Aspects of British Experimental Music as a Separate Art-Music Culture

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Abstract


…very generally, avant-garde music can be viewed as occupying an extreme position within the [Eurocentric art-music] tradition, while experimental music lies outside it. The distinction may appear slight, but when applied to such areas as institutional support, ‘official’ recognition, and financial reward, the avant garde’s links with tradition – however tenuous – can carry enormous weight.

This thesis examines the differences between the British experimental movement and the avant garde, especially the hostility and incomprehension of the avant-garde mainstream toward British experimental music activity. This relationship, of the ‘approved’ avant-garde culture to the ‘outsider’ culture of experimentalism, results in an attempt by the dominant culture to co-opt the features of experimentalism it finds attractive (or, in the case of minimalism, those which become popular despite its disapproval) and to deride features which lie outside its aesthetic criteria.

In this sense, this relationship exhibits some parallels to the idea of cultural hegemony articulated by Edward Said in Orientalism and is informed by four basic aesthetic principles. These principles can be found in the work of Cornelius Cardew after he finished working on Karlheinz Stockhausen’s Carré (1959-60) and in the musical and referential concerns of the musicians, artists, and others who formed the Scratch Orchestra (1969-73). Such a difference can also be found in activities which are less usually considered to be experimental activity, particularly the post-Scratch Orchestra political and tonal composers. The thesis shows how British experimentalism embraced many features of other arts, especially those of visual arts, and uses documented compositional and performance activity (including concerts, tours, text
and tonal pieces) to establish a sense of the richness and consistency of experimental music within its own cultural and aesthetic terms.
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Introduction

What I cannot understand is why the makers of experimental music...write such a vast amount about it.... [O]ne of the principal tenets of the experimentalist faith is that the Western musical tradition of attaching significance to sound should be broken; sound should be heard in and for itself, without the complications of meaning, ideas, psychology, emotions. Why not concentrate, then, on making and listening, rather than writing – and perhaps on persuading the rest of us to join in?

Richard Middleton, Review of Michael Nyman, Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond

Despite this emphasis on prose as a means of explication, rather than pitch analysis, experimental music often is met with incomprehension; if it is comprehended, it is often derided. British experimental music has been denigrated for having an ideology which either aspires to religion (Middleton’s notion of ‘experimentalist faith’; he also calls it ‘a rather amateurish branch of philosophy and comparative religion, as against a genuinely musical movement’); or revolutionary politics (especially in works by the critic Paul Griffiths); or that it is too undisciplined to be included in a book on modern music (Lewis Foreman).

Experimental music also defies normal developmental modelling. Middleton worried about the scope of ‘...a book which calls itself baldly and all-inclusively “Experimental Music” (not “A History of...”, “The Development of”...)’. Michael Nyman wrote:

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2 Ibid., p. 86.


5 Middleton, Music & Letters, p. 86.
Experimental music appears to have sprung up quite spontaneously in the early fifties: it was not the culmination of a long line of development, being largely without a linear history. But it would be wrong to imply that it happened without a historical background. Nyman articulates one of the main differences between the experimental and avant-garde movements. Experimental music operates without a strict reliance on linear history, in that ideas for pieces may come from anywhere, any time. However, there is an experimental music ‘tradition’; a kind of loose ‘college’ of composers who are linked in some ways which may be philosophical, aesthetically, through visual arts, or other modes of thinking which may or may not have anything to do with sound. Nyman’s understanding of experimental music in these terms and Middleton’s, Griffiths’, and Foreman’s completely different understanding shows that they view the same evidence, the scores and associated writing, in different ways. Nyman is an experimentalist, an ‘insider’ who knows and appreciates the music and activities of experimentalists; Middleton, and as will be shown later, Griffiths, Foreman, and many others, are ‘outsiders’ who can neither know nor appreciate these activities without accepting their differences. Despite their geographical proximity, these two ways of thinking and writing about, performing, and creating music are so different as to form two separate cultures.

The American experimental tradition is better documented than the British tradition, although the early influences on the former are by no means solely American. Charles Ives valued the ‘accidental’ collisions of sounds resulting from the personality of players or of coincidence; Henry Cowell notated ‘uncontrollable’ sonorities. In France, Erik Satie wrote anti-developmental music, such as the repetitive Vexations and Musique d’amueblement; in Italy, the Futurist Luigi Russolo invented intonarumori or noise machines. To these might be added the ideas of

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Ferruccio Busoni (although not his music), Percy Grainger, Edgard Varèse (in some of his works), and Anton Webern (for his silences more than his sound).  

These composers articulated, or appeared to articulate, a different definition of music; moreover, a different sense of what was valuable and artistic in music. This concern was taken up by American experimentalists associated with John Cage, who wrote at length on the nature of sound, silence, and of process and non-intention. These writings, combined with Cage’s compositions which carried out his ideas, became the aesthetic foundation for generations of American, and later British, experimentalists. These ideas were not favoured by more conservative elements of music academia; in fact, it is still possible to find music scholars who believe Cage to be a charlatan. The reaction of such scholars to the text-piece Action Scores of the international Fluxus art movement of the late 1950s to the late 1960s is even stronger. These scores preceded the text compositions of the Scratch Orchestra (1969-73) and may or may not involve sound. The art historian Owen Smith voiced a common impression of musical scholarship when he asked me:

as a music historian do you differentiate between Fluxus events and musical notation in general? It seems to me that there is a general hesitancy by many music historians to consider Fluxus, or more broadly Action Music as music.

Experimental music has been ignored in most graduate programmes in music history and musicology. A search on the UMI Dissertations Abstracts database shows that ‘experimental music’ brings up eleven theses after 1990, with only two from musicology and only one before

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7 These backgrounds are well documented in Experimental Music, pp. 27-41.

8 I found that this is a strong minority opinion among musicologists who answered my composer survey (see Appendix 6).

9 Owen Smith, posting on Fluxlist, 12 August 1999.

10 There were some known omissions in the UMI results, such as David Patterson’s 1990 dissertation on John Cage.
1990 (which was on the music of Charles Ives); for Fluxus, there is only one thesis listed in music, compared with ten in art history and two in theatre. John Cage comes under the purview of many disciplines, including art, literature, theatre, dance, architecture, education and religion. There have been fourteen theses and dissertations in music which have mentioned him in abstracts since 1990 (eight before), but they come from the fields of music theory; only three treat him from an historical methodology.\footnote{There were also a number of M.A. and D.M.A. papers which I did not count, as they either treated performance problems in Cage’s music, or used this music as the basis for original compositions by the authors.} Of British theses collected in the Index of Theses, only four theses have ‘John Cage’ or ‘experimental music’ in their title. Two of these are M.A. dissertations, and one Ph.D. thesis, by David Nicholls, covers experimental music from Ives to early Cage.

Stranger, though, is that these ideas were not liked by the dominant majority of modernists, those of the dominant avant-garde culture, who valued complexity of process determined by the composer and dictated to the performer (and, by association, the audience). Many of these writers thought Cage, if not a charlatan, a simpleton. In the 1960s, when modernism began to become preferred over the tonal mainstream of the American national style (such as William Schuman, Howard Hanson, and Aaron Copland), the winners of the Pulitzer Prize in Music all came from the academic avant garde, including Elliott Carter, Jacob Druckman, and Charles Wuorinen. Since 1950, no experimentalist has won this award;\footnote{Charles Ives was given one for his Third Symphony in 1947, upon his ‘rediscovery’. In 1949, Virgil Thomson won; then no one remotely sympathetic to the experimental aesthetic won until Henry Brant, in 2002.} a fact mirrored in the attitudes of arts establishments in the United States and Britain toward experimental music. The visual arts and dance academia have celebrated and supported experimental music throughout its most vibrant years – those associated with Cage and the choreographer Merce
Cunningham; the New York School and the New York abstract expressionists and pop artists; Fluxus artists-cum-poets-cum-composers; Cornelius Cardew and British artists; the British systemic artists and composers. However, experimental music has consistently struggled to find such support in a musical world dominated and in many cases controlled by members of the avant garde.13

Cage has gained some critical ground in academic writing since the early 1980s and now several specialists – Christopher Shultis and David Patterson, for instance – are joined by those in other aspects of American experimental music. British experimental music has not had as much academic attention for various reasons. Part of this may stem from a stronger antagonism from the avant garde in Britain within its smaller scene, bolstered by a much more conservative view of music by critics outside of modernism. Cardew was probably one of the best-known British modern composers in Europe throughout the 1960s. In 1965, Andrew Porter wrote:

Cardew (born 1936) should be the subject of a brief diversion [from the main composers treated]. After the Academy he went to Cologne, worked with Stockhausen on Carré. In international avant-garde circles he is probably a more familiar figure than any of the seven young ‘central’ composers here considered [Goehr, Davies, Maw, Birtwistle, Musgrave, Williamson and Bennett]; his music is performed frequently at their concerts – and in the ordinary run of British concert life, hardly at all. He is our only significant composer who has worked with graphic or other experimental notation, with indeterminate or only partially determined composition. His work is thoughtful, and the emphasis is on choice rather than chance.14

13 Of the correspondence about music, groups, and festivals to the Arts Council between 1945-1995 housed in the V & A, which took up 138 pages of items of individual and multiple files, bundles and transfer cases, only three items had anything to do with experimental music: Ian Mitchell’s group Gemini, the free jazz and experimental Association for Improvising Musicians, and the London Musicians’ Collective, mostly devoted to improvisation. The web site for the Huddersfield Festival lists John Cage as the only experimentalist among its important guests in a shortlist. Huddersfield did not answer repeated queries for the whereabouts of a list of composers and ensembles. The Almeida Festival – before it turned into a venue for opera – regularly programmed works by experimentalists, but it was a lone exception.

Despite this glowing assessment, Porter did not place Cardew among his main figures; instead, he dealt with him only as an associate of Richard Rodney Bennett when they were at the Royal Academy of Music. Porter chose to emphasise the other seven composers in what was meant to be the English contribution to ‘a comprehensive survey’ of music in Europe, even though, according to Porter, Cardew had more European exposure than the others.

Cardew, unlike Cage, gave his critics a further reason to dismiss him in the 1970s when he rejected his own, pre-political work; and along with Cardew they dismissed the other, less well-known composers associated with him. Like Cage, Dick Higgins, and others who wrote about American experimental music, British experimentalists have written most of the available literature on British experimental music. Cardew’s work tends to be the best-known: his ‘Notations, Interpretation, etc.’ consists of diary entries on the aesthetics of notation which stands equally with any of Cage’s writings on experimental aesthetics. Cardew’s diaries are quite revealing of his work in graphic music, as diary entries form the bulk of the non-musical content of Treatise Handbook, and shows his growing dissatisfaction with graphic music that must be read symbolically. Much of his other writing of the 1960s has been ignored or misunderstood. This includes his manifesto breaking away from Stockhausen in the two-part ‘Report on Carré’, and ‘Sitting in the Dark’, an explanation of the Focus Opera Group performance of his Schooltime Compositions. The editors of The Musical Times found ‘Sitting in the Dark’ so confusing that Cardew was asked to add an explanatory paragraph.

15 *Tempo* vol. 58, no. 21 (1961), pp. 21-33.


18 Ibid.
Michael Parsons, who wrote mostly for The Financial Times, was one of the few reviewers sympathetic to experimental music in the mid-1960s, as was Michael Nyman in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This is not surprising, as both participated in the scene as experimental composers and performers. Nyman’s magnum opus, of course, is his book, Experimental Music, but he also wrote articles of great acumen for Music and Musicians, Tempo, and Studio International. Parsons has written generously about other experimentalists, notably the pianist John Tilbury and the composer Howard Skempton, and especially well about experimental music in its relation to the visual arts.

Brian Dennis’s work includes insightful research into The Great Learning and two books on experimental music in education. Gavin Bryars, Dave Smith and Christopher Hobbs have written on the movement at length, as has Eddie Prévost, who has written extensively on the aesthetics and social analogies of improvisation in the last twenty years. John Tilbury has been researching and writing a biography of Cardew since the latter’s untimely death in 1981. There have been some signs that Tilbury is close to completion; in view of the quality of the occasional article he has written, this work cannot come out too soon.

Critics and historians are often fans and students of the music about which they write. Michael Nyman could claim some distance as a critic, as for most of the time when he wrote about the scene he was not composing (Bell Set No. 1 and some other works come from Nyman’s first

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20 Contact, no. 21 (1980), pp. 12-16.


24 ‘Cornelius Cardew’, Contact, no. 26 (Spring 1983), pp. 4-12.
period of compositional activity; it was not until the late 1970s that Nyman became a full-time composer. Keith Potter has worked as a critic of modern music of all kinds, but his specialty is experimental and minimal music. With Hilary Bracefield, Potter founded Contact magazine, a journal of new music published through the 1970s and 1980s. Until its last two or three issues (which neither Potter nor Bracefield edited), Contact was significant in that it presented a balance of articles on avant-garde and experimental music. Many of the experimental composers and performers wrote for this journal (The Musical Times and Tempo also providing journal space to experimentalists). Although Potter has written extensively about British experimental music, he has done so in the last decade or so only a few times, as he was involved for some years in research for his book on American minimalists and postmodernism.

In some respects, British experimental music has had more champions in the United States than in Britain. Michael Parsons said in 1974 that ‘[t]he English publisher of Scratch Music has only sold 1200 copies in this country, but he’s also sold 12,000 to America’. This tenfold differential may, in part, be explained by the far larger population, but it does not explain it all, as the U.S. interest in mainstream modern British composers is small (Birtwistle and Maxwell Davies are far less popular in the U.S. than in Britain; Ferneyhough became well known only when he settled in California). The Experimental Music Catalogue, which compiled anthologies of British and some American experimental music according to instrumentation or use (Vocal, String, Education, Scratch Orchestra, and Rhythmic


Anthologies, among others), sold well, especially to university libraries in the United States. In the 1970s and 1980s, composers often had more requests for concerts and lectures in mainland Europe (Belgium, particularly, but also the Netherlands and France), as well as at American university music departments. In contrast, with the exception of Goldsmiths College, London (where Potter and Tilbury taught) and Leicester Polytechnic (the music department was built by Gavin Bryars), the only consistent British university interest came from art colleges.

Before the advent of the Internet, information was difficult to obtain, aside from the articles and published works mentioned above. Writers from outside British experimental music have mostly been hampered by a lack of available material. In 1983, I spent six months in London gathering information for my M.A. thesis, ‘Experimental Music: Cornelius Cardew and His Contemporaries’, using oral history and other methods more common then to ethnomusicology. Cardew had only recently died – I arrived for my first trip to London in 1981 the day before his funeral. Former members of the Scratch Orchestra and other experimental groups were only just beginning to cross the divide which had arisen when Cardew, Tilbury, and others in and around the Scratch Orchestra adopted a Marxist aesthetic which others, such as John White, Christopher Hobbs, and Gavin Bryars, did not care to follow. Most members of the Scratch Orchestra who were not formally trained in music outside the Orchestra had lost touch or, like Psi (now Peter) Ellison, found the experience of the Scratch Orchestra divisions so painful that they refused to keep in touch. My understanding of the experience of these people came from two sources: Ilona Phombeah and Bryn Harris. Apart from Nyman’s book, my thesis was the only large-

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27 University of Redlands (California), 1983. This thesis was the first systematic history of the movement, using primary sources (documents, oral history). The present thesis moves on from the establishment of that history to address its unique cultural features in contrast to the mainstream avant-garde and so, aside from some shared statements of fact and older articles and interviews, this is entirely new research; as far as methodology and conclusions, this thesis is entirely different.
scale history of the experimental movement in Britain of this size and depth until 2001. About half is devoted to Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra; the rest is devoted to individual composers and groups.

There are other related undergraduate and graduate dissertations on specific parts of the movement. ‘Music of Association – Mr Gavin Bryars and “Irma”: an Opera Op. XII by Mr. Thos. Phillips’, by Andrew Thomson (now Hugill),\(^{28}\) is a good early example. In the mid-1990s I had an extended correspondence with Cecilia Sun, then of Eastman College of Music (now at UCLA), who was writing about Cardew’s politicisation. Her work has turned to Eastern influences on a wider range of music and is, as yet, unpublished. I shared a conference session in 2001 with Tania Chen, a student at Goldsmiths College, whose ‘Chance, Choice and Contingency in Cornelius Cardew’s *Memories of You*’ provided a vital performance history of this work.\(^{29}\) Chen recently seems to have concentrated more on her work as a pianist, as has Sarah Walker, a pianist and broadcaster who has written a thesis on reference in British experimental piano music since the 1970s.\(^{30}\) Undergraduate dissertations are common, but of variable quality and virtually unobtainable. One of the best of these is ‘AMM – A History and Aesthetic’ by Zoe Sosinka.\(^{31}\)

Kathryn Gleasman Pisaro has recently completed an American doctoral thesis, ‘Music From Scratch: Cornelius Cardew, Experimental Music and the Scratch Orchestra in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s’.\(^{32}\) There may be an advantage in that Pisaro came to the Scratch Orchestra

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as an outsider, not only as an American (as I was by birth), but also as someone relatively new to experimental music (she trained as a Baroque oboist). Pisaro used the same general methodology – oral history – as I used, and interviewed most of the same members I did in 1983, plus two members whom I could not locate at the time: Carole Finer and Psi Ellison. This thesis, however, suffers from problems of accuracy, poor citation, and a misinterpretation of British music and culture.\footnote{There are basic errors of fact, such as the statement that Christopher Hobbs was a bassoonist in AMM (he was a multi-instrumentalist); errors of citation, such as an incomplete citation of an article on Paragraph 7 of The Great Learning by Linda Dusman; errors of categorisation, such as Pisaro’s indication that the Cardew manuscript collection held in the British Library (and donated in 1991) is new and is a Scratch Orchestra collection, of basic editing (‘the musical cannon’) and of timeliness, as much of the information here has not been updated since her first trip to Britain in 1996. This inaccuracy runs throughout the thesis, making citation with any confidence difficult. Pisaro remains steadfastly an outsider, which can grate as well as delight: for instance, she begins her thesis linking the isolation of British music in general with Arthurian legend. She also uses the American spelling ‘mom’ in a quotation of an interview with Carole Finer, instead of the British ‘mum’, thus throwing Finer out of London and into Evanston, Illinois.}

Information in works published by the academic press (both books and peer-reviewed journals), as well as the general media usually comes from critics hostile to experimental music and tends to exhibit a simplification of the scene, often based upon supposition rather than fact. Most writers, notably Lewis Foreman and Paul Griffiths, have been openly dismissive of British experimental music on musical or political grounds, often basing their assessments on mistaken assumptions and the aesthetic criteria of the avant garde. This is unfortunate, particularly as Griffiths’ short and dismissive section on Cardew in his book Modern Music\footnote{Paul Griffiths, Modern Music: The Avant-Garde Since 1945 (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1981).} and its later editions often is used as a major source for British experimental music as a whole. Because these impressions (which will be dealt with at length in Chapters 1 and 2) are the easiest to find, they have been passed from source to source as fact.\footnote{Plus ça change – Alan Walker wrote of the transmission of assumptions of fact by writers in Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years 1811-1847 (London: Faber, 1983): ‘They take...}
Most academic journals have ignored the scene, perhaps as a result of the negative coverage in these earlier books. For instance, *Perspectives of New Music* has only an interview with AMM conducted by Christopher Hobbs, editor of a special feature on improvisation, but this was made possible by his co-editor Barney Childs, then one of the strongest supporters of British experimental music in the U. S.

Since the 1990s, there have been some signs of change. Timothy D. Taylor wrote in 1998 that ‘Cardew has received scant scholarly attention’. Taylor only found two major sources: Tilbury’s liner notes for the recording of Cardew’s memorial concert, and Richard Barrett’s 1987 article ‘Cornelius Cardew’, which was published thanks to its editors Michael Finnissy (who, although associated with the avant-garde New Complexity movement, is a supporter of experimental music) and Roger Wright (a former Scratch Orchestra member and now Controller of BBC Radio 3). This article suffers from Barrett’s viewpoint as a New Complexity composer. His facts are correct, as he has obtained them from Tilbury’s programme notes for the Cardew Memorial Concert, a related article in *Contact* and from my thesis. However, Barrett emphasises structural elements of *The Great Learning*; and there is a concomitant sense that he finds some of the most interesting features of the indeterminacy simplistic.

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37 Actually, scant published scholarly attention: the present thesis, although new in form and intention, is the result of twenty years of scholarly attention, including four articles which were refused by various publications.


Taylor’s article, ‘Moving in Decency: The Music and Radical Politics of Cornelius Cardew’, uses material from his dissertation, ‘The Voracious Muse: Contemporary Cross-Cultural Musical Borrowings, Culture and Postmodernism’. Taylor received a grant from the University of Michigan to pursue his doctoral research in London, but the only place he seems to have visited was the British Music Information Centre (BMIC), and therefore his thesis (and his later article) suffers from unfamiliarity with the literature. Taylor wrote that ‘Cardew said and wrote very little about aesthetics, although it is clear that he recognised its existence’. He cites Cardew’s objection to the Darmstadt avant garde as ‘aesthetic’ music (equivalent to ‘high art’ music) in a debate of 1971, and his stated concern in a conversation with Adrian Jack in 1975 that architectural ‘aesthetic’ beauty is less important than a building’s function. Here Cardew’s use of the term ‘aesthetic’ means a music meant only to be admired in the first instance – an empty purpose given Cardew’s preference for social function – and the popular association of the term ‘external beauty’ in the second.

Christopher Ballantine also wrote that ‘[e]xperimental music patently lacks an articulate aesthetic’, in ‘Towards an Aesthetic of Experimental

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42 Taylor does not cite Tilbury’s Contact article, which is easily available in London in the Central Music Library, although he knows of Contact at least indirectly (it was cited in Tilbury’s article), and he cites Keith Potter’s interview with Cardew in issue no. 10 (1974-75). He also could have obtained information from my thesis, which is at the BMIC. He does not mention having interviewed any contemporary of Cardew’s, even though Matthew Greenall, the director of the BMIC (whom he thanks in the article), could have provided contacts. Some of his errors are factual; for instance, he guessed that the ‘Toy Symphony’ played by the Scratch Orchestra was by Leopold Mozart, rather than Scratch Orchestra member Jenny Robbins; he also guessed that the Experimental Music Catalogue was Cardew’s own company. Some of his errors stem from ignorance of the culture in which Cardew moved. Although he noted that Cardew turned away from serialism in the 1960s, Taylor chooses to analyse the pitch content of Paragraph 2 of The Great Learning as pentachords and hexachords, using pitch-class numbers. See Chapter 9 for more on this problem.

Music’. However, the aesthetic Ballantine finds ‘articulate’ and writes of in his article is limited to Bertolt Brecht, Theodor Adorno, and Walter Benjamin. This is a very interesting early attempt to explain the aesthetics of experimental music, both British and American, but yet another aesthetic view can come from within the culture and its writings.

The scope of aesthetics goes beyond such simple concerns as external beauty and art empty of function. Aesthetic values comprise a wealth of factors which lie between the art work and the perceiver, including form and content, use, and implied or agreed ‘message’. They constitute:

Those features of a work that contribute to its success and importance as a work of art: the features upon which its significance or beauty supervene. They include the form, content, integrity, harmony, purity, or fittingness of works. In philosophical aesthetics it has proved hard to define these features in usefully specific, objective, terms; they are in any event qualities whose apprehension pleases and satisfies us.

All of these features, even one as ‘fixed’ as the form, vary in value in the interpretation of the work by each perceiver. A culture which values complexity, virtuosity, or scale will rate certain pieces more highly than those which value equal proportions or brevity. In the values beyond the actual physical parameters of the work – the ‘content, integrity, harmony, purity, or fittingness’ – the variables in perception stem from cultural assumptions even more.

Cardew valued the utility of music over its beauty, but this does not mean that he did not value beauty, as the care and attention he lavished on the visual appearance of Treatise shows. Such statements are common in earlier writings, such as ‘Notation, Interpretation, etc.’:


A musical notation that looks beautiful is not a beautiful notation, because it is not the function of a musical notation to look beautiful (functionalism).\(^{46}\)

The requirement that a notation is functional can be part of its aesthetic, as is whether it is good, moral, colourful, balanced, or even tasty, if the perceiver determines it to be vital in considering whether it is better than another. Indeed, Cardew wrote articles, diary entries and lectures which, except for pure political, non-musical writing in his later role as an important member of the Marxist left, are entirely concerned with notions of cultural values which shape aesthetics. These notions include whether a piece should be owned, who should play it, what it communicates (if anything), what is its intended audience, what makes it important, and so on, all from a standpoint of the value of the work. His concerns with the social value of music remained consistently paramount, even when the particularities of the values changed as he worked from an ideology of the European avant garde, to experimentalism, to Marxism-Leninism.

In fact, experimental composers in Britain and the United States place an emphasis upon philosophical criteria at least as much as and in most cases more than technical criteria, and this accounts for Richard Middleton’s dismay at the amount of writing about the music presented at the beginning of this introduction. Although the mainstream avant garde (composers following the Darmstadt School and the international movement which ensued) has a set of core values, one of these is that technical criteria are very important. For this reason alone, articles on experimental music do not appear often in the *Journal of Music Theory* and similar forums for modern music. John Cage’s writings especially are concerned with audience and performer perception more than process, even when written according to such process (as in *45 Minutes*).

\(^{46}\) *Tempo*, no. 58 (Summer 1961), p. 29. Taylor does not cite this work or *Treatise Handbook*, both of which give a good insight into Cardew’s philosophical attitudes in his second period.
for a Speaker), or even in some cases in which his main contribution is process (as in his use of the I Ching to organise Notations). This aesthetic concern is shared by other members of the American experimental movement, and is best articulated by Morton Feldman and Dick Higgins, among others. Something similar can be found in the music of Satie (particularly in his Musique d’ameublement), the Futurists, Grainger and others who have been admired by experimentalists, and of course, this aesthetic emphasis is shared among the British experimentalists.

It is largely the shared concern for aesthetic criteria before technical theory which bonds experimental composers even when they adopt different technical means of composition, and does not bond others whose music may share technical similarities. This emphasis is one of the reasons that this music is often misunderstood, which may explain why the experimentalists both in the United States and Britain have been so neglected as far as commissions, articles, educational positions, awards and grants, and other benefits available to the dominant modern music culture go. Experimental music in Britain thrives with a separate audience, in separate venues, often thanks to separate modes of funding and dissemination – so much so, that in combination with its separate aesthetics, experimental music in general, and British


49 Christopher Ballantine, in ‘Towards an Aesthetic of Experimental Music’, The Musical Quarterly, vol. 63, no. 2 (April 1977), wrote that experimental music was ‘inclusive and participatory’: ‘Boulez is performed at the Royal Festival Hall, Cardew in Ealing Town Hall’ [p. 244]. This choice of venues was not simply a political statement, but also one of opportunity (the Scratch Orchestra played at the ICA, Queen Elizabeth Hall, and the 1972 Proms at the Royal Albert Hall and, no doubt, would have liked to have done so more often). In the 1960s, this difference might have only been one of prestige and the prominence of advertising; since the 1990s, this difference means a composer’s livelihood, as the Performing Rights Society no longer pays performance royalties for concerts which are not given in a ‘significant venue’. 
experimental music in particular, can be seen as a separate, and equal, art-music culture.

This thesis will explore the ways in which this culture works: its aesthetics, the hostile reception by the dominant culture, and its coherence, despite extreme changes in process over the years. It is divided into four sections which are roughly chronological but which also treat the movement according to general activities and attitudes. The first section attempts a definition of aesthetic and other cultural factors which make experimental music distinct from the dominant avant garde. These factors are significant features that articulate the gulf between experimental and avant-garde ‘camps’, and will be dealt with mostly in Chapters 1 and 2. They also provide a consistency of aesthetic and personal style which transcends differences in technique, so that ‘postmodernist’ experimental music has much more in common with ‘modernist’ music by the same composers than ‘postmodernist’ music by outsiders. This aesthetic and cultural bond is examined against more typical modernist and postmodernist historical modelling in Chapter 3.

The second section is an examination of the wealth of referential and other factors in text pieces, using the Scratch Orchestra’s earliest publication *Nature Study Notes*. The construction of these Improvisation Rites is typical of much Scratch Orchestra composition, even though they themselves are not compositions but exercises leading to improvisation. I have used both Michael Nyman’s process identification and a typology derived loosely from folklore studies\(^{50}\) to attempt to establish a classification for a music which cannot be analysed using current technical means.

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The third section details the activities of the Scratch Orchestra: its membership, range of activities, and political and social attitudes. With the exception of the earlier, more diffuse Fluxus movement, this group was unique in that it welcomed artists and non-musicians, resulting in an all-composer ensemble which consisted of a large number of women members. It was also unique in that it relied much more heavily than most ensembles on a social structure modelled on government, even on family. Cardew’s *The Great Learning* was the central, large-scale work dedicated to the Scratch Orchestra, and will be examined for its philosophy, construction, and use by the Scratch Orchestra, in Chapter 9. Lastly, Chapter 10 is an examination of the differences between the Confucian modelling of the Scratch Orchestra throughout most of its existence and Maoist aesthetic of the later Scratch Orchestra and other groups; also the difference in stylistics and the changes within this aesthetic throughout the 1970s and more recently.

The fourth section shows the way in which the aesthetic and cultural attitudes of British experimental composers have remained distinct and coherent through the radical change from indeterminate composition and text notation to systems music and tonality. In the same way that Cardew was a central figure in earlier experimental music, John White is a central figure in this era. Chapter 11 is an examination of musical systems, a strict numerical process linked to change-ring and the word systems of Samuel Beckett rather than serialism. Chapter 12 is an examination of tastes and influences in earlier music for these composers, whether political or not. I have asked many of these composers to fill out a survey of past composers whom they think to be either essential, important, or overrated and compared their answers to those of a control group mostly from the AMS-list musicological email list. The results of this survey show a striking difference in tastes, both between the experimentalists and the control group and within the experimental movement itself.
There is another element of aesthetic perception which is so individual as to be almost impossible to express coherently, and that is emotional ‘affect’ or ‘expression’. To attempt to write about this response is impossible, as it is personal. However, it is important to the concept of experimental music as a separate art culture instead of a pastime or a branch of philosophy that there is such a response, that it works as musical art. Even some sympathetic outsiders treat ‘conceptual’ music as only that, as J. Peter Burkholder did in his assessment of what he called ‘research music’:

The ‘classic’ works of research music are often referred to, as classic scientific articles are often cited, but little performed. Cage’s music, for instance, is far more often talked about or written about than played, and for good reason: his thinking is far more interesting than his music, which (by and large) need never be repeated, once played…. [T]he extreme unpopularity of this music should in no way be understood as a comment on its intrinsic value, viability, or musicality, any more than the work of a probabilist on martingales should be considered without value because it has no immediate application. It is extremely hard to judge this music, because so few people know anything about it; although there is much that seems dull, there is also research music of great excitement and intrinsic beauty.  

In a few of the starker Action Scores most of the content can be imagined, especially in those works which do not have direct connection with sound. Most of the rest, while they can be imagined from the score, have a more direct affect when experienced as performance. This is no different from the use of scores in reviews of distant orchestral premieres (such as those of Beethoven) common in the nineteenth century. Such a practice could never be justified as being as ‘good’ as experiencing the piece in concert.

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52 Nevertheless, I really enjoyed the performance of La Monte Young’s Piano Piece for David Tudor #1 (1960), in which the piano is provided with a bale of hay and a bucket of water, which I saw in 1982. In this case, the direct engagement was much like that of any visual art work. For me, the experience of seeing one of Duchamp’s Fountains at the Tate in the 1980s was equal to seeing works in the then newly-opened Turner Gallery.
Personally, I have had a deep emotional, as well as intellectual, engagement with American and British experimentalism, both in concept and in performance, since the age of thirteen. My direct response to experimental music is not unlike that experienced by British experimental musicians and regular audience members, and has been discussed (most volubly by John White, but in other ways by most of the others) in a personal and direct manner. This thesis has been a joy, in that I was able to return to old friends, both human and musical, and to understand them more; if some passages appear to be overly provocative, even grumpy, it is because I cannot understand why so many writers are able to dismiss such wonderful music out of hand. It is my hope that this thesis will explain how experimental music is deserving of equal treatment in the arts life of Britain to that of the mainstream avant garde.
Acknowledgements

Thanks to the experimental composers and Scratch Orchestra participants themselves, who answered many questions this year, including a survey (something which I know to be the bane of a composer’s life). Dave Smith sent pieces; Hugh Shrapnel sent long, patient answers. Michael Parsons revived his movements for the Dumb Show of Paragraph 5 of The Great Learning, came to Leicester and made a DVD for this thesis. Gavin Bryars, Howard Skempton, and Michael Nyman gave help between commissions and performances. Eddie Prévost similarly gave patient answers, and John Tilbury took time from his Cardew biography to generously confirm information of thirty years ago. Members of the Scratch Orchestra and people who performed in the pre-Scratch Roundhouse concert – particularly Richard Ascough, Michael Chant, and members who had not been contacted before, such as Linda Dyos, Hilary Audus, Alan Sutcliffe, David Briers, David Cobb, and others – were very kind. Sutcliffe, Briers, and Cobb sent useful memories of their time in the Orchestra. Michael Graubart, former head of music at Morley College, sent his memories about working with Cardew. David Bedford explained his early performances of Treatise.

Jonathan Kramer sent a copy of one of his articles and clarified many points about postmodernism; J. Peter Burkholder and David Nicholls answered questions about definition and historical modelling. Derek Matravers, lecturer in philosophy at the Open University, was particularly helpful with clarifying the philosophical boundaries of aesthetics and of Hegel and history; aesthetics, particularly, has been muddied in outside scholarship and Derek was patient and clear in straightening this out. My former colleague Martin Sheil at De Montfort University filmed, edited, and duplicated the Parsons DVD: the stunning starkness of the setting and the clean lines of the titles are his idea.
Most of all, thanks go to my supervisor, Katharine Ellis, who suggested the filter of experimental music as a separate culture, the useful construct of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’, and asked clear questions when my concepts were fuzzy and internalised. She took over supervision of a long-delayed attempt at the degree in a subject originally outside her purview, although she soon became knowledgeable. I could not have had better, more accurate, nor more sympathetic treatment from a supervisor. My external viva examiner, David Nicholls, made thorough and timely editorial comments that greatly improved the final version of this thesis; thanks also to my internal examiner, Keith Potter, for his comments. My greatest appreciation goes to Chris Hobbs, who produced the Parsons DVD, obtained materials, proofread, printed, and supported the work with good humour. Deep, eternal gratitude also is due the late Barney Childs, who is missed beyond words.
It began upon the following Occasion. It is allowed on all Hands, that the primitive way of breaking Eggs, before we eat them, was upon the larger End: But his present Majesty’s Grand-father, while he was a Boy, going to eat an Egg, and breaking it according to the ancient Practice, happened to cut one of his Fingers. Whereupon the Emperor his Father published an Edict, commanding all his Subjects, upon great Penaltys, to break the smaller End of their Eggs. The People so highly resented this Law, that our Histories tell us there have been six Rebellions raised on that account; wherein one Emperor lost his Life, and another his Crown. These civil Commotions were constantly fomented by the Monarchs of Blefuscu; and when they were quelled, the Exiles always fled for Refuge to that Empire. It is computed, that eleven thousand Persons have, at several times, suffered Death, rather than submit to break their Eggs at the smaller End. Many hundred large Volumes have been published upon this Controversy: But the books of the Big-Endians have been long forbidden, and the whole Party rendered incapable by Law of holding Employments.

Jonathan Swift

Gulliver’s Travels

Part I, ‘A Voyage to Lilliput’

Chapter IV
Chapter 1: A Tale of Two Critics

The three pieces enterprisingly given by Focus Opera Group last night at the International Students’ House are not, I think, susceptible to musical criticism in any normal sense. Cornelius Cardew’s new work, *Schooltime Compositions*, was more an event with sound. It is notated as a series of patterns – verbal, musical, linear – designed ‘to draw out an interpreter’s feelings’ in his chosen medium. It came over (as intended, I imagine) as a 40-minute non-event. It all seemed to me to be on a very low plane of imagination and inventiveness, indeed a low plane of human activity altogether. In a mild way it was faintly amusing; but I should hate to think that anything so poverty-stricken is artistic progress.

Stanley Sadie, ‘Avant garde, but is it progress?’ *The Times*, Thursday, 12 March 1968

Throughout the 1960s Cornelius Cardew was perhaps the most radical composer working in Britain. Born in 1936, he studied in Germany with Stockhausen and worked as his assistant on the score of the big choral work *Carré* before returning to this country to realise his own musical ideas. Taking his cue from Stockhausen, he questioned all the basic tenets of the postwar avant-garde, exploring the limitations of conventional and graphic musical notation and the possibilities of text-based intuitive music and improvisation.

When Cardew died in December 1981, the victim of a hit-and-run driver, he had pretty well marginalised himself. For over a decade he had devoted himself exclusively to Marxist causes, adapting his musical language accordingly and abandoning all hints of musical radicalism in favour of a thoroughly tonal, neo-romantic style that could be used to produce revolutionary songs and instrumental works based on folk songs. This is what he believed the music of the people should be, and he projected it into his work with the Scratch Orchestra (no instrumental skills required) and the People’s Liberation Music, both of which he founded.

Cardew’s music is rarely heard today, which was reason enough for this large-scale concert to mark the 20th anniversary of his death. Among the audience were many of the composers and musicians who had worked with him during the heady days of the 1970s. The organisers had tried to cover all facets of Cardew’s strangely diverse career, including a paragraph of *The Great Learning*, his huge choral and instrumental work based on Confucius, performed by former members of the Scratch Orchestra, together with the *Octet*’61, the early *February Pieces* for piano and the text-based *The Tiger’s Mind*. There was also a selection of the later piano music.
and songs, featuring such imperishable gems as *Smash the Social Contract* and a setting of Marx’s *Workers of the World Unite*.

It was all very earnest and dutiful, but snared in a time warp, and only occasionally delivered with enough vitality to convince younger members of the audience that here was once a composer of real vision and originality. It’s hard to imagine the direction that Cardew’s music would have taken had he lived longer, but even harder to believe that he would have carried on writing those achingly ordinary ditties. The problem with this memorial concert was that too many of those involved appeared to believe that those songs were the climax of his achievement, and the reason that we should remember him now.


The reviews that begin this chapter both have obvious similarities. Both evaluate performances of works by Cornelius Cardew and both are not favourable.¹ There are superficial differences in understanding which inform the writers’ opinions, as Sadie was writing over thirty-three years before Clements. Both, however, have underlying assumptions which make them find Cardew’s work shallow exercises in sensation in the first, and shallow political posturing in the second. These assumptions differ in many respects from those held by Cardew and others who work in or appreciate British experimental music (and experimental music in general) to the level of basic attitudes and definitions of music itself, its use and its aesthetics. The difference in assumptions is so great as to cause incomprehension in those outside experimental music, and this incomprehension causes derision. The conclusions in these reviews, especially in the article by Andrew Clements, are as pertinent to an understanding of experimental music as if a review of a cat castigated it for failing in qualities – loyalty, ability to fetch – inherent in a dog.

¹ Clements gives this concert two out of five stars – very low for a concert of modern music. Fiona Maddocks, who is the author of a biography of Hildegard of Bingen, also reviewed this concert for *The Observer*, but it exhibits mostly her prejudices for vocal music and against bobble hats (a piece of clothing often, like the anorak, associated with ‘nerdish’ obsession).
Both reviews are typical of the musical invective heaped upon Cardew and other British experimental composers and performers over the last thirty-five years or so. British experimental music, according to these sources, consisted of a small group of musical amateurs who made badly-rehearsed theatre until they all found Marx with Cardew and then wrote simple songs to unwieldy texts. If the content is not political, then it consists of simple piano tunes of at the most Grade 3 difficulty, Romantic pastiches, or ‘photocopied’ arpeggios. There is no coherent theory – at least no theory of any complexity – and as it has long abandoned the standards and inheritance of Western avant-garde music in the twentieth century.

Not all of these attitudes are central to every source. Stanley Sadie seemed uncomfortable with the operas by Kagel, Ligeti and Cardew in the Focus Opera Group performance: ‘They were described as “avant-garde operas”; but you would not recognise them as belonging to the genre of Figaro, Otello, or Grimes’; and he described his boredom at the other two works. His discomfort was due to unfamiliarity with post-war music in general, an ‘antimodernism’ at the heart of the time delay between conception, reception, and acceptance which makes Nicholas Slonimsky’s Lexicon of Musical Invective so much fun to read. Sadie looked to the bellwether of musical evolutionism, the artistic Darwinism which believes that each succeeding musical development should be an improvement, and found Schooltime Compositions wanting: ‘I should hate to think that anything so poverty-stricken is artistic progress’.2

Sadie also exhibits a particularly British conservatism of the time. Joseph Kerman noted that

[i]n Britain conservative music was not eclipsed, chance music never had much of a chance, and serialism did not make a serious impact until somewhat later.3

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2 Sadie, ‘Avant garde, but is it progress?’, 12 March 1968.

3 Joseph Kerman, Musicology (London: Fontana, 1985), p. 22. Pockets of this conservatism flourish more recently than is often assumed, such as the new Open
The other set of assumptions (which are more relevant to the concerns of this thesis) informs Andrew Clements’ review. Clements’ assumptions are central to modernist history and are best seen through two factual errors on which he bases his conception of Cardew’s work. In his first paragraph, Clements misreads Stockhausen’s influence on Cardew:

\[ \text{taking his cue from Stockhausen, he questioned all the basic tenets of the postwar avant-garde, exploring the limitations of conventional and graphic musical notation and the possibilities of text-based intuitive music and improvisation.}^4 \]

The words ‘taking his cue’ indicates agreement, positive influence and the continuation of a linear history of an idea.

In fact, Cardew reacted against Stockhausen’s ideas about notation, interpretation and realisation in his work as Stockhausen’s assistant on the piece *Carré* (1960). His role was to realise Stockhausen’s shorthand notes indicating individual events and to write them out for four orchestras to play. These notes were indeterminate enough to hold the promise of creative realisation: boxes holding notes indicating shorthand indications of pitch, rhythm, instrumentation and other features. The boxes and their contents resemble other event-based notation\(^5\) similar to some indeterminate events in music by Christian Wolff.

Following his experience Cardew questioned the traditional roles of composer and performer as well as ownership of a piece. The look of Cardew’s *Octet ’61 for Jasper Johns*, which he wrote as a kind of response

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\(^4\) Andrew Clements, ‘Marx and the Modern Composer’, *The Guardian*, Thursday, 3 January 2002 (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4328289,00.html>).

\(^5\) Event-based notation is a clearly symbolic notation, presented as a collection of events rather than in flowing lines as in common-practice notation. This kind of notation may be arranged to be played as a field situation, by strict random processes, by human processes, or by whim, or it may be arranged so that the player moves through events in a specified, fixed order, as in *Octet ’61 for Jasper Johns* or *Autumn 60*. Mobile form, as in many works by Earle Brown or Barney Childs (particularly in *Any Five* (1965)) is a sectional version of event-based notation.
to Carré, is strikingly like Stockhausen’s notes. However, Stockhausen had the final say over the realisation, so that not a note would be performed by the orchestra until Cardew’s realisation was approved: ‘[t]his score, if published, would be the score of a piece for four orchestras by Karlheinz Stockhausen and no mistake about it’.6

If Cardew was ‘taking his cue’ from Stockhausen in his later work, it was so that he could segue into a different tune entirely. He wrote that

[t]he story of this piece is longer and more harrowing that the ‘story’ of any other piece I have written. Which says nothing about its value. Like the Viennese painter who remarked – very pleased with himself – to a critic, ‘Yes, a lot of work went into that picture’. ‘Well isn’t that just too bad’, was the reply, ‘because none of it is ever going to come out again’.7

Stockhausen did not think of the notes as music, but as directions to his assistant; Cardew saw them as finished works to be realised as performance. Stockhausen changed Cardew’s realisation as he wanted, and is credited as sole composer by writers who study Stockhausen’s works. Clements shows his modernist assumptions in the sense of ownership of a piece, of control in respect of indeterminate elements, even in the assumption of a direct, linear inheritance of technique in music history. These assumptions have been common to Western art-music since the Romantic era and remain unchanged in the music of the twentieth-century avant-garde.

Clements’ second factual error is a common one in articles and books by modernists about Cardew:

For over a decade he had devoted himself exclusively to Marxist causes, adapting his musical language accordingly and abandoning all hints of musical radicalism in favour of a thoroughly tonal, neo-romantic style that could be used to produce revolutionary songs and instrumental works based on folk songs. This is what he believed the music of the people should be, and he projected it into his work with the Scratch Orchestra (no instrumental skills

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7 Ibid.
required) and the People's Liberation Music, both of which he founded.8

Here Clements’ mistake is to backdate Cardew’s Marxist activity from its real beginning in the early 1970s (which ended with his repudiation of experimental music, at least for a few years) to 1969, when he founded, along with Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton, the Scratch Orchestra. This mistake probably stems from Paul Griffiths’ account of the Orchestra as a Marxist ensemble:

Like a revolutionary cadre, the Scratch Orchestra was from the first to be alert to its own evolution, and almost inevitably that evolution led it from the modelling of egalitarian relationships in music to active political engagement.9

Griffiths has, by means of his use of the simile ‘like a revolutionary cadre’, inferred that the Scratch Orchestra may have been a Marxist group from its inception. In his first edition (1981), he followed this with “[t]he Scratch Orchestra Ideology Group was established in 1971 to make a study of socialist thought”,10 which would have provided sharp-eyed readers a date which marked a change in ideology, but he had dropped this in his 1995 revision. Instead, Griffiths noted that Cardew’s even earlier association with AMM11 ‘was a politically radicalizing influence’.12 This might seem a small point, especially as Cardew’s work in notation and improvisation had a strong social dimension of equality of

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8 Clements, ‘Marx and the Modern Composer’.


11 AMM is an improvisation ensemble founded by the jazz musicians Keith Rowe and Eddie Prévost in 1963 when they found the rules and sound world of the Mike Westbrook Band (and other British free jazz groups) limiting. Cardew joined AMM in the mid-1960s: other members in the 1960s include Laurence Sheaff, Lou Gare, John Tilbury, and Christopher Hobbs. The letters are an acronym, the meaning of which is secret.

participants, but Griffiths’ misattribution of Maoism to that early social
dimension is not benign. Griffiths found Cardew’s political work to lead
to ‘arrangements of East-West confections’ of Maoist songs, and there is
evidence that Griffiths held opposing political views to Cardew, at least
at one time.13 Because of this, Griffiths’ work on Cardew is both short
and dismissive; he is able to leave out the rest of British experimental
music in his first edition.14

Cardew’s concerns from 1971 were based on Maoist aesthetics.
Music must have clear programmes or support lyrics to carry political
messages. Melodies must be simple, easily understood and remembered
if not easy to sing, so as not to alienate the broad masses of the people.
The use of simple melodies and popular song was not banned in the early
Scratch Orchestra – in fact it often was met with delight – but it was
only one of a number of choices in an activity which emphasised
spontaneity and simultaneity though improvisation and text-based
composition. While both aesthetics involved a broader range of people
than that of the dominant avant-garde, they did so in opposing ways.
The Maoist late Scratch Orchestra (Red Flame) and People’s Liberation
Music attempted to play music according to traditional criteria of
professionalism to please a wider audience; the early Scratch Orchestra
aimed to include a wider group of performers playing more ‘difficult’
music which would attract a smaller audience used to modern art and
art-pop sound worlds. While both ideas, the experimental and the
Maoist, expanded the scope for involvement for social benefit,15 the ways

13 See Chapter 11.

14 As he moved from The Times of London to The New Yorker in the 1990s, Griffiths’
interests moved from the European avant-garde to include some minimalists, including
a couple of paragraphs on Michael Nyman and Gavin Bryars. But Griffiths, who was
commissioned by OUP to write on Cage, and by New Grove Dictionary of Music and
Musicians to write on British systems in the 1980 edition, is a major source of
misunderstanding about experimental music.

15 John Tilbury emphasised this basic humanism in ‘Cornelius Cardew’, Contact, no. 26
in which they did so were entirely different and as such became anathema to the practitioners of each. Outside critics at the same time were able to dismiss both practices at one stroke, claiming that this simplicity and its political basis fell outside of modern music and therefore could be dismissed wholesale.

Before his adoption of Maoist and Marxist-Leninist thought, Cardew was interested in the lack of preconceptions that people could bring to a performance if they had not been brought up in an art-music culture.

In 1957 when I left The Royal Academy of Music in London complex compositional techniques were considered indispensable. I acquired some – and still carry them around like an infection that I am perpetually desirous of curing. Sometimes the temptation occurs to me that if I were to infect my students with it I would at last be free of it myself.16

Cardew was also interested in the philosophy of notation and interpretation, which stemmed from his experience with Carré, from his investigation of graphic music and interpretation in his 193-page graphic score Treatise (which will be examined in this section) and from his studies in improvisation as a member of AMM. While working with the Scratch Orchestra Cardew wrote The Great Learning, a compendium of experimental styles, which had as its political basis principles of Confucianism.

Without the Marxist political basis Clements alleges (most likely unthinkingly and without malice, perhaps following Griffiths), the Scratch Orchestra emerges as a classic experimental ensemble. Its membership was no less musical than the artists and poets who were members of the earlier movement Fluxus.17 In fact, rather than being

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17 Fluxus was an international avant-garde movement which flourished mainly in New York City for a decade from the late 1950s. The founder and guiding light of Fluxus was the publisher and promoter George Maciunas, who encouraged the production of art boxes, mail art, and other works and performances. The bulk of Fluxus activity was
the musical illiterates Clements describes (‘no instrumental skills required’), the members were trained performers who attended rehearsals at Scratch meetings and classes at Morley College. A small number were Cardew’s students at the Royal Academy of Music (whom he never did infect with complex compositional techniques); others were composers, performers, visual artists; still others were lab workers and bus drivers. There was a standard of competence and of excellence in Scratch Orchestra performance, but the standards of reading skills and virtuosity were not concerned with traditional notation or with speed and accuracy of execution as they were in the common art-music tradition. Rather, the players and their informed audience valued considered and innovative solutions to problems of notation (including text notation) and instrumentation. They valued sensitive placement of contributions and interaction with others much in the same way that the audiences for AMM and other British free improvisation groups do. They valued compositions for the ability to inspire these solutions. A good composition (which would include Improvisation Rites and Scratch Music, which are compositional types distinct from Scratch Compositions) would inspire players to go to extraordinary lengths to gather suitable sound sources and spend hours practising and considering methods of interpretation.

Such responsibility to the score observed by ‘amateurs’ undermines notions of professionalism; moreover, it undermines the primacy of the score and of the composer him or herself. Nicholas Cook, while writing

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what Fluxus member Dick Higgins termed ‘intermedia’, a type of art activity which fell between the arts, so that a works could be at the same time poetry, dance, music, visual art work, even film. Major Fluxus artists who dealt with sound to a great extent include Higgins, Alison Knowles, George Brecht, La Monte Young and Yoko Ono.

18 Membership lists are to be found in Appendix 1; biographies of some members in Appendix 2.

19 See Chapter 5 for an overview of Scratch activities.
about unwritten alternatives in through-composed scores, could have been writing about the aversion of analysis to indeterminate music:

To many analysts it is unthinkable that in any particular compositional situation a whole range of alternatives will serve equally well – or at least they would consider this a condemnation of the music. In this way analysis has become associated with a kind of aesthetic determinism: the aim is to deduce aesthetic properties from the musical structure – or, more specifically, from the musical score.\(^{20}\)

Clements is not old-fashioned or completely biased toward stricter avant-garde music, as he later wrote an article for *The Guardian* praising Frederic Rzewski, but his praise was reserved for Rzewski’s more virtuosic piano music.\(^{21}\) Complex technique is as important as a fixed, complex structure: without one or the other or, preferably both, there is no way in which Clements can determine whether a piece will be of lasting value. Without them, there is no need for him to expend any energy to determine the contexts of the music. Clements is not alone:

Lewis Foreman made a similar assessment in *British Music Now*:

> The claims of certain vigorous pressure groups for different avant-garde and experimental composers have been considered, and it is hoped that a balance has been achieved. I believe that most of these changing groups may be important by their example but their actual music will amount to very little. They will probably be seen historically as more important as pamphleteers than as composers per se. Probably the cause most vigorously fought in this respect is for Cornelius Cardew and his ‘school’…. The Scratch Orchestra and its progeny is clearly of some historical importance but has very little place in the mainstream, or mainstreams, of musical development now [this is the crux of modernist historicism-based values]. This is not to belittle Cardew as a composer, for he has produced worthwhile music (try the Leo Brouwer guitar record). The wasteland of indiscipline and politically inspired changes in the very nature of music itself is more insidious than


the stylistic problems of the Fifties when strict serialism was found not to be the liberating influence many had hoped it to be.\textsuperscript{22}

It was as if the concert I saw at the Conway Hall, London, on 29 December 2001, was different from the one Clements saw. Clements centred his complaints on a performance by members of the political rock group People’s Liberation Music, of which Cardew was a member in the mid-1970s, who played a set of his pop and political tunes and arrangements. The aesthetics and performance standards were different from those of common art-music tradition and experimental performance, in that the political message and inclusivity of participants were more important than performance standards. The performance quality suffered from the practical demands of folk and popular music, in that most pop bands are non-literate players of tonal music; even literate players tend to develop the sound of a band from improvisation and learnt formulae. Bereft of the short-cuts to musical agreement that notation brings, they must rely upon regular rehearsals to keep sharp, especially as Cardew’s PLM songs often show more affinity with art music than traditional folk, blues and pop construction.\textsuperscript{23}

Lastly, the contrast between amplified pop and folk songs and the mostly acoustic art music was keen. The day’s schedule had opened with a performance by ex-Scratch Orchestra members of Paragraph 6 of \textit{The Great Learning} (1968-71), Cardew’s great experimental multi-part work. Paragraph 6 has a kind of ‘network’ system in which players can only move through the score upon hearing certain sounds and silences, which means that the sound-world must be rather quiet and spare for the piece to work. This performance was very quiet, with many stretches of silence, and was one of the most successful, sensitive performances I

\textsuperscript{22} Lewis Foreman, ‘Editor’s Introduction’, \textit{British Music Now} (London: Elek Books, 1975), p. 13. Foreman suggests some kind of lobby for inclusion, although I have found no documentary evidence for this, either published or unpublished.

\textsuperscript{23} PLM reunited last in 1982 for Cardew’s Memorial Concert. The resulting recording of the group at a time when it was not long out of circulation (\textit{Memorial Concert} (Impetus, 1982)) displays a much tighter ensemble.
have heard. John Tilbury played Cardew’s early *February Pieces* for piano solo (1958), which segued to a performance of *Treatise* by AMM. Although AMM guitarist Keith Rowe used electric amplification, it was balanced against Tilbury’s piano and Eddie Prévost’s drum kit: art-music amplification suitable for the ambience of the Conway Hall. The PLM set was amplified individually for each performer with little or no mixing facilities for the live auditorium. It was a system which would have been suitable for popular music venues or outdoor rallies, and formed a sharp contrast to the art music which preceded and followed it.

The audience was also divided between those interested in experimental music and those who wanted political content, a polite version of the differences which led to the final schism between members of the Scratch Orchestra in 1971. Clements ignores most of the experimental music in his review once he relies on his assumptions. There is a suspicion that he might have walked out before the final two sets, as he does not mention the Promenade Theatre Orchestra, who reunited for the first time since they had disbanded in the mid-1970s, to play Cardew’s early experimental work *Octet ’61 for Jasper Johns*. This work, Cardew’s bid for freedom from Stockhausen’s strictures, can be started at any point in the notation and played cyclically to the chosen point. The PTO rather typically used toy instruments and cheap electronics to realise the work, while following the instructions strictly. The piece features one event of great distinction, an arrow meaning ‘out, away’, which can vary in realisation from a subtle change of dynamic or tone production, to wild theatre. The PTO, respecting the moment of the

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24 The performance difficulties of Paragraph 6 will be examined in more detail in Chapter 9, “The Masters of Plink”: Performance Variants in *The Great Learning*.

25 The reasons for this schism and its underlying assumptions will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 10.

26 The preference of Promenade Theatre Orchestra members for toy instruments will be examined in Chapter 11.
anniversary of this concert, chose to make this event their last, charged glasses, and raised them to the audience, with the cry of ‘To Cornelius’. I had the chance to talk to many of the audience members, for there were many gaps and intermissions due to the needs of the different ensembles and soloists. As in most memorials or reunions, the grizzled veterans of the Scratch Orchestra and other ensembles were in nostalgic mood. University students and other younger attendees were eagerly listening to the veterans and were enthusiastically describing their own compositions and ensembles, and the ways in which they had been inspired and influenced by Cardew’s music. Clements’ last complaint contrasts with my impression:

It was all very earnest and dutiful, but snared in a time warp, and only occasionally delivered with enough vitality to convince younger members of the audience that here was once a composer of real vision and originality.²⁷

This review, like many others throughout the history of experimental music, reminds one of the descriptions of music of Japan or India by nineteenth-century European travellers. Clements, as a dutiful critic, explained Cardew’s work to the best of his ability, but because he was working within his own cultural assumptions in an alien musical culture, his perceptions were completely at odds with the majority of those assembled.

²⁷ Clements, ‘Marx and the Modern Composer’.
Can an alternative musical culture exist in Western art music? Sadie and Clements both criticised pieces by Cardew using the accepted standards of Western art music in Britain in 1968 and 2001: a work should have an historical lineage; its players should be professionally trained in a conservatory or similar institution; it should be timeless rather than deal with present-day concerns; finally, it must be complex, based upon a modern theory and look to the future. If such standards were universal and unchanging, then the pieces played in these two concerts must fail. However, all of these criteria are tied directly to a single culture, that of the Western art-music mainstream. Far from being universal and permanent, the criteria are aesthetic constructs which have been held inviolate in Western art music only since the nineteenth century.

Edward Said, in *Orientalism*, believed that the need to categorise is innate, but that aesthetic hierarchies created by such categorisation are arbitrary:

Despite the distraction of a great many vague desires, impulses, and images, the mind seems persistently to formulate what Claude Lévi-Strauss has called a science of the concrete. A primitive tribe, for example, assigns a definite place, function, and significance to every leafy species in its immediate environment. Many of these grasses and flowers have no practical use; but the point Lévi-Strauss makes is that mind requires order, and order is achieved by discriminating and taking note of everything, placing everything of which the mind is aware in a secure, refundable place, therefore giving things some role to play in the economy of objects and identities that make up an environment. This kind of rudimentary classification has a logic to it, but the rules of the logic by which a green fern in one society is a symbol of grace and in another is considered maleficent are neither predictably rational nor universal. There is always a measure of the purely arbitrary in the way the distinctions between things are seen. And with these distinctions go values whose history, if one could unearth it completely, would probably show the same measure of arbitrariness. This is evident enough in the case of fashion. Why do wigs, lace collars, and high buckled shoes appear, then
disappear, over a period of decades? Some of the answer has to do with utility and some with the inherent beauty of the fashion. But if we agree that all things in history, like history itself, are made by men, then we will appreciate how possible it is for many objects or places or times to be assigned roles and given meanings that acquire objective validity only after the assignments are made.¹

While Said establishes arbitrary assignments of values, he is not willing to give up ‘inherent beauty’, a socially-determined aesthetic value, entirely. This is surprising, because his example, the ephemeral aesthetic of beauty in fashion, is particularly susceptible to change and regional variation. Notions of beauty are cultural and fixed to time and place just as other values: the stick-thin supermodel is pleasing to the fashion world, as the pneumatic glamour model is to the tabloids, as, unfortunately, African physiognomy is not pleasing to white racists.²

The only innate beauty in Said’s list of costume may be the magpie-like fascination with shiny things such as a belt buckle, with a physical effect of dazzling reflected light.³

Aesthetic definition often goes no further than the popular idea of surface decoration, which might indicate either the purely decorative (lip gloss for humans, emulsion for buildings), or structural elements which exist beyond function (finials or columns). But ‘beauty’ does not lie within decorative or functional elements of the object itself, in most common views of aesthetics, but is determines by the perceiver. Philosophy commonly limits aesthetic judgement to perception through the senses, rather than the intellect, so that aesthetic beauty must be


² To use an example within Said’s field of study, Egyptian dancers are often heavier than those portrayed in Orientalist art.

³ A current analogy to the difference Said extrapolates from Lévi-Strauss between the categorisation of a certain growth as a fern and the assignment of symbolic meaning as ‘maleficent’ is found in current rap culture, as ‘bling-bling’. Participants will approve of a person who is ‘blinging’, or showing off jewellery. Here the flash of the accessories stand as synecdoche for presumed wealth.
described in terms of the way it looks, smells, sounds, and so on. Other judgements – is it useful, is it complex or timely, for instance – are not aesthetic. However, it is difficult to determine exactly what is entirely sensual. For instance, the yeast extract Marmite is loved and loathed in almost equal measure (the Marmite company having run an advertising campaign on this fact). The overt reason it is loved and loathed can be explained to some extent by its inherent form and content as a dark, salty paste. More revealing reasons for Marmite’s divided aesthetic can be found in its cultural role: that it is consumed in some neighbourhoods and classes and not others, that it is used as a refreshing drink, even as strengthening medicine for children and is thus associated with comfort, even love, for some; to ‘nasty physic’ for others. These factors support and define a perception of Marmite; so, too, do the factors of memory and experience determine the assessment of an art object. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, the term ‘aesthetics’ will be wider than that used in most philosophical discourse (although this wider definition is often understood in arts discourse) to include those elements of cultural value which shape the information received by the senses.

The notion that aesthetics are arbitrary in Western music is often met by the charge of relativism. Aesthetic relativism should not be confused with ethical or moral relativism, in which practices which should be universally abhorred – the subjugation of a group on the basis of race or gender, for instance – can be condoned on the basis of tradition. The response to the charge, usually made by the dominant culture, of relativism, is to offer the alternative explanation of cultural pluralism.

Pluralism is embraced in popular music scholarship, which covers a multiplicity of aesthetic camps. Most Kerrang! and Smash Hits readers,

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4 Derek Matravers, senior lecturer in philosophy at the Open University, helped me to understand this concept.

5 This is a punishment given to a bad child, in ‘Cruel Frederick’, an edifying tale by Heinrich Hoffmann in Struwwelpeter (London: Blackie, n.d. (orig. German text 1844)).
for instance, are mutually dismissive of the music covered by each other’s publications; some divisions, like the ‘Disco Sucks’ campaigns in the U.S. in the 1970s, have more ominous undertones. Academic study of popular music, though, tends to examine these subjects on a more-or-less equal basis, attempting to study the participants through their own aesthetic values. Scholars respect non-Western art music, even within a Western setting (such as Afro-American jazz), as equal both as artistic activity and as scholastic pursuit, so much so that the lines of ethnomusicology and historical musicology have become blurred in the past fifteen years. However, this ecumenical approach has often been denied to experimental music. It assumes that there is but one way of categorising all contemporary art-music activity and that lies within the nineteenth-century aesthetic framework of the dominant culture.

The common model for the distinction between knowledge held by members of a cultural group and knowledge held by those outside that group who study them is the ‘emic/etic’ model developed by the linguistic cultural anthropologist Kenneth Pike in 1954. Pike proposed this distinction based on the phonemic characterisations of words and word formation by the ‘inside’ group (that similar sounds such as ‘b’ and ‘v’ would indicate a contrast in meaning) and the phonetic classifications observed by ‘outside’ researchers (such as dental fricatives). The distinction has since been adapted to a multiplicity of disciplines, including ethnomusicology. Applied to music, emic knowledge might

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6 Some of the ‘Disco Sucks’ campaigns of the late 1970s, in which DJs asked listeners to burn disco records, had racist and homophobic undertones, not to mention analogies to book-burnings in Nazi and other totalitarian systems. Most of the listeners who took part were unaware of such undertones, usually citing disco’s relative simplicity as a poor opposition to the ‘authenticity’ and complexity perceived to exist in hard rock.


8 Applications of the emic/etic distinction in ethnomusicology are common: a random sample of some general considerations includes Frank Alvarez-Pereyre and Simha Arom, ‘Ethnomusicology and the Emic/Etic Issue’, The World of Music 35 (1), 1993, pp.
include what kind of song would be appropriate for corn-grinding (which an etic scholar may categorise) or what ornament to add in Western Baroque or modern Indian art-music performance according to the type and tempo, even the emotive nature of the piece (which an etic scholar may learn, with difficulty). Emic knowledge will also include held assumptions about what makes good music, even the definition and nature of music itself, and this is usually the kind of knowledge which it is difficult to elicit from the emic participants or for the etic scholar to internalise. Such knowledge lies at the basis of the examples often used in answer to the old canard that ‘music is a universal language’: stories detailing incidents of non-Western groups who, on their first audition of deeply complex music (Beethoven is often mentioned), find it humorous, or who find light music painful or distressing. Leonard B. Meyer was concerned with cultural variants in aesthetics as early as 1960, and wrote in 1998, that ‘it is a mistake – albeit a common one – to conceptualize the problem [of distinguishing innate from learned behaviour] as a search for “musical” universals. There are none’. These aesthetic responses are learned rather than innate, and are harder to isolate as such by the etic researcher than other classifications because it is learned almost at the same time as language itself: the assumptions fall into psychological criteria. Carol R. Ember described a test in which Africans classified drawn objects by colour rather than form, while Americans classified them by shape:

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9 Of course, in the case of historical performance practice, we are all etic, albeit some of us are more etic than others.


Whether an individual psychologist means it or not (and I am not claiming intentional bias), most comparisons between ‘us’ and ‘them’ have involved measures and tests developed here. It is not surprising, therefore, that ‘we’ almost always do ‘better’, i.e., score higher, than ‘they’. If psychologists believe (as I think they often do) that their measures are valid for assessing abilities, then their comparisons may become invidious. So, for example, if one believes that classifying objects by form instead of colour indicates more ‘abstract’ thinking, African adults seem to think less abstractly than American children! Such comparisons make most anthropologists cringe, and I think rightly so.\(^\text{12}\)

The anthropologists who apply relative value to different cultural responses do so because of their own deep-seated cultural assumptions. They set the tests through them; they interpret the results through them.\(^\text{13}\)

The same reasoning can apply to the dominant Western art culture: Beethoven, Schoenberg and Stockhausen are important because they are important. They are proven important by analytical methods which were devised by the culture which determined them to be important, and one of the prime aesthetic characteristics is a correspondence of parts or a unity. Nicholas Cook, following Charles Rosen, wrote:

> [i]t is hardly going too far to say that analysis as we know it was invented to deal with Beethoven’s symphonies.... Early analysts tried to demonstrate the unity of Beethoven’s symphonies precisely because all they could hear in them was disunity. Webern promoted the aesthetics of unity but wrote music that struck most listeners as episodic and disconnected; hence the enormous investment of post-war theory in methods for demonstrating how his music is unified after all.\(^\text{14}\)

Caught in what is essentially a tautological cycle, no-one in the dominant culture is ever forced to question this hierarchy, whereas those making


\(^{13}\) For an attempt to reverse this cultural bias by setting a survey biased towards the preferences of experimental musicians, and the result, see Chapter 12.

music outside it are constantly challenged to prove their worth, and often the only means with which to do so are the analytical methods biased in favour of the dominant culture. Therefore, a scholar studying Beethoven, Schoenberg, or Stockhausen will be asked only whether their work is new or enlightening. A scholar studying the Scratch Orchestra will have to jump the extra hurdle of proving that the subject itself is worthwhile.\footnote{What is now a hurdle used to be a closed door.}

This extends into all music activities, especially in regard to funding. David Nicholls found this to be an historic distinction:

\ldots very generally, avant-garde music can be viewed as occupying an extreme position within the [Eurocentric art-music] tradition, while experimental music lies outside it. The distinction may appear slight, but when applied to such areas as institutional support, \textquoteleft official\textquoteright recognition, and financial reward, the avant garde\textquotesingle s links with tradition – however tenuous – can carry enormous weight.\footnote{David Nicholls, \textquoteleft Avant-garde and Experimental Music\textquoteright, in Nicholls, ed., \textit{Cambridge History of American Music} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) p. 518.}

The aesthetic modes of thought, which form those links with tradition, include a sense of linearity and inheritance in history, what I have referred to elsewhere as \textquoteleft music history as a relay race\textquoteright.\footnote{\textquoteleft Historical Assumptions of the Avant-Garde and Experimental Movements: The Participants and Their Historians\textquoteright, \textit{Experimental Music Catalogue Article Archive} \textless http://www.experimentalmusic.co.uk \textgreater .} This model of history posits an inheritance in which the most direct influences are the most immediate in time. Like a relay race, one important composer in an age passes on the baton of knowledge to the next important composer.

There is also a sense of improvement, which might be shown by the classic model of human evolution – a line of walking creatures, from ape to modern man. Darwin\textquotesingle s model, as Leo Treitler has discussed extensively, is one of continuous adaptation by organisms of all sorts to changes in their environment. Herbert Spencer adapted this model to society and culture (which he called \textquoteleft superorganic evolution\textquoteright), but in
doing so, he established a model of progress from primitive to modern. Spencer wrote two articles on the evolution of music in which he traced its development from what he called ‘excited speech’:

Note first the fact (not properly an historical one, but fitly grouped as such) that the dance-chants of savage tribes are very monotonous, and in virtue of their monotony are much more nearly allied to ordinary speech than are the songs of civilised races.\(^{18}\)

Of course, this shows the inherent sense of superiority common in the mid-nineteenth-century English mind, and no sensible modernist would agree with such a depiction of Western progress.

However, a general sense of progress remains. It is widely acknowledged today that Arnold Schoenberg’s famous comment that he had secured the supremacy of German music for the next one hundred years with his twelve-tone system is an anecdote told by Josef Rufer which can be considered to be spurious. However, a similar thought has been found in a letter to Alma Mahler, bristling as a gesture of defiance against Aryan supremacists in Vienna, but with its historicism intact:

I have begun again to work. Something completely new! The German Aryans who persecuted me in Mattsee will have this new thing (especially this one) to thank for the fact that even they will still be respected abroad for 100 years, because they belong to the very state that has just secured for itself hegemony in the field of music!\(^{19}\)


[H]abe ich wieder zu arbeiten begonnen. Was ganz Neues! Die Deutschen, die mich in Mattsee verfolgt haben, werden es diesem Neuen (speziell diesem) [XXX] zu verdanken haben, dass man sogar sie noch 100 Jahre lang im Ausland achtet, weil sie dem Staat angehören, der sich neuerdings die Hegemonie auf dem Gebiet der Musik gesichert hat!
Such futurism is related to these historicist assumptions and the other emic attitudes of the dominant culture. New pieces must show some progress from the old: if a composer visits an older work, in quotation, say, it must be set within a modernist frame. Pastiche can only be used as a joke and usually bars a piece from greatness. Pieces are more valued if they show some sort of compositional complexity and length. In the nineteenth century, which still determines the musical establishment in Western societies, expansion of sonata form allowed for this complexity, using increasingly complex extensions of the tonal system; in the twentieth century, serialism became increasingly mathematically complex. Instrumentation and use determine how seriously a piece can be taken: instruments should be Western orchestral standard (others are added to simulate national traits in what is an international art-music style) and the numbers of players used should be either as large as possible or culturally determined to be of serious intent (as in the string quartet). Other music – miniatures, music for folk or non-standard instruments such as the pedalier or the accordion, certain configurations of chamber music instrumentation such as piano duets – are assigned to the less well-regarded category of salon or ‘private’ music. While humour can appear, it should generally happen only as a short contrast in a larger work, for instance as a middle movement in a symphony. At the helm of this enterprise is the notion of the composer.

20 The librarian and Brazilian music scholar Tom Moore used the ‘private music’ label in an exchange on the AMS-list (4 March 2003) to mean music which musicians played for their own entertainment. When I mentioned the large body of experimental piano duets for concert use and tried to distinguish them from the kinds of anonymous Victorian clarinet duet books I used to play as entertainment, Moore held to his idea that such music, even if written well, worked better as private entertainment. Moore exhibited his overt understanding of music in society as an ethnomusicologist; by insisting upon such a place for piano duets in spite of evidence of concert music, he was also showing his Western art-music assumptions.

21 For instance, two events which occurred in the London production of Stockhausen’s Donnerstag aus Licht: included what looked like a homeless woman wandering onstage and asking, ‘Why don’t you all go home’, and a radio-controlled toy. But those were two tiny bits of fun in a long, monumental evening.
as a kind of micro-God, exerting explicit and implicit control over any performance of a work, so that performers must divine the composer's intent beyond the score.\(^{22}\)

Experimentalists are harder to pin down, primarily because the avant garde has misunderstood, muddied, and even usurped the term. For the purposes of the present argument, I shall define ‘experimental music’ as work made by the composers and performers in Michael Nyman’s *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*. I shall also define as ‘experimental’ those works and activities by these composers and performers which occurred after the publication of Nyman’s book, except in cases in which a composer or performer has disavowed being an ‘experimentalist’, or where those works and activities fall outside of the definition. Such a definition would include Cage, Wolff, Feldman, and Brown (when the last was associated with them); the international intermedia group Fluxus; the 1960s indeterminate and theatre-music ensembles the Sonic Arts Union and the Once Group; the West Coast scene (Riley, Oliveros and others, including the Los Angeles ‘New Tonality’ composers not mentioned by Nyman); Cardew, David Bedford (when he was working with Cardew), John White, the Scratch Orchestra composers; related English groups and composers such as Gavin Bryars, the Portsmouth Sinfonia, and the Promenade Theatre Orchestra; the non-jazz free-improvisation groups Musica Elettronica Viva (MEV) and AMM; among others.

Composers originally did not like the term ‘experimental’, but they accepted it. John Cage had already resigned himself to being an ‘experimental’ composer and was defending the use of the term in ‘Experimental Music: Doctrine’, in 1955.\(^{23}\) Subsequent composers who felt an affinity with Cage, either in a commitment to indeterminacy or in

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\(^{22}\) The fact that this often does not work is the result of two other nineteenth-century constructions, the cult of the soloist and of the conductor.

