Expanding horizons: the international avant-garde, 1962–75

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Darmstadt after Steinecke

When Wolfgang Steinecke – the originator of the Darmstadt Ferienkurse – died at the end of 1961, much of the increasingly fragile spirit of collegiality within the Cologne/Darmstadt-centred avant-garde died with him. Boulez and Stockhausen in particular were already fiercely competitive, and when in 1960 Steinecke had assigned direction of the Darmstadt composition course to Boulez, Stockhausen had pointedly stayed away.\(^1\) Cage's work and significance was a constant source of acrimonious debate, and Nono's bitter opposition to him\(^2\) was one reason for the Italian composer being marginalized by the Cologne inner circle as a structuralist reactionary. Other Cologne figures were starting to assert their creative personalities, and look for their place in the sun: Argentinian-born Mauricio Kagel, whose Anagrama (1959) had upstaged the premiere of Stockhausen's Kontakte at the 1960 ISCM Festival in Cologne, was starting to rebel against Stockhausen's assumptions of supremacy; the Hungarian György Ligeti, disenchanted by the incessant conflicts, had left Cologne for Vienna just at the moment where his own distinctive compositional voice was starting to emerge in the orchestral work Apparitions (1960); and Gottfried Michael Koenig (b. 1926), who had been Stockhausen's right-hand man in the electronic studios since the mid-1950s, and whose Klangfiguren (1956) had been the only work one could think of setting beside Gesang der jünglinge, would shortly leave for Holland.

These territorial power struggles and secessions offered a paradoxical yet symbolic upbeat to a decade whose central theme was to be openness. Orthodoxies would continue, but as the number of composers affiliated to the notion of an avant-garde swelled dramatically – even globalized – every form of authority and exclusiveness would be questioned. As the 1960s progressed, both hope and disenchantment grew in harness with one another, mirroring

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\(^2\) Cf. Luigi Nono, 'Geschichte und Gegenwart in der Musik von heute', in Melos 27 (1960), pp. 69–75.
the political dreams and discontents that erupted in the abortive uprisings of 1968. In Europe, at least, 1968 marked a crucial turning point: a collapse of utopian thinking, which diversified into furious protest and denial on the one hand and resignation or capitulation on the other, the latter paving the way for the most 'retro' elements of mid-1970s postmodernism.

Initially, though, this was also a period of enormous achievement and excitement. Boulez referred contemptuously to the 'dreadful and regular epidemics' that seemingly created new fashions on an annual basis. Naturally, as the ranks of the 'avant-garde' grew, so too did epigonism: multiplying numbers does not necessarily multiply talent and originality, or at least, not by the same factor. But it was precisely the proliferation of ideas that characterized the 1960s, not the systematic working-out of a consistent radical position that had occupied the avant-gardes of the previous decade. In some respects Boulez, whose own compositions in the fourteen years separating Pli selon pli (1961) and Rituel in memoriam Bruno Maderna (1975) would scarcely match his earlier triumphs, was now out of step with the times. In the wake of the modernist 'grand narratives' of the 1950s - serialism and its derivatives, indeterminacy, and electroacoustic music - there was certainly ample scope for the acts of consolidation rather than innovation that Boulez now appeared to endorse, but the mood of the era did not favour them. Initially, works by young Boulez disciples and protégés such as Diaphonies (1964) and Triade (1965) by Gilbert Amy (b. 1936), or Equivalences (1963) by Jean-Claude Eloy (b. 1938), impressed through their superior craft and elegance; but before long, the predictable mélange of mellifluous harmonies, limited aleatory elements, and massed metallophones was seeming like a new academicism (starting with Faisceaux-Diffractions (1970), Eloy too would break out into quite new directions), and increasingly, it was to the ever-unpredictable Stockhausen that young composers looked, as the prophet of times to come. Purism gave way to pluralism.

Another respect in which the European avant-garde detached itself from the post-Webernism of the preceding decade was its espousal of large forms and dramatic gestures. If there was any trace of a Webernesque 'Andacht zum Kleinen' at the start of the 1960s, it soon disappeared. Though the individual movements of Boulez's Pli selon pli may not have exceeded fifteen minutes in length, the overall one-hour span demonstrated a new sense of scale, almost doubling the length of those Stockhausen works (Gruppen (1957), Carré, and Kontakte (both 1960)) which had previously set the benchmark for temporal and gestural ambition. Stockhausen himself would soon up the stakes with the 1965 version of Momento, and above all with the massive electroacoustic composition Hymnen (1967), which lasts almost two hours (over two hours in the version with soloists). Without quite aspiring to these dimensions, Berio's works from this period, such as Passaggio (1962), Epifanie (1964), and Laborintus II (1965), moved up around the half-hour mark, as did Kagel in works like the orchestral Heterophonie (1961), and Tremens (1965), or Ligeti in his Requiem (1965).

More significant than duration, though, was the broadening of themes and emotional scope. The move from the studio/laboratory mentality of the 1950s avant-garde to a more theatrical orientation may have been partly an outcome of the avant-garde's growing impact and cultural status, but it also reflected an increasing willingness to address major human and social themes, as in the works by Berio mentioned above and in Stockhausen's Hymnen, with its utopian aspiration of unifying all peoples through music. The 'big statement' also becomes clear in Xenakis's works of the late 1960s, such as the orchestral works Terretektorh (1966) and Nomos Gamma (1968), in which the orchestral players are to be placed amidst the audience, the ballet score Kraanerg (1969), and the tape composition Persepolis (1971). Once again, this is not just a matter of duration or large forces, but of subject matter: Kraanerg, for instance, was inspired in part by predictions that around 2020, eighty per cent of the world's population will be aged under twenty-five, and that a biological struggle between generations will sweep the planet, destroying all known social frameworks.

However, the spirit of 1960s modernism is not adequately conveyed by its more glamorous and dramatic products alone. Almost equally characteristic was the 'do-it-yourself' attitude which many composers extrapolated from Cage's work - an approach which viewed the whole notion of the 'great work' with some scepticism. Pluralism and cosmopolitanism notwithstanding, the 1960s saw a clear polarization between the modernist activities of American and European composers (in passing, it may be noted that the two most durable new tendencies introduced during this time - live electronics and minimalism - both emanated from the United States). Moreover, within the United States a sharp split emerged between an 'orthodox' modernism fostered within university music departments, embodied by composers such as Milton Babbitt (b. 1916) and Elliott Carter (b. 1908), and more experimental activities pursued largely without reference to educational institutions, this split being encapsulated in the New York distinction between 'uptown' and 'downtown' composers.


