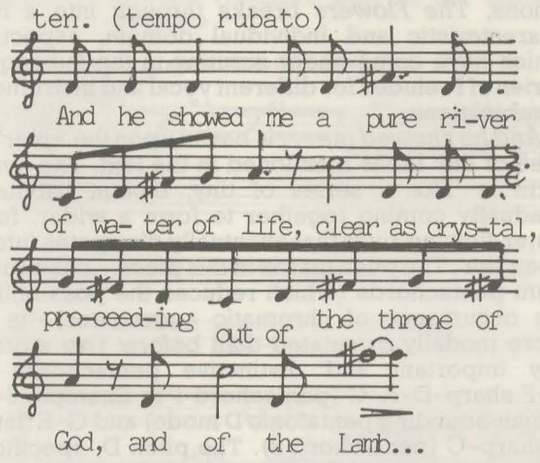
And he showed me . . . is based upon the 'river' and 'tree of life' ideas mentioned in the text. The overall form is 'like a series of tiny, distant tributaries gradually coming together to form a wider, fuller, faster-flowing river that eventually dissipates into the open sea'. The pitch matrix in this piece—constructed from pentachords (which reduces the possibility of the occurrence of chromatic aggregates)—is still more modally orientated than before: two structurally important and distinctive pentachords are G–F sharp–D–A–C (pentachord 1 in Example 3—an Indian-sounding pentatonic D mode) and G–E flat–D–F sharp–C (pentachord 2). The pitch D, specifically the one above middle C, forms the focus of many of Wiegold's works; he feels it to be 'central' in several ways, preferring the tonal reference point to occur in

Example 3



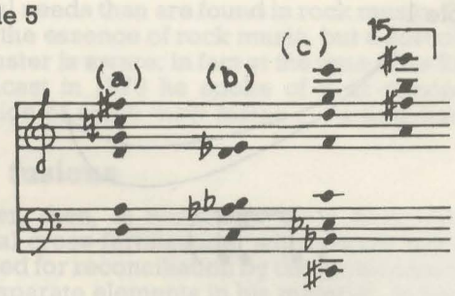
a median register, rather than in the bass as the foundation of a hierarchy. Consequently, consonant material (low in the harmonic series) is often found in this register, while chromatic activity increases towards the outer limits of the registral spectrum; this assures a 'completely fluid bass', concentrates clear harmonic working in the area where the ear is most sensitive to relative and absolute pitch, and establishes a true centre which may be contrasted with complementary extremes. (This concept of centricity and balance also has resonances in the political and philosophical/spiritual spheres.) The well-differentiated modal areas in *And he showed me . . .* are mediated by graduations between them, made available automatically by the construction of the matrix; moving through the pentachords in the order 1-10 produces this gradually changing modality. The text, as in *Sing Lullaby*, was applied to the musical structure in fragmented syllables, except at the pivotal points in the structure where the singer walks forward from the ensemble and announces a section of the text in a recitative-like manner, which shows one or other of the principal modal areas in its barest form (the first of these, using pentachord 1, is shown in Example 4). These points are separated by more or less complex development sections, which mostly tend towards unity of gesture and rhythm, the D mode being associated with an explicit presentation of the work's fundamental pulse, semiquaver at crotchet = 90—the confluence of tributaries into a single flow.

Example 4



The Soft Complaining Flute introduces a natural consequence of the harmonic thinking of the preceding works—the inclusion of justly tuned intervals. *The Flowers* uses a single chord for the basis of almost all its harmony (Example 5a), which is coloured by the presence of the non-tempered seventh partial (that is, *c″* a 1/6-tone below its tempered equivalent), and to which the guitar is tuned. This chord is then 'multiplied' onto each of its own pitches to produce a set of chords more or less rich in flattened pitches, and this set constitutes the 'harmonic structure or summary' of the piece. *The Flowers* is scored for flute/piccolo, clarinet/bass clarinet, viola, cello, harp, percussion, and twelve-string guitar or *santūr*. The *santūr* is a Middle Eastern dulcimer, and Wiegold regards it as preferable to the guitar in this piece, since the part consists almost entirely of natural harmonics, which even on a twelve-string guitar are too faint to compete with the ensemble. The guitar or *santūr* and the harp are tuned in such a way as together to make available all the non-tempered pitches required, and thus to lead the intonation of the other instrumental parts.

Example 5



It will be noticed that the notes of the guitar chord are the same as those of the D mode in *And he showed me . . .*; and just as the D mode in that work has a complementary mode, the harmonic summary of *The Flowers* is supplemented by a 'harmonic opposite' chord, C–A flat–B flat–D–E flat, in the tenor register (Example 5b), and a symmetrical tempered twelve-note chord (Example 5c); the last constitutes 'the main focus of the tempered side of the piece'. Unlike *And he showed me . . .*, however, the differentiation in timbre of the instruments used here allows the dramatic relationships between them to function as a formal determinant, as in earlier works. This increase in 'vertical' clarity is matched by a harder-edged alternation of contrasted materials 'horizontally'—that is, in the sequence of ideas; moreover the constant reference to a basic pulse and harmony is made much more explicit.

The Flowers Appear on the Earth is a 'rite of spring' (and a comparison with Stravinsky in the areas of form and rhythm would not be inappropriate). The text obviously suggested the idea of flowering, but it also suggested the relationship between the earth and the flowers it brings forth, which Wiegold interpreted as implying a piece 'firmly rooted harmonically, yet reaching up from this into distant, delicately-related regions'. The characteristic shape is that of a preparation in stillness for a spiralling and joyous growth, a celebration of a principle common to both organic processes and the act of meditation.

The arrival, in *The Flowers*, at a convincing simplicity and the viability of natural tunings has had important consequences for Wiegold's work. The ensuing series of Preludes ('short pieces exploring limited areas that seem to me in some way "elemental" ') may be seen as amplifying facets of this approach that could not be accommodated in that piece. (The original length of *The Flowers* was over 40′—no doubt the result of Wiegold's enthusiasm at having discovered a mode of utterance more completely consonant with his thinking than any he had previously achieved; it was reduced drastically by revision, which resulted in a return to the greater structural tightness of the earlier works.) The use of ostinatos in *Prelude I* (1978; for four instruments and percussionist-conductor) and *Prelude II* (1980; for piano), and of drones in *Prelude IV* (1979; for soprano, clarinet, cello, and piano), which also exploits the 'natural third' between the tempered major and minor thirds, further reinforces the 'stillness at the centre', found in previous works, and the connection with non-Western and non-classical musics. Further, the development of clear ritualistic forms is exploited in an actual liturgical context in *Ritual of the Light* (1978), a 'participatory' event devised for musicians with the clergy and congregation of Liverpool's Roman Catholic Cathedral, the shape of which is itself an important compositional factor.

Peter Wiegold

SELECTED SCORES:

INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE WITHOUT VOICE

The Flowers Appear on the Earth
for Fl., Cl., Vla., Vcl., Perc.

The Dancing Day
for Brass Quintet

Prelude I
for Alto Fl., Cl., Vla., Vcl., Perc.

Prelude II
for Piano Solo

Prelude III
for Wind Quintet

Prelude V
for String Quartet

Birthday Prelude
for Fl., Cl., Bn., Hn.

Gemini
for 2 Cl., 2 Perc.

The Circle of Forms
for Elec. Guitar, Amp. Db.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC WITH VOICE

The Peace of God
for 2 Fl. (1 doubling Sop. Sax), 2 Vcl., Tpt., Narrator, Children

And He Showed Me A Pure River of Water of Life
for Soprano, 3 Cl., Perc.

Dove Sta Amore
for Soprano, Cl., Tpt., Db.

Prelude IV—Snow Melting!
for Soprano, Cl., Vcl., Pno.

Sing Lullaby
for Soprano, Db. (Amp. & Wa-Wa)

ELECTRONIC

The Soft Complaining Flute
for Flute and Tape

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UNIVERSAL EDITION

The most recent larger work has been the *Grimm Songs* for voice and piano, commissioned and first performed (in 1983) by Jane Manning, to a text by Nick Otty. Otty had worked previously with Wiegold on *Saving the Sun* (1980) for tenor and tape (which dramatises the performer–tape relationship in a more convincing way than most such pieces), and has also co-directed music-theatre workshops with him, including the 1983 SPNM Composers' Weekend. The text consists of two alternating elements: a series of 'songs' exploring in a mock-structuralist vein the recurrent situations found in the folk-tales of the Brothers Grimm; and episodes in which the singer takes on the character of an old woman who chastises a young girl for being frightened by the stories, on the grounds that they are after all only stories and may be reduced to a small number of simple (and by no means scary) structures. (The tongue-in-cheek attitude of the old woman's explaining-away was perhaps lost on some critics at the première.) The keyboard is intended to behave as an instrument in 'folk-tuning': the group of pitches used is restricted and remains constant throughout the piece, and once again intervals are consonant in the centre and chromatic at the extremes. The rhythmic language of the work is more refined and simplified than ever, and harmonic repetitions abound, though the material is necessarily richer than in the short Preludes; as in recent works of Stockhausen, for example, familiar harmonic material is deployed in unexpected ways, here tending strongly towards jazz and rock music and occasionally Stravinskian harmony. The combination of eclecticism with Wiegold's unifying intuition, however, results in a work whose originality in the field of pieces for voice and piano is unquestionable: one never feels that the composer is frustrated by the restrictions of this medium, and the refinement of the sound of his music, its individuality and attractiveness—developed in *The Flowers . . .* and subsequently—continues seemingly effortlessly in these songs.

To conclude, a few words concerning Peter Wiegold's participatory workshops. Experience shows that these are now almost invariably successful, in that they provide for both musicians and 'non-musicians' an adventure in what may be totally unfamiliar domains, an expansion of the individual's perception of his or her imagination and abilities, and (more urgently for participants who are composers!) a welcome perspective on the roots of music in physical gesture, spontaneity, and conviviality. The lack of the composer–performer–listener hierarchy in these events, and the substitution of an unassuming invitation to collective work might even afford participants some useful social awareness (or is that hoping too much?).

Naturally, Wiegold has learned more than most from these events, if only through continuity of attendance, and equally naturally he has begun to put the experience to work in his role as composer. For some time he and Gemini have been involved in sessions without other participants, working on collaborative compositions and improvisation; the resulting repertory has not yet found its way into the concert hall, but it has been performed to small audiences with some success. The music on the whole leans towards Wiegold's preoccupation with modal melodic material, from which harmony is generated by canonic superimposition with an energy and abrasiveness more commonly met with in rock music. This work is apparently still in a state of gestation, and has some way to go before it is traditionally 'presentable'. But on the basis of an as yet cursory acquaintance, it seems not only to afford genuine opportunities for the composer's craft, but also to be unaffected in its return to musical basics—unlike a great deal of other experimental work; the absence of compositorial domination undoubtedly plays a part here. What it shares with much experimental music in this country is a simplicity of musical means, and the tendency (also evinced by Vinko Globokar among others) to re-establish regional musical activity distinguished by a compact and economical organisation of creative and performing forces; this approach may lead to a more 'folk'- or 'community'-orientated musical subculture than those that exist in the socially less important 'centres of excellence'.

At a stage in life where many composers, having all but come to terms with the problems raised by their education and subsequent casting adrift into professional activity, are settling into the habit of producing what is expected of them, the sincerity and directness of Peter Wiegold's approach has led him to divert his attention away from the concert hall; a new work, to be given its première by Dreamtiger in early 1984, promises to carry to a new stage this still-embryonic process of interchange, which by now constitutes an indispensable element of the originality and vitality of Wiegold's work.

[1] Quotations are taken from Peter Wiegold's commentary on his portfolio of compositions submitted for the degree of PhD at Durham University in 1979, and from numerous conversations between Wiegold and the author over the period 1980-82.

Material Received

Scores

George Benjamin, *A Mind of Winter*, for soprano and orchestra (1980-81) (Faber)
Petar Bergamo, *Musica concertante: studi per orchestra sinfonica* (1961-2) (Philharmonia/Universal)
Pierre Boulez, *Messagesquisse*, for 7 cellos (Universal)
Benjamin Britten, *Young Apollo* op.16, for piano and string orchestra (1939) (Faber)
Barry Conyngham, *Mirages*, for orchestra (1978) (Universal)
Peter Maxwell Davies, *Black Pentecost*, for mezzo-soprano, baritone, and orchestra (1979) (Chester)
——, *Piano Sonata* (1981) (Chester)
Jonathan Harvey, *String Quartet* (1977) (Faber)
Roman Haubenstock-Ramati, *Song*, for solo percussion (1978) (Universal)
Josef Matthias Hauer, *Violinkonzert* op.54 (1928) (transcr. for violin and piano by Bruno Hauer) (Universal)
Mauricio Kagel, *Hallelujah*, for voices (1967) (Universal)
Oliver Knussen, *Ophelia Dances*, Book 1, for 9 instruments (1975) (Faber)
Zygmunt Krauze, *Suite de danses et de chansons pour clavecin et orchestre* (1977) (Universal)
Frank Martin, *Le vin herbé*, for 12 singers, 7 strings, and piano (Universal)
Richard Meale, *Interiors/Exteriors*, for 2 pianos and 3 percussionists (Universal)
Arvo Paart, *Credo*, for solo piano, mixed choir, and orchestra (1968) (Universal)
Wolfgang Rihm, *Musik für drei Streicher* (1977) (Philharmonia/Universal)
Al'fred Shnitke, *2. Streichquartett* (1981) (Philharmonia/Universal)
Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Schlagtrio, für Klavier und 2 x 3 Pauken*, no.⅓ (1952, rev. 1974) (Universal)
John Tavener, *The Lamb*, for SATB chorus (1982) (Chester)
Kurt Weill, *Der Silbersee* (vocal score) (Universal)
Hugh Wood, *Chamber Concerto* op.15 (Chester)
——, *To a Child Dancing in the Wind*, part-song for SATB, unaccompanied (1973) (Chester)
Alexander Zemlinsky, *Symphonische Gesänge* op.20, for baritone/contralto and orchestra (Universal)

New Writing on Stravinsky

Hilary Bracefield

Stravinsky Studies at the Crossroads

Mikhail Druskin, *Igor Stravinsky: his Life, Works and Views*, translated by Martin Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), £13.50

Paul Griffiths, *Igor Stravinsky: The Rake's Progress*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), £9.95 (hardback), £3.95 (paperback)

One year after the centenary of Igor Stravinsky's birth the Stravinsky scholarship factory is at last showing signs of coming into full production after an ominously long period of tooling-up. Pieter Van den Toorn's *The Music of Igor Stravinsky*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue,[1] is the first major product of what is sure to be a long line of analytical studies of the composer's music.