\(^{23}\) *The Score* and *I.M.A. Magazine*, no. 12 (June 1955).
opposition to the determinacy of process, and most importantly, who
grouped together, who appreciated each other’s music, also adopted the
‘experimental’ label despite sharing Cage’s original misgivings.\textsuperscript{24}

These composers, in the main, reject or ignore the concept of a
linear historical inheritance, and embrace the idea of a field situation in
which all sources are considered to be accessible for engagement,
reaction and absorption, no matter how distant the historical,
geographical, or cultural origin. Without a linear historical construct,
esperimental composers are freed from the concomitant sense of
historical improvement. Such sources can be used in many ways: as
pastiche or parody, by engaging with the source in a sincere attempt to
emulate it, or in an attempt gently to tease, or even to ridicule it.
Orchestration has no hierarchy: some of the most highly-regarded pieces
use home-made instruments, found instruments, toy instruments, or
there is no instrumentation specified. Venues are less hierarchical, as is
genre: while most experimental composers would welcome opera and
orchestral commissions because of the increased financial rewards, some
actively discourage such opportunities, preferring to write miniatures.
Neither is analytical complexity necessarily desired, as many well-
regarded pieces are incredibly simple. Cage deflected the obvious
objection to simplicity in ‘Experimental Music: Doctrine’:

\textbf{QUESTION:} But seriously, if this is what music is, I could write it
as well as you.

\textbf{ANSWER:} Have I said anything that would lead you to think I
thought you were stupid?\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{24} The only other movement which has used the term ‘experimental music’ almost
contemporaneously with Cage was a group of electronic composers following Pierre
Schaeffer, who, as head of the Groupe de Recherches de Musique Concrète de la
Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française, launched the First International Ten Days of
Experimental Music in Paris in 1953. On the basis of being equal first, this electronic
movement has an equal claim on the term with the Cagean group.

\textsuperscript{25} Cage, \textit{The Score} and \textit{I.M.A. Magazine}, found in
2003.
These composers hold as much regard for good interpreters of their music as do avant-garde composers, however, and value their performance specialists and professionals. Unfortunately, full-time experimental music specialists are rare, due to the domination of modern music funding by the avant garde. Esteemed experimental performers such as David Tudor, John Tilbury and Ian Mitchell have gained reputations as performers of avant-garde music while their hearts lay with less-profitable experimental music. Their value as players per se lies in their roles as collaborators in performance decisions that, especially in classic experimental indeterminacy, often resemble composition itself. Even in later, through-composed experimental music, performance decisions of non-notated elements are made without having to divine the composer’s intent, and if they are, it is seen as a collaborative effort rather than work made in honour of the composer’s vision.

These are the given assumptions of the two movements. Experimental musicians have some idea of their general assumptions and those of the avant garde because they are constantly confronted by the dominant culture. In the avant garde these assumptions are learned as well but are rarely, if ever, challenged. They therefore lie at so basic a level that they are accepted as universal truths. Such an elevation of preference to universal law was satirised by Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver’s Travels*, in the quotation which begins this part of the thesis.\(^{26}\) Swift described a war which was based upon which end of a boiled egg should be broken. The ostensible reason for an edict against breaking the egg on the big end was one of safety, as the emperor’s son had hurt his finger while breaking an egg in this manner; but in reality, it was one of habit, of preference, of aesthetic. Such insistence on preference has led to discrimination, to censorship, even genocide against a cultural group by the dominant culture. Swift’s satire, through its exaggeration, highlights

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a feature of cultural life noted by Said in the writings of Antonio Gramsci:

In any society not totalitarian, then, certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as hegemony, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West.27

It cannot be stressed too much that, like the psychologists who set Western-biased tests and most of the hard rockers who put ‘Disco sucks’ bumper stickers on their cars, people like Sadie and Clements who have written scathing assessments of experimental music have done so not because of any conspiracy to keep down a brilliant art culture, but because that art culture fails according to their most deeply-held assumptions. Many etic writers react with anger to a defence of experimental music because they do not acknowledge that there is another culture. To disagree with their assessments, one must also disagree with their assumptions. However, the emic assumptions of the dominant culture are held by representatives of that culture to be ‘Truth’.

These assumptions can be the cause of careless scholarship because prejudice and rumour masquerading as fact can often stick to them – hence Clements’ acceptance of Griffiths’ assertion that the Scratch Orchestra was a Marxist group throughout its existence. For those who have perpetuated this myth, the Scratch Orchestra was an exercise in Maoist collectivisation – a kind of Cultural Revolution in which music was reduced to the lowest common denominator, both in terms of musical technique and aesthetic – and so can be dismissed from serious study. By backdating the move to Maoist aesthetics – in which music had a meaning and must transmit doctrine in a manner that would appeal to the masses – to the Scratch Orchestra, the whole of Cardew’s activities

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and those of his associates can be dismissed as simple music for amateurs. Even if the avant-garde critic has political sympathies for such music-making, he or she has no need to consider it to be art music due to its amateur basis and it can be dismissed wholesale.

Cultural hegemony will have a deleterious effect on the natural interaction of these separate art musics, even when motivated by good intentions. Sometimes the avant garde merely ignores experimental music. For instance, the only substantial web pages on the BBC Radio 3 site dealing directly with the Scratch Orchestra contain an interview by Sarah Walker, a presenter on the mostly avant-garde programme ‘Hear and Now’, with Scratch member Bryn Harris. However, this interview does not appear within the new music pages, not even on the site for the programme which Walker presents; rather it comes within the part of the site devoted to world music. This is particularly ironic in that the Controller of Radio 3, Roger Wright, was himself a member of the Scratch Orchestra.

In other cases, members of the avant-garde try to erode the identity of experimental music by changing the definition to include avant-garde music. The long-awaited British experimental music issue of *Contemporary Music Review* has failed to be completed twice. The first time the editorship passed to the New Complexity composer Richard Barrett, who changed first the writers and then the subject to New Complexity. The second time the editorship was given to an outside scholar with no knowledge of the subject and it was dropped after several years of inaction.

28 Many mainstream avant-garde composers, including Alan Bush and Tim Souster, held sympathetic political beliefs.


30 The ‘New Complexity’ was a movement of five or six composers in the 1980s – most prominently James Dillon and Michael Finnissy, who did not like the appellation – who favoured a return to the compositional rigour of the European avant garde.
Furthermore, a dominant culture often redefines concepts of a culture to suit its own purposes. In the case of experimental music, the term ‘experimental’ itself has been co-opted by many members of the dominant art culture. The Kagel scholar Bjoern Heile has described Mauricio Kagel’s work as ‘experimental’,\(^\text{31}\) even though Kagel had only limited contact with and influence from experimental composers,\(^\text{32}\) and his theatre works have more in common with the aleatory of Stockhausen and other Darmstadt composers. Heile disagreed with Nyman’s definition of experimental music as being opposed to the dominant avant garde, so much so that he found *Experimental Music* to have an anti-European bias. Since Heile expanded the definition of ‘experimental music’ to include any performer choice in Western art music, regardless of theoretical or cultural differences, Kagel (and many others) are experimental composers and the problems of all modernist music become the same.\(^\text{33}\)

The most systematic case of redefinition of the term ‘experimental music’ occurs in Leigh Landy’s *What’s the Matter with Today’s Experimental Music? Organized Sound Too Rarely Heard*.\(^\text{34}\) The title shows the cultural origin and bias of the writer clearly, and could be simplified without loss of meaning as ‘Indeterminate Music? Not Determinate Enough!’ Landy redefines experimental music as

\(^{31}\) Email to VA, March 2003.

\(^{32}\) Kagel confused the experimental freedom of indeterminacy with anarchy in the first performance of *Treatise*, as is detailed in Chapter 4.

\(^{33}\) Similarly, the British composer Christopher Fox, who has claimed John Cage as an influence, does so while embracing the cultural attitudes and associations of the dominant European avant garde, so that Ligeti and George Crumb are subsumed under his conception of ‘experimentalism’. This led to a change in emphasis in the journal *Contact*, which had featured experimental and repetitive music under its founder editor Keith Potter. In the last two or three issues, edited by Fox, there were no items on British experimentalists or their interests; where formerly feature articles commonly showcased Erik Satie or John White, among others, the Spring 1988 issue typically led with an article by Richard Toop on ‘the New Complexity’.

music in which the innovative component (not in the sense of newness found in any artistic work, but instead substantial innovation as clearly intended by a composer) of any aspect of a given piece takes priority above the more general technical craftsmanship expected of any art work.\textsuperscript{35}

Since the emphasis on innovation has been stressed in the theory of all modernist music in the twentieth century, Landy is then able to examine the music he wants to examine, which includes Ligeti, Berio, Elliott Carter, Xenakis, Ton de Leeuw, Jean-Claude Risset and Makato Shinohara. Only Christian Wolff, Earle Brown and Steve Reich are studied in both Landy’s and Nyman’s books. Landy has chosen these composers because the pieces he has chosen from their oeuvre fit his definition of ‘experimental music’: a kind of innovation with complexity. He has chosen to analyse Reich’s \textit{Piano Phase} (1967) for its complexity in performance (‘The score presents no challenge to the reader, but a most challenging one to the performer’),\textsuperscript{36} but not the later text score \textit{Pendulum Music} (1968). Similarly, he chose Wolff’s \textit{In Between Pieces} (1963) for its complex network notation rather than his instruction pieces,\textsuperscript{37} and Brown’s \textit{Available Forms I} (1961), a piece written after Brown had disowned his early, ‘experimental’ works such as \textit{December 1952}, which he no longer called a ‘piece’ but an ‘activity’.\textsuperscript{38} All of these pieces are not under question as experimental music; rather, it is Landy’s personal definition which places them among strange bedfellows and

\textsuperscript{35} Landy, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{36} Landy, p. 225.

\textsuperscript{37} Landy introduces his analysis by linking Wolff with Cardew’s late political music (p. 237), confusing this with Cardew’s work with the Scratch Orchestra. If so, Landy should have chosen the Scratch-like \textit{Burdocks} (1970), which the Scratch played on many occasions. However, there are many inaccuracies on this page, not least of which is the assertion that ‘Cardew’s music was performed exclusively by the Scratch Orchestra’. By redefining the term ‘experimental music’, Landy has avoided the need to know about the existing experimental movement.

\textsuperscript{38} Nyman, p. 58.
which destroys the cultural basis which they share with works more commonly considered to be ‘experimental’ by Nyman and others.

There is also the problem that since individual composers and individual works do not always adhere to the traits mentioned above, there is the temptation to throw out the distinction entirely; but something unique would be lost as experimental music would disappear under the established weight of the avant garde. There is an ineffable quality to experimental music as well as these traits: Barney Childs called it ‘a spirit of place’, but it is also an effect of what Alan P. Merriam called ‘music in culture’, that an understanding of musical activity should be made within the culture that made it.39 Such musical practice is based on an almost familial or tribal relationship which consists of aesthetic assumptions, such as those delineated for avant-garde and experimental movements, that are specific to the group and vary in time and in space, plus a familiarity which comes from shared experience of education and professional life. As Said noticed in the arbitrariness of aesthetic in fashion, there are cultural fads and fancies to each movement. Some are evergreen: the experimental penchant for non-Western thought and sound sources is strong enough that Lloyd Whitesell, in examining blankness and negation in the Western avant garde (a concept which is central to most Eastern religions), focussed entirely on experimental works.40 Some are important in one time and place, or fade in and out of fashion like Said’s wigs and buckles: in 1983 I was told emphatically that systems music was passé, but John White

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returned to its use for his electronic work, and Christopher Hobbs returned to systems almost exclusively during the 1990s.\textsuperscript{41}

In the dominant Western culture, it is hard to find an acknowledgement of another, coexistent, art music unless one looks to ethnomusicology. Robert D. Morris, in ‘Aspects of Confluence between Western Art Music and Ethnomusicology’, proposed an ‘ethnomusicological perspective’ which consists of three precepts, the first of which is:

\begin{quote}
there is more than one kind of legitimate art music. A composer will allow that someone else’s contrasting musical practice is valid and worthwhile.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

Morris has observed that once contemporary art music’s pluralism is acknowledged, one notices that the ecological balance among contemporary music cultures is hardly static, but quite fluid. Each culture is aware to various degrees of accuracy and acceptance of the doings of others. There are borrowings, acculturations, rejections, evaluations, and even alliances going on all the time. Many individual artists, usually performers, have simultaneous citizenship in many of these cultures.\textsuperscript{43}

Such a celebration of this pluralism depends upon awareness and respect for the aesthetic values of each culture, which may value the same works

\textsuperscript{41} Systemic processes (creating ‘systemic’ music or ‘systems’) are fixed numerical systems (much like twelve-tone series) which determine the note-to-note progression or structure of a piece. The ancestry here has more to do with English campanology or chance-determined procedure (such as Cage’s \textit{Music of Changes}) than the higher maths of serial music. Systemic composers deny any link to serialism, citing an affinity in process with the British systemic art movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Systems pieces usually aspire to a pleasant euphony, even in the starker percussion versions. They avoid the dramatic contrast and narrative curve of serial composition, usually showing a tendency towards a satisfying completion of the process by near repetition. In this manner, the surface effect of systemic music is similar to most repetitive or minimal music.

\textsuperscript{42} Robert D. Morris, ‘Aspects of Confluence between Western Art Music and Ethnomusicology’ in Elizabeth West Marvin and Richard Hermann, eds. \textit{Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz Since 1945} (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 1995), p. 55. Morris lives this plurality: while best known as a scholar and teacher on serialism, Morris’s personal style includes pieces more rightly considered to be ‘experimental’ and a long history of association with composers such as Morton Feldman.

\textsuperscript{43} Morris, p. 53.
for entirely different reasons. The most famous example lies in the works of Webern: the avant garde revering what Cook called unity deriving from its rigorous serialism; the experimentalists revering the disunity and blankness of his sparse textures and frequent silences.44


The musics made by these two artists, and by their successors, may be seen as exemplifying two very different conceptions of real-time music-making. These differences encompass not only music but areas once thought of as ‘extra-musical’, including race and ethnicity, class, and social and political philosophy.47

Since Cage had an aversion to jazz, by which he probably meant the popular dance music of his youth and early adulthood, Lewis finds a base to criticise elements of what he calls ‘Eurological’ experimental music and improvisation (in which he includes most indeterminate music). However, at the same time, Lewis articulates one shared feature of both of these experimental traditions in articulating their differences: the shared emphasis on the ‘extra-musical’ social, political, and, perhaps, aesthetic philosophy. One might therefore posit that ‘Afrological’ and ‘Eurological’ experimentalism stand as equal but separate art musics, closer to each other than to the dominant avant garde.

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44 Nicholas Cook, ‘Music Theory and the Postmodern Muse: An Afterword’, in Marvin and Hermann, eds., Concert Music, Rock, and Jazz since 1945; the experimental fondness for Webern is widely expressed, for instance in the works and writings of Howard Skempton.


46 Lewis, p. 93.

47 Lewis, p. 94.
Morris’s cultural pluralism of art music is, so far, rare, and is almost completely absent from the infrastructure of the arts establishment. Ironically, there is the language, the history and the aesthetics in place for the peaceful coexistence of Morris’s ‘ethnomusicological perspective’ and the next chapter will explore just such cultural differences in more detail. For instance, variables in performance or composition can be called indeterminacy or aleatory, depending upon the training and approach of the composer. A repetitive piece may be systemic if written according to the numerical procedures developed by British experimentalists, or it could be more generically minimal. Yet such distinctions have been eroded: more frequently the terms ‘indeterminacy’ and ‘aleatory’ are interchangeable; systems, while applied for a time as a British term for minimalism in the non-specialist press, has now been subsumed under minimalism. The definition associated with this spelling, this culture, becomes paramount: in losing the criteria with the terminology, the indeterminate composer writes an inferior form of aleatory, the systems composer just another type of minimalism. The subordinate culture must exist under the definitions and aesthetics of the dominant culture.

Such hegemony has a direct relationship to the imperialism in *Orientalism*. Edward Said cites Arthur Balfour, who said:

> We know the civilisation of Egypt better than we know the civilisations of any other country. We know it further back; we know it more intimately; we know more about it.  

48  

Said writes that:

[k]nowledge to Balfour means surveying a civilisation from its origins to its prime to its decline – and of course, it means being able to do that. Knowledge means rising above immediacy, beyond self, into the foreign and distant. The object of such knowledge is inherently vulnerable to scrutiny; this object is a ‘fact’ which, if it develops, changes, or otherwise transforms itself in the way that

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civilisations frequently do, nevertheless is fundamentally, even ontologically stable. To have such a knowledge of such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it. And authority here means for ‘us’ to deny autonomy to ‘it’ – the Oriental country – since we know it and it exists, in a sense, as we know it. British knowledge of Egypt is Egypt for Balfour, and the burdens of knowledge make such questions as inferiority and superiority seem petty ones. Balfour nowhere denies British superiority and Egyptian inferiority; he takes them for granted as he describes the consequences of knowledge.49

This passage has a direct analogy in the differences between the Western art-music mainstream and the experimentalists, as a simple substitution of terms can show. Mainstream knowledge of music is music for the critics of experimental music, both those who deride it and those who redefine it, and the burdens of knowledge make such questions as inferiority and superiority seem petty ones. They nowhere deny modernist superiority and experimental inferiority; they take them for granted as they describe the consequences of knowledge.

49 Said, Orientalism, p. 32. Italics are Said’s.
Chapter 3: Toward a definition of the differences in Western art-music cultures

The history of modern music has been obsessed with definition: as either opposition to or as a result of the theories and practices of common-practice art music or as opposition to or result of the work of the generation before. Experimental music, as the secondary culture, has often been defined through its opposition to the modernist avant-garde. In his first chapter of *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, Michael Nyman defines experimental music by its differences, using the structure of Cage’s distinction of musical activity: ‘Composing’s one thing, performing’s another, listening’s a third. What can they have to do with one another?’¹ More recently, much minimalist music and the so-called New Tonality has been sheltered under the umbrella of ‘postmodernism’. Postmodernist history has existed for well over twenty years and the first writings on musical postmodernism are almost as old, but there is still some aura of newness and uncertainty in many of the defining criteria of musical postmodernism.

The problem of defining the nature of activity within postmodernism and modernism, between experimentalism and ‘avant-gardism’, has been a difficult one. To explore this difficulty, it is useful to oversimplify the problem at first, if only to show how several of the most common models of this activity work. The first and probably the oldest simplified historical model, the modernist dialectic, relies upon compositional style, in which a period of avant-garde composition co-existed with more conservative or mainstream composition to the end of the Second World War. Post-war activity was then polarised between reliance upon total serialism (the avant garde) and total chance (the experimentalists). The second simplified historical model, of postmodern

¹ Cage, quoted in Nyman, p. 2. I will examine Nyman’s categorisation closely in Chapter 6, ‘Nature Study Notes: A Study in Compositional Types’.

66
succession, also relies to some extent upon compositional style, in that there was a move in modernism away from tonal structures and consonance throughout the first seventy-five years or so of the twentieth century, to be gradually supplanted by postmodernism, with its adoption of the same tonal structures and consonance modernism repudiated. The third simplified historical model is aesthetic opposition, which posits that a polarity has existed throughout the twentieth century between two ‘camps’ that, for the moment, will be called ‘avant garde’ and ‘experimental’. Compositional aesthetics and other cultural assumptions define and distinguish the two camps, while bypassing superficial stylistics.

The modernist dialectic

This model was still current when Michael Nyman wrote *Experimental Music* (although published in 1974, most of the research had been completed a couple of years earlier). As he was unable to classify them as postmodern (as the term was not yet in use in music), Nyman categorised repetitive works by Riley, Reich and Glass, and short tonal works such as Howard Skempton’s *Waltz*, as experimental because of their use of systemic or random structural processes.\(^2\) It was here that he coined the term ‘minimalism’ for these works. By the late 1970s, however, the increased compositional activity in traditional tonality (rather than in systemic processes which might or might not have had a tonal surface) made such classification as experimental process untenable.\(^3\) Nyman was aware of the problem of classing minimal and neo-tonal music as experimental activity, but relished the activity himself: in October 1971, he wrote an article called ‘Believe It or Not,

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2 Random processes use random means (the *I Ching*, dart boards, dice, random number tables, telephone books, and so on) to determine the note-to-note procedure for a piece of music or its performance.

3 Tonality with non-experimental process came in many forms, including the delicate fixed notation of the West Coast composers (Harold Budd, Jim Fox), and crossovers with popular music (New York composers had a short craze in the 1970s for cowboy music).
Melody Rides Again and by the late 1970s he had launched a successful career as a minimalist, especially in film music and operas.

In 1983, my M.A. thesis on British experimental music for the University of Redlands was divided into two parts following this process-led determination. One part was devoted to works commonly thought to be experimental: those by Cardew, members of the Scratch Orchestra and other contemporaries (the musical scene at Portsmouth Arts College, AMM, and others), until the final break-up of the Scratch Orchestra in 1973. The other part detailed the years 1973-1983 and was devoted mostly to the works of individual composers and compositional methods such as systems. The composers in 1983 were involved in something which seemed miles away from experimentalism: the sound was different, usually euphonious if not tuneful, the processes were different and often shared a great deal with pre-war processes of more conservative composers or even nineteenth-century composition. The use of instruments had changed, often focussing on the piano; the notions of professionalism (so famously challenged in the Scratch Orchestra) and of desirable venues had returned to something approaching those of the musical establishment. As part of the oral histories I gathered for the thesis I asked each composer and improviser whether he still considered himself experimental; only one composer, Michael Parsons, did. The improvisers Eddie Prévost and Keith Rowe felt that the energy and

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5 Christopher Hobbs, Michael Parsons, Howard Skempton, Hugh Shrapnel, John White, Michael Nyman, Brian Dennis, plus Scratch Orchestra members who composed (Bryn Harris and Richard Ascough), improvisors who had composed (Keith Rowe and Eddie Prévost), and the pianist/improvisor John Tilbury. The exclusively male group here shows a problem for the Scratch Orchestra scholar, especially in the early 1980s: that of accessing the memories of women participants. The enthusiastic participation by women visual artists as composers in the Scratch Orchestra will be discussed in Chapter 8, and the lack of women with musical training in later experimental music in Chapter 12.
interactivity of experimental music continued mainly in free improvisation.\(^6\)

Yet this activity was not part of the musical establishment, and it was not part of the avant garde. Some of it shared features of American minimalism, some of it did not. In a radio interview in 1984, I called this activity ‘post-experimental’,\(^7\) which was too vague. The structural differences between Hobbs’ *Voicepiece* (1968), for instance (a text piece using random numbers so that performers could realise their own scores) and his *Sonatina 1982* (a through-composed multi-movement tonal work for piano with references to show tunes, using piano techniques which would have been familiar to Liszt) are greater than those in most post-Renaissance music by a single composer. If there was such a fundamental change and no one seemed willing to be associated with this model, then perhaps it was outdated.

**Postmodernist succession**

This model, of a return to a period marked by a consideration for tonality after a period of modernism, solves the problem of conflicting stylistics. The use of the term ‘postmodernism’ to determine an historical model is risky, as the term itself has conflicting definitions. Jonathan Kramer writes:

> [W]hat is postmodernism? For some critics, postmodernism’s defining compositional practice is its deliberate attempt to reach out by using procedures and materials audiences are believed to relish: diatonicism, singable melodies, metric regularity, foot-tapping rhythms, tonality, and/or consonant harmonies. Nostalgia for the good old days of tunes and tonality, however, is actually

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\(^6\) Prévost still finds this to be true, recently writing, “indeterminate music” was a lost opportunity in terms of developing a more creative ethos amongst performers [Edwin Prévost, email to VA, 19 March, 2003].

\(^7\) The SUNY Stony Brook university radio station, on an evening new music show. The host was a young man named David Patterson, now a well-known writer in Cage studies.
Toward a definition of the differences in Western art-music cultures

opposed to certain strains of postmodernism. It is not so much postmodernist as antimodernist.8

The American experimental composer and writer on the aesthetics of indeterminacy Barney Childs hated the term ‘postmodern’, and found the illogic of the coinage ugly. ‘What comes after modernism?’ he would say,9 meaning that ‘modern’ is, or should be by definition, a condition of the present, that modern should succeed modern, the former attaining some indication of the past or ‘antique’ status of something which was once modern: the Baroque, the Second English musical Renaissance, even futurism. There is, of course, also an objection to a distinction of the postmodern by proponents of a single, linear avant garde. Benjamin Boretz dismissed it out of hand, while acknowledging its existence:

Postmodernism in music is premised on the idea that people have to compose, perform, listen to, and review music no matter how useless, pointless, rootless, disengaged, culturally archaic those practices have become. Business, after all, is business. And what is called minimalist music, in postmodernist talk, strenuously and overtly celebrates the pervading poverty of our cultural spirit, and the mechanical functionality which has increasingly become what passes for our relations to one another.10

In a discussion following Jonathan Kramer's paper on Cage and postmodernism at the Second Biennial International Conference on Twentieth-Century Music in 2001, the British theorist Arnold Whittall


10 Benjamin Boretz, ‘On Thinking about Various Issues Induced by the Problem of Discovering That One Is Not a “Composer”, and That the Space Which One Inhabits Musically Is Not “America”, Perspectives of New Music, vol. 27, no. 2 (Summer, 1989), p. 39. For many experimentalists, Boretz's description of 'mechanical functionality' in minimalism would be a bit rich coming from the founder of PNM, a journal which celebrated the mechanics of New York serialism whenever it could.
denied its existence: ‘there is no postmodernism, only [the continuation of] modernism’.

However, Childs’ and Whittall’s reservations are poles apart and come from opposite ways of thinking. Childs was enthusiastic about the tenets of postmodernism, as he had been about experimentalism; like Cage when he wrote that he originally objected to the term ‘experimentalism’, Childs was a fully paid-up member who simply objected to the name of the club. Whittall, to continue the metaphor, was an outsider trying to take over the club and impose his own rules. His statement would negate the cultural differences from modernism which exist in all postmodern music, resulting in its devaluation and the same assumptions and errors made by Clements in his review of the ‘Cardew Day’ concert.

Kramer notes that despite the inaccuracy of the popular notion of postmodernism – ‘any composition that was written recently but sounds as if it were not’ – there are definitions of postmodernism in other arts which have analogies to music. He quotes Umberto Eco in Postscript to the Name of the Rose: ‘Postmodernism is not a trend to be chronologically defined, but, rather, an ideal category or, better, still, a Kunstwollen, a

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Formerly, whenever anyone said the music I presented was experimental, I objected. It seemed to me that composers knew what they were doing, and that the experiments that had been made had taken place prior to the finished works, just as sketches are made before paintings and rehearsals precede performances. But, giving the matter further thought, I realised that there is ordinarily an essential difference between making a piece of music and hearing one. A composer knows his work as a woodsman knows a path he has traced and retraced, while a listener is confronted by the same work as one is in the woods by a plant he has never seen before.

Now, on the other hand, times have changed; music has changed; and I no longer object to the word ‘experimental’. I use it in fact to describe all the music that especially interests me and to which I am devoted, whether someone else wrote it or I myself did. What has happened is that I have become a listener and the music has become something to hear.

12 Kramer, ‘Nature’.
way of operating’. Although he does not follow Eco entirely, in that Eco posits a kind of relationship between modernism and postmodernism in every artistic period, Kramer agrees with the idea of a *Kunstwollen*:

A more subtle and nuanced understanding of postmodernism emerges once we consider it not as a historical period but as an attitude – a current attitude that influences not only today’s compositional practices but also how we listen to and use music of other eras.

_*The Name of the Rose*_ exhibits many of the features of postmodernism which Kramer finds in postmodern composition, particularly intertextuality and eclecticism. The surface plot is consistent with any historical mystery, particularly Ellis Peters’ Brother Cadfael series (since it shares the medieval setting), but some readers might notice other references and models, particularly that of Sherlock Holmes in the name (William of Baskerville) and the methodology of the protagonist. At this level the story can be enjoyed – the film achieved great success with the general public – but underneath there is a subtext which explores the nature of sign and symbol, of implied and deeper meanings, mostly delivered in a kind of catechism reminiscent of both Holmes and Watson and medieval treatises such as the *Scholia Enchiriadis*.

The intertextuality of *The Name of the Rose* marks it as a postmodern novel distinct from the pulp mysteries it resembles, as do the multi-layered puns in Dave Smith’s pieces for the Garden Furniture Music Ensemble (the ensemble name itself, a pun on Erik Satie’s *Musique d’ameublement*, was devised by John White). In contrast, the music of Frederick Stocken and the Hecklers who, in the early 1990s, picketed concerts of works by Harrison Birtwistle, might be called

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14 Kramer, ‘Nature’.

15 My advisor at SUNY Stony Brook, James McCalla, who taught a seminar in structuralism, recommended *The Name of the Rose*, newly published in its English translation, as the first semiological novel.
antimodernist, in that their musical style is influenced by the early twentieth century mainstream without any discernible subtext.\textsuperscript{16} Importantly, Kramer notes that the relationship between postmodernists and history is different from that which modernists held:

> The avant-gardists of early modernism...sought to escape history, but were hopelessly trapped in the continuity of historical development. To see themselves on the cutting edge, such avant-gardists...had to accept history as linear progress....Because they recognize history as a cultural construct, postmodernists...can enter into a peaceful coexistence with the past, instead of confronting it as latter-day modernists do. For postmodernists, history is recast as a process of rediscovering what we already are, rather than a linear progression into what we have never been\textsuperscript{17}

Postmodernists recognise the relationship of the past to the present and make a feature of it, including playing with the model of historical constructs.

To look for historical precedents leading toward postmodernism would be to accept the idea of historical progress, which postmodernists challenge. The literature on postmodernism is full of statements about the death of history, but it is not necessary to go to the extreme of seeing our age as post-historical in order to understand the uneasy relationship between postmodernism and progress.\textsuperscript{18}

The ‘death of history’ is a popular concept, especially in non-academic writings, and as such seems to have lost both its origins and its exact meaning. The musicologist Leo Treitler, in ‘The Present as History’, presented an early variant in association with modern music and art:

> The elimination of the distinction between past and present means the elimination of history, and the dominating ideas of impersonalness and objectivity in art make it unlikely that art will

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16}Examples of Stocken’s work may be found on <http://www.jediworld.net/frederickstocken/>. Accessed 5-6 April 2003.
\item \textsuperscript{17}Kramer, ‘Nature’. Quotation from an anonymous reviewer of an early version of the article. Some of the ellipses in this quotation have omitted examples of modernist (Russolo, Satie, Cowell, and Varèse) and postmodernist (Kernis, Tavener, Schoenfield, and Adès) composers. I find problems with this list, particularly in regarding Satie as a modernist and Adès and Tavener as postmodernists. But this is a minor quibble which in no way detracts from the beauty of this definition.
\item \textsuperscript{18}Kramer, ‘Nature’.
\end{itemize}
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... The manifestations of this ideology in all the arts are familiar enough: John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen (at times), Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg, Nathalie Saurraute, Andy Warhol, etc.\textsuperscript{19}

More recently, it seems that the postmodernist obsession with ‘the death of history’ follows Francis Fukuyama’s article and book on the ‘end of history’.\textsuperscript{20} This phrase is used without an understanding of Fukuyama’s specific political thesis (the end of Western Communism) and its Hegelian background. Hegel posited a series of histories with defined goals or ends leading to the expression of a spirit of freedom within a national will.\textsuperscript{21} Hegel also saw a limit to the purview of the arts, which seems to have become mixed up with his historical construct. Derek Matravers wrote:

\begin{quote}
The meaning of ‘postmodern’ seems rather fraught. Hegel seemed to think that the arts were suitable ‘vehicles’ for expressing the truth about life until the truth got too complicated, and thus had to be expressed conceptually. Thereafter philosophy was the suitable vehicle for expressing the truth. Something like this thought has been taken over by some art historians who have argued that art had a developmental linear history until sometime in the sixties. There was some kind of end (opinions vary as to what it was) and thus the visual arts could drop the thought that they had to develop in a kind of linear way, and through [sic] themselves into game-playing and enjoyment. Thus, they can then shamelessly pillage the past. So ‘the elimination of history’, or ‘the end of the grand narrative’, does capture the basic idea.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

However, this does not negate the Hegelian dialectic, which Keith Potter (following Michael Nyman’s distinction) saw to be intrinsically bound in the aesthetic of the avant garde, which assured an internal linearity, in

\textsuperscript{19} Treitler, p. 54.


\textsuperscript{22} Derek Matravers, email to VA, 7 November 2003.
that ‘all musical works must retain a narrative element due simply to their unfolding in time’. Potter summarises Nyman thus:

[F]or all the European avant-garde’s concern with rejection of the past, with technical innovation, with the search for new materials and new forms for those materials – all characteristic of what is often called modernism – composers such as Stockhausen are ultimately wedded to Western ‘classical’ tradition.... [S]uch an approach is essentially foreign to the experimental aesthetic of Cage and his (largely American) associates.

For Kramer, this rejection of the linearity of history is part of a postmodern attitude (which consequently encourages intertextuality and eclecticism) which he has found in mid-period Cage, in Ives ‘Puttnam’s Camp’ from *Three Places in New England*, and in other works completed years before the concept was developed. By defining postmodernism by attitude rather than by surface stylistics, Kramer loses the sense of succession in most musical definitions of postmodernism. In this, he may be a lone voice.

As a theorist, Kramer divides modernism and postmodernism by relative organisational unity:

Schenkerian theory and set theory, arguably the two most common analytic methodologies currently (or at least recently) practiced, are both intense statements on the necessity of, more or less respectively, textural organicism and unity. They are popular because they try to answer a question that has bothered music theorists for generations. But this question – how are works of music unified? – is not the only one to ask, nor is it the most basic.

Nicholas Cook saw this as being limiting, citing Hans Keller’s verdict that

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I have come to the widely-tested conclusion that this is true of all good music: the looser the manifest integration, the stricter the demonstrable latent unification. I use this criterion as one of my tools for objective evaluation.\(^{26}\)

Cook answered that

The result is a somewhat narrow and pedagogical aesthetic which puts a great premium on the clarity with which structural functions are expressed in music, on the absence of unnecessary ornamentation, and in general upon unity and inevitability.\(^{27}\)

Rather, Kramer is interested in the disunity which he finds in postmodernist works, which he has since noted in specific works throughout the twentieth century. He cites Morse Peckham, who introduced the concept in *Man’s Rage for Chaos*\(^{28}\) that art presents disorganised experiences in order that they may be organised by the perceiving culture.

When it was new, *Man’s Rage for Chaos* was particularly popular with the artistic avant garde. More recently, however, the book seems to be routinely ignored, perhaps because it poses a deep threat to the beliefs of modernists and traditionalists alike. But it is, in fact, one of the first statements of the postmodern aesthetic of disunity.\(^{29}\)

For Kramer, disunity cannot occur easily in works which are based in a continuing, systematic (even systemic) process:

Consonance does not guarantee a postmodern aesthetic, however. Some path-breaking early minimalist works strike me as more modernist than postmodernist. The purity, the strong statement, and the radical newness of such pieces as Steve Reich’s *Violin Phase* or Philip Glass’s *Music in Fifths* are thoroughly modernist. These composers’ attempts to define a new kind of music reflects early twentieth-century experiments, although the actual sounds of their music are dissimilar from those of early atonality. Significantly, early minimalist music must be thoroughly unified,


\(^{27}\) Cook, p. 223.


\(^{29}\) Kramer, ‘Unity’, p. 17.
and sometimes is even pervasively organic; consider the way Reich’s *Four Organs* grows inexorably from its initial material.\(^{30}\)

He also sees early technical experiments, especially those which result in new instrumental resources, to be a feature of modernism. He cites Russolo, Satie, Cowell, and Varèse in particular as modernists, yet Nyman cites them in his ‘Backgrounds’ chapter on experimental origins. Kramer’s divisions of the postmodernist succession cut across the experimental culture reviewed in this thesis as much as the ‘beginning’ of tonality cuts up experimental music in the modernist dialectic.

For this reason I cannot use Kramer’s model unaltered in this thesis, no matter how useful it may be in other situations. Such a model, applied unaltered, forces experimentalists to lie with strange bedfellows and has them hopping in and out of the postmodern and modernist beds almost from piece to piece. Text and graphic pieces, random processes, improvisation and other indeterminate techniques often create postmodern disunity;\(^ {31}\) but the systems pieces, some written contemporaneously with text pieces (in fact, some of John White’s *Machines* are written almost entirely in text notation) are rigorously modernist. Through-composed tonal works should be postmodernist: a list of traits in his later work ‘The Nature and Origins of Postmodernism’ includes eclecticism, pluralism, and irony, all fitting British experimental music perfectly, but consistent disunity is harder to prove consistently.

For the purposes of this thesis, the postmodernist model also not only excludes a lot of experimental compositional activity, but it includes a lot which is not. Kramer finds postmodern features in the work of John Zorn, who has come to composition from improvisation, but he also finds them in Thomas Adès as well, a composer whose use of quotation seems to have more in common with that of Schoenberg or George Crumb.

\(^{30}\) Kramer, ‘Unity’, p. 25.

\(^{31}\) Kramer seems to have come down more securely for classic experimentalism as a postmodern music despite its sonic resemblance to modernism in *The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism*.
These distinctions are useful in evaluating individual works in that they destroy traditional analytic hierarchy and linearity, but they actually work against consideration of British experimental music as a coherent cultural model.

Kramer, after all, was not trying to determine a coherent movement, but rather to find a flexible set of analytical definitions. There is much in his model which explains the opposition between the avant-garde and experimental composers. He posits a Freudian distinction between modernism and postmodernism which evokes the child-like play of the Scratch Orchestra as well as the jokes of the PTO composers:

The situation for modernists was and is òœdipal: they are in conflict with their antecedents, whom they reinterpret in order to possess, shape, and control their legacy. Modernists sought to displace the major figures in their past, because they were in competition with them despite their owing their very (artistic) existence to them. Influence was a critical issue for modernists. Postmodernists, however, are more like adolescents than like children: they have passed beyond their òœdipal conflicts with their modernist parents, although they may still have an uneasy relationship with them (thus, postmodernists may accept historical succession even while rejecting the idea of progress). Postmodernists like to feel that they can be whatever they wish. Their music can happily acknowledge the past, without having to demonstrate superiority to it. Postmodern composers understand that their music is different from that of modernism, but they can nonetheless include modernist (and earlier) styles without having to make them something other than what they were or to relegate them to the inferior status of historical artifacts. But, like adolescents, they can maintain ambivalent feelings toward the modernists whom they view as parents. If these attitudes of postmodernists seem naïvely utopian, that quality is certainly consonant with their adolescent nature.32

Kramer’s concept of postmodernism is that it is an attitude. However, he acknowledges that the modernist mainstream and the traditional theoretical establishment oppose it. He cites Joseph Kerman, in the wonderfully titled ‘How We Got into Analysis, and How to Get Out’, who wrote:

32 Kramer, ‘Nature’.
From the standpoint of the ruling ideology, analysis exists for the purpose of demonstrating organicism, and organicism exists for the purpose of validating a certain body of works of art.\textsuperscript{33} Kerman found:

\[\text{T}he\ true\ milieu\ of\ analysis\ is\ not\ science\ but\ ideology.\ I\ do\ not\ think\ that\ we\ will\ understand\ analysis\ and\ the\ important\ role\ it\ plays\ in\ today’s\ music-academic\ scene\ on\ logical,\ intellectual,\ or\ purely\ technical\ grounds.\textsuperscript{34}\]

As such, analysis is arbitrary and deeply held. As slippery as an ‘attitude’ or aesthetic may be, analysis is just as slippery and only appears to be more truthful in its guise of rigour. Analysis will show and celebrate best only those features which it has been designed to show and to celebrate. Following this logic, structural analysis can be used as a secondary or even tertiary evidentiary feature, and overridden when necessary by aesthetic principles (such as those which were outlined in Chapter 2) and another historical model proposed. In a sense, this model features many of the pieces on each side of the modernist dialectic, but in considering the aesthetic principles as primary conditions, similar personal stylistics can be grouped together despite radical differences in analytical systems.

**Aesthetic opposition**

Emphasis on aesthetic criteria in defining experimental music is not new: it features heavily in Nyman and forms the basis of most of Barney Childs’ writings on indeterminacy and notation. However, most of these definitions rely upon process as much as aesthetics and become less applicable as stylistics change. David Nicholls extended the understanding of what ‘experimental music’ is, particularly in his book *American Experimental Music, 1890-1940*,\textsuperscript{35} by calling ‘experimental’


\textsuperscript{34} Kerman, p. 314.

\textsuperscript{35} Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1990. Nicholls wrote:
those early American works detailed in Nyman’s chapter ‘Backgrounds’, so that the title time span in Nicholls’ book ends ten years before what is commonly considered the era of experimental composition. In this, he has also followed Peter Yates, who, according to Christopher Shultis, claimed to have been the first to use the term ‘the American experimental tradition’. However, the authors mentioned by Yates in his two chapters of this name form such a broad church (George Gershwin, Aaron Copland, Ingolf Dahl, and Leonard Bernstein as well as many mentioned in Nyman and elsewhere) as to outline a general history of American music.36 Ives has either been considered an honoured ancestor of experimental music (Nyman) or been dubbed an experimentalist long after he had quit composition, even after he was dead. J. Peter Burkholder wrote that Ives ‘deserves pride of place as one of the first composers of experimental music’.37 Nicholls finds Ives to be experimental along two lines. The first is structural: ‘he tried out particular compositional techniques including extreme chromaticism, tone clusters, polytonality, polyrhythm, polymetre, polytempo, stratification, and spatial separation’,38 the technical features of

For me, when I was carrying out the research that led to the book, it was simply a matter of accepting Michael Nyman’s use of the term. A few years back, an American postgraduate called – I think – Frank Mauceri wrote to me about the issue, as he was writing a masters or doctoral dissertation on the subject. I did a little digging around, and seem to recall that I found references to experimentalism as early as the 1930s, either by the composers themselves (Cowell comes to mind) or in the literature about them. [David Nicholls, email to VA, 10 May 2003].


modernism which Kramer found in the works of Russolo, Satie, Cowell, and Cage. The second – ‘Ives wrote music in an unprecedentedly wide range of styles, from the popular through to the *recherché*. Equally (if not more) importantly, he sought to integrate these varied styles into a pluralistic whole...’ – recalls the eclecticism and intertextuality in Kramer’s definition of postmodernism. By Kramer’s definition Ives is both a postmodernist and a modernist, often in the same work; in Nicholls’ view, he is showing two different traits of experimentalism. Nicholls continues throughout his article – meant to be an overview chapter of the distinction between avant-garde and experimental music in a larger work devoted to the history of American music – to use the combination of technique and eclecticism to provide a history of experimental music which includes the mainstream minimalism and postmodernism of Philip Glass, Steve Reich, and John Zorn.

Perhaps what Kramer discerns as postmodern in Ives is not unlike Christopher Shultis’ explication of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Hegelian understanding of his actions in history. Shultis has linked Ives to Emerson and Cage to Henry David Thoreau in *Silencing the Sounded Self*. Shultis cites Russell Goodman, who wrote that

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39 Kramer does stress attitude over technique, so that such a contradiction may be possible.

40 Nicholls does not give a clear distinction of the avant-garde and experimental movements in post-1960s America, as he is trying to give an overview of the entire scene. However, he does mention that ‘the limitless musical universe of Cage’s *Variations IV* lies very close to the modernity which other composers, from quite different traditions, currently espouse. The British composer Robin Holloway could hardly be considered a fellow-traveller with Cage: yet in 1989 his own perspective was that “Modernism is everyone’s immediate past: and any remoter past can only be reached through it. Meanwhile, we have the present: infinite possibility, dislocated like a wrecked mosaic that has been incorrectly restored”’. Robin Holloway, ‘Modernism and After in Music’, in *The Cambridge Review*, vol. 110, p. 66.

Because he is an ‘idealist’, it might seem that Emerson must be committed to the idea, which attracted Hegel and Plato, of a completed and unchanging account of the world.\textsuperscript{42}

Goodman supported this by means of Emerson’s statement in ‘History’ that ‘always the thought is prior to the fact; all the facts of history pre-exist in the mind as laws’.\textsuperscript{43} Shultis compares this idea of ‘a fixed conception of the universe’ with Emerson’s declaration of experimentalism:

\begin{quote}
[L]et me remind the reader that I am only an experimenter. Do not set the least value on what I do, or the least discredit on what I do not, as if I pretended to settle any thing as true or false. I unsettle all things. No facts are to me sacred; none are profane; I simply experiment, an endless seeker with no Past at my back.\textsuperscript{44}
\end{quote}

Shultis reconciles the opposing statements – of a fixed past and ‘open-ended process’ without a past – through Emerson’s conception of the Over-Soul.

Idealism, as practiced by Emerson, consists of fixed laws that exist \textit{a priori} to our experience and the results then disseminated by the experimenter.\textsuperscript{45}

The sense of the Over-Soul, of a merger of subject and object, which humanity may use, is, in an historical model, much like the non-directional historicism of music history as a pool of equal accessibility. John Cage, following Willem de Kooning’s ‘The past does not influence me; I influence it’, suggested a ‘field theory’ of the accessibility of history when he told Michael Nyman that

\begin{quote}
I rather think that influence doesn’t go A B C, that is to say from Ives to someone younger than Ives to people still younger, but rather that we live in a field situation in which by our actions, by
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}


\textsuperscript{45} Shultis, p. 10.
\end{footnotes}
what we do, we are able to see what other people do in a different
light than we do without our having done anything. What I mean
to say is that the music we are writing now influences the way in
which we hear and appreciate the music of Ives more than that the
music of Ives influences us to do what we do.46

This ‘field situation’ may be the most coherent feature of experimental
music, and ties experimental composers to each other regardless of
nationality. It ties Ives and Cage together; it ties the British
experimentalists to the Americans and classic experimental, systems and
minimal, and through-composed tonal music together. The field
situation may be contrasted with Leonard B. Meyer’s ‘fluctuating stasis’
in *Music, the Arts and Ideas*.47 Meyer later posits a situation of reaction
to historical artefacts, which is ‘neoDarwinian [sic]’, a theory borrowed
from biological evolutionism which posits evolution among higher life
forms to be one of choice, rather than a linear model.

Models [of history] involving linear change are still with us (despite
the currency of post-modernism) because they seem to provide a
secure basis for the universal human needs to envisage and choose.
But linear models are, in my view, pernicious. This, for two reasons.
First, because the reasons for change are posited by the model, an
account of what happened comes to seem like an explanation of why
it happened. Second, because, as is evident in most current analytic
paradigms (including narrativity), linearity leads to the neglect of
‘The road[s] not taken’ [Meyer’s plural in brackets]. Just as it is in
everyday experience, an awareness of ‘what might have been’ is
indispensable for the understanding and appreciation of works of
art.48

On first consideration, Meyer’s ‘what might have been’ conjures up a
kind of ‘speculative musicology’ which would be weird, if not merely
impractical – something more on the order of a ‘can Superman beat
Batman’ debate. However, this model breaks the stranglehold of linear

46 John Cage, in Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, p. 27. De
Kooning quotation from John Cage, ‘History of Experimental Music in the United
States’, *Silence*, p. 67.

47 *Music, the Arts and Ideas: Patterns and Prediction in Twentieth Century Culture*

Darwinism by removing the inevitability of what was important at the time, a consideration which gives permission to the study of neglected music and events.\(^{49}\) Meyer, however, gives this model a ‘universal’ human status regardless of culture. While it could be the avant garde’s cultural choice in a neo-Darwinian universal to adopt a Spencerian social evolutionary model, leaving Cage and the experimentalists to their field situations, his model still seems to be one which, however inclusive, is still a construct of this culture rather than a universal.

Meyer’s ‘fluctuating stasis’, of reaction as the main stimulation in manipulation of existing material does not have wide application, either. This seems more consistent with the avant garde, whether it is the old avant garde of *Pierrot Lunaire* or the ‘post-modern’ avant garde of Thomas Adès. Ives and Cage, rather, are similar in that they almost establish a rapport with the sources, and this is seen in the British experimentalists, most notably in John White’s belief that he receives inspiration ‘to an almost spiritual sense. I just feel a very direct communication with some aspect of these figures of the past that I’d never get from reading their letters’.\(^{50}\)

J. Peter Burkholder also found a cultural acceptance of social Darwinism to lie at the heart of the wider avant garde, which he calls the ‘mainstream’.

In the central German tradition, the response to the new awareness of several generations of composers and their music was to view past styles and composers as participants in the forward progress of music, and to try to continue its development. This view, while similar in attitude to the views of Charles Burney in the late 18\(^{th}\) century, derived much of its power from the influence of Hegelian philosophy and related 19\(^{th}\)-century ideas, including theirs of biological and social evolution, and was characterized by a belief in the necessity and virtue of progress and discovery.\(^{51}\)

\(^{49}\) This repositioning of importance in history is most fertile in gender studies, as the historical ‘canon’ has to be bent or broken to accommodate women composers.

\(^{50}\) John White, interview, March 1983.

Burkholder noted that this mainstream shared the cultural values of its wider aesthetic.

It is a mainstream in the sense not of a shared style but of shared concerns, an intellectual tradition in the widest sense rather than a stylistic tradition. The mainstream of the past one hundred years consists of music written for an audience familiar with the art music of the 18th and 19th centuries, by composers who were or are themselves highly informed members of the audience, who wrote or write music with a concern both for continuing the tradition of European art music, particularly its aesthetic assumptions and its understanding of the relationship between artist and audience, and for distinguishing their own work stylistically from other composers, both predecessors and contemporaries.52

Burkholder noted that the historicism extended to serial music, as its structures are themselves largely comprehensible only by analogy with the procedures of past music, from which they are in fact derived by analogy, rather than through their exploitation of innate human capacities of hearing and cognition.53

He excepted only jazz and conservative art music (religious music, cinema and background music, school and amateur music, music in service of the state, especially totalitarian states) from this mainstream in Western art music, as well as ‘the music of experimental composers’.54

Burkholder’s formulation of ‘experimental music’ suffers from his lack of understanding of post-war music. He includes the post-war avant garde in his list of experimental composers, mostly because of Boulez’s article ‘Schönberg est mort’,55 while ignoring the continuing historicism – and serialism – of these composers, no matter how much they claimed a break with history, and as was noted in the Introduction to this thesis, he does not consider much experimental music necessary to perform.

52 Burkholder, pp. 115-6.
53 Burkholder, p. 125.
54 Burkholder, p. 129.
However, Burkholder’s idea of music tied by means of a larger aesthetic construct rather than technique is sound and works well in terms of experimental music.

Even though most of the composers I interviewed in 1983 did not consider themselves to be experimentalists, there was no clean break for them from experimental to postmodern music, at least not as clean as the almost Damascene conversion from the avant-garde to the experimental which Cardew experienced and wrote of in his work with Stockhausen on Carré. John White had been writing very short ‘postmodern’ piano sonatas since 1956, often alternating them with sonatas of non-tonal experimental ‘modernism’. Howard Skempton’s piano pieces also exist contemporaneously with text pieces in the 1960s; Michael Parsons has never ruled out experimental techniques, and postmodern and modern experimental features often co-exist in the same piece. These composers have seemed happier with the term ‘experimental’ in the last ten years or so. Christopher Hobbs re-established the Experimental Music Catalogue (EMC) in 1999, after he, Michael Nyman and Gavin Bryars closed it in the early 1980s. Hobbs, Parsons and Dave Smith have released recordings of their ‘postmodern tonality’ on its label, while older ‘modernist’ scores are sold by the EMC as well.\(^{56}\)

There is also the sense of a general style beyond relative consonance and dissonance, of the composer’s personality and ways of thinking about and working with music which remain constant, whatever the notational system or surface sound quality. Howard Skempton in particular maintains his own style throughout his work:\(^{57}\) a sense of neatness, proportion and the liberal use of silence and/or space encouraged from the performers by means of whatever notation or system he has chosen to use. Similarly, the stylistic elements which are inherent in the text pieces of John White, Hugh Shrapnel, and Gavin

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\(^{56}\) Much of this music is listed in the bibliography and discography of this thesis.

\(^{57}\) For a comparison of Drum No. 1 (a text piece) and One for Molly (a conventionally notated piano piece), see Chapter 12.
Bryars are more closely linked to those of their notated, tonal music than to text pieces by any other composer.

The aesthetic and other compositional features favoured by these composers can be described through a list of sixteen traits which Jonathan Kramer has found for postmodernism, including irony and the use of borrowing and reference, a disregard for linear history, compositional unity, for distinctions between ‘high’ and ‘low’ art or the use of one compositional method over another. At the same time, while not following a linear historical construct, the British experimentalists today have many of these traits in common with earlier experimental composers, best described by Nyman in the title of his chapter ‘Backgrounds’, which examined the experimental features of the music of Satie in particular, but also Ives, Russolo, Varèse, and at first, surprisingly, Webern:

Satie’s music is handled with great sympathy by experimental musicians; Webern’s music was brutally appropriated by the avant-garde.... The Europeans were attracted to the rational, purely technical and procedural aspects of Webern’s music; they saw in his refinement and extension of serialism the possibility of erecting a completely controlled and controlling musical system.... The [experimental] Americans on the other hand were not so much interested in how Webern’s music was written and constructed, as in how it sounded. They found that his music was made up of a unique dialectic between sound and silence, that the sounds were heard in silence, that silence was an integral part of the musical fabric.58

Nyman’s prose indicates something other than surface or structure, that of preference or aesthetic: the Europeans ‘were attracted’ to certain features, the Americans were ‘interested’ in others. Gavin Bryars wrote about the elements of Satie’s music59 which were admired and taken up

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58 Nyman, Experimental Music, p. 33.

by British composers, including Howard Skempton, John White, Christopher Hobbs, and Bryars himself.\textsuperscript{60}

For precisely the reasons Kramer gives to determine if a work is postmodern, one can formulate a model of an experimental music culture which is separate from the dominant avant-garde culture. What is more, this culture is coherent regardless of compositional process or of age. The culture is one of attitude, as Kramer has summarised it, but the experimental culture has certain specific differences which separate it from Kramer’s model.

These differences can be summed up in four linked aesthetic principles which distinguish experimental music from the avant garde, regardless of age or style. First, there is the ‘field situation’ historical model, in which all historical reference is equally accessible. Second, is an adaptation of Emerson’s historical model, ‘always the thought is prior to the fact’, applied to justification for a work; the reason that experimental composers wrote so much, as Richard Middleton noted. Whether an experimental work is complex or simple, the ‘idea’ behind the piece is always foreground to and usually precedes its structural theory. While this an obvious feature of ‘conceptual’ music (such as Scratch Orchestra and Fluxus text pieces), emphasis on the reasons for a piece also occur in Ives’ work (his works were often accompanied by explanatory texts, such as ‘Essays Before a Sonata’ and ‘Postface to 114 Songs’)\textsuperscript{61} and John White’s tonal piano sonatas. Even numerical systems in Britain in the 1970s, which are organised as strictly as most serial compositions, were usually explained on philosophical grounds by their composers (Christopher Hobbs threw away most of the drafts containing the structural rationale for his systems pieces). This feature of

\textsuperscript{60} To be treated at greater length in Part 4.

\textsuperscript{61} This is another quibble I have with Burkholder’s formulation, in that he placed Ives partially in the mainstream for the nineteenth-century piano techniques in the Concord Sonata (in ‘Museum Pieces’, p. 130), whereas I would place him entirely within experimentalism for his emphasis on his written justification.
experimental music aesthetics has especially strong links with post-war visual artists, and may explain the close ties between experimental composers and artists.

Third, is the parity of high and low art, the loss of the hierarchy of serious over humorous art, of monumental over occasional art, of climactic over static art. Thus White’s Farewell Symphony Orchestra titles such as ‘A Gritty Pearl is Like a Malady’ and ‘I Water the Front Cover’; and Satie’s miniatures and Vexations all can be rated as highly as, say, a symphony or late string quartet. Fourth, is the love of reference and its use in almost a literary, narrative way, which stands in opposition to the abstraction of the avant garde and in place of the emotional codes of common-practice (especially Romantic) music. For Gavin Bryars, this reference often hides in the structure of his work.

These aesthetic principles may not appear equally strongly in all experimental works by all experimental composers, but they appear to exist in most of the works and they appear more strongly than in the works of those composers of the avant-garde. Kramer has noted these features as typical of postmodernism, and so he has expressed this as part of an ‘attitude’ which, in part, allows him to present an ahistorical grouping of composers. However, Kramer focuses primarily on the compositional process while also considering the aesthetic, so that in his model the type of composition overrides the attitude where there is conflict. Consistency of attitude is of paramount consideration in deciding whether a composer or movement is experimental, and here is the reason, perhaps, that Kagel and Stockhausen, both of whom dabbled in performance indeterminacy in the 1960s, cannot be considered to be experimental. Such an aesthetic distinction also indicates why some postmodern composers like John Adams are experimental, and others like Thomas Adès are not; why New Complexity composers like

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62 Examples of these differences shown by Stockhausen and Kagel will be seen in Chapter 4.
Christopher Fox, who has an interest in Cage, are not experimental; even why some experimental composers, such as Ben Mason, were able to opt out.63

Such aesthetic distinctions are social: with whom does one associate and why? Adams ran the Experimental Music Ensemble at the San Francisco Conservatory, wrote the experimental music classic American Standard (the ostensibly patriotic title actually refers to the most popular maker of toilets in the U.S.) and does not seem to have changed his tastes in music nor his attitude since moving toward concert music.64 Fox’s taste in Cage is less clear, as he has merely stated his enthusiasm, but Cage is a lone experimentalist in a group of self-styled modernists in his pantheon.65 Mason simply dropped any public reference to his early work in the Garden Furniture Music ensemble since he changed his style in the mid-1980s. Perhaps this is determined not only by who they are, how they live, and what music they like, but with whom they choose to associate. In an adaptation of the colourful metaphor used by Lyndon Johnson, experimentalists are those who work from within the experimental tent.66 They may agree or squabble; some may even try to change styles and structures in such a major way that redefinition seems necessary. When they do so it is from within, starting from shared experimental aesthetic and cultural assumptions which those outside the tent may not share.

63 It was pointed out to me more than once in the mid-1980s that when Ben Mason became a ‘serious’ composer (i.e., he no longer wrote pieces with John White using sheep calls and other toys), he changed his preferred first name to the more formal Benedict.

64 At least this was so when I last spoke with him in 1987.

65 A common reason given for the celebration of Cage by the avant garde is his early square-root formula and his heritage as a student of Schoenberg; often one can tell the attitude of a writer by whether he or she plumps for Schoenberg or Henry Cowell as Cage’s teacher.

Toward a definition of the differences in Western art-music cultures
Cornelius Cardew’s 193-page graphic score *Treatise* (1963-67) can rightly be considered a landmark work. No one before (and, most likely, no one since) has attempted to write such a monumental score in a notation other than that of common-practice music. For a score of its size, *Treatise* is also consistent in its execution, neatly drafted (reflecting Cardew’s day-job as a graphic designer); and most commentators consider it beautiful. *Treatise*, as a graphic work, is indeterminate as to performance, although Cardew designed it as a consistent system of symbolic elements. He then made its indeterminacy greater by not providing a legend of these elements to facilitate interpretation: if he had done so, the piece could have been read as an alternative symbolic notation, much like Earle Brown’s *Four Systems*. Instead, Cardew provided no instructions at all, releasing *Treatise* from a specific symbolic interpretation, from notation as printed instruction, even from fixed musical or pictorial meaning.

One of the Romantic inheritances of the dominant avant-garde culture is the authority of the composer and of composer intention. However much analysis is shown to be culturally conditioned, the underlying assumption of most analysis is that it presents a consistent and permanent structural reading of a work, either of whatever the composer intended or what the analyst finds beyond it.¹ By emphasising the structure over its use in performance, analysts in the dominant culture only analyse one possible type of interpretation, unwittingly or not, and devalue a myriad of other possible interpretations.

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¹ Barney Childs, in a marginal note to my first draft of this chapter in 1990, wrote, ‘I am biased into thinking that “analysis” is happiest in finding out some discovery that the composer may OR MAY NOT EVER have intended! (i.e., “we know more about Eliot’s poetry than he did when he wrote it”).
Roger Smalley, in an early review of the piece, noted that:

From the visual point of view this is by far the most beautiful score I have ever seen. The draughtsmanship is impeccable and the score attains the status of a work of art in its own right. Furthermore the score, as well as being looked at can also be read like a book – like a treatise on the objects it contains, in fact.\(^2\)

Smalley wrote that Cardew had designed the piece according to ‘a master plan’ of elements – Cardew later published diary entries to show that he had manipulated sixty-seven such elements\(^3\) – in a manner Smalley found similar to that used by Karlheinz Stockhausen in *Zyklus* and *Plus-Minus*.

Smalley’s only criticism was that *Treatise* was published without instructions.

In spite of Cardew’s distrust of rules (‘in my piece there is no intention separate from the notation; the intention is that the player should respond to the notation. He should not interpret in a particular way [eg how he imagines the composer intended] but should be engaged in the act of interpretation’) I somehow wish that he had given a few general directives (which *are* inherent in the notation – but can you expect everyone to realise them?), such as: any number of pages may be performed, but they must be in sequence; any number of performers; any instruments (or words or actions); and, most important of all, consistency of interpretation – the event which you choose for a circle on page one must be such that it is capable of following the morphology of the drawn circle, which in turn will determine what event one chooses to represent it by. To me the most compelling feature of this score is the fact that every event is (or is capable of being made) functional in a context of pure musical discourse.\(^4\)

Smalley, an avant-gardist at the time, studied composition with John White at the Royal College of Music in the early 1960s (with fellow pupil Brian Dennis). His review is, overall, a favourable one, but he does not trust Cardew’s lack of instructions. Smalley indicates a need for a symbolic notation, one that indicates a direct correlation of symbol to


sound. Without such a symbolic correlation, there is neither an
overriding systematic theory, nor any way of gauging the quality of an
interpretation, and many early citations of this work are concerned with
this indeterminacy. Worst of all, in the central aesthetic criteria of the
avant garde, there is no control of the players and of the interpretation.

If Cardew had provided a legend of rules such as the ones Smalley
had suggested, then *Treatise* would have been just another piece using
interpretative graphic notation like *Plus-Minus*, albeit a stunningly
beautiful one. However, Cardew concentrated on the independence of the
interpreter from the moment he became dissatisfied with Stockhausen’s
control of what Cardew called a ‘Basic Score’ from which he had to realise
the former’s *Carré* for four orchestras. Smalley may or may not have
been aware of Cardew’s feelings about Stockhausen and *Plus-Minus*, but
Cardew would not have welcomed his comparison of that work to
*Treatise*. The year before Smalley wrote about *Treatise*, Cardew wrote
sarcastically about his experiences of playing *Plus-Minus*. He
particularly noted Stockhausen’s indication ‘for composers’ which stood
in place of ordinary instrumental indications.

I have now been involved in 5 ‘compositions’ (performances) of the
piece, so I am in a position to give a ‘survivor’s account’ of what
actually is implied by the enigmatic superscription: ‘for composers’.7

Robin Maconie does not mention this indication in his four-page
explanation of *Plus-Minus* in *The Works of Stockhausen*. Either Cardew
satirically chose to misread a dedication – the work was written for his
composition class at the ‘Cologne New Music Course’ in 1963 – or was
seriously stressing the responsibility of the composers for all marks on

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6 Cornelius Cardew, ‘Stockhausen’s “Plus-Minus”’, *London Magazine*, vol. 7, no. 1 (April

7 Cardew, “Plus-Minus”.

177-81.
the score. Probably he meant both; certainly if Maconie had a view on this he did not consider it worth mentioning. The difference in emphasis between the two writers here is indicative of the difference of the dominant avant garde and of Cardew's developing experimental sensibilities, whatever the reason: Cardew would feel that he had the right to interpret any element on the score as hierarchically important; Maconie would be more interested in structure, with other compositional elements hierarchically less important.

*Plus-Minus* consists of seven pages of 'form-schemes' of fixed stages of development and seven pages of musical material, detailing a complex series of instructions for 'composition' or realisation of seven basic combinations of durational symbols, called 'Akzidentien' around central sounds ('Zentralklang'). The title *Plus-Minus* illustrates the expansions and contractions of these combinations, forming both positive and negative variations of the same characteristics. In 1964, Cardew and Frederic Rzewski premiered *Plus-Minus* in Rome on pianos; Rzewski played electric organ as well (Maconie says harmonium), Cardew played three transistor radios. Both composers tried to manipulate Stockhausen's instructions to their own ends while 'playing the game' by observing the rules, as they resented Stockhausen's control.

Rzewski, feeling the healthy composer's antagonism to pitch material provided by another composer (in this case Stockhausen), decided to use adding opportunities for the accumulation of 'Akzidentien' or noises, and substracting opportunities for the elimination of the given pitch material.... I, on the other hand, feeling the healthy composer's reluctance to compose another man's music, decided to bring all elements as quickly as possible into the negative sphere (transistor radios), and even in the positive sphere to strive for maximum simplicity by using every substracting opportunity to eliminate 'Akzidentien'.

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9 Maconie, pp. 177-9.

10 Maconie, p. 181.

11 Cardew 'Plus-Minus', p. 87.
Rzewski further obscured Stockhausen’s compositional voice ‘by inserting preparations in the piano (screws, pieces of cork, bolts, coins, etc.), hence completely distorting – and liberating himself from – the original equal-tempered pitch manipulation assumed by Stockhausen’. Cardew seems to have resented the time it took to make a realisation of Plus-Minus, even though his own Autumn 60 and Octet ’61 require similar work, and found that the realisation was too long for a duo. Their attempts to subvert the ‘Stockhausen’ in Plus-Minus seem to have worked:

After four or five minutes’ flight over something that was quite recognizably Stockhausen country we found ourselves emerging into vast spaces of uncharted virgin steppe, a landscape of almost Wagnerian grandeur, and we experienced a feeling of elation (it must be remembered that this grew up only gradually through a number of very sticky rehearsals) and an invigorating sense of unlimited freedom.

Stockhausen seems to have liked this performance, despite the fact that he ‘had not been consulted in advance’. I was, in a truly unselfish sense, fascinated by it.... Sounds and sound combinations that, while recognizing their use by other composers, I had personally avoided.... I now find myself listening more adventurously, discovering a music summoned forth from me: feeling myself an instrument in the service of a profound and intangible power, experiencable only in music, in the poetry of sounds.

Rzewski put it rather differently: ‘It’s incredible how such tripe can be so beautiful’. This seems to be the verdict of several experimentalists who have used the indeterminacies of the notation either to improve or subvert Plus-Minus to their satisfaction: Gavin Bryars said that ‘John

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12 Cardew ‘‘Plus-Minus’’, p. 87.

13 Ibid., pp. 87-8.

14 Maconie, p. 181. It is significant that Stockhausen felt the need to stress the lack of consultation, and that Maconie felt the need to note this.

15 Stockhausen, Texte Band III: zur Musik 1963-70 (Köln: DuMont Schauberg, 1971); quoted in Maconie, p. 181.

[Tilbury] used a tape from London Zoo of an elephant pissing’ to interpret the negative bands in a concert in 1968.17

I have taken so much space to detail the different impressions of this work to show exactly the differences between the two cultures at this time regarding the ownership of the score and its performance. For Stockhausen, the performance is made in his service; the piece remains his and the performers should divine his intention even when it is not written down. For Cardew, the resulting performance is a collaboration of the performers and his score.

What emerges from all this is that in the work of many composers (including Feldman, Wolff, Cage, myself, Rzewski, LaMonte Young (sic)18 and even Stockhausen if he himself happens to be absent) the interpretation of the instructions for a piece has a decisive influence on the performance.19

Cardew stresses Stockhausen’s control of the performance situation. Cardew would have hoped that performers would take as much care in observing the implications of what was in the score through minute study – as he did by stressing the requirement in the Stockhausen score that it was ‘for composers’ – but that whatever they did in response to that was their responsibility. In Treatise, Cardew said:

I hesitated at the beginning to talk of the sounding music as my music. What I hope is that in playing this piece each musician will give of his own music – he will give it as his response to my music, which is the score itself.20

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17 Gavin Bryars, email to VA, 15 May 2003. Bryars used a combination of Schubert and a pop song in this concert, which subverted Stockhausen’s hoped-for modern sound.

18 The spelling of Young’s first name varies. Cardew and other British experimentalists (including Nyman) almost consistently use no space (‘LaMonte’), whereas Americans, including Young himself, use the space (‘La Monte’). While Young uses his own preferred spelling (for instance, he uses the space in the authorial credit in An Anthology), I shall keep the British spelling where it occurs in quotations.


20 Cardew, Treatise Handbook, p. x.
Because of this shared ownership, it is necessary to examine both the piece itself and its use in performance.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about Cardew’s lack of instructions – and therefore a lack of symbolic notation for *Treatise* – is that its genesis came from a work entirely concerned with the philosophy of language and meaning, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, by Ludwig Wittgenstein. Cardew wrote of *Tractatus* in his diary in the later stages of his construction of *Treatise*:

> I was 23 when I first came across Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus*: right from the first sentence, handwritten by Slad [David Sladen, an old school-friend] as a foretaste before he gave me the book. ‘The world is everything that is the case.’ It made a deep impression on me. The name *Treatise* (from *Tractatus*): a thorough investigation. Of what? Of everything, of nothing. Like the whole world of philosophy.²¹

*Tractatus* (1921) is the first of Wittgenstein’s two major works (the second is *Philosophical Investigations* (1953)). He follows Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*: where Kant was trying to determine the limits of thought, Wittgenstein tried to determine the limits of language. David Pears, in *Wittgenstein*, wrote:

> Like Kant, he believed that philosophers often unwittingly stray beyond the limits [of language] into the kind of specious nonsense that seems to express genuine thoughts but in fact does not do so. He wanted to discover the exact location of the line dividing sense from nonsense, so that people might realize when they had reached it and stop. This is the negative side of his philosophy and it makes the first, and usually the deepest impression on his readers. But it also has another, more positive side. His purpose was not merely to formulate instructions which would save people from trying to say what cannot be said in language, but also to succeed in understanding the structure of what can be said. He believed that the only way to achieve this understanding is to plot the limits, because the limits and the structure have a common origin. The nature of language dictates both what you can and what you cannot do with it.²²


Tractatus is a short book consisting of seven propositions that contain nested sub-propositions and mathematical formulae elaborating upon them. The main propositions are:

1. The world is all that is the case.
2. What is the case – a fact – is the existence of states of affairs.
3. A logical picture of facts is a thought.
4. A thought is a proposition with a sense
4.001 The totality of propositions is language.
5. A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions.
   (An elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself.)
6. The general form of a truth-function is \[ p, \sum, N(\Sigma) \].
   This is the general form of a proposition.
7. What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.\(^{23}\)

The sub-propositions (such as 4.001, above) comment upon the main propositions in a hierarchy determined by the decimal position of the sub-proposition. Cardew chose varying shapes which may stand as general propositions in Treatise in the same way that the whole-numbered propositions are important in Tractatus: Tilbury gives categories of ‘triangles, circles, circle derivation, squares, square derivations, irregular shapes, etc.’\(^{24}\) Such geometric shapes have little or no immediate reference as they stand, and many of these shapes and their derivations occur in that way: circles can occur as open circles, closed (or black) circles, partial circles (half circles), or as circle derivatives, such as ellipses. Example 4.1 shows one of the ‘black pages’ (so-called by Cardew to indicate a preponderance of black circles which occur in pages 128-144, but are most prominent in pages 130-135).\(^{25}\) In the first performance of these pages, at the American Artists’ Centre in

\(^{23}\) Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr. By D. F. Pears & B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 1961). The formula represented above is approximate and is explained in one of the nested sub-propositions. Cardew’s version of the first proposition: ‘The world is everything that is the case’ may have come from the first English translation of 1922, or he simply may have remembered it that way.

\(^{24}\) Tilbury, ‘Cardew’, p. 6.

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Paris, Cardew, John Tilbury and the composer David Bedford played the piece according to a time-space organisation\(^{26}\) and used the black areas to indicate melody.\(^{27}\)

![Ex. 4.1: Page 135 of Treatise](image)

Other shapes that occur under such a main proposition will have a musical or pictorial reference, however. A circle may be combined with a line to make a note-head which, especially aligned with further lines which can be referenced as a staff, will not only give a reference to music in general (a musical note) but often, in combination with other elements, a specific musical reference, such as low F on the bass clef. In the excerpt of the central figures from page 183 (Ex. 4.2, next page), there are two large black circles above the central ‘life-line’ which runs throughout most of the piece.\(^{28}\)

These circles are beamed together, which gives a musical reference to the black dots, although their near-perfect roundness could also refer to the black circles of ‘the black pages’. The first large black circle

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\(^{26}\) ‘Time-space organisation’ refers to a notation in which the relative length of an event is directly proportionate to the time in which it is to be played.

\(^{27}\) This was also the first public performance in which a player got lost, when ‘John Tilbury was two pages behind most of the time’ (Treatise Handbook, p. xi).

\(^{28}\) Michael Nyman first called this central line ‘(a life line?)’ in Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond, p. 100.
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appears on the bottom of four lines that, although resembling a staff, has no clef. However, the flat to its left reinforces the sense that the lines are part of a staff and the large black circle is a note.

Ex. 4.2: Excerpt from page 183, *Treatise*

The second round black circle to which the first is beamed is easier to see as a note, even though it has no accidental, as it lies, albeit out of proportion in size, just under a well-proportioned, well-drawn staff which has a bass clef in the proper F clef position and a number of easily-read notes around it.

The second stemmed black circle, having such a clear suggestion of pitch, therefore helps to give a sense of specific pitch reference to the first stemmed black circle to which it is beamed. This ‘note’ sits in its partial staff in a ‘bowl’ of curved lines, which is reflected in curved half-circles around the second note and, to a certain extent to the circle around the third black circle below the line. There are also some broken half-circles around a non-pitch-related black circle just beyond the left-hand margin of this excerpt, and the less even circular gestures at the far right of this
The establishment of a separate British musical culture excerpt may also be related. Just before this excerpt, there are a couple of bass-clef staves below the ‘life-line’, so this might be an Eb, or perhaps a Gb, on a treble staff. It lies just before a bass clef on the ‘life-line’, so some may relate it to that. It does, however, lie below the clear bass-clef line on which sits the black-circle F. Does it then indicate that the note is on a fictional staff below the bass clef? There is no correct answer here; all solutions (including ones which I may not have noticed) are equally valid. Such are the ambiguities which lie in the musical interpretations of Treatise.