4 'une lutte biologique entre les générations déferlant que toute la planète . . . ', composer's note to Erato [vinyl] recording.
New national schools

The Boulez–Nono–Stockhausen triumvirate that appeared to dominate Darmstadt in the late 1950s may have been international, but the national schools involved were the same ones that had dominated nineteenth-century music in France, Italy, and Germany. In fact, quite apart from the New York School around Cage, avant-gardes had already begun to emerge during the 1950s in countries as diverse as Sweden, Holland, England, Spain, and Japan. An emphatic multi-nationalism, however, became clearer from the early 1960s onwards. Initially, the most striking instance of this was the Polish ‘sonorist’ school that emerged rapidly from 1956 onwards, after the loosening of Socialist Realist stylistic restrictions: by 1961, younger composers like Krzysztof Penderecki and Henryk Górecki, and older ones like Witold Lutosławski and Kazimierz Serocki (1922–81), had already made an international impact with works which laid emphasis on colourful and novel sonorities and were characterized by abrupt, almost cinematic changes of texture. In the course of the 1960s, comparable but more limited Eastern European avant-gardes appeared in Czechoslovakia (Marek Kopelent (b. 1932), Rudolf Komorous (b. 1931), and Zbynek Vostrak (1920–85)), and Yugoslavia (Milko Kelemen (b. 1924), and above all Vinko Globokar (b. 1934), who was to play a major international role both as composer and as virtuoso trombonist). Yet while the emergence of these schools may reflect the waning influence of official communist art ideologies, the simultaneous rise of a Cuban avant-garde, headed by Leo Brouwer (b. 1939), was made possible by Castro’s liberal view of all forms of ‘radical’ expression.5

In many cases, these modernist schools provided a major revitalization of national musical culture, though rarely in a nationalist sense. In England, the early works of Peter Maxwell Davies, Alexander Goehr, and Harrison Birtwistle — who, together with the composers and performers Elgar Howarth and John Ogdon, made up the so-called ‘Manchester School’ — marked a clear break with current British practice, yet while superficially espousing a European sound-world, Davies and Birtwistle in particular established links back to earlier English avant-gardes ranging from Dunstable to Bull. But alongside the Manchester trinity, there were many other persuasive forces, including David Bedford (b. 1938), who had studied with Nono, but was more obviously influenced by the music he had heard on visits to the Warsaw Festival, and subsequently by radical developments in rock music. By the late 1960s, early works by Brian Ferneyhough (b. 1941) and Michael Finnissy (b. 1947) brought the first intimations of what was ultimately to become known as ‘new complexity’.

Particularly significant was the engagement of several Asian (and especially Japanese) composers with Western avant-garde techniques, not least because they brought a new sensibility into play, and in some instances showed how non-Western art musics could offer new perspectives to Western ‘new music’ without resort to the ‘exoticism’ practised by French composers, in particular, in the first part of the century. While some younger composers such as Toru Takemitsu and Jōji Yuasa (b. 1929) initially resisted overt references to Japanese art-music traditions, not least because of its associations with a discredited Imperial system,6 Bugaku per orchestra (1961) by Yoritsune Matsudaira (b. 1907) transposed aspects of bugaku (the ancient Japanese court music) into a serial and aleatory context, while the Nirvana Symphony (1958) by Toshiro Mayuzumi (1929–97) drew on elements of Buddhist chant. A comparable reinterpretation of Korean court music was pursued by Isang Yun (1917–95) in works like Loyang (1962) and Réak (1966). Such pieces induced many Western composers to consider whether aspects of non-Western music, past or present, might not open new avenues for them. One of the first to do so was Messiaen, whose Sept Haïkaï (1962) for piano and small orchestra followed a visit to Japan, and includes Matsudaira among its dedicatees; the fourth movement, entitled ‘Gagaku’, is Messiaen’s attempt to effect his own recreation of the ancient genre. An intriguing and in some respects paradoxical case history relating to Asian influence is provided by the Australian avant-garde that evolved in the course of the 1960s. Peter Sculthorpe (b. 1928), while clearly affected by aspects of Polish sonorism, insisted on the importance of Asia as a source of inspiration, and used elements of Balinese and Japanese music in many works before turning to native Australian traditions; similarly, early works by Richard Meale (b. 1934) drew on concepts from Japanese culture, while espousing a harmonic language derived from Boulez.

Composing with textures

There had already been moments in the 1950s, in both orchestral and electronic music, where the sheer number and complexity of sounds present meant that the individual sounds could no longer be heard, except as part of an overall texture or tendency. Stockhausen had already commented on this in relation


to parts of Gesang der Jünglinge (1956) and Gruppen, and other notable instances occur in his Carré. But such moments, in Stockhausen, nearly always comprised exceptions or extremes – they are not the raison d’être of the work in question. In a work like Xenakis’s Pithoprakta (1956), on the other hand, the manipulation of sound masses through applications of probability theory was precisely the point at issue (the programmatic, almost autobiographical dimension of the piece is not one that Xenakis was willing to comment on at the time). Here there were indeed figures, but only as the fixed outcomes of random distribution: the figures had no importance in themselves, except in relation to an overall distribution of clouds of sounds.

Pithoprakta may be a relatively rare example of the avant-garde work that really is ahead of its time, albeit only by a few years. Even in Xenakis’s own work it had no immediate major successors, though elements are resumed in the tape composition Diamorphoses (1957) and in Synmos (1959) for eighteen strings. But by 1961, the notion of a purely ‘textural’ music in which figuration of any kind served only to articulate global sonic processes was very much in the air, primarily among composers who, wherever they happened to be living at the time, were of Eastern European origin. Two ‘emblematic’ textural works from 1961 – Ligeti’s Atmosphères and Penderecki’s Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima – serve to highlight both common practice and essential differences. Both seek to neutralize harmony through the use of chromatic clusters, and both operate with dense bands of sound characterized by changing width, register, and timbre. However, Atmosphères consists of one continuous section, with a brief coda-epilogue at the end, whereas the slightly shorter Threnody comprises half a dozen clearly contrasted sections, each of which also employs contrast within a more restricted range. The Polish work makes use of a wide variety of novel string techniques, many of them involving aleatory elements, whereas the intricate ‘micropolyphony’ of Atmosphères is fully notated and eschews ‘extended techniques’ until the coda, where the wind players breathe through their instruments without producing a pitched sound. Broadly speaking, one could describe Ligeti’s piece as ‘organic’, and Penderecki’s as ‘tachist’ – a description applicable not only to Penderecki’s other early works (within which Fluorescences (1962) represents an extreme of experimentation) but to Polish sonorism in general: to Lutoslawski’s Jeux vénitiens (1961) and Trois poèmes d’Henri Michaux (1963), Serocki’s Segmenti (1961), Górecki’s Genesis cycle (1961–2), and Wojciech Kilar’s Diphthongos (1964). Here the primary intention is often (though not always) to provide a glittering array of unusual sonorities. However, Atmosphères consists of one continuous section, with a brief coda-epilogue at the end, whereas the slightly shorter Threnody comprises half a dozen clearly contrasted sections, each of which also employs contrast within a more restricted range. The Polish work makes use of a wide variety of novel string techniques, many of them involving aleatory elements, whereas the intricate ‘micropolyphony’ of Atmosphères is fully notated and eschews ‘extended techniques’ until the coda, where the wind players breathe through their instruments without producing a pitched sound. Broadly speaking, one could describe Ligeti’s piece as ‘organic’, and Penderecki’s as ‘tachist’ – a description applicable not only to Penderecki’s other early works (within which Fluorescences (1962) represents an extreme of experimentation) but to Polish sonorism in general: to Lutoslawski’s Jeux vénitiens (1961) and Trois poèmes d’Henri Michaux (1963), Serocki’s Segmenti (1961), Górecki’s Genesis cycle (1961–2), and Wojciech Kilar’s Diphthongos (1964). Here the primary intention is often (though not always) to provide a glittering array of unusual sonorities.