There has never been a dearth of general books on Stravinsky's life and works, but the situation here has never been really satisfactory either. His own writings about his music have been a source of mischief, misunderstanding, and misuse since at least 1913, and one wonders how far he was, like Wagner, consciously or subconsciously hoping to influence later conclusions about his personality and philosophy. Besides his many fascinating utterances to the newspaper and periodical press (long forgotten by or unknown to the general public until they began to emerge in such compilations as *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*),[2] Stravinsky's *Chronicle of my Life* (1936) and *Poetics of Music* (1942), and the series of conversation books, all written with the help of more or less silent collaborators, have trapped most writers on the composer into a reliance on unverified recountings of the composer's own views of his life, music, and critical reception. If this wasn't enough, Roman Vlad's *Stravinsky* (1960, rev. 2/1979) and Eric Walter White's *Stravinsky: the Composer and his Works* (1966, rev. 2/1979) have lasted far too long as the main source books for a study of the composer; they may be thorough but they are not the final word.

Stravinsky's death in 1971 has led to only a slow emergence of much-needed information on corners of the composer's life that he kept dark. In the case of many a 20th-century composer the widow has become the jealous guardian of such secrets and has held up the appraisal of her husband's music. Mrs Stravinsky's collaboration with Robert Craft, which produced *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* with its candid discussion of her relationship with the composer in the 1920s and 1930s, and her release of interesting pictorial documents that were the product of the Stravinskys' constant camera-clicking exercises,[3] have shone a light into at least some areas of Stravinsky's private life, however selectively. Her death in 1982 may be expected to lead eventually to the availability of far more material of a like kind.

There remain, however, several major obstacles to the establishment of a comprehensive body of writings on Stravinsky's life and works. The first of these is a nuisance, common to the study of many composers, rather than an insoluble problem: the wide dispersal of Stravinsky's musical scores and sketches among many libraries in Europe and the USA, the composer's publishers, and private collections. The second is the lack of material on Stravinsky's early life in Russia up to World War I. How much of this has been lost or destroyed and what actually remains in archives and private hands is something yet to be discovered. A heartening sign that Russian scholars may be able to begin to collate their holdings comes with the recent publication of critical works on the composer, the most important of which to date is the book by Mikhail Druskin under review; first published in Russian in 1974, it was revised in 1979, translated into German in 1976, and is now available in an English translation based on the revised edition.

A third difficulty is the sheer amount of material, other than scores and sketches, collected by the composer, who lived for so long and within such interesting circles. He was, after all, part of the heart of Western culture of the 20th century. While the Stravinsky estate will presumably be organised eventually to allow access to all the material it must hold, it is time now to discover what Stravinsky's friends and acquaintances and their descendants know and possess, and particularly what Stravinsky's own family (in both the West and the East) can contribute.

A final stumbling-block, and potentially the trickiest one, could be the relationship of Robert Craft, Stravinsky's long-time collaborator and assistant after the composer's arrival in the United States, to the Stravinsky estate and archives. There is no doubt that up to now he has played a major part in controlling what has been published from the material held by the Stravinskys themselves. The curious gathering of letters in the recently published first volume of a proposed three-volume *Selected Correspondence* edited by Craft,[4] and the rag-bag nature of *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* suggest both that selecting and editing the material for publication is a task far beyond one man, and that Craft in any case is not the man for the job.

Professor Druskin had the use neither of *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* nor the *Selected Correspondence* for his book on the composer. He knows, at least from scores, the whole of Stravinsky's musical output, but relies for discussion of the composer's life largely on *Chronicle of my Life* (in apparently either the 1935 French or 1936 English editions), the conversation books, Eric Walter White, Roman Vlad, and disappointingly (for the Western reader) few Russian sources. He has not set out to write a biography, but appears to have seized the opportunity to publish, mainly for the Russian public, his lifelong musings on the nature of Stravinsky's personality and music, not shrinking from discussion of Stravinsky's late period, his religious music, or the physical break from his homeland. Druskin, a distinguished Soviet musicologist (a professor at the Leningrad Conservatory), wrote his first published criticism of Stravinsky in 1928 and has long been an authority on Western music in general, but *Igor Stravinsky: his Life, Works and Views* (or as the dust jacket has it *his Personality, Works and Views*) is

more interesting in the end for what one sees of the Russian mind at work than for what it offers on Stravinsky. The book is certainly tinged with the turgidity of the Russian academic thesis. In carefully proposing, discussing, and summing up his points, Druskin is led into much cross-reference and repetition, and the book is completely devoid of musical examples to illuminate the text. The first, general chapters, in which he sets out his arguments, are in fact the most interesting and, as with all penetrating descriptive writing, some of his points and comments suddenly enlighten our understanding of the composer.

Druskin sees Stravinsky as a person who remained a Russian artist all his life, but also both as a universal artist and an individual one. His division of Stravinsky's life into the now customary three periods is underlined by a conviction that there is a continuity in all the composer's apparent changes:

> Beneath all these differences of manner we are aware of a single personality, a unity in complexity and a specifically Stravinskian vital sensibility, the manifestation of which changes with each new work. [p.6]

In each of the three periods Druskin follows three strands; the first period he thinks of as one of intensity, an interest in the barbaric, and an emphasis on Russianness; the second as the period of extension, aestheticism, and of the universal composer; and the third as the period of concentration, asceticism, and individuality. While these are perhaps truisms, Druskin puts his arguments well and underlines them with aptly chosen quotations from Stravinsky's own words and useful discussion.

The three long chapters in which he delineates the music of those three periods, the Russian, neoclassical, and the final, become, however, very laborious as the author trundles through the works, trying to make sure that the characteristics of each period are noted but at the same time that the composer's continuity is stressed. Potentially more interesting are shorter chapters that attempt to throw some sidelights on Stravinsky's character—chapters headed 'Petersburg', 'Pushkin', 'The Theatre', 'Neoclassicism', 'Movement', and 'Space'. Here Druskin's knowledge of the artistic milieu of the early 20th century allows him to indicate interesting possible influences on Stravinsky in these earlier years, particularly from the art world and the theatre. But the expectations aroused in the Western reader by the prospect of information on Stravinsky's Russian origins are never completely fulfilled. The short chapter on St Petersburg suggests only that Stravinsky's music may have been influenced by the city's architecture and street patterns, and the chapter on the Russian element in the composer's work adds little to what we know already.

There are, nevertheless, helpful insights to be gained from this book. Druskin discusses well what he terms the 'play-element' in Stravinsky's art and the 'festival' nature of his works for the theatre, and he does not neglect the Apollo–Dionysus conflict in Stravinsky's thinking. The chapter on Pushkin, though sadly lacking in detail for the uninitiated Western reader, delineates the place in Russian culture of 'Russian–European' artists such as Pushkin himself, Glinka, and Tchaikovsky, and their influence on Stravinsky; Druskin makes an interesting case for the 'Protean' nature of both Stravinsky's and Pushkin's art in examining 'the multi-faceted nature of Pushkin and the multiplicity of Stravinsky's stylistic "manners" ' (p.20). But conclusions are not pressed, and the steady plod through the works in the main chapters confuses rather than clarifies the argument of the others. The arousal of expectation by the promise of further details is often never satisfied.

Druskin's enthusiastic espousal of Stravinsky's late-period works suggests that all the composer's work has been assimilated into Soviet musical life. While critics in the USSR in 1958 referred to *Canticum sacrum* as 'holy cacophony'—'How ravaged, how emasculated must have been the soul of the composer capable of creating such dreadful music'[5]—Druskin can now describe it as a work of 'completeness, conclusiveness and integrity' (p.157), and he goes on to call the *Requiem Canticles* Stravinsky's greatest achievement.

The book has been issued with a laudatory preface by Stravinsky's son Theodore, but with no notes or explanations by the translator. A number of typographical and spelling mistakes suggest that it was rushed through the press. References to the ancient editions of source books used by Druskin (such as the 1936 edition of *Chronicle of my Life*) are retained and I found that page numbers did not always tally with any edition. Clumsy-sounding translations and odd paragraphing mar one's understanding of some of Druskin's arguments (I liked the idea of 'Russisms' in the *Symphony in C* (p.106) though). The publishers may have wished to present the book as Druskin wrote it, but it would have been helpful for the English reader to have notes on Meyerhold, Bergson, and some of the Russians mentioned or quoted, on details obscure to any but a Soviet audience, and on the method of translation. Information unknown to Druskin at the time of writing could have been supplied, too, such as that concerning the origins of and quarrel over Stravinsky's article on *The Rite of Spring* in *Muzyka* (1913), now available in both *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* and *Selected Correspondence*.

The disappointingly general discussion of Stravinsky's work in Druskin's book suggests that we are in no need of more books that set out to survey his entire output. Druskin remarks on two periods of crisis in Stravinsky's artistic career—one in 1920 and the other from 1935 until after the completion of *The Rake's Progress* (p.26)—and despite his belief in a continuity in Stravinsky's musical thinking he is as caught up as any critic in discussions of Stravinsky's 'impulsive and explosive' changes and 'sudden enthusiasms' (p.83). Well-researched studies of short periods in Stravinsky's life and of individual works would be the most helpful direction for Stravinsky scholarship to take from now on.

The Rake's Progress has long been considered a problematical work and is usually cursorily dealt with by writers of general books, such as Vlad or Francis Routh;[6] Druskin's discussion of the work is fairly sparse too. *Igor Stravinsky: The Rake's Progress* by Paul Griffiths, the latest Cambridge Opera Handbook, might have closed this gap, but it is somewhat uneasy in tone and chapters vary in their attitudes to the expected readership. The intelligent essay on the libretto by Gabriel Josipovici (reprinted from *Tempo*) is as illuminating on the music as it is on the underlying theme of the work, and Paul Griffiths's concluding chapter makes a worthwhile apology for Stravinsky's manipulation of operatic convention. Chapters on the work's history range from a careful collation of all available sources on the genesis of the work (Griffiths) and a tantalising glimpse of some of the sketches with a muddly commentary (Craft), to an account of the performance history (Griffiths) which might have been better organised as a commentary with detailed cast lists.

The current problem of how to write about Stravinsky's music is well shown by Griffiths's central

analytical chapters, in which it is plain that he cannot decide how to approach the work. Although he remarks that

> often the key of a passage is not inherent in the music but exists instead as a background perspective . . . Tonality is not a language which the music breathes, but rather a means of creating directional pulls which it may go along with, resist or change without warning [pp.99-100]

the 16-page synopsis of the opera analyses each scene almost entirely in terms of key, and without a single musical example. But does, for instance, Tom's first accompanied recitative, 'Here I stand', move from the key of C major to B major to E major and end in F major as Griffiths states (p.32)? It is surely not as simple and straightforward as that. In lieu of any penetrating analysis of the form and musical language of the whole opera, Griffiths gives a rather convoluted, detailed description ("The harpsichord for this recitative also seems suddenly more experienced' (p.84)) of the graveyard scene (Act 3 scene 2), which is neither concise enough nor, in its musical examples, entirely accurate.

In an otherwise well-produced book (though what fad has decided that *Renard* should be referred to as '*Bayka* or *Baize*' (p.67)?) it is irritating to find the two excerpts from Stravinsky's writings in a form somewhat different from that of the acknowledged source, *Themes and Episodes* by Stravinsky and Craft. Did Griffiths translate the material afresh from the original French? Well and good, but I should like to have known.

This irritating detail brings me to a final point. Up to now scholars have been working with incomplete data or secondhand sources, and there has been some excuse for inaccuracy. But the time has surely come for sorting the fact from the fiction, for checking rigorously against the sources, and for nailing the discrepancies. I give below a few examples of variations I noticed in my reading for this review. None is devastating, but from now on such differences ought to be dealt with.