Ex. 4.3: Last 1/3 of page 182, Treatise

Treatise: An Animated Analysis, a web page in ‘Pictures of Music’ (an exhibit from the Block Museum of Northwestern University), attempts to provide guidance in interpreting Treatise in this manner. Despite sizeable bandwidth, the author limits the analysis to the second half of page 182, an indication of the complexity of this piece (Ex. 4.3).

The writer examines the constituent visual features of the example, suggests Gestalt psychology as a means of organisation, displays its musical components, and then suggests a ‘freeform’ interpretation.

The author’s idea of what constitutes freeform interpretation comes mostly from a deep consideration of the musical features of the excerpt, and to do that he or she has taken an example that consists of elements which can be interpreted almost entirely as musical symbols. The most active visual units here centre on or around two clear staves and one group of four asymmetric parallel lines, which suggest another staff. The elements associated with these resemble musical symbols: numbers which resemble bars of rest; dots recalling the dots of a bass clef, repeat symbols, or note heads; lines recalling pitch slides or decrescendos, stems or beams, and bar lines; real notation such as a bass clef, a sharp and a flat; squiggles suggesting a treble clef and a mordent. Once these musical references are fixed, other, less specific graphic elements can be understood to have musical references, in almost a reflection of the nested proposition of Tractatus. For instance, the curved lines between the top staff and the ‘life-line’ suggest slurs (the long one which is attached to the life-line may suggest a time-span for most of the performance, with the numbers 1 and 2 on each side suggesting periods at the beginning and end either of total silence or of whatever activity the life-line indicates).

Only after this strictly musical ‘freeform’ interpretation does the writer suggest another way of interpreting Treatise. He or she shows the visual element of the example, highlighting the resemblance of the extract to a human figure (the head is the top staff, the chin the linked curved lines underneath, the shoulders the long arc which ties into the life-line). The animators have chosen to move the right hand side of the arc to resemble a waving arm. This is one of several anthropomorphic and pictorial images which Cardew has built into Treatise using the component elements. It shows that Cardew explored the aesthetic
principle of humour as it transcends language. He wrote in his diary: ‘Treatise. Watch for the laughs! (in re being with 7 Hungarians telling funny stories and finding that I knew where to laugh).’

However, as freeform as this analysis purports to be, it is only one of possibly an infinite number of ways of understanding this short extract and of understanding Treatise as a whole, as Cardew decided not to provide rules for performing Treatise at a late stage in its composition. Treatise changed from a piece with elements which had to be interpreted into a piece in which, as Cardew wrote, ‘[a] square musician (like myself) might use...as a path to the ocean of spontaneity’.

Although Cardew seems to have preferred an agreed, symbolic reading of Treatise throughout its pre-publication history, dissenting interpretations occurred from the first concert Cardew listed in Treatise Handbook. In June 1964, on the terrace of the Forte Belvedere, Florence, pages 57-60 and 75-79 were played as two separate sections (lasting only one-and-a-half and four minutes, respectively). Frederic Rzewski, on piano and other sound sources, ‘played’ the central life-line ‘as continuous sound. At each break in the line he would start a new sound’. There is a very short break on page 59 in the horizontal line, and a longer one on page 60, so in the first, short section Rzewski would have played three sounds. Page 75 begins without this line and there is one more break on the same page. There is one short break in each of the other pages. Such a simple binary sound choice – Rzewski was either droning or silent – was a good cue to orientate the others (Cardew on whistles, the graphic composer Sylvano Bussotti on percussion, and Italo Gomes on cello), who chose other elements of the score to interpret and who played the score as time-space notation, keeping together as much as they could. Only

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32 Ibid., p. ix.
Mauricio Kagel, who was reading aloud, ‘insisted on his “freedom”’\textsuperscript{33} and refused to limit himself to one aspect of the score.

On first consideration, one might consider Kagel’s act of rebellion a true act of indeterminate performance. Such musical anarchy was common much later in the Scratch Orchestra, especially in the actions of the Slippery Merchants and others who refused to join what the main body of the Orchestra was doing. In June 1964, Cardew had not written rules for \textit{Treatise} (he never did), but his diary entries at this time indicated that he would eventually implement written rules in the final score. Certainly this was one of the surprising interpretations that Cardew encountered in pre-publication performances.

However, it is more than likely that Kagel decided not to follow the rules more to make fun of Cardew’s indeterminacy than to explore its implications. Such satires perpetrated by avant-gardists on what they perceive to be the weakness of experimental music – that it is a mere free-for-all – are not unknown: for instance, György Ligeti’s \textit{Poème Symphonique} (1962), for 100 metronomes, was written to make fun of Cage and Bussotti’s indeterminacy and theatre.\textsuperscript{34} Kagel’s works around the time of this performance (for instance, his \textit{Musik für Renaissance-Instrumente} (1965)) exhibit many of the strictures of his previous work; his freer theatre works were yet to come. It may also be significant that after this performance and a request in 1964 for Cardew to write a chamber orchestra piece for a festival in Brussels (\textit{Bun No. 2}, an early realisation by the composer of \textit{Treatise}, into common-practice notation), Kagel does not seem to have had any such contact with Cardew and the British experimentalists. At the very least, Kagel misunderstood the reason for this unwritten discipline, which falls under the umbrella of

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. ix.

\textsuperscript{34} Paul Griffiths, \textit{Modern Music: The Avant Garde Since 1945} (London: Dent, 1981), p. 140. Although it has not been attempted by them, several British experimentalists have cited this piece as a reason for liking Ligeti, as they too have written for metronomes; for instance, John White’s \textit{Autumn Countdown Machine} (1971).
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performance practice. Cardew may have expected to act as performance leader or director for this concert. It may have been that the group decided democratically to choose their elements. Both scenarios are not unlike the two methods of practice in more traditional chamber music rehearsal, say a string quartet or wind quintet, in that dynamics, tempi and so on may either be determined by a leading member or ‘felt’ by the group as a whole.

Such coordination is not mandatory in a piece without rules (in common-practice notation, the grid-like structure of the full score demands coordination, even if unwritten performance practice did not enforce it), but neither is it banned. Christopher Hobbs has speculated that if Cardew had written rules for the interpretation of Treatise, given the pre-publication performances under his direction, they would have been much like those of his later AMM piece, The Tiger’s Mind, in which the players assume roles in an allegory, ‘playing’ them musically. Each player would choose a role (or, in the case of Treatise, a shape or other aspect) democratically; if the group were large enough, then a director would apportion the roles evenly between the members.35

What Kagel had realised was that without the rules all performance decisions, including his ‘free’ one, are equally valid. What he might not have realised was that not all performance decisions are equally good. A performer takes on great responsibility in playing an indeterminate piece in that decisions which once fell upon the composer fall upon the performer as equal partner. Perhaps in this case Kagel’s decision to choose a different interpretation resulted in a better performance than if he had followed Cardew.36 Without a recording or an alternative performance, it is impossible to tell one way or another with any certainty.

35 Hobbs, in conversation with VA, 17 May 2003. For more on The Tiger’s Mind, see Chapter 5.

36 Although it does not seem likely.
Certainly by the second pre-publication performance mentioned in the *Treatise Handbook*, at Walthamstow Forest Technical College in May 1965, Cardew felt that ‘each [musician] is free to interpret [*Treatise*] in his own way’.\textsuperscript{37} It is highly likely, though, that this performance of pages 89-106, which lasted about a half an hour, was organised in a similar manner to the Italian performance. Here Cardew lists himself as ‘guitar and conductor’, thus indicating some need for coordination. Other performers – David Bedford (accordion), Roger Smalley (piano), John Tilbury (piano), Clem Adelman (saxophone) – may therefore have agreed on some kind of divisions of elements. Smalley may have felt comfortable with Cardew’s control at this concert and this may have led to his plea for rules in the published version. The only rebellion came from John White on tuba, but this time it was an internal, demonstrably experimental rebellion, in which the player chooses not to refuse limitations, but to play with the indeterminacy within those limitations.

\textsuperscript{37} *Treatise Handbook*, p. ix.
White ‘set the precedent for “perverse” interpretation by reading ascending lines as descending intervals’, according to Cardew.\textsuperscript{38} This may indicate that the players were choosing separate elements, and White had chosen to interpret lines. It equally might be that all performers were interpreting all the elements on the score, as pages 89-106 are very thin-textured and mostly cluster around the life-line.

There are many numbers along the life-line here which most musicians interpret as seconds (or nominal beats or other units) of rest. Cardew certainly had thought of them as such, as at the next performance at the Theatre Royal in Stratford, London, in September 1965 (in which pages 89-127 were played as the last of three sections), Cardew wrote: ‘This was the first performance in which the pauses (numbers) were read as repeated chords’.\textsuperscript{39} Like the web analysis example from page 182, there is what might be interpreted as a stylised face on the right of page 95.

Christopher Hobbs has suggested that these pictorial elements (there is another face on page 150, a building which resembles a factory or power station on page 66, a Citroën Deux-Chevaux car on page 46, among others) may be, like Satie’s instructions on much of his piano music, a private entertainment for the performers.\textsuperscript{40} Some of these figures are distinct, others stylised so much as to be vague allusions, like the interpretation of figures in clouds.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. ix.

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. x.

\textsuperscript{40} Hobbs, in conversation with VA, April 2003.
This section also features clusters of clefs and other music symbols on page 99 and 101, but in the main, this is a rather blank section. A player choosing, say, to play only circular elements would rest for most of the performance. If all players kept together and most played all available elements at this concert, at least where possible, then White’s constant contrary motion would have been striking. The ‘perverse interpretation’ would have been within the implied compositional rules at the time (Cardew wrote in the Financial Times at this time that Treatise ‘is written from left to right and “treats” of its graphic subject matter in exhaustive “arguments”’), as well as the agreed performance decisions. White obviously relished finding the loophole in this description (and presumably in any rehearsal instructions Cardew may have given), that bottom and top was not determined to indicate low and high sounds.

The Stratford performance in September 1965 was notable for the participation of Keith Rowe, a guitarist with a background in jazz and the visual arts. Another jazz player, the saxophonist John Surman, played this time, but Cardew makes no mention of any effect this may have had upon the performance. Possibly the effect was minimal because this was a conducted performance (the conductor was Peter Greenham); possibly both players did not assert any ostensible jazz-based improvisation elements. It was not until 15 January 1966, a recording broadcast by the BBC in the series ‘Composer’s Portrait’, that Rowe had

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41 Treatise Handbook, p. x.
a profound effect upon *Treatise* and upon Cardew’s concerns with experimental music.

John White (trombone), John Tilbury (piano), David Bedford (accordion), Keith Rowe (electric guitar), Peter Greenham (this time on Hammond organ), and Cardew (piano, gong and radios) played on the BBC recording. Cardew’s personal choice of instruments was influenced by the first solo performance of *Treatise*, which he had given at the Watford Institute of Technology in London in October 1965. At Watford, Cardew had paired this performance of pages 107-126 with a solo performance of *Plus-Minus*, in which he again used transistor radios to mask the negative elements. Cardew may have programmed these pieces using the same instrumentation to show the differences in the two pieces. He interpreted squares as sounds for the gong, circles as radio sounds, the five-line staves as chords and any marks within it as piano preparations.

The BBC recording in 1966 used the same pages as the Watford performance and, presumably, some of the same suggestions. Cardew reproduced his pre-performance talk in *Treatise Handbook*, in which he outlined its origin and use as a visual stimulus for the first time.

The idea of writing Treatise came to me at a time when I was working as a graphic designer in a publisher’s office. While there I came to be occupied more and more with designing diagrams and charts and in the course of this work I became aware of the potential eloquence of simple black lines in a diagram. Thin, thick, curving, broken, and then the varying tones of grey made up of equally spaced parallel lines, and then the type – numbers, words, short sentences like ornate, literary, art-nouveauish visual interlopers in the purely graphic context of the diagram. Recently, working on the performance we are going to do now, it has struck me that the use of a wireless set as a musical instrument is analogous to the appearance of type on a diagram. It is a pre-processed, fully-fashioned element in amongst a whole lot of raw material.\textsuperscript{42}

In retrospect, Cardew’s collaboration with Keith Rowe proved to be profound. Rowe and AMM saxophonist Lou Gare had met as members of

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the Mike Westbrook Band, a modern jazz ensemble which kept the organisation and chart system of earlier jazz. Rowe said it ‘was a very emulative style of American jazz, probably based around late Ellington and Mingus’. They met Eddie Prévost, who was a drummer in another band, and began playing together. Rowe and Gare were art-school veterans. Rowe ‘ceased to tune his guitar in 1961’, and used his art-school background to solve his lack of music-reading skills:

I’d get the part from Mike Westbrook, get some idea of what the music was like, find a picture that I thought was appropriate and glue that on to the opposite page of the chart. I would play the picture and they would play from the dots.

Rowe and Gare related their performance to their visual art background, as Rowe explained:

[In painting you can paint something any colour, as long as you get the tone right, then overall the landscape will work.... Then we took those sorts of ideas, and said, Let’s forget the pitch, but get the timing of the note right. So it didn’t matter what note you played, so long as you got the timing right. Of course this was chaotic in the context of jazz music! And of course, then dropping the bar-lengths too just created havoc. Well, in the end we had to leave.

Rowe, Gare, Prévost, and Laurence Sheaff began playing as AMM in 1965: ‘it’s still jazz-like, but quite free, in November ’65, but by June ’66 it had undergone a complete change’. George Lewis, in ‘Improvised Music after 1950’, finds AMM’s ‘withdrawal’ from jazz to be an example of a general trend of ‘erasure’ of the role of black jazz in contemporary Western improvisation, the isolation of jazz from the main art music

43 Christopher Hobbs, ‘AMM: Eddie Prévost, Keith Rowe’, Perspectives of New Music vol. 21, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1982), p. 34.


46 Hobbs, p. 35.

47 Rowe, in Hobbs, p. 35.
The establishment of a separate British musical culture by ‘exnomination’, in which white culture defines itself only in contrast to the etic definition of black culture.48 Certainly Cage, in rejecting the jazz scene on his doorstep in New York City, was either purposefully disparaging jazz in favour of his own indeterminacy, or else he was being out of touch.49 Lewis cites an interview in Perspectives of New Music, in which Rowe and Prévost ‘describe in detail their need to break away from the “very emulative style of American jazz” that they had been performing’,50 as an example of the erasure of black jazz. In a later interview, Prévost said:

[T]here was quite a thorough-going repudiation of the old ways of making music. At that time, we’d all been brought up on the virtues and the magnificent musicianship of the American black players. The previous generation to us has been very happy to try and emulate them as skilfully as possible, the net result that it was a very pale imitation... Our generation opted for a different solution to that problem.51

Rowe, Gare, Sheaff and Prévost, along with Derek Bailey, John Surman, Trevor Watts, Maggie Nicols, and other members of the British free-jazz movement, tried to avoid emulation, just as Westbrook tried to move away from the dominant jazz scene in 1950s and early 1960s Britain, the trad-jazz played by Acker Bilk and others. More than that, the British

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49 Cage refers to ‘hot jazz’ in ‘History of Experimental Music in the United States’ (Silence, p. 72; Lewis, p. 98), and recognises this as the New Orleans and Chicago styles of the early twentieth century. He also writes, ‘Jazz per se derives from serious music. And when serious music derives from it, the situation becomes rather silly’ [p. 72]. Lewis is right to find this terminology offensive, as if jazz is not serious. However, the ‘serious’ appropriation of jazz to which Cage refers, the then-current Third Stream style written by Gunther Schuller, was indeed very unsatisfactory. Cage places this in a whole line of composers and styles which he hated, including Virgil Thomson, Harry Partch, and Henry Brant.


51 Eddie Prévost and Keith Rowe, Interview with VA, 7 April 1983.
jazz musicians were trying to avoid emulation of American music, to find a style which was unique to British culture, much as the Beatles had found a British rock style after the emulative music of artists such as Cliff Richard. There was no significant black jazz movement in Britain until the 1980s, due to the immigration of Afro-Caribbean people, who had a different culture. Therefore the white British artists had to break away to something new. AMM was the only group which thought it necessary to dissociate themselves from the term ‘jazz’, but it was only one way to try to distinguish British improvisation as British.

Cardew found Rowe to be the facilitator who made Treatise the ‘transition between my early preoccupation with problems of music notation and my present concerns – improvisation and a musical life’. Cardew thought that Rowe ‘bore more or less the same relation to the electric guitar as David Tudor did to the piano (I put that in the past tense because by no stretch of the imagination could you now call them guitarist or pianist respectively)’.

Cardew soon joined AMM – he participated in a concert at the Conway Hall in May 1966 – and found this collaboration profound:

Joining AMM was the turning point, both in the composition of Treatise and in everything I have thought about music up to now. Before that, Treatise had been an elaborate attempt at graphic notation of music; after that time it became simply graphic music..., a network of nameless lines and spaces pursuing their own geometry untethered to themes and modulations, 12-note series and their transformations, the rules or laws of musical composition and all the other figments of the musicological imagination.

Even so, Cardew was not willing to give this event up to historicism, announcing the re-broadcast in 1970:

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53 Ibid., pp. x-xi.

54 Hobbs, p. 35.

Well, scrutinise any point closely enough and you are liable to see it as a turning point, in relation to which everything else is either before or after, – and this tells us something about the activity of scrutinising, but very little about music. Which is my devious way of saying that what you are going to hear is music, not a turning point....

In February, Cardew wrote in his diary that if asked what all those squiggles in Treatise mean, I might reasonably answer: a) that it is very complicated to explain, and explanations are of dubious value, and b) that in any case it is secret.

By March he wrote: ‘Treatise: What is it? Well, it’s a vertebrate’. More formally, in May, Cardew wrote in an Arts Council grant application that ‘Treatise is a graphic score, composed without reference to any system of rules governing the interpretation’.

According to Carl Dahlhaus’ definition, Treatise was already on the border of what could be called a composition, even with rules. George Lewis summarised this definition.

According to Dahlhaus, a composition is, first, an individually complete structure in itself (“ein in sich geschlossenes, individuelles Gebilde”). Second, this structure must be fully worked out (“ausgearbeitet”). Third and fourth, it is fixed in written form (“schriftlich fixiert”) in order to be performed (“um aufgeführt zu werden”). Finally, what is worked out and notated must constitute the essential part of the aesthetic object that is constituted in the consciousness of the listener.

Treatise is an individually complete structure which is fully worked out as an arrangement of graphic elements. Depending upon what exactly Dahlhaus meant by ‘ausgearbeitet’ (‘worked out’), many experimental

56 Ibid., p. xi.
57 Ibid., p. vii.
58 Ibid., p. vii.
59 Ibid., p. vii.
pieces are in danger of falling at this second hurdle. *Treatise* is fixed in
written form and is written out with the express intention of
performance, but Cardew broke the cognitive agreement Dahlhaus
assumed that there should be between the fixed score and performance.
With the exception of the more obscure or poetical scores, most of the text
pieces which followed *Treatise*, by Cardew and the Scratch Orchestra,
comply with this criterion better than *Treatise* once Cardew scrapped the
rules. It is obvious that Dahlhaus did not anticipate the implications of
his definition as applied to experimental notation, as *Treatise* fails the
last test – that the structure of the piece is essential to perception by the
listener – even in most performances in which the performer attempts to
follow a perceived consistent symbology. In fact, La Monte Young’s
*Piano Piece for David Tudor #1* (1960)\(^{61}\) passes all Dahlhaus’ criteria
easily, and is, according to his conditions, more of a composition than
*Treatise*.

Such is the hazard of attempting to make rules for all music at all
times.\(^ {62}\) Christopher Ballantine articulated the difference between
Western art music as Dahlhaus understood it and experimental music:

> [I]n traditional music, the musical language is predetermined to a
> very great extent; it is a *donnée* and to that extent a kind of ‘fate’. In
> experimental music, on the other hand, the notion of this pregiven
> ‘fate’ is radically overthrown; the horizons of the musical language
> are established anew with each piece, or at any rate each
> performance.\(^ {63}\)

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\(^{61}\) ‘Bring a bale of hay and a bucket of water onto the stage for the piano to eat and
drink. The performer may then feed the piano or leave it to eat by itself. If the former,
the piece is over after the piano has been fed. If the latter, it is over after the piano eats
or decides not to’.

\(^{62}\) Lewis notes that Dahlhaus exempts non-Western music, but he finds other major
problems when this definition was applied to Afro-American and Euro-American
experimental music.

\(^{63}\) Christopher Ballantine, ‘Towards an Aesthetic of Experimental Music’, *The Musical
The jazz critic and experimental music promoter Victor Schonfield also emphasised the role of the listener in the assessment of the ‘aesthetic object’ but without Dahlhaus’ fixed perception of structure:

The assumption that certain relationships between realisations indicate ‘successful’ indeterminacy in performance is absurd, since the closeness of the relationship depends on the degree of indeterminacy the composer has built into the score: many good scores (such as Cornelius Cardew’s *Treatise*) permit numerous faithful and interesting realizations with no similarities whatsoever, and many others (such as those of Morton Feldman) permit hardly any noticeable differences at all. The successful indeterminate score is simply one which can give rise to what the listener considers good music, and good music of a kind which could not be created by the traditional methods of composition or improvisation.  

Cardew continued to provide suggestions for interpretations in the rest of his pre-publication performances of *Treatise*, but he did so with the knowledge that these ‘suggestions’ were no longer essential to the piece. In another February diary entry, Cardew quoted Wittgenstein, the model for the original structure of *Treatise*: “‘And if e.g. you play a game you hold by its rules. And it is an interesting fact that people set up rules for pleasure, and then hold by them’.”

After joining AMM, Cardew began to emphasise the continuous nature of *Treatise*, obscuring its musical construction and emphasising the visual ones. In the programme for a concert in Buffalo, New York, on 17 December 1966, Cardew noted the variety of valid interpretations:

*Treatise* is a long continuous drawing – in form rather similar to a novel. But it is composed according to musical principles and is intended to serve as a score for musicians to play from. However, indications of sounds, noises and musical relationships do not figure in the score, which is purely graphic (rare exceptions occur when the signs used are reminiscent of musical notations – to the professional musician, these appear as lights in the fog, but for the fully indoctrinated reader, they pose knotty problems in musicology).

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The continuous nature of *Treatise* is a feature which attracts many people. A fellow student in graduate school, Bob Clarida, photocopied the entirety of *Treatise* and pinned it around his sitting room above the picture rail. In the 1980s, Dave Smith found a use for a continuous version of *Treatise* beyond that of wallpaper. He had a continuous transparency made of successive pages which could be rolled across an overhead projector, thus allowing some measure of time-space coordination as well as a visual display for the audience. This visual cue for the audience seems to have been considered by several other performers to be important beyond a simple aesthetic pleasure in viewing the score. The American composer Elliott Schwartz directed student performances, one in the early 1980s, the other in the mid-1990s:

In both situations, I used a small number of pages – around 8, 9 or 10 pages (always consecutive) – and allowed one minute of performance time per page. In both, I created a ‘slide show’ of the pages being used & had the audience following the symbolic graphics. Beyond that, though, the two performances were quite different.\(^{67}\)

The popular-music scholar Kevin Holm-Hudson performed a spontaneous solo version in 1984, in which he asked the audience to choose which pages he would play. Holm-Hudson does not remember any problems arising from such an unprepared reading (which may have followed Cardew’s 1970 assessment that ‘[a] square musician (like myself) might use Treatise as a path to the ocean of spontaneity’\(^{68}\)), but he did feel that the audience missed out:

One problem I realized as I embarked on the project was that it would have been much more meaningful for the audience if they could see the score as I played, but without 193 transparencies (awkward and prohibitively expensive!) that would not have been possible.\(^{69}\)

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\(^{67}\) Elliott Schwartz, email to VA, 8 May 2003.

\(^{68}\) *Treatise Handbook*, p. i.

\(^{69}\) Kevin Holm-Hudson, email to VA 28 April 2003.
In order to make *Treatise* continuous in execution as well as in concept, one must remove the right and left margins of each page. Cardew’s clearer emphasis on the continuous nature of the score makes it possible to accept that such margins exist only because of the limitations of a book format; but Cardew was also willing to change notation indications. In both the 17 December concert in Buffalo and one in the Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City on the 20th, the group of New York professionals who played pages 1-20 agreed to reduce the first indication, the number 34, to play seventeen pianissimo chords. This agreement was made as a performance decision in a concert which was carefully determined beforehand (Cardew wrote a series of five-note chords to interpret the five-line staff elements and he acted as conductor, cueing the rest by coordinating page turns). Such strictures seem to have been demanded by the players, as Cardew wrote in the programme notes:

> The score does not specify the number or kind of instruments to be used, nor does it provide rules for the interpretation of the graphic material. Each player interprets the score according to his own acumen and sensibility. He may be guided by many things – by the internal structure of the score itself, by his personal experience of music-making, by reference to the various traditions growing up around this and other indeterminate works, by the action of the other musicians working on the piece, and – failing these – by conversation with the composer during rehearsals.\(^7\)

Instrumentation often seems to have been determined by what was available on the day, either *in situ* at the performance venue (Peter Greenham on Hammond organ at the January 1966 BBC recording, for instance) or which would be needed in other pieces on the programme (as in Cardew’s October 1965 solo concert of *Treatise* with Plus-Minus). Other performances were more serendipitous – for instance, the Arts Council Drawing Room concert on 16 January 1967, in which John Tilbury played piano, while David Bedford, who usually played accordion, joined Francine Elliott in playing balloons. Since there are no rules for *Treatise*, instrumentation can be varied by the performers at

\(^7\) *Treatise Handbook*, p. i.
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will. At a concert by the members of Coma (Contemporary Music-Making for Amateurs) at Leeds Holy Trinity Church, 26 June 1999, the players (flute/bass clarinet, clarinet, tenor sax, viola/percussion, cello/percussion, guitar, organ, piano) were directed by John Tilbury, who asked that certain instrumental combinations play certain pages.\textsuperscript{71}

Directions are severe or loose according to the preference of the directors. John Tilbury suggested that the Coma ensemble interpret pages 84-5, which contain numerous small open circles spread in an almost stellar manner around the central life-line, as 'quite sparse and Webernesque'.\textsuperscript{72} Schwartz favoured a classic interpretation:

\[\text{T}he \text{ horizontal line was taken to be 'normative' in terms of stability-tradition-ensemble agreement-etc. (but not middle register); we worked out a group interpretation (written on the blank staves), rehearsed it & performed it a la regularly notated chamber music.}\textsuperscript{73}\]

Ex. 4.7: Autumn 60, excerpt

\textsuperscript{71} According to Coma member Stephen Chase, the division was as follows: ‘pp.1-14 (ensemble), p190 (flute and cello), p16-19 (ensemble), p89 (clarinet and bass clarinet), p168 (guitar), pp42-44 (ensemble) p91 (viola, cello, guitar, piano), pp63-64 (sax), pp84-85 (ensemble), p64 (organ), p150 (ensemble), p183 (piano), pp187-193 (ensemble)’ [S. T. Chase, email to VA, 1 May 2003].

\textsuperscript{72} Chase, email to VA, 1 May 2003.

\textsuperscript{73} Schwartz, email to VA, 4 May 2003.
Schwartz refers to one of *Treatise*’s most prominent features – a pair of blank staves. Originally, Cardew placed these staves at the bottom of each page in the score as a practical feature on which the interpreter could write his or her realisation. There are similar staves beneath the symbolic elements in his earlier work *Autumn ’60* (Ex. 4.7), which lie below each line of the score itself, but which are not to be played as the score.

Since Cardew abandoned the instructions, however, a musically-literate interpretation was only one option from an infinite number of possible interpretations. As such, the staves presumably could be a meaningless graphic to some interpreters. In this sense the person using the staves in the manner intended, by writing upon them, could be writing on the score itself, while Schwartz’s equally-valid conventional approach would treat these realisations as performance notes, much as articulation or bowing indications can be found on every orchestral part.

Graphic realisations can take many forms. In February 1966, art students in Leeds who performed pages 89-129 with Cardew and Robin Page enlarged the score and painted it in colours. Cardew had envisaged a coloured version in his diary entries in December 1963, but he never made such a version. In the mid-1990s, Christopher Hobbs realised a page as a map rather than a painting or a score. He and a group of improvising students at De Montfort University placed a copy of one page (Hobbs is not sure which one, but it may have been page 149) on the floor. This page was then used to indicate areas in the performance space in which musical events would happen. Since the performance degree at De Montfort was changed in the late 1990s to a music technology programme, Hobbs has used *Treatise* for electronic realisation by students, many of whom have little or no skill in traditional notation reading. One such student, Edward West, chose to interpret page 149 – a series of staff-based elements combined with partial and whole ellipses.

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– as cartoon music, as he thought that the ellipses looked like the ears of cartoon mice.

It might be noted that aside from the regular performances of Treatise by AMM, most of the performances under discussion are either for universities and other educational establishments or are made by students at those establishments. This does not mean that Treatise is an educational or didactic piece, at least not in the sense of ease of play. John Tilbury called it ‘sensational, beautiful as to be inhibiting for all but the boldest spirits, its visual impact disconcertingly putting most performances of it in the shade’. John White, in the ‘Machine Letters’, which accompanied the 17 May 1971 performance of White’s Machine for Tuba and Cello, one of the first of his systemic works, wrote:

Your letters...remind me of early rehearsals and performances of your Treatise, where I reckon my musical education actually began. When people talk about the impossibility of playing Treatise I find it hard to think in general terms. All that comes to mind is a feeling of awe at having been in on the early days when the great impossibilities hadn’t yet occurred to anyone. All of my Machines are the wayward and prodigal sons of Treatise. (I wonder how many other wild oats get sown by Treatise when you weren’t looking!).

Barney Childs, who founded new music ensembles at every university at which he taught, never mounted a student performance of Treatise to my knowledge, although he directed many graphic pieces by Brown and others. Indeed, on one occasion when a rather cocky student who was not noted for his improvisational sensitivity performed Treatise, Childs was not at all pleased with the result. Performing Treatise calls for great discipline by its performers, perhaps because Cardew provides input in the notation beyond what a performer would create him or


76 See Chapter 11.

herself, it expands rather than limits performance choice as other pieces do, even as the cultural and social limitations of free improvisation do. Childs wrote, ‘*Treatise* includes the entire world of performable sound as potential; the performer serves as screenout, as filter, through his particular responses’. Cardew noted that these responses should be intelligently given in interaction with the score:

> The danger in this kind of work is that many readers of the score will simply relate the musical memories they have already acquired to the notation in front of them, and the result will be merely a gulash made up of the various musical backgrounds of the people involved. For such players there will be no intelligible incentive to *invent* music or extend themselves beyond the limitations of their education and experience.

For Cardew, the answer to these limitations was Keith Rowe, with his musical illiteracy and visual acumen; for those of us who are musically literate the answer may lie in considering that a strictly symbolic musical interpretation may not be the only, or even the best way in which to approach *Treatise*.


Part II: Construction

‘What is a caucus-race?’ said Alice... ‘Why,’ said the Dodo, ‘the best way to explain it is to do it.’... First it marked out a race-course in a sort of circle (‘the exact shape doesn’t matter,’ it said), and then all the party were placed along the course, here and there. There was no ‘one, two, three and away,’ but they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over. However, when they had been running half an hour or so... the Dodo suddenly called out ‘The race is over!’ and they all crowded round it, panting, and asking, ‘But who has won?’ This question the Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought... At last the Dodo said, ‘Everybody has won, and all must have prizes.’

Lewis Carroll

Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland
Chapter 5: The Draft Constitution of the Scratch Orchestra

When Cardew published ‘A Scratch Orchestra: Draft Constitution’ in The Musical Times in June 1969, he appended an advertisement for the first meeting of the Scratch Orchestra that July. The Constitution established ground rules that performed substantially the same function as any contractual document, from hire purchase for an appliance to the central laws of a nation. It was then subjected to a wide variety of interpretations by members of the Experimental Music class at Morley College, then by the wider membership of the Scratch Orchestra, as well as by friends and professional colleagues. As a document, the Draft Constitution provides an outline of what it was hoped that the Scratch Orchestra might become. Nature Study Notes, a Scratch Orchestra collection of Improvisation Rites published a few months after the Draft Constitution, provides an example of how that outline was carried out in the months just before and just after the founding meeting of the Scratch Orchestra. It also reveals the interests, backgrounds, and attitudes of its first membership.

Although Cardew consulted co-founders Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton on its content, the bulk of the Draft Constitution reflects Cardew’s concerns and is typical of his writing style. The Constitution follows most legal documents and manifestos in that there is a clear concern with definition, and that the role and duties of the Orchestra and its membership are clearly detailed.

Definition: A Scratch orchestra is a large number of enthusiasts pooling their resources (not primarily material resources) and assembling for action (music-making, performance, edification).¹

Cardew clarified this statement in the next paragraph, a surprising statement in the then conservative context of _The Musical Times_:

Note: The word music and its derivatives are here not understood to refer exclusively to sound and related phenomena (hearing, etc.). What they do refer to is flexible and depends entirely on the members of the Scratch Orchestra.2

Just a few years before, Dick Higgins had written in an article about intermedia that Fluxus members Nam June Paik and Benjamin Patterson had played with the boundaries between music and non-music:

[In 1958], Al Hansen moved into the area [of happenings] from graphic notation experiments, and Nam June Paik and Benjamin Patterson (both in Germany at the time) moved in from varieties of music in which specifically musical events were frequently replaced by non-musical actions.3

For Higgins, the substitution of the ‘non-musical action’ for the sonic created intermedia, not music. Music was an art of sound and most writers only expanded upon what sounds could be music, as in the American composer Larry Austin’s definition of music as ‘wanted sound’.4 Therefore, Cardew’s concept that music might not refer to sound is revolutionary for the time.

Cardew delineated five fields of Scratch Orchestra activity: Scratch Music, Popular Classics, Improvisation Rites, Compositions, and Research Projects. These fields, while relying mostly upon verbal or text notation as the means of information delivery and some features which

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4 Often cited in conversation by Barney Childs. Austin went to Italy, influencing Franco Evangelisti with the concept of improvisation as ‘stand-up composing’. This led to the formation of Il Gruppo di Improvisazione da Nuova Consonanza, which included Cardew and the film composer Ennio Morricone and which may have influenced the members of Musica Elettronica Viva (Barney Childs, ‘Larry Austin’, in Childs and Christopher Hobbs, eds., ‘Forum: Improvisation’, _Perspectives of New Music_, vol. 21, nos. 1-2 (Fall-Winter 1982, Spring-Summer 1983), pp. 27-33).
overlapped, had distinct defining qualities of use in the life of the Orchestra.

**Compositions**

Compositions were pieces ‘performable by the orchestra’. A Scratch Composition had a writer or writers and a notation of some sort which was to be interpreted by performers. Compositions could be purpose-written by members, or they could be works by outsiders which could be played by the Orchestra. Cardew outlined the mechanics of playing compositions within the activity of the Scratch Orchestra: ‘[a]ny composition submitted by a member of the orchestra will be given a trial run in which all terms of the composition will be adhered to as closely as possible’, thus emphasising the game-playing element of Scratch performance. It was considered desirable, at least by Cardew and most of the members of the Scratch Orchestra (those who were professional performers of experimental music or had become adepts through the Experimental Music class), to follow the instructions of a score exactly, even if the interpretation did not come out the way the composer intended. The Orchestra, according to this clause, could have rejected unwanted compositions; but in practice, none were rejected in the first year of the Orchestra.

**Popular Classics**

Compositions which were ‘repeatedly acclaimed’ entered the category of Popular Classics. Popular Classics were ‘[o]nly such works as are familiar to several members.’ Only ‘particles’ of the originals – ‘a page of a score, a page or more of the part for one instrument or voice, a

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page of an arrangement, a thematic analysis, a gramophone record, etc.\textsuperscript{9} – were collected to serve as Popular Classics. A ‘qualified’ or ‘reading’ player would play the particle, ‘while the remaining players join in as best they can’,\textsuperscript{10} using a combination of memory and improvisation. The implication in this instruction separates the musically literate from the illiterate, and it is the only such separation in the entirety of the Draft Constitution. However, even this hierarchy was mitigated by the provision for a particle on a gramophone record which the non-literate could imitate, and the possibility that a popular composition may be used as a Popular Classic.

Christopher Ballantine associated the performance of some Popular Classics with Dada:

\begin{quote}
Such activities have much in common with Dada’s ‘violations’ of sacrosanct works of art – the best known of which was Duchamp’s addition of moustaches and a goatee to the \textit{Mona Lisa}. And both of these spring from a motive very similar to one of the motives underlying Brecht’s epic theatre: the alienation of the familiar.\textsuperscript{11}
\end{quote}

There was a great sense of fun in the accounts of versions of Western art music played as Popular Classics by the Scratch Orchestra, and they may be seen as a gentle parody of the hype generated by the Beethoven Bicentennial in 1970. Perhaps some of this has an affinity with Duchamp’s \textit{Mona Lisa}, or \textit{L.H.O.O.Q.} (the title, which has no meaning, approximates the sound of ‘elle a chaud au cul’ (‘she has a hot arse’) when spoken).\textsuperscript{12} However, Popular Classics was a category consisting of any music known to the Orchestra, a provision which democratised all music known to them, whether ‘classics’, avant-garde, experimental, or popular.

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.


Another experimental group, the Portsmouth Sinfonia,\textsuperscript{13} at first played mostly ‘popular classics’ in the commonly understood sense of Western art music, but they justified their performance as an exercise in reading the score as if it were graphic music. For both groups, all music was fair game: rather than demeaning Western art music, it can be equally posited that they elevated other music to its level.

Cardew provided examples of Popular Classics in an appendix to the Constitution. They fall into two types:\textsuperscript{14} the bulk of the list are ‘popular classics’ as understood by the average concert-goer, for instance Beethoven’s \textit{Pastoral} Symphony, Mozart’s \textit{Eine Kleine Nachtmusik}, and Bach’s ‘Sheep May Safely Graze’. Cardew has also included, among the older works and in no particular order, Cage’s \textit{Piano Concert} and Schoenberg’s \textit{Pierrot Lunaire}. It seems reasonable to conclude that Cardew considered these more modern works to have already entered not just the canon of Popular Classics, but also ‘popular classics’ in its casual definition. The appendix devoted to Compositions lists pieces which were more contemporary and which later entered the category of Popular Classics - Terry Riley’s \textit{In C}, Christopher Hobbs’ \textit{Voicepiece}, and Christian Wolff’s \textit{Play} – but did not do so until the Orchestra was established.

\textbf{Scratch Music}

The definition of Scratch Music was not understood by many players. Michael Chant wrote in \textit{Scratch Music} that ‘I know no one who claims to understand what Cornelius Cardew means by “scratch

\textsuperscript{13} The Portsmouth Sinfonia, a group which began life as a project at the Portsmouth College of Art in about 1970, took the concept of improvisation, memory, and reading in a group of varying musical ability and made it a success. Their first album, \textit{The Portsmouth Sinfonia Plays the Popular Classics} (Columbia, KC 33049, 1974), was perhaps the greatest popular hit for British experimental music before those by Gavin Bryars and Michael Nyman in the 1980s.

\textsuperscript{14} ‘Draft Constitution’, p. 618.
He speculated that this category might entail a specific feature of experimental music, in the way that Popular Classics used reference or the Rites used improvisation:

it may be – and that this book has reached an existence is a slight confirmation of this surmise – that he means it to be connected with experiments in notation.  

The experimentation was intended to be more pedagogical than groundbreaking, as Cardew noted in the Draft Constitution:

The notation may be accomplished using any means – verbal, graphic, musical, collage, etc – and should be regarded as a period of training: never notate more than one accompaniment in a day.  

The central idea of Scratch Music was an introduction to experimental music writing:

Scratch Music was proposed as a kind of basic training for participants in the Scratch Orchestra, the idea being that each person should write a number of pieces of Scratch Music equal to or greater than the number of people in the orchestra.  

It was to consist of a number of accompaniments:

Scratch Music, recommended rate of composition, not more than one per day, is basically accompaniments. An accompaniment is defined as something that allows a solo, in the event of one occurring, to be appreciated as such. Each piece of Scratch Music should in theory be performable continuously (whether agonisingly or enjoyably depends on the type of person doing it and on the mood he is in) for indefinite periods of time.  

Perhaps Cardew hoped to emulate the medieval and early Renaissance system of apprenticeship in painting and other art forms, in which an 

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16 Chant, p. 17.  
apprentice artist would work the periphery of paintings and frescoes
according to his ability while the master was responsible for the grand
design and the main figures. If so, this introductory training was to
occur while the new member worked as a full member of the Scratch
Orchestra, there being, at least as an ideal, an antipathy to established
hierarchy.

Scratch Music had the capability to cross the boundaries of its
definition and use into other categories.

Ideally every piece of Scratch Music should be flexible enough to
become a solo, if the player feels that way inclined (for instance, it
may be played either sitting or standing, either muted or un-
muted).²⁰

The flexibility of Scratch Music meant that it could be an Improvisation
Rite (as long as it did not describe the note-to-note features of the music
in great detail), a Composition (as long as it could be used in conjunction
with other music as both an accompaniment and a solo), or a stage in a
Research Project.

Research Project

The Research Project was a cod-scientific investigation performed
with utter seriousness on a subject which might be fictional, impractical,
or ridiculous.

The universe is regarded from the viewpoint of travel. This means
that an infinite number of research vectors are regarded as
hypothetically travellable. Travels may be undertaken in many
dimensions, eg temporal, spatial, intellectual, spiritual, emotional. I
imagine any vector will be found to impinge on all these dimensions
at some point or other. For instance, if your research vector is the
Tiger, you could be involved in time (since the tiger represents an
evolving species), space (a trip to the zoo), intellect (the tiger’s
biology), spirit (the symbolic values acquired by the tiger) and
emotion (your subjective relation to the animal).

The above is an intellectual structure, so for a start let’s make the
research vector a word or group of words rather than an object or an

impression etc. A record of research is kept in the Scratchbook and this record may be made available to all.\textsuperscript{21}

The Research Project description may have been written and have existed separately from the rest of the Draft Constitution: it is written in the style of a speech, entirely in the first and second person and contains language which appeals to the reader. The rest of the Draft Constitution is written in the third person, which uses the curt style of a rulebook. However, the language and subject matter (the reference to ‘tiger’ as a subject recalls Cardew’s fairy-tale-like AMM piece \textit{The Tiger’s Mind}, which will be explained below)\textsuperscript{22} are consistent with Cardew’s other writings.

\textbf{Improvisation Rites}

Many of the elements of Compositions, Popular Classics, and the Research Project are shared by the unique category of Improvisation Rites, at least as they appear in the first Scratch Orchestra publication, \textit{Nature Study Notes} (1969).

An Improvisation Rite is not a musical composition; it does not attempt to influence the music that will be played; at most it may establish a community of feeling, or a communal starting point, through ritual.\textsuperscript{23}

An outside observer might feel that ‘improvisation’ and ‘ritual’ are opposites: improvisation, especially in non-tonal performance, offers a wide range of responses, whereas ritual limits actions. Here the ritual is not the opposite of improvisation; it is designed to limit improvisational response. Good improvisation is never really free: experienced players will collect a repertoire of sounds and responses to anticipated contributions by others. The amount of freedom allowed varies with the style of improvisation. Trad-jazz improvisation is limited to such an

\textsuperscript{21} Cardew, ‘Draft Constitution’, p. 618.


\textsuperscript{23} ‘Draft Constitution’, p. 619.
extent in terms of harmony and the role of each player that it acts as an
unwritten score (also called a ‘head chart’). Other improvisation, no
matter how free, has limitations of stylistics built up by taste. The ritual
in the Rites also provides the players with ideas of where to start
improvising. Freedom can be overwhelming, especially to an
inexperienced player who has not developed a repertoire of
improvisational gambits common to experienced players.24

This does not mean that interpretation of indeterminate elements in
a written score should be confused with free improvisation (that is, the
scoreless music played in Britain and the US in jazz and art music since
the 1960s). For instance, Beate Kutschke, in ‘Improvisation: An Always-
Accessible Instrument of Innovation’,25 has written that ‘composers of
avant-garde music in the sixties and seventies [relied] on the emergence
of creative processes by playing spontaneously on cue’.26 The experience
of interpreting indeterminate music and of creating free improvisation is,
for those who have worked seriously in both, a very different experience.
In the first, one is working with and for – or against – the score; in the
latter, one is working with and for – and against – oneself and each
other. The experience of improvisation for the experienced indeterminate
performer is like the first performance of a high-wire act without a net:

24 In this sense, members of AMM and other experienced improvisers either found the
Rites too basic, or considered them to be compositions.

25 Perspectives of New Music, Spring 1999, vol. 37, issue 2, p. 147. In ‘John Cage, Four
Solos for Voice: A Contradiction’, a paper presented at the Second Biennial
International Conference on Twentieth-Century Music at Goldsmiths College in 2001,
Daryl Runswick corrected Cage’s view of his own work – ‘I think something that
happens by chance is more interesting than something a human being thinks might be
interesting’ – with the comment ‘Which is ironic, because Four Solos for Voice is an
improvisation piece by any definition of the word’ [Runswick, abstract].

26 Kutschke, p. 147. Sabine Feisst, Der Begriff Improvisation in der neuen Musik (The
Concept of Improvisation in New Music) (Berlin: Berliner Musik Studien, no. 14, 1997),
also related improvisation to composed music, but she seems to stress influence rather
than equivalence, and has interviewed improvising composers Frederic Rzewski and
Alvin Curran of MEV.
for once, there is no authority to which one can appeal or, in cases in
which things go wrong, whom one can blame.

Cardew first attempted to impose a limitation onto improvisation in
his AMM piece *The Tiger’s Mind*. This piece consists of two texts: a
Daypiece and a Nightpiece. The Daypiece reads:

The tiger fights the mind that loves the circle that traps the tiger.
The circle is perfect and outside time. The wind blows dust in tigers’
eyes. Amy reflects, relaxes with her mind, which puts out buds
(emulates the tree). Amy jumps through the circle and comforts the
tiger. The tiger sleeps in the tree. High wind. Amy climbs the tree,
which groans in the wind and succumbs. The tiger burns.\(^\text{27}\)

A Nightpiece follows it: ‘The tiger burns and sniffs the wind for news’.
Aside from a reference to William Blake (‘The Tyger’, which begins,
‘Tyger, tyger, burning bright’), both pieces form a kind of mnemonic to
indicate interaction between six improvisers or improvising groups: Amy,
the tiger, the tree, wind, the circle, and the mind. Each role has assigned
to it a kind of improvising personality of strengths and weaknesses in
regard to the other roles, in a manner not dissimilar to the strengths and
weaknesses of each role in the game of rock-paper-scissors. For instance,

*Amy* is a person. She worships the tiger. She tags along holding
him by the tail. Her mind is occupied with things close by. She
comes to no harm in the wind, although it brings her intimations of
things far away. However, in high winds she should avoid climbing
trees.

*The tiger* is a beast; he likes to hunt. His face when he sights his
prey is a silent explosion. In lean seasons he must conserve his
strength and be on his guard against manginess. Movement is his
language and Amy understands this language. His growling, etc.,
are merely his instinctual noises. His telecommunications system is
based on the wind which brings him scents and sounds from far
away. His hearing and sense of smell are very acute.\(^\text{28}\)

\(^{27}\) Cardew, *The Tiger’s Mind*.

\(^{28}\) *The Tiger’s Mind*. 
A player who assumed the role of Amy would therefore react more readily to the player assuming the role of the tiger. He or she\textsuperscript{29} would engage with those situated in physical proximity and would avoid playing with the person assuming the role of the tree when the player assuming the role of the wind was prominent.

Cardew envisaged a learning period in which each of the six roles would be assigned to each of six musicians who would interact according to the plot of the two pieces. As players understood the interaction of the characters more clearly, they were allowed to assign their own roles in secret, so that a player who wished to play the circle, say, would assign roles to the others without their knowledge, making one wind, another the mind, and acting to their improvisations accordingly. Further adjustments to the story could be made as players became comfortable, and more than one player could assume a role (although not with knowledge more than one Amy). Mechanical and inanimate objects could be assigned roles in cases where fewer than six players were available.

In its use as a kind of training ground for improvisation and as a spur for improvisation, \textit{The Tiger’s Mind} can be considered to be a trial run for the Improvisation Rites.\textsuperscript{30} In both the sense of limitation and of instigation, the Rites act, not as improvisations, but as frames for improvisation. In most cases, the Improvisation Rites have the opportunity for variance found in \textit{The Tiger’s Mind}; in many cases, the directions for interaction are either far looser that the older piece or are non-existent.

It is also very important to realise that the Improvisation Rites \textit{as a category} were not devised with any ironic or satirical intent. There are many individual rites which, in construction or in realisation, are truly

\textsuperscript{29} Bearded AMM musician Eddie Prévost once beamed happily at me before a concert and said, ‘I’m Amy!’, much to the surprise of passers-by.

\textsuperscript{30} It is also this limitation and educative feature of \textit{The Tiger’s Mind} which made it unpopular with the members of AMM when Cardew first wrote it.
funny. However, the participants did not feel that there was anything contradictory or silly about the category itself, any more than serialists think that the 12-tone system is funny, even when there are humorous pieces written in it. Improvisation rites facilitate improvisation in the way that Buddhist or Christian rituals facilitate mindfulness or a closer relationship with God.

Even if these rites were not, strictly speaking, compositions, the rule of realisation was seriously observed by the core membership. Each Rite was explained verbally by its author to the ensemble, who would follow the instructions as best they could.

Any suggested rite will be given a trial run and thereafter left to look after itself. Successful rites may well take on aspects of folklore, acquire nicknames, etc.\textsuperscript{31}

Despite the serious observance of instruction and of the concept of the category as a musical activity, there was also an aspect of the familiar and friendly in these rites. Such a familiarity as nicknames was not proposed for the categories of Scratch Music or Compositions. As proposed, the Improvisation Rites were to be the internal family activities of the Scratch Orchestra, as they became they crossed all categories of Scratch Orchestra activity and form a fascinating view of the concerns and the aspirations of the early Scratch Orchestra.

\textsuperscript{31} ‘Draft Constitution’, p. 618.
Chapter 6: *Nature Study Notes: A Study in Compositional Types*

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**Descriptive Features**

The rites for *Nature Study Notes* were collected before and during the founding of the Scratch Orchestra, and members were urged to ‘constantly bear in mind the possibility of new rites’,\(^1\) probably because of the impending publication. Cardew gave several examples of Improvisation Rites in an appendix in the Draft Constitution, so that the project to collect these rites was in progress before June 1969 – at least two months before the first meeting of the Scratch Orchestra on 1 July 1969.

An important source of Improvisation Rites also came from a concert on 4 May 1969, part of a series at the Roundhouse in London presented by Music Now. This concert was played by the ‘Music Now Ensemble’, whose membership forms a cross-section of those who would form the Scratch Orchestra, and who would write many of the rites in *Nature Study Notes*, as well as people who would become important members of the British electronic musical avant-garde and free improvisation movements.\(^2\)

The *Nature Study Notes* collection was not complete by the *Musical Times* publication. One of the two sample rites, a fingernail-painting exercise credited to the musically-trained member Richard Reason, appears in a revised form credited to Cardew in *Nature Study Notes*. Cardew had also not yet devised the categorisation of the rites found in *Nature Study Notes*. The two Rites listed, Howard Skempton’s *Drum No.*

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\(^1\) ‘Draft Constitution’, p. 619.

1 and the Reason (or Cardew) rite are listed without titles as numbers 1 and 14.

_Nature Study Notes_ is subtitled ‘Improvisation Rites 1969’, which suggests that it was published by Cardew and distributed by the Experimental Music Catalogue before December 31 of that year, perhaps in time for the first Scratch Orchestra concert on 1 November. Christopher Hobbs ran the Experimental Music Catalogue then. No issues of the catalogue holdings exist from that year (the first known is from September 1972). Hobbs worked in a manner similar to that used in underground publications at the time: he would collate scores and other relevant materials and photocopy them when they were ordered. _Nature Study Notes_ was prepared and photocopied by Cardew, but the method of publication and distribution would have been the same: because there was no need to send _Nature Study Notes_ to a printer there was no time delay between preparation and publication. This subtitle exists instead of a copyright date, as ‘[n]o rights are reserved in this book of rites. They may be reproduced and performed freely’.³

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Example 6.1: _Nature Study Notes_ title format.
As published Nature Study Notes is a pamphlet, 228 x 175 mm. The cover is made using print or rub-on letters, and approximates the cover of a school composition book.

Example 6.2: Schooltime Compositions cover, signed and dated by the author in a limited edition published by Gallery Upstairs Press, New York

Cardew had used the school composition book as a model before (see Ex. 6.2). This may reflect his concerns since he had started teaching at the Anti-University, Morley College, and the Royal Academy of Music. The text within was hand-written by Cardew:

For reasons of economy the pages of this book are reproduced from handwritten originals. The editor wishes to apologise for any inconvenience in reading caused by this method of production.  

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4 This size of paper does not seem to be a common one. Cardew was working as a graphic designer at the time. He probably reproduced Nature Study Notes at Aldus Books, the firm at which he worked.

5 Nature Study Notes, p. 2.
This shows the same care in text music manuscript as in the final version of *The Great Learning*.6

Each of the 152 Rites in *Nature Study Notes* is arranged ‘in the approximate order of collection’,7 and is assigned an identifying code. This code, more reminiscent of a library classification than a biological one, despite the title, is made up of three constituent parts: the composer’s initials, the title’s initials, and the order number in *Nature Study Notes*. For example:

TMTTR38 = Tim Mitchell, *Tube Train Rite*. Order No.: 38.
CFIRNTFM145 = Carole Finer [spelled Fyner here], *Improvisation Rite No. 2: Flower Music*. Order No.: 145.

These codes guide the reader to an appendix of ‘notes on the rites’,8 consisting of a legend to the codes and supplementary information as to performance or origins, which Cardew called ‘a pedigree’.9 Here Cardew provides two other codes for the composers: those of A (ancestor or archetype), ‘identifying the basic human or non-human state, activity or event that the rite bears on’,10 and F (father), ‘who provides the idea’.11 Composers were allowed to name any other sources as relatives, and the composer was known as the Mother (‘her initials are at the head of the code name’).12 In fact, although many of the rites transcended the ritual into composition, the appellation ‘composer’ is never used.

Although Cardew claimed collection in ‘approximate’ order of receipt, the collection begins and ends with two rites by Howard

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7 *Nature Study Notes*, p. 2.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
Skempton, *Drum No. 1* (HSDNO1) and *Drum No. 2* (HSDNT152). These rites form equal and opposite pillars to the collection. The first consists of instructions for play and appears in the *Scratch Anthology of Compositions*\(^\text{13}\) as a composition.\(^\text{14}\) It was one of the most popular text pieces of the Scratch Orchestra and became a Popular Classic.\(^\text{15}\) *Drum No. 2* acts as the philosophical counterpart to the physicality of *Drum No. 1*:

**HSDNT152** The drum is without form. A simple extension of the soul.\(^\text{16}\)

Less obvious, and probably accidentally, the two central rites, Nos. 76 and 77, are very short and take the ritual into emotion and aspiration:

**CCR76** It's not music. It's my heart beating.

**DJFR77** It glows when it's spun. Spin your dream.

[CCR76 = Cornelius Cardew, *Rite*; DJFR77 = David Jackman, *Firefly Rite*]

Aside from these fortuities, the collection shows signs of being amassed in order of receipt: often Cardew has had to place long rites out of numerical order so that they could fit on the page. For instance, Christopher Hobbs’ *The Island Game Rite* (CHTIGR20), the longest rite in *Nature Study Notes*, is moved from its ordinal place between nineteen and twenty-one to fill most of the next page, between twenty-eight and twenty-nine. It would have been easy for Cardew to renumber those rites between twenty-one and twenty-eight as twenty to twenty-seven, renumbering CHTIGR as twenty-eight, but instead, he places a note: ‘[20 on next page]’. Paul Irvine’s *Improvisation Rite No. 2* (PIIRNT99) is placed before his *Improvisation Rite No. 1* (PIIRNO100), but the reason

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\(^{13}\) London: Experimental Music Catalogue, 1971.

\(^{14}\) Closer examination of *Drum No. 1* as it reflects Howard Skempton’s style will appear in Chapter 13.

\(^{15}\) For instance, Christopher Hobbs has used the *Drum No. 1* principle in workshops for thirty years without having consulted the score or followed it exactly.

\(^{16}\) *Nature Study Notes*, p. 11.
for reversing these rites (both in the form of short, opposite directions) is not obvious. It might be more reasonable to assume that Cardew picked up the two rites in reverse order rather than to assume that he reversed them as an editorial decision. Numbers 112-128 consist of short rites by Alan Brett, most of which are variations of the one before: there would be a strong temptation to break this assumed link in what are supposed to be separate rites by placing them evenly throughout the collection, but Cardew leaves them together.

**Rites by Nyman Classification**

Perhaps because the new Scratch Orchestra membership wanted to take part immediately in the publishing activities launched by Cardew and disseminated by Hobbs, the *Nature Study Notes* rites reveal a wide range of creative process and thus need to be classified as to type.\(^{17}\) Michael Nyman, in *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*,\(^ {18}\) used Cage's 'trinity' of performing, composing, and listening ('Composing's one thing, performing's another, listening's a third. What can they have to do with one another?')\(^ {19}\) to explain the activities of experimental music worldwide and its opposition to the avant garde of the era. This classification, especially that of composing and performing, when applied to *Nature Study Notes*, provides much information about the nature of the rites.\(^ {20}\)

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\(^{17}\) I shall attempt to avoid the term 'compositional', in deference to Cardew's original definition of rites, unless the rite shows signs of being a composition. However, I shall prefer 'author' to 'mother'.


\(^{19}\) Cage, quoted in Nyman, p. 2.

\(^{20}\) Nyman points out the variants for the listener, which are much the same as those for composer and performer.
Composing

Notation

Almost all of the rites in *Nature Study Notes* are text (sometimes called verbal) notation, which work primarily as instructions to the performers. FRLMDP47 [Frederic Rzewski, *Les Moutons de Panurge*] consists of a melody in common-practice notation and text instructions which indicate a unique method of playing it:

![Ex. 6.3: Frederic Rzewski, Les Moutons de Panurge, Nature Study Notes version, copied by Cardew](image)

As can be seen above, the text indicates an additive system of notes: 1, 1-2, 1-2-3, and so on. This additive structure is reversed upon completion of the melody: 2-3...65, 3-4...65, and so on, making a kind of inverted arch form. While the use of notation is unusual in Scratch Orchestra music because of the need to avoid a hierarchical distinction between reading and non-reading players, the provision for non-reading players (here rather unflatteringly called ‘non-musicians’) is typical of those pieces (best exemplified in *The Great Learning*) which do use notation. The
non-musicians, who ‘have a leader, whom they may follow or not’, are captured by Rzewski as the Scratch Orchestra would exist in its experimental life, in that they are given permission to do almost anything during the performance of this piece.

Ex. 6.4: Hobbs, *The Island Game Rite*, excerpt

Other pieces – Christopher Hobbs’ *The Island Game Rite* (CHTIGR20; Ex. 6.4, above), Bryn Harris’ *Desert Island Rite* (BHDIR62; Ex. 6.5),

Ex. 6.5: Bryn Harris, *Desert Island Rite*

and Tim Mitchell’s *Tube Train Rite* (TMTTR38; Ex.6.6, next page) – have limited graphic components. Hobbs’ and Harris’ graphics are illustrative
diagrams (Hobbs depicts five people on two desert islands; Harris, who credits Hobbs as father, gives a graphic representation of a custard pie island). Cardew also has drawn the graphic of a sun in the supplementary notes for CCRR66, *Radiant Rite*. Mitchell gives a sample of a marked journey which the performer is supposed to make him- or herself.

Ex. 6.6: Tim Mitchell: *Tube Train Rite*

These markings, which resemble the use of different broken lines to represent different roads and boundaries of maps, provide a way, in black-and-white, to approximate the markings on the London Underground map designed by Harry Beck.

The most striking graphic rite in *Nature Study Notes* is DJ151, an untitled rite by David Jackman:

Ex. 6.7: DJ151, by David Jackman
Here, in only three words and the image of a packet of cigarettes, Jackman has encapsulated the nature of Cardew’s desire that a rite ‘establish a community of feeling, or a communal starting-point’.21

**Processes**

Nyman presents five kinds of compositional processes: chance determination processes, people processes, contextual processes, repetition processes, and electronic processes. Chance processes in rites are often borrowed. Carole Finer’s *SNAP! Rite* (CFSNAP!R148) uses the play of the children’s game Snap to build sounds, as she asks the players to substitute sounds for the word ‘Snap!’ (made when a player has a matching card). Cardew’s *Poem Rite* (CCPR16), in which unspecified random means are used by the players to determine when to play, is a tribute to La Monte Young’s *Poem for Tables, Chairs and Benches*.

People processes, ‘which allow the performers to move through given or suggested material, each at his own speed’,22 are more common. In fact, Nyman cites Rzewski’s *Les Moutons de Panurge* as an example of people processes in which different abilities are considered, especially in that Rzewski asks that players who are lost remain lost. Alan Brett’s short rites tend to play with contextual processes, real and imagined, for instance *Composition or Improvisation Rite* (ABCOIR125): ‘Play what the person 8 places to your left is playing. Don’t play what the person 8 places to your right is playing’.23 Here the player is limited to the sounds

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21 ‘Draft Constitution’, p. 617. The use of proffered cigarettes as an introduction and a sign of inclusion in British life is something which I felt particularly keenly when I first came to Britain.

22 Nyman, p. 5.

23 *Nature Study Notes*, p. 10. This instruction also depends upon a placement of players which would allow for a player to be situated either eight places to the left or to the right. The Scratch Orchestra never had a fixed seating plan. Players could place themselves anywhere within a performance space if the piece could stand it. Hence a player could sit opposite the player eight places to his or her right, if the group were seated in a circle (as happened in a performance of Paragraph 6 of *The Great Learning* at the Almeida Festival in 2000), he or she could move to the player to hear him or her in a thick texture, or he or she could move from a position in which there were players
he or she hears, with the necessary delay between audition and execution. As will be shown later, Brett’s play with these contextual processes leads to impossible demands in at least one rite.

Repetition exists in the sense of repetitive or continuous processes, as in Alvin Curran’s *Sitting Room Song* (ACSRS64), in which singers were to repeat a phrase over and over again, embellishing it with added material. Rzewski’s similarly additive *Les Moutons de Panurge* exhibits the kind of immediately repeating sound-world of *In C* and other pieces which Nyman would later call ‘minimalist’. With the exception of *Les Moutons de Panurge*, Hobbs’ *Gramophone Rite*, and Cardew’s *Poem Rite*, the scope for electronic music was not evident in the Scratch Orchestra at that time. The Rzewski piece asked only for amplification, Cardew gave electronic or mechanical instruments as an option, and Hobbs used the gramophone as a metaphor rather than a sonic device. The Scratch Orchestra rites lack electronic pieces because of both the expense of most electronic instruments and the lack of portability and ease of live performance in the late 1960s.24

**The Unique Moment and Identity**

By writing activities which mostly facilitate free improvisation rather than eliciting specific sounds, the authors of rites ensured that every performance would guarantee what Nyman calls the unique moment.25 While some rites come closer to compositions and have a distinguishing sound (*Les Moutons de Panurge*, for all Rzewski’s permission for failure and dissent, will always be distinguished by at least the fragments of its melody), others require the players to make

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24 Hobbs wrote, ‘Also the undemocratic nature of amplified sound’ [message to VA, 12 December 2003].

25 Nyman, p. 8.
their own decisions about instruments, pitches, and rhythms. Howard Skempton’s untitled rite, HS58, ‘INTROIT Procrastinate’,\(^{26}\) will allow the player to find many ways of evoking delay, helped by Skempton’s supplementary notes: ‘F: Choir experience. A: Parades, processions, old films, etc.’\(^{27}\).

What emerges from this rite will not necessarily sound like a piece by Howard Skempton, even though the reference to his choir experience does (Skempton’s background in choirs and other singing activities is evident in much of his performance and compositional work). Nyman calls this feature of most traditional composition (and that of avant-garde composers – Nyman cites Boulez and Stockhausen particularly) identity.

With a score like Cardew’s Treatise (1963-6) aural recognisability is both impossible and irrelevant since the (non-musical) graphic symbols it contains have no meanings attached to them but ‘are to be interpreted in the context of their role in the whole’.... Each performer is invited by the absence of rules to make personal correlations of sight to sound.\(^{28}\)

While most of the text-based rites have something approaching rules, and those that do not have an indication of the types of interpretation that is desired by means of performance practice, the indeterminacy of prose instructions usually ensures the lack of identity by means of sound in the rites. The greatest exceptions are those rites which exist as compositions, such as Les Moutons de Panurge and Drum No. 1.

**Time**

Most of the rites do not have a specific time limit indicated. Some of them have a specified ending which is arrived at through following a given process; others, like free improvisation, are indeterminate as to the rite and can be determined by the performers. Some rites can be cut to

\(^{26}\) Nature Study Notes, p. 7.

\(^{27}\) Ibid., p. 14.

\(^{28}\) Nyman, p. 9.
fit the time available, which would have been useful in the familial sense of rites being used by the Orchestra as a bonding ritual. Nyman not only wrote about the elasticity of performance timings but introduced the idea of time perception, a phenomenon which has led to a great body of research in the last thirty years. Perhaps the rite which plays with perception of time the best is Philip Dadsen’s *Passing Time Rite* (PDPT30):

> Pass time. If passing time bores you, pause to listen. If listening to time passing bores you, invent a distraction to pass time by.\(^{29}\)

Dadsen uses the sense of boredom because it is one of the main ways that time perception is influenced by mood. Dick Higgins cited this phenomenon with respect to Satie’s *Vexations* in his essay ‘Boredom and Danger’ in 1966:

> Today it is usually done by a team of pianists, and lasts over a period of roughly 25 hours. Is it boring? Only at first. After a while [a very strange] euphoria...begins to intensify. By the time the piece is over, the silence is absolutely numbing, so much of an environment has the piece become.\(^{30}\)

Time is affected in a more practical way through the use of language. Several rites exhibit this feature, which is clearly stated in the opening to Tim Mitchell’s untitled rite (TM40):

> Take a space. Make a sound in it. Make another sound in it. Make another sound in it. Make another sound in it. Get to know the space.\(^{31}\)

The full stops which separate each action force the player to pause between each sound. The framework of this group of instructions places these actions in the context of the environment in which it is being played, asking that the player consider the acoustic of the space, perhaps by changing the sounds to vary the resonance, or that he or she explore

\(^{29}\) *Nature Study Notes*, p. 5.


\(^{31}\) *Nature Study Notes*, p. 6.
the space physically by making sounds in different locations within the space.

Performing

Tasks

Performance in experimental music places a creative burden upon performers.

The attitude that experimental music breeds among its best performers/composers/listeners is not what Cage called ‘carelessness as to the result’ but involvement and responsibility of a kind rarely encountered in other music.\footnote{Nyman, p. 13.}

This responsibility is particularly acute in text notation, especially in most of the Improvisation Rites in Nature Study Notes, as they were designed to encourage improvisation, rather than as pieces. The rites typically avoid fixing the duration, the tempo, instrumentation and many of the other activities, so that one performance may sound completely different from the next. Such freedom is not so totally given in the improvisational aspects of earlier music: while not specifically banned, oral tradition and sensibilities would not allow the soloist to switch to a kazoo in the indicated and customary cadenza points in Mozart’s Clarinet Concerto. What this freedom does is to force the players into evaluating their learned technique and, if necessary, inventing a new one.

Experimental music has, for the performer, effected the reverse of Duchamp’s revolution in the visual arts. Duchamp once said that ‘the point was to forget \textit{with my hand}...I wanted to put painting once again at the service of my mind.’ The \textit{head} has always been the guiding principle of Western music, and experimental music has successfully taught performers to remember with their hands, to produce and experience sounds physiologically.\footnote{Ibid.}

Nyman delineates problems of experimental performance in the categories below.
Unpredictable Difficulties Encountered in Performance

The interpretation of indeterminate text pieces often involves the serious consideration of solving ridiculous problems set in the notation. Cardew instilled in his students and in the Scratch Orchestra a concern for exploring the ramifications of the instructions of a piece. Christopher Hobbs remembered Cardew using La Monte Young’s Piano Piece for David Tudor #3 (1960), the entire text of which reads ‘most of them/were very old grasshoppers’:

he was asking us how we would solve that problem, and he...had this leather jacket and we sat there in great silence while he moved very, very gently and made the jacket creak slightly, which was his idea of ‘some of them were very old grasshoppers’ [sic], that it might get that idea across.34

Sometimes the realisation throws up impossibilities or incompatibilities which the performer may handle: those which derive from random means or those which come up due to incompatible solutions made by performers. Some of these impossible situations will be examined later. Carole Finer recognised such an incompatibility which would make her Exchange of Instruments Rite (CFEOIR147) last forever, and forestalled it emphatically:

Once everyone has his own instrument back the rite can stop. So, if no-one wanted to go back to his own instrument the rite could go on for ever? When an individual wants to stop playing he must get his own instrument back before stopping.35

The Game Element

Finer noted a feature of experimental music which is very strong: a kind of ‘bloody-mindedness’ to explore the ramifications of the composition or rite by the performer. John Tilbury said:

I think composition is a serious occupation and the onus is on the performer to show what he has written, even if from time to time it

34 Christopher Hobbs, interviewed by VA, 3 February 1983.

35 Nature Study Notes, p. 11.
may make him (the composer of course) look ridiculous. What he writes and what you read are two different things.\textsuperscript{36}

Nyman called this attitude ‘rules and their (subjective) interpretation’, which has its basis in game-play. Nyman found that most of the game elements in experimental music were like solitaire, perhaps reflecting the one-to-one nature of the communication between composer and performer by means of the notation. Many of the Improvisation Rites exhibit signs of participatory games, especially as several rites were directly taken from games and then adapted to performance. Since these rites have close analogies to the games upon which they were taken, the methodology developed in the field of economics called game theory may be applied in some cases to them.\textsuperscript{37}

Hobbs’ \textit{The Island Game Rite} has elements of static games with incomplete information, called Bayesian games. In static games, the players make a choice of a move or action from a range given to them. They do it simultaneously rather than in a dynamic game, which is played in turn (e.g., chess). All players are given the same options: in \textit{The Island Game Rite} the players are asked to assign characters in a morality tale (called, conveniently, A, B, C, D, and E) numbers according to preference, from one to five. The players are not given any other information until they have completed this task. They are then told what the letters and numbers mean: the characters represent sex, intelligence, power, morality, and security and the numbers the relative importance each player assigns these categories. This is a standard pop psychology game which has appeared over the years under several names,\textsuperscript{38} and its success as a psychology game depends upon the secrecy

\textsuperscript{36} Tilbury in 1969, in Nyman, p. 16.

\textsuperscript{37} The following game theory information has come in its entirety from Robert Gibbons, ‘An Introduction to Applicable Game Theory’, \textit{Journal of Economic Perspectives}, vol. 11, no. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 127-149.

\textsuperscript{38} Hobbs found his version in \textit{The Evening Standard} (14 May 1969); I played this game as ‘Crocodile River’ in the 1970s.
of the meaning behind the choices. Hobbs adds further meaning by attaching musical sounds to each category and importance. These sound styles are roughly analogous to the categories: for instance relative ‘security’ is evoked by playing sounds ‘which you know can be produced’ to playing sounds without ‘caring whether they can be produced or not’. Such a sense of relative insecurity is common to all virtuoso performance, but is particularly keen in twentieth-century performance which requires extended techniques. Hobbs tries to elicit this sense of relative safety and danger without using traditional notation.

Other rites, such as Carole Finer’s SNAP! Rite show dynamic tendencies, in that players take turns placing cards face up in the hope of finding a match (and thus winning cards). SNAP!, however, is almost entirely physical in its execution. Although a player may benefit from knowledge about their opponent – for instance, that he or she made a sudden twitch before a pounce – the action is too simple to gain much from game theory. The use of game theory for the evaluation of the interaction between players in free improvisation has been attempted, but at this early stage of investigation it seems to work less well when applied to text pieces. Game theory is concerned with the actions of players seeking a payoff. This payoff can be defined as successful contributions in a single performance of a work, but cannot be quantified when held against the almost infinite ‘right’ choices in the interpretation of a text-based piece or rite. There is an element of necessary contest between players of games, so that the payoff is usually at the expense of others. Dick Higgins noted the cooperative element in following rules in what he called ‘Games of Art’:

> These rules establish a community of participants who are more conscious of behaving in similar ways than they would be if they were acting in a drama.... The artist has to make certain decisions then about how best to promote a team spirit....

the team spirit and co-operation among the participants can be much more beautiful than in other media.\textsuperscript{40}

As Higgins points out, performance is a team sport. Without an opponent, however, the strategies are harder to read and are more easily examined in regard to their influences and other types.

Nyman gives other facets of performance which apply to the Scratch Orchestra and to \textit{Nature Study Notes} in a general way. He noted that the Scratch Orchestra transcended the notion of the traditional performer or composer: through the use of text scores a non-musician could be trained to be both. This extends to the notion of professionalism. It is commonly assumed by outsiders who do not reject the Scratch Orchestra activities out of hand that the work done was a kind of educational project. While Cardew did give the work (as can be seen above) an educational package (especially in \textit{Nature Study Notes}), he did so in the sense of all artistic enquiry being an education. Some of the most eloquent rites in this collection would still stand performance and are by visual or conceptual artists (Tim Mitchell and Carole Finer) or non-musicians (Bryn Harris). The text notation makes a literary classification possible, using the tools of folklore studies, which will form the basis of the next chapter.

An Overview of Text Types

Nyman’s classification exemplifies the way in which the Improvisation Rites in *Nature Study Notes* show traits which are common to experimental music, particularly as it existed in its classic era (ca. 1952-1974). To analyse the rites themselves, they must be classified as to the forms preferred, the references used, and other authorial elements which were used in their construction. One solution might be found in the method used in the tale type classification of folktale devised by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson,¹ at least as it was used by Robert Darnton in ‘Peasants Tell Tales: The Meaning of Mother Goose’.² Folk tales, however, consist of multiple variants of a source type, whereas, at least in such a small, one-off, sample as the 152 rites in *Nature Study Notes*, the desire of the author is to be original in his or her construction.

