

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

from TREVOR WISHART

I should like to add my own footnote to Stephen Montague's review of Barry Anderson's work. Besides being a close colleague and friend, I had worked alongside Barry at IRCAM on a number of occasions during his compositional involvement in *The Mask of Orpheus*, and spent the day and evening with him rehearsing for the concert in which *Arc* was premièred, immediately prior to his untimely death.

In particular I would like to address the problem of the relationship between Birtwistle and Anderson during the composition of *The Mask of Orpheus*. I have the greatest respect for Birtwistle himself, as a composer in the traditional sense, and as a musician whose utilization of electro-acoustic music has helped to spearhead the acceptability of electro-acoustics with the more conservative elements of the musical public. The central problem for me is that, during the composition of *The Mask* the relationship in which Barry found himself by dint of his own personal generosity is one which reinforces the classic British class division between those who work on a text (the musical score) and those who 'merely' engineer sonic materials (the clerk *v.* the manual worker syndrome).

With the power of the new technology, it is now possible to mould and sculpt sound itself, like a plastic material, and therefore the ability to do this must today be regarded as an important *compositional* skill. A person who has the knowledge and ability to create new sounds in this way is a composer. There is no reason why every composer should possess every skill, nor why composers with different skills should not cooperate on the production of a work. But a collaboration must be acknowledged as such, and in particular the electro-acoustic composer should not be demeaned as a 'technical assistant' or 'performer'.

Furthermore, whilst there is an understandable desire to capitalize on the public success of *The Mask of Orpheus* to promote electro-acoustic music as an acceptable medium with a wider musical public, there is also an inherent danger in promoting Birtwistle himself as some kind of 'guru' in the sphere of electronics and computer music where, as I am sure he would be the first to admit, his hands-on practical experience is somewhat limited. Unfortunately, the relative lack of acknowledgement of Anderson's true role as co-composer in the making of *The Mask of Orpheus* contributes to this false assignation.

As a witness to some of the four years which Barry Anderson devoted to the collaborative composition of *The Mask*, I would like to feel that the opera-going public fully appreciated the contribution he made to the composition of this remarkable work, and also the importance of electro-acoustics as a compositional discipline.

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from MICHAEL GRAUBART

I was delighted to see Stephen Montague's appreciation of Barry Anderson in TEMPO No. 166. Amongst other matters, it is important to keep trying to set the record straight about the nature of Barry's creative collaboration with Harrison Birtwistle on *The Mask of Orpheus*. It in no way reduces Birtwistle's status as a major composer to say loudly and clearly that Barry Anderson *composed* the all-important electronic music in that opera, under very general directions from Birtwistle about the character and (sometimes) rhythmic structure of each section. After *The Observer* had published an article by Peter Heyworth about the opera and Birtwistle's work in the IRCAM studio, I wrote to its Editor; but the letter was not printed. The truth must be repeated over and over again; otherwise, when the definitive histories of the music of the 70's and 80's come to be written, they will be written wrongly. I know something about it, for Barry used to discuss his work with me on his return from hectic weeks or week-ends at IRCAM.

I should like to correct or supplement one or two of Stephen Montague's statements, too. When the South Bank Adult Education Institute's work was absorbed into that of Morley College (in 1981, incidentally, not 1980), the West Square Studio grew in scope because we amalgamated with it Morley College's own courses in electronic music, which I had been teaching for some years. (It is worth remembering that Morley ran courses in electronic music, taught by Daphne Oram, in the 50's—before any other educational institution in this country did.) The Studio became perhaps the best open-access electronic music studio in the country (and remains so, under the capable direction of Philipp Wachsmann) because of Barry Anderson's passionate devotion to teaching at all levels, including introductory courses for complete beginners—unemployed youngsters from Brixton as well as distinguished composers.

Barry's full-time work at Morley College included being Assistant Director of Music and Head of Dance and of Drama. I should like to pay tribute to his dedication, hard work and support as a colleague. But when, in 1986, he decided to cut down on his regular commitments at Morley College, he did not, as Stephen Montague says, 'drop most of his teaching at Morley College'. His teaching continued to be important to him. What he dropped was the supervision of the Dance Department and some of his general administrative work in the Music Department. He retained almost all his teaching in electronic music, and in fact his total commitment to Morley College was reduced by less than half. (It may be a less important myth than the Birtwistle-Orpheus one, but it seems as hard to correct).

Finally, may I make a small addition to the work-list? When Barry Till, who had been Principal of Morley College for over 20 years, retired in 1986, Barry Anderson composed another delightful short taped fanfare called *Fanfarewell* for a valedictory concert.

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from KATHRYN BAILEY

I read with interest Regina Busch's response to my article, 'Willi Reich's Webern' (TEMPO No. 165). I reply only because doing so gives me an opportunity to draw attention to two misprints that I overlooked in reading the proofs (they seem also to have escaped Miss Busch's fearful scrutiny): a 'not' about halfway down the first page that should have been a 'now', and 'numbers 4 and 6' instead of 'numbers 5 and 7' near the end of the third page.

Having done this, I may as well say also that I thought at the time, and think still, that it was unnecessary to muster the whole battery of musicological resources in order to defend a conjecture (having to do, in my opinion, specifically with Willi Reich and only incidentally with Anton Webern) in an article that was written as recreation during work on a much larger project. I am, it would seem, not as *fleißig* as Miss Busch thinks appropriate, but I wonder if she might have found less to object to had she read the article more carefully and borne in mind its restricted purpose. It is also possible that a familiarity with some of my other writings on the subject of Webern's twelve-note music ('The Evolution of Variation Form in the Music of Webern' in *Current Musicology* 16 (1973) and 'Webern's Opus 21: Creativity in Tradition' in *The Journal of Musicology* II/1 (1983), in particular) would have given her a different perception of my work. As for her caution against trusting the work of 'musicologists and other music-lovers' (I am not at all certain that the first of these is necessarily a subset of the second), this is a curious suggestion, since I assume that we are both musicologists by trade and music-lovers by inclination.

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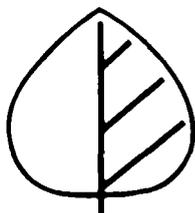
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