For example, most writers on *The Rake's Progress* refer to the influence of Mozart's operas on Stravinsky at the time he began planning his opera. But was *Così fan tutte* the most important influence, or *Don Giovanni*? Authors disagree. Druskin plumps for *Così* on page 20 and *Don Giovanni* on page 109. It would be nice to see this argued out from evidence in the music of the opera itself. It would also be helpful to know exactly which operas by Mozart Stravinsky studied. Griffiths tells us (p.10) that 'Stravinsky wrote to Hawkes asking for full scores of the Mozart-da Ponte operas and *Die Zauberflöte*, all to be the "source of inspiration for my future opera".' The reference given to support this quotation cites *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*, but there the note reads (p.397) 'Writes to Hawkes asking for orchestra scores of four Mozart operas, the "source of inspiration for my future opera".' One would have expected to be able to sort out this discrepancy from the first volume of the *Selected Correspondence*, but I looked there only to find that it does not include letters to and from Ralph Hawkes. It does, though, give the Stravinsky/Auden exchanges about *The Rake's Progress*. Or does it? Even these turn out to be incomplete: at least one important letter—from Auden, written on 28 January 1948, suggesting that the auction scene be transferred to Act 3—is missing. This letter appears in *Memories and Commentaries*,[7] but we have no means of knowing what others may have been rejected from the selection.

It is, however, good to have for the first time Stravinsky's interesting letter of 18 October 1949 detailing the problems of inserting Baba's prose into Tom's and Anne's verse duet (*Selected Correspondence*, vol.1, pp.309-10), which Craft does not enlarge upon in his article in the Griffiths handbook (p.28). But was the resulting number a 'trio' (Craft in Griffiths) or a 'terzetto' (Craft in *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* and *Selected Correspondence*) or a 'terzettino' (Craft elsewhere in Griffiths)? Stravinsky himself, of course, called it a trio. And was it composed at the end of October 1949 (Craft in Griffiths and *Selected Correspondence*) or on 3 October (Craft in *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*)?

By contrast with the act of silent editing perpetrated on Stravinsky's articles reprinted in Griffiths's handbook, Martin Cooper allows mistakes to remain in Druskin's book, such as the date of the first performance of *Jeu de cartes* (1937) and a complete muddle over the date of a production by Meyerhold of *The Nightingale*. This curious hybrid work would indeed be worthy of a study of the kind that I have indicated is now needed. Its crucial place in Stravinsky's development could now be completely elucidated from a purely analytical angle. Both Druskin and Griffiths make some interesting assumptions about it; both *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* and *Selected Correspondence* add previously unknown source material on it to what had already been published; there are people still alive who have memories of its early productions. Scholars should now be ready to follow up such leads with care and thoroughness; the writers of general books will then be able to make new assessments of the chameleon composer that was Igor Stravinsky.

1 Pieter C. Van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), reviewed below by Gloria Toplis.
2 Vera Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* (London: Hutchinson, 1979).
3 Igor and Vera Stravinsky, *A Photograph Album 1921-1971* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982).
4 *Stravinsky, Selected Correspondence*, vol.1, ed. and with commentaries by Robert Craft (London: Faber, 1982).
5 The critic I. Nestyev in *Sovetskaya muzyka* (1958), no.2, p.132, quoted in Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972).
6 Francis Routh, *Stravinsky*, The Master Musicians (London: Dent, 1975).
7 Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Memories and Commentaries* (London: Faber, 1960), p.161.

Gloria Toplis

Stravinsky's Pitch Organisation Re-examined

Pieter C. Van den Toorn, *The Music of Igor Stravinsky* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1983), £25.00

It was at the time that the first issues of *Perspectives of New Music* appeared during the early 1960s that a significant corpus of analytical writings on the music of Stravinsky began to be established. The new journal included Edward T. Cone's influential analysis of *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920), in which he shows that the continuity of the music is constantly being interrupted because blocks of

material, each involving different textures, registers, harmonies, rhythms, and metres, are set synchronically side by side; when considered apart from their immediate context, the blocks may be seen to possess one or another of these parameters in common.[1] The same author has defined the structuring of the first movement of the *Symphony in C* (1938-40)—one of the neoclassical works most obviously akin in spirit to Classical models—not in terms of the tonal relationships of sonata form, but in terms of the temporal proportion to one another of the sections (established by means of rather ill-defined tonal areas), which is very much the same as that of a typical sonata form movement.[2]

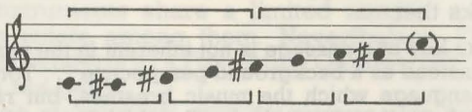
Stravinsky students in the sixties were strongly influenced by the somewhat scathing and (in the opinion of later analysts) harmful remarks of Pierre Boulez on the composer's compositional technique in works following *The Rite of Spring* (1911-13). Comparing Stravinsky unfavourably with his more adventurous Viennese contemporaries because of his own view of technical progress, Boulez propounded the idea that after *The Rite* Stravinsky ceased any attempt to invent a new language, and fell back on the 'prop' of traditional procedures and techniques (he spoke of modality as well as tonality). The typical minor/major thirds, diminished and augmented octaves, 'displaced' bass notes, and 'avoided notes' that abound in the neoclassical works were interpreted by Boulez as mannerisms grafted onto an established mode of organisation.[3]

Essential to Boulez' thinking were his conclusions about the meaning of one of the few passages in Stravinsky's copious writings in which a technique for establishing pitch relationships is hinted at. The passage in question has been a point of departure for many who have attempted a serious investigation of this aspect of Stravinsky's music:

> So our chief concern is not so much what is known as tonality as what one might term the polar attraction of sound, of an interval, or even of a complex of tones. The sounding tone constitutes in a way the essential axis of music . . . All music being nothing but a succession of impulses and repose, it is easy to see that the drawing together and separation of poles of attraction in a way determine the respiration of music.[4]

In Boulez' opinion the 'poles of attraction' were none other than the tonic, dominant, and subdominant. Other analysts were more guarded in their interpretation. Arthur Berger, in perhaps the most interesting and well-substantiated study of the 1960s dealing with pitch relationships, favoured an approach to the music that does not presuppose the presence of tonality as a crutch.[5] He was concerned with passages from the works of the Russian and neoclassical periods, from which he extrapolated the 'octatonic' scale—an alternation of semitones and tones (the scale that forms Messiaen's second mode of limited transposition). The octatonic scale allows the division of the octave into halves at the tritone, the two segments having the same interval content; each tritone can be further divided into two minor thirds, similarly equivalent in interval content (Example 1).

Example 1



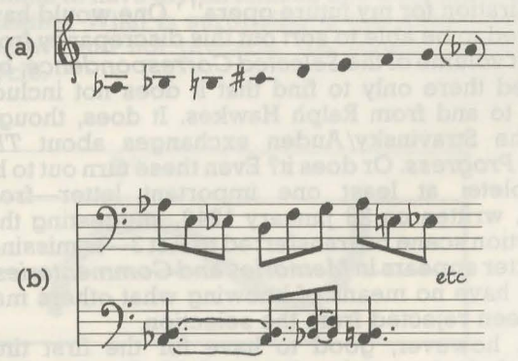
Because of its symmetrical partitioning of the octave, the use of the octatonic scale as a basis for composition offers different possibilities from the familiar major scale, which possesses no such symmetrical ordering of invervals but divides at the dominant under the dictates of traditional tonal practice—the system of 'functional tonality'. It is not surprising that a theory positing the existence in Stravinsky's music of a scale that offers a means of evading dominant-tonic polarity should appeal to anyone trying to demonstrate that this music does not conform to the dictates of functional tonality. The appropriateness of the octatonic theory to Stravinsky's output becomes increasingly obvious the more closely the constitution of the scale itself is examined. For example, each degree articulating a division at the minor third supports both a minor and a major triad—in Example 1 C supports the triads C-E flat-G and C-E-G, E flat supports the triads E flat-G flat-B flat and E flat-G-B flat, and so on; overlapping tetrachords a minor third apart contain interlocking minor/major thirds—C-C sharp-D sharp-E, D sharp-E-F sharp-G, F sharp-G-A-A sharp, A-A sharp-C-C sharp. There is scarcely a work of Stravinsky's that does not feature minor/major triadic interplay.

Berger's octatonic theory has now been extensively applied to Stravinsky's music by Pieter Van den Toorn. His book, for which a two-part article published in 1975 served as a preliminary study,[6] covers a wide variety of works, starting early and tracing the composer's progress through what are termed his two 'changes of life'—from Russian to neoclassical and from neoclassical to serial periods. Some 20 works that lend themselves particularly well to deductions about octatonic practice are selected for detailed analysis; these range chronologically from *The Firebird* (1910) to *Abraham and Isaac* (1962-3).

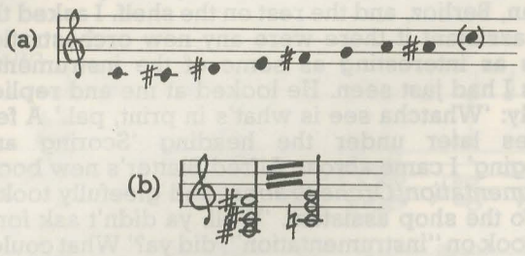
In an early chapter on *The Firebird* Stravinsky's method of switching between octatonically derived material and passages based on the major scale, with its associated tonal relationships, is shown to have a precedent in the operas and symphonic poems of his teacher, Rimsky-Korsakov; Rimsky frequently depicts 'magical' characters by means of exotic sounds based on the octatonic scale, whereas real-life figures are portrayed in tonal music. Van den Toorn regards the block juxtaposition of octatonic with non-octatonic material as essential to Stravinsky's developing compositional technique; and he would explain the abrupt changes observed by Cone as the inescapable result of using the octatonic scale with all its peculiar attributes.

A passage such as that in Example 2b is melodically and harmonically static; it relies on the articulation of the two (embroidered) dyads A flat-E and D-F, together spanning the interval of a tritone (A flat-D), over their transposition into the complementary tritone (D-A flat), where they appear as B flat-D and A flat-B; all the notes here except E flat are accounted for by the octatonic collection shown in Example 2a.

Example 2



Example 3



The celebrated 'Petrushka chord' (Example 3b), referable to the octatonic collection of Example 3a, is similarly capable of interpretation as a static entity, a 'complex sonore'[7] in which no one element asserts priority over the others—this interpretation provides an alternative to the usual explanations involving 'bitonality' or 'polytonality'. Static sonorities such as those in Examples 2b and 3b yield themselves in only a very limited way to development because of the nature of the scale on which they are based; indeed 'development' is confined mainly to transposition. To continue in Van den Toorn's words:

> For as here defined, (0, 3, 6, 9) symmetrical construction[8] within blocks defies internally motivated 'progress' or 'development' along traditional tonal lines (the sense of harmonic progression, resolution, or cadence associated with tonality and the diatonic C-scale). Change, 'progress', or 'development' is possible only by abruptly cutting off the symmetrically conceived deadlock, only by terminating activity and abruptly juxtaposing it with something new in the collectional reference or in its partitioning . . . In other words, juxtaposition, like superimposition, is no mere formality, no mere architectural curiosity to be heard and understood solely in terms of 'form' . . . Abrupt block juxtaposition is *content-motivated*, prompted (one might say necessitated and brought into being) by the static, non-progressive nature of the balance, polarity, or locked confrontation of Stravinsky's octatonic settings. [pp.62-3]

This description relates more or less convincingly to the works of the Russian period, but if octatonic theory is to be applied to the works of Stravinsky's neoclassical period, a considerable degree of octatonic/diatonic interaction has to be allowed for. In the neoclassical and serial literature extensive passages in which the octatonic scale is used exclusively are rare, though the minor/major triads which are central to a particular work or section of a work may sometimes be referable to one of the octatonic collections. In the neoclassical works the fact that one triad, the tonic, predominates (even if it is not defined in terms of the harmonic relationships intrinsic to functional tonality) means that Van den Toorn's essential prerequisite for regarding material as octatonically derived—the potential for four equal tonal centres—is lacking. This criterion is in fact seldom met in the neoclassical period, yet in spite of his earlier assertion Van den Toorn finds it difficult to let go of the octatonic explanation, even when it leads him into rather questionable views of stylistic evolution:

> Thus all neoclassical manifestations of . . . 'minor-major third' emphasis, whether found in passages explicitly octatonic or not, are here viewed as having their origin in the octatonic pitch collection. Evidence suggests that Stravinsky was drawn to the emphasis by way of his earlier invention with referentially octatonic material. [p.265]

In discussing Stravinsky's two 'changes of life'—in particular the conversion to serialism—Van den Toorn quotes at length from the composer's own statements, recorded in the volumes of dialogues with Robert Craft.[9] While he sometimes naively falls prey to the danger of too literal interpretation of Stravinsky's words, it is useful to have this substantial documentation relating to Stravinsky's adoption of twelve-note technique; the extracts also reveal how difficult it is to discern the composer's motive for beginning to use serial processes. Though Van den Toorn revamps Henri Pousseur's observation that, in terms of internal construction Stravinsky's early sets—for example those used in *Agon* (1953-7)—bear a strong similarity to the twelve-note sets of Webern—for example that of the Variations op.30[10]—he abandons any attempt at interpreting Stravinsky's manipulation of sets, either in terms of his heritage from the Viennese or in terms of the theoretical constructs put forward by exponents of serial theory in the USA over the last two decades; he simply remarks:

> were we to confine our scrutiny solely to the 'Bransle simple', 'Bransle gay', and 'Bransle double' of *Agon* (a stretch of some one hundred measures), we would find exemplified nearly all of the so-called classical techniques commonly inferred from the music of Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg—the very stock in trade itemized, say, in a compendium such as George Perle's *Serial Composition and Atonality* . . . [In fact] we survey the scene not so much from the standpoint of its literature and theoretical haunts as from that of Stravinsky's past, confronting the at times elusive but nonetheless unmistakable circumstance that somehow Stravinsky remains Stravinsky. [pp.386-7]

In keeping with Van den Toorn's central hypothesis, of course, 'the scene' has to involve the octatonic scale; where the serial works are concerned the scale is understood as operating in the background, influencing set construction, choice of set forms, and transpositions.