The rites in *Nature Study Notes* have supplementary notes which explain their origins, variant performances and other information which usually does not appear in published works. The entirety of *Nature Study Notes* pieces, classed according to text type, can be found in Appendix 3. At the same time that this classification system supports Nyman’s system of similarities in all experimental music, the more specific elements of type show a wide variety of differences, even stylistic variants between different composers. Within experimental music, such variants are commonly acknowledged, but something of these variations has been lost. Jonathan W. Barnard has written of what he perceives to be ‘anonymity’ in Fluxus:

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These events have a curiously anonymous, or impersonal, aspect, as if anyone could have planned them – something which is really not true of Cage’s pieces, despite his supposedly having removed himself from the proceedings. Is there anything, really, that categorically distinguishes [George] Brecht’s Fluxus pieces from La Monte Young’s of about the same time?  

The short answer is yes. Brecht’s text pieces (as collected in *Water Yam*) are succinct, sometimes only consisting of one word (‘polishing’ and ‘nearby’ are two entire texts), whereas Young’s are fuller. Brecht’s instructions, even when almost telegraphic, are recognisable as instructions, whereas Young often shapes his texts into poetic, oblique description (‘most of them/were very old grasshoppers’), which then must be deciphered by the performer in order to interpret it as performance. Both composers (and it is important to remember that normally Brecht is a visual artist and Young a composer) are different from Dick Higgins, who is different from Yoko Ono, Alison Knowles, and Ken Friedman. All of them are different from other text-based composers worldwide, including those of the Scratch Orchestra. The differences are much like those between symphonies by Haydn and Mozart, which exist despite formal similarities.

The widest classification distinction is whether a rite in *Nature Study Notes* fits the definition for Improvisation Rites as laid down by Cardew in the Draft Constitution: it is not a composition and it does not influence the music that will be played; at most it may establish a community of feeling, or a communal starting-point, through ritual’. The *Nature Study Notes* rites succeed or fail in this to varying extents. That the definition may not have been clear to the membership can be seen in several rites, for instance Alan Brett’s series of *Composition or...*  

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4 George Brecht was a prominent member of Fluxus: ‘a painter, who in the early fifties formulated a number of chance methods to break out of the blind alley of abstract expressionism and who, in 1957, wrote an authoritative monograph, entitled *Chance-Imagery*, of the history and use of random procedures in twentieth-century art’ (Nyman, *Experimental Music*, p. 62).
Improvisation Rites by Text-type Classification

Improvisation Rites (COIR) or Carole Finer's SNAP! Rite (which has the parenthetical subheading, ‘(or is it a composition?)’). Rites emerge clearly only when compositional limitations are overwhelming: the common-practice notation (and attendant need for musical training) of Les Moutons de Panurge; the specific instrumentation (‘Any number of drums’) in Drum No. 1. That these rites reappeared in the Scratch Anthology of Compositions provides a benchmark for the rite which is more compositional.

In contrast, the true-type rite is far more common: of the 153 rites examined, 127 are true-type in that the actual sound to be made is not determined. The sounds to be made can be organised in some way, but not so much that the performers have to realise a score or even follow the instructions in the rite. Michael Parsons’ Night Rite (MPNR21) is a good example of a true-type rite which mentions sound:

MPNR21 Place comfortable mattresses about the room. Those who feel tired lie down. The others play or sing relaxing music. A player who feels tired may also lie down. Ends when any or all of those lying down are asleep. Follow one of these instructions at a time: 1) play or sing more quietly than someone near you. 2) play or sing more continuously than someone near you. 3) play or sing at a lower pitch than someone near you. 4) play or sing with purer timbre than someone near you. (Move around)

Parsons establishes an environment in which those attending (audience members or performers) can relax themselves or relax others by means of their improvisation. Players may lie down. There is a natural ending when one or all attending are asleep. The directions are to play or sing, so that players are not limited to specific instrumentation. Parsons has directed the performance toward gentle, more sustained play and, although he does not ask that players follow the instructions in order, the enumeration of instructions would encourage such performance. As

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5 Christopher Hobbs’ The Broken Object Rite (CHTBOR15) has a related rite which can only be played afterward, marked CHTBOR15A.

6 Nature Study Notes, p. 4.
such, this rite approaches a composition without quite breaking Cardew’s
definition of a rite.

In contrast, Richard Reason’s *Live Every Minute*, which has a
similar bent toward engineering emotions in numerical order, is a
composition (it appears in the *Scratch Anthology of Compositions*) that
approaches an Improvisation Rite:

1. Be quiet.
2. Hum contentedly.
3. Laugh quietly to yourself.
4. Laugh lustily and occasionally.
5. Laugh hysterically often.
6. Cry loudly (if unable to cry express grief in some way)
7. Scream uncontrollably.....

Each section should last about one minute, and each merge into the
next. *Live every minute.*

This excerpt shows the first half of a palindromic form (of thirteen
instructions, with the seventh as central pivot), of increasing, then
decreasing emotional and vocal activity. Because this piece is in a
collection of compositions and the numerical instructions are placed as a
list in descending order, playing from top to bottom is assumed, if not
actually required. The instruction at the bottom, which breaks the
symmetry of the rest of the score, limits the players further as to time
and method of motion from one step to the next.

Sometimes the language used by the author indicates an awareness
of the compositional type. Carole Finer invented a complex structure for
*Stillness* (CFS32), in which performers play only when they fail to
remain still. She admitted the compositional nature of the piece in the
instructions:

The piece ends by 1) If one, two, or three players have played for a
quarter hour without interruption. 2) At a given time the player
who has played longest stops.

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Alan Brett, whose awareness of the close relationship between composition and rite is exhibited in his series of Composition or Improvisation Rites, repeatedly placed the word ‘piece’ into Piece (ABP128), ending with the pun, ‘Peace begins where Piece ends’.9

**Forms**

Forms of rites often frame the action of improvisation. Many forms are cyclical. Hobbs' untitled rite (CH27) is perfectly cyclical:

...watch what you are doing. Do nothing. / Occasionally, raise your head and watch someone. / If they raise their head and watch you, / play for a short time, / watching what you are doing. If, while you are/watching what you are doing, doing nothing, / you feel that someone is watching you, / play for a short time, / watching what you are doing, or / raise your head and watch the person who is / watching you. If someone is watching you, / play for a short time. / If no-one is watching you...10

Cardew was impressed enough by this form that on another occasion he took the trouble of writing out this rite in a circle; a kind of *Ma fin est mon commencement* of the Scratch Orchestra.11

**Linked process forms**

Processes in which activities are passed from one player to another are useful as a spur to communality of feeling. Linked rites can have a network, snowball effect. For instance, Hugh Shrapnel's *Unknown Rite* (HMSUR103):

Only one person knows at first. He communicates to one or more of the company of what is to happen without stating anything definite, (for he might not know for certain himself at this point) by suggesting, demonstrating, implying, questioning. As he communicates thus to some, so they in turn communicate to others and out of ideas, actions emerge, at first by individuals but gradually by groups of people getting larger and larger and less and less as the actions converge on each other with increasing

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9 *Nature Study Notes*, p. 10.

10 *Nature Study Notes*, p. 4.

11 Hobbs said in November 2002 that he was very touched by this gesture from his teacher.
concordance of aims. In this way the implications of the start form the actions of now. The rite ends when everyone is doing the same thing.\footnote{Nature Study Notes, p. 9.}

Shrapnel has made the rite non-specific as to sound. The communication (including the terms ‘suggesting, demonstrating, implying, questioning’) is unclear as to whether it is verbal, nor whether the actions are musical. In this way the snowball effect of communication frames whatever activities which are to be done not as music, but as ritual.

**Contingent process**

A form may also be repeated or extended in some other way through contingent process, in which certain conditions will activate further instruction. David Dixon’s *Novelty Wears Off* (DDNWO110) uses a form with cyclical elements which may be repeated indefinitely if the situation warrants it:

1. In the situation in which you now find yourself, what is the most surprising things you could do? 2. This may or may not influence what is to follow. 3. In view of the above, what is now the most surprising thing you could do? 4. Repeat 2 and 3 until the novelty of each occurrence is no longer surprising. 5. If doing something unsurprising will occasion surprise, the piece may continue.\footnote{Ibid., p. 9.}

Dick Higgins emphasised the importance of the contradiction in the idea of the mundane occasioning surprise in ‘Boredom and Danger’:

[B]oredom often serves a useful function: as an opposite to excitement and as a means of bringing emphasis to what it interrupts, causing us to view both elements freshly. It is a necessary station on the way to other experiences....\footnote{Higgins, ‘Boredom and Danger’, p. 103.}

Although Dixon refers to a piece, sound is never mentioned. The actions made in this rite could be musical or they could be something else. The action of change in whatever players had set up as surprising – say, jumping and screaming, taking one’s clothing off – could itself be
surprising. Since the repetition of any action could be surprising as well, such repetition might go on for some time before the novelty wore off.

**Closed forms**

Other forms are closed in that the rite is over when the activity has been completed. Howard Skempton’s *Improvisation Rite No. 2*, ‘When you’re not playing, look for a girl in red stockings’, is, presumably, over once that person has been sighted. Hugh Shrapnel’s *Beethoven Rite* (HMSBR45), in which players react in an exaggerated manner to a recording of a piece by Beethoven lasts, in its main version, for the length of time the recording takes to play. As ‘[t]he piece itself may or may not form part of the improvisation’, there is a possibility of a variant performance which differs in length.

**Persistent forms**

Howard Skempton’s *Improvisation Rite No. 3* (HSIRNT14) is similar to *Novelty Wears Off*, but with a more compact language and a persistent form which is entirely self-reflexive:

> Before playing, do something inappropriate. Keep doing it until it seems inappropriate to start playing. Start playing.17

This kind of opposition of language to specify opposition of action can be found in several rites in which there is an element of a **dual and opposite direction of play**. Hugh Shrapnel’s *Improvisation Rite* (HMSIR44) uses this opposition in language with a similar goal to that of Skempton:

> Do something impossible, Do something possible; Make the impossible thing seems possible, Make the possible thing seem impossible.18

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15 *Nature Study Notes*, p. 3.


Sometimes the nature of duality lies in the roles of the performers and others. Michael Chant’s *The Rite: Advice* (MCTR:A134) brings the listener into the rite:

Play or listen. If uncertain of anything at any time go to where someone (if you are performing) is listening, or where someone (if you are listening) is performing, and ask him.\(^{19}\)

The first sentence indicates that at least part of the audience should be aware of the text of the rite and, by listening, they become performers, especially if they observe the second sentence and ask a question of a performer.

**Found or ready-made forms**

Many of the forms are found or ready-made systems. This is a feature of text-based experimental music which also flourished in traditionally-notated music. Christopher Hobbs specialised in the musical readymade, in the Duchampian sense.\(^{20}\) *The Island Game Rite* is a perfect example of a found system, but there are several other rites which use previously existing material either as content (David Jackman adapted a catalogue of lipstick shades to his untitled DJ 79); or as directions (Cardew’s use of Confucius’s *Analects* on war in CCC131 or David Jackman’s adoption of ‘A Caucus-Race’ from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*).

**Multiple-part forms**

Some rites are related by type and could be grouped as multiple parts of the same idea. Alan Brett’s series of short rites (ABCOIR112-126) are related as to form and idea, especially 113-122:

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p. 11.

ABCOIR113 Start to play. Then later: – Play now and then, but only when somebody else is playing.

ABCOIR114 Start to play anything. Continue to play anything. Start to attempt playing something that somebody else was playing 10 minutes ago.

ABCOIR115 Play when you are least expected to.

ABCOIR117 Watch somebody else in the Scratch Orchestra, try and play what they were/are about to play.

ABCOIR118 Play what you will be playing in twenty minute’s [sic] time.

ABCOIR119 The more ugly the sounds the more beautiful they become.

ABCOIR120 The more beautiful the sound the more ugly they become.

ABCOIR121 Playing faster than you can the time passes slowly.

ABCOIR122 Play so slowly that it becomes your fastest speed possible.\(^{21}\)

These separate rites could be separate steps in the same rite and make up a consistent form. The first five rites are concerned with playing in time (ABCOIR117 is the only rite which mentions the Scratch Orchestra as a condition of play (Michael Parsons’ *Pay as You Play Rite* (MPPAYPR46) asks that the ‘pay’ mentioned in the title go to the Scratch Orchestra bank account)). The next pair deal with aesthetics (the ‘ugly/beautiful’ contrast in 119 and 120); a final pair is devoted to tempo. ABCOIR 123-6 also have a theme, in that they are concerned with the placement of sounds in relation to other players.

David Jackman’s *Three Bird Rites* (DJTBR98) has the same multipart structure but it lies within one rite:

Converse with pigeons (real or imaginary). Establish a rapport.
Converse with ducks (real or imaginary). Establish a rapport.
Converse with chickens (real or imaginary). Establish a rapport.\(^{22}\)

\(^{21}\) *Nature Study Notes*, p. 10.

Repetitive or additive forms

Repetitive or additive forms exist in rites which either are compositions or have strong compositional construction. It is perhaps best used in Tim Mitchell’s untitled rite (TM40):

Take a space. Make a sound in it. Make another sound in it. Make another sound in it. Make another sound in it. Get to know the space. Take an object. Do something to it. Do something else to it. Do something else to it. Do something else to it. Get to know the object. Take a person. Watch them make an action. Watch them make another action. Watch them make another action. Watch them make another action. Get to know the person. Do something. Do something else. Do something else. Do something else. Get to know yourself.23

This rite has four sections consisting of an object, an action repeated four times, and an injunction. In this structure the rite would look much like many Scratch Orchestra text-based compositions if it were displayed as follows:

Take a space.
Make a sound in it.
Make another sound in it.
Make another sound in it.
Make another sound in it.
Get to know the space.

Take an object.
Do something to it.
Do something else to it.
Do something else to it.
Do something else to it.
Get to know the object.

Take a person.
Watch them make an action.
Watch them make another action.
Watch them make another action.
Watch them make another action.
Get to know the person.

Do something.
Do something else.
Do something else.

23 Ibid., p. 6.
Do something else.
Get to know yourself.

Although Cardew has made slashes (/) on other rites where concrete placement has been lost in publication, TM40 is not one of them. Certainly this arrangement underlines the waiting time required between actions. The symmetry is lost in the last group of actions but it is, implicitly, ‘take yourself’.

**Compositional Provisions**

Beyond formal construction there are several features of Improvisation Rites which show shared cultural and aesthetic values. Particularly strong features are based on a concern for the equality of membership, care for the welfare of members, and an emphasis on enjoyment and entertainment.

**Danger and damage control**

Rites were designed with care for danger and damage control, whether to avoid accidental or deliberate sabotage of the rite through interpretation or as limitation of physical damage. Only Cardew’s *Stupid Book Rite* (CCSBR7) indicates mild violence without amelioration: ‘To end, stronger measures may be necessary, eg. Destruction of the S[tupid] B[ook]’. More commonly, provisions are made to bar violence or needless destruction, as in Christopher Hobbs’ *Supplement: The Broken Object Rite* (CHSTBOR15A): ‘Be careful not to break anything other than the objects (this rite is better performed out of doors, in a large open space)’.

**Equality of participants**

Methods to control the players and to avoid sabotage are more subtle and exist in the construction of many works. One method used

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was to ensure equality by instructions, for instance Chris Jones’ CJ81, which divided the improvisation into sections: ‘The signal to begin each part of each period may be given by any player and must be observed by the rest’. There were contingencies for situations in which the rite would become unbalanced or if it would become impossible to end it otherwise. Christopher Hobbs’ Small Brush Rite (CHSBR19), in which players stroke each other’s lips with soft brushes, includes such a concern:

Note: If it becomes plain to a player that he will never find the stroking intolerable, it would be courteous at some point to pretend to find it intolerable. Indeed, not to do so could under some circumstances be considered cruel.

Puns and word-play

Verbal notation of the Improvisation Rites encouraged the authors to engage in logical and illogical definitions, including puns and word-play. Hugh Shrapnel made a play on the Christian concept of the Trinity in his Vodka Rite (HMSVR48), calling the alcoholic drink the ‘Holy Spirit’. Tim Mitchell’s Scratch Rite (TMSR86) plays upon the name of the Orchestra by evoking a flea circus: ‘Crowd around a small box containing a large number of fleas. On a signal the box is opened. Commence playing when the fleas bite’.

Pastiche and parody

Such word-play also resulted in pastiche and parody. The funniest parody in Nature Study Notes is Michael Chant’s untitled MC12:

Two classes of performers: improvisers and stone-throwers, the former class to contain more members than the latter.

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26 Ibid., p. 8.

27 Ibid., p. 4.

28 Ibid., p. 8.
The stone throwers throw stones to miss the improvisers and cause no damage, with a vigour proportionate to the intensity of the sound.  

Paragraph 1 of Cardew’s *The Great Learning* had been premiered the year before. This work, which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 10, divides performers into two groups, one larger than the other, with different activities (in the Cardew, whistle players and speakers), all of whom strike stones together at the beginning. Paragraph 1 is written to encourage an atmosphere of ritualistic calm. In MC12, however, the ritual is subverted into one group of people hurling stones at another. Even the customary concern for the welfare of the players in these rites is sent up, as Chant primly asserts (in a parody of the Scratch concern for danger and damage control) that ‘[t]here are no penalties for hitting an improviser or damaging an object, as it is assumed this will not occur’.  

**Game-play**

Games are a common model for rites, as at least twenty-three rites have a direct correlation to existing games. Particularly popular are party and childrens’ games. Michael Parsons brought the village fête into Scratch activity in his *Egg-Pushing Rite* (MPERR144). In *Stirring Guitar Rite* (BHSGR33), Bryn Harris evoked the children’s electric game Operation by asking that players place a switched-on plastic drinks stirrer (a favourite instrumental adjunct of AMM guitarist Keith Rowe) between the strings of a guitar without making a sound. Harris’ provision for failure is reminiscent of the cruelties of childhood games: ‘if the task has not been successfully completed within the time limit, that

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29 Ibid., p. 8.

person must leave the group temporarily to contemplate his lack of dexterity'.

Rite Types by Their Use in Performance and Personal Style

The preponderance of rites which fall into the true-type definition narrows the kind of performance decisions to those associated with improvisation. Very few rites directly indicate performance, perhaps because Improvisation Rites were originally used as an impetus to improvisation. Frederic Rzewski’s Fund-Raising Rite (FRFFR6) asks for an announcement about the rite which would appear in a programme or displayed as a sign in the performance space:

Announce a collective improvisation in which anyone can take part. The announcement should be accompanied by the following text:

‘Look around and let yourself be drawn to a person whom you like. Study his face, gestures, movements for a while. Then take a sum of money, preferably all you have in your pocket, and give it to him. Then start again.’

However, this rite is written by an interested outsider, and shows its difference in its use. Most rites do not need rehearsal and the instruments and other props are easily obtainable, often by one member for the others – for instance, the vodka in Hugh Shrapnel’s Vodka Rite involves a relatively cheap, albeit potent, liquor which can be shared by an improvising group.

Often music acts as a kind of non-verbal communication between the players, whether as a kind of framing device, for instance

Christopher Hobbs, Improvisation Rite (CHIR83):

Stand anywhere in the room. Face in any direction. Look straight ahead of you. Turn around your own axis very slowly (perhaps only once in the time available). When your eyes meet those of another performer, acknowledge his presence; on the simplest level by smiling in greeting and moving on; or by standing still for a time, looking at him; or by making some action which will involve him or

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31 Ibid., p. 5.

32 Ibid., p. 3.
to which he can respond, either by imitating the action or by making a complementary one. Do not contradict or fail to respond to these gestures of friendship. After you have completed an action as described above, resume your circular motion. Let this be the first performance of the rite.\textsuperscript{33}

or as the constituent sound source, as in Frederic Rzewski’s \textit{Rite} (FRR80):

\begin{verbatim}
Talk gibberish to someone (any sounds, gestures, expressions).
Have conversation with that person in gibberish. After a while notice that another pair nearby is talking the same language. Include them in your conversation. Continue until everyone is participating in the same conversation. Continue.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{verbatim}

Such an aesthetic, of music as a language, was unpopular within the dominant art-music culture. As parody or as accepted concept, this would have appealed to the members of the Orchestra, whatever their musical training. Another such aesthetic is the ability of music to express emotion, which Hugh Shrapnel treated in his \textit{Beethoven Rite} (HMSBR45): ‘exaggerate in some way (perhaps actively) what would be your normal emotional response to it.’\textsuperscript{35} Here the emotional response exhibited by the performers may or may not have been the emotional response which Beethoven might have intended or expected; a suitable emotional response to, say, the noble intent of the ‘Eroica’ or the bucolic intent of the ‘Pastoral’ Symphonies, could be one of revulsion or hilarity.

Interpretation of rites could, by means of multiple definitions of deliberately obscure instructions, move from the actual into the realisation of conceptual elements of the piece. Howard Skempton’s \textit{Improvisation Rite No. 4} (HSIRNF28) shows this deliberate vagueness:

\begin{verbatim}
Do something. Undo it. Do it again – but louder. Undo it again.
Do it while undoing it. Undo it while doing it.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{verbatim}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p. 4.
\end{itemize}
The language here could indicate any action which is reversible and has something to do with sound. A zip fastener might provide a strong concrete realisation, but because the nature of the terms ‘do’, ‘undo’, and ‘something’ are unclear, it could also be the statement of an opinion.

The sense of vagueness can also lead to contradictory or impossible instructions, such as the feat of mind-reading required in Alan Brett’s *Composition or Improvisation Rite* (ABCOIR117):

Watch somebody else in the Scratch Orchestra; try and play what they were/are about to play.37

In this rite the player must observe another player and guess – by the observed player’s expression or perhaps actions – their intent. As the observed player would most obviously give this away in a situation in which they had changed their mind at the last minute – a quickly saved mistake, say – the player choosing to observe in ABCOIR117 might wait a long time before gathering material for the rite and might perhaps never get it. In this sense it is the search for such intent – and the keen awareness which accompanies such non-sonic activity – which forms the rite. A more active performance could be made if the observer had improvised with the observed player before and knew his or her style. The performance of a player’s signature sound event by another before the player can lead to much amusement among the gathered group, if not the victim of the emulation.

Most of the rites are either open-ended, or specify by their structure a natural end, so that few of the rites require time-keeping in any manner. Frederic Rzewski’s *Les Moutons de Panurge* requires a very complex *musical* time-keeping, in that players must follow the score exactly and the entire ensemble must accelerate throughout the main part of the piece from quaver=150 to ca. 300, but as has been mentioned, this is an atypical rite. Several of Alan Brett’s *Composition or Improvisation* Rites ask that the players play a certain time before or

after someone else, but because these occur in matched rites which are often, at least in part, contradictory or impossible, the timing is less crucial than the concept which it represents. The most meticulous use of numbers to determine structural time is in Cardew’s *Quiet Rite* (CCQR133):

Rule 1: In the first third of the piece approx 1 in 6 sounds to be loud and short (P); approx. 1 in 6 to be long (up to 20 secs) and quiet (Q); the rest to be short and quiet (R).

Method: let x be the time available in minutes, and y be the number of players participating. \(2x/y = z\) the number of sounds (nearest whole number) to be made by each player in the first third of x. If \(z \geq 12\), each makes 2 Ps, 2 Qs, and the rest Rs. If \(12 \geq z \geq 6\), each makes 1 P, 1 Q, and the rest Rs. If \(z = 3, 4, \text{ or } 5\), each makes 1 P or 1 Q and the rest Rs. If \(z = 1 \text{ or } 2\), only the occasional player to make a P, or a Q, the rest make R only. If \(z < 1\): either: 1/2 Rs may be attempted, with an occasional 1/2 P or 1/2 Q, or: a certain number of players (sufficient to make \(z = 10\) should be silent for the first third of x, or: a combination of similar systems designed to uphold rule 1.

Rule 2: Proceed smoothly from the first third through the remainder of the piece.\(^{38}\)

In this rite, the players must know the length of time of the entire piece and the number of players who will take part (so that, unlike Scratch Music, players cannot join in once the rite is under way). The calculations must be made and the number of notes assigned to each player, especially if \(z\) (the number of notes made by each player) was two or less. This has some parodistic elements: for instance, the instruction to try to make half-sounds if \(z\) were less than one. No matter how silly, though, the Orchestra members would be expected to play the game and to try to fulfil the instructions. Careful timing would have to be made of the entire rite, therefore, to ensure that the two-thirds of x (the length of the entire improvisation) would be long enough to make the formula valid.

As well as Michael Parsons’ *Night Rite* (MPNR21), which provides soft furnishings and comfort for the players, environmental features occurred in other rites, such as David Jackman’s untitled rite (DJ69), in which the performing space was to be covered with kapok or similar fluff. Hugh Shrapnel’s *Improvisation Rite* (HMSIR43) is a site-specific environmental piece, in that sounds are to be made from objects found while on a walk on the riverside path from Greenwich Pier to Woolwich. The supplementary notes indicate that any other area could be used for this rite as a variant. Although it was not limited to the instructions of this rite, Shrapnel used the environment for his Scratch Orchestra Presentation (#18), an excursion to the Dorset coast which contained performances of other pieces as well. Outdoor and site-specific concerts became common for the Scratch Orchestra. Other non-traditional means of performance includes opportunities for private or solo performance, as mentioned above.

**Rite Types by Personal Stylistics**

Hugh Shrapnel’s environmental piece indicates a personal concern which was to show up in other pieces and in other activities in which Shrapnel was to engage. These personal stylistics are easier to find than national ones or stylistics acquired by training. Christopher Hobbs wrote the two longest rites, one purpose-written (*The Hidden Object Rite* (CHTHOR15)), one found (*The Island Game Rite* (CHTIGR20)). In the main, Hobbs’ rites are carefully constructed sets of instructions, not dissimilar to *Voicpiece*, one of the pieces mentioned as an example of a Scratch Orchestra Composition in the Draft Constitution. Howard Skempton’s rites and notated compositions also show stylistic similarities, as will be shown in Chapter 12. Cardew’s works show a wide variety of types of construction and influence, perhaps as examples to the others or because he was experimenting himself with the extents of the genre. On the other hand, Ed Fulton and Chris May, both
performers and composers in the mainstream avant garde, wrote relatively short, rather ‘poetic’ pieces.

Visual artist members do not show a specific tendency toward visual pieces, although Tim Mitchell has the only rite which uses a graphic notation central to the piece (David Jackman, another trained artist, drew the picture of a cigarette pack in DJ151, but as an illustration rather than as symbolic notation). Mitchell also uses the painter Jasper Johns as a reference, but as Cardew dedicated _Octet ’61_ to Johns, this cannot be used as a sign of an arts education.

Nor can a national style difference be formed from this collection. There are only two Americans represented, Alvin Curran and Frederic Rzewski, both members of Music Elettronica Viva. At least two of Rzewski’s pieces, _Les Moutons de Panurge_ and _The Sound-Pool_ (FRTSP65), were not written for this collection, although, as MEV tended to use compositions to drive their improvisation, the latter fits _Nature Study Notes_ well.

There might be some significance to the fact that John Tilbury and Alan Brett, both performers, tend to prefer to write relatively jocular rites, but so does Bryn Harris, who was working in pest research. Carole Finer’s style resembles Cardew’s or Hobbs’ in her care for the ramifications and sources of her rites but she, too, is not a musician. There seemed to be mutual respect between musically-trained and untrained members; for instance, Hugh Shrapnel credited Bryn Harris for his _Beethoven Rite_. Certainly the sense of equality of membership is an overriding impression of _Nature Study Notes_. This equality was to inform the actions of the Orchestra throughout what Rod Eley called the ‘Golden Age’ of the Scratch Orchestra, and _Nature Study Notes_ formed a solid repertoire of this important section of Scratch Orchestra activity.

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Use of Reference

*Nature Study Notes* is particularly rich in its use of reference. Such reference is playful and reminiscent of the mixture of old (even ancient) lore and new fads detailed by Iona and Peter Opie in *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*. The Opies were aware that schoolyard games were not considered important at the time:

> It may be, of course, that the information recorded here will seem trifling to some. But to us the unexpected quantity and variety of the traditions which have been collected, and of the street and playground games which are being described in companion volumes, do seem to show that children today are storing up for themselves just as lively memories as any of those with which we are now regaled by the old folk.\(^{40}\)

The Scratch Orchestra created their own variety of reference, which is too great to be detailed here, so that a few examples must suffice.

Experimental music sources

Of sources for rites from American and non-British experimental music, the works of George Brecht had much in common with Scratch Orchestra composition.\(^{41}\) His box publication *Water Yam*\(^ {42}\) was a collection of text pieces, each printed on a reference card. His work influenced Tim Mitchell’s *Cards Rite* (TMCR39).\(^ {43}\) Cardew’s ‘*Elements for Use in Improvisation Rites’ Rite* (CCEFUIIRR107) evoked Brecht’s telegraphic style. Brecht’s *Solo for Violin, Viola, or Contrabass* (*Water Yam*, 1962: see Ex. 7.1, next page), consists of the single indication: ‘polishing’.

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\(^{41}\) Brecht and Associates (George Brecht) provided the plan for the research project, ‘The Journey of the Isle of Wight Westward by Iceberg to Tokyo Bay’.

\(^{42}\) George Brecht *Water Yam* (Fluxus Box C, 1967).

\(^{43}\) *Nature Study Notes*, p. 6.
Ex. 7.1: George Brecht, performing *Solo for Violin, Viola, or Contrabass* 44

CCEFUIIRR107 has several such indications: ‘Bodily contact. Exchange of instruments (goods, objects). Cleaning operations. Courtesy.’ Cardew listed Brecht as father and ‘ritual’ as the ancestor or archetype. Brecht’s work could act as an interpretive solution in performing Cardew’s rite, in that ‘polishing’ is one solution to the direction that the performer engage in ‘cleaning operations’.

**Performance rituals**

John Tilbury combined the panache of performance with the slightly tawdry elements of commercial culture in *Dress Rite*:

Undress, folding your clothes neatly and piling them with clothes belonging to others. When you feel dressed for the occasion begin to play. 45

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45 *Nature Study Notes*, p. 8.
Tilbury lists his influences as, ‘F: Liberace.  A: Fig-leaves, “I danced with the winds in my maidenform bra,” Moss Bros.’ Wladziu Valentino Liberace (1919-87), the popular American pianist, was known for a dramatic dress sense and image which extended to the candelabra which decorated his pianos onstage. Fig leaves are, by tradition, the Biblical symbol for Adam and Eve’s shame, for hidden sin, modesty, and dress as concealment. The play on the popular Maidenform bra advertisement – the format for this popular series of advertisements which ran from the late 1940s almost always started as wish rather than action (‘I dreamed I was...in my Maidenform bra’) – forms a kitsch bookend to Liberace’s camp display in its sense of secret liberation. Moss Bros. Clothiers is yet another way in which dress is manifested in popular culture, in that it is best known for the hire of dress suits and dinner jackets, a sign of special occasion – weddings, retirement and other formal dinners and dances – of the working and poorer middle classes for whom such events were rare. Dress suits are also more prosaically the work clothes of the male orchestral musician. Tilbury brings the ceremony of concert dress into


the performance space and underlines its importance to the players and any audience. He does not specify the type of dress to use in the instructions in the rite. In fact, he mentions only undressing before play, that the act of changing clothes to ‘feel dressed’ could be implied as realised, or it could mean, like the Maidenform advert, that a state of undress equals freedom.

**Children’s literature**

Another popular cultural reference might be found in the two rites which refer to Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*, as Alice imagery was strong within the late 1960s drugs culture, especially by way of the Jefferson Airplane song ‘White Rabbit’ from their album *Surrealistic Pillow* (RCA, 1967). David Jackman’s *A Caucus-Race* (DJACR92) presents a quotation from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*:

> ‘What is a caucus-race?’ said Alice... ‘Why,’ said the Dodo, ‘the best way to explain it is to do it.’... First it marked out a race-course in a sort of circle (‘the exact shape doesn’t matter,’ it said), and then all the party were placed along the course, here and there. There was no ‘one, two, three and away,’ but they began running when they liked, and left off when they liked, so that it was not easy to know when the race was over. However, when they had been running half an hour or so.... the Dodo suddenly called out ‘The race is over!’ and they all crowded round it, panting, and asking, ‘But who has won?’ This question the Dodo could not answer without a great deal of thought.....At last the Dodo said, ‘Everybody has won, and all must have prizes.’

In a way, Jackman is realising Carroll’s own performance instructions, which Jackman has left out of his Rite ‘(And, as you might like to try the thing yourself, some winter-day, I will tell you how the Dodo managed it.)’

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Gender

In 1969, the year of the first Apollo moon landing, Christopher Hobbs’ *Lunar Rite* (CHLR87: ‘Men How high the moon? Women Count’)\(^5^1\) used the double meaning of the moon as aspirational goal and as source and affect for the menstrual cycle. The phrase, ‘How high the moon’, refers to the 1940 song by Morgan Lewis, Jr. and Nancy Henderson, which became the *cantus firmus* for the bebop classic ‘Ornithology’, by Charlie Parker and Benny Harris. The character of the singer in this ballad tends to be voiced by a woman, and the imagery is that of waiting for a lover:

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Somewhere there’s music
How faint the tune
Somewhere there’s heaven
How high the moon
There is no moon above
When love is far away too
Till it comes true
That you love me as I love you\(^5^2\)
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The attitude of the character singing is passive. The lover will have to ‘do all the running’. Until then, he is as distant as the absent moon.

The same instruction, as applied to the male players, carries opposite meanings, those of space as conquest, of the need to strive to win the space race, at that time an entirely masculine pursuit, at least for the United States (the jazz song reference suggests a U.S., rather than Soviet, basis). The women players’ instruction, ‘count’, refers to one of the rituals involved in educating young girls about menstruation in schools and at home – the establishment of a diary or some other means of counting the days in which the menstrual cycle occurs. Here the moon is a symbol of adventure and romance for men, who seem to control its appearance for women (‘there is no moon above/when love is far away’).

\(^{51}\) *Nature Study Notes*, p. 8.

The moon, when there at all, is the source of an earth-bound ritual associated with pain for women. Hobbs carried this theme to the supplementary notes, refusing to name a father for the rite: ‘untraced’, and naming ‘Subjugation of the female’, as the archetype or ancestor.

Howard Skempton’s *Three-Part Rite* (HSTPR41: ‘Each player divides himself into three equal parts’) formed one of the required rites in the Journey Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 23 November 1970, which will be examined in Chapter 8. This rite commonly has been assumed to refer to Julius Caesar’s ‘Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres’, although this is not mentioned in the rite. The father in this rite is Aristophanes and so the most likely reference to a division of three comes in Plato’s Dialogues concerning Aristophanes in praise of Love, with a musing upon gender:

Aristophanes professed to open another vein of discourse; he had a mind to praise Love in another way, unlike that either of Pausanias or Eryximachus. Mankind, he said, judging by their neglect of him, have never, as I think, at all understood the power of Love. For if they had understood him they would surely have built noble temples and altars, and offered solemn sacrifices in his honour; but this is not done, and most certainly ought to be done: [189d] since of all the gods he is the best friend of men, the helper and the healer of the ills which are the great impediment to the happiness of the race. I will try to describe his power to you, and you shall teach the rest of the world what I am teaching you. In the first place, let me treat of the nature of man and what has happened to it; for the original human nature was not like the present, but different. [189e] The sexes were not two as they are now, but originally three in number; there was man, woman, and the union of the two, having a name corresponding to this double nature, which had once a real existence, but is now lost, and the word ‘Androgynous’ is only preserved as a term of reproach.\(^{54}\)

This reference suggests a psychosexual interpretation, rather than the spatial one suggested by the quotation from Caesar. It does not seem to have been realised according to this reference in the Queen Elizabeth

\(^{53}\) Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, Liber I.

Hall concert, but offers an image of a more overlapped form (of ‘masculine’ shading into ‘feminine’ by means of androgyny) than the clear-cut form of other interpretations.

Science

Howard Skempton’s Opera Rite (HSOR59: ‘Regard instability as a function of discontent’) is perhaps the best application of scientific phenomena to an improvisational situation. This true-type rite makes reference to a behavioural phenomenon known as klinokinesis:

Movement in which an organism travels in a straight line except when it encounters an unfavourable environment or an aversive stimulus, when it turns at random to remain in the favourable environment, the frequency of turning depending on the environmental variability and the direction or angular velocity of turning, which depends in turn on the intensity of the environmental stimulus. [From Greek kleinein to incline + kinesis movement]55

Such a definition has obvious improvisational uses, as even in the best improvisations a player may find ‘an unfavourable environment or an aversive stimulus’, in sounds produced by others. Such an aversion is entirely subjective. Lou Gare provided a particularly apt evocation of thought in improvisation in his impressions of playing in AMM:

It is good just to listen. I don’t know what to do.
Keith is playing fantastically tonight.
Why is Eddie laying on the floor?
I can’t hear Cor.
Why doesn’t Christopher turn that thing off whatever it is?
I shall go deaf if this noise goes on much longer.
Why doesn’t someone turn the lights on – I hope they don’t stop.
I can’t bear it.
One is tossed this way and that – and I don’t move.56


Gare displays the sense of powerlessness in improvisation, in that he can only respond to the stimulus of the other players, even if that response might in turn provide a stimulus to the other players. The reference to Opera in Skempton’s title might indicate the progress of most plots of grand opera; in that misunderstanding and unhappiness are often outside the protagonists’ control, or that Opera might simply mean ‘works’.

Religion and philosophy

Another link between Nature Study Notes and The Great Learning is CCC131, Cardew’s rite which is a quotation from Confucius, Analects Bk III, section 23 (translated by Soothill), part of Confucius’ works on social order and government:

The attack should be prompt and united, and as the piece progresses it should do so harmoniously, with clearness of tone and continuity of time, and so on to its conclusion.\(^{57}\)

This quotation is from ‘The Master discoursing to the Bandmaster of Lu’ on ‘the art of music’, so it may be thought of as a ready-made rite and benefits from the play on words between ‘attack’ as the initiation of sound and ‘attack’ in its military meaning. Cardew highlights the translation by Soothill by featuring it in the rite itself. This translation gives the attack as united as if in a downbeat properly played together. In his supplementary notes, Cardew adds Ezra Pound’s translation:

One can understand this music; a rousing start in unison, then the parts follow pure, clear one from another, (brilliant) explicit to the conclusion.\(^{58}\)

in which he translates this unity as a unison. It may be useful to compare these translations with the one by Arthur Waley, as Cardew recommended it to Christopher Hobbs.

\(^{57}\) Analects Bk. III, tr. Soothill; quoted in Nature Study Notes, p. 10.

\(^{58}\) Nature Study Notes, p. 12.
When talking to the Grand Master of Lu about music, the Master said, Their music in so far as one can find out about it began with a strict unison. Soon the musicians were given more liberty; but the tone remained harmonious, brilliant, consistent, right on till the close.  

In this translation Waley follows Pound in the use of the term ‘unison’, but he also adds a note about the musicians being allowed ‘more liberty’, which he interprets as liberty to improvise, a fortuitous coincidence in relation to Improvisation Rites.

Conclusion

There are far more references of this sort in Nature Study Notes, and far more in Improvisation Rites as the Scratch Orchestra continued. Since these rites were collected in the months just previous to and just after the formation of the Scratch Orchestra, they show only the features of music-making at the start of the Scratch Orchestra. However, they also show the breadth and depth which members and friends brought to the Orchestra, even before Cardew could educate them in the ways in which he envisaged it. It must be remembered that many of the authors represented in this early publication had not received the instruction Cardew was giving in the Experimental Music class at Morley College. Many of the authors did not eventually join the Orchestra. However, this variety was to continue in Scratch Orchestra activities and publications throughout its existence (as may be noted in the next part of this thesis) and gave lie to the notion that the Orchestra was a pliant tool, or Cardew’s own educational project. The Orchestra, as


60 If the reader perceives that this statement grates against the idea of an Orchestra without hierarchy as put forth in the Draft Constitution, he or she is right. The perception that Cardew could not give up the role of leader and teacher would grow through the life of the Orchestra, leading to the Discontents in 1971, which is detailed in Chapter 10.
Nature Study Notes suggests, sprang from Cardew’s head, but like Athena, it did so fully armed.
Pei-man Khang asked Hwang-Tî, saying, ‘You were celebrating, O Tî, a performance of the music of the Hsien-khîh, in the open country near the Thung-thing lake. When I heard the first part of it I was afraid; the next made me weary; and the last perplexed me. I became agitated and unable to speak, and lost my self-possession’. The Tî said, ‘It was likely that it should so affect you! It was performed with (the instruments of) men, and all attuned according to (the influences of) Heaven. It proceeded according to (the principles of) propriety and righteousness, and was pervaded by (the idea of) the Grand Purity….

‘I performed first the music calculated to awe; and you were frightened as if by a ghostly visitation. I followed it with that calculated to weary; and in your weariness you would have withdrawn. I concluded with that calculated to perplex; and in your perplexity you felt your stupidity. But that stupidity is akin to the Tâo; you may with it convey the Tâo in your person, and have it (ever) with you’.

The book of Kwang-Sze, XIV.3 (tr. James Legge), quoted in the Firelighting Component of Paragraph 5, The Great Learning (Cardew)
Chapter 8: Demographics and Performance Activity of the Scratch Orchestra

Before the change in 1971 to a committee-run Orchestra, Cardew was primarily responsible for dissemination of Orchestra information. He sent Scratch Letters, news, address lists, proposals for presentations and other concerts, and music, to the membership. Proposals for presentations and other events appeared in the hand or typeface of their authors, but Cardew collated all material, maintained Scratch Orchestra Letters and address lists himself, and wrote them out by hand rather than delegating such work to others. The SO Letters provide an insight into the aspirations and activity of the Orchestra, while the address lists yield information about the membership itself.

Membership of the Scratch Orchestra

The privately circulated Scratch Orchestra address list of 15 June 1970 has 101 members, and is the largest of the lists except the last. Recent published or anecdotal information for fifty-five members on this list was unobtainable, but of the rest, twenty-five are trained musicians. Sixteen members are best categorised as experimental musicians trained in art music: for instance, founders Cardew, Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton, and Cardew’s students Christopher Hobbs and Hugh Shrapnel. Some of these musicians did not remain in the professional realm. Michael Chant is an organist and composer who became a bookbinder, and Richard Ascough, who came to the Scratch Orchestra from Hugh Davies’ courses in electronic music at Goldsmiths’ College,\(^1\) is now a trades union organiser. Other professional musicians (five, possibly six) had a jazz or other improvisational background,\(^2\) such as

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\(^1\) Goldsmiths has dropped the apostrophe since this course was offered.

\(^2\) See Chapter 4. John Tilbury is, here, classed among the art-music experimentalists, even though he was active in improvisation activity at the time. I also did not class contemporary members of AMM Christopher Hobbs and Cornelius Cardew as
Scratch Orchestra Demographics and Performance

AMM members Eddie Prévost and Keith Rowe. Laurie Baker, who was to become quite important to the Orchestra both in its latter days and in his work with his partner Brigid Scott-Baker on the Scratch Orchestra website, Musicnow, was a session bassist who played in West End and touring productions, including Hair.

The next largest category was the visual arts, with fifteen known artists. Many of these artists adopted elements of music and other arts in their oeuvre. Carole Finer lists her banjo performances as art activities. Tom Phillips, whose style has always included textual elements (most strikingly in his ‘found novel’ A Humument), wrote an experimental opera, Irma. David Jackman has continued to create music and striking graphics through his indie-pop electronic group Organum. As well as working as a jazz musician and improviser, Keith Rowe was also a trained artist whose style was pop art.

The comb logo in the Scratch Orchestra brochure (Ex. 8.1) is a black-and-white example. Rowe’s most well known work in this style is his colourful truck design for the recording AMM Music.\(^3\) There is a visual element to Rowe’s deconstruction of the electric guitar throughout his career in AMM. This instrument began as a normal electric guitar, which Rowe held in a prone position and manipulated by means of various objects. It is now a tabletop collection of stretched strings and electronic boxes. Rowe’s guitar could be considered to be a meditation or installation on the electric guitar as much as it is a pioneering electroacoustic instrument, so far is it removed both sonically and structurally from the original.

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improvisers, either, because their primary education and background came from this sphere. The work in experimental improvisation was such a main feature of British experimental music at this time, that in some way most, or even all, members could be classed as improvisers.

\(^3\) Elektra, EUK 256, 1966.
The enthusiastic attendance by visual artists could be linked to the fact that Cardew had come from a visual arts background. His mother taught art; his brother Seth is, and father Michael was, an accomplished and renowned potter. Cardew worked as a graphic artist for Aldus Books, a skill which facilitated his execution of Treatise (see Chapter 4). David Briers, an artist who joined the Scratch Orchestra through this connection, wrote:

> The way it came about was probably a bit unusual. I had been a graphic design student at Chelsea School of Art, and when I left college I got a job working as a hack in a cramped studio in Dean Street for a designer who had been one of our tutors. Most of the work we did comprised drawing educational diagrams for weekly partworks about history and astronomy. At that time Cornelius Cardew was also doing freelance design work of a similar nature for

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the same publisher (it was no wonder to me that the score of *Treatise* is so immaculately conceived, as it were, he being a wizard with the rapidograph) so occasionally he would pop into the studio.

I was extremely interested in experimental music at that time, but it was a solitary interest, as I had no musical training beyond O level, and none of my friends was similarly disposed. I had heard vaguely about the Scratch Orchestra, so Cornelius invited me along. I would not otherwise ever have become a member.\(^\text{6}\)

The second reason for this attendance is that experimental music is accessible to visual artists, a majority of whom find all art activity appropriate, no matter what materials or senses are involved. Fluxus had embraced intermedia whole-heartedly, but many British artists also found other media useful, even if they knew nothing of Fluxus.\(^\text{7}\) This interest has continued to this day: David Ryan, a Senior Lecturer at the Chelsea School of Art and Design, has mounted concerts of experimental works and improvisation as part of the department’s research profile. Professionals in visual arts academia recognised experimental music activities as research while professionals in music academia often did not, as the aesthetic criteria and techniques of experimental music activities did not follow the aesthetic criteria of common art-music culture.

Visual arts teachers embraced experimental music to the extent that many of the only venues in which one could experience American and British experimental music concerts and guest composers were arts colleges. This exposure led to a high percentage of visual arts students seeking out the Scratch Orchestra. David Cobb, who was a student when Tom Phillips was teaching at the Bath Academy of Art, remembered that Phillips brought in experimental musicians and visual artists, apparently with equal status and purpose.

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\(^\text{6}\) David Briers, email to VA, 4 September 2003.

\(^\text{7}\) Carole Finer knew nothing of Fluxus when she joined the Scratch Orchestra (Pisaro, p. 37.).
The Scratch Orchestra, along with artists and musicians such as Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, Dita Rohe and Dom Sylvester Houedard were some of the people who visited the Academy at the time. HAVING LEFT THE ACADEMY, JOINING THE SCRATCH ORCHESTRA was one of those threads that at the time I sewed into the fabric of the backdrop I had started to create for myself as a student.8

Because of this welcome, many arts colleges also hired experimental musicians as teachers, so that this experience was also direct and at first hand. For instance, Gavin Bryars began his career in teaching at Portsmouth Arts College (where he co-founded the Portsmouth Sinfonia) and Michael Nyman worked at Maidstone and Winchester (where he influenced art/rock and indie musicians Brian Eno and David Cunningham). Other colleges, including Bath, Leeds, Chelsea, and others hired experimentalists regularly as guest lecturers.

The visual arts connection also gave the Orchestra its large number of female members. Of the 101 members of the list of 15 September 1970, thirty-three were women and sixty-six were men (two members listed have names which are not obviously gender-specific and have not been found). A 2:1 ratio of men to women is rare in large music ensembles even today. Furthermore, the Scratch Orchestra was a composer-performer group. Music education traditionally has encouraged female students to be re-creative rather than creative: many nineteenth-century conservatories banned women from composition lessons, as women in the private sphere of the home and salon were meant to perform the works of others.9 The visual arts education, with its own restrictions upon women as to genre (they were banned from life drawing classes, for instance), was, nonetheless, creative. Women at home could engage in still life studies and portraits, if not landscapes or history painting. Because they had one foot in the creative door, so to

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8 David Cobb, email to VA, 29 September 2003.

speak, it was much easier to storm the bastions of these last genres in the late nineteenth century (although it was still a struggle), than to break through to any kind of creative role in music, an act which resulted in a relative trickle of female composition students to this day.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the legacy of this difference between creation and re-creation in the visual arts and music was still sharp, and the number of women entering composition classes was very small, while the number of women in art colleges was more buoyant. Other women may have joined from the other arts, particularly modern dance, which, like the theatre, often has specified gender roles. Dance also has strong female icons among choreographers and, at the university level, an overwhelming majority of female participants.

The membership percentage of women averaged 29% through all address lists and the percentage of women in the Orchestra never dropped below 24%. This figure stayed constant, from the ‘Golden Age’ of the Village Tours until the end. The percentage dipped to its lowest in the address list of 15 September 1971, just after the Discontents meetings of August 1971, in which the members of the Orchestra aired their grievances against Cardew and the state of the Orchestra. The exact proportion of arts background of the female membership is speculative, as of the thirty-three women in the 15 June 1970 Scratch Orchestra address list, I could not obtain current information for twenty-seven, a failure rate of almost eighty-two percent. I was unable to obtain current information on only thirty of the sixty-six male Orchestra members (45%). The reasons for this failure are partially the usual ones encountered when trying to ascertain information on women’s lives. Until recently, women almost invariably changed their names upon marriage and so may be working successfully under another name than the one which they used as university and arts school undergraduates. Women have also chosen children over careers, or in some other way taken a less visible career path in order to remain in the location which
favours the husband’s career. Such women may be working in the school sector, privately, or in other ways which are not ordinarily publicised. Some of the women may have been involved with a then-current partner; as well as several obviously married couples – Keith and Krystyna Rowe, Tom and Jill Phillips, David and Diane Jackman, Cornelius and Stella Cardew – there were couples who were linked in the address lists typographically as partners – Psi Ellison & Judith Euren, Eva Skalla & Peter Sutherland. The order of names of couples, both married and unmarried, seems to depend upon the main or original member who made contact. Most of these main or original members are male, although there are a few paired names in which the female appears first; for instance, Fran Green & Mike Harper. This is borne out by the fact that Penny Renner, who first appears in the 10 September 1970 Address Supplement, afterward appears in the address lists as ‘Penny Renner and Mike Kemp’, Kemp appearing for the first time in that list. In March 1972 the listing for ‘Tom & Jill Phillips’ became ‘Jill & Tom Phillips’ for both this and the December list. As information for new lists must have been taken from old ones, this change must have been requested personally. Either Tom Phillips was taking a less active role in the Orchestra, the couple had asked for a listing which would overturn the implied male dominance, or perhaps it was a combination of both reasons.11

10 An example is Marilyn Dennis, wife of the composer and Scratch Orchestra member Brian Dennis. Both studied at the Royal College of Music: Brian in composition, Marilyn in piano. The Dennises moved to Egham when Brian joined the staff of the music department at Royal Holloway College. Marilyn became a mother and private piano teacher for children. This should not in any way imply that Marilyn Dennis felt at all resentful of this situation, as she has not only always found great joy in her children but also has maintained a keen interest in the arts and remains a stimulating conversationalist in such matters. Her life choice, however, is typical of many wives of composers, both here and in the U. S., who married in the 1960s or before.

The female members drifted away after they broke up, either because they had adopted experimental music mainly as a shared interest with the partner and had moved to some other interest when they split, or that they no longer felt comfortable working in the same art scene as their ex-partner. Primarily, however, the absence of these women from current experimental music stems from the lack of women in experimental music with training in common-practice music in general. Unfortunately, the number of women composers in British and American experimental music dropped significantly (to nothing in Britain), when the main compositional activity moved from text and graphic scores to traditional notation. Pauline Oliveros is one of the few women composers of text scores who have a traditional musical education (she studied with Robert Erickson). Fluxus members Yoko Ono and Alison Knowles were educated in visual arts and remain active in experimental sound. However, the gap in training effected a kind of split between visual artists and musicians, whatever their gender, as far as compositional styles were concerned.

Other members were non-musicians who became competent in experimental performance (the most enduring example is Bryn Harris, a non-musician who joined the Orchestra out of curiosity, who remains a

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12 Judith Euren’s prominent role in the Discontents and other Scratch Orchestra events proves that she was not only in the Scratch Orchestra to share her partner Psi Ellison’s interest in experimental music; as does Eva Skalla, who continues to be involved in modern world music. However, the prior experience of women in other situations prevents me from ruling out this reason as a cause for the drift of some women from experimental music. For instance, the Brahms scholar Styra Avins once told me of some early experiences she had had in the New York experimental scene when her partner was the composer and later MEV member Philip Corner. Avins said that she had had no interest in such music since then.

13 For women composers as influences in experimental music, see Chapter 12.

14 Harris was working for a pest-research laboratory during the Scratch Orchestra years, testing locusts. Harris was a member of the anarchic Scratch Orchestra subgroup the Slippery Merchants, so-called because of an event in the Village Concerts in which Hugh Shrapnel and Psi Ellison were accused of stealing the nose-cone of a bomb from a barn. The farmer, a former bomb-disposal expert, called them ‘a right pair of slippery merchants’. The Slippery Merchants were an anarchic group which held rather humorous, often Dadaist, events. Harris brought some of his locusts from work
prominent experimental performer and recording engineer while working as a bus driver). Richard Reason wrote: ‘And so it grew: musicians came, artists came, and bank clerks came: violins, tubas and record-players came too’.15

Rehearsal and Performance

The address lists do not indicate the extent of a member’s participation. The address list of 11 January 1971 identifies out-of-town and passive members, presumably in order to reduce Cardew’s mailings. Of ninety-four members, seven are ‘out-of-town’ and rarely available for individual London rehearsals and minor performances, and thirteen are listed as ‘passive’. None of these members was listed among the personnel in the Orchestra’s most public performance of the autumn of 1970, the Journey concert, ‘Pilgrimage from Scattered Points on the Surface of the Body to the Heart, the Brain, the Stomach and the Inner Ear’, at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 23 November, which was broadcast by the BBC.16 Therefore, while the address lists indicate those who had some participation or interest, it is the letters and other documents that give a more reliable indicator of the real activity of the Orchestra.

Scratch Orchestra rehearsal took two forms: the Experimental Music classes at Morley College and a series of booked rehearsals. The Morley College classes were ideal for long-term, complex rehearsals, such as those for the drumming in Paragraph 2 and the Dumb Show for Paragraph 5 of Cardew’s The Great Learning. Concerts occurred at least twice a month leading up to the Village Concerts in July and August 1970. In the early existence of the Scratch Orchestra rehearsals were to the Slippery Merchants’ ‘Afternoon Teas’, where they were deep-fried and eaten. Harris described the flavour as not unlike salt-and-vinegar crisps.

15 Reason, Scratch advertising brochure.

16 There were four adults and one child appearing at this concert who do not appear on any available address list: Evelyn Quinn, Clare Ross, and Marie-Therese Pinder (presumably related to member David Pinder); Pete Buswell; and Sheba Phombeah, the young daughter of Ilona, who was listed as playing ‘games’.
often held at The Place dance theatre and rehearsal rooms at 17 Dukes Road, near Euston Station. The Place had opened in 1969, funded by a trust established by Robin Howard, originally as ‘The Artists’ Place’. Experimental music and drama were common in the first years, but in 1982, access was restricted to dance. Whether Howard had specific feelings about the anti-war concerns of the day or not, his general feeling as to the philosophical implications of the building’s conversion chimed with them:

The building, designed by Robert Edis, had been opened by the Prince of Wales in 1889 as the home of the Middlesex Artists’ Rifle Volunteers and the Victorian facade still includes the heads of Mars, god of war and Minerva the goddess of wisdom: war and the liberal arts. As the Trust’s founder Robin Howard observed when The Place was transformed into a home for dancers ‘and all those who are involved in the allied arts’, ‘the headquarters of Artists in War had become the headquarters of Arts in Peace’.

Nearby, the Rising Sun public house, at the side of Euston Station, provided a congenial meeting place after rehearsals. Rehearsal time indicates the seriousness with which the Orchestra took some events. Cardew, for instance, scheduled seven weekly two-hour rehearsals at The Place in preparation for the Queen Elizabeth Hall concert.

Scratch Orchestra performance differed from common modernist ideals of performance and performance standard in several respects. The membership and instrumentation were flexible: few pieces required specific instrumentation, so the Scratch Orchestra was not limited to a certain group of players for concerts. In fact, the Orchestra was quite proud of its ever-changing and often frankly odd instrumentation. The personnel list for the Queen Elizabeth Hall concert deliberately spoofs an orchestra personnel list common to most concert programmes, set in what might be seating order: violins, violas, violoncelli, flutes, oboe, bass

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18 Prichard, ‘Our History’. 
clarinets, saxophones, trombones, celesta, organs and percussion. These were interspersed with non-orchestral and toy instruments: guitar, banjo, plastic ukulele, recorders, bamboo flutes, swanee whistles, melodica, toy piano, rhythm sticks; as well as invented instruments or things not commonly considered to be instruments at all: string lung, elastics, tape recorders, sine wave generators, table tennis, mouthbow, ‘home-made instruments’ and ‘other things’.

Without an aesthetic that celebrated virtuosity, deputies for specific pieces were easy to accommodate. However, for many performances it was crucial that there be a substantial core of performers skilled in the aesthetic and the techniques of experimental music, a skill that could be acquired only through experience in rehearsal and performance. In this way, visiting performers and free spirits who either had no idea of performance methods or spurned them could do whatever they chose – changing clothes, crawling around the performance space, slapping their own backsides – without disturbing the organised central activity. In fact, many of these fringe activities were themselves highly organised, as in the interruptions of one hundred timed events performed as a protest at the Queen Elizabeth Hall by the ‘anarchic’ sub-group the Slippery Merchants. Even though they were designed as separate events and in opposition to the billed programme, all action became part of the performance since the aesthetic embraced such simultaneity. ¹⁹

¹⁹ I have dealt with the Queen Elizabeth Hall performance at length in my MA thesis.

Scratch Orchestra concerts were organised by members of all ages, despite the implication in the Draft Constitution that all concerts would be organised by reverse seniority. Cardew chose to use the term ‘presentation’ after the publication of the Draft Constitution, as he seems to have been unhappy with the cultural baggage (the audience seating, applause, programming and other elements) of traditional concerts. ‘The Scratch Orchestra intends to function in the public sphere, and this function will be expressed in the form of – for lack of a better word –
Many of the Scratch Orchestra performances were numbered Presentations, as mentioned in the Draft Constitution: ‘[i]n rotation (starting with the youngest) each member will have the option of designing a concert’. Some of these Presentations involved one idea or venue: for instance, Christopher Hobbs’ Presentation #1, in which improvisation was the only requirement. Hobbs remembers that at this concert, at the Hampstead Town Hall, Psi Ellison, the member who most resembled a hippie (including changing his name from the prosaic Peter to the letter Psi), contributed to the general sound world by playing ‘You’ve Got To Have Money in the Bank, Frank’ on his gramophone. The wind-up gramophone became a regular instrument: Presentation #20, by Psi Ellison, was to feature each member of the Orchestra playing the sound tracks to The Sound of Music and West Side Story on their own record players simultaneously.

Some presentations were themed: for instance, Diane Jackman’s Presentation #14 (‘Rocks’), or Bryn Harris’s Presentation #11: ‘The Roger Smalley Memorial Concert’, held in the presence of the amused Smalley. Some were anchored by a central performance, such as Presentation #19, designed by Chris May, at the Leeds University Arts Festival on 27 November 1970, in which Beethoven’s Fidelio Overture was played as a Popular Classic. According to the proposal for this Presentation, other activities would occur outside of the central performance area, with members joining and leaving Fidelio throughout, only uniting at the end. Some were site-specific, as in Presentation #17, Judith Euren’s concert on the Regents Park Boating Lake. Once a Presentation number was assigned, members could either take their option immediately or delay a

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22 This presentation, which was to be performed in an office block, does not seem to have been mounted.
While Presentations #1-4 were all held in November 1969, Presentation #5 was held after #6 in December of that year, with #8 in January. However, Presentation #7, designed by Greg Bright, was held at the German Institute in December 1970, a month after Presentations #26 and #19. As such, the Orchestra ignored the strict rotational system of the Draft Constitution. Bright designed still another kind of Presentation, an ostensibly ‘normal’ programme and order: two pieces by Christopher Hobbs, one by Bright, one each by Robert Ashley and Cardew.

Performers should be separated from the audience. A stage and rows of seats would be ideal. A curtain lowered between pieces would be in the right spirit. When not performing, performers should make themselves scarce.23

What would be an ordinary arrangement in non-Scratch Orchestra concerts was the unique feature of this presentation.

Other concerts were not part of the numbered Presentation system, but were ‘fixed’ by members who may not have had an upcoming Presentation slot. Some of the responsible persons listed in the document, ‘Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’,24 are not regular members of the Orchestra. For instance, the American performance artist Carolee Schneemann invited the Orchestra to play at the Chicago 8 Protest concert at the Roundhouse on 26 January 1970, and the conductor Marcello Panni booked the Orchestra to play at his wedding in the Caxton Hall on 2 December 1970.

Most ‘fixers’ were members of the Orchestra who, though too old to have an immediate Presentation date, had booked venues themselves, often with a theme or purpose too narrow for Scratch performance. Krysztyna Rowe held a Scratch Orchestra poetry evening on 6 March 1970 at the Lamb and Flag public house in Covent Garden. John Tilbury

23 SO Letter, 10/9/70, Ascough collection.

24 Ascough collection.
was the contact for a performance of George Brecht’s Fluxus box of text pieces, *Water Yam*, at the Royal Court Theatre on 22 November 1970. Michael Parsons arranged that the Orchestra would play at the Leeds University Arts Festival, 9 March 1970, and for a choral concert at St. Stephen’s Walbrook, on 4 June of that year. Parsons was liaison for the ‘Beethoven Today’ concert, which was performed by several ensembles, including the Shrapnel Metal Band, the Portsmouth Sinfonia, Private Company, and other separate ensembles. Many of these ensembles shared personnel with the Scratch Orchestra, but only a few could be categorised as Scratch Orchestra ‘sub-groups’. For instance, Hugh Shrapnel founded the Shrapnel Metal Band (later Wood and Metal Band) as not only a play on his name but also in order to explore this specific orchestration, as well as Shrapnel’s penchant for Victorian and other salon music, something only tangentially and occasionally explored in the Scratch Orchestra.

Still other events – Chelsea School of Art on 18 February 1970, followed by St. Martin’s School of Art on the 27th – have no contact name attached, by which it seems that Cardew himself either fixed the event or was the Orchestra contact. Cardew fixed the venues for the Village Concerts of Cornwall and Anglesey in the summer of 1970. Richard Reason described a typical concert:

In the afternoon, before the first village concert, some of the orchestra went to Blisland and talked to the inhabitants. They also gave short performances on the green. The appointed hour arrived and the villagers came, at first slightly mystified by the toy pianos and the fact that not all the performers were actually on the stage. First came a song, ‘Bells over the Meadow’. Then came ‘Radiant Rite’, No. CCRR66 in ‘Nature Study Notes’... During the 40-minute ‘Drum No. 1’ which involved some 35 performers drumming very loudly, I noticed two elderly ladies happily clapping in time with the beat. This was typical of the village audience whose refreshing attitude enabled them to enjoy a performance as a new spectacle without the worrying preoccupation: ‘Are we being made fools of?’ or ‘But is it really music?’... [T]he gentlemen from the village hall thanked Mr. Cardew and his friends. They explained that it was new
to them and that they liked some of the pieces, one called ‘Bells over the Meadow’ by Albert W. Ketelbey [sic] particularly...  

Cardew provided the campsite for the first week at Wenford Bridge, as it was the family home and studio: its kiln launched by Bernard Leach, Seth Cardew now runs this site. The second week Bryn Harris noted that:

[t]he first series of village concerts we did when we went down to Cornwall; we then went straight from there up to Anglesey because we had someone who had family living on Anglesey...and camped there and worked out of there. The new – what was new then – commercial television station for Wales came up and did a film about it, telling us how we were actually...retracing the routes of old troubadours. We were quite unaware of this...  

Whenever the Scratch Orchestra left London (the Village Concerts tour was the first, but others included the Northern tour of 1971 and the late appearance of the more politicised Scratch Orchestra at the cultural festival associated with the Munich Olympics in 1972) the membership was perforce more stable. It seems that this tour, the Orchestra’s first experience of a fixed ensemble as well as a two-week holiday in the British countryside, made for happy memories.

Ilona Phombeah’s home movies of the tour, all taken at the Scratch Orchestra camps, appear somewhat like some of the more bucolic Beatles footage of their filmed accompaniments to tunes like ‘Strawberry Fields Forever’. When I first interviewed members of the Scratch Orchestra in 1983, several of them stressed that they ‘were not hippies’ in the late 1960s. It was interesting to find a shift in attitude when the films were shown at the ICA for the Scratch Orchestra 25th Anniversary Day in November 1993, as participants rather ruefully commented on their looks and activities. The change in appraisal seems to occur for two reasons: the first, and most obvious, is that most of the participants had

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26 Personal interview with Bryn Harris, April 1983.
not seen these films in 1983 and had a self-image which smoothed out
the effects of time and fashion. The second stems from notions of
competence and aesthetics in the experimental culture. One of the
slogans of the counterculture, both in Britain and in the United States
was ‘Do your own thing’, which often included a do-it-yourself approach
to art, dance, and other performance. A trained experimental performer
would have found it extremely hurtful to have his or her carefully
produced work mistaken for a spur-of-the-moment exercise in self-
expression.

Regional Arts Councils were more liberal with small grants in the
late 1960s and early 1970s. Northern Arts Association funded the 1971
Newcastle tour of 20 June to 4 July (which will be dealt with in greater
detail in Chapter 11) with a grant of £150. For this, Orchestra members
shared vans, pooled food resources and camped on farmland. Town halls
and other venues were more easily available, cheap or free (the Scratch
Orchestra, having no regular requirement for a piano and almost none
for a piano of concert quality, was able to play almost anywhere). Greg
Bright launched a Scratch Orchestra concert at Ealing Town Hall on 25
February 1971, entirely to persuade a Sobranie executive, Charles C.
Redstone, to fund a recording of the Scratch Orchestra featuring Bright’s
composition, The Balkan Sobranie Smoking Mixture. Cardew wrote:

[W]e are presenting a programme of pieces that are primarily aural
rather than visual (not that I think aural pieces sound more
interesting than visual pieces – just that we should encourage
Redstone to make a record)…. Notwithstanding our ulterior motive
in presenting this concert, it is a public concert and effort must be
made to get people to come to it…. Suggestions and help should be
offered to them, so that the leaflets, etc., get to as many and various
people as possible. Considering the amount of music we have
produced our audience is still alarmingly small. 27

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27 SO Letter, 18/1/71, Ascough collection.
Although arts funding was less dependent upon audience figures then than now, pride as much as the need to prove commercial necessity prompted Cardew’s plea.

The Scratch Orchestra and its membership formed an arts community as coherent as any in established venues. The activity exceeded the original Constitutional boundaries, as it embraced, with letters and advertising, both the categories of compositional activity and the Presentations and their reverse seniority. The Orchestra played for protests, for weddings, the music of other experimentalists. It also embraced and supported other official and tangential Orchestra tours and concerts, as well as the activities of so-called ‘sub-groups’, including protest groups (like the Slippery Merchants).28 Throughout the Orchestra’s existence, Cardew’s work *The Great Learning*, dedicated to the Orchestra itself, was an important part of its repertoire. The next chapter will examine the structural features of this work and performance solutions found by the members of the Orchestra and by later performers.

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28 If anything, the Orchestra was a victim of its own creativity, for the number of unrealised proposals for concerts piled up until Michael Chant proposed a series of ‘Dealer Concerts’, in which concert proposals would be used up in groups of five or more simultaneously. The first five of these concert ideas were attempted on the Newcastle tour, with a result that was to prove a turning point for the Orchestra, and this will be assessed in Chapter 11.
Chapter 9: ‘The Masters of Plink’: Performance Variants in *The Great Learning*

One of the practical applications of musicology has always been the production of critical editions of music. According to Joseph Kerman, ‘[m]usicologists sometimes like to take credit for the amount of old music that is to be heard nowadays’.¹ For Kerman, music analysis exhibits a practical influence upon performance only in the strictest avant-garde pieces, and ‘the “modernist” sensibility evidently favours hearing just the notes the original composer wrote, no more no less…’.² John Tilbury wrote:

[I]n the fifties the relationship between composer and performer had become a coercive one: play this loud, play that louder, do this quickly, wait, stop. Notations had become a sequence of commands constituting the composer's control strategy.³

Performance practice of the mainstream avant garde is best exhibited in books on extended instrumental technique. The cooperative element in this performance is the development of new sounds by a performer. Once these sounds are established as such, composers will expect performers to reproduce them exactly and reliably.⁴

However, most work in performance practice, whatever the musical period, is the study of the indeterminate in music. As such, experimental music has a great body of performance solutions, codified often only anecdotally outside the score as performance traditions. An example of

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¹ Joseph Kerman, *Musicology* (London: Fontana Press, 1985), p. 184. While this source may be almost twenty years out of date, I have found many of Kerman’s pronouncements still valid.

² Kerman, p. 189.


⁴ The avant-garde performance ‘game’ of strict observation leads to some problems. For instance, many composers who wish to write multiphonics for clarinet turn to the earliest text, Bruno Bartolozzi’s *New Sounds for Woodwinds* (London: OUP, 1967). Unfortunately, Bartolozzi’s sounds only work on Italian clarinets.
Performance Variants in The Great Learning

this is David Tudor’s performance of Cage’s 4’33”, which has overshadowed other performances so much that many writers have assumed this to be a work for piano. In fact, the score is indeterminate as to instrument. Cage released the work from its original tripartite structure, even its titular duration, so that there have been valid performances of 4’33” on many different instruments. Tudor’s decision to delineate the movements by closing the piano lid, however, emphasised the negation of performer sound, and has become a part of most performances. Other performance practice traditions stem from a logical reading of the score; for instance, the requirement that the performer remain still in response to the direction ‘Tacet’ stems from the implied need to ‘perform’ silence as physical silence (no movement) as well as sonic silence (no sound). My ‘performance’ of the ‘Tacet’ sections of common-practice music – for instance, the clarinet parts in the middle movements of eighteenth-century symphonies – is quite different, consisting of keeping the clarinet warm and the reed wet for the last movement. This ‘Tacet’ means that one is surplus to the requirement; Cage’s ‘Tacet’ is the piece itself.

Experimental performance practice exhibits a close consideration of elements that normally are taken for granted in realisation of earlier music. It is also concerned with the development of new or unusual instruments and instrumental technique. Cardew’s The Great Learning is a good source for performance practice study by virtue of its length and stylistic variety as well as its continued use in performance. The Great Learning is based on the first seven paragraphs – the introduction – of the Dà Xué (or the Ta Hseûh, according to the transliteration used by Cardew), written by Confucius and his pupils between the fifth and

5 At the Classic Masterworks of Experimental Music Festival in 1982, we performed a wind-band version.

6 I perform this by putting my mouthpiece cap on my clarinet.
second centuries BC. Each paragraph in this work lasts from a half hour to two hours, the whole lasting more than nine hours.

Cardew aimed to produce a compendium of experimental technique and thought in *The Great Learning*, by allusion to and imitation of the styles of other experimental composers. He was also very much influenced by his experiences with AMM in improvisation, as the Scratch Orchestra was designed as an improvising, as well as a performing and composing, ensemble. The Scratch Orchestra proved to be his testing ground; many of Cardew’s instructions attempt to meet challenges advanced by the Orchestra.

Although there was a strict separation of improvisation and interpretation of compositional indeterminacy in British experimental music,7 AMM improvisation exhibits ideas of texture and of interactivity that can apply to the interpretation of indeterminate music. Evan Parker, the improvising saxophonist, first detailed this difference as ‘atomistic’ and ‘laminar’ at the Actual Music Festival at the Institute for Contemporary Arts in London in 1980:

The group of people that were working around the SME (Spontaneous Music Ensemble) at that time – John Stevens, Derek Bailey, Trevor Watts, Paul Rutherford – were working on a method that I could call ‘atomistic’, breaking the music down into small component parts and piecing them together again in a collective way, so as to de-emphasize the soloistic nature of improvisation and replace it by a collective process. But at the same time AMM had what I would call a ‘laminar’ way of working, where although the solo had been lost and the emphasis was on a collective sound, an orchestral sound if you like, it was not done by breaking the music into small components but by contributing layers which would fit together and make a new whole.8

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7 For a discussion of misunderstanding of this separation by the avant-garde mainstream, see Chapter 5, and of the relationship between British free improvisation and American jazz in Chapter 4.

The 1975 album *Face to Face* by The Spontaneous Music Ensemble, founded by John Stevens, exhibits a kind of free-jazz approach to the common sound-world (Trevor Watts’ half-voiced sounds and slurred modal runs, for instance). It also shows the ‘atomistic’ texture: a kind of heterophonic, conversational mode of interaction between the players. Silences are short but numerous; phrases last no more than a few seconds at most; tutti playing is rare and short as well. As an interactive device, the SME ‘atomistic’ texture has an affect not unlike that of *klangfarbenmelodie* and star-pieces such as Cage’s *Atlas Eclipticalis*. Christian Wolff’s networked pieces (such as *For 1, 2, or 3 People*), in which the actions of one performer determine the actions of another, usually have this kind of halting texture in performance and arise from a similar cooperative aesthetic as the SME players.

On the other hand, AMM music is ‘laminal’ (Eddie Prévost’s adaptation of Parker’s ‘laminar’), and exhibits collective action by means of simultaneous effort rather than conversation:

This idea of layers superimposed upon other layers has always seemed close to the actuality of AMM music. During listening sessions to select material for release, Keith Rowe and I have often played different AMM recordings simultaneously, switching in and out from one recording to another. It always produced interesting results. So, it should be no surprise that layers feature prominently in our material. The ‘submarine’ sandwich...is a reminder of our first encounter with this dietary delight during our visit to the USA in 1971. Of course, we take the ‘sandwich’ theme further...by layering sounds in performance.⁹

AMM’s ‘laminal’ sound is a cooperative effort made by the members fulfilling their own roles within a whole texture rather than by exchanging melodic fragments in a kind of dialogue.