Ligeti’s organicist position (continued in the graphically notated Volumina (1962) for organ) is paralleled by Fasce (1961) and Spiegel II (1962) by Friedrich Cerha (b. 1926) – the remainder of the remarkable Spiegel cycle, apparently conceived in the early 1960s, was not actually carried through until 1970 – and works by the young Swedish composer Jan Morthensen (b. 1940), whose book Nonfigurative Musik included an adulatory preface by Heinz-Klaus Metzger. Another ‘textural’ path was pursued by Aldo Clementi (b. 1925), under the influence of informal abstractionism in painting: in his work of the early 1960s, typified by the three pieces entitled Informel (1961–3), harmony and melody are almost completely neutralized in favour of an opaque but constantly shifting surface. However, next to Ligeti, perhaps the finest exponent of an organic textural style was a composer whose work was, at the time, almost completely unknown: Giacinto Scelsi. A reclusive Sicilian aristocrat, deeply influenced by Buddhism, he produced two remarkable works in 1958: I presagi, a work for wind ensemble which reanimated the spirit of Varèse’s ensemble pieces from the 1920s within a hieratic, ritualistic context, and above all the Quattro pezzi per orchestra, each of whose four movements centres on a single pitch, subjected to constant changes of timbre, intonation, and (chromatically blurred) octave doublings, producing music of quite unique and omnious intensity. However marginal they may have appeared at the time, Scelsi’s preoccupations are actually quite close to those of both Stockhausen and the ‘texturalists’. Scelsi’s harmony-less ‘single notes’ are, in effect, smudged unison clusters; as for Stockhausen (who appears to have been completely unaware of Scelsi), in 1960 he began work on Monophonie, a ‘one-note’ orchestral work which, had he ever completed it, might have come fascinatingly close to Scelsi’s aesthetic.

Collage, quotation, and irony

Perhaps the clearest indication of a break with 1950s avant-garde purism was the degree to which composers became willing to introduce stylistic ‘foreign bodies’ into their work, often in form of direct, collage-like quotations. The European pioneer here was the Cologne-based Bernd Alois Zimmermann, whose opera Die Soldaten (1960), Dialogue for two pianos and orchestra (1960, rev. 1965), and piano trio Présence (1961) introduced quotations ranging from Bach to (with intentional irony) Stockhausen, within a highly serialist framework. For Zimmermann, such quotations had a metaphysical dimension, deriving from St Augustine and from the composer’s own notion
of the 'spherical shape of time'. For other composers, the sheer provocation of confronting 'old' and 'new' music, or turning the former into the latter, was attractive enough in its own right. A characteristic early example is the quintet Modulation I (1966) by the Zimmermann pupil Johannes Fritsch (b. 1941), also closely associated with Stockhausen; the opening artfully fuses quotations from Beethoven, Brahms, Berg, and Schoenberg in such a way that everything sounds familiar, yet not actually like a quotation. The most celebrated European instances of a collage/quotation-based composition are probably the third movement of Berio's Sinfonia (1968) and Stockhausen's Hymnen, but the strategies of the two works are quite different. Berio creates an intricate web of exact quotations from Bach to the mid-1960s, grafted onto the scherzo of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony, which is almost constantly present in full or more fragmentary form. In Hymnen, on the other hand, a wide range of national anthems is used as a 'familiar' basis for constant musical transformation—an approach which Stockhausen describes, with some justification, as 'meta-collage'.

A comparable, and ultimately more drastic phenomenon in the US occurs in the work of George Rochberg (b. 1918). Up to the early 1960s, Rochberg had typified the accomplished American academic composer; he was a serialist with a distinctly Schoenbergian orientation whose Second String Quartet (1961), in particular, was widely admired. In 1964, following the death of his son, Rochberg claimed that for him, writing serial music had become a meaningless activity, and in Contra mortem et tempus (1965) he adopted a 'collage-assemblage' approach, combining passages from works by many composers, from Berg and Webern to Boulez and Rochberg himself. Here virtually all the quotations are atonal; in subsequent works, such as the Third String Quartet (1972), Rochberg moves from quotation to a 'polystylistic' approach to composition whose stylistic references extend back to Beethoven. A comparable progression (or regression, depending on one's point of view) may be observed in the work of George Crumb, who attained a considerable level of popularity in the late 1960s and 70s with works such as Vox balaenae (1971) and the Lorca cycle Ancient Voices of Children (1970).

Such characteristics obviously beg questions concerning the borderlines between pluralism and postmodernism. While the latter, in terms of music, is often regarded as a particular outcome of 1960s pluralism which emerges in the early and especially mid-1970s, there are certain works from the 1960s, especially from Italy, which seem to fulfill all the conditions of ahistoricity, irony, and double meanings established by subsequent theoreticians such as the architect Charles Jencks. Perhaps the most striking musical precursor is Paolo Castaldi (b. 1930), whose Anfrage (1963) for two pianos consists entirely of cutout quotations of tonal and atonal repertoire, with rather Satie-esque verbal instructions which are also collages from other sources. The tonal excerpts are provided without key signatures, but are to be played literally as they appear on the score page, without 'tonal reconstruction'; only the atonal quotations escape the indignity of arbitrary distortion. More modest examples by the same composer are Grid (1969) for solo piano, in which the melodic/harmonic content of Liszt's third Liebestraum is grafted onto the rhythmic structure of Chopin's E major Etude, op. 10, no. 3, and Elisa (1967), in which a characteristically complex 'structuralist' rhythmic notation (partly appropriated from Bussotti's Pour Clavier) is used to simulate a painstaking but painfully inept rendering of Beethoven's Für Elise. Comparable tendencies are found in certain works by Niccolo Castiglioni (1932–96), notably the enormous Sinfonie guerrière et amarose for solo organ (1967), which embraces every organ genre from Darmstadt to the fairground.