At this point in the text even the most innocent student must become aware that, in his careful avoidance of the application of one theory to Stravinsky's *oeuvre*—that of functional tonality—Van den Toorn has substituted another equally binding—that of the operation of the octatonic scale. To do him justice, however, his close examination of certain of the later, large-scale serial works, such as *Abraham and Isaac* (he also refers to *Requiem Canticles*, 1965-6), adequately demonstrates what he terms Stravinsky's 'hexachordal transposition-rotation scheme'.

Following Berger, Van den Toorn employs the now widely accepted integer notation to designate melodic and harmonic complexes; this has the advantage, of course, of obviating the need for terms that imply the use of functional tonality, and conveniently circumvents awkward verbal descriptions. There is an important difference, however, between Van den Toorn's practice and that of Allen Forte, for example (one of the few other analysts to devote a book to Stravinsky's music—though he deals with only one work).[11] In selecting a particular degree of an octatonic collection for the designation 0, Van den Toorn implies the priority of that pitch class in the work or passage concerned, whereas Forte's system avoids such implications, since C is always 0, D flat always 1, D always 2, and so on. The 'structural level' diagrams used throughout Van den Toorn's book, which necessarily isolate particular pitch classes of priority at the 'background' level, can be confusing when they are superimposed on a theory that leans towards an interpretation of music in terms of interlocked centres. It is interesting that a different theory involving levels has lately been tested on some of the works discussed by Van den Toorn: in a disappointingly sketchy study Joseph Straus has applied Schenkerian ideas of structure and prolongation to Stravinsky's music, which results in the emergence of a pattern of dynamic progressions

between tonal centres.[12]

Van den Toorn's book lucidly expounds, explores, and illustrates a theory, but the theory itself hangs on a thin thread: the author admits that there exists not a single mention of the octatonic scale in all the Stravinsky–Craft writings. Perhaps, as he put it in 1975:

> In our quest for a theoretical framework and an accompanying analytical approach (or approaches) which will satisfy our binding instincts . . . we may have to contend not with consistency, identity, or distinctiveness, but with consistencies, identities, and distinctivenesses.[13]

1 Edward T. Cone, 'Stravinsky: the Progress of a Method', *Perspectives of New Music*, vol.1, no.1 (1962), pp.18-26; reprinted in *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky*, ed. Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp.156-64.

2 Edward T. Cone, 'The Uses of Convention: Stravinsky and his Models', *Musical Quarterly*, vol.48 (1962), p.287; reprinted in *Stravinsky: a New Appraisal of his Work*, ed. Paul Henry Lang (New York: Norton, 1963), p.21.

3 Pierre Boulez, 'Trajectoires', *Relevés d'apprenti* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966), pp.245-50; Eng. trans. as 'Trajectories: Ravel, Stravinsky, Schoenberg', *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, trans. Herbert Weinstock (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), pp.242-64.

4 Igor Stravinsky, *Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1947), p.49.

5 Arthur Berger, 'Problems of Pitch Organization in Stravinsky', *Perspectives of New Music*, vol.2, no.1 (1963), pp.11-42; reprinted in *Perspectives on Schoenberg and Stravinsky*, ed. Boretz and Cone, pp.156-64.

6 Pieter C. Van den Toorn, 'Some Characteristics of Stravinsky's Diatonic Music', *Perspectives of New Music*, vol.14, no.1 (1975), pp.104-38; vol.15, no.2 (1977), pp.58-96.

7 Berger ('Problems of Pitch Organization', p.137) borrows the term from Stravinsky's *Poetics*.

8 See below for Van den Toorn's integer notation.

9 Originally published in six volumes by Doubleday and Alfred A. Knopf in New York: *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky* (1959); *Memories and Commentaries* (1960); *Expositions and Developments* (1962); *Dialogues and a Diary* (1963); *Themes and Episodes* (1966); and *Retrospectives and Conclusions* (1969).

10 Henri Pousseur: 'Stravinsky by Way of Webern: the Consistency of a Syntax', *Perspectives of New Music*, vol.10, no.2 (1972), pp.13-51; vol.11, no.1 (1972), pp.112-45.

11 Allen Forte, *The Harmonic Organization of 'The Rite of Spring'* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978).

12 Joseph Straus, 'Stravinsky's Tonal Axis', *Journal of Music Theory*, vol.26 (1982), pp.261-90.

13 Van den Toorn, 'Some Characteristics of Stravinsky's Diatonic Music', pp.105-6.

Stephen Montague

Orchestration for the 20th-century Musician

Alfred Blatter, *Instrumentation/Orchestration* (London: Longman, 1980), £12.50

I was recently in New York's largest music store browsing through the specialist books by Thomas Howell, Robert Dick, Phillip Rehfeldt, Bertram Turetzky, Stuart Dempster, and others on the extended techniques and performing practices currently in use by many composers and performers world-wide. I then moved on into the section of orchestration books and was somewhat surprised to see only the old familiar tomes by Forsyth, Piston, Kennan, Berlioz, and the rest on the shelf. I asked the shop assistant if there were any new orchestration books as interesting as some of the instrumental books I had just seen. He looked at me and replied smartly: 'Whatcha see is what's in print, pal.' A few minutes later under the heading 'Scoring and Arranging' I came across Alfred Blatter's new book, *Instrumentation/Orchestration*, and gleefully took it over to the shop assistant. 'Well, ya didn't ask for a new book on "instrumentation", did ya?' What could I say?

I understand that *Instrumentation/Orchestration* has now been available for a couple of years both in Britain and the United States, but I have yet to see it on the shelves of music shops in this country. Perhaps I was always looking under the wrong heading, for I got the same reaction in London as I had in New York: when I asked a shop assistant at Foyles for the 'orchestration' book by Blatter, he said: 'Isn't that an "instrumentation" book, sir?' Evidently shop assistants and booksellers make a kind of differentiation between those terms that we composers blur. At any rate, what I finally got hold of has certainly turned out to be the best all-round orchestration book (or instrumentation book, if you like) published in years.

The author, Alfred Blatter, is a graduate of the University of Illinois, a composer, horn player, and arranger, the senior editor of Media Press (a publishing house specialising in avant-garde music), one of the American panelists at the International Conference on New Music Notation in Ghent, and head of the music department and Director of Performing Arts at Drexel University, Philadelphia. His *Instrumentation/Orchestration*, like the Piston, Kennan, and other orchestration books printed in the last couple of decades, is designed to be used by both student and professional musicians. But where most of the earlier books have really very little to offer the working professional, Blatter's appendix gives a comprehensive account of instrumental resources, which alone is nearly worth the price of the book. Extensive charts show, for instance, all the fingerings and alternative fingerings for woodwind, brass, and even strings; the overtone series for every chromatic note is given up to and including the 16th partial; the intervals and directions of transposition of just about all Western instruments are supplied, including out-of-the-way candidates like the Heckelphone, baritone oboe, Wagner tubas, and oboe d'amore; and the possibilities for electronic sound modification are dealt with in some detail.

What makes this book outstanding, compared with its competitors, is its breadth. Here at last is an orchestration book that attempts to handle the vast resources available to the composer and arranger in the late 20th century; the author is clearly aware of the rapid development of instrumental techniques over the past two decades, and these developments are given good coverage (alongside the three Bs, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg). Blatter assumes rightly that many of the so-called 'avant-garde' techniques of yesterday are today almost common practice. The Bartók pizzicato, for example, is now a standard technique, and few players are shocked any more by being asked to play behind the bridge of a string instrument, or produce a multiphonic on a woodwind. The list of 'impossibilities' gets shorter, Blatter remarks, while the list of possibilities grows longer. In Strauss's edition of Berlioz' treatise on instrumentation (1904-5) it is said to be 'very rare' and 'very difficult' for a C trumpet to play a high B flat, B natural, or C; Kennan (1964) suggested the A flat below high C

as the practical limit, and B flat as the practical professional limit. But today any composer who has worked with professional, or even good student trumpet players knows that they have no difficulty in playing top C or D; so it is quite reasonable for Blatter to notate the range of the C trumpet as extending to top E or even higher for professionals. In addition he lists the pedal notes for brass instruments, which are rarely mentioned in other books, but are frequently found in new solo and chamber works. The chapter on percussion instruments, an area where resources have expanded enormously, is also very useful. For the professional, then, this is an invaluable reference work.

Reference is not, however, the chief purpose of the book. *Instrumentation/Orchestration* is designed to accompany a one- or two-term course in orchestration for beginners or intermediate students. For a textbook the approach is very good. The discussion of each subject proceeds from the general to the specific. The chapters dealing with the families of orchestral instruments, for example, begin with information that applies equally to all members of a family—articulation, special effects, notation, etc.—then go on, in sub-chapters, to deal in detail with the individual instruments. Traditional 18th- and 19th-century playing techniques are described, followed by discussion of newer developments, such as extended techniques, notation of special effects, the different types of mute available, and so on. Each sub-chapter concludes with exercises in writing for the instrument alone and in combination with others, and a good, up-to-date bibliography. The musical examples strike a sensible balance between classical, 20th-century, and avant-garde works (Media Press publications abound, of course). There are good photographs by David Hruby of all the instruments, and of mutes and mallets. All the instrumental ranges are, for once, clearly notated and illustrated. Three are presented for each instrument: elementary school, high school (16-18 year olds), and professional. The illustrations of the 'dynamic curves' are a nice addition for students: Blatter provides a graph for each instrument, which represents its natural dynamic properties in relation to its register—a horizontal, cone-shaped figure, for example, means that the instrument is softer in the lower range and louder in the upper registers.

The annotated listing of chapter headings that follows will give an idea of the wide scope of Blatter's book:

I. The Basics: Preparing Scores and Parts

The author's extensive experience as senior editor of a music-publishing firm gives this chapter some authority. A good many professional composers and arrangers would do well to read these 23 pages and follow the suggestions.

II. Instrumentation: The Orchestral Strings

In addition to the usual information about string writing, there is a brief, but good discussion of special bowing effects, such as 'scratch tone', bowing the tailpiece, 'silent fingerings', etc. In the section on harmonics (and throughout the book where appropriate), the recommended notation from the 1974 Ghent International Conference on New Music Notation is used.

III. Instrumentation: The Woodwinds

Because many more extended techniques have been developed in the last few years on woodwind instruments, the discussion is much lengthier in this chapter than in that on the strings. Slap-tonguing, multiphonics, air tones, etc. are discussed, but it seems to be assumed that for finer details of such techniques the reader will consult the specialist books by Howell,[1] Dick,[2] and Rehfeldt,[3] and the newer books that are constantly appearing. Unfortunately, though, specific references are not made to sources such as these in footnotes, nor are they highlighted in the bibliography. There is nothing to indicate the vast research on multiphonics, for example, in Howell's flute book: some 1826 examples with fingerings and commentary!

IV. Instrumentation:The Brass

As with the woodwind, a great deal of talent and energy has gone into developing the ranges and playing techniques of all brass instruments in recent years. There is a thorough treatment of these developments and techniques, but again footnotes to lead the reader to sources for further study, or to music utilising new playing methods would have been a worthwhile addition. There is a photograph of the 16 or so mutes now available to brass players, and a useful discussion of their characteristics.

V. Instrumentation: The Percussion

This is one of the best chapters in the book. Unlike Smith Brindle, whose percussion book frustratingly leaves out the ranges of many of the percussion instruments,[4] Blatter gives the ranges and transpositions of just about all the pitched instruments, from Almglocken, slide whistles, and flexatones, to rototoms, steel drums, and tubaphones. There are clear photographs of most of the instruments, and more than four pages are devoted to the graphic symbols used to represent them in scores and to their names in French, Italian, German, and English. Most orchestration books gloss over the variety of mallets and sticks available and their different purposes, but here there is an excellent discussion, and again illustrations, symbols, and names in four languages.

VI. Instrumentation: The Other Instruments

This is another splendid chapter, which deals with various miscellaneous instruments and their playing techniques: piano, electric piano, toy piano, harpsichord, double-action harp, Troubadour harp, pipe organ, electric organs, guitars, electric guitars, mandolin, ukulele, banjos, electric bass, pedal steel guitar, accordion, harmonica, harmonium, recorders, and ocarinas. There is a brief discussion of tablatures, and again the ranges of all the instruments, including ocarinas, are clearly illustrated.

VIII. Orchestration: Scoring Musical Elements

It is at this point that Blatter first makes a distinction between 'instrumentation' and 'orchestration', though unfortunately he does not come right out with a clear definition of each term. Perhaps the reader is intended to infer their meanings from the subject matter of the chapter, which covers identification of musical lines, the use of instrumental colour, scoring prominent and subordinate lines and isolated chords, and special approaches such as *Klangfarbenmelodie*. The last is illustrated by an excerpt from Elliott Carter's woodwind quartet *Eight Etudes and a Fantasy*, while more traditional extracts—from Wagner, Berlioz, Ravel, and others—neatly exemplify Blatter's system of scoring procedures.