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Members speak of the roles they play rather than their interaction with each other. The consistency of AMM performance comes about through the trust of the participants in each other’s work and the compatibility of their sound-world. Rowe and Prévost were able to segue effectively from one AMM performance to another, not because it was so unchanging, but that it was consistent in the manner in which it could change. When silences came, they were often long, creating another sonic element. Rowe’s ‘prepared’ guitar and Prévost’s percussion fulfil their roles like
tomatoes, onion, and salami fulfil their roles (or rolls?) in a submarine sandwich. The ‘laminal’ texture of simultaneity exists in many of Morton Feldman’s works (such as Piece for Four Pianos (1957)), La Monte Young’s continuous music, Terry Riley’s In C (1964) and other works in which performers have personal control over the placement of their determined contributions. The laminal texture gave rise to the Peace News blurb on the sandwich programme (Ex. 9.1, previous page), which called it a ‘wall of sound’;\(^{11}\) it may also have influenced London Look’s dismay at the seriousness of contemplation by the audience (‘[f]or two hours people listened as though it were a concert at the Festival Hall’).

Although there will always be a choice of textures available to composers and improvisers, the preferred desired interactive texture in post-war modernism and early experimentalism (from 1945-1970 as a major force) was the atomistic, and the desired interactive texture in late experimentalism and postmodern minimalism (1965-the present) is the laminal. Paragraphs 6 and 7 (dedicated, although not in the score, to Christian Wolff and La Monte Young, respectively) exhibit this duality most clearly.\(^{12}\) Although they are text pieces, and therefore usually more indeterminate than the paragraphs with traditional musical notation, both are devised so that it is almost impossible to achieve any sort of performance, much less a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ one, by going against the idea of atomistic sound in Paragraph 6 or the laminal sound in Paragraph 7.

Paragraph 6 (Ex. 9.2, below) consists of instructions to make sounds under various categories, such as ‘isolated’, ‘synchronised’, and ‘optional’, paired with the text, which may or may not be spoken in part through the course of the work.

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\(^{11}\) This refers to Phil Spector’s pop production style of the 1960s, in which massed orchestral and pop instruments were layered in backing tracks.

Ex. 9.2: First five instruction groups, Paragraph 6

Brian Dennis noted that both Paragraph 1 and 7 are structured using the brushstrokes of the Chinese pictographs of the text in different ways.\textsuperscript{13} Paragraph 6 also uses this method, in that the number of the actions demanded corresponds to the number of brushstrokes for each character.\textsuperscript{14} The order of making these sounds is fixed by the instructions, but the timing is dependent on the performer hearing sounds in certain categories made by other players, who are all working through the text in their own time according to the same limitations.

A person, in interpreting the first word (‘From’) and ‘make or hear an isolated sound’, will make a sound or hear one made by another player. Cardew indicates that ‘isolated’ means simply that the sound is made or heard, but performers often infer its more common meaning of the sense of ‘isolation’ – i.e., the state of being surrounded by silence as a desert island is surrounded by water – which Cardew has not indicated in his legend. The performer must then ‘hear out the following general pause’ (defined by Cardew in the legend as ‘when everyone is silent and still’). He or she has no influence on whether such a pause will occur nor

\begin{center}
FROM Make or hear an isolated sound and hear out the following general pause. Then a set of four sounds, the first one synchronised. 
THE EMPEROR A pair of sounds, then a pair of optional sounds.
SON OF HEAVEN Two sounds, the first synchronised. Between the two await the occurrence of a long pause.
DOWN TO A synchronised sound followed by an isolated one. Then an optional sound followed by an isolated one.
DOWN TO Five sounds; the second synchronised, the third isolated, the last preceded by a general pause.
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{13} ‘Cardew’s “The Great Learning”’, \textit{The Musical Times}, November 1971, pp. 1066-68.

how long it will last; he or she cannot proceed until it has finished. The player will then make four sounds, ‘the first one synchronised’ (‘simultaneously with another player’), which calls for the player to wait until he or she can either catch the eye of another player (who often needs a synchronisation as well) before he or she can fulfil this portion of the score. This ‘network’ of actions and reactions is similar to the music of the dedicatee of Paragraph 6, Christian Wolff, for instance, in his *Septet* (1964) (Ex. 9.3):

![Ex. 9.3: Christian Wolff, Septet](image)

Ex. 9.3: Christian Wolff, *Septet*¹⁵

In this excerpt, the player at the top (Player 5) has a white note head with the number ‘3’ and a vertical line below. This is equivalent to the simultaneous sound in Paragraph 6: ‘play simultaneously with the next sound you hear’. The player must rely upon another player to make his or her sound. Because of this network, with its conditions and resultant delays, both Paragraph 6 and the *Septet* will exhibit a lacy texture punctuated by silences, if played according to the score instructions. John Tilbury noted the specific ‘experimental’ nature of this increased responsibility, which sets these two atomistic works apart from the atomistic texture of the avant garde:

Inspired by the writings and compositions of John Cage, the experimentalists freed the performer from his incarceration by the serialists, restoring the mutuality of the relationship between composer and performer; the American composer Christian Wolff, for example, notates not what to play, but how to play.\(^\text{16}\)

Cardew’s instructions ensure that any other approach other than the atomistic is doomed to failure. It relies on what Michael Nyman called a ‘network principle’,\(^\text{17}\) as each individual performer has to wait for the requisite numbers of specific types of sounds and silences before they can play their event. It is much like a traffic jam, in which drivers’ reaction times vary as they follow and react to the movements of the cars ahead. To extend this analogy further, it is like a traffic jam with people constantly and quite randomly and unexpectedly changing lanes, as there is no hierarchy among performers – even less than there would be in the standard traffic jam. One could be waiting through what one thinks is an adequate silence after, say, two optional sounds, when someone produces something which one can only interpret as an intentional one. One then has to wait still further for two optional sounds and a silence, during which time there is further danger of interruption.

There is also the problem of reading the written text as notation. Rather than ‘playing spontaneously on cue’ as Beate Kutschke has simplified improvisational elements in indeterminate works,\(^\text{18}\) the player must usually look well ahead in a text piece, at the very least, and consider the limitations placed there by the composer. Trained musicians are taught from childhood to transfer common-practice notation into actions to make sound directly without thought (so that any thought will be involved with interpretation); literate adults have been

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\(^\text{16}\) Tilbury, ‘On Indeterminate Notation’.


taught from childhood to transfer written English (or other languages) directly into thought instead of action. What is more, most music notation is a physical manifestation of temporal progression (only *da capo* and repeat marks tend to break the progression from the front to the back of a score in book form), while text music may not be.\(^{19}\)

Cardew’s indication for the third instruction set, ‘Son of Heaven’, must be read in its entirety before the instructions can be followed: ‘Two sounds, the first synchronised. Between the two await the occurrence of a long pause’. To perform the first sentence (‘two sounds’) without interposing the second (‘a long pause’) would be wrong.

This is the hardest of the paragraphs of *The Great Learning* to perform correctly, although it seems to be the one most often revived, as it requires fewer performers than the other paragraphs. While Cardew states specifically that most sounds should be short and quiet, performers’ ideas of what constitutes ‘most’, ‘short’, and ‘quiet’ vary considerably. In the performance of Paragraph 6 at the Almeida Festival in 1984, part of the first complete performance of *The Great Learning* in England,\(^{20}\) I sat directly behind a young woman who spent a great deal of the time making very long rattles and rolls on the array of kitchen equipment she had assembled. Because of this, I had few opportunities to hear silences or unintended sounds. Stephen Chase, a COMA member who performed Paragraph 6 under the direction of Howard Skempton and James Saunders at the Huddersfield Festival in 2001, found:

> Initially it seemed that because of the size of the group (about 40 or so) there would be too much activity because of certain sections of the group not quite taking things ‘seriously’, but things seemed to become more concerted towards the performance….\(^{21}\)

\(^{19}\) Jonathan Kramer has dealt with this concept much more eloquently in many of his articles.

\(^{20}\) The players included Eddie Prévost, Keith Rowe, and Christian Wolff. The opportunity to play with them probably swelled the ranks.

\(^{21}\) S.T. Chase, email to VA, 1 May 2003.
Even with a smaller ensemble, such as the performances I directed in California (using no more than a dozen people), it only takes one or two insensitive performers to sabotage the atomistic texture. As a result, performers may give up or 'cheat' the progression of instructions. To go without cheating or giving up, one would have to wait until the noisier members had worked through their options. Cardew made a provision in the performance notes that ‘[t]here is no obligation to reach the end’. In the 1984 concert, I finished without completing the paragraph. Chase found that even with the ‘concerted’ efforts of the ensemble, he was unable to complete more than half the score in the allotted time of forty-five minutes.

The physical placement of players for Paragraph 6 seems always to be static, so that the players can have ready access to their instruments. Players often arrange themselves in a chamber-music semicircle, with no movement of players between instruments. Players at an informal performance at a workshop run by Michael Parsons in 1983 and the Almeida Festival performance in 1999 sat in a circle; still a rather classic rehearsal placement. The players at the Cardew Day Concert in 2001 sat in a looser grouping with some people sitting or standing behind others. This should have caused problems in sight-lines, but it was the most successful performance I have ever witnessed – perhaps because of the experience and training of the ex-Scratch Orchestra players.

Those who perform the score as written often experience a feeling of extreme preoccupation in the same way that one would in difficult music in conventional notation. Chase wrote:

My own feeling – and speaking afterwards to others who took part – was that there was a lot of intense concentration going on which seemed to suspend time; the performance seemed to rush by (if that isn't a contradiction of what I just said!). Despite actually making few sounds I did feel very busy – counting off sounds and listening for cues and pauses.22

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22 S.T. Chase, email to VA, 1 May 2003.
Those who ‘play spontaneously on cue’ or mistake 1960s experimental performance for the counter-cultural ethic of ‘do your own thing’ (as the girl banging the kitchenware in the 1984 concert may have done) may have missed this rewarding contraction of perceived time.

The other major exemplar of the atomistic in indeterminate music in *The Great Learning* is a composition in Paragraph 5, which is dedicated to the Scratch Orchestra itself (Cage is a co-dedicatee of this Paragraph, as the entire piece is dedicated to the Orchestra). Paragraph 5 is the longest and largest-scale of the paragraphs in *The Great Learning*. In its simplest performance option, it begins with an opening Dumb Show, performed by all players. The second part is a series of Compositions, interspersed by the recitation of a text. The Paragraph ends with an Improvisation Rite, which must last as long as the two previous sections put together (this balance of notated music and free improvisation was previously found in Frederic Rzewski’s *Les Moutons de Panurge*). One of the Compositions, some of which have the form of true-type Improvisation Rites, is ‘Plink’ (Ex. 9.4).

Ex. 9.4: Paragraph 5, ‘Plink’

‘Plink’, like many of the Compositions in Paragraph 5, is gently satirical. The list of suggested instruments encourages atomistic performance. Christian Wolff and Anton Webern are obvious candidates for election as Masters of Plink because of the atomistic texture in their work. It seems that for *Raindrops* (1970), for ‘any number and kind of tuned and
untuned percussion, guitars and/or other plucked strings\textsuperscript{23} alone

Shrapnel was elevated to the Mastership of Plink, as most of his other works of the time, particularly those for the Promenade Theatre Orchestra, are laminal. Cardew avoided explaining God’s membership in this august body.

Cardew buried ‘Plink’ in the Scratch-like simultaneity of the second section of Paragraph 5. It is but one texture among many going on at the same time – optional material which includes traditionally-notated Ode Machines (dedicated to John White) usually performed by more experienced singers, usually professionals, and the game-like Action and Number Scores, which are systemic, additive and generally pantomimic. ‘Plink’ has an optional accompaniment called ‘Tube Train Stopped between Stations’, in which the participant has to have listened during each stop on at least three journeys during the month prior to the performance, so that even when performed alone, ‘Plink’ will not be purely atomistic.

The rest of \textit{The Great Learning} is mostly laminal. Michael Nyman applied the term ‘network principle’ to Paragraph 7 as well as 6.\textsuperscript{24} In Paragraph 6, the network determines timing; in Paragraph 7 (Ex. 9.5), it determines pitch. Paragraph 7 consists of a text which is broken into lines of single words or phrases, each of which is to be chanted for the length of a breath a given number of times. Brian Dennis found that these repetitions reflect the number of brush strokes used in the Chinese ideogram for each line.\textsuperscript{25} The letter and number combinations between


the instructions and text which resemble computer function keys (f3, f1, etc.) are directions to sing a certain number of repetitions loudly. Bryn Harris said that many of the Scratch members particularly enjoyed emphasising the *forte* drone of the word ‘trash’,* which can be heard clearly in some performances.

![Score part of Ex. 9.5: Paragraph 7 of *The Great Learning*, score part](image)

Ex. 9.5: Paragraph 7 of *The Great Learning*, score part

Each performer chooses a pitch for the first line, and subsequent pitches are taken by matching the pitches sung by other players. There is a gradual reduction in the numbers of pitches available, as weaker singers take the pitches from stronger ones more often than they take pitches from each other. Richard Barrett, a member of the New Complexity movement, wrote:

> There seems to be an inherent tendency for the situation initially set up to produce a ‘beautiful’, diatonically-based harmony from the short-lived chromatic/microtonal opening, even (or especially?) for those with untrained voices.*

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* Bryn Harris, Interview by VA, 15 April 1983.

While the available pitches do settle down to euphony, none of the Scratch Orchestra members I have asked remembers such diatonicism and it does not occur on the 1984 Almeida recording, which seems to have been Barrett’s only experience of the work; in fact, many made it their job to find and perpetuate unusual or dissonant notes. The tuning appears to fall into an approximate equal temperament, but Dave Smith wrote:

Paragraph 7 could be seen as presenting ‘LaMonte Young [sic] for the people’ – no need for just intonation! The effect is not dissimilar. I would have that this ‘beautiful sound’ element is present in other Paragraphs as well.\(^{28}\)

Cardew, by indicating that pitches of Paragraph 7 should be held for the length of a breath, ensures that a laminal performance will occur. It does not specify a long breath, merely ‘a length-of-a-breath note’. The instruction that lines should be taken successively without much pause means that extremely short, fast breaths would render a performer hyperventilated over the course of the work. Cardew also gives approximate times for each paragraph – Paragraph 7 lasts about 90 minutes – and despite all efforts to prolong it,\(^{29}\) a performance of the entire paragraph will last about this long.

In Paragraph 7 performers move around the performance space. This is a logical practical solution to the problem of diminishing pitch choice, as the weaker singers take their notes from the stronger ones (who may or may not be the better singers). Eventually a singer may find it necessary to move to another local grouping to avoid repetition of


\(^{29}\) Dave Smith: ‘Bryn (Harris) told me with some glee about the competition between himself and Chris Hobbs to finish last: that’s not breaking the rules’. ‘The Great Learning – a conversation between Howard Skempton and Dave Smith’. 
pitches. However, there is absolutely no rule that people have to move into the audience and surround the audience with the piece – Cardew’s only advice is ‘Remain stationary for the duration of a line; move around only between lines.’ This rule uses the environment and avoids the two-dimensionality of the stage, an experimental principle which goes back to composers like Henry Brant and Charles Ives. In practice, there can be a real disadvantage in moving too far. People at the 1984 concert occasionally distanced themselves so much from other players by going up into the balcony of the Union Chapel (which meant leaving the auditorium and climbing some steps) that they took some time between lines in order to get to the nearest pitch source. While small venues can hamper the movement of the singers, it can, in the right environment and with the right number of singers for the space, also prove to be effective. Peter Harden presented a reduced Paragraph 7 at Café de Sax, a small bar in The Hague, on 17 December 2002. Harden took the decision to do only half the Paragraph (from the second arrow – a decision also made for the Deutsche Grammophon recording of the same Paragraph by the Scratch Orchestra).

At the opening, in the first couple of minutes, there was some messing around, but it subsided, the seriousness with which most people treated the piece must have been infectious. During the twenty-five minute performance the singing could be heard all the way down the street and attracted many to come and see what was going on. Some left immediately but many stayed till the end and seemed genuinely fascinated. The alien nature of the work to the place in which it was performed seemed to hold people’s attention. As for reviews, all I can give you is a comment from the Dutch barman who is more at home with Europop than anything else, who said: ‘It was beautiful, I mean... really, it was beautiful.’

I use a reductive exercise based on Paragraph 7 to teach performance practice and responsibility in the Open University Humanities summer school. The students always come to the opinion themselves that they must walk around to ‘find new notes’.

Although Ives seems always to have conceived his antiphony in a traditional manner, like Gabrieli, and indicated movement through musical means, as in ‘Putnam’s Camp’ in Three Places in New England, Brant, as he pointed out in a lecture at the Huddersfield Festival in 1987, would be happy to put musicians on roller coasters and octopus rides, if they could physically play without being sick or injured.

Peter Harden, email to VA, 6 May 2003.
According to Howard Skempton, Paragraph 1 ‘is an exception. It was written before the Scratch Orchestra was a twinkle in his eye’, and was premiered at the Cheltenham Festival in 1968. It consists of three main features: the first is a conducted passage of stones hit together (Ex. 9.6):

Ex. 9.6: Opening of Paragraph 1

According to Dennis, the number of quavers in each beamed group corresponds to the number of letters in the transliteration of the words. The combination of the irregularly-conducted beats and the lack of an agreed tempo for the quavers in each beat ensures that the chorus will play at slightly different times within the beat. Cardew also has not determined how the ‘pitch’ indications are to be interpreted, deliberately allowing each member to interpret ‘the notation as he or she sees fit’. The resulting sound is the effect of a spray of droplets or the sound of surf against a shingle beach, as more members reach the first quaver in each beamed group together (note that the conducting indication is just


34 Cardew, Paragraph 1 of The Great Learning, performance notes.
before the first quaver, thus adding confusion about where to begin). The varying heights of the ‘quavers’, also related to the characters, has been a challenge to performers as there is a limited range of pitches to be obtained by knocking two stones together. Cardew has directed that each member of the chorus only use ‘two stones’, so the construction of a ‘stone organ’, which could utilise a range of sounds, would go against the instructions. There is the possibility of a hocketing interpretation, in which members could divide different stone sounds as in bell ringing. Here Cardew’s instruction that ‘each member’ realise the notation might prohibit such collaboration. Dave Smith traditionally uses a piece of slate which will produce different sounds when hit in different locations. Christopher Hobbs has followed another common strategy of interpreting the height of the quavers by raising and lowering the stones as he struck them.

Despite the lack of sustaining capability in the stones, this section is still laminal because of the organ part, which occurs throughout the paragraph. Cardew specified a pipe organ, because the first event requires the organist to switch on the organ with two notes held down with a weight or wedge and to switch it off at the end with another three weighted notes. Individual notes will sustain at various lengths.

An apt analogy is tidal. As the sea progressively reaches the seashore, there is a period of maximum immersion when the sand is completely covered; equally gradually, and inevitably, the water recedes, drawn away by its own forces; the sand looks much as it did before. But who can say what effect the experience has on the sand? [p. 131]

While the language here reflects the thinking of the time, it does point up the reflective nature of participation in The Great Learning. There is the tired exhilaration which is often experienced in long contemplation of the sea.

See ‘Chinese Characters’.

Dave Smith, conversation in the Horse and Groom public house, Old Hatfield, 9 June 2003.

Broadcast on BBC Radio 3, 6 April 1997.
depending upon the size of the pipe used, whereas an electronic organ would merely shut down instantly. The result is a shifting emphasis on the notes of the chord held down. The recording of the performance in the 1982 memorial concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall offers an extreme example of the effect. The QEH organ, when shut off, continues to sound for over a minute, bending pitches and highlighting various harmonics, until it literally runs off the record. This decay varies with each pipe organ: in a performance I directed in California in 1986, the tracker organ installed at the venue died almost instantly. The weights used can vary: Michael Chant, who performed the organ part at many performances, including the premiere, is a printer by trade and uses blocks of type; others have used matchboxes filled with heavy material. After the chorus has finished hitting the stones, there is an organ solo which uses weighted notes, notes altered in volume by pushing out or pulling in stops, indications to use the swell box, and other features. The solo is written in free time-space notation and the organist is encouraged to move leisurely through the material. Barlines indicate only a change of registration.

After the organ solo, the chorus, this time divided almost equally into speakers and whistlers, alternates between recitations of the text and several whistle solos.

Ex. 9.7: Opening of whistle section, Paragraph 1

‘Whistlers provide themselves with the wherewithal to whistle; all natural and mechanical means are permissible, from a broken tooth to

39 Impetus Recordings (28204), 1986.
empty bottles.\textsuperscript{40} The whistle solo part is the same for each soloist; it is usually played quite virtuosically, consisting as it does of elongated note-heads derived from segments of the Chinese pictographs, as Brian Dennis found.\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{Ex.9.8.png}
\caption{Ex. 9.8: Part of whistle solo, Paragraph 1}
\end{figure}

Most whistle soloists tend to choose whistles with some range, such as a swanee whistle, very much a favourite instrument with the Scratch and its contemporary, the Promenade Theatre Orchestra. Not all, though—police and gamesmaster’s whistles and tops of recorders have been used. Dave Smith performed a striking solo with a set of plastic Pan pipes at the London Sinfonietta concert.

Paragraph 2 is dedicated to Terry Riley, and uses the idea of progression through a limited number of repeated passages in Riley’s \textit{In C} (1964). The method of progression through the passages in Paragraph 2 and the content of those passages are different from those in \textit{In C}. This paragraph took up half the rehearsal time for the Morley College Experimental Music Class from its inception until the Paragraph had its premiere performance in May 1969 at the Roundhouse in London. The piece consists of twenty-five groups of five and six notes sung by a chorus.\textsuperscript{42} Attached to these groups are twenty-six percussion rhythms.

\textsuperscript{40} Cardew, instructions to Paragraph 1.

\textsuperscript{41} Dennis, p. 1067.

\textsuperscript{42} Timothy D. Taylor (‘Moving in Decency’, p. 559) found these pitches, which are unaltered in the final version, to consist of hexachords and pentachords. He made a mistake in his transcription in bar 6 (by leaving a flat off the second D) and ignoring a flat in one of the Ebs in bar 16. He then presented these bars as pitch class sets (so that there is a mistake in numbering in bar 4: G is pc 7, not 8). Taylor’s serial ordering (despite his quotation on p. 555 that ‘Cardew reacted against serialism’) ignores the fact that this is a five-bar pentatonic melody which is transposed by a semitone for each subsequent line.
The chorus material is sung in order, one note to the length of a breath to the indicated text (Ex. 9.9).


This text is set over five groups; the other groups are set in a grid which indicates that the text will be sung five times. The percussion rhythms are to be played in any order and at any tempo. Each rhythm must be repeated for the duration of each pitch group. There is one rhythmic
group left over which will be played after the choral material is finished; here the percussionists synchronise their tempi. At a signal, all percussionists end by finishing the group, giving a ragged ending to the piece.

There are two published editions of this Paragraph: as part of The Great Learning, published first by the Experimental Music Catalogue in 1971, which is still in print in its third printing, reissued by the Cornelius Cardew Committee in the early 1980s. There is also the privately-printed first edition of Paragraph 2 alone, entitled The Great Digest (1969; the name comes from the Ezra Pound translation). These two versions have significant differences, many of which Cardew made in response to the problems of performance. The first was the question of who was to drum and who was to sing. In the 1969 version, Cardew presented his preferred original method: ‘Each performer has a drum and two beaters, and should memorise the twenty-six rhythmic patterns and the five melodic phrases with text’. Hobbs remembered that at the Morley College classes,

Cornelius was trying to train people to play the drum part and initially to try to fulfil the desire of the score that you played and sang simultaneously. It became obvious that nobody, with the possible exception of Cardew, could do that.

For this first published version, Cardew admitted this problem and gave an alternative instruction which would allow ‘some performers...unable to cope with simultaneous drumming and singing’ to join drummers and sing their groups following each drummer’s rhythmic groupings. There was also the possibility that groups of singers, following a lead singer, could follow a single drummer, or that tired drummers could relieve each other alternatively. By the 1971 version this ossia was

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45 Cardew, The Great Digest.
reversed. Here groups of singers are accompanied by a drummer, who works with the lead singer by responding to his or her cue to begin a new rhythmic group in his or her own time. Cardew realised that very few groups of people could drum and sing at the same time, although he held out a faint hope that someday there might be such a group:

This performance is not the only possible one: circumstances may encourage the devising of others (e.g. all members of the chorus could both drum and sing).  

Another concern was whether the singers could be heard over the drums. An ideal performance according to the 1969 version would have had a ratio of drummers to singers of 1:1; furthermore, ‘[t]he rhythmic patterns are to be played strong and energetic throughout’. In the 1971 version, Cardew had realised that it was nearly impossible with this ratio for the singers to be heard, especially if they were untrained, and asked for ‘[a] number of groups...each consisting of the following: one drummer, one lead singer, and a number of supporting singers’. By the Deutsche Grammophon recording of Paragraph 2, Cardew concluded that the imbalance between drummers and singers was an exercise in failure:

Michael Parsons gave me an illuminating reference for the piece: he says that Buddhist monks go to a waterfall to practice chanting. The waterfall can’t be drowned, but it inspires the voice to high levels of power and purity. In this piece the voices fight a losing battle with the drums. Occasionally a voice may seem equal to the situation, but due to the long duration they increasingly prove inadequate. Singers may justifiably feel proud of surviving to the end, but in my own experience of singing the piece I come away feeling drained and exhausted: I’ve given everything I’ve got and it has not proved adequate – I have failed. The changes in the later version are all matters of interpretation.

The notation, with one exception, an omission, and the correction of an

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47 Cardew, The Great Digest.


49 Cardew, liner notes to The Scratch Orchestra, The Great Learning (Deutsche Grammophon 256 107, 1971).
error, is the same in both versions. The exception is an indication in the chorus part of a twenty-sixth section, consisting of the single word, ‘Hey’.

In the first version, the drummer/singer who reached the end of the twenty-five singing groups first was to shout ‘hey’ at the first stroke of the twenty-sixth rhythm, at which point all others, in reaching their twenty-sixth rhythm would do so in time with the first. A non-playing conductor started and stopped the entire piece with a signal in the 1969 version.

Between his opening and closing signals the conductor may either disappear or continue conducting – strongly and energetically – throughout the piece, following his inclination with regard to changes of tempo and metre.\(^{50}\)

The other indications, which ask that the singer/drummers choose their own tempi, seems to indicate that anything the conductor did might have nothing to do with the actions of the players. This conducting role was dropped in the 1971 version, which asked that the start and end should be cued by one of the singers. The indication ‘hey’ was dropped from the 1971 notation as well, resulting in a more even grid of five rows of five bars each, and the visual cue of the first drummer moving to an agreed position to indicate arrival at the twenty-sixth rhythm.

The 1969 score includes the twenty-six original Chinese characters of this Paragraph, attached both to the rhythms and to the pitch grid. These characters refer to the organisation of the twenty-six notes of the part for singers, the barring (indicating sentences), and the number of strokes in each rhythmic group.\(^{51}\) In this version, Cardew made provision for performance by a Chinese chorus, in which case, ‘the text is to be sung in Chinese, one syllable to each note’.\(^{52}\) In 1982, when I

\(^{50}\) Cardew, *The Great Digest*.

\(^{51}\) More detailed analysis on these correspondences occur in ‘Chinese Characters’.

\(^{52}\) Cardew, *The Great Digest*. 
directed this Paragraph in California, I had one Chinese speaker among the performers and asked her if she could teach us all to sing in Chinese. She demurred, possibly because, as she stated, the language was Mandarin and she spoke Cantonese only, or because she despaired of teaching us Chinese. Such a performance would have taken the ossia of the 1969 version, as none of us would have been able to drum and sing together.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 are more suggestive of instrumentation than many of the other paragraphs. Perhaps this is significant, as both are pre-Scratch works originally meant for different, more traditional performers. Cardew produced part of The Great Learning for the 1972 Promenade Concerts, at which time he had adopted Marxism. Embarrassed by a translation by a Fascist poet of a philosopher banned by Mao’s government, Cardew chose to shorten both Paragraphs 1 and 2 with the substitution of new texts composed by a committee. Michael Chant revised the organ solo in Paragraph 1 to accomplish the link; he continues to use his revision, as he did in the South Bank concert with the London Sinfonietta. It was also decided to ask the groups of singers to perform the text together for the Proms concert, so as to clarify the words. Also to be included were Maoist banners and slogans, but the BBC banned them. Cardew recognised almost immediately that shortening Paragraph 1 and 2 and changing its text did not work, either musically or ideologically, and it was withdrawn after this first performance. Even while still Maoist, Cardew said that although he had

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54 This censorship was followed in a different manner in the broadcast of the Sinfonietta performance of Paragraph 1, when the BBC cut whistle solos by Christopher Hobbs and Dave Smith. When Howard Skempton, who attended the concert, complained, he was told that the cut was made for time, something which was not done to the Stockhausen piece on the same programme nor, presumably, to other works, as at the time, the BBC advertised that, unlike Classic FM, they played entire works.
repudiated his experimental works, if *The Great Learning* were performed it should be performed as originally written.\(^{55}\)

Paragraph 5 also has one of the more problematic notations of the entire work in its introductory Dumb Show (Ex. 9.10).

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Cardew taught the Scratch Orchestra to perform the gestures by rote in his experimental music class at Morley College in preparation for its premiere, which took up weeks of the meetings.\(^{56}\) In 1984 Michael Parsons assumed this role, but after almost twenty years it is difficult to say that each gesture was as Cardew had envisaged it. The gestures are fairly clearly described, but as in dance notation, there is no way that specific motions and movements can be described precisely enough to be duplicated from performance to performance. Cardew divides the performers into seven or eight groups. According to the performance

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\(^{56}\) Hobbs, February 1983.
notes, the first person to make the gestures for the first sentence does so in front of the second, as ‘teacher’. The student becomes ‘teacher’, performing the Dumb Show to the next student, while the original teacher performs the other sentences alone. In this way the Dumb Show resembles some of the linked-process Improvisation Rites in *Nature Study Notes*.

Ex. 9.11: Michael Parsons’ notes for the first two sentences, Paragraph 5

In practice, this act of ‘tuition’ is pretence; the instructions are too hard to learn at first sight, and the indeterminacy of the movement notation has made many practitioners devise their own shorthand notes for movements, so that they can approximate them from performance to performance over the years. Dave Smith has annotated his copy of the scores with mnemonics for his own use; Stephan Szczelkun drew
explanatory stick figures. Michael Parsons has made a series of small cue cards representing each sentence. These cards indicate gestures indented according to grouping and hierarchy; he relies on these more than on the score itself (Ex. 9.11, previous page).

The shape and the original meaning of the pictograms form the gestures in the Dumb Show. However, the movements have often been taken by performers to be real sign language, either Native American or British or American Sign Language for the deaf. For instance, the ‘centrepiece’, which begins with ‘Combing motion of the fingers of both hands down the face, accompanied by facial expression’, is similar to that of deaf signing for ‘man’ – the stroking of an imaginary beard. It is also – ‘ér’, a connective word translated as ‘and’ or ‘then’, which is ‘a pictograph of a man’s beard’.

The end of Paragraph 5 – the ‘Improvisation Rite’ – must last as long as the Dumb Show and the compositions put together. The entire text of the rite is ‘A dense forest that presents no obstacle to the mind or eye (or other sense)’. This is very much a tribute to the ‘mystic’ type of improvisation rites to be found in Nature Study Notes. As a model for authentic performance, the best recording available of the Scratch Orchestra in full free improvisation is a tape of the first concert, at Hammersmith Town Hall in 1969. The organiser of the first concert, Christopher Hobbs, had given a direction that anything could be used, anything could be played, provided that random means were used. The result is a joyful, almost undifferentiated noise level, through which occasional singing, bits of radio and The ‘Dam-Busters’ March on a wind-

57 Dave Smith, Hatfield, 9 June 2003; Michael Parsons, Leicester, 10 June 2003.

58 See Appendix 4, ‘Catalogue of Movements, Dumb Show, Paragraph 5’, for a comparison of the translated and original texts with Parsons’ notes and movements on the accompanying DVD of Parsons performing the Dumb Show.

59 Chinese Readings.

up gramophone player can be heard. Cardew’s direction that other
senses might come into play gives one an idea of the kind of activities
which can be considered improvisatory — former members describe
Scratch activities including undressing or dressing in strange costumes,
poetry readings, and children playing ‘games’. The 1984 performance
had similar types of ‘improvisation’, including flower arrangement and
haircuts, which could not be picked up in recording. The unifying factor
of all Scratch concerts seems to be the sheer disunity of activity – that
one need not act in concert with the group, and that completely separate
activity adds to the perception of the whole.

Paragraph 3 emphasises the first characters in each sentence as
repeated three-note chords sung over a low Ab. Cardew has emphasised
the importance of playing this note at the octave specified, using the
direction to ‘play the low note, over and over, long’, played by ‘large
instruments’. This particular note is below the range of cellos and just
below the range of bassoons and bass clarinets without extensions or
special fingerings, requiring the richer sounds of double basses and
double bassoons, or contrabass clarinets. Pipe organs may also be used
in venues which have them. After the note is established, this note is
varied by the addition of ascending scales. The choir sing the remaining
words of each sentence to the notes from the ascending scales.
Instrumental sections separate each sentence.

This is the only paragraph to recommend the ensemble size (‘10
instrumentalists, 30 singers’) rather than the proportion involved in
various activities alone. Cardew set the actions in eight steps, with eight
further items (numbered 10-16). These give variants which will extend
the performance (a rule allowing that the sentences may be mixed after
the main structure, a corresponding one for a new low note, and a

61 Personal interview with Bryn Harris, 15 April 1983; also Hobbs, February 1983;
programme for QEH concert, from the collection of Richard Ascough.

62 Cardew, The Great Learning, Paragraph 3.
suggestion for a new harmonic framework). They may also clarify and facilitate the performance (suggestions for notes in the ascending scales – the only direct notation for microtones in *The Great Learning* occurs here – and the provision that singers may, if they wish, equip themselves with a single-note pitch source, such as a bell or pitch-pipe, tuned to one of the given notes). He also specified dynamics (‘moderate’) and made provisions to avoid the loss of the Ab drone and to forestall solo singers. The result is a low instrumental drone, reminiscent of Tibetan chants, with slowly diffusing sung chords.

Paragraph 4 has seven sections for chorus playing instruments and organ, representing the seven sentences of the paragraph. Cardew demanded an organ with at least two manuals and weights as in Paragraph 1. He also gave complex instructions for playing the score, including an example of such realisation. However, in an addendum, Cardew forbade the organist to make such a performing realisation of the score, perhaps in order to encourage a more intuitive performance. Much of Cardew’s earlier works, from *Autumn ’60* to *Octet ’61 for Jasper Johns* to an early concept of *Treatise* (1963-67) demand this kind of realisation. Cardew forestalled any leisurely realisation (as he encouraged in Paragraph 1) by asking the organist to coordinate with the chorus leader, even to abandon a section rather than fall behind.

Cardew’s description of the other instruments resembles more an organological study than performance instructions. He categorised one group of instruments as ‘wands’ and ‘sonorous substances’, and described them by their use, thus encouraging imagination in the choice of the instruments. The third category, ‘gueros’, is also described

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64 The spelling ‘güiro’ is common, with Walter Piston (*Orchestration*) giving ‘guero’ as the French spelling. Since this organological category is Cardew’s own and refers to a wider category of scraped instruments than the Latin American gourd they imitate, I will retain Cardew’s spelling.
freely as anything which makes a good sound when stroked. Gueros have been cheese graters, bicycle wheels, and radiator grilles. Wands could be anything, from tree switches and car antennae to carpet beaters. Only ‘sonorous substance’ is provided with an example – ‘...a cushion or any object that produces a satisfying sound when struck’, a suggestion which almost always ensures that over half the players will provide themselves with cushions. The players sit in a line or ‘crocodile’. Dave Smith said, ‘There’s a good practical reason for that. It’s a canon in which you have to be aware of what the person ahead is doing’. Each player follows the one before, hitting the sonorous substance with the wand and speaking the text of the Paragraph in canon. A section for gueros using a notation similar to that of the whistle solos in Paragraph 1 follows. After all seven sentences are done in this fashion, a coda, made up of all seven guero sections played alone, follows. The physical layout of this Paragraph is quite striking: it was featured quite prominently by Phillipe Regniez in his film on Cardew, and was used by Ken Russell in his *The ABC of British Music*. Dave Smith said that Paragraph 4

brings ‘Death Chant’ (LaMonte Young [sic]) to mind! It’s very ritualistic and there’s a lot of repetitive and ethnic music with that quality. And watching people beating cushions increases the effect.

Of course, this attention to performance practice is not consistent with Cardew’s own wishes. Since he experienced *Treatise* differently

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65 The film director Ken Russell carried a carpet-beater while presenting this paragraph of *The Great Learning* in *The ABC of British Music* (*The South Bank Show* special, Thames Television, 1988).


69 Dave Smith, “*The Great Learning*” [sic] – a conversation’. 
through repeated performances and he changed his attitude to improvisation, no doubt he expected others’ performances to change with future musical ideas. However, there is a basic human interest in all of us to know what it was like ‘back then’, which makes authentic performance so attractive. There is also the suspicion today that performance freedom precludes rehearsal and research, a course of action which, hopefully, this thesis has shown to be productive.

Michael Parsons, Dave Smith, and Christopher Hobbs all mentioned that the Dumb Show, as vague as it is, could be interpreted in any manner that the notation would allow; and yet Smith and Parsons kept notes of their former gestures. Parsons agreed readily to my suggestion that he be filmed performing the Dumb Show, thinking that a DVD would be useful in instructing performers in his methods, though at the same time warning that authentic performance was not necessary. Certainly, the care these performers bring to the realisation of *The Great Learning* makes the study of its performing tradition worthwhile.

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71 The question-and-answer section of the session in which I gave a summary of this chapter at the Third Biennial Conference on Twentieth-Century Music (University of Nottingham, 28 June 2003) showed that many delegates rejected the concept of authentic performance of experimental music. At the time I was eager to agree that this was not the only course of action, but after much thought, I find that examination of historical performance practice is, at the very least, a desirable step in approaching experimental music in general. I can only surmise that this aversion either stems from an aversion to limitation of indeterminate elements, or to the modernist affection for novelty and innovation.
Chapter 10: ‘The Dilemma of the Bourgeois Artist’: Discontents and Politicisation

The Dealer Concerts, the Newcastle tour, and the Discontents meetings, which proved to mark a crisis point in the existence of the Scratch Orchestra, provide some of the most dramatic events in the Scratch Orchestra’s history. Michael Chant solicited untried concert ideas, which he then ‘dealt’ to members to the Orchestra to realise simultaneously for the first concert of the tour, at the Newcastle Civic Centre, 21 June 1971. Cardew received Greg Bright’s *Sweet F.A.*: ‘Act as obscenely as you can until the authorities intervene’. He interpreted it by drawing nudes and writing four-letter words on pieces of toilet paper. For this, the police closed the concert on the grounds of obscenity. This event was blown up in the press as a ‘silly season’ controversy, one which benefited from an existing prejudice held by the tabloids against modern music of any kind. The Orchestra was banned from returning to the Newcastle Civic centre for their fifth concert, although this was rescinded, in part because of the presence of a German film crew.

There is a suggestion that the police had not wished for the first concert to go ahead, and that Cardew’s mild action was seized upon as an excuse to close it.1 Only months before, it seems likely that the Orchestra would have found this situation amusing. The Orchestra had a jocular pride in bad reviews and consternation from establishment figures. A Scratch Orchestra promotional flyer reads:

> After hearing a performance at the ICA, Karlheinz Stockhausen said of The Orchestra: ‘They can’t possibly improve’. Come along and find out what he meant!2

Nor did they have a particular horror of involvement with the police. An incident in which Hugh Shrapnel and Psi Ellison were arrested for

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1 Bryn Harris, interview, April 1983.

2 Promotional material for concert, 5 March 1971, Ascough collection.
stealing the nose cone of a bomb occurred during the Village Tours the summer before (they had thought that the nose cone was a bell abandoned in a derelict barn; the farm owner was a former bomb disposal expert who had kept the nose cone for ‘sentimental reasons’).³ This must have been frightening for Shrapnel (the ‘innocent party’)⁴ and Ellison while they were detained, but the incident was cherished as another piece of Orchestra lore.

The resultant notoriety on the Northern tour in 1971, though, was uncomfortable (physically so, since the farmer on whose land the Orchestra camped threw them off as a result of the newspaper coverage), and was made more intense by the fact that the members on tour were thrown together with time to discuss growing problems in the Orchestra. These problems included divisions between artists and trained musicians and between those who wished for more equality among the membership. Musicians were beginning to feel constrained by the need to work in text and graphic notation. Some members found a certain kind of sameness to new works and had the feeling, much like Stockhausen, that there was a lack of scope for improvement as an ensemble.

At the same time, and often among the same members, there was a resentment of Cardew’s leadership in what was meant to be an ensemble of equals. Cardew had invested his time and effort almost wholly in the Scratch Orchestra; he had lost his job at Aldus Books due to frequent absences and he had only one student at the Royal Academy of Music, in part because the administration of the Academy did nothing to encourage students to study with him. Christopher Hobbs found out that Cardew was available to teach at the Academy only because a friend of his had badgered the administration to allow him to do so. Hobbs said:

³ Bryn Harris, Interview with VA, April 1983.

⁴ Ibid.
[T]hey were very wary about his being there; they were throughout the time that he taught there...so they never advertised the fact that he taught there. It was completely secret. They never told a soul.\textsuperscript{5}

Cardew may also have had few students because his method of instruction did not fit traditional conservatory coursework.\textsuperscript{6} Adrian Jack asked Cardew about this in 1975, after Cardew had adopted Marxism:

\begin{quote}
A[drian] J[ack]: Are you still a professor at the Academy?

C[ornelius] C[ardew]: I'm available in theory, but they don't give me students.

AJ: Why?

CC: I think it's just a hangover from the old avantgarde days. They didn't like the Scratch Orchestra and the fact that I didn't care if students went in for exams. They feel that any person who thinks it isn't necessary to have that kind of training is a threat to the Academy.\textsuperscript{7}
\end{quote}

Cardew's work as a teacher lay explicitly in the Experimental Music classes at Morley College and implicitly in the Scratch Orchestra itself. He put virtually all of his energies into the Scratch Orchestra. He compiled and distributed the address lists, letters, and other mailings; he used his reputation to gain grants and recording dates. Other composers have been the central leaders of their ensembles: Steve Reich and Philip Glass; the familial repertory company of Karlheinz Stockhausen; the loose, changing groups of people around La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela; latterly, in British experimental music itself, the Michael Nyman Band and Gavin Bryars Ensemble. Cardew denied that the Scratch Orchestra was his ensemble, but outsiders often placed him as its head. As he gave so much of his creative energies to the Orchestra and because its original organisation bears his stamp, however, it is not

\textsuperscript{5} Hobbs, interview, 3 February 1983.

\textsuperscript{6} Hobbs, for instance, stopped attending musicianship and other RAM classes almost immediately, and left the Academy after two years.

\textsuperscript{7} Adrian Jack, ‘Cornelius Cardew’, \textit{Music and Musicians}, May 1975, p. 34.
surprising that his feeling of belonging grew and became confused with a parental, even a proprietorial interest.8

Bryn Harris thought that the reason for the perception of Cardew’s growing control had to do with a combination of Cardew’s financial problems and his emulation of the Confucian governmental system:

I think it’s essential to recognise that in the Draft Constitution just how much Cornelius was influenced by Confucianism at that time. Phil Gebbett [one of the musically-trained members; part of the associated group CPE] really blew the gaff on it in a way because he made a fair old study of Confucianism himself, understood the whole content of the prints, recognised that Cornelius had really gone far enough into it and was using all this, establishing himself as ‘My good lord’, the being who is going to be emulated by the others. Frankly, most of the time he was quite a good leader, but when he was having external problems he wasn’t so good.9

Michael Parsons, John Tilbury, Howard Skempton, and Michael Chant also emerged as perceived figureheads.10 There may also have been a gulf between the stalwarts of the Orchestra and rank-and-file members, as David Briers noted.

I must have found it convivial and enjoyable to some degree, but I never really made close friends through the Scratch Orchestra, and found the small group that ran it to be very exclusive, even if they thought they weren’t.11

This ‘exclusivity’ may have in part stemmed from the pressures of organisation, which fell upon most experienced members, especially those who took on the responsibility of administration and rehearsal. In part, most of these ‘leaders’ (with the possible exceptions of Tilbury and Bryn Harris) appear to be reserved to this day when not involved in

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8 See Chapters 5-8 for examples of Improvisation Rites in Nature Study Notes. The balance of works written by trained musicians, visual artists and others in Nature Study Notes is similar in Scratch Anthology of Compositions, Scratch Music, and other collections. Cardew is very prominent, especially due to The Great Learning, in SO recordings and prestige performances, but in Scratch Orchestra-produced activities, his activity shows him to be just one of a number of the more prolific members.

9 Bryn Harris, interview, April 1983.

10 Kathryn Gleasman Pisaro, Music From Scratch, p. 45.

11 David Briers, email, 4 September 2003.
teaching or rehearsing, although they very friendly and helpful when approached. Cardew appeared distant to his students – even to Christopher Hobbs. During his time at the Royal Academy of Music:

I was closer to him than any of the other [students], partly because I’d been his sole student for a while…. When we played Christian Wolff’s Trio, I was as close to him as Cardew’s natural reserve and a fourteen year age gap could make. He, I think, was only really close to people of his own age…. He was a remarkably private man and in that way he got on with AMM, which is also a very private group.\footnote{Christopher Hobbs, Interview, 3 February 1983.}

The so-called ‘sub-groups’, both those without an independent identity outside of the Orchestra and those that operated separately, often found themselves at odds with the organisation and working methods of the Orchestra. David Jackman, whose Harmony Band was a separate entity was, nonetheless, keen to keep the democratic nature of the Scratch Orchestra intact. The Slippery Merchants, who protested against what they felt to be increasing organisation of Scratch Orchestra activities, discussed kidnapping Cardew, a proposal which was not meant entirely jocularly.

Harris described the escalating tension between Cardew and Jackman, as well as with many other Orchestra members:

There was one meeting where…both Dave Jackman and I were opposing what [Cardew] was putting forward for the forthcoming plans. [Cardew] said, ‘I’ve never before felt like putting anybody out of the Orchestra’. Suddenly there was uproar; he just totally misjudged it because suddenly everybody said, ‘Well, who are you to decide in the Orchestra anyway? You’re only another member!’ But it was just a fit of pique he had got into and that’s where he blew the gaff on how it was really his orchestra.\footnote{Bryn Harris, interview, April 1983.}

The issues of these divisions were discussed during the Northern Tour. Some of these divisions were physical: at their new site, Cardew camped with a few followers across a brook from the rest of the Orchestra. The ideas proposed included those offered by a growing contingent of Marxist-Leninists such as Keith Rowe and John Tilbury.
Marxism, especially Maoism, had been one of a number of philosophies then current. Christopher Hobbs was expelled from the Students’ Union at Royal Academy of Music in 1969 for selling *The Little Red Book* of Mao’s quotations, although he was reinstated immediately, as the president of the union had no right to expel him. Hobbs acted to irritate conservative members of the Union as much as from any belief, as he read Mao as part of a self-education which included Freud, Joyce and Wittgenstein. Mao’s Marxist equality in general fit the equality of the Scratch Orchestra better than the hierarchical governing system of Confucianism, but it was one of a number of influences. Until well after the Discontent Meetings, the ‘dominant ideology’ in the Scratch Orchestra remained improvisation and indeterminacy.

Members aired their divisions as a series of uninterrupted statements at the Discontent Meetings of 23 and 24 August. Each member took turns speaking, during which they were not to be interrupted, according to a proposal signed by Judith Euren, Hugh Shrapnel, Psi Ellison, and David and Diane Jackman. Many of the contributions were lost, as only Judith Euren and John Tilbury provided written copies of their statements for other members. Other statements and events of these two days are only available from anecdotes. John Tilbury, who spoke on the first day, tabled a Marxist aesthetic:

> Nobody can deny that our intentions in the S.O. are good, more than that, that the class stand of many of us is correct, but if we look at the effect of our good intentions we find that there are serious shortcomings, that activity without criticism and self-criticism is both dangerous and harmful.\(^1\)

Tilbury offered such criticism in a list of contradictions between theory and practice in the life of the Orchestra. Some of these contradictions – the existence of a leader, the closed nature of both social and musical activities – were complaints shared by other members. Tilbury stressed the contradiction between the Orchestra as an anti-establishment

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\(^1\) John Tilbury, Discontent File (23 August 1971), Ascough Collection.
organisation and its willingness to appear on the BBC, and to accept Arts Council grants, and other signs of favour from the establishment. He added the charge of ‘elitism’ to paternalism as a stance in opposition to democracy. Finally, Tilbury felt that the Orchestra was ‘a pessimistic symptom of a system in decay’.\[^{15}\]

Tilbury cited Christopher Caudwell (1907-37), a British Marxist who wrote *Studies in a Dying Culture* and other works that took a Marxist approach to aesthetics in the arts and sciences. Caudwell felt that the common view of Marxist aesthetics misunderstood the impetus for the utility of art:

> It is supposed to be the teaching of Marxism that art for art’s sake is an illusion and that art must be propaganda. This is, however, making the usual bourgeois simplification of a complex matter. Art is a social function. This is not a Marxist demand, but arises from the way in which art forms are defined. Only those things are recognised as art forms which have a conscious social function. The fantasies of a dreamer are not art. What is important to art, Marxism and society is the question: What social function is art playing?\[^{16}\]

Such a simplification of Marxist aesthetics is easy to make. Art has a social function, but more importantly, the function, according to Mao Zhedong, following Lenin, is political.

> In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art’s sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics. Proletarian literature and art are part of the whole proletarian revolutionary cause; they are, as Lenin said, cogs and wheels in the whole revolutionary machine.\[^{17}\]

Caudwell thought that art has a social function which has built into its categorisation forms according to use, which then must have a Marxist interpretation. Mao’s interpretation, which is a more common

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\[^{16}\] Caudwell, quoted in Tilbury, 23 August.

articulation of the aesthetic, is almost the same, but leaves out this step in reasoning to label art as inherently political. The step from a strict reading of art as invariably political to art as invariant propaganda perhaps stems from the assertive language of Marxism-Leninism of the Cultural Revolution. This in turn may have led to what Tilbury perceived as a simplification and conflating of his views and those of Keith Rowe, who had been a leading Marxist critic within the Orchestra. While Tilbury admired Rowe’s views, ‘which has put my own armchair communism to shame’,\(^\text{18}\) he felt that his own response was personal and independently conceived.

Apropos of Keith, perhaps I should try to get one thing straight. Whilst he and I have been regarded as the ‘political’ element in the S.O., we have both come to similar but not yet the same conclusions along quite different paths of development. It is not a question of us getting turned on together at meetings. So my views on the S.O. and the present state of affairs have this kind of ideological background and I would like people to be clear on that.\(^\text{19}\)

Marxist rhetoric may often sound to the outsider as ‘identikit’. The language of Marxism, especially as filtered through the particularities of Maoism in translation, may have been taken as evidence of an almost ‘religious’ conversion, superficially similar to the philosophical exploration current in the late 1960s and early 1970s which led to the strict language, lifestyle, and attitudes in evangelical Christian and other religious groups.

Perhaps the most contentious issue lay in the basic assumption laid out by Tilbury at the start:

In fact, all the views expressed in the Discontent File are ideologically based and I think that to recognise this would be a step forward. ‘Ideas do not fall out of the sky’.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^\text{18}\) Tilbury, 23 August 1971.

\(^\text{19}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{20}\) Ibid.
The fact that art is a social act is not contentious, but it becomes more contentious when prefacing Caudwell’s further definition: ‘Only those things are recognised as art forms which have a conscious social function. The fantasies of a dreamer are not art’. This step alienates those who use dreams as a spontaneous mode of creation: dreams, either real or manufactured (as in drug use or religious ecstasy) have motivated many works of Romanticism and earlier art as well as the proto-experimental works of la belle époque (Jarry, Apollinaire, Satie), surrealism, and much of serialism and abstract expressionism.

For the Scratch Orchestra, the social structure of music-making and the outreach programmes underlined the concept of art as a social act. The Village tours began with members approaching villagers to explain their work. The Slippery Merchants’ School Raids, in which members would appear suddenly at schools during breaks, and perform events which had some relevance to school activities, gave both students and teachers an experience of live performance. At the same time, these raids were disjointed, including Dadaist or dreamlike elements. The Merchants wore ‘wig-out’ costumes: Bryn Harris in white lab coat and mask, Greg Bright in a coat of mail made of coloured blocks of wood, Psi Ellison in a tramp’s clothing. They entered school grounds with a football bearing one word, kicked the ball around, and then left the ball with the children. The way to find the meaning of this work resembled a treasure hunt: if all of the schools brought their balls together, the words printed on them would spell out a sentence. However, this sentence was self-reflexive: ‘Manipulate the black words to find the whole’.21 One had to follow the instructions to find the instructions, a construction that has the logical structure of a dream.22

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21 Bryn Harris, interview, April 1983.

22 Sigmund Freud emphasised the role of daydreams and fantasies in creative writing and the writer as ‘der Träumer am hellichten Tag [the dreamer in broad daylight]’ in ‘Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming’, *Sigmund Freud, vol. 14: Art and Literature*, tr. under supervision of James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 137. The writing, however, to which he refers is the linear narrative of a popular romance rather than the
As such, the School Raids both had a conscious social dimension in their execution and an unconscious, dream dimension in their content. For Caudwell the content of the art work must be as clear as its form or performance:

But art is not in any case a relation to a thing, it is a relation between men, between artist and audience. The commercialisation of art may revolt the sincere artist, but the tragedy is that he revolts against it still within the limitations of bourgeois culture. He attempts to forget the market completely and concentrate on his relation to his work, the art work, which now becomes still further hypostatised as an entity-in-itself. Because the art work is now completely an end-in-itself, and even the market is forgotten, the art process becomes an extremely individualistic relation. The social values inherent in the art form, such as syntax, tradition, rules, technique, form, accepted tonal scale, now seem to have little value, for the art work more and more exists for the individual alone.  

Caudwell considered such private art antisocial:

For the Bourgeois Artist man is free not through but in spite of social relations. If one believes this – which is the deepest and most irradicable bourgeois illusion – all others are built on this – one must, if one is hurt by bourgeois social relations, see security and freedom only in casting them off, and returning to the primitive state with less ‘constraints’.... The bourgeois artist therefore could never escape from this essential selfishness – not a petty selfishness but the selfishness which is the pattern of bourgeois culture and is revealed in pacifism, Protestantism, and all varieties of salvation obtained by individual action.  

Tilbury read a long extract from Caudwell’s essay on D. H. Lawrence to clarify the problems of the Orchestra: ‘I suspect that these words go near the bone for many of us. By that I mean that Caudwell articulates what most of us feel...’ Many did indeed agree, but for others, this position...

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23 Christopher Caudwell, quoted in Tilbury, 23 August 1971.
24 Ibid.
26 Tilbury, 23 August 1971.
was too rigid. Bryn Harris chose an experimental solution, by looking through the writings of John Cage. His conclusion was that disparity of beliefs was good, if the differences were aired. Tilbury encouraged debate, but proposed that the purpose and aesthetic of Marxist ideology be held as given:

[W]e must help to create revolutionary public opinion, we must give active support, in our own way, to those forces which will ultimately destroy the existing social relations and create a new base.... As I see it, all our future meetings, discussions, concerts would have this broad ideological base. At the same time the various contradictions that still exist, and to a certain extent will always exist within the S.O. are resolved, not by the artificial separation and nurturing of ideas in glasshouse conditions, but by 'letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend'.

This quotation from Mao Zhedong comes from his speech of 1957, which encouraged discussion among the Chinese people:

Letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is the policy for promoting progress in the arts and sciences and a flourishing socialist culture in our land.... Questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields. They should not be settled in an over-simple manner. A period of trial is often needed to determine whether something is right or wrong.... In a socialist society, the conditions for the growth of the new are radically different from and far superior to those in the old society. Nevertheless, it often happens that new, rising forces are held back and sound ideas stifled. Besides, even in the absence of their deliberate suppression, the growth of new things may be hindered simply through lack of discernment. It is therefore necessary to be careful about questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, to encourage free discussion and avoid hasty conclusions. We believe that such an attitude will help ensure a relatively smooth development of the arts and sciences.

Mao cited Darwin and Copernicus as thinkers whose 'correct and good things were first regarded not as fragrant flowers but as poisonous

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27 Tilbury, 23 August 1971.

This encouragement of debate embraced debate about Marxism.

What should our policy be towards non-Marxist ideas? As far as unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs of the socialist cause are concerned, the matter is easy, we simply deprive them of their freedom of speech. But incorrect ideas among the people are quite a different matter. Will it do to ban such ideas and deny them any opportunity for expression? Certainly not. It is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues.

Tilbury’s proposal that all discussion start from Marxist ideology followed this method of ‘discussion, criticism and reasoning’. Judith Euren shared the view that discussion was paramount to find a kind of Orchestra self-knowledge.

I hope that our future structure will attempt to be realistic to ourselves. Our meetings ought to be run with a reverence for truth, i.e., that we should wish to make open what we are at the present moment in our complex entirety. Our discontents must be made apparent and fully considered.

However, Euren was concerned that ideological debate of the kind that Tilbury suggested would not suit all members:

There are some new ideas amongst us, so let us now make clear to what extent we as a whole adhere to them. The group’s discussion seems to be influenced by these ideas that it might give an incorrect appearance to some. This does not help our search for our real state of being. One of the causes of this misleading situation might be that firm belief in an ideology invariably gives rise to strong argument and that such confident words tend to encourage argument for its own sake. In contrast to this strength is the silence of some and the incoherence of others. But we should not disregard questioning and confusions. They have their importance because they come out of us.

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29 Ibid., p. 408.

30 Ibid., pp. 410-11.


32 Ibid.
Euren worried that some members might find the current situation of discussion and debate wearing:

> Whatever this group achieves it is not worth it if a minority is repressed. This situation could perhaps lead to just even one member finding it impossible to continue to work in such a framework.\(^\text{33}\)

At the next meeting, which Tilbury and Rowe did not attend, Euren’s words were borne out, due to the question of leadership rather than Marxist ideology. Bryn Harris described how the already heated relations between Cardew and Jackman erupted:

> Cornelius…made a proposal that he ‘step down’ and either Dave Jackman or Psi Ellison take over as being the most able leaders, at which point the discipline of the meeting broke down. Dave Jackman screamed and shouted and swore at him: ‘Rotten bastard, how dare you put me in a position like that’, and Psi burst into tears and walked out… He and Judith never participated in the Orchestra after that…. It was quite weird because the meeting broke down after that.\(^\text{34}\)

Psi Ellison, as a member of the anarchic Slippery Merchants, held a particular regard for the non-hierarchical organisation of the Orchestra, so that Cardew’s suggestion that he take over was hurtful. From the emotional nature of the Discontents File, the argument between David Jackman and Cardew, and especially Psi Ellison’s exit, from which he never returned (he refused to talk about the Scratch Orchestra for fifteen years), it is easy to conclude that this moment was a watershed for the Orchestra and that everything was changed completely thereafter. In fact, the demographics of the Scratch Orchestra address list and the communications in SO letters belies this conclusion. There were more members lost in the two address lists before the Newcastle tour and Discontents than in the two lists on either side of these events. In the months between the address list of the first half of 1971 and that of 15 September, twenty-five new members joined and only sixteen names

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\(^{33}\) Judith Euren, Discontents (1971).

\(^{34}\) Bryn Harris, interview, April 1983.
were removed. Psi Ellison and Judith Euren’s names remained on the lists throughout, even though they were no longer involved. They were treated as passive members: their addresses were kept up to date, as they moved in with Hugh Shrapnel, moved to Bedfordshire, and then were to be contacted via Catherine Williams.

Cardew hand-wrote the address list of 15 September 1971, but the next, 1 November 1971, is typed. The only organising member mentioned in this letter is Bryn Harris, who was the address list contact. Harris signed the letter attached to the next list of March 1972, but the typing, though similar, has several stylistic differences. The November 1971 list includes several proposals: for a new constitution, more concern for the education of the membership in traditional musical technique, and, most importantly, for the establishment of a committee of four people to run the day-to-day business of the Orchestra. By March 1972, this committee consisted of five: Birgit Burckhardt, Brian Dennis, Bryn Harris, Alec Hill, and Jenny Robbins.

In the November 1971 list, the members of the newly established Scratch Committee noted by means of asterisks those members who had not participated and stated that any such members would be removed from the address list if they did not contact a member of the committee. In fact, this threat was not carried out, as all members’ names were retained in the next address list. Ellison and Euren, despite not having taken part since the Discontents, have no such asterisk. It is as if the Scratch Orchestra wished to keep them, even if they did not want to be kept. Furthermore, the last address list of the Ascough Collection, dated May 1972, reached a larger number of members because non-participating members were no longer removed. As every other list shows a steady stream of additions and deletions this increase seems to indicate that the organisers were no longer sending music with the list, and that the Orchestra was changing from a fluctuating membership to a fixed core with a mailing list to advertise their concerts.
The Orchestra documents show that Cardew did not undergo some kind of Damascene conversion to Marxism in the early 1970s to write agitprop folksongs and pop tunes, as is commonly assumed. Soon after the Discontent meetings, the Scratch Ideology Group had its first meeting and Cardew joined at either the second or third meeting.\footnote{Ibid.} Although the Marxist influence would grow, the ‘old’ Scratch pieces and methods of performance and ‘new’ Scratch coexisted, mostly on the same concerts, for at least another year. One particularly telling juxtaposition of attitudes occurred at a concert in Liverpool, 26 January 1972. Here, John White’s \textit{The Chairman’s Enemies’ Favourite Things} followed Cardew’s \textit{10,000 Nails in the Coffin of Imperialism}. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of \textit{The Great Learning} were rearranged and the texts rewritten by a Scratch Orchestra committee for the Promenade Concerts of 1972 and the Orchestra played experimental and political works at the Munich Olympics, but the Marxist members eventually decided to follow the form as well as the political content of Maoist music. Cardew wrote an account of his dissatisfaction with the new, ‘political’ version of \textit{The Great Learning} in \textit{Stockhausen Serves Imperialism}, the best source of his thinking according to strict Maoist thought.

In order to harmonise the reactionary ideology of \textit{The Great Learning} with the revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism we were obliged to stand on our heads, and from such a contorted position one can perform no useful service to the revolution.\footnote{Cardew, \textit{Stockhausen Serves Imperialism} (London: Latimer, 1974) p. 99.}

While Mao had encouraged debate in the arts and sciences in 1957, he stated in 1942 that art should aspire to the forms preferred by the working class:

\begin{quote}
Take a bucket of water, for instance; where is it to be raised from if not from the ground? From mid-air? From what basis, then, are literature and art to be raised? From the basis of the feudal classes? From the basis of the bourgeoisie? From the basis of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals? No, not from any of these; only from the
\end{quote}
basis of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers. Nor does this mean raising the workers, peasants and soldiers to the ‘heights’ of the feudal classes, the bourgeoisie or the petty-bourgeois intellectuals; it means raising the level of literature and art in the direction in which the workers, peasants and soldiers are themselves advancing, in the direction in which the proletariat is advancing. Here again the task of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers comes in. Only by starting from the workers, peasants and soldiers can we have a correct understanding of popularization and of the raising of standards and find the proper relationship between the two.\textsuperscript{37}

The political membership valued adherence to a strict Marxist doctrine, reinforced through debate and criticism. A rift grew between members of the Scratch Ideology Group who wished to debate and practice and the experimental musicians and artists who preferred to play. A new insistence on musical training had both positive results – a new discipline among the members and the establishment of music lessons – and negative ones – the loss of spontaneity and the disaffection of many of the non-musical members. As women members mostly came from the visual arts, this hit them doubly hard, and women formed a sizeable majority of the Orchestra. Carole Finer said that in Orchestra meetings:

Stella [Cardew] and I used to sit there and shake our heads and say to each other ‘this isn’t right’. We’d ask questions and get put down for not being correct. It was very fanatical. Chairman Mao was the chairman and if you were incorrect you were told. Particularly women and particularly artists.\textsuperscript{38}

This debate and criticism within a narrow Maoist aesthetic led to the demise of the Promenade Theatre Orchestra, an ensemble founded by John White which played complicated systemic and tonal music on toy pianos and reed organs. After a concert by the Scratch and the PTO in Oslo, Hobbs and White ‘were quite roundly savaged by some of the other


\textsuperscript{38} Finer, quoted in Pisaro, p. 84.
members for what was thought, taken, or described at the time as a revisionist stance’. Shortly afterward, White and Hobbs reformed as a duo without political members Alec Hill and Hugh Shrapnel. AMM broke up for a short time: Rowe and Cardew left because they found AMM music too abstract. Lou Gare moved away (Lawrence Sheaff had quit years before); but though Eddie Prévost soon restarted the idea of AMM, there was no one else for several years, which made it impossible to play laminar music as AMM.

There is a problem in adapting the particularities of Chinese Marxist aesthetics to suit the tastes of the British people. While the broad masses of China may have enjoyed folk melodies – at least through the years of the Cultural Revolution – the British and Irish proletariat prefer rock music, soaps, game shows, and other commercial entertainments. People’s Liberation Music (PLM), established by Laurie Baker in 1974 (which Cardew and Shrapnel joined), addressed this problem to some extent, as they had good audience response at protests and other events. Cardew wrote his ‘Bethanien Song’ as a theme for a campaign to establish a medical clinic in Kreuzberg in West Berlin in 1973. It sounded so much like an authentic German protest song that many people mistook it for a traditional melody.

However, the problem of this music as proletarian lies in the fact that many of the styles adopted by the late Scratch Orchestra were determined and dictated by bourgeois musicians. The folk-pop of PLM played to an imagined proletariat, just as folk protest music in the twentieth century was mostly made by the intelligentsia. Cardew’s simpler tonal piano pieces follow the Maoist desire for a concert music which would be understood by the proletariat, as in the opera Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy and the Yellow River Concerto. In turn, this has resonance in Stalinist aesthetics, in which the language of nineteenth-century bourgeois art is used to build a ‘proletarian’ art.

39 Hobbs, 3 January 1983.
Revolutionaries who came from a bourgeois background could denounce a member of the proletariat interested in ‘difficult’ music of the avant garde, experimentalism or even common-practice art music as a tool of the bourgeoisie. For instance, this exchange took place between the critic Adrian Jack and Cardew in 1975:

AJ: You must admit that the working classes don’t like Beethoven or Mozart very much.

CC: I’m not at all surprised that the working class doesn’t like Beethoven or Mozart, because they are the composers of the bourgeoisie.  

Art had to be hierarchical according to class, rather than differentiated equally as separate aesthetic styles. In a way, this narrow view of Marxist aesthetics can penalise and subordinate members of the proletariat rather than freeing them.

However, the new music was not as simple as many critics made out. Cardew’s *Piano Albums* of 1973 and 1974 followed then-current Maoist thinking about a ‘proletarian’ music influenced by folk and popular songs. Some of these are Chinese revolutionary and popular songs (*Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman*, *The East is Red*), or Maoist art music (*Bring the Land a New Life* is based on an aria from the opera *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*). There are also pieces based upon Irish revolutionary songs – *The Croppy Boy* and *Four Principles on Ireland* – which reflect the immediate and local concerns of Cardew and the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist), that of the struggle of Irish nationalism in Northern Ireland, a concern which, at the time of this writing, remains current. With one exception, the pieces from the *Piano Albums* which were collected on the recording *Four Principles on Ireland*.

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41 Since I am focussing on class attitudes, it is necessary to declare my own: I was born into a working-class family in a mostly poor neighbourhood.
Ireland and Other Pieces\textsuperscript{42} exhibit musical references which include Bach, a composer with whom Cardew had a particular affinity, nineteenth-century piano technique, Gershwin, and Debussy. These works would be called paraphrases or fantasies upon the folk sources in the classification system of nineteenth and early twentieth-century genres and they would be difficult to use as set this way for communal singing. They reflect the common transformation of folk sources for concert use permissible in China at the time, as well as Cardew’s own pre-modern influences.

The exception is Revolution is the Main Trend in the World Today, which (as played as a piano solo) has a theme with the feeling of ‘pop’ pieces written to keep school choirs interested, a wandering ‘meditation’ on this theme, and a conclusion with a weak Jerry Lee Lewis-style run up the keyboard. However, this one failure (and it is not an unqualified failure, as it worked better when arranged for PLM) and the small scale of all the early works is understandable. Cardew was ‘experimenting’ (in the traditional sense of the word) with finding a style which would work more appropriately under Maoist aesthetics and within British cultural norms, just as Schoenberg wrote miniatures when he first ‘experimented’ with atonality.

Friendly critics, such as Adrian Jack, did not like Cardew’s change in style:

The music you have written recently sounds almost deliberately bad for instance – those pieces from the Piano Album that John Tilbury played at the Purcell Room on March 5 last year. Why are they not better composed? You could certainly manage better, couldn’t you?\textsuperscript{43}

Cardew agreed:

\textsuperscript{42}Cramps, CRSLP 6106, 1974. Re-released by Ampersand Records (Ampere 7, 2001), for which I wrote updated liner notes.

\textsuperscript{43}Adrian Jack, ‘Cornelius Cardew’, p. 31.
When I was at the Academy I was more interested in writing like Stockhausen, and the 19th-century pastiche I had to do I never took very seriously.\textsuperscript{44}

Like Erik Satie, who returned to study counterpoint at the Schola Cantorum in 1905 (years after leaving the Paris Conservatoire) in order to revitalise his composition, Cardew was working on a Masters of Arts in musical analysis at King’s College at his death in 1981. This may have solved a problem which Keith Potter noted in Cardew’s later concert music, which he categorised as being written in ‘accessible idioms’:

> At the time of their composition, these works seemingly achieved little beyond alienating their listeners who, as the bourgeois audience Cardew set out to challenge, remained largely unconvinced by his music, and not only because most of them probably remained unconvinced by his politics. One did not have to be a convinced modernist to find Cardew’s treatment of his material banal, its musical language only a vulgar – and grammatically suspect – approximation to previous styles without the addition of anything of his own.\textsuperscript{45}

The solutions Cardew chose in these years, using common-practice musical reference, are not unlike the solutions chosen by other experimentalists who write tonal music, particularly John White, who, in his sonatas, has rarely moved far from a juxtaposition of references (Alkan, Reger, Satie, Medtner, and others), although White had been working in tonal music almost continuously throughout his life. Cardew’s later works are as referential as the miniatures in the Piano Albums, but they refer to a wider range of sources and use larger, often more complex structures. While the Thälmann Variations are not unusual in their construction as variations (although divided into three sections), the larger structure allows Cardew to interpolate Hanns Eisler’s ‘Rumours of War’ and Charles Koechlin’s ‘Libérons Thälmann’ among appearances of the theme, ‘Thälmann Song’. Most of the rest of

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

Cardew’s concert music is also tonal but it is always more extended and complex than those works used for other purposes, such as choral pieces written for the Progressive Cultural Association Singers. Although his work commemorating the death of Mao, *Mountains*, for bass clarinet (1975), is based in part on J.S. Bach, a central section includes graphic notation suggesting that the player use multiphonics. His unfinished piano duo, *Boolavogue* (1981; written for Susan Bradshaw and John Tilbury at the request of Keith Potter), has short sections of performer choice, albeit of the ‘vamp until ready’ type.

Nor did Cardew remain devoted to an unchanging Maoist aesthetic, even if there were such a thing. He can be shown to have changed his mind in respect to the political effect of Frederic Rzewski’s piece *Coming Together* (1972). In *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*, Cardew reported on a 1973 performance of this work in Berlin.

*Coming Together* is a piece which deals with a local event, the Attica prison uprising, occurring in a worldwide context of liberation struggles. It is very important material and highly suitable for musical treatment. The error of the piece is that it treats of its subject in a subjective way. The text is fragmented and repeated according to a mechanical plan, with the result that it becomes obsessive. The instrumental accompaniment, which refers to popular music and does actually engage the pop-conscious audience and is a good initiative to that extent, nevertheless develops a negative aspect of pop music – its hypnotic or hysterical aspect – and none of its positive aspects… The basic ideology of the piece is anarchism…on account of the choice and treatment of this text for this purpose…Anarchism is an ideology that springs from the decaying bourgeoisie.

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46 Cardew is revered in the Marxist-Leninist arena. He was a founder of the Progressive Cultural Association in 1975, a group of representatives of various arts associated with the Communist Party of England (Marxist-Leninist). He also helped to found the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and was a member of its central committee until his death. There is a whole literature of writings on Cardew’s political achievements which, for lack of space, cannot be examined in depth here.

47 There are many variants in the Maoist dialectic. Two of these are the strictures of appealing to the masses in ‘Talks on the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art’ in 1942 and the inclusiveness of the ‘hundred schools of thought ’ in ‘On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People’, speech of 1957, both cited in this chapter.

Three years later, Cardew presented a far more positive view of the same main features (systems and rock ostinati) of this work:

*Coming Together/Attica* (1972) develops the systemic techniques of *Les Moutons de Panurge*; see Chapter 6] but uses them to present two texts of extraordinary emotional striking power... Assisted in this performance by rock and jazz artists, Rzewski uses dynamic, driving elements from popular music to embody the urgency and total commitment of those killed.49

Cardew was the most visible political composer from the British experimental music scene, but he was not the only one. Laurie Baker, as a professional session musician with experience of popular music performance, was, as mentioned before, the leading light of People’s Liberation Music. Michael Chant and Hugh Shrapnel have written music and organised concerts, most recently, the 2002 ‘Not In Our Name’ event against the Iraq invasion by Britain and the United States. Shrapnel has returned to writing concert music after a hiatus in the 1970s; like Cardew he returned to university – like Hobbs, he had left the Royal Academy of Music before completion – receiving a degree from Goldsmiths College in the mid-1980s. Eddie Prévost, Keith Rowe, and John Tilbury liken AMM improvisation to collective action. Keith Rowe returned to AMM in the late 1970s and Tilbury joined permanently upon Cardew’s death. The freeing of aesthetics from the strictures of the Maoism of the Cultural Revolution has not diluted these musicians’ political beliefs. A good example is John Tilbury’s decision to boycott the U.S. following the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

By submitting oneself to the formal procedure of entering the US, by presenting oneself and one’s passport to American custom officials for acceptance and approval one is conferring a status of legitimacy, of normality, on a situation which is abnormal. Furthermore, in making music there we are not ‘informing and enlightening the peoples of the USA’; we are in fact providing them with an alibi, a temporary escape, a haven, from the harsh realities of the

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consequences of the ideology in which they are subsumed. Just as the Orchestras who played Beethoven in the Third Reich did.\footnote{50}

This action is especially heartfelt and brave in that AMM’s American audience has grown in the last decade and this statement may alienate many.