In fact, the kind of ironic evaluation of musical material often associated with postmodernism was already widespread among the 1960s avant-garde. Two companion pieces by Ligeti, Aventures (1963) and Nouvelles aventures (1965), deliberately sought to push the 'hyper-expressive' dimension of wide-leaping post-Webern vocal styles to the point of absurdity, and the same strategy is pursued at the beginning of the 'Dies irae's Requiem. This bizarre insertion into what is innately a highly serious work could be regarded as a latter-day 'alienation effect' (in the Brechtian sense); comparable instances are found (alongside straightforward examples of gleefully malicious satire) in several works by Maxwell Davies, including Revelation and Fall (1966), St Thomas Wake (1969), and Vesalius icones (1969). However, the primary exponent of ironic equivocality was undoubtedly Mauricio Kagel, who in terms of the 'Cologne school' might be regarded as playing Mephistopheles to Stockhausen's Faust. Virtually every piece of Kagel's has some unsettling aspect, whether it be the 'too high' tuning up note that begins Heterophonie, the seeming contradiction between the highly serious musical content of Match (1964) for two cellos and percussionist and its visual effect as a droll sports contest, or the way that the instruments of Praetorius's Syntagma musicum are resurrected to function as an avant-garde ensemble in Music for Renaissance Instruments (1966). The climax of Kagel's earlier work is probably provided by Staatstheater (1970), in which the entire institutional apparatus of a state opera house is dissected, using its own means against it.

9. George Rochberg, sleeve note to the Composers Recordings Inc recording of 'Contra mortem et tempus' (ca. 1968).

The New York School and Fluxus

The 1960s saw increasing diversions of opinion within the group of composers around Cage. Put simply, Cage and Christian Wolff (now supplemented by the Japanese composer Toshi Ichiyanagi (b. 1932) [sic]) continued to espouse an 'egoless' view of composition, while Earle Brown and, above all, Morton Feldman sought to establish recognizable and relatively consistent artistic personalities. A significant indicator of this was the approach to notation. In the eight years that separate Atlas eclipticus (1961) and Cheap Imitation (1969), Cage produced almost no work in anything resembling a notated score format. Rather than producing 'works', he preferred to create particular situations (albeit documented with a 'work title') that gave rise to the production and perception of sounds, with no particular bias towards instrumental (or vocal) performance. Some of these scores, following the model established in Fontana Mix (1958), involved the random superimposition of plastic sheets with graphic elements; others were purely verbal, such as Variations V (1965), subtitled 'remarks re an audio-visual performance'.

Brown's scores from Available Forms I (1961) onwards mix spatial notation with graphic elements; some, like Available Forms I & II and Novara (1962), are open forms, while others are 'through-composed', though sometimes incorporating 'mobile' elements. They are notable for their economy and pragmatism, embodying the composer's dictum that 'Good notation is what works'. The twelve-minute String Quartet (1964) is notated on just three pages, and the twenty-minute Centering (1973), for violin and small orchestra, on only fifteen.

On the other hand Feldman's music, while maintaining the slow pace and soft dynamics that had emerged as a personal trademark during the 1950s, moved towards ever more exact notation. The graph notation of the 1950s (always just one practice out of many) reached a peak with the orchestral Out of Last Pieces... (1961), but was then largely abandoned, its last use being in The King of Denmark (1964) for solo percussionist. Durations (1960-1), an important set of five pieces for various small ensembles, is ironically titled, insofar as durations are the one area where the performers have significant freedom. However, with the Vertical Thoughts series (1963), durations too started to be more exactly specified. Moreover, as with so many other modernists in the 1960s, Feldman evolved a very distinctive harmonic vocabulary, not in the conventional sense of chord 'progressions', but in terms of personal sonorities.

The New School for Social Research in New York were attended not so much by aspiring composers as by visual artists and poets, some of whom, like Allen Kaprow, had already been instrumental in evolving the 'happenings' genre. One outcome of this was Fluxus, a multimedia anti-art movement presided over by George Maciunas, in which, unusually, music played a major role. While Fluxus notionally began in Wiesbaden (Germany), in 1962, its general preference for brief, provocative, and humorous 'events', strung together to form a 'show', seemed more characteristically American. One could probably make a distinction between 'cool' Fluxus, embodied in the succinct texts that comprise George Brecht's Water Yam collection (the 'score' of Saxophone Solo (1962) comprises the single word 'Trumpe't) and 'hot' Fluxus, characterised by the ritualistic, often masochistic 'actions' of the Korean Nam June Paik (b. 1932), who subsequently became one of the most significant early video artists.

Cage himself had highly equivocal feelings about Fluxus, admiring aspects of the work of Paik and Alison Knowles (b. 1932), but being disturbed both by the violence of Paik's performances and the insistence on frivolity of many other...
participants. On the other hand, many of the Darmstadt avant-garde (particularly Kagel and Ligeti) were particularly intrigued by Paik, who was active in Cologne around 1960, and Stockhausen actually incorporated Paik into the initial performances of his theatre piece Originale (1961). Ligeti wrote one explicit Fluxus piece (the near-silent Trois Bagatelles (1961) dedicated to David Tudor), and his 'mute' lecture Die Zukunft der Musik (1961) and Poème symphonique for a hundred metronomes (1962) also have clear Fluxus affiliations. For a while, Maciunas avidly sought closer links with the European avant-garde, but then rejected them with equal vehemence.

Electroacoustic music – tape music and live electronics

In the course of the 1960s, technological leadership in the area of electroacoustic studio composition passed to the US, mainly by virtue of innovations in synthesizer technology which European studios were relatively slow to adopt. In the early 1960s, the primary agent here was the Columbia-Princeton Studio headed by Milton Babbitt, and therefore initially oriented to a fairly orthodox serialist approach in which pitch and rhythmic relationships took clear precedence over the search for new concepts of timbre (though the sound-world of early pieces by Bülent Arel (1919–91) and Mario Davidsykov (b. 1934) is sometimes reminiscent of work done at the Milan studios around the same time). However, despite the recognition achieved by two early works for voice and tape – Vision and Prayer (1961) and Philomel (1963) – relatively little of Babbitt’s subsequent work involved the use of electronics.