IX. Orchestration: Scoring for Various Ensembles

Blatter's 'ensembles' include not only traditional groups such as the string orchestra, but also marching bands, percussion groups, and even a drum kit. There is an interesting list of instrumental substitutions showing what instruments can be made to sound like one another if an ensemble is incomplete.

X. Orchestration: The Technique of Transcribing

Transcribing is defined as a more elementary process than arranging. The usual solutions to the problems it involves are suggested, but some original hints pop up at various points. In transcribing organ literature, for example, one should remember that 'The pedal line is not always the bass . . . Even when it is the bass, it may not be in the octave notated.' (p.357)

XI. Orchestration: The Technique of Arranging

It is a little disappointing that this chapter is not longer and more thorough. Taking *America the Beautiful*, Blatter shows certain possibilities for arranging it, but unfortunately he does not carry the process to its logical conclusion and provide some complete versions: two or three methods of treating the first 16 bars, for instance, could have been instructive. What he has done is excellent, but as one of the culminating chapters this hardly balances all the detailed material presented before. It also seems to me that somewhere mention should have been made of the Boosey & Hawkes miniature score of Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, which has the original piano version below Ravel's famous orchestral version, and of some other well-known 'arrangements' of a similar type. Moreover, considering that drum kits, electric guitars, and other pop instruments are mentioned earlier in the book, I felt that Blatter should have discussed the writing and scoring of pop music; at very least he could have referred to some literature on the subject. The bibliography for chapters VIII to XII is a little too selective: where are the books on writing film scores, for example?

XII. Orchestration: Some Final Thoughts

This chapter is aimed primarily at the student. It lists the typical constitution of various ensembles from the symphony orchestra to jazz bands. Blatter has some good ideas about organising resources and judging your own work. And some nice homilies: 'The serious orchestrator is never really satisfied . . . one can always seek new and different tonal possibilities.' (p.376)

The book is nicely laid out, easy to handle, and has a tough, shiny, ink-proof cover. But I have a couple of minor criticisms to make about the production. The labels for musical examples are placed under rather than over the excerpts, which I found strangely irritating. The ink in my copy was slightly smeared on several pages, and in some of the illustrations in the appendix the stave-lines were broken. However, these are insignificant points which scarcely mar an excellent work. Alfred Blatter has given us a text- and reference book that reflects the state of the art in the last quarter of the 20th century, and a tool that students and professionals alike will use for the rest of their creative lives.

1 Thomas Howell, *The Avant-garde Flute: a Handbook for Composers and Flutists* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974).

2 Robert Dick, *The Other Flute: a Performance Manual of Contemporary Techniques* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

3 Phillip Rehfeldt, *New Directions for the Clarinet*, The New Instrumentation, vol.3 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978).

4 Reginald Smith Brindle, *Contemporary Percussion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).

David Wright

Preserving the Species

Alan Rump, *How we Treat our Composers* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1982), £2.00 + £1.25 postage and packing [typescript report available from the Arts Council, 105 Piccadilly, London W1CV 0AU]

Dr Alan Rump's study *How we Treat our Composers* demonstrates the sorry position of most contemporary composers. A cursory glance at the current musical scene gives the impression of a welter of activity, showing the profession to be more essential to today's society (when even washing-up liquid needs a jingle) than previously. However, more detailed examination reveals that while Tchaikovsky is alive and prospering in the Albert Hall, few 'serious contemporary composers' (to use one of Rump's classifications) gain significant material benefit from their work. This report highlights the paradoxical position that faces, with very few exceptions, contemporary composers in Britain. It shows that present conditions ensure that the ratio of financial return on a composer's work is such that the greater his creative activity, the smaller—in proportion to effort expended—is his income. As the report forcefully states:

> The obsolescence of our copyright law severely depresses the income of composers, publishers and record companies. A country which has got used to obtaining its new music cheaply harbours institutions which keep it cheap.

This passage illustrates the main thrust of the report, namely the inadequacy of the provision made by our society to secure and propagate the work of contemporary composers and the meagre financial return they receive in consequence. This inadequacy is so marked that it helps to define the term 'contemporary music' as surely as any statement of aesthetics.

Alan Rump's study is the result of a questionnaire sent to the Arts Council in preparation for the Council of Europe's Symposium on Aid to Musical Creation, held in October 1979. It was felt that the questionnaire itself was insufficient as a means of representing the position of the contemporary composer in Britain, and that there was a need for a more comprehensive survey; accordingly, the Department of Education and Science commissioned a report from Dr Rump, a lecturer in music at Bristol University, who had previously written an Arts Council paper, *Money for Composers* (1977).[1] The result, *How we Treat our Composers*, has eventually been made available by the Arts Council, with the caveat that the author's views do not necessarily represent those of the Council itself.

The report is presented under seven chapter headings, of which the first four ('The Law', 'Publishing', 'Recording', and 'Broadcasting') indicate those forces whose operation serves to regulate the availability and dissemination of a composer's work. The financial constraints that determine the attitude of many performing organisations to programming contemporary music (and they are not only those arising from box-office prudence) are dealt with in chapter 5, 'Public Performance', and the process of assessment leading to the disbursement of commissioning fees is described in chapter 6, 'The Grant Givers'. For the final chapter, 'The Composer's Living', Rump draws together the interaction of these

forces in an examination of the likely financial position of various types of composer at different stages in their careers.

This study is impressive in its comprehensiveness and in the lucidity of the presentation and evaluation of material, which make for an unexpectedly readable document. Certain aspects that create an imbalance in the picture as a whole, such as the emphasis given in particular to one Regional Arts Association (South-West Arts) and the music course at Bristol University, together with the scant attention paid to areas such as electronic music, jazz, and improvisation, obviously reflect the author's preferences and experience, but they do not invalidate the main causes for concern that the study expresses. However, the author's proposals for dealing with these would have been more strongly emphasised and more effectively displayed had a summary of recommendations been made.

The first problem to emerge in any discussion of the 'contemporary composer' is that the term does not give the reader a clear indication of the sort of music that is meant. It is the composer's manner rather than his substance that frequently determines his financial reward. Indeed, for many listeners the contemporary composer is actually an irrelevance, because as Rump points out:

> As the twentieth century has progressed, the supply of music on the air, on record and tape and in the concert hall has increased so much that the audience . . . has [according to taste] been able to splinter into many different 'specialist' preferences.

In a footnote Rump adds 'In doing so the audience mirrors the development of the art and language of composition in this century.' The composer is therefore presented with stylistic decisions which may or may not involve him in some sort of artistic compromise: bluntly put, is the composer to work in such a way as to produce music that is considered 'viable' in consumer terms—in which case he has a chance of having his work propagated in the market place by established publishers, recording companies, and the BBC; or is he to allow himself to be categorised as a 'specialist' composer, writing for a restricted audience?

It is the degree of availability of a composer's work in both published and recorded form (which usually reflects the accessibility of his musical language) that determines his commercial success. Rump shows that publishers now rely on the royalties that accrue from broadcasts, recordings, and performances, rather than those from printed music. This makes them reluctant to handle the work of 'specialist' composers, who are therefore forced to rely on commissions to finance their work. Not only do commissions provide an erratic and uncertain source of income, but they usually guarantee only one performance of the commissioned piece; Rump points out that it is the failure of commissioning bodies to fund subsequent performances of a work and its further propagation by means of a score or recording that most hinders the wider recognition of a 'specialist' composer. One of the report's most important conclusions is that 'the need for a larger programme for recording the best of the contemporary repertoire and for an aural archive of British music is urgent'. The importance of the BBC to the 'specialist' composer cannot be overestimated, for its resources can ensure that good performances are widely heard.

Throughout the report, Rump emphasises the necessity for a continuing programme of education and involvement in the concerns of 'specialist' contemporary music. Again the BBC is central to this purpose:

> A B.B.C. which felt a strong responsibility to broaden and deepen its audience's musical experience could lead that audience to new music through more explanatory programmes and through much more sensitive programming.

Rump suggests that lack of education accounts for much of the reluctance to listen to new music. Referring to the education of musicians, he points out that composition of the non-pastiche kind can sometimes be taken as a degree-course option, though he admits that the consequent stimulation of interest can result in a greater number of composers applying for the few grants available for further compositional study. He could have made the point that courses of higher education in music would serve the interests of the contemporary composer more effectively if they emphasised the critical study of the attitudes and language found in contemporary music. This lack in some institutions should be cause for concern, since it is possible for students, even at this level, to finish their study still thinking that tonally based music is the norm, from which other types are some sort of aberration—an attitude they then perpetuate in their own pupils. Rump strongly affirms that an important benefit of any composer-in-residence scheme is found in the educational experience it offers those who come into contact with the composer involved.

While Rump presses for the firmer support of contemporary music that would result from increased government funding, he makes it clear that he is against any assumption by the state of total responsibility for either the income of individual composers or for the transmission of their work. He argues that the inevitable consequence of such state participation would be increased centralisation of control within the art, with too great a reliance upon decisions (and therefore the judgment and taste) of functionaries whom Rump labels 'taste-makers': 'if we are to avoid the slavery Lenin and his heirs created, then we must make sure that the money-bags are many and their dispensers are various'. Rump expresses the view that the maintenance of a composer's integrity necessitates that he remain 'privatised', operating in the market place with the help of potential allies whom Rump calls 'decision-makers'—the producers, propagators, and consumers of the composer's work material. However, the distinction Rump seeks to draw by the use of these two terms is indeed tenuous, for although he clearly envisages the taste-maker's role as restrictive, his study fails to demonstrate that the operations of decision-makers are actually less confining: publishing and record making (areas instanced as being especially responsive to free market forces) allow the decision-maker/consumer the freedom to purchase only that which the decision-maker/vendor has seen fit to provide. The decision-maker/vendor is nothing other than a taste-maker, since the heavy costs of producing musical material ensure that the decisive factor is the potential market—a restriction whose effect may be seen in the fairly predictable nature of the output from several established publishing houses. With this in mind Rump's hope that 'In the very long run, the intensity of use to which a composer's works are put by the generality of music lovers should be the arbiter of his reward' rings somewhat hollow. In any case the time-scale necessary to achieve such a state should be gauged against Rump's estimate that at present 'some small part of one per cent of consumer spending on serious music reaches the pockets of living composers'.

Dr Rump's study makes gloomy reading. The state

has failed in its duty to provide an adequate system of copyright law, the financial consequences of which are to force the composer into greater dependence on government funding, direct and indirect. The present level of music education fails to stimulate the consumer: when many listeners can satisfy their needs through the works of past composers, and do so in preference to works by living composers, it is too easy for much contemporary music to be thought of as a wasteful luxury. There is no doubt that this report will make a significant contribution to any future assessment of the place of music and the contemporary composer in our society. The question is whether such an investigation in years to come will consider Dr Rump's findings as being in the mould of Charles Dickens or Thomas Moore: it would be a sad indictment of our society's attitude to its composers were the present Bleakness to be seen in retrospect as Utopian.

[1] Alan Rump, *Money for Composers* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1977) [available from the Arts Council, at the address given at the head of this review].

Graeme Smith

John Cage's 'Roaratorio': the Uses of Confusion

Around 1976 John Cage was asked to make a contribution to an issue of the American journal *Tri-Quarterly* focusing on James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Inspired by the commission he began seriously to examine this difficult text; the result was a series of mesostics produced from the text itself.[1]

The mesostic is a poetic device that has long fascinated Cage. It consists of a poem in which the middle letter of each line, read vertically, forms a word. As in his earlier experiments, Cage interpreted the form rather loosely in his work on *Finnegans Wake*: taking portions of the text he realigned them to form mesostics spelling 'James Joyce' down the page. This process, first of all, provided for Cage a way into and through the book; examined in their own right, for this external purpose, the letters and syllables became stepping-stones across the confusing and shifting semantic content of Joyce's writing. Eventually Cage read the whole book, created his mesostics and published them as *Writing through Finnegans Wake*,[2] a work that not only makes a characteristic visual impact but which carries even more perplexingly unresolved suggestions of meaning than the original (Example 1).

After *Writing through Finnegans Wake* was finished, Cage received an invitation from Klaus Schöning of Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Cologne, to write a piece of music based on it in some way. So he began work on *Listing through Finnegans Wake*, which was to have been a montage of all the sounds mentioned in the book—presumably assembled sequentially in the order of their appearance. Though this in itself appeared an impossibly large task, the project was extended and enriched still further. The result was *Roaratorio: an Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake*, completed in 1979.[3] In its original tape form the work was first broadcast on Westdeutscher Rundfunk on 22 October 1979 as a radio play; it received the Carl Sczuka Prize for the best radiophonic work of the year. This radio version is distributed by WDR and has been widely rebroadcast. The work was performed daily for a week at IRCAM in Paris (where the final mixing and realisation of the work took place) from 18 to 24 January 1981, and live by Cage and a group of musicians, with taped sounds, in London on 28 May 1982 as part of the Almeida Theatre Cage Festival. Cage has written a 'score' of the work, or rather of its construction, by means of which a similar piece could be derived from any book.[4]

The work consists of three superimposed layers: readings from *Writing through Finnegans Wake*; a random selection of sounds associated with the original text; and performances of traditional Irish music. I shall examine the three layers in turn, to assess their effect both as pure sound objects and as the means of transmitting the conceptual preoccupations that can be detected in all Cage's work and are strongly in evidence in this late creation of his.