One composer who managed to work in experimental music in the 1970s while maintaining a strong political sensibility is Dave Smith. Smith arranged pieces by Laurie Baker, Cardew, and others, and has written original pieces which reflect his opposition to the British occupation of Northern Ireland, most importantly in his Second Piano Concert, ‘Ireland One and Ireland Free’. Equally, Smith worked in minimalism and systems in a duo with John Lewis, in referential piano music, which often exhibits a debt to John White and in fact in White’s group, the Garden Furniture Music ensemble, and other music that will be discussed in the following chapters.

This variety of activity and of thought has gone unnoticed among avant-garde critics, most notably Paul Griffiths. In response to Griffiths’ negative review of \textit{Stockhausen Serves Imperialism} in \textit{The Musical Times}, Michael Parsons wrote:

‘What indeed, is exploitation?’ asks Paul Griffiths in his review of Cornelius Cardew’s book...as if there were some deep mystery here. If he pretends not to know, it is because, consciously or not, he writes as a representative of the class whose interest it is to conceal the reality of exploitation, to suggest that it is a thing of the past, and to blur the issue generally.... Does Paul Griffiths really imagine that there is no difference in privilege between, say, being a music critic (or a composer) and being a miner or factory worker, or that there are equal opportunities for all to choose freely to work at what interests them?... [Cardew’s] book is addressed primarily to artists and intellectuals in his own position, faced with his dilemma. The impact of his uncompromising honesty and self-criticism on many such people, even if they do not accept everything he says unreservedly, is already considerable.\footnote{51}


Michael Parsons probably included himself among those who did not accept Cardew’s aesthetics without reservation. Such a reaction would have been typical of many of the musically-trained composers who will be examined more closely in the final part of this thesis. While they would not have agreed on the limitations which Cardew put on his music, they would have agreed with Christopher Caudwell that music is a social act, whether or not they followed Caudwell’s Marxist interpretation. With no major exceptions, however, none of the experimentalists in this thesis would disagree with Michael Parsons regarding exploitation (whether conscious or not) by the privileged class. Paul Griffiths, however, did not agree:

Is, say, a solicitor’s son more or less limited in his choice (for privilege) than, say, a manual worker’s son? A study of cases might well indicate that he is more restricted. And if Michael Parsons has not met many workers who think that they have a ‘better deal’ than solicitor or managers, or any other group he takes to be ‘privileged’, then he has not met many workers. Each group ‘exploits’ a great many others, in that it passes to them certain responsibilities and reaps from them certain rewards (not, of course, necessarily financial, but there are other things people value): that is what society means. Cardew reminds me of a Salvation Army preacher trying to persuade people that they have ‘souls’ (read ‘chains’) that have to be ‘saved’ (read ‘lost’). I don’t believe they have.\(^{52}\)

Griffiths’ dismay at Cardew’s politics influenced *Modern Music*. He ignored British experimental music in his history, while dismissing Cardew himself:

Cardew’s answer [to the question of a revolutionary music] has been to offer simple didactic songs, such as *Soon*..., to make arrangements of the East-West confections put out as revolutionary art by the Chinese regime in the last years of Mao, or, as in his Piano Albums of 1973 and 1974, to make decorated transcriptions of Chinese and Irish revolutionary songs.\(^{53}\)


In the most recent edition of *Modern Music* (1995), this section was changed. Griffiths’ only musical example, Cardew’s first ‘political’ song, ‘Soon’ (1971), was cut from four lines to one, and the *Piano Albums* were not mentioned. Instead, Griffiths related ‘Soon’ to a kind of muddled postmodernism:

The musical quality of ‘Soon’ is not the point, any more than the musical quality of *Treatise*, being inaudible, could possibly be the point – or any more than the musical quality of *Structures Ia* and *Treatise* alike are expressions of musical ideology. ‘Soon’ says nothing about music. Thereby it marks the moment – as surely as such other phenomena of the period as minimalism and historicism – when the idea of musical progress was abandoned, or perhaps had to be abandoned. Progress now, for Cardew and composers who thought like him, could only be political progress, and music must relinquish all its own hopes and histories in order to serve that cause.54

Whether Griffiths had changed his politics since his extraordinary assertion in 1975 that a factory worker had ‘a better deal’ than a solicitor did, one cannot tell. The addition of a few sentences in Griffiths’ section on Cardew, Rzewski, and Wolff in the revised edition, and the deletion of the more denigratory sentences, may show that Griffiths, like Cardew, had changed his views over those twenty years. However, his new section title, ‘The Passion of Cornelius Cardew’, seems satirical, given the lukewarm assessment, and there is no sign that Griffiths values British experimental music in general any more than he did in his first edition, as there is no new work on the subject. It is lamentable that these two-and-a-half pages stand as one of the best-read works on the British experimental movement.

Cardew, who took a role not just in the musical activities of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), but also a political one, never fully returned to experimental music; he was killed.

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54 Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After: Directions Sine 1945* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), pp. 187-88. The reference to *Treatise* being ‘inaudible’ comes from Griffiths’ misunderstanding of Cardew’s diary entry in *Treatise Handbook* about the psychological reason for writing *Treatise* being his inability to make music at the time. To jump from this personal observation to a notion of *Treatise* as ‘inaudible’ is nonsense.
suddenly in 1981. He was, however, planning to work with AMM again just before his death. If his political activities had allowed him time, it is not fantastic to suppose that Cardew, like Tilbury and Rowe, and like Hugh Shrapnel (who had also given up his experimental activities to work with Cardew and PLM), would have re-entered experimental music activity in some way.

55 Ostensibly by a hit-and-run driver in snowy conditions, but some experimental musicians and political associates have expressed the view that this was not an accident.
Mr Spiro now replied to these questions, that is to say he replied to question one and he replied to question three. He did so at length, quoting from Saint Bonaventura, Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, Sanchez, Suarez, Henno, Soto, Diana, Concina and Dens, for he was a man of leisure. But Watt heard nothing of this, because of the other voices, singing, crying, stating, murmuring, things unintelligible, in his ear. With these, if he was not familiar, he was not unfamiliar either. So he was not alarmed, unduly. Now these voices, sometimes they sang only, and sometimes they cried only, and sometimes they stated only, and sometimes they murmured only, and sometimes they sang and cried, and sometimes they sang and stated, and sometimes they sang and murmured, and sometimes they cried and stated, and sometimes they cried and murmured, and sometimes they sang and cried and stated, and sometimes they sang and cried and murmured, and sometimes they sang and cried and stated and murmured, and sometimes they sang and cried and stated and murmured, all together, at the same time, as now, to mention only these four kinds of voices, for there were others. And sometimes Watt understood all, and sometimes he understood much, and sometimes he understood little, and sometimes he understood nothing, as now.

Samuel Beckett, *Watt*  
(New York: Grove Press, 1953), p. 29
Chapter 11:
‘Just the job for that lazy Sunday afternoon’:
Readymades and Systems Music

It is at this point in British experimental history that there seems to be a wrenching break in continuity of style, both of political and non-political music. The music of the Promenade Theatre Orchestra, Hobbs-White, Smith and Lewis, and Parsons and Skempton is mostly consonant, written in traditional notation, played by specialists in their respective instruments (even if those instruments were toy pianos and reed organs); classic experimentalism is often dissonant, disjunct music written in non-standard notations, played by non-specialists on non-standard instruments. How can one place the music of the Promenade Theatre Orchestra, Hobbs-White Duo and the duos of Dave Smith and John Lewis, and Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton in the same category as the classic experimentalism of Treatise and the Scratch Orchestra?¹

Michael Nyman was able to reconcile these divisions to a shared concern for process, a concern that is found in most works of twentieth-century modernism. He did note that the ‘limitlessness’ of the surface of experimental music contemporaneously co-existed (from about 1962) with the ‘singularity’ of minimalism,² a state of extreme limitation of musical materials which, at least in the case of La Monte Young, was partially derived from serialism. However, Young looked to Webern for a sense of stasis that occurs in the structure at the basic level, and it was

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the sense of maintaining stasis that Young used, not the pitch-based
process.

Whether strict or loose the emphasis on process and ‘idea’ (a loose
grouping of determinants which would include aesthetics – expression,
meaning, and value – as well as psychological, even physiological
concerns) differs between experimental music and the avant garde. The
concern with process in avant-garde music is paramount and gives rise to
any aesthetic or other philosophical judgement. Milton Babbitt, in ‘Who
Cares if You Listen?’, proposed that modern music should be so
complicated as to be understood by only a few people, in the same way as
higher mathematics was considered by the general public to be a good
thing even when few understood it. This social criterion follows a
posteriori from his work in total serialism, a technical system which he
gained from his study of Schoenberg and from his reactions to the
techniques of European serialism. The emphasis upon ‘form’ in avant-
garde music – ‘form’ is meant as understood in aesthetics to mean all
elements of the physical construction of a piece, including process, and
the resulting structure (which, along with content, is an unchanging
feature of the art object) – is pervasive. Eric Gans, a non-musician
semiologist, in a lecture to the Society of Music Theory, found little else:

Despite the generality of the term ‘esthetic’ [sic], it is virtually
impossible to talk about esthetics without referring to a specific art.
And of the major arts, music is no doubt the one students of esthetics
refer to least. Even for those who have more than a music-
appreciation background, it is difficult to integrate within esthetic
discourse an art that in principle makes no reference to worldly
experience. And yet any discussion of esthetic form should take
music as its model; for music alone of the arts is all form.4

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Schwartz and Barney Childs (with Jim Fox), eds., Contemporary Composers on

29, no. 2 (Summer 1991), p. 8. PNM’s house style follows this stance.
Experimental process, on the contrary, usually comes from an *a priori* philosophical position or is foreground to any technical means.\(^5\) Cage’s studies with Daisetz T. Suzuki in Zen Buddhism in the early 1950s gave him a basis to let go of control, which became manifest in his random processes, such as those which used the I Ching. Steve Reich’s ‘music of gradual process’, is concerned primarily with the clear *perception* of process rather than the actual process used:

> While performing and listening to gradual musical processes one can participate in a particular liberating and impersonal kind of ritual. Focusing in on the musical process makes possible that shift of attention away from *he and she and you and me* outwards towards *it*.\(^6\)

There are, of course, avant-garde composers who write from a philosophical position (Stockhausen writes from almost a religious one) and experimental composers who made control the centre of their idea. La Monte Young said that ‘I am wildly interested in repetition, because I think it demonstrates control’,\(^7\) without emphasising the means of structuring that repetition or the amount of control. Morton Feldman described his adoption of a limitation – a system – in terms of the source of his ideas, rather than the idea itself:

> In my early training as a composer with Stefan Wolpe, the one theme persistent in all our lessons was why I did not develop my ideas but went from one thing to another. ‘Negation’ was how Wolpe characterised this. Unlike so many composers, especially of his era, he didn’t question my ideas or extol any systems for me to use. I’m

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\(^5\) Henry Cowell and Harry Partch could be cited as exceptions, in that both wrote extensively on the technical means of achieving their sounds – a necessary step to creating, or recreating their music. However, both needed new sound resources in answer to philosophical problems and both highlighted this over the creation of structure (or process).


thankful for this, since at that time I remember I was dangling
between various procedures that I knew didn’t apply to my music….8

Feldman eventually chose the models of visual artists Robert
Rauschenberg, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko for their ideas of
formal generation in abstract expressionism (near-abstract in the case of
Rauschenberg).

An emphasis on overall justification over technique is common in
the visual arts: for instance, that a perception of the disjunct nature of
perspective and filmic narrative informs the technique of Cubism and the
nature of dreams informs the technique of surrealism. Dadaism often
exemplified the definition of art through the ‘elevation’ of existing
functional material to the state of ‘high’ art;9 for instance, in Marcel
Duchamp’s ‘readymade’, or found, art work which he made from an
ordinary urinal, called Fountain (1917; by the pseudonymous ‘R. Mutt’).10
Pop art exemplified the definition of art through the elevation of the
technique itself to ‘high’ art; for instance, Roy Lichtenstein’s use of comic
book drawing or Andy Warhol’s use of graphic design styles for
advertising.

John White similarly ‘elevated’ material and technique – the
household reed organs, the toy instruments, the overt promise of through
composition and the implied promise of consonance – to the state of

134-5.

9 The ‘hierarchy’ of fine art over functional construction is presented here as that most
commonly used, although it could just have easily been formulated that the concept of
fine art was ‘elevated’ to include functionalism.

10 The Blind Man, an art magazine co-written by Duchamp, included an unsigned lead
editorial (possibly by Duchamp himself), which explained the use of the aesthetic as
foreground:

Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance.
He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful
significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new
thought for that object [The Blind Man, May 1917; quoted in Calvin Tomkins,
experimental music in his P. T. Barnum-like advertisements for the Promenade Theatre Orchestra (the PTO):

PTO: for Machines!! Live Muzak!!! Readymades!!!!

The PT Orchestra!
The orchestra YOU can afford for that extra special occasion! Restful reed organs, tinking toy pianos, soothing psalteries, suave swanee whistles, jolly jew’s harps – NO noisy electronics! (Just the job for that lazy Sunday afternoon!) All musical material guaranteed thru-composed – NO hit-or-miss improvisation!

White has as much influence on the composers of the last part of this thesis as Cardew (and Cage) had on the composers examined in the first three parts. White had not begun his compositional work as a modernist, as Cardew had. Cardew told Keith Potter that he had written a piece in 1954 ‘which was fairly freely tonal, “English, more in the direction of Walton”,’ but until his political phase Cardew’s music had, as its earliest model, Schoenberg. White studied composition with Bernard Stevens and musical analysis with Elisabeth Lutyens while he was in the Royal College of Music in 1955-58. If anything, White was more conservative in his influences than other students:

I was writing piano sonatas, and I was writing pieces for my friends at college, and [Bernard Stevens] would look at them and say...‘You seem to be getting rather obsessed with chorales and arabesques. Do you think it would be an idea to do something that had more focus on the linear content?’ I’d take all this in the spirit in which it was meant and come along with another piano sonata next week.

His work, though, was considered by the authorities to be accomplished enough that White became a teacher of composition at RCM from 1960-66. His students included the conductor William York, the composers

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11 Advertisement, Contact no. 3 (Autumn 1971), p. 36.

12 Advertisement, Contact 3, p. 37; quoted in Nyman, Experimental Music, p. 144.


14 John White, interview, 7 March 1983.
Roger Smalley (who is probably best known for modernist works, although he currently works in a neo-tonal style), and Brian Dennis (who worked in experimental music).

White’s piano sonatas (now numbering 140) have been a constant activity since he wrote the first in 1956:

They are like entries in a diary and they reflect the musical interests of the moment. They’re nearly all about music almost more than about me. They’re the result of perhaps hearing a wonderful performance of the Busoni Elegies and after a few months a kind of mental digestive process will have gone through its cycle and probably some elements to do with [that piece] will be a feature of one of these semi-private pieces.\(^{15}\)

Despite White’s seeming conservatism, these references are wide-ranging. He decided to become a composer after hearing the British premiere of Olivier Messiaen’s Turangalîla Symphonie, which was perceived by many to be unpalatable modernism: ‘I was in the half of the audience [that] floated out of the Festival Hall six feet above the ground. The other half retired to the lavatory and were sick’.\(^{16}\) After leaving the Royal College of Music in 1966 (like Cardew, White disapproved of the exam system), White, having taught himself tuba in six months, became a member of the London Gabrieli Brass Quintet and continued to work in dance and theatre music. His sonatas, though, from 1967-72 (Nos. 34-52), are concerned with experimental processes, reflecting his association with Cornelius Cardew and other experimental composers. This association led to White’s invention of pieces known collectively as Machines, an early type of systems music.

**Structure and Reference in Early Systems Music**

The insistence of idea over structure in British systems is so strong that it is difficult, even impossible, to get many of the systemic composers – White and Hobbs especially – to talk about the exact processes used in

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
their work. White has usually offered descriptions about the character of
his systems. Hobbs threw away most of his working notes for his
systems in the 1970s, as he preferred writers to concentrate upon the
resultant sound. However, even Hobbs could not find a way to describe
his own music solely by means of reference in an academic paper, so he
reconstructed some of his systems for his doctoral thesis. Hobbs
preferred a balance of structural and referential indicators in his music.
Michael Parsons, in a *Musical Times* article in 1976, emphasised the
influences from the visual arts, using structure to differentiate individual
compositional styles. Brian Dennis used structural criteria, but this was
in a wider-ranging article comparing American and British repetitive
music, with little reference to art. The identifying features of types of
systemic music – the source and nature of their governing systems –
provide an easy categorisation for the music as it is made, however.
Here lies a contradiction: in order to categorise the types of systemic
music, it is easier to do so by means of its secondary characteristic – the
structure – more than the idea. Sometimes the ‘idea’ has led composers
to limit their work entirely to structure (such as some of the percussion
duos of Howard Skempton and Michael Parsons, in which the means of
delivering rhythmic systems was limited only to two drums).

**Machines**

John White developed systems, or systemic music – ‘pieces...whose
structure and/or note-to-note procedure [are] determined by *a priori*

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17 Christopher Hobbs, ‘On the Musical Compositions of Christopher Hobbs’, Doctoral

815-818.

19 Brian Dennis, ‘Repetitive and Systemic Music’, *The Musical Times*, December 1974,
pp. 1036-1038.

20 Thanks to Dave Smith for noting this (in conversation, 16 November 2003).
numerical systems’, beginning with his experimental Machines in the 1960s. Because White’s interest in process was led by idea, he was able to work in two or more techniques – for instance, tonality and number systems – at the same time, even when they seemed to represent opposing styles. As much as his sonatas of the late 1960s, White’s early Machines show their experimental heritage in that they are structured by number systems generated by random means: random number tables, dart boards, and chess moves. White described the Machines to emphasise the effect of the system rather than the specifics of its technique, in the process displaying his characteristic good humour:

The Machines, which date from the period 1967-72, represent a departure from the more traditionally ‘narrative’ nature of the rest of my pieces. I use the word Machine to define a consistent process governing a series of musical actions within a particular sound world and, by extension, the listener’s perception thereof. One might thus regard the Welsh Rarebit as a Machine in which a process is applied to the conditioning and perception of the world of bread and cheese.22

Chess moves controlled the progress of White’s largest Machine, the Machine for Cello and Tuba, which White and Cardew premiered at the Anti-University in April 1968. Many of the features of most systems pieces exist in this work. The music is written in traditional notation on an A3 score, but the tempo and rhythms are free (so that although it can last over four hours, the exact length of play is not fixed). This work was a success for White, as he and Cardew performed it several times over the next four years. Even though the system generating the choice of notes is strict, the manner of performing and instrumentation often were changed. Cardew and Michael Chant split the cello part for cello and electric organ in Blackheath in 1970 and Cardew and White performed it as part of Howard Skempton’s Prizewinners’ Concert by the Scratch

21 Christopher Hobbs, letter to VA, 21 May, 1982.

22 John White, Liner note to Drinking and Hooting Machine, in John White and Gavin Bryars, Machine Music (Obscure OBS8, 1978). White wrote this at a time when he thought that he would never return to systems, but he has regularly used systems, especially in electronic music, since the mid-1980s.
Orchestra at St. Pancras Town Hall, and simultaneously with White’s own *Drinking and Hooting Machine* at the New Arts Laboratory in July 1970.

*Drinking and Hooting Machine* (1969), which ‘presents some observations on the world of bottles and their non-percussive musical potential’,\(^{23}\) is a random number system applied to ‘a similar-sized bottle for each performer containing a favoured drink’.\(^{24}\) There are two categories of action: the first, the intake of the favoured drink (in intensities of ‘sip’, swig’ or ‘gulp’, as well as the neutral ‘as is’, in which the player leaves the bottle alone), which influences the outcome of the second, the ‘hooting’, or blowing over the top of the bottle in order to make a sound. Since the pitch of the bottles lowers gradually as the contents are drunk, ‘the effect of this piece has been compared to that of a large aviary full of owls all practising very slow descending scales’.\(^{25}\) In general, in all Machine pieces:

> [t]he sounds tend towards a sort of ragged consonance, the procedures usually involve much repetition with changes happening almost imperceptibly over large spans of time, and the atmosphere is usually pretty calm and unruffled, however fast the pace of the music.\(^{26}\)

### The Promenade Theatre Orchestra

One of the outlets for White’s Machines was the PTO, or Promenade Theatre Orchestra. This group, often cited as one of the Scratch Orchestra ‘sub-groups’, was a separate group of musicians – White, Christopher Hobbs, Alec Hill, and Hugh Shrapnel – who played traditionally-notated music which was often of great complexity and

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\(^{23}\) *Machine Music* liner notes.


\(^{25}\) *Machine Music* liner notes.

\(^{26}\) John White, quoted in Michael Nyman, ‘Believe It or Not, Melody Rides Again’, *Music and Musicians*, vol. 20, no. 2 (October 1971), p. 27.
technical difficulty. This concern for traditional learned skill is the antithesis of the new accessible skills of the Scratch Orchestra, but in its instrumentation and preferred musical structure, the PTO is more like the Scratch Orchestra than many such composer-led ensembles of the time (for instance, the Fires of London or Intermodulation). In the picture taken by Bryn Harris at the dress rehearsal for the PTO’s final UK concert at the Orangery in Holland Park, London (Ex. 11.1), the players are hard at work at their major instruments, a set of toy pianos. The toy piano has been used in experimental music since John Cage’s pieces in the 1940s, and it has been revived periodically since.  

The advantages of the toy piano as an instrument are sonic and visual, as well as rich in idea.

Ex. 11.1: The Promenade Theatre Orchestra at the Orangery (from l.-r.: Hobbs, Shrapnel, Hill, White)

The sounding medium of a toy piano is a set of metal bars, so it is not unlike a celesta. Toy pianos are more metallic, more strident, than the

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27 Most recently, Isabel Ettinauer has emerged as a toy piano virtuoso, playing Cage, and newly commissioned works. However, it is funny that Ettinauer has not asked White, Hobbs, or Shrapnel for new works (Hill has retired from writing); rather, she plays pieces by younger composers from the avant garde. The PTO composers did not write solo toy piano music at the time, as they wrote for their ensemble, but they have more experience of writing for this instrument than any other living composers.
bell-like celesta, and have a sharper attack. Played in groups (or, on one instrument, as thick chords), this sonority has a satisfying clashing sound. Visually, even the ‘professional’ toy pianos used by the PTO, which rested on legs that raised the instruments to a comfortable height for the players, do not do much to erase the humorous nature of four grown men playing little instruments. These two aspects are the physical manifestations of the idea that music of great complexity should be disseminated through such a trite, even silly, instrument.

Reed organs – cheap home instruments meant for amateurs – were equally important to the PTO, as they provided sustained sounds the toy pianos lacked. The members also played various percussion instruments (a set of bells can be seen in the picture), as well as their own secondary instruments: White on trombone and tuba, Hobbs on bassoon, Hill on clarinet and bass clarinet, and Shrapnel on oboe. The PTO met every Sunday in the pub or at John White’s house. Members would bring newly-written pieces, which would be rehearsed and performed in the afternoon. Successful pieces were used for concerts that were more ‘public’: some of these occurred in art galleries and theatre foyers, in which their music might be secondary to the action, even used as ‘background’. The music was often designed for the occasion and was ‘disposable’ in that other pieces would follow: Hobbs, for instance, has lost many of his pieces of the time because he erased or tore out existing pieces to provide manuscript paper for later ones.

There were three main structural types of pieces made by the PTO. The first were freely composed. Hobbs’ Working Notes (1969), for instance, is a repetitive piece reminiscent of American minimalism, using material which is referential: one bar from John Bull’s Galiard to the Quadran Pavan from the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book. Hugh Shrapnel

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28 The alternative would render the player into a position not unlike the character Schroeder, in Charles Schultz’s cartoon Peanuts.

29 Brian Dennis also took part in some early rehearsals.
remained interested in sentimental Victorian and Edwardian song, a fascination which has been mentioned in connection with his Scratch Orchestra and Wood and Metal Band performances. His *Carolina Moon* (1972) is a set of variations on a piece by a Broadway composer, Joe Burke (probably best known for the song, ‘Tiptoe Through the Tulips’, made famous in the 1960s by Tiny Tim). The theme is presented clearly enough for Burke to be given prominence in the composer credit on the recording of this concert, but Shrapnel’s arrangement, for two reed organs and two toy pianos, sounds like a Victorian calliope. *Ambrose Farman’s Melody* is a sentimental song by Farman, the harmonic structure of which Shrapnel extended in length. Shrapnel removed the melody from his version, which makes the title not a little ironic. Shrapnel described his *Four Toy Pianos* as a chaconne, as there is a rising whole-tone figure which is repeated in various configurations, using gradual augmentation from semiquavers to dotted semibreves.

The main feature of Hobbs’ *McCrimmon Will Never Return*, like Shrapnel’s *Four Toy Pianos*, used augmentation of the source material in order to obscure it and to emphasise other features of the piece than the original composer intended. Hobbs found four variant transcriptions of *pibroch* music for *McCrimmon* in the Central Music Library in Westminster. He slowed the music, especially the ornaments, which provide most of the variants, and set them simultaneously for four reed organs. John White wrote several Gothic pieces (such as *Gothic Waltz* and *Gothic Changeling* on the Orangery concert). The term ‘gothic’ is a classification unique to White and refers to a kind of bass-heavy music of some regularity, which might be governed by Machine or other systemic processes. In addition to Machines, with their random processes, early systems music took two generative forms: the imposition of purpose-built

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30 *The Promenade Theatre Orchestra: The Orangery, 1 October 1972* (Experimental Music Catalogue, EMC 102, 2002).
systems on existing material (musical readymades), and the use of existing systems to manipulate new material (found systems).

**Musical Readymades and Found Systems**

The musical ‘readymade’ is a category most commonly used by Christopher Hobbs. Where Duchamp took existing items and, with minimal, or even no, adjustment, signed and presented them as his art, musical readymades are usually created when the composer adopts an existing structure, usually from a non-musical source, or, more commonly, subjects an existing piece to a system, which usually shatters the source piece into an almost Cubist mosaic. Here the ways in which construction and perception of visual arts and experimental music cannot have exact equivalences. The filtering of an existing piece through a musical system has more non-original material than the subjects of Cubist and Futurist art works (say those by Picasso, Léger or Duchamp, or Balla and Boccioni), in which the image is deconstructed at the point of execution. The juxtaposition and interaction of alien objects in one art work to create something different (as happens in the British musical readymades) is perhaps closer to Duchamp’s *Bicycle Wheel* (1913), a stool with a bicycle fork and wheel mounted on its seat. This was a private work (Duchamp liked to rotate the wheel) and antedated his ‘proper’ readymades by two years.

The defining type of musical readymade, according to Hobbs, uses existing music as the found object and a random or numerical process to arrange it. *The Remorseless Lamb*, for piano duet or two pianos (1970), applies this process to J. S. Bach’s ‘Sheep May Safely Graze’. Hobbs arranged each bar of an existing arrangement of this work using a

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31 Calvin Tomkins notes the opposition of Futurism and Cubism, despite their surface similarities: ‘Futurism was in many ways the antithesis of Cubism.... The Futurists wanted to give the impression of movement on canvas.... Duchamp was after something else, a visual expression of the idea of movement’ [Tomkins, *Duchamp*, pp. 78-79].

telephone directory to supply the order; further, he arranged each stave of the original in the same way. Listening to *The Remorseless Lamb* is an experience which is possibly most analogous to viewing a Futurist or Cubist art work. Whatever their ideological differences, Futurism and Cubism often attempted to evoke movement in a static art – something which music, a time art, can do easily. However, music, limited to the unidirectional nature of time, has problems representing ideas except successionaly, something that the visual arts, which present a field which can be viewed in any order, can do well. Jonathan Kramer has dealt at length with pieces which, by tricks of structure, appear to transcend this succession. This fracturing of the familiar ‘Sheep May Safely Graze’ in *The Remorseless Lamb* throws the listener from one part of the piece to a later one, or an earlier one, or a combination of both at the same time, as one hand might come from one bar and the other from another.

*Czerny’s 100 Bouquet Valses for the piano by Lanner and Strauss arranged for such as cannot reach an Octave* (also 1970) uses freely chosen bars from the original titular source, which are ordered by means of common keys and then repeated. Later pieces, such as *Back Gate of Kiev* (c. 1972-3) and *Pretty Tough Cookie* (c. 1972), use a Bach chorale (Hobbs does not remember which one; White found the trudging quality similar to ‘The Great Gate of Kiev’ in *Pictures at an Exhibition* and suggested the title) and Tchaikovsky’s *Romeo and Juliet* as sources. In these later pieces, Hobbs transposed disparate instrumental lines to fit

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33 There are exceptions, of course: tryptichs, panoramas, even comic strips impose order upon the viewer which often can have a temporal element. Most Futurist and Cubist art, however, in its goal of movement and simultaneity, retains the field element common in most painting.

34 For instance, ‘Multiple and Non-Linear Time in Beethoven’s Opus 135’, *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 11, no. 2 (Spring-Summer 1973), pp. 122-145.

35 Hobbs no longer thinks this a good piece, and discourages its performance. He said that he believed that the free choice of the original material might be the reason that ‘it is such a duff piece’ [conversation, 19 November 2003].
an unaltered quotation and so can be considered to be ‘altered readymades’. In *Pretty Tough Cookie*, for instance, the repeated horn notes from the overture which announce the entrance of the love theme act as the central musical material. As in Duchamp’s *L.H.O.O.Q.* (the print of da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* which Duchamp adorned with a moustache and goatee beard), the conceptual part of Hobbs’ readymades is a skewering of the cult of the masterwork, as popular classic. Duchamp chose the *Mona Lisa* as much for its popular associations as for its inherent worth as high art. Duchamp also equalised the distinction between high and low art (functionalism of design and use): *Fountain* (the urinal) is also a readymade. Hobbs’ readymades question the nature of high art as much as do Duchamp’s, and he also has equalised high art (Bach, Tchaikovsky) with salon music (the waltzes). However, Hobbs restructured the originals so that they make more distinctly separate art works in which the original source is represented and transformed in a highly idiosyncratic way. It is this original content which might distinguish later experimental music from conceptual art. Yet, the original source remains foreground throughout; its identity is never obscured or deferred by extra material, as often occurs in variations, fantasias, or other common musical means of transforming an existing theme.

Another type of musical readymade, the found system, uses an extant system which operates upon new material created by the composer. This is best represented by Hobbs’ *Aran* (1972), which appeared at the Orangery concert. The system, a knitting pattern for an Aran sweater, determines the note-to-note procedure for the piece, which Hobbs set for the Promenade Theatre Orchestra using reed organs, toy pianos, and percussion featuring camel bells. Hobbs chose the instrumentation and pitches, but was limited in their ordering by the necessity of the pattern for regular alternation of stitches.
Before this, Hobbs had used found systems for a concert at the New Arts Lab, London, in 1969, using Samuel Beckett’s Watt (1945, published 1953), a novel that is ‘an account of the grotesque and improbable adventures of a fantastically logical Irish servant and his master’. The way in which the servant, Watt, exhibits his ‘fantastic’ logic frequently takes the form of partial or full permutations of groups of words.

For the concert, I went through the book and noted all the passages which could be turned into music. The threne [52.2...] was an obvious start – though it wasn’t systemic! I set it for 4-part male chorus, since the performers at the concert were myself, Michael Parsons, Howard Skempton, and Hugh Shrapnel. I also arranged ‘With all our Heart’ [in the addenda] – to a single chord, as I recall.

The threne is a piece for four-part mixed choir set with durational indications by Beckett, to which Hobbs arranged pitches. The numbers in the text (52.28571 and 51.142857, which is set as a kind of nursery tune) are surds – irrational numbers. The first number is the result of the days in a leap year (366) divided by the number of days in a week; the second the result of the days in a normal year (365) divided by the days in a week. ‘With all our Heart’ is similar; both sections, while not systemic, have many repeats. However, Hobbs also featured ‘systemic’ passages, such as ‘Now these voices...’, which is cited on the title page of Part 4 of this thesis. The actions described in this passage are subjected to a permutation as follows:

- Sang
- Cried
- Stated
- Murmured
- Sang and Cried

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37 Hobbs, letter to VA, 17 October 1983.
38 Watt, pp. 34-5.
39 Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), in his role as a professor of mathematics, was concerned with surds.
40 Watt, p. 29.
Sang and Stated
Sang and Murmured
Cried and Stated
Cried and Murmured
Stated and Murmured
Sang and Cried and Stated
Sang and Cried and Murmured
Cried and Stated and Murmured
Sang and Cried and Stated and Murmured

This gives a numerical system:

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There were other such systems: ‘Here he stood. Here he sat’,\(^4^1\) which describes the movements of a character named Mr Knott from window to door to bed to fire, is followed immediately by changes in the position of Mr Knott’s furniture,\(^4^2\) involving the permutations of his tallboy, dressing-table, nightstool, and washhand-stand on different days of the week in reference to the window, door, bed, and fire, and its position (whether standing, on its back or side). For this early concert, Hobbs asked players to make movements while playing one sound each for the first permutation, and used different parameters of sound for each day, furniture, position and location. As such these settings owed more to found text-based ‘systems’ in *Nature Study Notes* and other


permutational pieces (such as Cardew’s *Schooltime Special* (1968)) than to later systems.

Hobbs said that ‘*Watt* presents simple systems – in fact, they’re permutations – a system needn’t be as clearly finite as those in *Watt*’. However, one passage of *Watt* presents a system which is exactly like the numerical systems used by Hobbs and White in their percussion pieces.

Watt remembered a distant summer night, in a no less distant land..., and the three frogs croaking Krak!, Krek! and Krik!, at one, nine, seventeen, twenty-five, etc., and at one, six, eleven, sixteen, etc., and at one, four, seven, ten, etc., respectively....

This passage is followed by a concrete verbal ‘score’ of these frog sounds:

```
Krak! -- -- -- -- -- --
Krek! -- -- -- -- Krek! -- --
Krik! -- -- Krek! -- -- Krik! -- --
Krak! -- -- -- -- -- --
-- -- Krek! -- -- -- -- Krek!
-- Krik! -- -- Krik! -- -- Krik!
```

These are the first two lines of the score, in which there are sixteen instances of ‘Krak!’, twenty-five of ‘Krek!’, and forty-one of ‘Krik!’ when they are sounded together again. Hobbs was not to use this kind of system again until his work with John White in percussion music, starting with his *Number Piece 1* in 1973.

Another found system came from music: the English folk-religious practice of change ringing. This practice is supposed to have come from the use of bells to chime the hours for medieval worship. Modern change ringing dates to the seventeenth century, but the social practice of change ringing stems from a revival in the nineteenth century: while there is evidence for a seventeenth-century fad for change ringing among upper-class men, changes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

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43 Hobbs, letter to VA, 31 October 1983.

44 *Watt*, p. 136.

Readymades and Systems Music

A typical church ‘ring’ consists of four to eight bells, each pulled by an operator. The opening ring always consists of a ‘run’ of the bells from highest to lowest; the ring then proceeds according to a permutational system, which continues until the permutations are exhausted.

The basis of all change-ringing patterns is the ‘plain hunt’, literally the pattern a bell makes on a graph of the change as it is rung ‘lead’ or ‘behind’ other bells.47 A plain hunt for a ring of four bells is:

```
1 2 3 4
2 1 4 3
2 4 1 3
4 2 3 1
4 3 2 1
3 4 1 2
3 1 2 4
1 2 3 4
```

The hunt can be detected by following the numbers ‘1’, ‘2’, ‘3’, and ‘4’ as they snake from one column to the next and back again. By delaying the move of the third bell in a ring of four bells, and exchanging other bells (called a ‘dodge’), one can continue the number of new permutations before returning to the original ring. This version is called a Plain Bob and, for a ring of four bells, continues:

```
1342 1423
3124 4132
3214 4312
2341 3421
2431 3241
4213 2314
4123 2134
1432 1243
1423 1234
```

This is the basic ring. Other methods of modifying the hunt can be made to produce the available permutations of the number of bells used.48

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46 And more recently, both genders.

47 This information from Wilfrid G. Wilson, ‘Change Ringing’, New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 6th ed. (1980). The NGIII entry has been updated, and not for the better, by Steve Coleman.
Other methods of creating changes allow the paths of two bells to intertwine, which is called ‘doubles’.\textsuperscript{49}

This is only the beginning of an explanation of change ringing, which takes years to master. John White was attracted to change ringing, and adapted some changes to numerical systems. Many English experimental composers used some elements of change ringing, and even cultivated the literature on it, particularly the ‘bible’ of ringing, C. A. W. Troyte’s \textit{Change Ringing},\textsuperscript{50} and Dorothy L. Sayers’ novel \textit{The Nine Tailors},\textsuperscript{51} a detective story which obtains its structure, local colour, and solution from change ringing. Among the PTO, Alec Hill was the only experienced ringer. Hill wrote that his PTO piece:

\textit{Large Change Machine}, for four toy pianos, was an expansion of an earlier \textit{Small Change Machine} whose title was firstly a bad pun, then signified that the piece was based on \textit{change ringing}, that great British contribution (along with cricket) to world culture and finally was entitled \textit{machine} in homage to John White....\textsuperscript{52}

\textit{Large Change Machine} provides for a ‘ring’ of six chords in ascending, rather than descending, sequence. This sequence is ‘rung’ in a series of permutations modelled on one of the classic rings (Hill cannot remember which, although it may have been a variant on the Stedman principle, named after Fabian Stedman, a seventeenth-century ringer). The permutation is rung four times, at which point Hill overlays another system, whereby each player shortens and then lengthens certain notes in the ring. Hill related his experiences as a ringer to his experiences as a member of the PTO:

\begin{quote}
Large Change Machine, for four toy pianos, was an expansion of an earlier Small Change Machine whose title was firstly a bad pun, then signified that the piece was based on change ringing, that great British contribution (along with cricket) to world culture and finally was entitled machine in homage to John White....
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\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{48} The number of rings available for a set of \( n \) bells is \( n! \) (\( n \) factorial).

\textsuperscript{49} Wilson, ‘Change Ringing’.

\textsuperscript{50} London, 1869.


\textsuperscript{52} Alec Hill, liner notes, \textit{The Orangery}. 
Bell ringers traditionally had a bad reputation as being heavy drinkers. It therefore seemed appropriate to perform a piece like this as a means of exercising our brains and keeping us off the street every Sunday before the pubs opened.\(^\text{53}\)

**Numerical Systems**

Numerical systems differ from machines, found systems and readymades in that in that the numerical processes are purpose built (unlike found systems), and have mathematical rigour, even if that rigour is only of a simple arithmetical sort (unlike the random processes of machines and most readymades). Since 1969, many of the experimental composers had become interested in the work of the English systems artists: Malcolm Hughes, Michael Kidner, Peter Lowe, David Saunders, Jean Spencer, Keith Richardson-Jones, and Jeffrey Steele. Gavin Bryars first worked with Steele as a member of the Comprehensive Studies programme at Portsmouth College of Art, and Michael Parsons, who took over from Bryars in 1970, worked closely with him. Systems art stems from Russian constructivism (in which mostly geometric forms were built of elements of materials, rather than carving wood or stone, or building up clay); Bauhaus (a movement founded by Gropius which emphasised an architectural approach of clear form); and De Stijl (the Dutch group which emphasised geometric form, best known for the work of Piet Mondrian).\(^\text{54}\)

Like Mondrian, who refined his palette to primary colours, black and white, the English systems artists also limited their materials. There is a temptation to relate systems art to the better-known geometric style of English op art, as it is close geographically and even shares at least one practitioner. Keith Richardson-Jones worked in a particularly striking and colourful type of op art in the 1960s before he

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

came to systems such as his *Series C Coincident Multiple Arrays* (1979-80). However, as Michael Parsons has written, ‘English systems art, with its emphasis on clear structure, is distinct from op art (which exhibits some systemic characteristics in degenerate form)*, because systems art does not exhibit the sensory illusions of stroboscopic movement common to op art.

Jeffrey Steele’s systemic works of the time are best exemplified by *Series SG…..* (1973; Ex. 11.3). This set of works ‘is designed to exhibit the maximum range of aesthetic possibilities of diagonal symmetry’, and is typical of English systems art in that the relationship of elements in the series extends over a number of works. The series of ink drawings on paper is made so that each work is executed within an area twenty inches square in a framework twenty-five inches square.

The lines are drawn according to a strict mathematical system. The system presented in the accompanying text is obscure, perhaps deliberately so, but consists of the presentation of thin, straight, diagonal

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56 Jeffrey Steele, ‘Series SG…..’, explanatory text to accompany the works.

57 Parsons, pp. 815-6.
or vertical lines. These are subjected to a system governing their length and intersection. The system is strict: ‘[t]he random element is absent. Quasi-random effects are minimised and occur only where material and ideal accuracy deviate’.\textsuperscript{58} When Hobbs asked Steele for an explanation of the system formula when he received his copy in 1973, Steele told him that he could not remember what it meant. Whether this is mere forgetfulness or a deliberate obscuring of source material, Steele’s emphasis on the rigour of the system, combined with an indifference to whether the perceiver understands it, is very similar to attitudes evinced by the systems composers.

Ex. 11.3: Jeffrey Steele, No. 4 from Series SG.....

While Bryars and Parsons taught at Portsmouth, other composers such as Hobbs and White came to lecture and became aware of the systems art work, which was similar to Machines and readymades in their emphasis upon a clearly articulated structure. The PTO played at an exhibition of systems art at the Whitechapel Gallery in 1972, but upon the disintegration of the PTO Hobbs and White formed the Hobbs-White Duo and began to write numerical systems music, which in terms of structure was more similar to the rigours of systemic art. Parsons

\textsuperscript{58} Steele, ‘SG.....’.
warned that a total analogy between art and music was impossible, as has been noted above.

It is on the basis of common theoretical principles and their underlying attitudes that the association between musicians and systems artists has been developed. 59

Rather than line length or placement, as in systems art, Parsons has noted that in systems music:

[S]tructure is defined in terms of time lengths. Numbers, both in series and in random distribution within specified limits, are used to determine bar lengths, the rate of expansion or contraction of a figure, the number of repeats, and so on. In this way clearly recognisable rhythmic patterns are subjected to audible processes of change. 60

As Steele used thin lines and Richardson-Jones used squares, most strict systems composers – the Hobbs-White Duo and Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton, who played systems works together for many years – used an extremely limited group of percussive timbres. Parsons described the array for the early Hobbs-White duo: ‘the precise sound quality of the instruments – small drums, bells, woodblocks, and cymbals – is revealed and demonstrated, but not dramatised’. 61 Parsons and Skempton used an even smaller range of instruments, sometimes as few as two drums. As the English systems art does not have the visual trickery of op art, so English musical systems do not have ‘the hypnotic intensity of sound’ 62 of classic American minimalism. Partially this is because of the starkness of these early number systems, and not a little because of the gentle good humour of later ones, which are often couched in pop or other accessible music styles.


60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.
A good example of a simple numerical system in music is Hobbs’ earliest such piece, *Number Piece 1* (1973), for four wood blocks and four cymbals. Unlike the passage in *Watt* in which frogs croaked at varying intervals of time, so that they would coincide again at the combined product of all croaks (here $8 \times 5 \times 3 = 120$, or $a \times b \times c = n$, where $a$, $b$, and $c$ are the gaps between events, and $n$ is the total duration of the piece), *Number Piece 1* explores an alternation of blocks and cymbals in increasing and decreasing durations. More than that, it has two systemic processes operating simultaneously (see Appendix 5 for a chart of the system). The first is an alternating presentation of blocks and cymbals which occur, at first, every twenty units of time. Thus, the first group of ten units (realised into common notation as quavers in a 5/4 bar) consists of all four blocks hit at once, then in the second ten units, or bar, the cymbals are hit from lowest to highest at a space of one unit (or as successive quavers). In the next bar, the blocks are hit at two-unit intervals (or crotchets), the next, the cymbals, at three and so on. This system continues until the blocks are sounded at twenty-unit (two-bar) intervals at bar 21. Because blocks and cymbals begin every bar, the groups overlap, providing a sensation of increasing contrapuntal complexity. Counterpoint generated by augmentation of voices can be found in medieval mensuration canons – a model used by Arvo Pärt decades later – but Hobbs’ system comes from the visual stimulus of Steele’s drawings.

At this point this expansion stops – the spacing within the two groups remains at this two-bar interval – and the second system begins. Until this point, each group has started every ten units (or one bar). After this point each block and cymbal run begins one unit later, so that the cymbal run at bar 22 occurs eleven units after the blocks, then the blocks are begun twelve units after the cymbals (bar 23), the cymbals thirteen units after the blocks (bar 24), and so on. This continues until
block and cymbal entrances are twenty units (or two bars) apart, which happens in the block entrance in bar 36.

From here until the end, this system has finished and the block and cymbal entrances remain two bars apart. However, the first system begins the process of retrograde: the block run at bar 38 appears at intervals of nineteen units; the cymbal run at bar 40 occurs at eighteen units, and so on. In this way, the intervals become shorter until at bar 75 the blocks are again hit simultaneously and the piece ends. By adding a second system, Hobbs ensured a more varied pattern of sounds when the first system remained fairly static; he also was able to avoid a symmetrical arch form by not subjecting the second system to a retrograde presentation. Because of this, the end of the piece occurs over a longer time than the first ‘half’ of the piece and there is thus less overlap between block and cymbal runs. Hobbs has exhibited more choice in Number Piece 1 than is found in the work of systems artists, but once he had chosen this kind of two-tier, uneven system, Hobbs kept to its rules. As Parsons wrote of musical systems in general, ‘[t]here is an interplay of the planned with the unexpected, of fixed and free elements..., but certain regularities are guaranteed. It is music primarily of the clear articulation of time’. 63

Hobbs and White published some of their percussion pieces in the Duo Percussion Anthology. 64 This anthology shows that systemic writing was only one structural avenue for the Duo. All of Hobbs’ pieces in this collection use random processes with some free choice, 65 although there a simple systemization of instruments in Lincoln E. Moses Comes Down From the Mountain, the title of which is a play on the name of the

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63 Ibid.


65 Number Piece 1 and Number Piece 2 occur in the similarly-named Percussion Anthology by Hobbs alone (London: private printing, 1983; published by Experimental Music Catalogue in 1999).
co-author of *Tables of Random Permutations*.\(^{66}\) Most of White’s pieces in the *Duo Anthology* are systemic, or at least play with durations. Hobbs and White had both moved away from such stark systems by 1974, to play piano duos, as well as music for piano and White’s second instrument, the tuba, which are through-composed and make reference to music of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Parsons wrote:

Their loss of interest in systemic music arises from a feeling that it is too circumscribed for their present needs, and that empirical writing offers more opportunity for dramatic expression, and a chance to make meaningful reference to a variety of different styles. Their teaching work at the ‘Method’-based Drama Centre may have influenced this change of interest: the detached and demonstrative techniques of experimental music may be seen as having more in common with Brechtian principles.\(^{67}\)

Perhaps, though, it was that White and Hobbs had exhausted systems for the time being. The Hobbs-White Duo percussion systems were much more strict as to note-to-note procedure than those by Parsons, Skempton, or Dave Smith, and as such, more abstract. White’s music had usually promoted good humour and the deeply unfashionable emotion of sentimentality. White once flippantly told Michael Nyman, making word-play on the name of the American minimalist Steve Reich:

> The terrain of machine procedure contains also the possibility of happily indulged *sentimentality* (rather than the noble *sentiment* which is generally considered superior). System and sentimentality are the SS of my Reich.\(^{68}\)

White later explained that ‘I’m into sentimentality as a sort of precise science’.\(^{69}\)

Hobbs felt that it was simply a case of writing music which was suitable for the instrument:


\(^{67}\) Parsons, ‘Systems’, p. 813.


\(^{69}\) White, interview with VA, March 1983.
Writing empirical music for percussion seemed as wrong as writing systemic music for the piano.... The piano has an inherited structure of tonality; the modern instrument is a 19th century development, built for playing 19th century music; its sonority is badly compromised if you play serial music on it – at least that’s what I felt, and John did, too. Percussion, on the other hand, by itself, is a 20th-century development, and so has no inherited tradition. I’ve always found percussion an ‘unexpressive’ medium – it expresses itself beautifully because there’s nothing to get in the way of people hearing just the sounds – which isn’t the case with the piano.\footnote{Hobbs, letter to VA, 31 October 1983.}

Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton continued to use phrase or sectional systems for their percussion duo, such as Parsons’ \textit{Six Pieces in Counterrhythm} (1974) for two drummers, in which two different phrase lengths were played by each player. For instance, in the first section, Player 1 has a thirty-six beat phrase, which is played four times; Player 2 has a phrase of forty-eight beats, which is played three times, thus evening out to 144 beats. The sections of this piece are proportional in a ratio of 3:4:5:6.\footnote{Parsons, ‘Systems’, p. 817.} Skempton’s pieces show a similar concern for proportion – in fact, proportion is an overriding feature of Skempton’s main style. However, his use of repetition in his systems is mostly random.

Nor did Parsons or Skempton feel that systems should remain the province of percussion. Parsons wrote \textit{Levels} (1976) for two electric organs, using a system based upon a twelve-note chord and its transpositions. Sections and durations for chords and silences were determined, as well as register, and density, but Parsons avoided total serialism by using a combination of permutational and chance-based processes. Skempton wrote for piano, using sectional permutations, in \textit{Waltz} (1970) and \textit{Slow Waltz} (1973).

Dave Smith is probably the most consistent writer of systems music for pitched instruments: his first piece with ‘systems’ in the title is
**Fibonacci Systems** (1973; revised 1975), for piano. Smith and John Lewis formed a piano duo specialising in American minimalism as well as their own pieces; because of this, they may have been more comfortable with the motoric quality of American pitched repetitive process. Lewis wrote a piece for electric organs using a system based on phrase lengths and reggae rhythms called *Blue Beat Bicycle* (1975). Smith lists eighteen systems and process pieces between 1970-77; there were more which have not survived to his current catalogue. Parsons detailed but did not name Smith’s *10 Pieces for Two Baritone Horns* (1975), which used a rhythm system, and mentioned Smith’s fondness for Mode 2 in systems works of this time, a choice that was favoured by Bartók and Messiaen. Smith wrote:

> Many of my systems/process pieces are in mode 2 (and restricted to one transposition thereof). The idea was to randomly generate harmonic interest – an area which related composers, c.1973 (well, American, at least), had not explored. There are lots of these pieces (mostly process) – *Diabolus Changes, Diabolus, Fibonacci Systems* (an extended version of this forms the last 20 odd minutes of the 5th Piano Concert), *Organ Grind, Diabolus Maximus, Diabolus Apocalypsis* and *Diabolus Harmonicus* and some unperformed/untitled pieces.\(^{72}\)

Except for *Diabolus Maximus*, for five pianos, Smith no longer likes these pieces, but he has continued writing non-systemic pieces using Mode 2.

**Later Systems Music**

By 1983, both Hobbs and White had abandoned systems and readymades: Hobbs had not deleted *The Remorseless Lamb* from his works list, but he insisted that its time was past and did not want it performed. He has since revived *The Remorseless Lamb*, after hearing an archive tape of Dave Smith and John Lewis performing it, however. Parsons continued to write systems: for instance, he used a twelve-pitch ring (a plain hunt) for the pitch sources in *Fourths and Fifths II* (1983).

By the mid-1980s, White was writing for various Casio and other electric...

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\(^{72}\) Dave Smith, email to VA, 25 November 2003.
keyboards as well as early computer programs, which had revolutionised home electronic music. Because of the nature of the presets and their ability to articulate accurately rhythmic and pitch systems over complex permutations, he returned to writing systems, at first in a series of what he referred to as ‘electric’ symphonies. The presets often ensured a reference toward the pop music of the era. One of these symphonies, the 18th (1985), attempted to provide a kind of modern ‘shepherd’s duo’, of the sort evoked in the third movement of Berlioz’s *Symphonie Fantastique*: but White’s version was a pair of rock guitarists standing on neighbouring alps while exchanging solos.

Shrapnel has featured repeating patterns in later music, such as *After 4 Years* for solo vibraphone (1991), but he wrote that ‘I wouldn’t describe any of these pieces [as] systemic because they don't follow a pre-determined numeric pattern’. Smith wrote that since the 1970s, he is ‘always using change-ringing’ and has used a random twelve-tone system in ‘Pie’, part of his *Easy As* group which constitutes his 4th Piano Concert (the name stems from an attempt to find every possible common simile starting with ‘As easy as’ and ‘as hard as’ – for instance, pie, nails, and so on). He reused his mid-1970s piece *Fibonacci Systems* – in which Fibonacci numbers are ‘applied to a series of 8 arpeggios’ – in his 5th Piano Concert (1995): ‘What starts off as (relatively fast) single notes become v. slow chords by the end’.

Hobbs returned to systems in the 1990s, most noticeably in *Fifty in Two Thousand* (2000), for piano, prepared piano, electric keyboard and percussion. This piece, written by Hobbs as a kind of rite of passage for his fiftieth birthday, consists of fifty short pieces of five types. These types are arranged according to an alphabetical grid (Ex. 11.4, next page). The pieces are differentiated by type of music and also feature

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73 Hugh Shrapnel, email to VA, 30 November 2003.

74 All quotations in this paragraph without citation are from Dave Smith, email to VA, 25 November 2003.
permutations of the instruments used. One of these types uses the change-ringing pattern called Bob doubles.

Ex. 11.4: System for *Fifty in Two Thousand*

Another piece that has multiple systemic processes is Hobbs’ work for speakers, *Extended Relationships and False Endings* (1992), which manipulates the weekly plot synopses of soap operas published in *The Los Angeles Times*. *No One May Ever Have the Same Knowledge Again* (1994) uses several systems, based on astronomical data about the solar system, to arrange letters sent to the Mt. Wilson Observatory in Los Angeles, as well as the musical content which accompanies it.

Systems remain part of the compositional arsenal for experimental composers. While at their strictest, systems approached the rigour of early twelve-tone music at the very least, the concept of systems always remained an experimental idea. The systems, once devised, were allowed to run their course, as opposed to providing the choice available in set forms in most serial music. Essentially, once started these systems were out of the hands of their creators, producing a loss of control equal to that of anything which Cage had devised. Their rationale, from art, also comes from experimental aesthetics, as is the fact that systems can be dropped for through-composed or other types of music whenever needed.
Chapter 12: The Experimental Fascination with ‘the Also-rans’ of Music History

I don’t seek any dependence on any models. Mind you, I think John [White does] when he spins out this list of people – the also-rans [laughter].

Brian Dennis, interview, 13 February 1983

In the introduction, I mentioned that ‘affect’ or ‘expression’, although almost impossible to treat in a consistent way in academic writing, is important to experimental music as a separate art-music culture, as opposed to a pastime or other non-music activity. Such an emotional preference influences the choice of aesthetic or technique one adopts – for instance, serialism, nationalism, neoclassicism, or indeed, experimentalism – as well as the social environment of like-minded colleagues (the company one keeps). The preferences of the British experimentalists – what they consider important, musically – mirrors the consistency of culture which has been detailed in terms of construction, performance, and reference in the Scratch Orchestra in Parts II and III of this thesis, and in terms of association by systemic composers in Chapter 11. More importantly, these preferences show the consistency in which these composers are different from those of the mainstream culture, as has been detailed in Part I.

As Richard Middleton noted in a quotation from his review of Michael Nyman’s Experimental Music which began the introduction to this thesis, experimentalists write a lot about experimental music – too much for him – and influence and personal importance is a major subject. In 1974, John White laid out his preferences by listing an ‘apparently disparate collection of composers from the world of “alternative” musical history’:¹

Alkan: The exposition of mysterious order.
Schumann: The wealth of inner life half concealed behind the engaging and mobile nature of the musical patterns (*Kreisleriana*!).
Busoni: The masterful containing of a wide range of musical vocabulary, structure, and resonance.
Satie: The arcane charm of apparently simple musical statement.
Reger: The sympathetic ability to be simultaneously serious and lost.
Scriabin: The volatile and winged nature of the musical thought and its manifestation.
Medtner: The tactile fluency of thematic and structural organisation.
Bruckner: The dignity and magnificence of diatonic chord-progressions and unswerving metre.\(^2\)

While White’s pantheon has fluctuated over the years – since 1974 he has engaged with Rakhmaninov, Kraftwerk, Weill, the ray-gun sounds in the 1980s *Top of the Pops* theme, tangos, and old radio plays, among others – he has always placed any discussion of structure within the context of communicative, often literary, description. This particularly bothered Paul Griffiths, who blamed White’s name and secondary instrument for his perceived lack of seriousness.

Maybe one is bound to develop a worm’s ear view of music if one spends one’s formative years playing the tuba, and maybe it is some incentive to cultivate an esoteric personality if one has so blank a name as ‘John White’…. White’s simplicity opens up a great conceptual hole into which one shovels approaches and arguments, and gets nowhere. It might be easier just to label his work as boring, naïve, ironic or humorous, and no doubt it is all of these in some measure…. Boulez, though, is so much easier to understand.\(^3\)

Gavin Bryars, who, along with Cardew and White, has been a conceptual influence upon the other composers, can hardly be described in the same way as communicative. Bryars has avoided direct identification in his work, so much so that he abandoned an early career as an improvising bassist.

One of the main reasons I am against improvisation now is that in any improvising position the person creating the music is identified with the music. The two things are seen to be synonymous. The


creator is there making the music and is identified with the music and the music with the person. It’s like standing a painter next to his picture so that every time you see the painting you see the painter as well and you can’t see it without him. And because of that the music, in improvisation, doesn’t stand alone. It’s corporeal. My position, through the study of Zen and Cage, is to stand apart from one’s creation.... They are conceptions. I’m more interested in conception than reality.⁴

Bryars does not mean that the loss of immediate identity precludes individual style; nor does it restrict him to a kind of absolute, internal music reference. He often hides his processes, burying references – literary, scientific, artistic, geographical – for the listener to find, if they are persistent and clever enough. These references are wide, reflecting Bryars’ study in philosophy at Sheffield University (1961-64, although he also took composition), as well as his collaborations with artists at Portsmouth College of Art. As a devotee of at least two lines of what could be called ‘recreational scholarship’ in his career (study of the ‘canon’ of Sherlock Holmes and membership of the obscure body engendered by Alfred Jarry, the College of ‘Pataphysics), Bryars’ references often are coded within the structure of the work itself.

I got involved with the College of ‘Pataphysics in 1974, and through that I become interested in all kinds of technical processes for writing literature: different ways of putting texts together, often by highly elaborate and artificial means. There was a subgroup within the College concerned with how to write and analyse detective fiction.... And some of that interest carried over into the music I wrote in the later 1970s, where there were internal references that weren’t particularly important to what was going on – except that an attentive listener might notice, for example, that it’s rather off to have a piece otherwise in 12/8 beginning with a bar of 19/4 time, and then half-way through to have a bar of 19/32 time, and he might work out that those might be years rather than just metres.... Then if you want to find out why, you can take it further and find out more about the mystery, just like the detective....⁵

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While White engages with his sources in the guise of a ‘medium’, Bryars receives his as a scholar. In 1981, Keith Potter detailed Bryars’ pantheon: an interdisciplinary group which at the time included Satie, Lord Berners, Grainger, Karg-Elert, Marcel Duchamp, Jarry, Raymond Roussel, Jean Ferry, and Henri Rousseau, and has expanded since. Potter also noted in the same article that the traits of buried motivations for his works appear in his text works as well (for instance, the often-cited *Marvellous Aphorisms Are Scattered Richly Throughout These Pages* (1970), in which sound-producing devices are hidden within the performer’s clothing).

Potter may have been the first to stress the similarity between a composer’s text pieces and traditionally notated works. In fact, personal stylistics and the manner in which influences are received and transformed remain consistent in each of these composers’ works regardless of structural device. White’s music reflects social interaction (as in *Drinking and Hooting Machine*) and an aim to impart some things he has found delightful and amusing, if only for himself and his performers. These show up as open in-jokes (for instance, in occasional Satie-like jokey performance indications). Some of the Hobbs-White Duo’s strictest systems pieces using cross-rhythms were rehearsed (and presumably performed) to mnemonics devised by White: ‘Sound the trumpet, Lizzie!’ (for three against four); ‘Drink up your beer, come on please!’ (for three against five); and ‘Eat curried eggs but mind your eye!’ (for four against five).

Howard Skempton’s work consistently shows a concern for proportion of structure and a kind of spaciousness, even in text pieces. In *Drum No. 1* (1969; Ex. 12.1), Skempton achieves this through concrete placement as in a list, giving the instrumental requirement followed by

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6 White has said that he receives communication from his sources ‘to an almost spiritualist sense’ (interview, 1983). For the entire quotation see Chapter 3.

7 This pantheon is detailed in Potter, ‘Just the Tip of the Iceberg’, pp. 11-12.
orders for actions. There is a purposeful inbuilt redundancy in the second instruction, ‘Continuation of pulse’: to introduce a pulse would require some repetition (i.e., a ‘continuation’) in order to be perceived as a pulse.

Ex. 12.1. Howard Skempton, *Drum No. 1*¹

This ensures that the pulse is maintained for some time before it can be decorated (as in the last instruction). Skempton accomplishes this work using the minimum number of words, and their placement on the page (a three-by-five card) gives the work the clean terseness of an epigram.

The sense of space and of neatness and the economy of expression is essential to Skempton’s style throughout his life. Keith Potter wrote that ‘Webern and La Monte Young, as well as Feldman, were strong formative influences on the development of Skempton’s style’.⁹

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The economy of expression of Skempton’s influences appears in his later, traditionally notated pieces (such as *May Pole*, for orchestra, 1971), which are built following classical Greek architectural proportion. Later, longer works (for instance, his dance piece, *Delicate* (1996), for two cellos and percussion) often are built of several interdependent or related short works. Skempton’s other strand of compositional technique, best found in his accordion pieces, approaches a kind of nostalgic popular style while remaining concise in structure and delicate in texture.

Other experimentalists have particularly rich referential palettes. Michael Parsons’ references can be overt (for instance, his pieces based on Macedonian folk music which he wrote in the late 1980s and early 1990s, or his piano rags of the 1970s), or more diffuse (his opera *Expedition to the North Pole* (1985) used a Scratch Journey Concert format on real historical events using a dizzying variety of styles to suit the action). As has been noted in the last chapter, Hobbs, Shrapnel, and

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Smith all use reference and influence to inform much of their work, even when it is couched in the structural rigours of systems.

Michael Nyman has shaped his music to the needs of writing for film and theatre (as has White). He was particularly fortunate in being able to use his studies in Purcell for Peter Greenaway’s *A Draughtsman’s Contract* (1982), a film in a seventeenth-century setting. Whereas Bryars hides references and often uses relevant references in a leitmotivic fashion to refer to the momentary concerns of the piece, burying them within the texture, Nyman tends to combine his references in strands, which often change only in large sections and determine the texture itself, a feature which particularly matched the static, processional nature of Greenaway’s films. In *The Draughtsman’s Contract*, Nyman combined the repetitive elements of Baroque structure with his own love for loud music through the sensation of an idealised or imaginary rock music. This appealing surface has infuriated the British avant garde. Richard Barrett wrote about what he perceived to be Nyman’s cynicism:

> [B]y the end of the 1980s..., Nyman had not only become a successful film composer by spraying a coat of garish postmodernist paint over ‘classics’ such as Purcell and Mozart but was also able to write background music for television commercials without the slightest change of style.¹¹

For Barrett, it seems, music for the masses, at least in commerce, can have a pleasing surface, but music for art must be grittier or more original. It is ironic that Barrett makes such an ostensibly bourgeois statement in an article about ideology in British music.

While outsiders use references and models to decorate and generate their work, the specific references are often so different between experimentalists and outsiders as to cause a gulf in understanding. Paul Griffiths conducted an interview with Bryars for *New Sounds, New...*

**Personalities: British Composers of the 1980s** with a sense of incomprehension not found in the other interviews (which included Dominic Muldowney, Tim Souster, Nigel Osbourne and Brian Ferneyhough, among others). Bryars mentioned how he could use a detective story about Prince Zaleski, who solved crimes while playing Lakmé on a harmonium, and combine it with an Ellery Queen mystery that mentioned Lakmé.  

[Bryars:] Clearly, none of that relates to whether it’s going to be for orchestra, a theatre piece, an opera, a ballet, a piece for solo piano or what. It’s just that there is some kind of material.

[Griffiths:] But conceptual material, not sound material.

[B:] Is there a difference?

[G:] Well, let’s say you wouldn’t think of a tune and decide you might make a piano concerto out of it.

[B:] No, I don’t think I’d do that. A harmonium concerto maybe...

[G:] How do you relate to what one’s brought up to regard as the tradition?

[B:] What do you mean by ‘the tradition’?

[G:] Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms....

The gulf in this exchange stems from the fact that Griffiths did not believe that such ‘conceptual’ items as a reference to Lakmé could be seen to be building materials of equal importance to pitch and other musical elements. Bryars appeared to make a gentle dig at Griffiths’ incomprehension by saying that a reference to Zaleski at the harmonium would necessitate a multi-instrumental work featuring the instrument, rather than the piano (although a solo piano work may be conceivable to

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13 While this conversation indicated notes for a yet-unwritten work, Bryars had used Zaleski (created by Matthew Phipps Shiel) in *Out of Zaleski’s Gazebo* (1977) and other works.

Bryars, as it tends to ‘stand’ for other instruments – for instance, harp arpeggios and trumpet calls – in solo works). Perhaps Bryars was also being cagey, or perhaps he really was not sure what Griffiths meant by tradition, as Griffiths’ interviews with the other composers in this book are based upon the historicism and other assumptions of modernism which this thesis has already detailed. Once he was aware that Griffiths meant the common-practice tradition, Bryars articulated the idea of the ‘alternative’ music in terms which opposes a linear tradition to a ‘field situation’ outside it:

I take those composers [Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms] seriously. I’m not dismissive. But there are many composers who have an uneasy relationship with that tradition: Busoni interests me a lot, so do Liszt and Rossini, especially late Rossini. Maybe I find heretics more interesting. I don’t view myself as an heir to Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, that’s true. But there are composers from the past to whom I relate quite strongly, like Berlioz, Liszt, Schubert, Mahler, Busoni and a whole area of composers from around the turn of the century, like Reger, Karg-Elert, Skryabin, Szymanowski, Satie.¹⁵

Bryars and White most readily articulate these lists of influences, but the others hold similar enough views to show a coherent cultural difference in aesthetic. This aesthetic is a strong enough feature of experimentalist writing; the ways in which this differs from those of the mainstream culture can be highlighted by means of a survey.

Composer Preference Survey

In order to formalise the differences in perceived musical importance between the composers of experimental music and those of the mainstream, it is necessary to construct a survey which is centred upon the influences of the tested central group or groups. Interpretation based upon a ‘foreign’ centre can be misleading at best, as had happened in the perception test cited by Carole R. Ember,¹⁶ in which Africans were

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¹⁵ Bryars, in Griffiths, p. 158.

determined to think less abstractly than Americans did because they
categorised objects primarily by colour rather than form. It is usually
ideal that all such surveys should be neutral, but in dealing with a
minority culture, this solution is inadequate. In order to design a survey
that is weighted to take in equally the concerns of all respondents, one
must construct it to suit the needs of the majority. Since the majority in
this case is that of the outsider mainstream, such a survey would
represent its interests – either that or it would be so large as to be
impossible to assess. Therefore, I deliberately constructed a list of one
hundred composers based around the likes and dislikes of the
experimentalists, reduced so as to take in a number of figures from
common-practice and modernist ‘tradition’.

The Respondents

Experimental composers were the centre of the survey, so care had
to be taken that as many as possible would respond. Several composers
had from time to time expressed their impatience with student
questionnaires and surveys as a waste of time, and gave the impression
that they found this to be a lazy way of obtaining information. Therefore,
the list would have to be short and interesting; it had to be perceived to
be relevant to the experimental composers in as equal a manner as
possible. To receive as consistent a result as possible, the central
surviving composers – Gavin Bryars, Michael Nyman, John White,
Christopher Hobbs, Michael Parsons, Dave Smith, Howard Skempton,
and Hugh Shrapnel – would constitute one response unit.

A wider group was needed to act as a control group. Ideally, this
might have been a group of avant-gardists, but since the general object of
the survey was to find differences between the ‘tradition’ (as Griffiths
termed it) and the experimental pantheon, the larger group of academics
in musicology would suffice. The subscribers to the AMS and RMA email
lists would provide this control group.
Construction

The number of composers in the list was limited to one hundred, as anything longer appeared daunting.\textsuperscript{17} The composers for the central portion of the list were gathered from declared lists of influences – such as Bryars’ and White’s, above – plus other names which had appeared in interviews, liner notes and other sources. Some choices were made from familiarity; what may appear to be speculation on my part comes from almost a quarter century of informal chat, parties, shared holidays, house-sitting, and other contact – in short, ‘insider’ knowledge of a shared culture. Influences could be negative, as well as positive. These compositional influences were set within a framework of more ‘normal’ compositional influences. To balance such influences I listed all composers in the \textit{Norton-Grove Concise Encyclopedia of Music}\textsuperscript{18} whose biographies were longer than two column inches. This immediately proved to be far too large, so the qualifying composers were limited to those who flourished after 1800. This reduction omitted some experimental influences (Perotin, for instance) but since the major influences flourished in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this was acceptable. The remaining list had several hundred composers. Two strong experimental favourites were Brian Wilson, composer and co-founder of the Beach Boys, and the jazz bandleader and composer Carla Bley, so I added other pop and jazz composers for contrast: Chuck Berry, Bob Dylan, Duke Ellington, and John Lennon and Paul McCartney. The American composers John Adams and Harold Budd were added because they were the only non-British experimentalists on Brian Eno’s Obscure Recordings series.

Those composers who have had a more recent influence for good or ill were taken out of the list, as results might only indicate a clash of

\textsuperscript{17} For me as well – even so, the resultant data, pared down for this thesis, ran to forty-five pages.

\textsuperscript{18} Stanley Sadie, ed. (London: W.W. Norton, 1988).
personalities. Only those composers who had a direct influence on the experimentalists more than approximately twenty-five years ago were left on it. Further reductions came in the form of trying to remove ‘either/or’ candidates: for instance, Steve Reich or Philip Glass, Britten or Tippett, in which responses might either be duplicated or the votes divided between them. Others who were left off the list were influential only to one composer (Dave Smith is the only composer who works with most Latin American music and Albanian sources, for instance). As such, the list reflected a kind of central European core of names (with a heavy emphasis on British and American composers; the first because of the nationality of the experimentalist, the second because of the nationality of their main common influence, John Cage).

**Weighting**

I rejected the idea of a league table, as it was too time consuming for the subjects and some subjects might not agree with the survey as a kind of contest. I therefore decided upon two-tier voting (composers who were essential (A) or important (B)) with no limitation as to number of composers who could be assessed in any way. To avoid the temptation to give weight to those influences which are thought to be important in the general culture alone rather than personal value, I asked subjects to vote along two categories. One category was the public – those composers whom it is essential or important to know in culture, to teach, to perform and support – the other the private – those composers who have had an essential or important personal influence. There are two other categories: those composers of whom the subject has never heard (marked ‘?’) and those who the respondent felt were overrated or had a negative influence (marked ‘0’). Any composers who had neither a strong positive nor negative influence could be left unmarked. I added a

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19 In retrospect, leaving out Reich proved to be both a mistake and rather interesting, as respondents from both sides volunteered Reich over other omitted composers.
suggestion that subjects could add any composers they wished to the list either for positive or negative reasons.

**Dissemination**

In July, I emailed or posted the survey to the central experimental composers. On each email or letter, I sent personal greetings and my rationale for not including the respondent on the list. Having had a response from a majority of these composers, I sent the same questionnaire (minus personalisation) in September 2003 simultaneously to the RMA and AMS email lists. The AMS-list has a predominant membership of American musicologists; the RMA list seems to be more diverse. I added a section asking respondents to give their general location and the nature of their work (historian, theorist, performer, composer, educator, publisher). I prefaced this survey with my reasoning that

> It seemed useful to compare groups of people's attitudes to importance in music history for a paper I'm doing. What I needed was a kind of control group of musicians, so I thought that I'd turn to this list for help.\(^{20}\)

I did not give any other rationale for the survey, nor mention the central group for which this survey was designed. I also sent the survey to improvisers and performers, in order to detect a difference, but as only one ‘next generation’ improviser (30 years old) answered, nothing could be determined of the preferences of this group from this survey.

**Comments and Problems**

The immediate comments were from experimental composers. One respondent found the exercise pleasant in that it allowed him to air his ‘prejudices’. Another phoned me to confirm the instructions: in reading the list during the call he said, ‘Oh, my, why do you have Stanford?’ One composer wished for an ‘indifferent’ category; one marked a few

\(^{20}\) Email survey to AMS-list and RMA-list, 13 September 2003.
composers with the legend ‘one-work’, meaning that the composer’s ranking only rested upon one work. One composer thought this survey came too close to a league table and so placed an ‘X’ next to influential composers rather than ranking them as important or essential. Two did not reply (one apologised but cried off due to pressures of work) and two more responded after a reminder.

The ‘next generation’ improviser who responded to the email replied mostly in a similar way to the experimentalists on important experimental icons. He differed in his appreciation of composer-pianists, as he does not play, and gave a higher evaluation to post-war avant-garde music (Nono and Boulez, in particular). Without other respondents it is impossible to speculate on the reason for these differences, which could be one of age or of his status as an improviser.

