

EDITORIAL

Last summer, Bob Gilmore and I were in Amsterdam having a late lunch, gazing out across the sunlit waters of the IJ, and discussing the relationship between composition and performance. It can be a problematic relationship: Bob and I gossiped about composers who seemed to regard performers as troublesome servants, about performers who seemed to regard scores as no more than kindling with which to light their own creative fires, about histories of new music which focus only on composers, barely acknowledging that these composers were only able to do their work because of the dedication and expertise of performers. We concluded that something needed to be done, perhaps in the pages of *TEMPO*, and one of the first things that Bob proposed was the profile of the ensemble Apartment House which appears in this issue.

Philip Thomas's article on the music of Laurence Crane and Luke Nickel's article on Éliane Radigue were also Gilmore initiatives and they mesh perfectly with this more performer-oriented view on new music practice. Philip Thomas's perspective on Crane's music is informed by his experience of playing so much of it, and Nickel focuses on Radigue's most recent work, in which she finds the sounds which will become her new music in collaboration with the performers who will play it, making the music *on* the performer's instrument in much the same way that choreographers make their work on the bodies of their dancers.

The performer's view also informs part of the debate which takes up the next section of this issue. In *TEMPO* 272 we published John Croft's article 'Composition is not Research'. It was quite brief – just over five pages – but it was also quite provocative, from its opening assertion that 'There are, by and large, two kinds of composers in academia today – those who labour under the delusion that they are doing a kind of 'research', and those who recognise the absurdity of this idea' to its conclusion that 'many of us will be out of a job if we refuse to keep up the pretence'. It duly provoked, and the tracking devices at Cambridge University Press registered a huge spike in interest for *TEMPO* 272 and for this one article in particular. Soon the editorial in-box started to fill up with requests from composers and performers in universities who wanted to respond to Croft, and two of those requests, from the composer Camden Reeves and the pianist Ian Pace, have now turned into further articles in this issue.

As is often the case, that initial provocation has generated a much more sustained and extended debate. There may be some readers who feel that they are being invited to observe someone else's fight, that none of this is of any great significance for those outside the academic bubble inhabited by Croft, Reeves and Pace. Certainly many of the references to REF2014, the competition between UK universities and conservatoires for government research funding, may seem parochial, but I believe this is a debate which belongs in the pages of a journal like *TEMPO* because it is a debate about the nature

of what composers and performers think they are doing when they make music. Reeves and Pace have written articles that not only address many of the philosophical questions raised by Croft but also develop narratives of their own, about innovation and tradition, about what musicians and their listeners know and about how they know it.

It's also a debate with considerable economic significance. Across the industrialised world, from Aberdeen and Adelaide to Tokyo and Toronto, one of the ways in which musicians earn a living is through their work in universities and conservatoires, and these institutions use their big-name composers and performers to draw in students. But what sort of relationship is this? Suggest to college principals and university vice-chancellors that they are patrons of the arts, whose patronage is a modern equivalent of that of Louis XIV or the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg, and one might trigger quite a few chief executive seizures, but these same institutional leaders are happy to take credit for the art that their employees make as long as it can generate income as research.

Economic arguments about music also form part of Martin Iddon's article on Johannes Kreidler and the *Neue Konzeptualismus*, which has been a feature of musical developments in the German-speaking countries in the last 10 years. *TEMPO* has covered these developments before, in Celeste Oram's article on 'Darmstadt's new wave modernism' in *TEMPO* 271 and my own short article 'Falling in Love Again' which was published in *TEMPO* 273, but Martin Iddon's article delves much deeper into *Neue Konzeptualismus*, offering a compelling critique of what is in itself often presented as a critique of the processes involved in the composition, performance, promotion and monetisation of new music. Like John Croft's article in *TEMPO* 272 it is provocative, and I suspect we may not have heard the last of the questions it raises; making new music may not be research but it is about a lot more than just organising sounds and performing them.