Cage contributes layer one, adopting a chant-like, sing-song delivery of selections from *Writing through Finnegans Wake*. The sound of his voice is constantly being obscured by the other layers, so that to attempt to follow the words is futile; only occasionally, when the sound level of the other two layers momentarily drops, is the listener reminded that the reading continues throughout. The construction of this read text has obvious homologies with Cage's approach to the universe of sound. Perhaps, literature being more amenable to description and analysis than music, Cage's attitude to the text will help to delineate and clarify his musical preoccupations.

Much of Cage's writing has been influenced by two statements, made by Norman O. Brown and Thoreau. Brown wrote that syntax is the arrangement of an army;[5] Thoreau that when he heard a sentence he heard feet marching. Cage himself has been attracted to Oriental poetry because of its apparently non-syntactical form.[6] His assault on *Finnegans Wake* is an attempt to demilitarise language. For all its verbal innovativeness and playfulness, *Finnegans Wake* still uses, or demands that the reader recognise, a conventional syntax. If this syntax is 'the arrangement of an army' then Cage's mesostics are a demobilisation of *Finnegans Wake*—the words freed from grammatical regimentation to form their own associations of meaning.

Example 1 First and last mesostics from *Writing through Finnegans Wake*

wroth with twone nathand J oe
A
Malt
jh E m
S hen
pft J schute
Of finnegan
that the humpt Y hillhead of humself
is at the kno C k out
in th E park

i'm sure he squirted J uice in his eyes
to m A ke
theM flash
for flight E ning me
S till and all he was awful fond to me
J ust a whisk
Of
pit Y
a Cloud
in p E ace and silence

The complexity of the original text suggests an almost infinite number of readings; Cage's treatment simply gives expression to the conceptual implications inherent in Joyce's radical handling of the form of the novel. Joyce's challenge to the classic realist text, with its acceptance of the convention of an omniscient narrator, is extended by Cage's procedures: all readings are equally acceptable, a random reading no less so than one dominated by Cage's declared enemies, creativity, taste, and memory. The mesostic reading points out that the text, like the world, is capable of an infinite number of meaningful combinations. Aleatoric compositional procedures alert us to the musical potential of all sound.

The second layer of the work consists of a montage of sounds inspired by the book. As well as attempting in *Listing through Finnegans Wake* to build up all the sounds described or alluded to by Joyce, Cage also decided to characterise in sound all the places mentioned in the book. His task was made easier in one respect by the recent publication of Louis Mink's *A Finnegans Wake Gazetteer,*[7] but the number of places proved to be too large. In the end 626 places were selected randomly from the book. There are 626 pages in *Finnegans Wake*. Sounds from some of the places were procured by Cage on a field trip to Ireland accompanied by John Fulleman, who also assisted in the editing of the montage. Other sounds were solicited from radio stations all round the world, the choice of sounds being left to the recipients of the requests. Finally extensive use was made of the sound archive of WDR.

The use of places as a frame of reference recalls Cage's directions for the realisation of the piece *Variations IV*. In that work the randomly disposed transparent sheets (familiar tools of his aleatoric compositional technique) are superimposed on a map of the performing area, and the instructions for performance deduced from the combinations of point and line that result. This is the principle of notation expanded, where position is taken to represent sound. In the compositional strategy for the construction of the second layer in *Roaratorio*, the world, or at least that of the book, provides the 'score' of the montage; in this world the places mentioned in the text are like the imperfections in the paper which formed the basis of *Music for Piano* in 1952.

The third layer of sound in *Roaratorio* is provided by a handful of Irish musicians. Having sought the advice of Ciaran MacMathuna, in charge of traditional music for Radio Eireann, Cage selected several of the most highly regarded traditional performers to play in the work.[8] They were recorded and the tape mixed down onto the other layers for the WDR performance, but they also later participated in the live performances. Their contribution is of the highest quality in authenticity of style and skill of execution, but in the context of the work as a whole it raises difficulties of a nature that Cage has discussed in his writings, but which he has been unable fully to resolve in his music.

In his discussion of Ives's music in *A Year from Monday*[9] Cage makes several comments that have some bearing on *Roaratorio*. The first concerns the anecdotal or folksy elements in Ives's work, of which he writes:

> The American aspects of his music strike me, as endearing and touching and sentimental as they are, they strike me as the part of his work that is not basically interesting. If one is going to have referential material like that I would be happier if it was global in extent rather than specific to one country as is the referential material of Ives' music.[10]

The traditional music in *Roaratorio* poses the same problems of referentiality and sentimentality that Cage pinpoints in Ives's music. As it is presented in the finished work, the musical material is somewhat fragmentary, but even though the musical details of the sound product are not fully available to the listener, certain extamusical associations ring loud and clear. Cage's predilection for this music has all the marks of a Romantic American view of Ireland; his use of it to impart 'Irishness', a sort of cosmetic atmosphere, is not only uninteresting (to echo his comment on Ives) but offensive to anyone who regards traditional music as a self-sufficient form.

After criticising Ives for his use of referential material Cage praises him for his attitude to the relationship between an individual line and the dense polyphonic texture in which it might be situated. In such a musical situation, he says, there are two possibilities: the line may 'emerge' or we may 'enter in'. By this he means that the arrangement of the sounds may be such that the line will stand out, or we may have to immerse ourselves in a dense texture and find a line to follow. In the first case, everyone hears the same. In the second it may be that what the listener hears he or she hears alone. Cage thus contrasts Ives's referential themes with what he describes (without any pejorative suggestion) as 'the mud of Ives'. Ives's approach to polyphony, according to Cage, invites the possibility of the listener's not knowing what is happening.

The density of texture in *Roaratorio* is intended to obscure all the constituent sounds. Elements of the first and second layers occasionally break through and make themselves recognisable. But the third layer, because of the familiarity and potency of conventional structures, is forever pushing itself out of the 'mud'; even when it is obscured by the second layer, its inexorable rhythm and musical syntax ring on in the listener's mind until the sound becomes audible again and rejoins the mental construct that he has maintained in its absence. The problem for the conceptual balance of the work is that the musical material of the third layer is almost indestructible. In juxtaposing this highly structured music with the somewhat randomly constructed first and second layers, Cage is always in danger of toppling the work. The focusing of the ear caused by the third layer is clearly an example of an 'emerging' line in exactly the sense Cage intended in his discussion of Ives's work.

In practice, however, this third line does provide the work with a reassuring musical continuity that is missing in the other two layers. It sustains the listener's attention in a way that the montage and reading could not. Perhaps this is an example of the triumph of Cage's theatrical sense over his artistic philosophy.

In a recent article in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Wilfrid Mellers commented on a live performance of *Roaratorio* in such a way as to show that he misses many of the most important points of the work. But through his very errors of judgment he demonstrates some of the inconsistencies in Cage's approach discussed above. Of the third layer he says:

> [The] folk musicians intermittently create their 'musics of necessity', which spring from the lives they've led in the contexts of tradition but which, *going on*, become at once historical and eternally present. What they make is not the artefacts of Western 'works' of art but a *continuum*, existing within the flux we're surrounded by. That they endure makes our awareness of chaos peculiarly poignant.[11]

According to Mellers's interpretation, the players are not so much playing music as expressing some natural, archaic, historical and social collective

consciousness. This is no more than sentimentality, which patronises the musicians. They are producing '"works" of art' in quite the same way as a 'Western' performer, and it may be that Mellers does not recognise this because their music is treated in *Roaratorio* merely as an ornament to the larger composition. Further, that Mellers can construe the rest of the work as chaos by comparison with the third layer only points up Cage's misjudgment of the aural pull that each layer is capable of exerting. If Cage had followed his own principles of polyphony, as expressed in his comments on Ives's music, the musical marriage of the diverse sounds might have been more satisfactorily achieved.

I regard the montage as the most significant layer in the piece. The sounds are not clearly distinguishable: as Cage stated in a radio interview with Klaus Schöning, 'A large amount of what we experience is destroyed.'[12] *Roaratorio* exposes for what it is the illusion that what we hear is privileged over what is obscured. The self-effacing montage renders what is before our eyes as inaccessible as what is behind our backs: the sounds that present themselves to us are whipped away and replaced almost as we focus on them. We may accept the randomness with resignation, sinking ourselves quiescently in it, or we can attempt to control it formally, seeking the relationships of sequence, contrast, and similarity that may be found in any group of sounds. Paradoxically both possibilities are offered to us simultaneously.

Do the chance procedures of Cage result in a work that is truly random, a mere lucky dip into the universe of sound? One's aural experience of his music suggests that they do not. The grip of the tyranny of taste and memory may have been weakened by Cage's compositional techniques, but in spite of his protestations, personality impresses itself upon the sound object, to the extent that it is recognisably the work of Cage. Whether because he has restricted himself to a certain range of choices, or because he consistently balances contrast and similarity in certain degrees, or because of some other recurring characteristic, a conformity of style can be perceived, not only in the composition considered as a conceptual art object, but even in the physical sound product.

Cage's aleatoric procedures in both music and literature are marked by common paradoxes. Out of a deeply held conviction he aims to dismantle the central position of the composer as the individual who structures the experiences of others; instead the randomness of the universe is harnessed to act as designer of his musical events. But in the context of Western musical thought, this means nothing less than that the products of chance, and actions beyond his knowledge or control become Cage's aesthetic property. Far from extinguishing his aesthetic role, Cage has elevated it. Thus *4'33"* has not turned everyman into the composer of his own symphony on his front porch, as Ives and Cage himself would have hoped, though it reveals both silence and ambient sound as musically significant; rather it has appropriated part of the experience of not music, has taken 'silence' and tacked onto it 'John Cage ©1952'.

This is not to accuse Cage of deceit in his aesthetic manifestos. Indeed, the strength of his music comes from the complexity of its conceptual basis and the contradictory nature of its principles. If his ideas were simply clear, logical, and sequential, then they would be better expressed in language. In music Cage can present himself simultaneously as composer and not composer. This or that performance is both a unique musical event and a collection of sounds as unpremeditated and unstructured as any we might hear around us. It is within the power of music to express these complexities and confusions, and perhaps no-one has opened the way to their expression as faithfully as Cage. Rather than see *Roaratorio* as a musical failure because of the uncomfortable inconsistencies of its construction, we might look at it as the expression of a central contradiction: that of the relationship between randomly constructed *musique concrète* and highly structured conventional musical forms.

1 John Cage, '7 out of 23', *Tri-Quarterly*, no.30 (Winter 1977), pp.174-8. This is a collection of seven mesostics taken from *Finnegans Wake* without altering the sense of the original.
2 John Cage, *Writing through Finnegans Wake*, University of Tulsa Monograph no.16 (Tulsa, Oklahoma: University of Tulsa Press, 1978); also published as a special supplement to *James Joyce Quarterly*, vol.15 (1978).
3 The script of the piece, with additional explanatory material, is published as *Roaratorio: an Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* (Cologne: Westdeutscher Rundfunk, 1980).
4 Details of Cage's compositional practice in the piece are given in his article 'On having received the Carl Sczuka Prize for *Roaratorio*, Donaueschingen 10/20/79', *The Composer* (1980), and in Cage's radio interview with Klaus Schöning, made in connection with the original tape version of the piece.
5 See John Cage, *M* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), p.[ii].
6 Ibid.
7 Louis O. Mink, *A Finnegans Wake Gazetteer* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978).
8 The following musicians were heard in the original tape version of *Roaratorio*: Séamus Ennis (pipes), Paddy Glackin (fiddle), Matt Malloy (flute), Peadar and Mell Mercier (*bodhrán*), and Joe Heaney (voice).
9 *A Year from Monday* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1963), pp.37-42.
10 Ibid., p.41.
11 Wilfrid Mellers, 'John Cage at Seventy', *Times Literary Supplement* (11 June 1982), p.637.
12 See note 4 above.

David Byers

International Rostrum of Composers 1983

International Rostrum of Composers, Paris, 6-11 June 1983

It has been my good fortune to attend the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris for each of the past three years as the BBC's delegate. As a bonus, this year's session—a week or so later than usual—happily coincided with the advent of good weather: whatever the Rostrum is like, a week in Paris, especially in the sun, is always welcome!

What the Rostrum is, or aims to do, is certainly not widely known, and its status varies considerably from country to country. The 1983 meeting was the 30th and this seems a good occasion for giving the Rostrum a little of the publicity it deserves. Its purpose is thoroughly altruistic: 'The International Rostrum of Composers seeks to make known in all countries, through the intermediary of broadcasting organisations, outstanding works by contemporary composers.' Each country is allowed to send, through

its broadcasting organisations, a tape of one or several contemporary pieces up to a maximum of 35 minutes in length. The works may be of any aesthetic trend but should be 'of marked distinction'; living composers, especially those under 30, should be represented, but 'works by composers who have already achieved great international fame' should be avoided. Each country also sends a delegate who must provide at least three copies of the score or scores submitted, and sufficient copies of analytical and biographical notes for all the delegates. Most important of all, the works presented must have been contractually cleared for one free broadcast in each of the participating countries, to be given within twelve months; in fact the countries undertake to broadcast a minimum of six works from the Rostrum. The resulting transmissions are mainly of the borrowed tapes, but a few (very few!) are of new performances, resulting from the Rostrum's encouragement of live presentation of the selected works, if possible at public concerts.