The response from the two lists came almost entirely from the American list (which is a discussion list; the RMA-list mostly disseminates announcements), and as such, tends to reflect the interests of musicologists in universities as well as the cultural bias toward American musical interests. Some comments from this group displayed a lack of understanding of the nature and construction of the survey as I represented it. Several respondents complained that Bach, Handel, and other composers who flourished before 1800 were absent, so perhaps my parenthetical ‘Beethoven and later’ was unclear, although this perhaps may have come from a feeling that every survey should include earlier music.

Another complaint resulted from my deliberate vagueness about the use of the survey, and is best exemplified by a respondent’s subject line: ‘Your somewhat strange list’. Another respondent kindly offered the suggestion that I turn to psychologists or business analysts to ‘fix’ the oddity of my choices of composers: ‘Your fascinating survey, I feel, is too novel in form the way it stands and may lead to errors in response
undetectable by you’.21 Several respondents complained that ‘major composers’ such as Fauré, Ravel, Wolf, Bartók, and others were not represented. One respondent was more forceful: ‘Shame on you! [N]ot one single [B]razilian composer – not even Villa-Lobos. [C]an you even name any others?’22

More unsettling, however, were the complaints about the lack of women composers in the list, as I felt this keenly when constructing it. One respondent wrote:

I’m terribly disappointed that you don’t have more women on your list. Only 3 out of 100! A much larger percentage of the composers since Beethoven have considered themselves to be and have been considered by others to be composers. They will not be considered ‘important’ unless they ‘influence’ composers, theorists, and musicologists, but to do this we need to know about them. As educators we must try to break the cycle that keeps women out of the ‘canon’.23

The original composer survey list contained many of the women composers of the ‘canon’, including Fannie Mendelssohn, Clara Wieck, Ethel Smyth, Sophie Eckhardt-Gramatté and Elizabeth Lutyens, as well as more modern composers: Laurie Anderson, Alison Knowles, Meredith Monk, Delia Derbyshire, Daphne Oram, Pauline Oliveros, Judith Weir, and Yoko Ono. All were dropped for reasons of the criteria in the list reduction: some held too little interest for the composers in question, had too short a biography in Norton-Grove or were dropped due to the modern composers’ rule. Lutyens was Hugh Shrapnel’s teacher, so she would elicit an interest from Shrapnel only;24 Eckhardt-Gramatté is

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21 Email, 14 September 2003. I promised all respondents anonymity to ensure honest, forthright answers.

22 Email, 15 September 2003.

23 Email, 16 September 2003.

24 I knew beforehand that certain composers would or would not interest the experimentalists. Lutyens, for instance, has only been mentioned for her film scores by these composers if at all. Although White took lessons in analysis from Lutyens, he did not seem to have had a good time: ‘She ran into me some years after I’d left her and said, “Oh, I hear that you’ve taken up composition. Are you still doing it?”’ I said, “Oh, yes, I’m still doing it very enthusiastically”, and she said, “Oh, that’s a terrible shame!”
favoured mostly by Smith. I had discussed Derbyshire and Oram recently with Hobbs and Smith, so any response to these composers might have been influenced by their knowledge that I found them interesting. I held on to Smyth, Anderson, and Ono far longer than the rules allowed, and let them go with reluctance (as I did with Rzewski and Reich). The only female composer regularly mentioned consistently by more than one composer has been the jazz-band leader and composer Carla Bley.

The sad fact is that women still are unable or unwilling to come to experimental music composition from a musical background, rather than an art one. The correspondent’s emphasis on the ‘canon’ of musical history is of importance: the desire of women to be considered within it and their fight to break the ‘cycle’ of importance may be a reason that women choose to write within the norms of the dominant culture. There is also the sense that a woman already faces so many obstacles to acting creatively (rather than re-creatively) in music, she would not want to add the prejudice faced by using an alternative aesthetic.25 As has been shown,26 experimental music interest has come most from women who have been trained in the visual arts rather than in music, which accounts for the great drop-out of women composers in experimental music when the primary activity turned from indeterminate text-pieces to systemic and through-composed pieces using traditional notation. Of the American women composers with experimental leanings, only Oliveros

and I closed the conversation’ [White, interview, March 1983]. Hobbs remembered that Shrapnel liked his lessons with Lutyens for her bonhomie, as she would say, ‘Come in Hugh, and have some gin!’ [Hobbs, in conversation]. This benefit did not stop Shrapnel from changing teachers to Cardew at the first opportunity. The only instances of Eckhardt-Gramatté mentioned by experimentalists are when Smith collected her work in the last decade.

25 The reasoning may be the same in the case of Afro-American composers. The most prominent – for instance, Ollie Wilson and T.J. Anderson – write in the style of the academic avant garde.

26 In Chapter 8.
was trained primarily in music (Monk took joint honours in dance, art, and music); the rest come from the visual arts.

The only female participants in recent experimental music have all been performers: pianists Sarah Walker and Tania Chen, violists Zoe Sosinka and Karen Demmel, clarinettists Jane Aldred and myself, and others (including several singers and other performers who work mostly outside the experimental scene). The fact that all women who are involved in newer experimental music are performers is unsurprising, given the traditional lack of encouragement to women composers in academia; the fact that no women composers are working in traditionally-notated experimental music is troubling. The avant garde has included a steadily rising proportion of esteemed women composers; it would be wonderful if women were able to escape the ‘canon’ to enrich experimental music.

Results

The results of the responses were collated according to the categories listed in Appendix 6. These responses were arranged by percentages, first, according to those composers who were deemed by respondents to make their ‘A or B teams’ (the combined AB response); in other words, whether they were considered to be essential or important. Beethoven was ranked as essential or important publicly by 100% of all respondents, both from the control group and from the experimentalists. While the control group also gave 100% public approval to various composers, including Johannes Brahms, George Gershwin, and John Cage, the experimentalists only agreed on three further public influences: Cornelius Cardew, Anton Webern, and Erik Satie. Cage, unusually, came in with 83.33% public ranking by the experimentalists, possibly because they thought the greater musical community (the ‘public’) valued him less highly. As a personal influence, Cage achieves 100%, along with Cardew, Christian Wolff, and Satie among the
experimentalists, whereas Cage falls off the measured personal importance for the control group.

The variance in public ranking between the two groups is strongest in reference to two of the most stringent of the post-war ‘superserialists’: Milton Babbitt and Pierre Boulez, followed by others from the post-war avant garde – Elliott Carter, Krzyztof Penderecki, and Peter Maxwell Davies. Philip Glass and Henryk Gorecki are ranked more highly by the control group (by a variance of 78.08% and 78.95%, respectively), which shows that the experimentalists do not give blanket approval to other minimalists. The experimentalists also rank these composers highly in their assessment of overrated or zero-rated composers (Carter receives a 66.66% 0 rating privately), but this assessment is dominated both publicly and privately by John Tavener (one experimentalist respondent called him ‘pretentious and boring’), who is less disliked by the control group.

However, the enthusiasms of the experimentalists for Christian Wolff and Cornelius Cardew are not shared by the control group, who rated them 57.02% and 68.42% lower, respectively. It would be tempting to relate this low ranking for left-wing composers to the political move to the right in America, as Wolff’s New York associates Morton Feldman and John Cage fare rather better, but there is also a question of familiarity, as 26.31% of control group respondents did not know who either of these composers were. Whatever the reason, Wolff is far more disliked than Cardew, as he received the third highest ranking by the control group (21.05%, equal with Karol Szymanowski) as an overrated or zero-rated composer, whereas Cardew followed with 15.79% (along with Aram Khachaturian, Nicolay Medtner, Ennio Morricone, and Brian Wilson). Wolff and Cardew also were not recognised by 26.31% of the control group, along with Morricone, Kagel, and Wilson, although Harold Budd (78.95%), Lord Berners (57.89%), and Carla Bley and Albert Ketèlbey (52.63% each) topped the control group list.
Karlheinz Stockhausen is considered to be important publicly by the experimentalists, along with Schoenberg and Berg, but so are Mahler, Feldman, Terry Riley, and La Monte Young. The latter group also have high personal AB rankings (over 80%), whereas Schoenberg has only 50%, Stockhausen has 33%, and Berg 16.66%. Perhaps the experimentalists, at least formally, need to ‘know the opposition’ – a kind of self-education in what not to do. Certainly, the variance in AB public and private assessment is highest among these composers (Berg (-66.66%), followed by Stockhausen, Richard Strauss, and Luciano Berio (-50%), with Schoenberg having a variance of -33.33%). Control group variance between public and private varies most with Stockhausen (-52.63%) followed by Ennio Morricone, who is a secret favourite among those in the control group who know him (42.1% higher personal rating), and Philip Glass (42.1% less favoured privately). Webern is highly regarded both publicly and privately by both groups (83.33%-100%), reflecting the dual nature of his work (the strictly applied serialism and regard for the use of silence).

Privately, the variance between experimental and control groups is greatest in the pre-1945 (Romantic and early twentieth-century) composers. The variance in assessment of Giacomo Puccini is enormous (0% for the experimentalists, 94.74% for the control group), followed by Jules Massenet, Carl Nielsen, and Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (a difference of 84.21%), then Brahms, Chopin, and Milhaud, before the first post-war composer, Penderecki, appears (78.95%). This might reflect the experimental aversion to the mainstream tradition. It can be shown still more clearly if a distinction can be made between Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton, whose work refers more directly to classic experimentalism, and the group of composers, including Christopher Hobbs and Dave Smith, who worked with Bryars at the department which he founded at Leicester Polytechnic (later De Montfort University).
The ‘Leicester School’

Bryars moved to Leicester Polytechnic from Portsmouth Arts College (where he was replaced by Parsons) in 1970 and built a music performance programme entirely centred around experimental music, the ‘alternative’ musical history, and free improvisation and new jazz. Bryars brought in like-minded composers, such as Hobbs, White, and Smith, and performers to be guest and part-time lecturers. Improvisers such as Evan Parker and experimental and avant-garde virtuosi such as Ian Mitchell often provided instrumental tuition for the students. In 1971, Bryars and Hobbs played Satie’s Vexations at the polytechnic, a fourteen-hour performance that was noted in many studies of this work. Guest performers included the Balanescu Quartet (now probably best known for the new arrangement of the University Challenge theme, but then playing a quartet by Terry Riley and other minimal works), the Czech-German experimentalist Ladislav Kupkovic, and the Alkan specialist Ronald Smith.

Students received a thorough grounding in a wide-ranging curriculum that was centred upon experimental interests. The programme included a full history survey, but experimental tastes often influenced what was actually emphasised; for instance, more weight was placed on Liszt and Alkan than on Chopin. Departmental performances included the first performance of Steve Reich’s Music for 18 Musicians by an ensemble other than Reich’s own. Carla Bley was so impressed by the department jazz band (called the Bley Band) that she sent manuscripts of her charts to Smith for arrangement and asked them to open for her at the Camden Jazz Festival in 1992.

Bryars encouraged a collegial atmosphere which was heightened due to the fact that guest lecturers often had to stay on campus due to the distance from London to Leicester, especially during the 1980s. For a short time, a few composers called this association ‘the Leicester School’, although it was quickly dropped, so averse are these composers to the
normal dynastic organisation common to the mainstream. Whatever it should be called, the combination of work, performance, and long evenings at pubs and curry houses fostered a closeness which had been missing since the systems work of the early 1970s, perhaps even the Scratch Orchestra era.

In the composer survey, several icons, such as Alkan, were not strongly represented in public and private as essential, or even important. The strength of this assessment is clear when the ‘Leicester School’ is collated as a group. A total of seventeen composers, including Berio, Messiaen, Cowell, Pärt, Partch, and Brian Wilson achieve 100% AB public rating among the ‘Leicester School’ as opposed to 0% from the other experimental composers. Private AB ratings of Carla Bley, Sergey Rakhmaninov, Karol Szymanowski, and others also show this 100% variance. Part of the high assessment of public ranking of serialists such as Berio may lie in his importance in teaching in a music department, as Parsons, Skempton, and Shrapnel all have worked outside them (Parsons in art departments, Skempton in publishing, Shrapnel in community music). The only composers unknown to the experimentalists – Harold Budd, Ennio Morricone, and Brian Wilson – came from a respondent outside of the Leicester School. De Montfort University no longer has a programme to foster such associations, so this division may soften as these composers find new interests.

**Essential composers and the curious case of Johannes Brahms**

The cut-off between ‘essential’ and ‘important’ varied considerably, so that an assessment of percentages of ‘important’ or B team composers is fraught with problems. For instance, most AMS-list respondents marked more composers as essential than did the experimentalists. However, since the category of essential composers describes an apex, there are a few points to consider, especially the variation in response between the experimentalists and the control group regarding the public ranking of Johannes Brahms. Brahms achieved the largest variance of
any major composer in any ranking in the difference between the experimentalists and control group as to essential composers. Brahms achieved 100% approval from the control group; 0% from the experimentalists: a variance of 100%.

Brahms is abhorred by most experimentalists, especially for the feature which Schoenberg called his ‘developing variation’. John White wrote in 1974:

[Brahms F# minor Piano Sonata is] full of these noises of development, it’s the development noise, the pedal notes, the sequences, and the kind of rumbling angry sound that developed and always hangs about in German works. But [there is] not a single statement or single sense of obsession with an actual sound, with those kind of obsessive moments.

Bryars went further in 1994, when he was asked by The Independent what he would like to get rid of for the new year:

I would like to blow up the entire works of Brahms. I remember that I found it quite endearing when I learned that Britten, apparently, used to spend one day a year playing Brahms at the piano just to remind himself what a bad composer Brahms was. The absence of Brahms would create huge programming opportunities for the BBC who seem to have him as Composer of the Week whenever it’s the turn of a 19th century composer. It would also rid the world of a phenomenon which John White used to call ‘that development noise’, which can be heard both in and out of the development sections of the symphonies, a study of which has sent too many composers down a blind alley.

Essentially, it is this ‘development noise’, which influenced Schoenberg, who in turn has had a major influence on the mainstream of twentieth-

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The Also-rans of Music History

century music tradition. Neither are the experimentalists enthusiastic about Brahms as a central composer privately: the 78.95% variance comes from a cooler response from the control group rather than from any shift in experimental sentiments. Brahms receives a 33.33% B ranking due to the admission that he is, at least publicly, an important composer, but for the ‘Leicester School’, Brahms receives 100% ranking as overrated or zero-rated privately.30

Suggestions for additions

The control group offered 133 additions to the list, including a strong lobby for Eastern European and women composers. Particularly keenly missed were Samuel Barber (possibly reflecting the American majority of this group), Béla Bartók, Antonin Dvorák, Gabriel Fauré, Paul Hindemith, Witold Lutoslawski, Sergey Prokofiev, Maurice Ravel, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Giuseppe Verdi, Karl Maria von Weber, and Hugo Wolf. Bartók, Hindemith, Lutoslawski, Prokofiev, Ravel, and Vaughan Williams, Weber, and Wolf were also suggested by the experimentalists, although less enthusiastically. Dvorák was ignored entirely by the experimentalists, who gave Fauré, one of the most-strongly suggested control-group composers, one dot (meaning that one piece only was influential). One experimentalist suggested Verdi as overrated, in comparison to the large essential vote from the control group. Steve Reich was missed both by experimentalists and the control group, with an intensity in the control group only slightly less than that of Bartók and Fauré. Harrison Birtwistle was also nominated by both groups – the experimentalists to propose a 50% 0 ranking, to one essential vote from the control group.

The experimental group suggested forty composers. Many of these might have been ranked highly as unknown by the control group if

30 Any perceived Brahmsian characteristics among this group are frowned upon. Bryars warned Christopher Hobbs of straying into ‘the territory of the arch-enemy’ in ‘Satie and the British’, Contact, no. 25 (Autumn 1982), p. 11.
asked: for instance, Jehan Alain, Tom Dissevelt, Naji Hakim, Giya Kancheli, and Aarre Merikanto. One composer, while he accepted the rule leaving out experimentalists, proposed an exemption for John White, who has been a great influence, especially to Hobbs, Smith, and Shrapnel.

Problems

A wider survey of composers who have worked at various times with the core experimental group would dilute this response, as their influences vary with different contacts. Benedict Mason, who worked with White and Smith in the late 1970s and early 1980s, achieved commissions and prizes after moving from the quirkiness which he found in White. He no longer seems to acknowledge any of his works before 1986, which include some very quirky offerings for the Radio 3 programme *New Premises*. Similarly, Andrew Hugill (né Thomson), who once could have been described compositionally as ‘school of Bryars’, told me in 1997 that he no longer wrote ‘experimental music’. Hugill changed the focus of the music department at De Montfort University, which Bryars had founded and based upon experimental and jazz performance and composition, to one of electronic music and sound design.

Brian Dennis, whose gentle gibe at John White’s compositional pantheon opened this chapter, is a special case: that of a composer who supported and encouraged the work of experimental composers (especially Hobbs, Smith, and his teacher White) while holding aesthetics

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32 Bryars disparaged this shift in emphasis in an interview by Kate Worsley, ‘Score Draw’, *Times Higher Education*, 26 June 1998. At this point Bryars, who had retired to work on his own music, had severed connections with De Montfort because of this change. There is another composer who should be considered of this immediate later generation, and that is Bob Coleridge, who has worked in Cardew and other classic experimental performance with great diligence, and has joined and composed for groups with related interests, including the Redlands Consort, an ensemble which also included Hugh Shrapnel and Forward Music publisher Michael Newman.
in many respects at odds to their work. Dennis considered himself an
eperimental composer, at least in the 1960s, but he valued the heroes of
linear history, especially Wagner, and preferred the developmental
features of the music of White and Hobbs to other features of
traditionally-notated experimentalism. Dennis emphasised analytical
features in his music and in those of other experimentalists whose works
he analysed. Although his method of composition lay outside the avant
garde (he often used Chinese poetry to generate the shape and the
subharmonic series to generate vertical sonorities), he was proudest of
his works which lay inside the tradition, especially two operas which,
unlike those of Bryars and Nyman, assumed the shape and intensity of
operas of the tradition. The other experimental composers preferred his
miniatures (such as a group of piano pieces entitled *After Rain*, the
recording of which was released posthumously by the Scratch website
Musicnow) to his larger works.

With the possible exception of Mason, a wider survey of
experimentalists would dilute the results (leaving, perhaps, a milder
difference in opinion about Wagner and Brahms), but unless one
redefined the nature of experimental music itself, as Leigh Landy had
done, the difference in opinions would still be striking. The polar
opposition in opinions about the public importance of Brahms as an
essential composer is just one of the features of British experimental
music as a separate, consistent, yet varied culture.

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33 See Chapter 2.
Chapter 13: Conclusion and ‘Firelighting Component’

Cardew concluded the instructions to Paragraph 5 of *The Great Learning* with a ‘Firelighting Component’, an ‘inspirational text’ from the book of Kwang-Sze.\(^1\) He wrote in the instructions for performance that ‘[i]t should be understood that the entire paragraph is an improvisation rite’. This Component\(^2\) is a ‘found’ Improvisation Rite, much like the passage from Confucius’ *Analects* that Cardew used in *Nature Study Notes* (CCC131).\(^3\) As an inspirational text, this Component gives the careful reader a summation of the Paragraph as a rite created in sections; it also proposes a manner of proceeding in the rite which suggests the power of performance to elicit emotion in the listener, a celebration of affect and a call to response. This chapter is a summation of the traits of British experimental music as a separate art-music culture. It ends with a suggestion of ways in which provision for British experimental music is lacking and how experimental music can enhance the current arts scene.

The near-unanimous experimental distaste for Brahms as opposed to near-unanimous control-group approval, as is shown in Chapter 12, is one feature of the gulf between the British experimentalists and the ‘approved culture’, or mainstream, and the coherence of aesthetic judgement within British experimentalism. Brahms is a pillar of the ‘canon’ of Western art music tradition. By rejecting the value normally placed upon his works and setting up another pantheon of influences – a ‘background’\(^4\) – these composers do not have the justification of the

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2 An extract from this component precedes Part III. See p. 183.


tradition that the approved culture values. Even during the revolution of the post-war serialism, this link to tradition among the mainstream avant garde was still strong, a part of the Hegelian dialectic in which assumptions ‘are wedded to Western “classical” tradition’. Jonathan Kramer saw this dialectic to be a relationship of an Oedipal kind: ‘they are in conflict with their antecedents, whom they reinterpret in order to possess, shape, and control their legacy’. As discussed in Chapter 2, the link to tradition often assumes the evolutionary improvement inherent in social Darwinism. This has led to an emphasis on increased structural or note-to-note complexity, especially in movements such as post-war serialism and the New Complexity. However, it is their link to tradition which is important to the approved culture, especially in terms of ‘institutional support, “official” recognition, and financial reward’.

The experimentalists share some of the ‘adolescent’ traits that Kramer finds in the music of postmodernists, who ‘can happily acknowledge the past, without having to demonstrate superiority to it’. Chapter 3 shows that experimentalists prefer what John Cage called an historical ‘field situation’ of influence to Meyer’s ‘fluctuating stasis’ of reaction. Without a social Darwinist model for history, they have been able to select their influences regardless of chronology or relative importance to the Western ‘canon’. Where experimentalists react, it is

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8 Kramer, ‘Nature’.

9 John Cage, in Michael Nyman, Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond, p. 27.

often against their contemporaries. Kramer mentioned that postmodernists often resent modernists, but this was true of the relations between experimentalists and the avant garde. First-generation British experimentalists felt this keenly: for instance Cardew’s description of compositional technique of the ‘approved’ culture as ‘an infection that I am perpetually desirous of curing’.  

Such a non-linear, non-hierarchical historical construct does not preclude the use of reference, pastiche and/or parody, which is quite rich and multi-layered.  Much of the reference is non-musical: for instance the text-based Improvisation Rites of the Scratch Orchestra (as was shown in Chapter 7) and Cardew’s use of Chinese philosophy and language in The Great Learning (as detailed in Chapter 9). The percussion and other systems of the duos of Hobbs-White and Parsons and Skempton take much of their theory from the British systems art movement. Gavin Bryars’ works contain embedded references, often literary or philosophical, for the diligent scholar to winkle out through analysis, as many of them are not discernable in real-time performance. Smith, White, and Hobbs refer to the alternative ‘canon’ of the ‘also-rans’ of nineteenth-century piano music. In White’s case, this jokey communication between source, composer, and performer is similar to that found in Satie.

Size and genre does not indicate worth, either: the experimental composers prefer a kind of Gebrauchsmusik, rather than ‘writing a cosmological symphony to be performed by some mythical orchestra some time in the future and some famous conductor’ if the situation is not available. The use of text composition allowed visual artists, writers,

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12 Sometimes literally layered, as in Nyman’s pop/Purcell and Mozart hybrids.

13 John White, Interview, March 1983.
and locust technicians to compose and perform in the Scratch Orchestra. This accounted for the rather high number of women members in the Orchestra. This outreach to the other arts continued even when the composers themselves had stopped using text-based composition: Hobbs and White have used text composition in work with actors, as have Bryars, Nyman, and Parsons in art schools, and Tilbury and Smith with Contemporary Music-Making for Amateurs (COMA).

A serious, contemplative piece is not more important in experimental music than one that could be considered occasional, or light. Many well-regarded experimental pieces are humorous, often delightfully silly. These composers also reject the primacy of the composer. The most radical feature of Cardew’s *Treatise*, itself a monumental work, is its lack of instructions. This releases the performer from the obligation to follow the composer’s intent, while placing normally ‘compositional’ responsibility on to the performer. Those composers who seem particularly attached to dominant control can become targets. John Tilbury ‘took the piss’, quite literally, out of Stockhausen’s instructions in *Plus-Minus*, by employing a tape of an elephant urinating. White pilloried the seriousness of Stockhausen’s pioneering work *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1956) with a parody, *Gesang der Dingalinge* (1986). Lightness of content never gave performers an excuse to be sloppy. Most Scratch Orchestra members observed or broke the ‘rules’ for conduct and activities in the Draft Constitution, but they never ignored them.

Experimentalists do not emphasise structural complexity or the dominance of theory over idea. They thus retain a certain consistency of personal style even where the actual construction and resultant sound may be extremely different. As Emerson wrote, ‘always the thought is

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14 A good example is John White’s *Poor Fart Harmony*, a whoopee-cushion of farts and giggles arranged according to strict contrapuntal rules.
prior to the fact'. This emphasis on idea rather than compositional theory puzzled Richard Middleton, who wondered ‘why the makers of experimental music…write such a vast amount about it’. Middleton was worried by the content of the writing and did not seem to understand its nature. He saw the movement itself to be ‘a rather amateurish branch of philosophy and comparative religion’. Middleton could not escape the bounds of his theoretical constructs to appreciate those of experimental music. As Joseph Kerman noted, ‘the true milieu of analysis is not science but ideology’.

This ideology was immoveable for Lewis Foreman, who found ‘a wasteland of indiscipline’ in ‘Cornelius Cardew and his “school”’. Paul Griffiths found Cardew’s Marxism objectionable; he argued with Michael Parsons in The Musical Times about whether there was class envy and satirised Cardew’s ‘big switch’ (as Keith Potter called it) in his subchapter entitled ‘The Passion of Cornelius Cardew’. Griffiths dislikes the entire movement: he compared the Scratch Orchestra to ‘a revolutionary cadre’, and he abhorred the engaging tonality of John White’s music so much that he attacked White’s name. Stanley Sadie resisted modernism in general; he was bored by Kagel and Ligeti as well as Cardew. Andrew Clements could not adjust to the aesthetic; he


described Cardew’s works as ‘in a time-warp’ and thought his career ‘strangely diverse’.\footnote{Andrew Clements, ‘Marx and the Modern Composer’, \textit{The Guardian}, 3 January 2002.}

The modelling of what constitutes ‘experimental music’ differs so much as to render the term almost meaningless, as there have been several attempts to co-opt it to include composers, movements and aesthetics antithetical to the experimental music of Cage and Cardew. For instance, Leigh Landy listed disparate composers as experimental (only a few of whom were experimentalists) by devising a new definition for the term ‘experimental’. Christopher Fox also described himself as ‘experimental’ while ignoring experimental music in the scope of \textit{Contact} in its last few issues. Richard Barrett, in writing about the political music of Cardew and Dave Smith,\footnote{New Music, Aesthetics and Ideology/\textit{Neue Musik, Asthetik und Ideologie} (Wilhelmshaven, Germany: Noetzel, 1995), pp. 170-181.} deplored the fact that Bryars, Skempton, White and others had been ignored by Griffiths in his book, \textit{New Sounds, New Personalities},\footnote{Paul Griffiths, \textit{New Sounds, New Personalities: British Composers of the 1980s in Conversation with Paul Griffiths} (London: Faber Music, Ltd., 1985).} for ‘the homogeneously turgid but acceptable face of contemporary composition’\footnote{Barrett, ‘Avant-Garde and Ideology in the United Kingdom since Cardew’, in \textit{New Music, Aesthetics and Ideology}, p. 174.} of the other composers in the book. However, rather than write about experimentalists, Barrett chose to list Mark Anthony Turnage, Steve Martland, George Benjamin, Barrett himself, Judith Weir, Fox, James Dillon, and Chris Dench, arguably equally homogeneous and ‘acceptable’ faces, as important composers of the 1980s. These new definitions are allied to the aesthetics and note-to-note procedure of the ‘approved’ culture and overshadow the aesthetic distinctiveness of experimentalism.

Other views from outside the immediate experimental circle show an awareness of features of the aesthetic principles of British and
American experimental music. George Lewis posited a model in which Charlie Parker and John Cage are pioneers in two forms of experimental music, both involving the exploitation of non-notated music and both distinct from establishment art music. For ‘classical’ experimentalism and experimental improvisation, this formulation works well, as it allies two complementary aesthetic and formal systems. In Britain, the London Musicians’ Collective, an umbrella organisation for free improvisation, has hosted several experimental ventures in the last twenty years, both in its now-defunct performing space and its present Internet radio station, Resonance FM. The formulation, however, does not shelter all of the diverse British experimental styles, especially the eclectic styles favoured by the ‘Leicester school’.26

J. Peter Burkholder also provided a social reason for distinguishing experimental music from that of ‘the museum’ of art music,27 but his experimentalism, or ‘research music’, is a rather diffuse mixture of post-war serialism and other avant-garde music. Perhaps Kramer’s sixteen-point ‘checklist’ of postmodernist traits, mentioned in Chapter 3 could also define experimental music as treated in this thesis. His comment that postmodernism is an ‘attitude’28 certainly comes closest to a central point of this thesis, that the determining factors of British experimentalism (and American experimentalism in general) lie in its values – loosely, its aesthetics – and that much of criticism made by outsiders is based upon the incompatibility of the aesthetics of the experimental movement and the avant garde.

Arts bodies in Britain have not cultivated experimental music, as it is seen as a minority interest within mainstream modernism. Those who

26 Nor does it shelter the West Coast experimental movement of people such as the Cold Blue composers and Harold Budd, who work in nearby Los Angeles.


28 Kramer, ‘Nature’.
are charged with such assessment for music – for instance, the Arts Council and its related bodies – often have more knowledge of the avant garde and award funds accordingly. Despite the fact that COMA often uses experimental music and hires experimentalists for its summer school, no commissioned work in 2004 was written by an experimentalist and the committee charged with overseeing its composition contest that year consisted entirely of avant-garde composers.\footnote{Commissions were given to Diana Burrell, Richard Barrett, Jonathan Harvey, Alwynne Pritchard, Ed Bennett, Diamond Luke Barlow, Gabriel Jackson and Michael Finnissy. The committee included Diana Burrell, Stephen Montague and Phil Cashian.} Often experimental music gains funding only when it is an accompaniment to the other arts (music for film, drama and dance, music in art installations) or when funded by popular musicians. There is little current provision for experimental music education in music departments in Britain, as no experimental composer has worked full time in a university music programme since the mid-1990s. De Montfort University changed its programme to music technology (under pressure from the university) after Gavin Bryars retired and Royal Holloway College has had no experimental music provision since the death of Brian Dennis. In fact, provision for study of American experimentalism is greater in this country. The British Information Centre discontinued concerts at its centre in London, which hosted many important experimental premieres in the 1970s to 1990s; instead, they promote the Cutting Edge concert series, which has yet to include experimental music. The BBC similarly has limited its modern music provision mostly to the ‘approved’ avant garde and broadcasts of experimental music are almost non-existent.\footnote{The BBC put on a mini-festival of Cage’s music at the Barbican in January 2004, which had wildly successful attendance. They chose, however, to programme the weekend without consulting British experimentalists. Gavin Bryars and John Tilbury were added to the events very late in planning; a concert of Cage’s influences included Copland’s \textit{El Salon Mexico} and almost no Cage. The BBC expert commentator was Tom Service, no friend of experimental music; Nicolas Hodges, better known for the music of Darmstadt composers, played a concert of Morton Feldman and Christian Wolff instead of Tilbury, who had worked with both. This concert, with the lost opportunities it represents, demonstrates the need to understand experimental culture.}
If the current system worked, one could argue that ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’. However, avant-garde concerts, despite funding for outreach and promotion, are often as badly attended as experimental concerts without funding. Charlotte Higgins wrote:

[W]hile it is fine to accept the position that new music can be a minority interest, which ought not be judged according to popularity, it by no means follows that we should be satisfied with that. You would think that anyone who cared about this stuff would wish as many people as possible to enjoy it, yet at its worst the contemporary music world can be complacent, defeatist and act like a club that positively excludes outsiders. You’d swear some people actually enjoyed the fact that new music was unpopular.31

The American experimental series at the Barbican in the late 1990s, including Cage, Young, and Partch, was successful. A concert series of British experimental music, if similarly supported and advertised, might bring in audiences which the avant garde cannot reach. Certainly, it could not do much worse.

J. Peter Burkholder found that Western art music became a ‘museum culture’ in contrast to the eighteenth century, when ‘the concert audience... included both connoisseurs and those less knowledgeable, and all elements of the audience could find pleasure in a single work of art’.32 He cites Mozart, who wrote in 1782 that his new concertos were:

a happy medium between what is too easy and too difficult.... There are passages here and there from which connoisseurs alone can derive satisfaction; but these passages are written in such a way that the less learned cannot fail to be pleased, without knowing why.33

British experimental music has much in common with Mozart’s aims in this letter. It is almost always multi-layered, available to the casual


listener and the scholar. Even when the sound world is ‘difficult’, it is often available to the amateur, non-reading performer. If anything, it is this combination of reference, technique, and affect – of ‘system and sentimentality’, as White called it – which links the styles of British experimental music and makes it, at the same time, older and more modern than the establishment avant garde.
But I really think there are holes in the sky that open into the other world, & comes out like a moon sometimes. There are holes in certain places in the sky. You may be able to see certain countries of heaven through the holes. That's what you think Planets. No live world this side of the sky. If I was near you I think I could teach you different things.

Mrs. Alice May Williams,
letter to the Observers at Mt. Wilson, n.d.

Appendix 1: Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

While addresses, where known, have been removed from SO address lists for this appendix for privacy, post codes have been retained to show demographics.

*biography in Appendix 2

Performance at the Roundhouse, May 1969 (pre-Scratch Orchestra)

David Ahern*
Ruth Anderson
Hilary Audus*
Polly Barlow
Angela Bigley
Greg Bright (throughout)*
Barbara Brunsdon*
Gavin Bryars*
Cornelius Cardew (throughout)*
Michael Chant (throughout)*
Allan Cutts
Philip Dadson*
Hugh Davies*
Chris Dorsett
Linda Dyos*
Carole Finer (throughout)*
Lou Gare (to 15 September 1971)*
Errol Girdlestone*
Diana Gravill*
Clem [Claire?] Greenford (to 11 January 1971?)
Douglas Griffiths
Bob Guy (to first half, 1971)
Ann Hasted
Paul Hedley
Alex [sic, Alec] Hill (throughout)*
Christopher Hobbs (1 November 1971)*
Wendy Hoile
Interaction
Bevan Jones (to first half, 1971)*
Peter Jordan
Bernard (throughout) and Atheline Kelly
Letha
Margery [Wardle?] (to first half, 1971)
Ulli McCarthy (to 11 January 1971)
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership  328

Diana Miller
Tim Mitchell (throughout)
Katy Munn
Mary Monson
John R. Nash (throughout)
Maggie Nichols [sic. Nicols]*
Michael Parsons (throughout)*
Jill and Tom Phillips (throughout)*
Eddie Prévost (to 15 Sept. 1971; March 1972-end)*
Janet (to 11 January 1971) and Keith (this concert only) Robertson
Keith (throughout) and Krystyna (to 11 January 1971) Rowe*
Derek A G Shiel
Howard Skempton (throughout)*
David Sladen (throughout)*
Tim Souster*
John Tilbury (throughout)*

Address list to 15 June 1970:

David Briers, SW11 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)*
Andy Arthurs, Stonehouse, Glos. (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)*
Deryk Barker, Marlow, Bucks. (throughout)*
Laurie Barker [sic. Baker], W14 (to 1st half, 1971; December 1972 to end)*
Alan Brett, Southhall, Middx. (throughout)*
Greg Bright, NW8 (throughout)*
Bob Brown, NW8 (to 11 January 1971)
Birgit Burckhardt, N19 (throughout)
Dave Brooks, W14 (to 11 January 1971)
Claire Campbell, N1 (to 15 September 1971)
Cornelius Cardew (throughout)*
Michael Chant, W5 (throughout)*
Graham Crowley, WC2 (to 11 January 1971)
Michael Christopher, W9 (to 11 January 1971)
Roger Duke, Surbiton, Surrey (to 11 January 1971)
David Dixon, SE19 (to 1st half, 1971)
Trevor Denham, SE6 (to 11 January 1971)
Psi Ellison* & Judith Euren,* NW6 (throughout)
Belinda Ellis, W8 (to 11 January 1971)
Margaret Ferguson, NW3 (to 11 January 1971)
Carole Finer (throughout)*, SW6
Roger Fraser-Ackling, Isle of Wight (to 1st half, 1971)*
Ed Fulton, Teddington, Mddx. (throughout)*
Dave Godly, Pinner, Mddx (to 11 January 1971)
Bob Guy, Thames Ditton, Surrey (to first half, 1971)
Diana Gravill, NW1 (to 1st half, 1971)*
Lou Gare, W4 (to 15 September 1971)*
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

Claire Greenford & John Gosling, Surbiton, Surrey (to 11 January 1971)
Dave Gregory, South Croydon, Surrey (to 1st half, 1971)
Phil Gebbett, Sidcup, Kent (throughout)*
Fran Green* & Mike Harper,* SE9 (to 15 September 1971)
Christopher Hobbs, NW6 (1 November 1971)*
Bryn Harris, Bracknell, Berks. (throughout)*
Peter Holmes, SW5 (to 11 January 1971)
Jane Hare, SW19 (to 15 September 1971)
Russell Hall, NW1 (to 11 January 1971)
Alec Hill, NW3 (throughout)*
David & Diane Jackman, N19 (throughout)*
Paul Irvine, New Maldon, Surrey (to 11 January 1971)
Peter Klein, NW3 (to 1st half, 1971)
Bernard Kelly, NW3 (throughout)
Sheila Kasabova, NW1 (to 1st half, 1971)*
Tim Mitchell, SW9 (throughout)
Robin Mortimore, Portsmouth College of Art, Portsmouth (to 15 September 1971)*
Bill Mitchell, SE6 (to 1st half, 1971)
Carol Mann, W1 (+ Lillian Mann)
Mary Monson, N13 (to 1st half, 1971)
David Methuen, SW10 (to 1st half, 1971)
Pat Morris, Rickmansworth, Herts (to 15 September 1971)*
Chris May, W11 (throughout)*
Ulli McCarthy, N5 (to 11 January 1971)
Tamara McGregor, N10 (to 11 January 1971)
John Nicholson, N6 (to 11 January 1971)
John Nash, N5 (throughout)
Maggie Nichols [sic, Nicols], W1 [to 11 January 1971]*
Michael Nyman, NW3 (throughout)*
Patti Palmer, NW11 (to 11 January 1971)
Michael Parsons, NW8 (throughout)*
Tom & Jill Phillips, SE5 (throughout)*
Eddie Prévost, Matching Tye, Essex (to 15 Sept. 1971; March 1972-end)*
Richard Reason, SW12 (member throughout)*
Chris Robbins, NW2 (member throughout)
Carolyn Rogers, SW5 (throughout)
Keith (throughout)* & Krys (to 11 January 1971)* Rowe, Philip Courtenay (to 11 January 1971), Nancy Canright (to 11 January 1971), Pam Steele (to 15 September 1971) & Alan Sharples (to 15 September 1971), SW11
Francis Reagan (throughout)
Kevin Richards, W6 (to 15 September 1971)
Mafalda Reis, N6 (to 1st half, 1971)
Janet Robertson, SW8 (to 11 January 1971)
Diana Shepley, W2 (to 11 January 1971)
Daphne Simmons, Kingston, Surrey (to 1st half, 1971)
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

J. Smith, N20 (to 1st half, 1971)
Stefan Szczelkun, Shepperton, Mddx. (throughout)*
Barbara Schwartz, W14 (to 11 January 1971)
Eva Skalla & Peter Sutherland, W10 (throughout)
Howard Skempton, W3 (throughout)*
Mike Smith, N8 (to 11 January 1971)
Colin Stiff, N6 (throughout)
Roger Sutherland, N10 (throughout)*
Henry Shaftoe, NW6 (to 15 September 1971)
Hugh Shrapnel, SE3 (throughout)*
Victor Schonfield, W11 (to 1st half 1971; 15 September 1971 to end)*
John Tilbury, SE27 (throughout)*
Colin Wood, Colchester, Essex (throughout)
Margery Wardle, NW8 (to 1st half, 1971)
John White, SW19 (throughout)*
Nesta Walters, W9 (to 11 January 1971)
Penny Wood, E2 (to 11 January 1971)
Catherine Williams, W1 (throughout)
Peter Warrick, Barnehurst, Kent (throughout)
Ilona ['Halbe’ crossed out] Phombeah, W9 (throughout)*

Total: 101
Men/Women (unsure): 66/33/2
Experimental Art-Music Trained: 16
Jazz/Improvisation: 5/6?
Other (Avant-Garde) 2
(Pop) 3
Visual Arts: 15
Other (publishing, recording, computers, non-arts): 5
Not Known: 59

Extra numbers indicate people with dual activities

Address Supplement, 10 September 1970:

Richard Ascough, Southall, Mddx (10 September 1970 to end)*
Wendy Darling, Orpington, Kent (10 September 1970 to March 1972)
Psi Ellison & Judith Euren [change of address], SW3 (throughout)*
Bevan Jones, Bristol (in Roundhouse concert; 10 September 1970 to end)*
John Plant, E6 (10 September 1970 to 1st half, 1971)
Frank Reagan, Ravensborne College of Art, Bromley, Kent (10 September 1970 to end)
Richard Reason [change of address], SW11
Penny Renner, SE15 (10 September 1970 to end)
Jenny Robbins, E1 (10 September 1970 to end)
Madeline Russell, Hatfield, Herts. (10 September 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

David Sladen, N1 (Roundhouse perf.; 10 September 1970 to end)*
Trevor Wishart, Heslington, York (to 15 September 1971)*

Total: 10
New Members: 10
Men/Women (unsure): 6/4
Experimental Art-Music Trained: 2
Jazz/Improvisation: 0
Other (Avant-Garde) 2
(Var) 0
Visual Arts: 1
Other (publishing, recording, computers, non-arts): 1
Not Known: 6

Extra numbers indicate people with dual activities
Does not include activities of those in change of address for this supplement only

Address list 11 January 1971

o=out of town member; p=passive member

Andy Allen, NW1 (11 January 1971 to end)
Andy Arthurs (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)*o
Richard Ascough (10 September 1970 to end)*
Laurie Baker, W14 [proper spelling] (to 1st half, 1971; December 1972 to end)*p
Lawrence Ball, SE23 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Deryk Barker, [change of address], NW2 (throughout)*
Allan Brett [variant spelling], Southall, Mddx. (throughout)*
David Briers, SW11 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)*p
Greg Bright, NW8 (throughout)*
Birgit Burckhardt, N19 (throughout)
Claire Campbell, N1 (11 January 1971 to 15 September 1971)p
Cornelius (throughout)* & Stella (11 January 1971 to end)* Cardew, SW13
Michael Chant, W5 (throughout)*
A. Claxton, Pinner, Mddx. (11 January 1971 to 1st half, 1971)
David Cobb, Bath, Somerset (11 January 1971 to 1st half, 1971)*o
Chris Dench, SW18 (11 January 1971 to 1st half, 1971)*
Brian Dennis, W5 (11 January 1971 to end)*
David Dixon, SE19 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)p
Rod Eley, SE4 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Psi Ellison can be contacted via Judith Euren (throughout)*
Judith Euren [change of address], SW13 [with Cardews] (throughout)*
Carol [sic. Carole] Finer (throughout)*
Roger Ackling [formerly Fraser-Ackling] (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)*o
Ed Fulton, Teddington, Mddx. (throughout)*
Lou Gare, W4 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)*
Phil Gebbett, Sidcup, Kent (throughout)*
Diana Gravill, NW1 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)*p
Fran Green* & Mike Harper,* SE9 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Dave Gregory, South Croydon, Surrey (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)
Bob Guy, Thames Ditton, Surrey (15 June 1970 to first half, 1971)
Jane Hare, SW19 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Bryn Harris, W11 [change of address] (throughout)*
Alec Hill, NW3 (throughout)*
Chris [formerly Christopher] Hobbs [change of address], SW11 (15 June 1970 to 1 November 1971)*
David & Diane Jackman, N19 (throughout)*
Bevan Jones, Bristol (in Roundhouse concert; 10 September 1970 to end)o*
Bernard Kelly, NW3 (throughout)
Peter Klein, NW3 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)
Carol and Lillian Mann, W1 (15 June 1970 to end)
Chris May, W11 (throughout)*
Andy McKay, N19 (11 January 1971 to 1st half, 1971)
David Methuen, SW10 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)p
Tim Mitchell [change of address], SW4 (throughout)
Bill Mitchell, SE6 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)p
Mary Monson, N13 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)p
Pat Morris, Rickmansworth, Herts (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)*
Robin Mortimore, Portsmouth College of Art, Portsmouth (to 15 September 1971)*o
John Nash, N5 (throughout)
Michael Nyman, NW3 (throughout)*
Michael Parsons, NW8 (throughout)*
Tom & Jill Phillips, SE5 (throughout)*
Ilona Phombeah, W9 (throughout)*
David Pinder, WC1 (11 January 1970 to 1st half, 1971)
John Plant, E6 (10 September 1970 to 1st half, 1971)
Eddie Prévost, Matching Tye, Essex (15 June 1970 to 15 Sept. 1971; March 1972-end)*
Frank Regan [from Francis: same as Frank Reagan] SW19 (10 September 1970 to end)
Richard Reason, SW12 (member throughout)*p
Mafalda Reis, no address (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)
Penny Renner, SE15 (10 September 1970 to end)
Kevin Richards, W6 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Chris Robbins [change of address], same as Jenny Robbins (throughout)
Jenny Robbins, E1 (10 September 1970 to end)
Carolyn Rogers [change of address], via Colin Stiff (throughout)
Keith Rowe, SW11 (throughout)
Pam Steele, with Rowe (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

Alan Sharples with Rowe (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Madeline Russell, Hatfield, Herts. (10 September 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Victor Schonfield, W11 (to 1st half 1971; 15 September 1971 to end)*p
Henry Shaftoe, NW3 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Hugh Shrapnel, SW3 (throughout)*
Daphne Simmons, Kingston, Surrey (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)
Eva Skalla & Peter Sutherland, W10 (throughout)
Howard Skempton, W3 (throughout)*
David Sladen, N1 (Roundhouse perf.; 10 September 1970 to end)*p
J. Smith, N20 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)
R. Smith, Loughton, Essex (11 January 1971 to 1st half, 1971)
G.D. E. Soar, University Coll. Library, Accessions dep., Gower St. (11 January 1971 to 1st half, 1971)p
Colin (throughout) & Mary Stiff, N6 (11 January 1971 to end)
Roger Sutherland [change of address], NW3 (throughout)*
Stefan Szczelkun, Shepperton, Mddx. (throughout)*
John Tilbury, SE27 (throughout)*
Margery Wardle, NW6 (15 June 1970 to 1st half, 1971)p
Peter Warrick, Barnehurst, Kent (throughout)
John White, SW19 (throughout)*p
Caroline Wieners, SW13 (11 January 1971 to 1st half, 1971)
Helen Wilks, Dept. of Art, Reading University (11 January 1971 to 15 September 1971)
Trevor Wishart, Heslington, York (to 15 September 1971)*o
Colin Wood [change of address], N1 (throughout)

Total: 94
New Members: 15
Members Lost: 24
Out-of-town/Passive: 7/13
Men/Women (unsure): 66/26/(2)
Experimental Art-Music Trained: 20
Jazz/Improvisation: 4
Other (Avant-Garde): 4
(Pop): 0
Visual Arts: 15
Other (publishing, recording, computers, non-arts): 10
Not Known: 45
Out-of-town and passive designations for this list only

Scratch Orchestra calendar 1st half, 1971:

Andy Allen, NW1 (11 January 1971 to end)
Richard Ascough (10 September 1970 to end)*
Lawrence Ball, SE23 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Deryk Barker, [change of address], NW2 (throughout)*
Alan Brett [variant spelling], Southall, Mddx. (throughout)*
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

Greg Bright, NW8 (throughout)*
Birgit Burkhardt [variant spelling], N19 (throughout)
Clare Campbell [variant spelling] (11 January 1971 to 15 September 1971)
Cornelius (throughout)* & Stella (11 January 1971 to end)* Cardew, SW13
Michael Chant, W5 (throughout)*
Brian Dennis, W5 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Roderick [variant] Eley, SE3 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Psi Ellison and Judith Euren [change of address], Twickenham, Mddx. (throughout)*
D. C. Fawcett, Barnet, Herts. (1st half, 1971 to 15 September 1971)
Jane Few, Potters Bar, Herts. (1st half 1971 to 15 September 1971)
Carole Finer SW6 (throughout)*
Ed Fulton, Teddington, Mddx. (throughout)*
Lou Gare, W4 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)*
Phil Gebbett, Sidcup, Kent (throughout)*
Fran Green* & Mike Harper,* SE9 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Jane Hare, SW 9 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Bryn Harris [change of address], W11 (throughout)*
Alec Hill, NW3 (throughout)*
Christopher Hobbs [change of address], SW13 (15 June 1970 to 1 November 1971)*
David & Diane Jackman, N19 (throughout)*
Bernard Kelly, NW3 (throughout)
Edward Locke, Isleworth, Mddx. (1st half, 1971 to end)
Carol and Lillian Mann, W1 (15 June 1970 to end)
Chris May, W11 (throughout)*
Tim Mitchell, SW4 (throughout)
Pat Morris, Rickmansworth, Herts (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)*
Robin Mortimore, Portsmouth College of Art, Portsmouth (to 15 September 1971)*
John Nash, N5 (throughout)
Michael Nyman, NW3 (throughout)*
Michael Parsons, NW8 (throughout)*
Tom & Jill Phillips, SE5 (throughout)*
Ilona Phombeah, W9 (throughout)*
Eddie Prevost, Matching Tye, Essex (15 June 1970 to 15 Sept. 1971; March 1972-end)*
Frank Reagan (10 September 1970 to end) & Roger Waite (1st half 1971 to 15 September 1971), SW19
Richard Reason, SW12 (member throughout)*p
Kevin Richards, W6 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Chris Robbins [change of address], same as Jenny Robbins (throughout)
Jenny Robbins, E1 (10 September 1970 to end)
Philip Roberts W2 (1st half 1971 to 15 September 1971)
Carolyn Rogers [change of address], N4 (throughout)
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

Keith Rowe [-Pam Steele, Alan Sharples; change of address], SE21 (throughout)*
Madeline Russell, Hatfield, Herts. (10 September 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Henry Shaftoe, NW3 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Hugh Shrapnel [change of address: name of his piece Oakley St.], Oakley St., SW3 (throughout)*
Eva Skalla & Peter Sutherland, W10 (throughout)
Howard Skempton, W3 (throughout)*
David Sladen, N1 (Roundhouse perf.; 10 September 1970 to end)*
Susan Slesinger, NW6 (1st half 1971 to end)
Pam Steele & Alan Sharples, SW11 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971)
Colin (throughout) & Mary Stiff, N6 (11 January 1971 to end)
Sunday Dinner Enterprises (Penny Renner (10 September 1970 to end) and Mike Kemp (1st half 1971 to end); change of Renner address), Saffron Walden, Essex
Roger Sutherland [change of address], N19 (throughout)*
Stefan Szczelkun, Shepperton, Mddx. (throughout)*
Raha Tavallali, Barnet (1st half 1971 to end)
John Tilbury, SE27 (throughout)*
Peter Warrick, Barnehurst, Kent (throughout)
John White, SW19 (throughout)*
Helen Wilks, Dept. of Art. Reading University (11 January 1971 to 15 September 1971)
Trevor Wishart, Heslington, York (to 15 September 1971)*
Colin Wood, N1 (throughout)
Catherine Williams [change of address], NW1 (throughout)

Total: 77
New Members: 7
Members Lost: 24
Men/Women (unsure): 52/23/2
Experimental Art-Music Trained: 18
Jazz/Improvisation: 4
Other (Avant-Garde): 3
(Pop): 0
Visual Arts: 11
Other (publishing, recording, computers, non-arts): 5
Not Known: 36

Scratch Orchestra list, 15 September 1971:

Frank Abbott, WC1 (15 September 1971 to end)
Andy Allen, NW1 (11 January 1971 to end)
Tony (15 September 1971 to end)* & Dorothy (15 September 1971 to March 1972) Attwood, Edgeware, Mddx.
Richard Ascough (10 September 1970 to end)*
Lawrence Ball, SE23 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

John Bangs, New Malden, Surrey (15 September 1971 to December 1972)
Deryk Barker, [no address], NW2 (throughout)*
Bill Barnet, N1 (15 September 1971 to March 1972)
Alan Brett, Southall, Mddx. (throughout)*
Greg Bright, Shepton Mallet, Somerset (throughout)*
Birgit Burckhardt, N19 (throughout)
Cornelius (throughout)* & Stella (11 January 1971 to end)* Cardew, SW13
Michael Chant, W5 (throughout)*
Wendy Darling, Manningtree, Essex (15 September 1971 to March 1972)
Brian Dennis, W5 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Christel Dirtheuer, München, W. Germany (15 September 1971 to end)
Roderick Eley, SE3 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Psi Ellison, no address [quit at Discontents] (throughout)*
Judith Euren, no address [quit at Discontents] (throughout)*
Carole Finer SW6 (throughout)*
Ed Fulton, Teddington, Mddx. (throughout)*
Phil Gebbett, Sidcup, Kent (throughout)*
Sue Gittens, SE3 (15 September 1971 to end)
Ranulf Glanville, N1 (15 September 1971 to end)
Bryn Harris, W11 (throughout)*
Alec Hill, NW3 (throughout)*
Christopher Hobbs [change of address], SW12 (15 June 1970 to 1 November 1971)*
Ian [no other name], West Ewell, Surrey (15 September 1971 to 1 November 1971)
David & Diane Jackman, N19 (throughout)*
Bernard Kelly, NW3 (throughout)
Bob Kelly, Chester-le-Street, Co, Durham (15 September 1971 to end)
Edward Locke, Isleworth, Mddx. (1st half, 1971 to end)
Carol and Lillian Mann, W1 (15 June 1970 to end)
Chris May, W11 (throughout)*
Tim Mitchell, SW4 (throughout)
John Nash, N5 (throughout)
Michael Nyman, NW3 (throughout)*
Waheed Pall, New Malden, Surrey (15 September 1971 to end)
Michael Parsons, NW8 (throughout)*
Tom & Jill Phillips, SE5 (throughout)*
Ilona Phombeah, W9 (throughout)*
John Pitchford, Dunstable, Beds. (15 September 1971 to end)
Chris Plumridge, SW18 (15 September 1971 to March 1972)
Paschal Preston, W2 (15 September 1971 to end)
Frank Reagan [no address] (15 September 1971 to end)
Richard Reason, Lower Stonden, Beds. (member throughout)*
Chris Robbins (throughout) & Shirley [no other name] (15 September 1971 to end), N5
Jenny Robbins, E1 (10 September 1970 to end)
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

Carolyn Rogers, N4 (throughout)
Ebis Rothermel [no address] (15 September to 1 November 1971)
Keith Rowe, SE21 (throughout)*
Hugh Shrapnel [change of address], N19 (throughout)*
Eva Skalla [listed separately from Peter Sutherland although they still
live at same address], W10 (throughout)
Howard Skempton, W3 (throughout)*
David Sladen, N1 (Roundhouse perf.; 10 September 1970 to end)*
Susan Slesinger [change of address], NW6 (1st half 1971 to end)
Colin (throughout) & Mary Stiff, N6 (11 January 1971 to end)
Alan Sutcliffe, Wokingham, Berks.(15 September 1971 to end)
Peter Sutherland, W10 [see note for Eva Skalla, above] (throughout)
Roger Sutherland, N19 (throughout)*
Stefan Szczelkun, Shepperton, Mddx. (throughout)*
Raha Tavallali, Barnet (1st half 1971 to end)
Brian Taylor, Surbiton, Surrey (15 September 1971 to end)
John Tilbury, SE27 (throughout)*
Stephen Trowell, c/o Nat West Bank, EC3 (15 September 1971 to March
1972)
John Tyrrell, SE19 (15 September 1971 to end)
Roger Waite [no address] (1st half 1971 to 15 September 1971)
Dave Walker, Salford nr. Chipping Norton, Oxon. (15 September 1971 to
end)
Peter Warrick, Barnehurst, Kent (throughout)
John White, SW19 (throughout)*
Colin Wood, N1 (throughout)
Catherine Williams, NW1 (throughout)
Victor Schonfield, W11 (to 1st half 1971; 15 September 1971 to end)
Penny Renner (10 September 1970 to end) and Mike Kemp (1st half 1971
to end) Saffron Walden, Essex
Greg Bright, NW8 [as well as Shepton Mallet address above]
(throughout)*
David Smith, N19 (15 September 1971 to end)*
Lewis Pugh, NW11 (15 September 1971 to end)

Total: 85
New Members: 25
Members Lost: 16
Men/Women (unsure): 61/19/5
Experimental Art-Music Trained: 18
Jazz/Improvisation: 2
Other (Avant-Garde): 2
(Pop): 0
Visual Arts: 13
Other (publishing, recording, computers, non-arts): 6
Not Known: 42
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership 338

**Scratch Orchestra addresses, 1 November 1971:**

[+means that these names will be deleted unless they notified Bryn Harris on 1/1/72]

Frank Abbott, WC1 (15 September 1971 to end)
+Andy Allen, NW1 (11 January 1971 to end)
Richard Ascough, Southall, Mddx. (10 September 1970 to end)*
Tony (15 September 1971 to end)* & Dorothy (15 September 1971 to March 1972) Attwood, Edgeware, Mddx.
Lawrence Ball, SE23 (11 January 1971 to end)*
John Bangs, New Malden, Surrey (15 September 1971 to December 1972)
Deryk Barker [new address], W4 (throughout)*
+Bill Barnet, N1 (15 September 1971 to March 1972)
Alan Brett, Southall, Mddx. (throughout)*
Greg Bright, Shepton Mallet, Somerset (throughout)*
Birgit Burckhardt, N19 (throughout)
Cornelius (throughout)* & Stella (11 January 1971 to end)* Cardew, SW13
+Michael Chant, W5 (throughout)*
+Michael Cunningham, NW3 (to March 1972)
+Wendy Darling, Orpington, Kent (15 September 1971 to March 1972)
Brian Dennis, W5 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Christel Dirtheuer, München, W. Germany (15 September 1971 to end)
Roderick Eley, SE3 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Psi Ellison and Judith Euren, [address change] Oakley St., SW3
  (throughout)*
Carole Finer SW6 (throughout)*
+Ed Fulton, Teddington, Mddx. (throughout)*
+Phil Gebbett, N10 (throughout)*
Sue Gittens, SE3 (15 September 1971 to end)
+Ranulf Glanville, N1 (15 September 1971 to end)
Bryn Harris, W11 (throughout)*
Alec Hill, NW3 (throughout)*
David & Diane Jackman, N19 (throughout)*
+Bernard Kelly, NW3 (throughout)
Linda Kinsman, N1 (1 November 1971 to March 1972)
Edward Locke, Isleworth, Mddx. (1st half, 1971 to end)
Carol and Lillian Mann, W1 (15 June 1970 to end)
Chris May, W11 (throughout)*
Tim Mitchell, SW4 (throughout)
+John Nash, N5 (throughout)
+Michael Nyman, W10 (throughout)*
Waheed Pall, New Malden, Surrey (15 September 1971 to end)
+Michael Parsons, NW8 (throughout)*
+Tom & Jill Phillips, SE5 (throughout)*
+Ilona Phombeah, W9 (throughout)*
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

+John Pitchford, Dunstable, Beds. (15 September 1971 to end)
+Chris Plumridge, SW18 (15 September 1971 to March 1972)
+Paschal Preston, W2 (15 September 1971 to end)
+Lewis Pugh, NW11 (15 September 1971 to end)
+Richard Reason, Lower Stonden, Beds. (member throughout)*
Kevin Richards, W11 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971; 1 November 1971 to end)
Chris (throughout) & Shirlee (15 September 1971 to end) Robbins
[correction of names], N5
Jenny Robbins, E1 (10 September 1970 to end)
Penny Renner (10 September 1970 to end) and Mike Kemp (1\textsuperscript{st} half 1971 to end) Saffron Walden, Essex
Carolyn Rogers, N4 (throughout)
Keith Rowe, SE21 (throughout)*
David Russell, W11 (1 November 1971 to end)
Victor Schonfield, W11 (to 1\textsuperscript{st} half 1971; 15 September 1971 to end)
Hugh Shrapnel, N19 (throughout)*
+Eva Skalla, W10 (throughout)
+Howard Skempton, W13 (throughout)*
+David Sladen, N1 (Roundhouse perf.; 10 September 1970 to end)*
+Susan Slesinger, NW6 (1\textsuperscript{st} half 1971 to end)
+Colin (throughout) & Mary Stiff, N6 (11 January 1971 to end)
+Alan Sutcliffe, Wokingham, Berks.(15 September 1971 to end)
+Peter Sutherland, W10 (throughout)
Roger Sutherland, N19 (throughout)*
Stefan Szczelkun, Shepperton, Mddx. and [new] School of Architecture, Portsmouth College Tech. (throughout)*
+David Smith, N19 (15 September 1971 to end)*
Raha Tavallali, Barnet (1\textsuperscript{st} half 1971 to end)
+Brian Taylor, Surbiton, Surrey (15 September 1971 to end)
John Tilbury [new address], N3 (throughout)*
+Stephen Trowell, c/o Nat West Bank, EC3 (15 September 1971 to March 1972)
+John Tyrrell, SE19 (15 September 1971 to end)
Roger Wright, SE21 (1 November 1971 to end)
+Dave Walker, Salford nr. Chipping Norton, Oxon. (15 September 1971 to end)
+Peter Warrick, Barnehurst, Kent (throughout)
+John White, SW19 (throughout)*
+Colin Wood, N1 (throughout)
Catherine Williams, NW1 (throughout)

Total: 83
New Members: 2
Members Lost: 3
Men/Women (unsure): 59/20/4
Experimental Art-Music Trained: 19
Jazz/Improvisation: 2
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

Other (Avant-Garde): 3
(Pop): 0
Visual Arts: 12
Other (publishing, recording, computers, non-arts): 6
Not Known: 43

Scratch Orchestra addresses, March 1972:

Underlined names indicate Scratch Committee members

Frank Abbott, WC1 (15 September 1971 to end)
Andy Allen, NW1 (11 January 1971 to end)
Richard Ascough, Southall, Mddx. (10 September 1970 to end)*
Tony Attwood [new address] W5 (15 September 1971 to end)*
Lawrence Ball, SE23 (11 January 1971 to end)*
John Bangs, New Malden, Surrey (15 September 1971 to end)
Deryk Barker [new address], N4 (throughout)*
Alan Brett, Southall, Mddx. (throughout)*
Greg Bright, Shepton Mallet, Somerset (also N8) (throughout)*
Birgit Burckhardt, N19 (throughout)
Cornelius (throughout)* & Stella (11 January 1971 to end)* Cardew, SW13
Michael Chant, W5 (throughout)*
Brian Dennis [new address], Addlestone, Surrey (11 January 1971 to end)*
Christel Dirtheuer, München, W. Germany (15 September 1971 to end)
Roderick Eley, SE3 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Psi Ellison and Judith Euren, [address change] Bletsoe, Beds. (throughout)*
Carole Finer SW6 (throughout)*
Ed Fulton [new address], N21 (throughout)*
Phil Gebbett, N10 (throughout)*
Sue Gittins [spelling change], N19 (15 September 1971 to end)
Runulf Glanville, N1 (15 September 1971 to end)
Bryn Harris, W11 (throughout)*
Alec Hill, NW3 (throughout)*
David & Diane Jackman, N19 (throughout)*
Penny Jordan [address – N1 –scratched out] (March 1972 to end)*
Bernard Kelly, NW3 (throughout)
Bob Kelly, Chester-le-Street, Co, Durham (15 September 1971 to end)
John Lewis, N4 (March 1972 to end)*
Edward Locke, Isleworth, Mddx. (1st half, 1971 to end)
Lisa Major, N19 (March 1972 to end)
Carol and Lillian Mann, W1 (15 June 1970 to end)
Chris May, W11 (throughout)*
Tim Mitchell, SW4 (throughout)
John Nash, N5 (throughout)
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

Michael Nyman, W10 (throughout)*
Patricia O'Shea [no address given] (March 1972 to end)
Pete O'Sullivan, N1 (March 1972)
Waheed Pall, New Malden, Surrey (15 September 1971 to end)
Michael Parsons, NW8 (throughout)*
Barbara & Geoff Pearce, E17 (March 1972)
Jill & Tom Phillips [change of order], SE5 (throughout)*
Ilona Phombeah, W9 (throughout)*
John Pitchford, Dunstable, Beds. (15 September 1971 to end)
Paschal Preston, W2 (15 September 1971 to end)
Lewis Pugh, NW11 (15 September 1971 to end)
Eddie Prévost, Matching Tye, Essex (15 June 1970 to 15 Sept. 1971; March 1972-end)*
Richard Reason, Lower Stonden, Beds. (member throughout)*
Frank Regan [spelling change], SE27 (15 September 1971 to end)
Penny Renner (10 September 1970 to end) and Mike Kemp (1st half 1971 to end) Saffron Walden, Essex
Kevin Richards, W11 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971; 1 November 1971 to end)
Chris (throughout) & Shirlee (15 September 1971 to end) Robbins
[correction of names], N5
Jenny Robbins, E1 (10 September 1970 to end)
Carolyn Rogers [address change], N6 (throughout)
Keith Rowe [no address] (throughout)*
David Russell, W11 (1 November 1971 to end)
Victor Schonfield, W11 (to 1st half 1971; 15 September 1971 to end)
Hugh Shrapnel, SE3 (throughout)*
Eva Skalla, W10 (throughout)
Howard Skempton, W13 (throughout)*
David Sladen, N1 (Roundhouse perf.; 10 September 1970 to end)*
Susan Slesinger, NW6 [also Royal Holloway College] (1st half 1971 to end)
David Smith, N19 (15 September 1971 to end)*
Colin (throughout) & Mary Stiff, N6 (11 January 1971 to end)
Alan Sutcliffe, Wokingham, Berks (15 September 1971 to end)
Peter Sutherland, W10 (throughout)
Roger Sutherland, N19 (throughout)*
Stefan Szczelkun, Shepperton, Mddx. and [new] School of Architecture, Portsmouth College Tech. (throughout)*
Mary Shelton, W14 (March 1972)
Raha Tavallali, Barnet (1st half 1971 to end)
Brian Taylor, Surbiton, Surrey (15 September 1971 to end)
John Tilbury [new address], N7 (throughout)*
John Tyrrell, SE19 (15 September 1971 to end)
Roger Wright [new address] SE8 (1 November 1971 to end)
John Wakeman, Crawley, Surrey (March 1972)
Lists of Scratch Orchestra Membership

Dave Walker, Salford nr. Chipping Norton, Oxon. (15 September 1971 to end)
Peter Warrick, Barnehurst, Kent (throughout)
John White, SW19 (throughout)*
Catherine Williams, NW1 (throughout)
Colin Wood [new address], W10 (throughout)
Ian Ward, N1 (March 1972 to end)

Total: 89
New Members: 8
Members Lost: 7

Men/Women (unsure): 62/23/4
Experimental Art-Music Trained: 19
Jazz/Improvisation: 3
Other (Avant-Garde): 3
(Pop): 0
Visual Arts: 12
Other (publishing, recording, computers, non-arts): 6
Not Known: 47

Scratch Orchestra addresses, December 1972:

Underlined names indicate contacts (not underlined in this letter)

Frank Abbott [new address], SW12 (15 September 1971 to end)
Andy Allen, NW1 (11 January 1971 to end)
Richard Ascough, Southall, Mddx. (10 September 1970 to end)*
Tony Atwood W5 (15 September 1971 to end)*
Laurie (to 1st half, 1971; December 1972 to end)* & Bridget [sic. Brigid] Baker, W12
(December 1972)*
Phillip Baker, N13 (December 1972)
Lawrence Ball, SE23 (11 January 1971 to end)*
John Bangs, New Malden, Surrey (15 September 1971 to December 1972)
Deryk Barker [new address], N19 (throughout)*
Nigel Bond, New Malden, Surrey (December 1972)
Alan Brett [new address], W4 (throughout)*
Greg Bright, [new address], NW8 (throughout)*
Birgit Burckhardt, N19 (throughout)
Cornelius (throughout)* & Stella (11 January 1971 to end)* Cardew, SW13
Michael Chant, W5 (throughout)*
Fred Daly, EC1 (December 1972)
Brian Dennis, Addlestone, Surrey (11 January 1971 to end)*
Christel Dirtheuer, München, W. Germany (15 September 1971 to end)
Roderick Eley, SE3 (11 January 1971 to end)*
Stewart Elliott, Cambridge (December 1972)
Psi Ellison and Judith Euren, [address change] via Catherine Williams (throughout)*
Vincent Fiedorowicz, Southall, Mddx. (December 1972)
Carole Finer, SW6 (throughout)*
Ed Fulton, N21 (throughout)*
Phil Gebbett [new address], Sidcup, Mddx. (throughout)*
Sue Gittins [new address], Cambridge (15 September 1971 to end)
Ranulf Glanville, N1 (15 September 1971 to end)
Francis Haines, New Barnet, Herts. (December 1972)
Bryn Harris, W11 (throughout)*
Robin Hartwell, Reading, Berks. (December 1972)
Liz Hay, N14 (December 1972)
Alec Hill [new address], SW12 (throughout)*
Keith Hodgson, N4 (December 1972)
David & Diane Jackman, N19 (throughout)*
Penny Jordan [new address], N4 (March 1972 to end)
Bernard Kelly, NW3 (throughout)
Bob Kelly, Chester-le-Street, Co, Durham (15 September 1971 to end)
John Lewis, N4 (March 1972 to end)
Edward Locke, Isleworth, Mddx. (1st half, 1971 to end)
Maro Lockwood, N1 (December 1972)
Lisa Major, N19 (March 1972 to end)
Carol and Lillian Mann, W1 (15 June 1970 to end)
Aimone Mantero, SW3 (December 1972)
Malcolm Macdonald, SW3 (December 1972)
Chris May [new address], SW5 (throughout)*
Jeff Merrifield, Chelmsford, Essex (December 1972)
Tim (throughout) & Barbara (December 1972) Mitchell, SW4
Philip Murphy, N21 (December 1972)
John Nash, N5 (throughout)
Pam Niblett, N4 (December 1972)
Michael Nyman, W10 (throughout)*
Patricia O'Shea [no address given] (March 1972 to end)
Pete O'Sullivan [new address], N22 (March 1972 to end)
Waheed Pall, New Malden, Surrey (15 September 1971 to end)
Michael Parsons, NW3 (throughout)*
Barbara & Geoff Pearce, E17 (March 1972 to end)
Jill & Tom Phillips, SE5 (throughout)*
Michael Philpot, W1P (December 1972)
Ilona Phombeah, W9 (throughout)*
John Pitchford [new address] Luton, Beds. (15 September 1971 to end)
Anthony Powers. Hitchen, Herts. (December 1972)
Paschal Preston, W2 (15 September 1971 to end)
Lewis Pugh [new address] N8 (15 September 1971 to end)
Eddie Prevost, Matching Tye, Essex (15 June 1970 to 15 Sept. 1971;
March 1972-end)*
Andras Ranka, SW11 (December 1972)
Richard Reason, Lower Stondon, Beds. (member throughout)*
Frank Regan, SE27 (15 September 1971 to end)
Penny Renner (10 September 1970 to end) and Mike Kemp (1st half 1971 to end) Saffron Walden, Essex

Kevin Richards, W11 (15 June 1970 to 15 September 1971; 1 November 1971 to end)

Chris (throughout) & Shirlee (15 September 1971 to end) Robbins, N5

Jenny Robbins, E1 (10 September 1970 to end)

Carolyn Rogers, N6 (throughout)

Keith Rowe [new address], SW19 (throughout)*

Dave [short name] Russell, W11 (1 November 1971 to end)

Victor Schonfield, W11 (to 1st half 1971; 15 September 1971 to end)

Hugh Shrapnel [new address], SW12 (throughout)*

Eva Skalla, W10 (throughout)

Howard Skempton, W13 (throughout)*

David Sladen, N1 (Roundhouse perf.; 10 September 1970 to end)*

Susan Slesinger, NW6 (1st half 1971 to end)

Dave [first use of current preferred name] Smith, N19 (15 September 1971 to end)*

Colin (throughout) & Mary Stiff, N6 (11 January 1971 to end)

Alan Sutcliffe, Wokingham, Berks.(15 September 1971 to end)*

Peter Sutherland, W10 (throughout)

Roger Sutherland, N19 (throughout)*

Stefan Szczelkun, Shepperton, Mddx. (throughout)*

Mary Shelton, W14 (March 1972 to end)

Raha Tavallali, Barnet (1st half 1971 to end)

Brian Taylor [new address] School of Building, Leicester Polytechnic (15 September 1971 to end)

John Tilbury, N7 (throughout)*

John Tyrrell, SE19 (15 September 1971 to end)

Roger Wright [no address] (1 November 1971 to end)

John Wakeman, Crawley, Surrey (March 1972 to end)

Dave Walker, Salford nr. Chipping Norton, Oxon. (15 September 1971 to end)

Ian Ward, N1 (March 1972 to end)

Peter Warrick, Barnehurst, Kent (throughout)

John White, SW19 (throughout)*

Catherine Williams [new address], NW3 (throughout)

Colin Wood [new address], SW20 (throughout)

Michael Wrigley, N4 (December 1972)

Total: 111

New Members: 22
Members Lost: 0

Men/Women (unsure): 77/28/6

Experimental Art-Music Trained: 18

Jazz/Improvisation: 3

Other (Avant-Garde): 3

(Pop): 1

Visual Arts: 13
Other (publishing, recording, computers, non-arts): 8
Not Known: 67

Some Others mentioned in Scratch Documents:

Francis Booth (Scratch Orchestra Presentation #2, Islington Town Hall, 8 November 1969)*
Pauline Maloney (Scratch Orchestra Presentation #3, Chelsea Town Hall, 15 November 1969)*
Victoria Ellis (Scratch Orchestra Presentation #5, Ealing Technical College, 6 December 1969).*
Appendix 2: Scratch Orchestra and Experimental Music Biographies

Birth/death dates given where known.


Andy Arthurs. Recording engineer, composer. Was a member of the Scratch Orchestra from mid-1970-1971. Attended University of Surrey (1970-74), worked at AIR Studios and elsewhere as a recording engineer and sound designer for popular music acts, including ELO, Cat Stevens, Brian Ferry, and Paul McCartney. In 1991, Arthurs moved to Australia, where he is Head of Music at Queensland University of Technology.