In Europe, Stockhausen remained committed to the ‘classic’ studio medium; Telemusik (1966) is perhaps the most perfect example of the genre from this period, while Hymnen (1966–7) is certainly the most ambitious. Nono, who had initially rejected electronic music on ideological grounds (as ‘inhuman’) eventually came to regard it as an important vehicle for conveying Marxist ideology, starting with La fabbrica illuminata (1964). But for the rest, leading European avant-gardists mainly rejected it. After composing Visage (1961), a remarkable ‘scena’ for female voice and electronic music, Berio, who had been an early pioneer, virtually abandoned electronics (there is a brief but typically brilliant electronic episode in Laborintus II (1965)); Boulez, after the relative debacle of Poésie pour pouvoir (1958), wrote no further electroacoustic works for another couple of decades. An attempt in the early 1960s to attract newly emerging composers such as Castiglioni, Clementi, and Franco Donatoni (1927–2000) to the Milan studios had no ongoing consequences, though Maderna continued to work there. Perhaps the only significant 1960s extension of the electronic

purism of the 1950s was the work undertaken by Gottfried Michael Koenig at the Institut voor Sonologie, where he completed the Terminus series (1962–7) begun in Cologne, and produced the Funktion cycle (1968–9), in which matters of aesthetic pleasure are almost entirely subordinated to the imperatives of algorithmically based research (though the abrasive sound of the results also represents a characteristic late-1960s ‘aesthetic’). Nevertheless, a large number of electronic studios continued to be active throughout the 1960s; in addition to those already mentioned, mention should be made of the studios at Mills College (where Pauline Oliveros realised several remarkable early works) and Dartmouth in the United States, at Nippon Radio in Tokyo, and at Swedish Radio and Polish Radio.

From the early 1960s, the orientation of the Paris musique concrète studios (Groupe de Recherches Musicales) changed. Pierre Schaeffer remained influential as a theorist, primarily through the publication of his Traité des objets musicaux (1966), but the work produced at the GRM and elsewhere in France moved away from research towards a new aesthetics, and from clinical etudes à la Schaeffer (Etude aux sons tendus, Etude aux accidents (both 1958)). In 1960 came a more extended work, whose provocatively programmatic title Tête et queue du dragon (Dragon’s Head and Tail) foreshadowed major trends in the years to follow (provocation was to remain a central aspect of Ferrari’s music). Leaving the GRM in 1963, Ferrari engaged with what he called ‘anecdotal music’ – a sort of composer-processed sound reportage – examples of which are Music Promenade (1964) and Presque rien no. 1 (1970). By this time, several other young composers such as François-Bernard Mache (b. 1935) and the initially Cage-influenced François Bayle (b. 1932) had joined the studio, followed shortly after by Bernard Parmegiani (b. 1927). The latter two became, along with Pierre Henry, the principal exponents of musique concrète, though their most significant work dates from the mid-1970s onwards.

Arguably the most characteristic development in this area after 1962, however, took place outside the studios, and it had its origins in Cage. To the end of his life, Cage insisted that his most important contribution was the ‘silent’ piece 4’33”, but in terms of influence on musical practice Cartridge Music (1960) may have stronger claims. This highly indeterminate score (on transparent sheets) is conceived in terms of ‘amplified small sounds’, produced by inserting various objects into a gramophone pickup; from this modest beginning grows the whole history of ‘live electronic music’. What this new genre sought to do

was to abolish the distinction between electronic music (or musique concrète) as ‘studio practice’, and live concert performance. It did this by using selected equipment from the studios to modify instrumental or other sounds electronically in a live performance context, as opposed to juxtaposing live instruments and tape – a practice already well established by the late 1950s. Even in the hands of composers with a slightly less radical aesthetic agenda than Cage’s, live electronic music was ‘experimental’ in the sense that its outcomes could scarcely be foreseen (it only became a ‘precise science’ with the advent of computer technology in the late 1970s). Of the established European composers, only Stockhausen was immediately attracted to live electronic music; in fact, it became a central aspect of his work during the years 1964–70, most notably in Microphonia I (1964), a virtuoso display piece for six performers and one tam-tam, and Mantra (1970) for two pianos, the piece in which he established the method of ‘formula composition’ which dominated his work from that time on, as well as a sequence of works written for his own performing ensemble. But in the United States, live electronics was the basis on which a younger generation of composers, such as David Behrman (b. 1937), Larry Austin (b. 1930), and Allan Bryant (b. 1931), established a new performance practice. Here experimentation, instrument building, and a measure of improvisation went hand in hand, and circuit design was often part of the composition process. An important technological factor here was the replacement of valve technology by transistors. This dramatically reduced the physical size of electronic instruments; by the end of the 1960s, the sci-fi laboratory ambience of the RCA Mark II synthesizer at Columbia-Princeton had largely been displaced by instruments which could sit on a table top.

Minimalism and psychedelia

In the course of the early 1960s there emerged a new tendency (with marginal links to live electronic practice) which in some respects broke more radically with modernist orthodoxies than even the New York School around Cage had done. Initially described variously as ‘static music’, ‘hypnotic music’, and ‘repetitive music’, it came to be known as ‘minimalism’. The origins of minimalism are normally traced back to La Monte Young:14 to the startlingly long durations of his String Trio (1959), and above all to one of his Fluxus-oriented pieces, a Composition #7 1960 which consists only of the notes F♯ and B♭, and the instruction ‘to be held for a very long time’. There is a limit, perhaps, to what one should extrapolate from a simple polemical gesture. However, the diatonic interval, the implied stasis and the long duration all anticipate fundamental characteristics of minimalism. What is lacking here, however, is the element of obsessive repetition that is generally associated with the three other principal early exponents of minimalism: Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass. Mertens indicates that both Riley (who, like Young, had early affiliations to Fluxus) and Reich made use of tape loops (a guarantee of repetition) in early music for film-soundtrack productions,15 and presumably Riley’s “all-night concerts” in Sweden in 1963 rested at least in part on the insistent ‘looped’ figures that became his trademark in the mid-1960s. The first notated documentation of a minimalist/repetitive school came with two works by Riley from 1964: Keyboard Studies and In C, the latter work being the one that first established international awareness of this new tendency. While Keyboard Studies assumes a high level of keyboard proficiency, In C, for any number of instruments, is defiantly anti-virtuosic: it consists of a sequence of fifty-three fairly simple diatonic figures, gradually moving from C via E minor towards F, which can be repeated any number of times by each player before moving on to the next figure. Throughout a performance, which typically might last forty to fifty minutes, the tempo is coordinated by a pianist playing the top two Cs on the instrument in a regular quaver pulse.