The Rostrum is held over five days at UNESCO House, under the auspices of the International Music Council. The Monday morning is taken up with official speeches of welcome and homilies on the supposed powers of music to heal all international ills. The Rostrum's president, Dr Gerard Victory, formerly Director of Music for Radio Telefis Eireann, then takes the chair and business proper commences. Lots are drawn to decide the order in which the countries will be listened to, and delegates are reminded of the rules; it is all a slow business since each instruction has to be stated in the two working languages, English and French. Then the music begins, courtesy of a sound technician and two tape recorders. For three and a half days delegates are subjected to a barrage of taped music, which they must assess. On the Friday morning, when each delegate has cast his 20 votes, there emerge one 'selected' work and nine 'recommended' works; a second vote on the works of composers under 30 years of age leads to another 'selection' and two more 'recommendations'. Friday afternoon is devoted to an examination of the rules and any problems experienced during the session, and the Rostrum is duly wound up for another year.

The delegates are an assorted bunch. Most work for radio stations: some have specific charge of programmes of contemporary music, others are heads or directors of music. A few are musicians resident in Paris who are nominated by the radio stations of their home countries because a shortage of travel funds prevents the sending of a proper delegate from among the broadcasting staff. This year the USA's National Public Radio was in a state of such financial embarrassment that it sent tapes but no delegate at all. After due deliberation the Rostrum decided not to allow this lest the entire exercise become a sort of anonymous chain letter—send one tape and receive 32! Some countries have been sending the same delegates for many years; others, like the UK, have a policy of changing personnel every two or three years. Many delegates are earnestly attentive, scribbling all the while, staring vacantly into space, or crowding around one of the available scores. A few are always to be seen reading newspapers or maps—presumably catching up on the whereabouts of the available night life! The contact established between delegates, when the language barrier proves surmountable, is always professionally stimulating, but interestingly (and understandably) conversations tend to be steered politely away from any honest appraisal of the presented works.

At the first session in 1954 only four European radio stations participated and this generated 16 broadcasts. In 1981 there were 33 radio stations (including five from Asia and the Pacific and five from the Americas) and a resulting 662 broadcasts. This year 32 radio stations were represented; notable absentees, apart from the USA, were Poland and Czechoslovakia.

When I first attended the Rostrum in 1981 I knew little about how it was organised, but I had been impressed by the list of composers whose works had been recommended in the past. In the 1950s Berio, Dutilleux, Frank Martin, Henze, Castiglioni, Lutosławski, and Baird were represented, and in the sixties Carter, Penderecki, Nono, Takemitsu, Tavener, and Ligeti. The 1970s saw recommendations for Crumb, Balassa, Górecki, Durkó, and Louis Andriessen, but generally there were fewer of the big names—presumably the suggestion that those who had yet to acquire an international reputation should be favoured was beginning to take full effect. My first year was marked by intense disappointment. Coming from insular Belfast, I had expected to find myself in a forum for the very best in contemporary music; I had hoped for music that was exciting and original, and the truth is that there's not very much of that around. Often the works played at the Rostrum suffer simply from being heard in such close proximity to one another: several times I have found that a work which seemed to be only a borderline possibility for transmission when it was played in Paris was a better piece when I listened to it a month later in my office.

The work that was selected in 1981, *Réquisitoire* for brass and percussion by the Belgian composer Frédérik Van Rossum, was certainly one of the more characterful and distinctive scores, but I found it cliché-ridden and it failed to live up to the claim in the programme note that it evokes 'human tragedy in the face of divine sentence'. It has left me with few memories—an observation with which I have tended to dismiss the whole of the 1981 Rostrum. And yet when I look back at the list of works, I realise just how many of them I *do* remember. The selected work by a composer under 30, *Trois morceaux de l'aube* for cello and piano by the Finnish composer Jouni Kaipainen, is refreshing and uncluttered music, which deserves public performances. So do two other, simpler pieces offered that year by Hungary: *Handshake after Shot* by Gyula Csapó was an object lesson in C major simplicity and brevity; *Epitaph from Aquincum* for soprano, electric organ, and strings, by János Decsényi, was full of commonplace overlapping diatonic phrases and often seemed puerile . . . but it has remained such a strong and vivid memory that I regret the distortion on the recording which prevented me from including it in my selection for broadcasting.

Orchestral works that year all tended to be on a large scale and to build up to a climax, with the inevitable J. Arthur Rank tam-tam. Outstanding for its craftsmanship was a piano concerto by the Bulgarian composer Georgi Mintchev, but in style this was a Romantic work, owing everything to the old Romanticism and very little to the new. Denmark contributed orchestral works in 1981 and 1982 that, like Kaipainen's piece, deserve public performance in this country. Ib Nørholm's *Idylles d'apocalypse*, for organ, 15 wind instruments, and string quartet, explored the paradox of its title with much more drama and even horror than Van Rossum could evoke in *Réquisitoire*. The images that inspired Nørholm were from the work of Hieronymous Bosch and they were reflected in a music whose language was not

always immediately contemporary but whose impact certainly was. By contrast, in 1982 Denmark offered Bo Holten's *Caccia*, an exploration of the F major merits of a mid-14th-century French *caccia*; its effectiveness arose from many overlapping canons, and the enjoyable tapestry managed at times to suggest Peter Maxwell Davies and even Stokowski!

The Rostrum provides insufficient evidence to allow one to make generalisations about national characteristics; but on the strength of my three visits I have decided—I hope wrongly—that all Australian orchestral music reflects a vast and anonymous outback, while the French write only for unwieldy monster orchestras. Alain Bancquart's Symphony, heard in 1981, was a lumbering giant of a piece, which at times came close to anonymity but always managed to startle at the crucial moment. In 1982 France presented the work of Yoshihisa Taira, born in Japan but resident in France since 1966; his *Meditations for Orchestra* was another blockbuster of a score with hammer blows of percussion, washes of sound, and, towards the end, a long, slow *crescendo* which began with interweaving strings.

> An infinite number of sounds float around me [says Taira]. Some of them touch me more intensely than others. So to me, beginning to make music is the same thing as listening to the life of each of the sounds that I have remembered . . . To me, music must not be abstract subject with pedantic theories or vain explanations. I think music must be a living verb, concrete.

Hearing his *Meditations* after a Parisian lunch on a hot June day was like being struck by a chunk of concrete. A devastating piece.

And this year France did it again—bigger and bolder though no better. *Ouverture pour une fête étrange* by Michaël Levinas is scored for two orchestras and tape—the tape producing a mutation of the orchestral sound by means of amplification and pitch modification. The work was inspired by a Piranese drawing and is written on tremendously long pages with a veritable multitude of staves. The vast, murmuring outcome seemed to me to be a waste of such resources—the effect would be better captured by synthesizers and the like . . . But then Rostrum delegates tend to like the blockbusters (as I did last year!), so it was a slight surprise to find M. Levinas just pipped at the post for this year's recommendation. That the recommended work should have been Györky Kurtág's *Messages of the late R. V. Troussova* will come as no surprise, however, to those who have heard this urgent, humorous, fragmented, and lonely piece (it has been broadcast several times and was given at the 1982 Proms). The only surprise is that a composer as well established as Kurtág should have been represented at the Rostrum at all. Perhaps it was felt that a change was needed in the style of the works submitted by Hungary. There is more detailed compositional craft evident in a Kurtág score than in the minimalist offerings of Csapó and Decsényi in 1981, or in *Lesson 24: Christmas Day* by István Mártha, which was entered in 1982; but for all its simplicity, the relentless rhythms and sheer jubilation of Mártha's piece, operating on a different level from the music of Kurtág, provided memorable refreshment and, indeed, a reminder of the sheer diversity of music to be heard at the Rostrum.

Despite that diversity, my lasting impression of this year's Rostrum is one of emptiness. The tone was set by the opening piece which came from West Germany: Passacaglia by the young composer Detlev Müller-Siemens was a well-constructed, well-orchestrated, slow-moving, sombre work, but once the available and rather anonymous possibilities of 3 against 4 against 5 had been explored there was the real problem of what else to do. Müller-Siemens had the measure of his material and knew when to stop: many other entries did not have this merit. For Australia, Martin Wesley-Smith's *For Marimba and Tape* was a fun piece of which a little went a long way; Peter Sculthorpe's Piano Concerto—perhaps because of its association with the deaths of three close friends and his own near-fatal car accident—lacked the vital spark needed to enliven what sounded like a slowed-down version of all that lovely French film music where the piano has an ostinato figure dominated by endless semiquavers.

By contrast, Denmark offered two characterful works. Hans Abrahamsen's *Nacht und Trompeten* (1981) is another of those orchestral pieces that mix various permutations of rhythmic groupings using similar notes, but it revealed a composer with a strong personality and a clear and often dramatic sense of direction. Niels Rosing-Schow's *E rigidis* for violin and piano was born from the 'new simplicity'; the title means 'out of rigidity' and suggests a development from 'the frozen to the freely fabulating'. Without intending any sort of condescension, I can say that this was a charming piece, which was well but unobtrusively crafted; its concentration on the central note E was no hindrance to the gradual unfolding of the music.

Another country that presented a group of interesting pieces was Yugoslavia. The orchestral Sarabande by Frano Parać began as good film music in the big Romantic tradition; every now and then the curtain opened just a little to reveal a private world which gradually grew but then came to naught—in fact it lost direction in a sub-Tchaikovsky fairyland before disappearing. It was a strangely haunting work: old-fashioned, depressing, and powerful. The juxtaposition with Milan Stibilj's *La Rosette* for orchestra was fascinating. This was a relentless piece with colourful, if diffuse, textures in which the strings were often scored for in ten parts; but what a wonderful sensation when the strings thinned out to leave simple thirds in the horns! The third Yugoslavian piece, *Raskovnik* by Vuk Kulenović, was a hypnotic minimalist work based on folk-dance material. It may well prove boring on a second hearing but it was fun to follow with the score.

I have still to look back over my scribbled notes (no, I was not one of the newspaper and map readers!) and decide on my personal recommendations from the 1983 Rostrum. But it seemed to me that while 1982 was a marked improvement on 1981, this year the number of interesting works declined again; still, not every small country can provide masterpieces each year (nor for that matter can every large country—thank goodness!). Perhaps anyway I shall revise my opinion when I listen to the tapes again, and decided that 1983 had its share of masterpieces.

I have been disappointed by much that I have heard at the Rostrum, but that does not detract from its usefulness in providing the opportunity to hear and assess contemporary music from many corners of the globe. The competitive element inherent in the voting procedure should not be highlighted; placings of second, third, and so on after the main recommendation do not give a true reflection of the artistic merits of a particular work. However, it is pleasing to note that British composers have consistently maintained a position in the ratings! For the record the works that have been presented in the last three years are Edward Maguire's *Euphoria—a Sense of Well-being* and George Benjamin's *Ringed by the Flat Horizon* in 1981, John Buller's *The Theatre of Memory* in 1982, and Roger Smalley's Symphony in 1983.

Elliott Schwartz

Trans-Atlantic Interactions

British–American Musical Interactions, Third American Music Conference, Keele University, 1-4 July 1983

An impressive conference on the subject of American music, co-sponsored by the Sonneck Society and attended by, among others, scholars, performers, and composers from more than 15 American states, took place during the weekend of 4 July. That's not necessarily news, since the Sonneck Society—as the principal institution concerned with the entire area of music in American life, past and present—organises events of this nature each year. What *is* newsworthy is the fact that the conference took place in Britain, at the University of Keele's Centre for American Music.

As many visiting Americans have discovered during the past decade or so, the University of Keele's music department is unusually receptive to American developments. Professor Peter Dickinson has travelled extensively in the USA (beginning with his own student years at the Juilliard), and frequently gives talks on such subjects as Ives for the BBC. The Keele Centre, which houses one of the most comprehensive libraries of American music outside the USA, hosted two international conferences on American music during the 1970s, one on the cultivated tradition and the other on blues, country, and rock styles. Dickinson has also brought a number of Americans to the Centre as guest professors. The most recent of these, Karl Kroeger of the University of Colorado (who spent a year at Keele as Leverhulme Fellow), has also been an active officer of the Sonneck Society. It seemed only natural that the third Keele conference should be jointly sponsored with Sonneck, and that this unique trans-Atlantic venture be devoted to the subject of British–American musical interactions.

American attendance at the conference was impressive, even though early July is a vacation period for most American academics; people travelled to Keele from points as widely separated as Vermont, California, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Alabama, Colorado, Kansas, and Michigan. British representatives came from Glasgow, Southampton, Liverpool, London, Oxford, Sheffield, and a great many other places—testimony to the deep interest in American music and its British connections that is felt on both sides of the Atlantic.

Papers were ordered according to historical period, beginning with presentations on 18th-century topics by the critic Percy Young and the University of Michigan's Richard Crawford, among others. 19th-century subjects of particular interest included an account of Horatio Parker's travels to London at the turn of the century (William Kearns, University of Colorado), and the influence of Gilbert and Sullivan on the American music theatre (Steven Ledbetter of the Boston Symphony Orchestra). Contemporary topics that especially interested me included Ruth Wilson's study of recent songs in which American texts have been set by British composers (and vice versa), and three papers presented by Britons: on the BBC and broadcasts of American pop music in the 1920s and 1930s (Simon Frith), home-grown British spin-offs of country music (Tony Russell), and the fascinating relationship between Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and Frank Bridge when he visited America in the twenties (Stephen Banfield).

