
Letters to the Editor

From Roger Sutherland

I should like the opportunity to respond to Kenneth Gloag's review of my book *New Perspectives in Music*, which appeared in *Tempo* 194 and came to my attention only recently. Few of his remarks concern the detailed content of the book; his criticisms centre on its overall structure and the amounts of space allocated to specific composers.

Gloag objects to my identification of Schoenberg, Varèse and Webern as the 'three composers (who) decisively influence the course of post war music', claiming that 'this seems an unnecessarily exclusive and restrictive list'. However, he has inserted the definite article which precedes the quotation. Without it, the list does not read as either exclusive or restrictive. Indeed the chapter containing this statement ('The Legacy of Webern') follows an entire chapter devoted to the work of Luigi Russolo who 'provided the theoretical foundations of electronic music and musique concrète'. Moreover, the chapter on Henry Cowell clearly identifies him as a precursor of the most radical features of American experimental music; while the chapter on Cage picks out Ives as a major influence, along with Rauschenberg, Zen Buddhism, Indian music, Satie, Duchamp and many others. I would certainly agree that 'as we move beyond the immediate post-war situation the question of influence becomes increasingly diffuse' – although by no means 'difficult to specify'. In discussing Steve Reich I have referred to the influence on this composer's thought of Ghanian drumming, Machaut, Perotin and Bartók. In discussing Philip Glass I have referred to the influences of both Bach and Indian music. Indeed, as the book progresses beyond the immediate post-war situation more and more influences are brought into play. I state that La Monte Young was influenced by jazz, total serialism, plainchant, Indian vocal techniques and extra-musical phenomena (e.g. the hum of telephone poles). The chapter on Stockhausen traces an ever-widening circle of influences, beginning with Goevaerts and Webern and progressing to Mayuzumi, Ferrari and various Eastern and Asiatic sources.

My second major objection concerns Gloag's assertion that I have devalued the contribution

of Boulez. Boulez is clearly the central figure in the chapter on serialism, which contains detailed commentaries on *Le marteau sans maître*, the first book of *Structures* and the Third Piano Sonata. In the biographies section I have described him as 'one of the most influential figures of his generation'. As the founder of IRCAM he is also the central figure in the chapter on computer music. Although I did not include a separate chapter on Boulez (nor on Varèse, for that matter) the reader can be left in no doubt that I regard him as a seminal figure.

Finally while it is true that 'there is no shortage of concise surveys of contemporary music', few of them can claim to be either comprehensive or up to date. Can he name me another survey which spans both instrumental and electronic music and which takes in computer music, sound sculpture, live electronic music, systems music, improvisation and the Fluxus movement; and deals with such innovative but neglected figures as Logothetis, Bertoia, Bertoncini, Tudor, Dobrowolski, Schnebel, Christou, Kayn, Eimert and Koenig? I do not claim massive originality for my book but I would assert that in dealing with many neglected areas of post-war music it has filled a huge chasm in the existing literature.

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From Ed Fulton

I have recently renewed my acquaintance with *Tempo* – your issue No.195 I found enjoyable and stimulating.

Two errors, though, I think; it isn't Antony Pay pictured on p.23, but Alan Hacker, unless my memory deceives me. And one thing I'm sure about – your review (p.49) of the Apartment House concert states that they gave the UK première of Wolff's *Snowdrop* – they didn't. The UK première was given by the group cpe in the Purcell Room, South Bank back in 1972 or 1973; I played harpsichord. We used a 'harpsichord and (or) possibly other instrument(s)' (in our case treble recorder and flute) as the score directs. The piece may be written on one staff, but it is not quite 'a single line of music' as your reviewer states; I would venture to suggest that Wolff's

score itself has a 'clear and coherent structure' which is realized in performance providing we avoid over-elaboration.

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From Paul Rapoport

I was glad to see *Tempo* pay tribute to the Polish composer Moysey Weinberg (1919-96) in Martin Anderson's obituary in the July issue. Two points made by Mr Anderson call for elaboration. The first, about Weinberg's arrest in 1953 (for being Jewish and Solomon Mikhoels' son-in-law): in her book on Shostakovich, Elizabeth Wilson

quotes Weinberg's wife at that time relating how Shostakovich intervened on Weinberg's behalf.

Second, about Weinberg's 17th to 19th symphonies: the Russian title for this trilogy is literally *Having Crossed the Threshold of War*, rather than *On the Threshold of War*. The published score translates it freely as *To Outlive the War*. Regardless, these are three impressive symphonies.

Even if it is necessarily based on relatively little music, Mr Anderson's favourable assessment should be sustained, if only more might be heard of what Weinberg wrote.

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