Reich’s first characteristic works were machine-based: initial experiments used electronic ‘gates’,16 while It’s Gonna Rain (1965) and Come Out (1966) used tape-loops of brief spoken phrases (which also act as diatonic pitch motives), gradually drifting out of phase with one another to produce psychoacoustic illusions reminiscent of moiré patterns (and indeed of the ‘Op-Art’ of painters such as Bridget Riley that surfaced at much the same time, though there is no persuasive evidence of direct influence). This ‘phase-shifting’ technique was then transferred to live instrumentalists in Piano Phase, Reed Phase, and Violin Phase (all 1967). The ‘mechanical’ aspects of Reich’s early music reflect a very different aesthetic to that of Young and Riley: whereas both Young and Riley aimed to induce a trance-like state (Young’s famous assertion ‘If my music doesn’t transport you straight to heaven, then I’ve failed’ is only slightly hyperbolic), Reich, as he emphasized in his early writings, was concerned that the listener followed every detail of what was happening, and the same holds good for the additive processes that Glass used in pieces like Music in Fifths and Music in Contrary Motion (both 1969).

The open instrumentation of In C notwithstanding, the performance practice of early minimalism was largely centred on the composers themselves. Riley

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15 Mertens, American Minimal Music, pp. 37, 48.
16 Steve Reich, Writings about Music, New York, 1975, pp. 18ff.
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was essentially a solo performer, often using tape-delay systems to build up a mesmeric sonic tapestry, while Young, Reich, and Glass all formed their own ensembles. Moreover, with the exception of Reich, the composers generally declined to make their scores easily available for performance by others. As for the widespread popularity eventually gained by these composers, it did not come immediately; the first disc releases came out on small, specialist labels, and it was not until the 1968 release of In C that a substantial international following developed. That album, while issued on the ‘classical’ Columbia Masterworks label, had cover art reminiscent of contemporaneous psychedelic rock albums, and a quote from respected classical critic Alfred Frankenstein on the front cover was complemented by on the back by a ‘rave’ from Paul Williams, editor of the psychedelia-orientated US rock magazine Crawdaddy, declaring that ‘what we have here is a “trip”’. This, coming at the height of ‘flower power’ and epic levels of LSD consumption, symbolized a relatively brief point of intersection between the ‘rock’ and ‘art’ avant-gardes and their audiences that was by no means restricted to minimalism. Stockhausen, whose photo appeared at the top left of the Beatles’ Sergeant Pepper album, attended several Grateful Dead concerts during his months in California in 1968, and had a large following among progressive-rock aficionados. Conversely, members of the Grateful Dead formed a Rex Foundation which, even thirty years later, was funding recordings of radical ‘complexist’ works. Moreover, the feedback-based improvisations of rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix were, in many respects, just as much instances of ‘live electronic music’ as the work of groups such as Sonic Arts Union or Musica Elettronica Viva.

Death of the author: improvisation and collective composition

However characteristic minimalism may seem of a certain 1960s ethos, there were two significant respects in which it swam robustly against the tide of the times. One was its essentially affirmative character (arising from its strong preference for diatonic, major-mode figures), which came at a time when ‘progressive’ art was assumed to have a critical content, and all suggestions of affirmation were widely regarded within the avant-garde as reactionary. The other was the relatively constrained, regimented role of performers in minimalist works. Even in Riley’s In C, the freedom of performers to proceed through the materials at their own pace was offset by the constraints of an unfinishingly regular and regulatory pulse. In works by Reich and Glass, the performers were absolutely locked into an ultra-disciplined, mechanistic rhythmic grid.

While both Reich and Glass have portrayed their early works as being, in part, a reaction against prevailing serialist orthodoxies, in retrospect it is hard to believe that this was the whole story, or even a significant part of it. It may have been an issue for the composers, but scarcely for their target audiences, for whom the existence of serialism, even if acknowledged, would have been a non-issue: if audiences were to be ‘weaned away’ from anyone, it would have been Janis Joplin rather than Pierre Boulez. It was another story for those composers who chose in the early 1960s to move from structuralism, via Cagean indeterminacy, to improvisation. One of the first examples was provided by Franco Evangelisti (1926–80), who from the mid-1950s had produced works in which rigorously conceived structures were subverted from within by aleatory structures. Around 1963, after completing the orchestral work Random or Not Random, he renounced composition, supposedly (as he claimed to his publisher and former fellow-student Hans Swarsenski) because he had devised a system within which any possible composition was foreseeable, and therefore uninteresting. In the wake of this drastic decision, he formed the Gruppo Nuova Consonanza, a collective of mainly younger composers working in Rome at the time, initially including Roland Kayn (b. 1933), Frederic Rzewski (b. 1938), Ivan Vandor (b. 1932), and also, more surprisingly, the highly successful film composer Ennio Morricone (b. 1928).

Rzewski and Vandor soon seceded to form their own group Musica Elettronica Viva, along with Allan Bryant, Alvin Curran (b. 1938) and Richard Teitelbaum (b. 1939); MEV then became the model for numerous other groups, especially in America, such as Sonic Arts Union (more a composer collective than a ‘group’) and the California Time Machine. Though initially generated from a ‘concert-hall’ avant-garde, the stylistic boundaries of such ‘free improvisation’ were never clearly delineated, and became less so. This was, after all, a period in which influential younger jazz performers such as Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor were already pioneering ‘free jazz’ within comparatively small ensembles, as indeed were some rock groups (and the actual name California Time Machine could easily have been that of a 1960s rock group). Nevertheless, the general assumption underlying such groups was that a knowledge of the structuralist repertoire, detached from its generative methods, could be the basis for a richer and more ‘relevant’ new form of musical communication.

A similar course was followed by the Englishman Cornelius Cardew, who had worked as Stockhausen’s assistant on the realisation of Carré. In 1959, Cardew wrote a Third Piano Sonata that was a high point of late-1950s structuralism; then, under the influence of Cage, he composed a sequence of highly indeterminate scores, such as Autumn ‘60 and Octet ‘61. The latter caused a minor sensation in England when issued as a musical supplement in the Musical Times.
at a time when this journal’s supplements more characteristically consisted of
diatonic Anglican church anthems. From 1963–7 Cardew worked on *Treatise*,
an exquisitely drafted 193-page graphic score with (as a matter of principle) no
performance instructions. Thereafter he moved on to improvisation, joining
the AMM group established by Lou Gare, Eddie Prevost and Keith Rowe (it is
symptomatic of the authority attaching to composer participation that AMM
is often regarded as having been Cardew’s creation, or at least led by him; there
is no reason to suppose this was actually the case).