A number of concerts were held at Keele during the conference period, including a nicely varied recital by baritone Henry Herford, winner of the 1982 International American Music Competition. Herford's programme, which was recorded for future broadcast by the BBC, offered strong readings of Ives, Barber, and Virgil Thomson, among others. We also heard a lecture-recital by Stephen Spackman (St Andrews, Scotland) on Thomas Jefferson and the violin, and performances by Keele pianists Penelope Roskell and Peter Seivewright of music ranging from Tippett and Elizabeth Lutyens to the young American Larry Bell (resident at the American Academy in Rome).

I personally took part in a lengthy morning-and-afternoon session devoted to the unique 'interaction' of British and American composers who have developed special attachments for each other's countries, and came to Keele to discuss those attachments. First there were performances of music by some of the composers present; of these, the taut, intense *Dialogue and Song* for cello and piano by Jonathan Harvey, and the American Stephen Montague's *Paramell III*, for piano solo and a quiet repeated-noted drone chanted by the audience, were the most effective by far. The discussion period that followed offered uniquely individual glimpses of the 'British–American interaction' on a personal level: Harvey's years at Princeton, on a Harkness Fellowship, working with Milton Babbitt; the Harkness residency of Roger Marsh at the opposite end of America (aesthetically as well as geographically) in San Diego; Montague's decision to remain in London as a free-lance musician after his visit a decade ago as a Fulbright Scholar; the influence of the British avant garde upon my own work (also a decade ago); Simon Bainbridge's summers at Tanglewood; Keith Potter's visit to New York as a critic, covering performance art at The Kitchen.

From our different standpoints we also tried to isolate certain factors that might distinguish recent British and American music, or that might relate the two: the concern for multiple 'levels' and simultaneities, a fascination with collage and parody (perhaps more British than American), the search for new intonation systems and instrument building (certainly more American), and the like. Much of the exchange was led by the elder statesman and best-known member of our panel, who has done more to further trans-Atlantic 'interaction' than the rest of us put together—Wilfrid Mellers, author of *Music in a New-Found Land* and a frequent visitor to the USA. Mellers (who had, in fact, just returned from a visiting residency at Dartmouth College) was awarded honorary membership of the Sonneck Society for his contributions to the study of American music.

The conference ended with a panel on that most complex of Anglo-American musical collaborations, the latest edition of *Grove's Dictionary*. Stanley Sadie, editor of *The New Grove*, joined H. Wiley Hitchcock of the Institute for Studies in American Music at Brooklyn College (and associate editor, with Sadie, of the forthcoming American *Grove*) in answering questions from the floor—not only concerning the *Grove* project, but on issues related to future musicological co-operation as well. And if a model for such co-operation is needed, the Keele Conference itself in all its aspects—from the presentation of papers to concerts, in its actively engaging the BBC and the *Musical Times* (which brought out a special American issue), and in its broad-based appeal to many quarters of the musical community—will undoubtedly serve for many years.

A different version of this review will appear in *Musical America*.

Hilary Bracefield

Groping towards 'Gruppen'

Karlheinz Stockhausen, *Gruppen*; London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Claudio Abbado, Edward Downes, and James Judd, Barbican Centre, London, 28, 29, 31 March 1983

It seems on the surface ridiculous that in 1983 the performance by a major orchestra in a major musical centre of a major work from the 1950s by a major 20th-century composer is so rare that it is made something of a red-letter occasion, but there it is. A work requiring forces no larger than those for *The Rite of Spring* or a Strauss tone poem, with a not unmanageable degree of spatial separation between groups—which an orchestra would cope with cheerfully for the Berlioz *Requiem* or a full-dress production of the *1812 Overture*—is tentatively given its sixth performance in Great Britain, heralded by much preparatory publicity of a gingerly nature, and greeted by a positive swarm of critics from all over the place, a sprinkling of lionising socialites, diffident reviews, and a mention in *Private Eye* (not in Pseud's Corner) —to be rewarded, in all likelihood, by suppression from the orchestra's repertory for as long as possible.

I speak, of course, of the open lecture-concert and two performances of Stockhausen's *Gruppen*, given in the Barbican in the last week of March by the LSO conducted by Claudio Abbado, Edward Downes, and James Judd. There was much about the aura surrounding the whole operation that smacked of the still-prevalent need to put avant-garde works into some special category. It was marketed as a big contemporary event yet the programme was shared uneasily with two works by Brahms—*Variations on a Theme by Haydn* and the *Alto Rhapsody*—presumably to bring in a big-name draw, Shirley Verrett. It was hard to tell how many of the audience did in fact appear for only one half of the programme, but there were many who sat through the Stockhausen with fixed, forebearing smiles on their faces.

Now it is true that there is still much music by many earlier 20th-century masters that is only rarely granted an airing by the main London concert givers. But by now important works of the 1950s and 1960s should be receiving stern assessment from the standpoint of full understanding fostered by the availability of regular live realisations. This is certainly not happening with Stockhausen's work in Britain at present. The sheer excitement of the performances we had in the late sixties and early seventies seems to have gone. Those sometimes forbidding concerts, directed by the composer beadily keeping everyone to the straight and narrow, which brought each new work to this country, seem to have ended. For most of us the 25-year-old *Gruppen* is known chiefly from the recording, the score, the commentaries, and Stockhausen's own pronouncements; if we stretch our memories back some of us may have recollections of one of the few performances—the last in Britain was in 1976. Our knowledge of the work's structures comes to us not from familiarity with the live music, but only from the written word, our aural impression not from hearing it in the kind of space it was designed for, but from the two-dimensional sound of a recording.

Having attended on all three evenings at the Barbican (I also heard the 1974 Prom at which the work was played), I still don't feel I can decide how good *Gruppen* is, and the chief barrier to my decision is the kind of treatment it received. Perhaps it was unfortunate that I was there on Monday night. Only after the evening was over did I notice that the programme called it a lecture-*concert*; I had expected a final rehearsal, but in fact after the lecture the piece was played right through once. Jonathan Harvey's introduction, illustrated by excerpts played by the LSO, struck the right balance between enthusiasm and erudition and gave very suitable information for the general audience. But I was far more shocked than the London critics seem to have been by the behaviour of the musicians in front of the paying public. Deliberate guffawing at places where Jonathan Harvey spoke of the strong fascination of the work the more one hears it, and of the influence on the score of the shapes of the mountains of Switzerland where Stockhausen was working, was disturbing and could not help but colour the attitude of the audience. A lot of silly waving from orchestra to orchestra, inattention and noise during the lecture, and the rude packing up of instruments the moment the chief conductor laid down his baton at the end of the play-through left the impression that the LSO was playing the work under duress, as a duty. All this affected my reception of the performances on the next two nights, and my judgment of the work.

There was no doubt, though, that uncommitted as many of the instrumentalists may have been, committed the conductors certainly were. And there was no doubt that the work had been thoroughly prepared. The performances were in general remarkably accurate in timing and dynamics and in the synchronisation between the three orchestral groups. Abbado, Downes, and Judd really knew the music, and the players could certainly play what was on the pages in front of them—no mean feat at all. But despite the fact that Stockhausen appears to have pre-programmed all the elements in the piece, like any composer relying on live performance he cannot avoid the chance element which is its greatest trait. These three renderings of *Gruppen* had an inflexibility that came from two sources. First there was the fact that the orchestra didn't really know the piece—this is surely the main barrier to proper assessment of so many 20th-century works: players concentrating on getting the notes right can't listen to the whole piece as it unfolds. Second, the players seemed unable or unwilling to relax into the music and enjoy it (from the attitude at the lecture-concert I guess that this was because many of them felt antipathy for it).

As regards note-playing, the three performances were, in fact, remarkably similar. The opening sections were assured on the first night after the warm-up of playing excerpts to illustrate the lecture, but the rest of the performance came across very much as a run-through. Tuesday night started much more tentatively from cold, but built to the big climax at group 114 with far greater excitement. On Thursday many of the solo passages sounded more individual and lyrical, and the string sections of the orchestras seemed more sure of their place in the work and assertive in their playing, but the climax made less impact. The broadcast performance (Tuesday night) was appreciably shorter than the well-known recorded performance, some of the acceleration of tempo coming around group 40, and more resulting from the excited antics of the conductors at groups 76 and 118. There were several sections, for example some of the early parts of the work around groups 9 and 14, and the trilled music starting in group 113 in orchestra 3, where one felt that the orchestras had misunderstood Stockhausen's intentions regarding balance. There were sections, too, where nice effects, evident on the page

and in the recording, did not come off: the pointillistic sounds of group 22, the big brass chords of 118, the drums at 121, and worst of all the flat-out section at 122, where I suspect that the players were playing anything that came into their fingers, making sure only to end at the right second (which they did).

Where one sits in the hall will colour one's reactions as well. I was on the ground floor on all three evenings, and felt very much 'under' the sound, which rose to the ceiling and to some extent stayed there. Curiously, the orchestra nearest to me on each night was the hardest to hear because of its elevation, and the percussion of all three was more dominant than Stockhausen can really have meant it to be. The electric guitar had a disturbingly plangent sound, and though it may have heraldic solos (like the E-flat clarinet), Stockhausen surely did not intend it to sound so unrelated to all the other instruments.

The LSO certainly gave *Gruppen* three workmanlike performances. The excitement of the writing for large orchestra, the beauty of the shimmering colour of the string writing, and the clear pointillistic interplay of many sections came through almost in spite of the players. The relaxed surety which the same orchestra brings to, say, *The Rite of Spring* to make it come thoroughly alive was missing, and without it it was impossible to assess *Gruppen* as a whole—because 25 years after its completion the work must stand (if at all) as a complete piece and not the sum of its components. It's a pity that we are still hedged round by Stockhausen's writings on the work; it's a pity to clutch at the three less serial 'interludes', as Jonathan Harvey calls them, for one's main pleasure; it's a pity to feel anxiety that one might not be following the argument of the groups, for one needs to trace the logic of the entire piece. I am inclined to decide that though I admire the sheer panache of the 29-year-old Stockhausen's writing for orchestra, on the evidence of these performances the design doesn't quite come off. The build-up to group 114 loses its way, and more importantly the composer has mismanaged the final wind-down after the cathartic moment. I don't think that even a more committed performance could remove these problems, but a more committed performance might persuade me otherwise.

Material Received

Records

Ros Bandt, *Improvisations in Acoustic Chambers* (Move Records MS 3035)

Ros Bandt and LIME, *Soft and Fragile: Music in Glass and Clay* (Move Records MS 3045)

Computer Music—Stanley Haynes, *Prisms*; Larry Austin, *Canadian Coastlines*; Charles Dodge, *Any Resemblance*; John Celona, *Music in Circular Motions*; Bruce Pennycook, *Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein* (Folkways Records FTS 37475)

IRCAM: un portrait (Centre Georges Pompidou IRCAM 0001)

Periodicals

Composer: Magazine of the British Music Information Centre, nos.78-9 (1983)

Dansk musik tidsskrift (1981/2), nos.1-6; (1982/3), nos.1-6

Musical Times, vol.124, nos.1683-6 (1983)

Musik-Konzepte: die Reihe über Komponisten, no.31: *Giacinto Scelsi* (July 1983)

Tempo, no.145 (June 1983)

Books

Stravinsky, Selected Correspondence, vol.1, ed. and with commentaries by Robert Craft (London: Faber and Faber, 1982)

Contributors to this Issue

Richard Barrett Composer, based in London. He is currently working on a piece for Suoraan commissioned by the New McNaghten Concerts.

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

David Byers Composer and Senior Music Producer with the BBC in Belfast. He studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music and with Henri Pousseur at the Liège Conservatoire.

Christopher Fox Composer, performer, and director of the Filter Band (who will include Walter Zimmermann's *Zwiefache* in their 1984 concerts). He is currently involved in an EEC-funded community arts project in Bradford, and is working on commissions from Lontano, Singcircle, and Nora Post (the last is a work for bass oboe).

David Jefferies is studying music at the University of Sussex.

Stephen Montague Freelance composer and pianist, based in London. His works have been performed and broadcast in many countries and he has recently received commissions from the Academy of London Chamber Orchestra and Singcircle, and a Gulbenkian commission for a 40′ work for piano and live electronics. He is on the executive committee of EMAS and is one of the organisers of their new concert series.

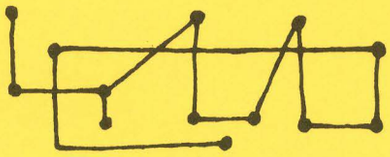
Elliott Schwartz Composer, and chairman of the music department of Bowdoin College, Maine. He is currently writing a book on 20th-century music.

Graeme Smith is pursuing postgraduate research on the music of Irish immigrants to Australia at Monash University, Melbourne.

Adrian Thomas Composer and Senior Lecturer in Music at The Queen's University of Belfast. He is currently on sabbatical leave at the University of California at San Diego.

Gloria Toplis Part-time lecturer in music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. She is currently completing a PhD thesis on the music of Stravinsky in the 1940s.

David Wright Part-time lecturer in music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London, and at Trinity College of Music, London.



VOLUME 20, NOS. 1 & 2

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Cardew, Coker, Hanson, Miller, Monk, Steuermann

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