To a degree, Stockhausen too followed this course. His major work of
the early 1960s, *Motette for soprano, thirteen instrumentalists, and chorus*
(1962–5, completed 1972), is an open-form work; so too are the live-electronic
works *Mikrophonie I, Mixtur* (both 1964) and, to a degree, *Stimmung* (1968).
But starting with *Plus-Minus* (1964), Stockhausen also produced what he called
‘process compositions’. These were pieces in which the scores and/or parts indicated
only strategies for the transformation of materials – given in some detail
for *Plus-Minus*, but left completely open in *Kurzwellen* (1968), where the mate-
rials to be transformed are found at random on short-wave radio receivers.
Presumably sensing that such pieces required a new oral tradition to estab-
lish proper performance practice, Stockhausen formed a small live-electronic
ensemble to realize these pieces, two of whose members (Johannes Fritsch and
Rolf Gehlhaar (b. 1943)) were also gifted young composers. The extreme ex-
tension of this strategy is found in the cycle of text-compositions *Aus den sieben
tagen* (1968).

The live performances and recordings of the latter at Darmstadt in 1969
gave rise to considerable controversies (including issues of authorship) which
in retrospect give cause to reflect on the role of ‘new-music virtuosi’ during
this era. Back in the late 1950s, Stockhausen had praised performers such as the
flautist Severino Gazzelloni, and especially the pianist David Tudor, for their
‘co-creative’ spirit.17 This co-creativity had many dimensions: for instance, the
willingness to make decisions in relation to variable or open formal structures,
to interpret highly ambiguous notations, and above all to extend the limits of
their instrument. The latter might operate in conventional terms (such as the
extra fifth the young Heinz Holliger added to the top of the oboe range, or
Harry Sparnaay’s even more radical expansion of bass clarinet tessitura), but
more typically it involved an exploration of new timbres, and especially the
transitional territory between pitch and noise (which was inherently at odds
with the nature of inherited Western notation, and naturally led towards quasi-
improvisation). The result, in Europe at least, was a panorama of solo performer
categories, ranging from relatively conventional ‘servants of the music’, such as
the pianists Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky and the cellist Siegfried Palm, via
‘personality cult’ performers such as percussionist Stomu Yamashta, to increas-
ingly radically inclined virtuoso composer-performers such as Globokar and
Holliger.

Another symptom of the collectivist spirit of the mid- and late 1960s was the
proliferation of ‘collective compositions’ that not only involved many com-
posers, but to some degree sought to efface notions of individual authorship.
Given the rather rosy view of Maoism that was widespread in the time (a copy
of the Little Red Book was standard equipment for the dissenting university
student), there may be conscious parallels here with the ‘composer commit-
tees’ in China that produced works such as the *Yellow River* and *Butterfly Lovers*
concertos, even though the artistic outcomes are worlds apart. Three particular
instances may give some idea of the breadth of intentions and applications:

• In 1963, eleven composers associated with the GRM in Paris collaborated in
a *concert collectif*, for which six of them provided a number of ‘base sequences’,
both as recordings and as notated scores. All but one of these six composers,
plus four others, then went on to compose individual compositions lasting
about eight minutes, which were elaborated from one or (in most cases) more
of these sequences. One could see this as a radical extension of the theme(s)
and variations principle within an essentially athematic, high-modernist
context.

• In 1967, at the Darmstadt Summer School, the twelve young com-
posers in Stockhausen’s composition class (many of them well on the way
to establishing significant individual creative personalities) collaborated
with Stockhausen to produce a four-hour performance entitled *Ensemble*.
Following discussions, Stockhausen provided an overall framework and com-
posed eight inserts ‘intended to function as clear temporal demarcations,
giving the ENSEMBLE orientation points in respect to past and future’.18
Stockhausen’s aim was to establish a completely new kind of collaborative
compositional practice.

• In 1970, five young Dutch composers – Peter Schat, Jan van Vlijmen, Misha
Mengelberg (all b. 1939), Reinbert de Leeuw (b. 1938) and Louis Andriessen
(b. 1939), the latter still relatively unknown – collaborated with two young
authors to produce the ‘collective opera’ *Reconstructie*, a rereading of the Don
Juan myth with intermittent reference to Mozart, in which the Don repres-
sents voracious American capitalism in South America, the Commendatore

is Che Guevara, and Leporello is transformed into an unflattering representation of the Dutch philosopher Erasmus. The score engages, often ironically (or rather, 'dialectically'), with all kinds of contemporary styles, both populist and ‘high art’. One of its main aims was to affront the establishment, both local and international; in this, it succeeded to a considerable degree. This reflected a situation in which, following the uprisings of 1968, the political responsibilities of artists had become a matter of considerable debate.

Political engagement before and after 1968

In the 1950s, Luigi Nono was almost alone among ‘radical’ composers in espousing an overtly leftist stance. The riot that erupted during an explicitly antifascist scene at the premiere of his opera Intolleranza 1960 may not have been the only scandal of that era, but it was probably the only one where (right-wing) demonstrators yelled out ‘Viva la polizia!’ Even so, works such as Chimeras and the subsequent cantata Canti di vita e d’amore: sul ponte di Hiroshima (1961) could still be interpreted in terms of humanitarian rather than party-political concerns. With La fabbrica illuminata (1964) for soprano and four-track tape, this ceased to be the case: the piece was a direct attack on appalling working conditions in northern Italian Fiat factories, and the ‘inhuman’ capitalist interests that they reflected. In subsequent works such as Ricorda cose ti hanno fatto in Auschwitz (‘Remember what they did at Auschwitz’ – derived from music for Peter Weiss’s play Die Ermittlung) (1966), A fioresta è giovem e cheja da vidca (1966), or the Contrappunto dialettico alla mente (1967), attacks on American involvement in South America and Vietnam were so explicit as to make Nono a persona non grata at institutionally funded Western European new music festivals (especially in West Germany, where allied occupation troops were still in residence). But ideologically, Nono’s influence on the European avant-garde was decisive: it forced all composers to reflect on social responsibilities as well as aesthetic ones.

One of the more surprising and public converts was Hans Werner Henze. After the debacle of his attempted entry into the avant-garde with the Concerto per il Marigny (1956), Henze had conspicuously broken his ties with it: his Kammermusik 1958, using the same ensemble as Schubert’s Octet, was clear evidence of this. The expressly crafted lyricism of a work like the Rimbaud setting Being Beauteous (1963) is stylistically closer to Frank Martin than to any of the Darmstadt practitioners. Yet three years later, following his opera Die Bassariden, Henze underwent an artistic crisis; not for the first time, he felt alienated from the bourgeois culture which, nevertheless, his work exemplified. The student uprisings of 1967–8 led Henze not only to espouse left-wing causes, but also to radicalize his style:19 it is hard to reconcile the extreme vocal instrumentalism of the Versuch über Schweine (1968) or the nihilistic ambience of Der langwierige Weg in die Wohnung von Natasha Ungeheuer (1971) with the lyrical opera composer of a few years earlier. In these politically oriented works, Henze pursued what he terms a ‘musica impura’:20 a music whose style is deliberately inconsistent, since different styles are necessary to symbolize different social strata or reflect different ideologies.

A yet more intransigent path was pursued by three younger German composers, Helmut Lachenmann, Hans Joachim Hespel (both b. 1938), and Nicolas A. Huber (b. 1939). Hespel’s political position was essentially a radical anarchist one, whereas Huber and Lachenmann were ‘idealistic socialists’ (Lachenmann’s early works include a Satat für [Christopher Caudwell]). Their music was conceived as, among other things, a frontal assault on bourgeois values, including musical ones; it not only ‘extended’ conventional playing techniques in a manner typical of the 1960s avant-garde, but also set out to eradicate any trace of inherited (‘bourgeois’) notions of beauty attaching to particular instruments – a trait which led to Lachenmann in particular being depicted journalistically as a Verweigerungsmusiker (literally, a ‘denial musician’).21 Globokar adopted a similar position – his Laboratorium (1973) is a particularly drastic instance of this – and for a while so too did Kagel, whose Acustica (1970), for ‘experimental sound sources’, is a ruthless investigation of what the composer has called Scheissklänge (‘shit sounds’), a notion that naturally invites comparison with contemporary German production in the visual arts.

However, left-wingers did not have a monopoly on dissent and resistance. Under communism, the writing of overtly religious works was also an act of political defiance. Penderecki’s Stabat mater (1962), subsequently absorbed into his St Luke Passion (1965), provided a benchmark, while also highlighting the problems associated with avant-garde affirmations: after ten minutes of clusters, interspersed with diatonic chant, the work ends with a sustained but incongruous triad. The highly dissonant, experimental side of the 1960s was well suited to the expression of critical or tragic sentiments, but much less so to positive assertions of any kind of belief. Thus it was quite feasible for Ligeti to write a Requiem (1965), or Penderecki a Dies irae (1967), but for the time being a Magnificat or Te Deum seemed hard to imagine. When Messiaen, in the wake of his brilliant but controversial orchestral work Chronochromie (1960), returned

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20 Ibid., pp. 136ff.
to writing works with an explicit theological programme in which birdsong was not the only major element, the stylistic disparities from earlier works like the Turangalila-symphonie soon became apparent, whether in the modal chant melodies of Couleurs de la cite celeste (1963) or the unabashedly tonal cadences that dominate the last movement of the massive oratorio La transfiguration (1969). In Germany, Kagel and especially Dieter Schnebel (b. 1934) espoused an ‘acoustic theology’ in which expressions of faith were radically detached from the traditional musical vocabulary of affirmation. The most extreme assertions of this position include Kagel’s Hallelujah (1968), and two works by Schnebel the Choralvorspiele (1968/9) for organists and trombonists, at the end of which the trombonists take their choral fragments outside the ‘sacred space’ implied by the organ and into the open air, and fir stimmen (missa est . . .) (1958–68), a choral work in the final section of which the human voices are joined (on tape) by those of animals. Such ventures were, however, relatively short-lived. The ‘crisis of communication’ implicit here ultimately had consequences for left-wing composers too; they had to make a decision between writing radical works in notional support of a proletariat that had no interest in such music (though there is some evidence that Nono managed to overcome this problem), or adopting more ‘accessible’ styles (as did Cardew, explicitly following Maoist models, and Rzewski).

In comparison, such concerns were scarcely at the forefront of American new music, though there were notable exceptions. When in 1969 Source Magazine published twenty composers’ responses to the question ‘Have you, or has anyone else ever used your music for social or political ends?’ only five (including Robert Ashley (b. 1930) and Frederic Rzewski, but not John Cage) asserted clear socio-political intentions. In Ashley’s case, this was clear even in an early piece like The Wolfman (1964); Rzewski’s engagement became more apparent in the course of the 1970s, starting with pieces like Attica and Coming Together (both 1972). The situation of American composers was, however, a special one. Worldwide, the US was identified by most leftist composers as a primary target, and it seems fair to observe that the ethical and practical problems involved in attacking a geographically remote nation (e.g. the US from Europe) are much less than those of attacking even limited aspects of one’s own country’s political system. The most widely remarked instance of such internal US criticism was Sal Martirano’s (1927–95) L.’s G.A. (1968), for ‘gassed-masked politico, helium bomb and two-channel tape’, in which the protagonist attempts increasingly

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23 ‘Events/Comments - is new music being used for social or political ends?’, in Source: Music of the Avant-Garde 6 (1969), pp. 71–E.

24 Composer’s programme note.


festivals or on the radio (the effectiveness of the latter having been somewhat curtailed since the 1960s by the introduction of FM stereo broadcasting, which improved quality but greatly reduced the range of access which had previously been a key contributor to the cosmopolitanism of European new music).

In the 1950s, very little 'new music' had made its way onto the relatively novel medium of the LP. This started to change significantly in the early 1960s. Significant early landmarks included three ten-inch LPs of electronic music from Cologne (by Eimert, Koenig, Krenek, and Stockhausen) from Deutsche Grammophon; two discs of Parisian musique concrete (Boîte à musique); the Warsaw Festival's documentation of new Polish works from 1963 onwards; a three-disc set by Italian RCA, mainly conducted by Maderna and including works by Berio, Boulez, Brown, Haubenstock-Ramati, Penderecki, Pousseur, and Stockhausen (1965); Cage's Indeterminacy lecture (Folkways 1959) and his 25th Anniversary concert, including the notorious premiere of the Concert 'Piano and Orchestra'; and perhaps most remarkably of all, the Time-Mainstream series directed by Earle Brown, which covered both the New York School and the Darmstadt avant-garde. Later in the 1960s, the series of discs issued in conjunction with Source magazine drew attention to a slightly younger generation of US experimental composers, such as Robert Ashley, David Behrman, and Alvin Lucier, while Behrman himself was chief producer for the CBS Odyssey label. Definitive official sanction was provided in 1969 by Deutsche Grammophon's decision to issue a six-disc set entitled avant-Garde, which had three successors in subsequent years; by this stage, those with ears to hear had plenty to listen to.

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THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY MUSIC

EDITED BY NICHOLAS COOK AND ANTHONY POPEL
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