Richard Ascough. Member of Scratch Orchestra after the Village Tour in 1970, Ascough had previous training in music. He collected and kept almost every document associated with the Scratch Orchestra and other experimental music events. He works in the trades union movement and writes music.

Tony Attwood. Musician, writer, educationalist. Played in rock bands in the 1960-70s. Was a writer on Blake’s 7 and other science-fiction television shows. Lectured at Dartington College of Arts and wrote educational books based on his experiences, including The Pop Workbook and Music From Scratch, the latter a CSE/GCSE text which uses simple song-writing to generate other forms of music education. Attwood’s web site also offers guidance on divorce, dyscalculia and dyslexia. He currently plays accordion in a band supporting the Rutland Morris Men. <http://www.tonyattwood.co.uk/morris.htm>. Accessed 3 September 2003.

Laurie Baker (1943- ). Bass and synthesizer player, session musician, composer. Born in Australia, with early experience in jazz, Baker wrote graphic and text pieces before he joined the Scratch Orchestra at an early stage and then rejoined in December 1972. He played much in the West End (including the London production of Hair) and wrote music for television. Baker was a core member of People’s Liberation Music throughout its existence. He runs, with his partner Brigid Scott Baker, the MusicNow record company and website <www.musicnow.co.uk>.


Alan Brett. Cellist. Was a member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. By 1987 Brett was no longer interested in Scratch Music (according to a conversation, November 1987 at the Huddersfield Festival); instead Brett has specialised, particularly in the 1980s, in the work of the British avant-garde, performing works by Brian Ferneyhough, Simon Bainbridge, Richard Barrett, and others.

David Briers. Writer, arts administrator, curator. Worked with Cardew as a graphic artist at Aldus Books. Cardew encouraged him to join the Scratch Orchestra and he took part through early 1971. He stopped participating when he moved from London. Currently a postgraduate researcher on the Live Art Archive at Nottingham Trent University, Briers has written papers on Fluxus and on arts administration.

Frances Booth. Member of the early Scratch Orchestra. Organised Presentation #2 at the Islington Town Hall, 8 November 1969 ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection].

Greg Bright. Member throughout the Scratch Orchestra’s existence. Founding member of the anarchic Scratch sub-group the Slippery Merchants. Founder and owner of Latimer New Dimensions Press,
which published *Scratch Music* and *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism.* Bright is best known for his work in the 1970s as a designer of mazes. Designer of the first three-dimensional maze in Britain, at Longleat House (1978).

**Barbara Brunsdon.** Saw an announcement for the 4 May Roundhouse concert either at art college or in Morley College. Went to the concert with a friend and took part. She remembers wandering around singing, and that radios were placed around the room. She never worked in experimental music again. Now Project Manager for CreativePeople, a group of 10 consortia that provide development guidance in the arts and crafts. <www.creativepeople.org.uk> and personal telephone call. Accessed 23 April 2003.

**Gavin Bryars (1943– ).** Taught at Portsmouth Art College (1969-78), where he founded the Portsmouth Sinfonia; at Leicester Polytechnic (1969-94). Originally a jazz bass player (in the early 1960s, he worked in new and free jazz with Tony Oxley and Derek Bailey), he became known in experimental music, first for his ‘private’ text pieces, then for his construction pieces, such as *Sinking the Titanic* and *Jesus’ Blood Never Failed Me Yet*. In the 1980s, Bryars was known for his opera *Medea* and part of Robert Wilson’s *CIVIL warS*. In 1998, the English National Opera premiered *Dr. Ox’s Experiment*, based upon a story by Jules Verne. Along with Michael Nyman, Bryars is perhaps the most successful British experimental composer. <http://www.gavinbryars.com/>. Accessed 23 April 2003.

**Cornelius Cardew (1936-81).** Educated at the Royal Academy of Music, Cardew went to Cologne, Germany in the late 1950s and became Karlheinz Stockhausen’s assistant. There he met John Cage and Christian Wolff. Dissatisfied with his collaboration with Stockhausen on *Carré*, Cardew returned to Britain, where he completed his 193-page graphic score, *Treatise* (1963-67). Work on this piece led to his membership in AMM and the founding of the Scratch Orchestra with Michael Parsons and Howard Skempton (1969-73). Cardew’s work with the Scratch Orchestra coincided with his large-scale multi-movement work *The Great Learning* (1968-71), a compendium of experimental techniques based on the writings of Confucius. Contradictions within the Scratch Orchestra, as well as a new direction in personal and political philosophy led to his adoption of Marxism-Leninism-Mao-Tse-Tung Thought, the aesthetic of which brought a new clarity and tonality to his musical style. At first his works were structurally simple and populist (he was a founder member of People’s Liberation Music, a revolutionary popular music group), but later works for concert showed greater complexity and technical requirements (such as *Thälmann Variations* and *Mountains*). Cardew was a major figure in Marxist-Leninist politics. He was killed by a hit-and-run driver near his home in East London.
Stella Cardew. Member of the Scratch Orchestra from 11 January 1971. Former wife of Cornelius Cardew; visual artist.

Michael Chant (1945- ). Born in Wakefield, North Yorkshire, Chant took a degree in mathematics at Reading University while also gaining a prize in organ-playing in his final year. Chant came to London in 1968, and worked with Cardew until his death in 1981. Chant’s music – even his text-based music – often shows great complexity. He rewrote the organ part of Paragraph 1 of *The Great Learning* for its adapted Marxist performance at the Promenade Concerts in 1972, and has continued to write music, while working as a typesetter and union activist. Chant has been active in the Revolutionary Communist Part of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) since its inception and the Progressive Cultural Association. <www.composer.co.uk/composers/chant.html>. Accessed 23 April 2003.

David Cobb (1942- ). Born in London, Cobb was a student at the Bath College of Art. Tom Phillips taught there, where he exposed his students to American and British experimental music. After leaving college, Cobb joined the Scratch Orchestra (and appears on the address lists from 11 January until the first half of 1971). Professor Cobb currently runs the foundation course at the City of Bath School of Art and Design.

Graham Crowley. Former member of the Scratch Orchestra, Crowley now is professor of painting at the Royal College of Art.


Hugh Davies. Electronic music composer and writer. Davies studied music at Oxford (1961-64), and was assistant to Stockhausen (1964-66). In 1968, he wrote one of the first catalogues of electronic music (Lowell Cross was the other), and from 1967-86, he was director of the Electronic Music Studio at Goldsmiths College, London. He was a member of Gentle Fire and Naked Software in the 1960s and early 1970s; and has worked since in improvisation and electronic instrument building, and has written extensively about electronic music history, including the relevant entries in *NGII*. He is currently a researcher in Sonic Art at Middlesex University. <www.mdx.ac.uk/www/sonic/staff/hugh.html>. Accessed 23 April 2003.

Brian Dennis (1941-98). Composer, writer, educationalist. Studied at the Royal College of Music with Peter Racine Fricker and John White; formed composers’ ensemble with White, Roger Smalley and William York. Attended the Darmstadt Ferienkürse in 1964-5. Joined the faculty at Royal Holloway College in 1971, the same year he both wrote about and joined the Scratch Orchestra. Dennis first noted in a published work the relationship between the construction of Cardew’s *The Great Learning* and the Chinese characters of the original text. Was part of the leadership group steering the Scratch Orchestra after the Discontents. Dennis wrote two books on teaching experimental music in schools and is perhaps best known for his songs and operas, particularly those using text from classical Chinese poetry.

Linda Dyos. Visual arts student who performed at the Roundhouse concert, 4 May 1969. She was interested in connections between the visual arts and music composition, writing her thesis on this subject. She corresponded briefly with Cage and Stockhausen in this regard and won a place at the University of Utrecht to study electronic music. She also attended Hugh Davies’ class in electronic music at Goldsmiths College. Davies introduced her to Cardew and the electronic music pioneer Peter Zinovieff. She became a member of the Scratch Orchestra. Now Manager of Culture, Film and Tourism for Croydon council. <www.croydonfilmcommission.com>. Accessed 23 April 2003.

Rod Eley. ‘The most educated among us’, according to Cornelius Cardew in his introduction to Eley’s ‘A History of the Scratch Orchestra 1969-72’, in *Stockhausen Serves Imperialism*. Currently General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist), Eley has an interest in Irish language and history.

Victoria Ellis. Member of the early Scratch Orchestra. Organiser of Presentation #5 [‘Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], at Ealing Technical College, 6 December 1969.

Psi (now Peter) Ellison. Member of the Scratch Orchestra. Left the Scratch Orchestra in the Discontents meetings, August 1971, but his name was kept on Scratch Orchestra address lists throughout. Currently involved in travellers’ rights. <www.musicnow.co.uk>. 
Judith Euren (now Davies). Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout. Partner of Psi Ellison. Co-Author (with Ellison and Hugh Shrapnel) of one of the Discontents documents. Left with Ellison at Discontents Meetings. Lives with her husband on a farm in mid-Wales.


Ed Fulton. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Member of CPE, a trio made up of Chris May, Phil Gebbett, and Fulton, which played music by Cage, Feldman, and other experimental and new-music composers.

Lou Gare. Saxophonist, improviser, member of AMM. Gare had been a member of the Mike Westbrook Band with Keith Rowe. He also took up an interest in abstract art, getting a place at the Hammersmith school of Art in the 1960s. He was a founding member, with Rowe and Prévost and then Cardew, of AMM. In the late 1970s, Gare moved to Devon, forming the Exeter Free Jazz Duo and, presently, the improvisation group Synchronicity. He has occasionally played with Prévost since the suspension of AMM in the early 1970s. Although he has not rejoined it, he played with AMM in 1992. <http://www.lgare.fsnet.co.uk/webpage2.htm>. Accessed 24 April 2003.

Phil Gebbett. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Member of CPE, an ensemble named for members Chris May, Phil Gebbett, and Ed Fulton, which played American and British experimental music.


Fran Green. Member of the Scratch Orchestra to 1971. Designer of Presentation #6: ‘Perceive the data...etc. for BBC TV’ ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], Acton Town Hall, 1 December 1969.


Bryn Harris. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Harris was one of the best examples of Scratch Orchestra composers who came from outside the traditional art-music background of members such as Hugh Shrapnel and Christopher Hobbs. He was the organiser of Scratch Presentation #11: ‘Roger Smalley Memorial Concert’ ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], St. John’s Church, Smith Square, 24 April 1970. Harris was a founding member of the Slippery Merchants sub-group. Currently Harris is best known for his work in recording, where he has documented Scratch Orchestra and other new music activity in Britain for over twenty years.

Alec Hill. Clarinettist, composer, member of the Scratch Orchestra and the Promenade Theatre Orchestra. Obtained a doctorate in chemistry. Now retired and active in amateur and semi-professional clarinet work.

Christopher Hobbs (1950- ). Pianist and composer, composition student of Cornelius Cardew at the Royal Academy of Music. Hobbs was asked by Lou Gare to join AMM in 1968; he was also the designer of the first Scratch Orchestra concert (Hampstead Town Hall, 1 November 1969. He founded the Experimental Music Catalogue in 1968-9, which published much of the music of the British experimentalists until it was closed in the early 1980s; he re-launched it in 1999. Hobbs was Director of Music at the Drama Centre, London 1980-1991 and taught at De Montfort University from 1981-present. Hobbs continues to compose, sometimes in a systemic style.

Paul Irvine. Member of the early Scratch Orchestra. Designer of Presentation #4 of the Scratch Orchestra: a ‘3-hour concert include. Toccata & Fugue in D minor’ ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from
1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], Ealing Town Hall, 25 November 1969.

**David Jackman.** Member throughout the Orchestra’s existence, although he has stated in interviews that he left when the Orchestra became Maoist (<http://www.qserve.net/~wrr/Organum/text/Gneurosis1.html>; ‘The political aspect of the Scratch Orchestra began only in 1972, when I was no longer there’ <http://www.qserve.net/~wrr/Organum/text/AufAbwegen22.html>). Currently works as performance artist, performer and composer in the indie music scene.

**Diane Jackman.** Wife of David Jackman; member of the Scratch orchestra throughout its existence. Organiser of Presentation #14: ‘Rocks’ ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], St. Pancras Town Hall, 16 April 1970.

**Bevan Jones.** Member of the early Scratch Orchestra. Designer of Presentation #8: ‘Scrapbook for 1960 compiled by Bevan Jones’ ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], New Arts Laboratory, 11 January 1970.


**Sheila Kasabova.** Member of the Scratch Orchestra. Cardew’s partner from the early 1970s until his death. Active member of the Cornelius Cardew Foundation; designed covers for several of Cardew’s works released under its auspices.

**John Lewis.** Member of the Scratch Orchestra from March 1972. Member of a duo with Dave Smith which specialised in minimalist performance. Also worked in pop music. Currently teaching piano in schools.

**Pauline Maloney.** Member of the early Scratch Orchestra. Organised Presentation #3: ‘Journey of the Isle of Wight Westwards, by Iceberg, to Tokyo Bay’ ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], Chelsea Town Hall, 15 November 1969.

**Chris May.** Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout. Member of CPE, a group consisting of Chris May, Phil Gebbett, and Ed Fulton, which performed experimental music. Became a civil servant and is currently interested in playing the gamba.
**Jeff Merrifield.** Member of the Scratch Orchestra in late 1972. Historian specialising in the Cathars.

**Ian Mitchell.** Clarinettist. Mitchell came late to experimental music. He was a contemporary of Shrapnel, Hobbs, Gravill, Thompson, and other students of Cardew’s at the Royal Academy of Music, but he studied with Alan Hacker and worked on pieces of the mainstream avant garde. Was a member of the Michael Nyman Band in the early 1980s and premiered Cardew’s *Mountains* for bass clarinet (which was written for the Dutch bass clarinettist Harry Spaarnay, who never played it). Mitchell has consistently championed experimental music, both through his ensemble Gemini and in solo projects, such as the first solo bass clarinet recording, ‘the edge of the world’, which features music by Cardew, White, Hobbs, Smith, and Childs.

**Robin Mortimore.** Founding member and leader of the Portsmouth Sinfonia (founded by Gavin Bryars at the Portsmouth College of Art in 1970).

**Patrick Morris (1948- ).** Composer, member of the Scratch Orchestra until 1971. Organised Presentation #9, Hampstead Heath in the open air ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], 9 May 1970. Became disillusioned with the avant garde and took a philosophy degree. Founder of the New Simplicity ensemble The Wink. Influences are Brian Eno and Erik Satie and he currently writes in a deliberately simple tonal style.

**Maggie Nicols (1948- ).** Singer. Performed with Denis Rose (1965-7), the Spontaneous Music Ensemble (1971) and Ark (1978). Since the mid-1970, Nicols has been involved in feminist music, co-founding Ova (1976) and the Feminist Improvising Group. Nicols is still active as an improviser both in the UK and Europe.

**Michael Nyman (1944- ).** Composer, writer. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Coined the term ‘minimalism’ in a review of *The Great Digest* in 1968. Wrote *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, still the best easily-available source on experimental music, especially of Britain. Turned to writing and performing music in 1976, first with the Campiello Band, then to the eponymous Michael Nyman band, which has achieved renown. Now perhaps best known as a film composer, in association with Peter Greenaway, Jane Campion, and others.

**Michael Parsons (1938- ).** Pianist and composer. Co-founder (with Howard Skempton and Cornelius Cardew) of the Scratch Orchestra. Parsons’ work lecturing for arts colleges (Portsmouth Polytechnic and Slade School) led to his association with the British Systems artists.
(Jeffrey Steele, Keith Richardson-Jones) and to his own work as a systemic composer. Parsons has taken influences of northern and arctic environments for his works; later music of Macedonia and other world musics. Parsons has also exhibited an interest in propagating experimental and world music through workshops over the years, much of the time through the London Musicians’ Collective (LMC) and elsewhere.

**Tom Phillips (1937- ).** Visual artist, author and composer. Elected R.A., 1989. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Wrote *A Humument*, a doctored Victorian novel in which certain passages were highlighted to provide new meaning, and his related opera, *Irma* (realised and recorded by Gavin Bryars on Obscure with previous (unreleased) and later versions.

**Jill Phillips.** Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Ex-wife of Tom Phillips (there is a lithograph of her by Tom Phillips from 1980 on <http://www.tomphillips.co.uk/portrait/jphi/>).

**Ilona Phombeah.** Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout. Filmed parts of the Village tour, among other events and has maintained an interest in experimental music and Scratch Orchestra revivals.

**Eddie (Edwin) Prévost (1942- ).** Improvising jazz and experimental music drummer. Prévost worked in jazz (including a be-bop sextet with Lou Gare) before founding AMM with Lou Gare and Keith Rowe in 1965. He still works in modern jazz improvisation through his quartet and elsewhere. AMM, despite a short hiatus in the 1970s, still exists: in fact, since the mid-1980s, it has seen a new florescence of popularity. In the last twenty years, Prévost has written about the theory and aesthetic of improvisation and he is the owner and guiding force behind Matchless Recordings, which publishes music by AMM, improvisers and classic British experimental music.

**Richard Reason.** Member throughout the existence of the Scratch Orchestra. Was member of Cardew’s composition class at the Royal Academy of music: wrote the text-based collection *Games for Musicians*. Became disillusioned with experimental music for political reasons; still performs occasionally.

**Keith Rowe.** Improvising guitarist, performer of electronic music and pop artist. Rowe was educated in art but worked in the Mike Westbrook Band before founding AMM with Eddie Prévost and Lou Gare in 1965. Rowe changed the shape and use of the electric guitar, deconstructing it so that it finally became a table-top electric string instrument. From the first, Rowe experimented with the use of objects on the strings or pick-ups and is known as a pioneer of extended guitar technique. A member
Scratch Orchestra and Experimental Music Biographies

of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Rowe currently lives in France but continues to work as an artist, both solo and in association with AMM and others.

**Krystyna Rowe.** Wife of Keith Rowe. Was member of the early Scratch Orchestra. Organised a Scratch Orchestra Poetry Evening at the Lamb and Flag in Covent Garden ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71', Ascough Collection], 6 March 1970.

**Victor Schonfield.** Writer, promoter, political activist. Schonfield founded Music Now, an organisation which promoted most new music and avant-garde jazz in Britain and in Europe in the 1960s and 70s. Most of the most successful concerts and festivals in which British experimental music was featured (including Contemporary Pianist, most of the Scratch Orchestra events, Promenade Theatre Orchestra and AMM) came about through Schonfield's promotion; he also brought many American experimentalists and jazz players, including Sun Ra, to Britain. Currently a writer on jazz music and a Labour activist.

**Brigid Scott-Baker.** Member of the Scratch Orchestra by December 1972. Currently a web designer; runs the Musicnow and Composers’ Project web sites. She has done much of the work in Cardew Foundation promotion and recording since the 1990s.

**Hugh Shrapnel (1947- ).** Composer, oboist. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Studied with Elisabeth Lutyens and Norman Demuth, before becoming a member of Cardew’s composition class at the Royal Academy of Music. Member of the Promenade Theatre Orchestra, People’s Liberation Music and, more recently, the Redlands Consort and Amethyst. Founder of the Scratch-related Shrapnel Wood and Metal Band, Shrapnel’s music often features a fondness for sentimental Victoriana and folksongs.

**Eva Skalla.** Arts administrator, ethnomusicologist. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout. Partner of Peter Sutherland. Currently works in projects in world music, most recently in facilitating a collaboration between Kudish musicians and Michael Nyman.

**Howard Skempton (1947- ).** Singer, accordionist, and composer. Co-founder of the Scratch Orchestra (with Michael Parsons and Cornelius Cardew). Skempton studied with Cardew privately and at Morley College. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Organiser of Presentation #15: ‘Prizewinners Concert’ ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], St. Pancras Town Hall, 30 April 1970. Skempton’s music is influenced by Webern and Feldman and exhibits a tendency for balance and brevity. Most often cited as an example of ‘The New Simplicity’ (as opposed to
‘The New Complexity’). Since the 1990s, Skempton’s music has become more popular, with Proms and other commissions and well-regarded recordings.

**David Sladen.** School friend of Cardew, Sladen conducted the first known interview of AMM. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence.

**Dave (David) Smith (1949- ).** Composer, pianist, conductor. Member of the late Scratch Orchestra. Studied music at Cambridge. Formed piano duo with composer John Lewis; later collaborations with John White (in the Garden Furniture Music Ensemble and elsewhere), Michael Parsons, Gavin Bryars (a long-time member of the Gavin Bryars ensemble) and others. Was member of the English Gamelan Orchestra and has maintained an interest in Albanian music. Arranged and directed music for the PCA chorus and other groups. Has written much music for piano (his series of Piano Concerts, for instance) and for varying groups both professional, student, and amateur.

**Tim Souster (1943-94).** Composer. Influenced by Stockhausen’s courses at Darmstadt (1964) and became Stockhausen’s assistant (1971-3). Worked for the BBC, and was composer-in-residence at King’s College, Cambridge (1969-71). Formed Intermodulation and Odb. He specialised in electronic music, especially for film and television. He performed in the Roundhouse concert in May 1969 but never joined the Scratch Orchestra.

**Alan Sutcliffe (1930- ).** Composer, sound designer, computer artist. Co-founder of the Computer Arts Society (1968, with George Mallen and John Lansdown). Member of the Electronic Music Studios (EMS) founded by Peter Zinovieff in London. Member of the Scratch Orchestra from 1971 to its end. Sutcliffe heard about the Scratch Orchestra from fellow SPNM member John Tilbury and decided to join. Currently works in computer art and children’s’ arts projects in Berkshire.

Stephan Szczelkun. Performance and mail artist, writer. Member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout. Organised an ‘all-day ambulatory concert’ in Richmond ['Scratch Orchestra Presentations from 1.11.69 to 1.1.71’, Ascough Collection], 16 May 1970. Szczelkun has been involved in underground scenes since the 1960s, including psychedelia, alternative arts, experimentalism, punk and heavy metal, and the new dance scene. Interested in and has written about collectives, both arts and others; founder of Working Press, the centre of the working class arts movement.

Robin Thompson. Studied bassoon at the Royal Academy of Music, but also was a member of Cardew’s composition class (with Hobbs, Shrapnel, Gravill). After leaving RAM, Thompson specialised in Japanese music, gaining a Ph.D. on Okinawan classical performing arts. Until recently, Thompson was a lecturer at the University of Ryukyu, Okinawa, performs both on bassoon and koto, and writes music in a traditional Japanese style.

John Tilbury (1936–). Pianist, improviser, actor. Studied piano with Arthur Alexander at the Royal College of Music. Met Cardew in August 1959 at the Dartington Summer School, from whence he began a relationship with Cardew not unlike that of David Tudor to John Cage. Tilbury launched ‘The Contemporary Pianist’, a three-day festival of new piano music, in 1968 and was a staunch member of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its existence. Having played occasionally with AMM in the 1960s, Tilbury joined as a permanent member in the 1980s. Recently, Tilbury has turned to acting in a series of Samuel Beckett plays.

John White (1936–). Pianist, tuba player, composer. White originally hoped to become a sculptor, but changed to composition, writing the first of his diary-like piano sonatas in 1956. Taught composition at the Royal College of Music in the 1960s; students included Brian Dennis and Roger Smalley. Member of the London Gabrielli Brass Quintet and the Scratch Orchestra (although a member throughout, he did not always take part). Founder member of groups as varied as the Promenade Theatre Orchestra, Hobb-White Duo, Garden Furniture Ensemble, and others. White has also written much for the theatre and is currently Director of Music at the Drama Centre, London.

Trevor Wishart (1946–). Composer. Member of the Scratch Orchestra for a year. Best known for his electronic and computer pieces; also for his books on electronic music On Sonic Art (1985) and Audible Design (1994).
Appendix 3: Nature Study Notes: Complete Typology by Title

General Considerations:

**True-Type Rites:** CCIR2, PDIR3, FRMEVR4, HMSIR5, FRFRR6, CCSBR7, HSIR8, MC9, MC10, MC11, MC12, HSIRNT13, HSIRNT14, CHSTBOR15A, CCPR16, CCAR17, CCSR18, CHSBR19, MPNR21, CCTG22, CCAOR23, CCIR24, CCIRTSOW25, CCSR26, CH27, HSIRNF28, PDIR29, PDPTR30, PD31, BHSGR33, HSBR34, BHWSR35, BHUSR36, JNWW37, TMTTR38, TMCR39, TM40, HSTPR41, CCPR42, HMSIR43, HMSCR44, MPPAYPR46, HMSCR48, BHSRR49, MNBBSSR50, HSSR51, HSTRO52, HSOR53, HSRR54, HSPR55, HSSR56, HSWR57, HS58, HSOR59, MCICR60, CCHAC61, BHDIR62, BGRIR63, FRTSP65, CCR66, CLR67, DJ68, DJ69, MACvMOSS&AvMcC&OR70, CCIR71, CCR72, CCR73, CCR74, CCR75, CCR76, DJFR77, DJCR78, DJ79, CJ81, JTM82, CHER83, LHUR84, HSM85, TMSR86, CHLR87, CHRR88, CHMR89, CHHR90, DJACR91, BHTOOB93, HSSR94, EFM95, MSIR96, MSIR97, DJTBR98, PIIRNT99, PIIRNO100, RSIRNT101, CCFR102, HMSUR103, HMSCR104, MSIR105, MPIR106, CCEFUIIRR107, MPR109, DDNWO110, CMPR111, ABCOIR112, ABCOIR113, ABCOIR114, ABCOIR115, ABCOIR116, ABCOIR117, ABCOIR118, ABCOIR119, ABCOIR120, ABCOIR121, ABCOIR122, ABCOIR123, ABCOIR124, ABCOIR125, ABCOIR126, ABIR127, CCAMMR129, JHBBCOR130, CCC131, CCDCR132, MCTR:A134, CMH-CR135, BHPRR136, RSRIV137, EFPR138, EFPR139, BHBR140, HSMSSB141, MPSACR142, MPJR143, MPEPR144, CFRNTFM145, CFIR146, CFEOR147, CFSNAP!R148, CCIR149, DJ151, HSDNT152

**Compositions:** HSDNO1, HMSIR5, MC11, CHTHOR15, CCPR16, CHTIGR20, CFS32, FRMLDP47, ACSR64, FRR80, MSCR108, ABCOIR123, APB128, CCQR133, RSRIV137, MPSACR142, CFEOR147, CFSNAP!R148, CCWR150

**Forms**

**Cyclic forms:** PDIR3, CCAR17, CH27, EFM095, DDNWO110, EFPR138

**Linked process:** CFS32, BHUSR36, HMSUR103, ABCOIR113, ABCOIR114, CCDCR132
**Framing structure**: CCSR26, BHSR49, HSTROJ52, BHDIR62, DJ68, CJ81, HMSSR94, JHBBCOR130, MPSACR142

**Contingent process**: HSDNO1, CCSBR7, CCPR16, CHSBR19, CHTIGR20, PDPTR30, CFS32, BHSGR33, BHUSR36, JNWWR37, HMSIR43, CCRR66, CJ81, HMSSR94, EFM095, PIIRNO100, RSIRNT101, CCFR102, MPIR106, DDNWO110, ABCOIR115, ABCOIR123, ABCOIR126, JHBBCOR130, CCC131, CMH-CR135, CFEOR147, CFSNAP!R148, CCIR149

**Endless process**: CCCMR74, CFEOR147

**Closed forms**: CHSBR19, HMSBR45, MCICR60

**Private or secret systems**: CHIR83, CHRR88, ABCOIR115, ABCOIR116, BHPTR136

**Persistent forms**: FRFRR6, HSIRNT13, HSIRNT14, HSIRNF28

**Dual and opposite direction of play**: CCSR18, CHSBR19, PD31, HMSIR44, CCHAC61, CCLR67, HMSSR94, PIIRNT99, PIIRNO100, RSIRNT101, CMPR111, ABCOIR119, ABCOIR120, ABCOIR121, MCTR:A134, MPEPR144, CCWR150

**Found and ready-made forms**: CHTIGR20, PD31, HMSIR43, DJ79, DJACR92, CCC131, CCQR133

**Multiple-part forms**: CCAOR23, HMSIR44, DJTBR98, CCFR102, DDNWO110, ABCOIR114

**Repetitive or additive forms**: TM40, FRLMDP47, ACSR64, FRR80, CMPR111, ABCOIR126

**Compositional provisions**

**Danger and damage control**: HSDNO1, CCSBR7, MC12, CHSTBOR15A, CHTIGR20, HSIR55, FRTSP65, CJ81, CHIR83, PIIRNO100, RSIRNT101, MSCR108, CFEOR147, CFSNAP!R148

**Physical or other non-sonic directions**: HMSBR45, HSSR51, HSWR54, TMSR86, MSIR97, DJ151

**Equality of participants**: HSIR8, CCSR18, MPR109, CFRNTFM145

**Hierarchy of participants**: FRMEVR4, FRLMDP47, ABCOIR113

**Graphic notation**: TMTTR38, CFIR146, DJ151
Notational manipulation of time or players: HSDNO1, HSIIRNT13, CCAOR23, HSIIRNF28, PDPTR30, CFS32, HSBR34, TM40, MPPAYPR46, DJ69, CCMR74, DJ79, LHUR84, HMS85, EFM095, ABCOIR114, ABCOIR118, ABP128, RSRIV137

Multiple interpretations: CCHAC61, CCMR74, CHHR90, CCC131, BHBR140, CCIR149, CCIR149

Conceptual or fantastic realisation: DJFR77, CHGR91, ABCOIR117, ABCOIR121, ABCOIR122, ABCOIR124, ABCOIR126, CCDCR132, HSDNT152

Concert situation as part of event: FRFRR6, CH27, ACSR64, DJ69

Puns and word-play: CCSBR7, MC10, MC11, HSIIRNT14, CCIRTSOW25, BHSGR33, CCIR42, HMSVR48, HSSR56, HSIR59, HMS85, TMSR86, CHLR87, CHGR91, BHTOO93, ABCOIR112, ABCOIR116, ABCOIR124, ABIR127, ABP128, CCIR149

Pastiche and parody: MC12, CCTG22, HMSBR45, CCTGRFT73, ABCOIR117

Game-play: CCIR2, PDIR3, FRMEVR4, HSIR8, MC10, CHTHOR15, BHSGR33, JNWWR37, TMCR39, HMSVR48, BHDIR62, CHIR83, CHMR89, DJACR92, HMSUR103, HMSCR104, MSIR105, MPR106, MPJR143, MPEPR144, CFEOIR147, CFSPN’R148

References

Common-practice art music HSDNO1, HSIIR5, CCAR17, BHSGR33, HSBR34, HMSBR45, HSIR59, CCR72, CCR76, ABCOIR114, ABCOIR119, ABCOIR120, JHBBCOR130, BHBR140, MPSACR142

Aesthetics: HSIIR5, TMCR39, HMSR104

Popular Classics: FRR80, BHPRR136

Scratch Music: CCIR2, CCAR17, CCSR18, CCSR26, CCEFUIIRR107

Research Project: TMTTR38, TMCR39, CCIR149

Other rites: BHWSR35, MPPAYPR46, BHSR49, HSSR56, BHDIR62, CCTGRFT73, CHMR89, PIIRNT99, CCFR102, ABCOIR123, ABCOIR124, ABCOIR125, EFPR139, CCIR149
Other experimental music: PDIR3, HMSIR5, MC11, MC12, CCPR16, CCIR24, CH27, BHSGR33, TMCR39, HSTPR41, HMSBR45, MPPAYPR46, HSSR51, CCR72, HMSUR103, CCEFUIIRR107, ABCOIR112, ABCOIR126, CCAMMR129, EFPR138, HMSSB141, CCWR150

Popular culture and events: CHTIGR20, MPNR21, JNWWR37, TMCR39, MPPAYPR46, BHSR49, MNBBSSR50, BGRIR63, CCIR71, CCTGRFT73, CCR76, JTDR82, TMSR86, CHLR87, BHTOOB93, MSIR96, MSIR97, DJTBR98, MSIR105, MPEPR144, CFRTNFM145

Advertising: DJ79, JTDR82

Other arts: CCIR2, CCSBR7, MC9, CHTHOR15, MPNR21, CH27, PD31, TM40, HSTPR41, HMSIR44, CCTGRFT73, CCR76, DJCR78, DJACR92, PIIRNO100, ABCOIR122, EFPR138, EFPR139, HMSSB141

Gender roles and sexuality: HSIRNT13, CHSBR19, HSTPR41, HSSR56, CLRL67, CHLR87, CCDCR132, MCTR:A134

Science: HSWR54, HSRR55, HSWR57, HSOR59, CCHAC61, CCRR66, DJFR77, CHLR87, CMPR111, CCAMMR129, CCQR133, EFPR139

History: TMCR39, CHMR89, CHHR90

School and education/childhood: MPNR21, CCTG22, HSSR51, HSBR55, HS58, CCFR102, MPEPR144, CFEIOIR147

Religion/philosophy: CHTHOR15, CCAOR23, CCIRTSOW25, PD31, HSBR34, JNWWR37, TMTRR38, HSTPR41, HMSVR48, MNBBSSR50, HSOR53, HS58, MCICR60, FRTSP65, CCCMR75, DJCR78, CHIR83, CHHR90, EFMO95, DJTBR98, MSIR105, CCEFUIIRR107, ABIR127, CCAMMR129, CCC131, HMSSB141, HSDNT152

Law and government: FRMEVR4, HSIR8, CCSR18, HSOR59, MCAvMOSS&AfvMcC&OR70, HMSUR103, HMSKR104

Economics: FRFRR6, MC9, CCIR42, MCAvMOSS&AfvMcC&OR70, JTDR82
### Appendix 4: Catalogue of Movements, Dumb Show, *The Great Learning*, Paragraph 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence¹</th>
<th>Score Direction²</th>
<th>Chinese Character³</th>
<th>Parsons' Notes⁴</th>
<th>DVD Timing⁵</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1) When things had been classified...</td>
<td>00'34&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘When things had been classified...’</td>
<td>'Curve the two forefingers, place them on the sides of the head as horns and waggle them.'</td>
<td>物 (wù: ox pictograph)= ‘thing’. Front part of pictograph</td>
<td>'forefingers to head – waggle'</td>
<td>00'41&quot;</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'…then take one hand, fingers outstretched, down and out to full length behind body.'</td>
<td>Same: back part (legs of 'ox')</td>
<td>00'47&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘armstretch – LH behind RH point/above’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘…in organic categories…’</td>
<td>'Other hand points obliquely towards the ground in front, forefinger extended, then with extending motion of whole arm raise it high quickly and repeat the process with the other hand. Now play with this position: shake the hands like foliage, sway the arms as in the wind, make little firework explosions with the fingers, etc. all the while watching the hands attentively. During this play take a slow step or two and produce an unvoiced sound from the region of the mouth.'</td>
<td>格 (gè: wood (tree) pictograph)= ‘pattern’</td>
<td>'foliage + step + (organic)'</td>
<td>00'52&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>而 (ér: beard)=</td>
<td>'centrepiece'</td>
<td>1'03&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘and’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>而 (ér: beard)=</td>
<td>'centrepiece'</td>
<td>1'10&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘and’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Option 2:’</td>
<td>‘Fingers and thumb partially’</td>
<td>后 (hòu: person/mouth)=</td>
<td>‘centrepiece’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>Score Direction</td>
<td>Chinese Character</td>
<td>Parsons’ Notes</td>
<td>DVD Timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>unclosed are placed in front of the mouth, shot upward and slightly shaken, accompanied by whistling.</td>
<td>'prince'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘...knowledge...’</td>
<td>Option 1: ‘One hand up, flat, pointing forward, palms down, beside and behind head; shoot it straight forward, decelerating fast, finally reaching maximum extension out front, while eyes narrow as though following the trajectory into the distance, accompanied at some point by an unvoiced sound from the region of the mouth’.</td>
<td>知 (zhì: arrow/mouth)= 'knowledge'</td>
<td>'shoot LH -&gt; distance'</td>
<td>1'18&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘...moved toward fulfillment’.</td>
<td>‘Flex arms, fists closed, then release forearms up and out, turning the hands to face outwards and continuing the movement down and curving back with the whole arm, continue the curve to bring the arms up at the back, forcing the body forwards, down on knees, touch forehead to ground with hands as high as possible behind, optionally beating like wings’.</td>
<td>至 (zhì: bird swooping down)= 'arrive'</td>
<td>'flex + stretch arms behind forehead/grd. + flap'</td>
<td>1'24&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>‘Rest’.</td>
<td></td>
<td>'palm/finger R'</td>
<td>1'56&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Given the extreme knowable points,’</td>
<td>Option 3: ‘Right forefinger placed side on to nose, moves forward and slightly to the right, turning pad outwards’.</td>
<td>知 (zhì: arrow/mouth)= 'knowledge'</td>
<td></td>
<td>2'00&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>Score Direction</td>
<td>Chinese Character</td>
<td>Parsons’ Notes</td>
<td>DVD Timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Eyes cast vaguely about…'</td>
<td>至 (zhì: bird swooping down)= 'arrive'</td>
<td>'looking around – '</td>
<td>2'12&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'…then left hand, palm down in front of the body, is brought down to touch ground with pad of middle finger'.</td>
<td>'touch LH finger-ground'</td>
<td></td>
<td>2'18&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Then both hands – palms up in front of chin and as close to it as possible, pointing forward and outward and round to end in fully outstretched cross shape, with palms still up'.</td>
<td>'palms under chin – stretch out'</td>
<td></td>
<td>2'23&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Repeat centrepiece'.</td>
<td>而 (ér: beard)= 'and'</td>
<td>'Centre'</td>
<td>2'32&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 1: 'strike mouth with palm while exhaling breath, and immediately chop downwards with the other hand holding palm towards body front'.</td>
<td>后 (hou: person/mouth)= 'prince'</td>
<td>'Centre'</td>
<td>2'38&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'…the inarticulate thoughts were defined with precision,'</td>
<td>意 (yì: sound from the heart)= 'idea, intention'</td>
<td>'LH sun circle/…'</td>
<td>2'45&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'At some point early during this, strike heart audibly with right fist'.</td>
<td></td>
<td>'…thump'</td>
<td>2'48&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'…the sun’s lance coming to rest on the precise spot verbally'.</td>
<td>誠 (chéng: words that become reality)= 'sincere'</td>
<td>'RH flick (words)'</td>
<td>2'59&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumb Show, Catalogue of Movements 366</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement Description</th>
<th>Movement Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(start with thumb touching lower lip) or down (forefinger knuckle touching lower lip)</td>
<td>'Axe chop' 3'06&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then clasp right hand to left waiting at left shoulder, with a loud clap. Clasped hands then chop sharply down diagonally to a sudden stop in front of the body, like a left-handed axe stroke.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Axe chop'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Having attained this precise verbal definition,'</td>
<td>'RH circle/sun LH flick' 3'12&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Make circle with right thumb and forefinger and starting low by left leg let it describe a circle over head as left hand did before. Signal to start the motion is given by the left hand striking the heart and rebounding lightly upward.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'RH circle/sun LH flick' 3'16&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'...this sincerity,'</td>
<td>'LH silent yell/strike RH flick from shoulder' 3'28&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 1: 'Left hand strikes mouth several times (mouth position as for silent yell) followed by right hand flicked violently forward at shoulder level, as if throwing heavy dart or shaking off sticky dough.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'LH silent yell/strike RH flick from shoulder' 3'28&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Repeat centrepiece'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Centre'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2: 'Fingers and thumb partially unclosed are placed in front of the mouth, shot upward and slightly shaken, accompanied by whistling.'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Centre'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'...they then stabilised their hearts'.</td>
<td>'RH on heart' 3'48&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right hand on heart, palm to body and fingers horizontal, and keep it there till end of sentence'.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Movement Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3'54&quot;</td>
<td>Left fist facing front beside right hand; erect the forefinger, then the three other fingers all at once to make a flat palm facing front, fingers pointing up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4'06&quot;</td>
<td>'Rest'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4'11&quot;</td>
<td>The right hand, fingers collected, thumb on pads of other fingers, is slowly raised to the heart. Hold it there through the following action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4'17&quot;</td>
<td>'Left hand, back up, fingers together pointing upward at an angle, held as low as possible by left hip, slowly advances in the plane of the hand, rising forward in as straight a line as possible, to end at maximum extension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4'28&quot;</td>
<td>Repeat centrepiece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4'36&quot;</td>
<td>Option 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4'40&quot;</td>
<td>'They disciplined themselves'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4'48&quot;</td>
<td>Both hands palms up, tips touching, held horizontal below abdomen. Together they move out (or slightly down and out) and rise up in a curve as over a pregnant belly, ending with a neat little curve to bring hands flat on chest, backs out, tips of fingers touching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4'50&quot;</td>
<td>'Stretch out the left hand to full length in some direction, then surprisingly turn it in and point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely to centre of own breastbone.</td>
<td>‘lapels –...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Then move both hands, loosely closed, to chest – rather like a clubman holding his lapels. Hold them there’.</td>
<td>‘RH out + down / turn upwards’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Then the right hand – palm up, fingers together, pointing more or less forward and slightly up, slightly out from the chest – curves in a semicircle inwards, downwards, and finally outwards between thighs, ending palm down, fingers pointing forward and slightly up. In lower part of semicircle drop shoulder to gain depth’.</td>
<td>‘Jump’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Jump with both feet to end this gesture’.</td>
<td>‘(b) Having attained...set their own houses in order’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Rest’</td>
<td>‘Having attained this self-discipline,’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Hands carelessly hanging at sides, forefingers extended in to touch thighs,’</td>
<td>‘fingers drag up sides – shoulders/armpits elbows out’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘...then dragged up the sides of the body to end either on shoulders or pointing into armpits, in either case with elbows straight out sideways’.</td>
<td>‘mirror LH’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Left elbow in against side, with cupped left hand held about a foot away from the face. Turn head slightly to the left and down as if looking into a mirror held in the left hand. Hold this through the following;’</td>
<td>‘RH forefinger walk + foot-tap’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Hold right forefinger extended straight up in front of the chest. Walk it away a few steps.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Movement Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3'36&quot;</td>
<td>'RH edgewise – L elbow (stamp)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'40&quot;</td>
<td>'Centre'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'48&quot;</td>
<td>'Centre'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5'52&quot;</td>
<td>'RH overhead LH heavy bucket lift – &gt; grind'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'11&quot;</td>
<td>'hands flat in front – touch'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6'22&quot;</td>
<td>'– mesh/turn forward and break'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>'Rest'</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>'Rest'</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>'Rest'</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7'45&quot;</td>
<td>'other fingers jump up &amp; H joins arms horizontal – round &amp; behind'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7'54&quot;</td>
<td>'LH flutter'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8'00&quot;</td>
<td>'RH point + thss... moving forward'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8'06&quot;</td>
<td>'Centre'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8'12&quot;</td>
<td>'Centre'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8'17&quot;</td>
<td>'RH overhead forward – down – forefinger touch ground'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8'25&quot;</td>
<td>'LH above ** (stars)'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8'40&quot;</td>
<td>'LH flat above, flatten RH/space between'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Dumb Show, Catalogue of Movements 372**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Stand with outstretched arms, palms up and head dropped, making a T-shape. Hold arms and head as still as possible while bending the body out to right or left side and also forward as far as possible; then return to T-shape.</td>
<td>8'49&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Then lift up the head and move the hands up and over and in to end with their backs over the ears and the fingers pointing down the neck.</td>
<td>9'09&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Holding the hands thus, walk about on heels for as long as you feel inclined.</td>
<td>9'15&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Alternatives Sentence 1</td>
<td>9'49&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Centrepiece: 睆 (ér: beard)= 'and'</td>
<td>'Centre' 9'58&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Centrepiece, Option 2: 后 (hou: person/mouth)= 'prince'</td>
<td>'Centre' 10'01&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Option 2: Left hand closed with the thumb covering the nails of the other fingers.</td>
<td>'OR LH finger' 10'06&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Now allow forefinger out and holding it upright in front of the chest rub it up and down with thumb and forefinger of right hand, the other fingers being loosely closed. At some point in this rubbing produce an unvoiced sound from the region of the mouth. Then return the left forefinger under</td>
<td>‘rubbing’ 10'14&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Dumb Show, Catalogue of Movements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives Sentence 2</th>
<th>10'27&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 3: ‘Right forefinger placed side on to nose, moves forward and slightly to the right, turning pad outwards’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(zhì: arrow/mouth)=</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘knowledge’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'palm/finger R'</td>
<td>10'31&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives Sentence 2</th>
<th>10'43&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 2: ‘Right arm raised, fingers together, palm forward, placed in front of forehead, moves forward and downward in a quarter circle’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘OR RH 1/4 circle’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'beard'</td>
<td>10'53&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives Sentence 6</th>
<th>11'10&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1: ‘Hands hold scalp and slide down to cover the ears; then vibrate the fingers to and from the head, the thick part of the hand being held still’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘scalp cap/vibrate’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'scalp cap/vibrate’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'OR roof + scoop!'</td>
<td>11'19&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| End credits | 11'28" |

---


2 Score directions from ‘The Introductory Dumb Show’, The Great Learning.

Michael Parsons' private performance notes for performing the Dumb Show. Copy from Michael Parsons.


Placement of the Text is approximate, as it often does not maintain the order of the Chinese pictographs in the original text.

Drawings and complex arrows copied from Parsons' notes.

This centrepiece, which focuses on the orders of the prince and which appears in every sentence, does not seem to have been translated by Ezra Pound into the English language text.
Appendix 5: Christopher Hobbs, 
*Number Piece 1*, System Chart
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

6a: Composer Survey Email

Sent in late August/early September to AMS-list and RMA-list as follows. The same email was sent to eight experimental composers, five improvisers and performers with one added sentence, explaining why their own names were not on the survey (that I was studying influences). Response from nineteen control group subjects; six experimental composers. Only one improviser/performer answered, so the response is not included in the results below.

Breakdown of response demographics:

Theorists: (+historian, educator) (+historian, educator, performer, composer) (+historian, educator, performer, composer)
Historians: (graduate student) (cum teacher) (cum publisher/independent scholar) (also a student) (+ performer) (Music historian) (+ educator) (student) (+ ethnomusicologist) (+student, film music) (+ educator)
Composer: (+ pianist, ex science prof)
Performer: (+cum music research) (+educator)
> Educator:
> Publisher:
> Other:

Locations of respondents: Texas (2); Canada (Quebec and Ontario); Israel; New York City; Massachusetts; San Francisco; North Carolina; Kentucky (2); New York (2); Illinois; Oregon; Michigan (2); Wisconsin; New Hampshire; Scotland (Aberdeen).
Names and addresses of respondents have been omitted for the sake of privacy.

Email:

Hello all,

I’m hoping that you might help me with a survey which I’m trying to conduct at the moment using groups of people related by means of their membership in a single email list or interest group. It can take as much or as little time as you wish. I’m looking for statistical data, so there’s no need for explanation (unless you wish to do so). I think that the best way is to press reply, and answer next to the questions provided, and then send to me.

Below is a list of composers (Beethoven and later). Please rank those you think applicable along two categories:

Public – how important is it to you that the composer be studied, his/her works be played and known?

Personal – how important is the composer’s works to you and your own study at any time in your life and work?

according to the following criteria/marks:
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

A – The A team: essential. For instance, you believe the composer should never be left out of a music history survey; that one might not be considered to be educated without knowing him/her. If personal, this composer’s works imposed a strong influence on your musical life and thinking (at any time, even though they may not influence you now).

B – The B team: very important. Perhaps this composer exerts a powerful influence on you for one piece only, or you think that he or she should be used in a history survey, but it’s of slightly lesser import to you than the A team.

Composers who you may consider to be important in a public or personal way, but who are not very important or essential (A or B), can be left with no mark.

? – Huh? You do not know this composer.

0 – Big zero. The composer shouldn’t be on this list, in a public or personal way - anything from being trivial, overrated, boring, or just obscure. Essentially, this composer isn't important enough for you.

So, a sample might read:

Composer, A educational/personal [the explanatory marks are unnecessary]:

Pres, Josquin des A/A [meaning that I think Josquin is essential both for study and for my life in music]

Bear, Smokey the A/0 [Smokey is essential for educated musicians to know, but I think he’s boring].

Clown, Bozo the B/ [meaning education B team, personal blank: Bozo is quite important to study, but hasn’t influenced me personally as much as others].

[After questions about order, I put in the following into all but the first mailing: ‘Moocher, Minnie the /A [meaning not very important or essential for the world, but essential to me personally’]

This is by no means meant to represent a complete list, but if there are any composers left out whom you feel strongly should go in A, B, or 0, then please add their names at the bottom when asked. There are also a few further questions at the bottom to place you statistically. All replies will be held in confidence and your name will not be used.

Thanks so much in advance,

Virginia

--

Virginia Anderson
Leicester, UK
vanderson@experimentalmusic.co.uk

1. Adams, John
2. Andriessen, Louis
3. Antheil, George
4. Alkan, Charles
5. Babbitt, Milton
6. Beach, Amy
7. Beethoven, Ludwig van
8. Berg, Alban
9. Berio, Luciano
10. Berlioz, Hector
11. Berners, Lord
12. Berry, Chuck
13. Bley, Carla
14. Boulez, Pierre
15. Brahms, Johannes
16. Brian, Havergal
17. Britten, Benjamin
18. Bruckner, Anton
19. Budd, Harold
20. Busoni, Ferruccio
21. Cage, John
22. Cardew, Cornelius
23. Carter, Elliott
24. Chopin, Fryderyk
25. Copland, Aaron
26. Cowell, Henry
27. Crawford (Seeger), Ruth
28. Davies, Peter Maxwell
29. Debussy, Claude
30. Dylan, Bob
31. Eisler, Hanns
32. Elgar, Edward
33. Ellington, Duke
34. Feldman, Morton
35. Ferneyhough, Brian
36. Gershwin, George
37. Ginastera, Alberto
38. Glass, Philip
39. Glinka, Mikhail
40. Gorecki, Henryk
41. Gottschalk, Louis
42. Grainger, Percy
43. Grieg, Edvard
44. Harrison, Lou
45. Ives, Charles
46. Janácek, Leos
47. Kagel, Mauricio
48. Ketèlhey, Albert
49. Khachaturian, Aram
50. Lennon, John, and Paul McCartney
51. Ligeti, György
52. Liszt, Franz
53. Mahler, Gustav
54. Massenet, Jules
55. Medtner, Nikolay
56. Mendelssohn, Felix
57. Messiaen, Olivier
58. Meyerbeer, Giacomo
59. Milhaud, Darius
60. Morricone, Ennio
61. Musorgsky, Modest
62. Nielsen, Carl
63. Nono, Luigi
64. Pärt, Arvo
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

65. Partch, Harry
66. Penderecki, Krzysztof
67. Poulenc, Francis
68. Puccini, Giacomo
69. Rachmaninov, Sergey
70. Reger, Max
71. Riley, Terry
72. Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay
73. Rossini, Gioachino
74. Russolo, Luigi
75. Satie, Erik
76. Schoenberg, Arnold
77. Schubert, Franz
78. Schumann, Robert
79. Shostakovich, Dmitry
80. Sibelius, Jean
81. Skryabin, Alexander
82. Sorabji, Kaikhosru
83. Stanford, Charles
84. Stockhausen, Karlheinz
85. Strauss, Richard
86. Sullivan, Arthur
87. Stravinsky, Igor
88. Szymanowski, Karol
89. Takemitsu, Toru
90. Tavener, John
91. Tchaikovsky, Pyotr
92. Thomson, Virgil
93. Varèse, Edgard
94. Wagner, Richard
95. Webern, Anton
96. Weill, Kurt
97. Wilson, Brian
98. Wolff, Christian
99. Xenakis, Iannis
100. Young, La Monte

Other composers who should be on the A Team (specify public or personal):

Other composers who should be on the B Team:

Other composers who get an 0:

About you:

What best describes your activity/profession in music:

Theorist:
Historian:
Composer:
Performer:
Educator:
Publisher:
Other:

Country and State/Province/County in which you work:
Thanks ever so much for doing this! I hope to release my results in the new year.
### Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

#### 6b.1. Combined Essential and Important Data

**Essential and Important Composers (AB Importance), Public**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental order</th>
<th>Control Group Order:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beethoven, Ludwig van</td>
<td>Beethoven, Ludwig van</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardew, Cornelius</td>
<td>Webern, Anton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satie, Erik</td>
<td>Berg, Alban</td>
</tr>
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<td>Webern, Anton</td>
<td>Cage, John</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Schoenberg, Arnold</td>
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<td>Schumann, Robert</td>
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<td>Stockhausen, Karlheinz</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Liszt, Franz</td>
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<td>Ives, Charles</td>
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<td>Schubert, Franz</td>
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<td>Strauss, Richard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stravinsky, Igor</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Berlioz, Hector</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copland, Aaron</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Skryabin, Alexander</td>
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<td>Tchaikovsky, Pyotr</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wagner, Richard</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brahms, Johannes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Britten, Benjamin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chopin, Fryderyk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debussy, Claude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gershwin, George</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boulez, Pierre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 80-100%            | Mahler, Gustav       |
|                    | Ellington, Duke      |
|                    | Janácek, Leos        |
|                    | Bruckner, Anton      |
|                    | Messiaen, Olivier    |
|                    | Elgar, Edward        |
|                    | Lennon and McCartney |
|                    | Puccini, Giacomo     |
|                    | Carter, Elliott      |
|                    | Glass, Philip        |
|                    | Glinka, Mikhail      |
|                    | Penderecki, Krzyztof |
|                    | Sibelius, Jean       |
|                    | Berio, Luciano       |
|                    | Cowell, Henry        |
|                    | Grieg, Edvard        |
Composers with variance of 50% and more, AB Importance, public:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>experimental/control percentage</th>
<th>percent variance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Babbitt, Milton 0%/89.47%</td>
<td>-89.47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boulez, Pierre 16.6%/100%</td>
<td>-83.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorecki, Henryk 0%/78.95%</td>
<td>-78.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carter, Elliott 16.6%/94.74%</td>
<td>-78.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glass, Philip 16.66%/94.74%</td>
<td>-78.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glinka, Mikhail 16.66%/94.74%</td>
<td>-78.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penderecki, Krzysztof 16.66%/94.74%</td>
<td>-78.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beach, Amy 0%/73.68%</td>
<td>-73.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davies, Peter Maxwell 0%/73.68%</td>
<td>-73.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyerbeer, Giacomo 16.66%/89.47%</td>
<td>-72.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardew, Cornelius 100%/31.58%</td>
<td>+68.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crawford (Seeger), Ruth 0%/68.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khachaturian, Aram 0%/68.42%</td>
<td>-68.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nielsen, Carl 16.66%/84.21%</td>
<td>-67.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahms, Johannes 33.3%/100%</td>
<td>-66.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britten, Benjamin 33.3%/100%</td>
<td>-66.66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chopin, Fryderyk 33.3%/100%</td>
<td>-66.66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debussy, Claude 33.3%/100%</td>
<td>-66.66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gershwin, George 33.3%/100%</td>
<td>-66.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tavener, John 0%/63.16%</td>
<td>-63.16%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berry, Chuck 16.6%/78.95%</td>
<td>-62.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginastera, Alberto 16.66%/78.95%</td>
<td>-62.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massenet, Jules 16.66%/78.95%</td>
<td>-62.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reger, Max 16.66%/78.95%</td>
<td>-62.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takemitsu, Toru 16.66%/78.95%</td>
<td>-62.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgar, Edward 33.33%/94.74%</td>
<td>-61.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lennon and McCartney 33.33%/94.74%</td>
<td>-61.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puccini, Giacomo 33.33%/94.74%</td>
<td>-61.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolff, Christian 83.33%/26.31%</td>
<td>+57.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adams, John 33.3%/89.47%</td>
<td>-56.14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ligeti, György 33.33%/89.47%</td>
<td>-56.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendelssohn, Felix 33.33%/89.47%</td>
<td>-56.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poulenc, Francis 33.33%/89.47%</td>
<td>-56.14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>AB Importance</th>
<th>Control Group Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay</td>
<td>33.33%/89.47%</td>
<td>-56.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milhaud, Darius</td>
<td>33.33%/84.21%</td>
<td>-50.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sullivan, Arthur</td>
<td>33.33%/84.21%</td>
<td>-50.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlioz, Hector</td>
<td>50%/100%</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copland, Aaron</td>
<td>50%/100%</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skryabin, Alexander</td>
<td>50%/100%</td>
<td>-50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tchaikovsky, Pyotr</td>
<td>50%/100%</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagner, Richard</td>
<td>50%/100%</td>
<td>-50%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

#### Essential and Important Composers (AB Importance), Private

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental order</th>
<th>Control Group Order:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cage, John 100%</td>
<td>Webern, Anton 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardew, Cornelius 100%</td>
<td>Stravinsky, Igor 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satie, Erik 100%</td>
<td>Gershwin, George 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolff, Christian 100%</td>
<td>Schumann, Robert 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tchaikovsky, Pyotr 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debussy, Claude 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schubert, Franz 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brahms, Johannes 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chopin, Fryderyk 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Beethoven, Ludwig van | 83.3%          |
| Feldman, Morton       | 83.3%          |
| Mahler, Gustav        | 83.33%         |
| Riley, Terry          | 83.33%         |
| Webern, Anton         | 83.33%         |
| Young, La Monte       | 83.33%         |
| Beethoven, Ludwig van | 94.74%         |
| Mahler, Gustav        | 94.74%         |
| Ives, Charles         | 94.74%         |
| Liszt, Franz          | 94.74%         |
| Ellington, Duke       | 94.74%         |
| Schoenberg, Arnold    | 94.74%         |
| Skryabin, Alexander   | 94.74%         |
| Copland, Aaron        | 94.74%         |
| Berlioz, Hector       | 94.74%         |
| Janáček, Leos         | 89.47%         |
| Musorgsky, Modest     | 89.47%         |
| Rossini, Gioachino    | 89.47%         |
| Sibelius, Jean        | 89.47%         |
| Rakhmaninov, Sergey   | 89.47%         |
| Ligeti, György        | 89.47%         |
| Mendelssohn, Felix    | 89.47%         |
| Poulenc, Francis      | 89.47%         |
| Strauss, Richard      | 89.47%         |
| Wagner, Richard       | 89.47%         |
| Messiah, Olivier      | 84.21%         |
| Britten, Benjamin     | 84.21%         |
| Ginastera, Alberto    | 84.21%         |
| Shostakovitch, Dmitry | 84.21%         |
| Massenet, Jules       | 84.21%         |
| Rimsky-Korsakov, N.   | 84.21%         |
Composers with variance of 50% and more, AB Importance, private:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>experimental/control percentage</th>
<th>percent variance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Puccini, Giacomo 0%/94.74%</td>
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<td>Massenet, Jules 0%/84.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nielsen, Carl 0%/84.21%</td>
<td>-84.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay 0%/84.21%</td>
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<td>Milhaud, Darius 0%/78.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penderecki, Krzyztof 0%/78.95%</td>
<td>-78.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berlioz, Hector 16.6%/94.74%</td>
<td>-78.08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardew, Cornelius 100%/26.31%</td>
<td>+73.69%</td>
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<td>Wolff, Christian 100%/26.31%</td>
<td>+73.69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carter, Elliott 0%/73.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mendelssohn, Felix 16.66%/89.47%</td>
<td>-72.81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poulenc, Francis 16.66%/89.47%</td>
<td>-72.81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strauss, Richard 16.66%/89.47%</td>
<td>-72.81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wagner, Richard 16.66%/89.47%</td>
<td>-72.81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adams, John 0%/68.42%</td>
<td>-68.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berio, Luciano 0%/68.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Davies, Peter Maxwell 0%/68.42%</td>
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<td>Takemitsu, Toru 0%/68.42%</td>
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<td>Ginastera, Alberto 16.66%/84.21%</td>
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<td>Shostakovich, Dmitry 16.66%/84.21%</td>
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<td>Debussy, Claude 33.33%/100%</td>
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<td>Schubert, Franz 33.33%/100%</td>
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<td>Cowell, Henry 16.66%/78.95%</td>
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<td>Morricone, Ennio 16.66%/78.95%</td>
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<td>Copland, Aaron 33.3%/94.74%</td>
<td>-61.41%</td>
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<td>Beach, Amy 0%/57.89%</td>
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<td>Tavener, John 0%/57.89%</td>
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<td>Glinka, Mikhail 16.6%/73.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rakhmaninov, Sergey 33.33%/89.47%</td>
<td>-56.14%</td>
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<td>Glass Philip 0%/52.63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berg, Alban 16.6%/68.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elgar, Edward 16.6%/68.42%</td>
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<td>Gorecki, Henryk 16.6%/68.42%</td>
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<td>Gershwin, George 50%/100%</td>
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<td>Schumann, Robert 50%/100%</td>
<td>-50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tchaikovsky, Pyotr 50%/100%</td>
<td>-50%</td>
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### Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

#### Variance in public/private assessment, experimental:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composers: public/private</th>
<th>variance</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Berg, Alban 83.3%/16.6%</td>
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<td>Stockhausen, Karlheinz 83.33%/33.33%</td>
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<td>Strauss, Richard 66.66%/16.66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berio, Luciano 50%/0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schoenberg, Arnold 83.3%/50%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schumann, Robert 83.33%/50%</td>
<td>-33.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sibelius, Jean 83.33%/50%</td>
<td>-33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schubert, Franz 66.66%/33.33%</td>
<td>-33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlioz, Hector 50%/16.66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bruckner, Anton 50%/16.6%</td>
<td>-33.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cowell, Henry 50%/16.66%</td>
<td>-33.33%</td>
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<td>Pärt, Arvo 50%/16.66%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Varèse, Edgard 83.3%/66.66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rakhmaninov, Sergey 50%/33.33%</td>
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<td>Elgar, Edward 33.33%/16.66%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Variance in public/private assessment, control:

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<th>Variance</th>
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<td>78.95%</td>
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<td>57.89%</td>
<td>-26.31%</td>
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<td>47.37%</td>
<td>-26.31%</td>
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<td>-26.31%</td>
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<td>-15.79%</td>
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<td>57.89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khachaturian, Aram</td>
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<td>52.63%</td>
<td>-15.79%</td>
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Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

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<th>Leicester School</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Var.</th>
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<tr>
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<td>100%/89.47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cowell, Henry</td>
<td>89.47%/78.95%</td>
<td>-10.35%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messiaen, Olivier</td>
<td>94.74%/84.21%</td>
<td>-10.35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wagner, Richard</td>
<td>100%/89.47%</td>
<td>-10.35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomson, Virgil</td>
<td>68.42%/57.89%</td>
<td>-10.35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kagel, Mauricio</td>
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<td>-10.35%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>21.05%/31.58%</td>
<td>+10.35%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>31.58%/21.05%</td>
<td>-10.35%</td>
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<td>78.95%/68.42%</td>
<td>-10.35%</td>
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<td>78.95%/68.42%</td>
<td>-10.35%</td>
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<td>36.82%/26.31%</td>
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<td>100%/94.74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harrison, Lou</td>
<td>63.16%/57.89%</td>
<td>-5.26%</td>
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<td>Musorgsky, Modest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rossini, Gioachino</td>
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Experimental variance between ‘Leicester School’ and others: AB public

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<td>Harrison, Lou</td>
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Experimental variance between ‘Leicester School’ and others: AB private

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Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

6b.2. Essential Composers

Essential Composers, Public

Experimental order

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<th>Experimental order</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Beethoven, Ludwig van 100%</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Schoenberg, Arnold 100%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wagner, Richard 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Debussy, Claude 100%</td>
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<td>Brahms, Johannes 100%</td>
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80-100%

<table>
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<th>Experimental order</th>
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<tr>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>Schumann, Robert 94.74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>83.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schubert, Franz 94.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Berg, Alban 94.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ives, Charles 89.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chopin, Fryderyk 89.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cage, John 84.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mahler, Gustav 84.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lennon and McCartney 84.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tchaikovsky, Pyotr 84.21%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Shostakovich, Dmitry 84.21%</td>
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Composers with variance of 50% and more, essential, public:

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<th>percent variance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rossini, Gioachino apub: 0%/78.95%</td>
<td>-78.95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mendelssohn, Felix apub: 0%/73.68%</td>
<td>-73.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puccini, Giacomo apub: 0%/73.68%</td>
<td>-73.68%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Britten, Benjamin apub: 0%/68.42%</td>
<td>-68.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shostakovitch, Dmitry apub: 16.66%/84.21%</td>
<td>-67.55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debussy, Claude apub:33.33%/100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardew, Cornelius apub: 66.6%/5.26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berlioz, Hector apub: 33.3%/94.74%</td>
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<td>Schubert, Franz apub: 33.33%/94.74%</td>
<td>-61.41%</td>
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<td>Babbitt, Milton apub: 0%/57.89%</td>
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<td>Bruckner, Anton apub: 0%/57.89%</td>
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<td>Penderecki, Krzyztof apub: 0%/57.89%</td>
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Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

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<th>Composers</th>
<th>Experimental order</th>
<th>Control Group Order:</th>
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<td>16.6%/73.68%</td>
<td>Schubert, Franz 94.74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chopin, Fryderyk</td>
<td>33.3%/89.47%</td>
<td>Schumann, Robert 84.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter, Elliott</td>
<td>0%/52.63%</td>
<td>Debussy, Claude 89.47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay</td>
<td>0%/52.63%</td>
<td>Beethoven, Ludwig van 84.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lennon and McCartney</td>
<td>33.33%/84.21%</td>
<td>Wagner, Richard 84.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tchaikovsky, Pyotr</td>
<td>33.33%/84.21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schoenberg, Arnold</td>
<td>50%/100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wagner, Richard</td>
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**Essential Composers, Private**

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**Control Group Order:**

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<td>Schumann, Robert</td>
<td>84.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debussy, Claude</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beethoven, Ludwig</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wagner, Richard</td>
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**60-80%**

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<tr>
<td>Satie, Erik</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webern, Anton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liszt, Franz</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Schoenberg, Arnold</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copland, Aaron</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berg, Alban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ives, Charles</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Webern, Anton</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chopin, Fryderyk</td>
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<td>Mendelssohn, Felix</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shostakovich, Dmitry</td>
<td>63.16%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Composers with variance of 50% and more, essential, private:**

| Schubert, Franz        | 0%/94.74% | -94.74% |
| Brahms, Johannes       | 0%/78.95% | -78.95% |
| Debussy, Claude        | 16.6%/89.47% | -72.81% |
| Berg, Alban            | 0%/68.42% | -68.42% |
| Copland, Aaron         | 0%/68.42% | -68.42% |
| Wagner, Richard        | 16.66%/84.21% | -67.55% |
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Difference</th>
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<td>Chopin, Fryderyk</td>
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<td>-63.15%</td>
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<td>Stravinsky, Igor</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>94.74%</td>
<td>-61.41%</td>
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<td>16.66%</td>
<td>68.42%</td>
<td>-51.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beethoven, Ludwig van</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>84.21%</td>
<td>-50.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6b.3. Perceived overrated or zero composers;
Unknown composers

Overrated Composers, public:

**Experimental order**

- Tavener, John 50%
- Babbitt, Milton 16.6%
- Beach, Amy 16.6%
- Boulez, Pierre 16.6%
- Brahms, Johannes 16.6%
- Carter, Elliott 16.6%
- Davies, Peter Maxwell 16.6%
- Ginastera, Alberto 16.66%
- Glass, Philip 16.66%
- Gorecki, Henryk 16.66%
- Ketèlbey, Albert 16.66%
- Messiaen, Olivier 16.66%
- Pärt, Arvo 16.66%
- Penderecki, Krzysztof 16.66%
- Rakhmaninov, Sergey 16.66%
- Stanford, Charles 16.66%

**Control Group Order:**

- Stanford, Charles 36.84%
- Brian, Havergal 21.05%
- Szymanowski, Karol 21.05%
- Wolff, Christian 21.05%
- Cardew, Cornelius 15.79%
- Khachaturian, Aram 15.79%
- Medtner, Nikolay 15.79%
- Morricone, Ennio 15.79%
- Wilson, Brian 15.79%
- Andriessen, Louis 10.53%
- Antheil, George 10.53%
- Berners, Lord 10.53%
- Bley, Carla 10.53%
- Ferneyhough, Brian 10.35%
- Grainger, Percy 10.35%
- Nono, Luigi 10.35%
- Reger, Max 10.35%
- Sorabji, Kaikhosru 10.35%
- Sullivan, Arthur 10.35%
- Young, La Monte 10.35%
- Tavener, John 5.26%
- Davies, Peter Maxwell 5.26%
- Glass, Philip 5.26%
- Gorecki, Henryk 5.26%
- Messiaen, Olivier 5.26%
- Pärt, Arvo 5.26%
- Alkan, Charles 5.26%
- Berry, Chuck 5.26%
- Bruckner, Anton 5.26%
- Budd, Harold 5.26%
- Busoni, Ferruccio 5.26%
- Crawford (Seeger), Ruth 5.26%
- Dylan, Bob 5.26%
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

Eisler, Hanns 5.26%
Ellington, Duke 5.26%
Feldman, Morton 5.26%
Kagel, Mauricio 5.26%
Lennon/McCartney 5.26%
Massenet, Jules 5.26%
Milhaud, Darius 5.26%
Nielsen, Carl 5.26%
Poulenc, Francis 5.26%
Riley, Terry 5.26%
Russolo, Luigi 5.26%
Sibelius, Jean 5.26%
Thomson, Virgil 5.26%
Weill, Kurt 5.26%
Xenakis, Iannis 5.26%

Overrated Composers, private:

Experimental order
Carter, Elliott 66.6%
Tavener, John 66.66%
Babbitt, Milton 50%
Brahms, Johannes 50%
Ginastera, Alberto 33.33%
Gorecki, Henryk 33.33%
Nielsen, Carl 33.33%
Adams, John 16.6%
Andriessen, Louis 16.6%
Beach, Amy 16.6%
Boulez, Pierre 16.6%
Britten, Benjamin 16.6%
Davies, Peter Maxwell 16.6%
Dylan, Bob 16.66%
Elgar, Edward 16.66%
Glass, Philip 16.66%
Massenet, Jules 16.66%
Messiaen, Olivier 16.66%
Meyerbeer, Giacomo 16.66%
Penderecki, Krzysztof 16.66%
Puccini, Giacomo 16.66%
Rakhmaninov, Sergey 16.66%
Stanford, Charles 16.66%
Strauss, Richard 16.66%
Wagner, Richard 16.66%

Control Group Order:
Glass, Philip 31.58%
Stanford, Charles 26.31%
Stockhausen, Karlheinz 26.31%
Ferneyhough, Brian 21.05%
Khachaturian, Aram 21.05%
Szymanowski, Karol 21.05%
Wolff, Christian 21.05%
Babbitt, Milton 15.79%
Boulez, Pierre 15.79%
Berry, Chuck 15.79%
Brian, Havergal 15.79%
Cage, John 15.79%
Cardew, Cornelius 15.79%
Reger, Max 15.79%
Sullivan, Arthur 15.79%
Xenakis, Iannis 15.79%
Carter, Elliott 10.35%
Gorecki, Henryk 10.35%
Adams, John 10.53%
Andriessen, Louis 10.53%
Britten, Benjamin 10.53%
Massenet, Jules 10.35%
Wagner, Richard 10.35%
Antheil, George 10.53%
Cowell, Henry 10.53%
Berners, Lord 10.53%
Gottschalk, Louis 10.35%
Grainger, Percy 10.35%
Ketèlbey, Albert 10.35%
Lennon/McCartney 10.35%
Medtner, Nikolay 10.35%
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

Milhaud, Darius 10.35%
Morricone, Ennio 10.35%
Nono, Luigi 10.35%
Pärt, Arvo 10.35%
Partch, Harry 10.35%
Riley, Terry 10.35%
Russolo, Luigi 10.35%
Takemitsu, Toru 10.35%
Thomson, Virgil 10.35%
Young, La Monte 10.35%
Tavener, John 5.26%
Dylan, Bob 5.26%
Elgar, Edward 5.26%
Messiaen, Olivier 5.26%
Alkan, Charles 5.26%
Bley, Carla 5.26%
Bruckner, Anton 5.26%
Budd, Harold 5.26%
Busoni, Ferruccio 5.26%
Crawford (Seeger), Ruth 5.26%
Eisler, Hanns 5.26%
Feldman, Morton 5.26%
Grieg, Edvard 5.26%
Liszt, Franz 5.26%
Mahler, Gustav 5.26%
Satie, Erik 5.26%
Schoenberg, Arnold 5.26%
Shostakovich, Dmitry 5.26%
Sibelius, Jean 5.26%
Varèse, Edgard 5.26%
Weill, Kurt 5.26%

Unknown Composers:

**Experimental Order**

- Budd, Harold 16.6%
- Morricone, Ennio 16.66%
- Wilson, Brian 16.66%

**Control Group Order:**

- Budd, Harold 78.95%
- Berners, Lord 57.89%
- Bley, Carla 52.63%
- Ketèlbey, Albert 52.63%
- Russolo, Luigi 47.37%
- Sorabji, Kaikhosru 47.37%
- Brian, Havergal 31.58%
- Cardew, Cornelius 26.31%
- Kagel, Mauricio 26.31%
- Morricone, Ennio 26.31%
- Wilson, Brian 26.31%
- Wolff, Christian 26.31%
- Alkan, Charles 21.05%
- Ferneyhough, Brian 21.05%
- Medtner, Nikolay 21.05%
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

Stanford, Charles 21.05%
Andriessen, Louis 15.79%
Young, La Monte 10.35%
Antheil, George 5.26%
Eisler, Hanns 5.26%
Feldman, Morton 5.26%
Gottschalk, Louis 5.26%
Grainger, Percy 5.26%
Harrison, Lou 5.26%
Khachaturian, Aram 5.26%
Partch, Harry 5.26%
Riley, Terry 5.26%
Takemitsu, Toru 5.26%

6b.4. Suggested Personal Favourites
(. means favourite for one work only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental list/marks</th>
<th>Control list</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alain, Jehan B/A</td>
<td>Anderson, Laurie A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argento, Dominick B/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold, Malcolm /B</td>
<td>Ashley, Robert B/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auric, Georges B/AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Balakirev, Mily A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barber, Samuel AABBB/AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barraqué, Jean /A</td>
<td>Bartók, Béla AAAAAA/AAAAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartók, Béla AB/BB</td>
<td>Bellini, Vincenzo A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bernstein, Leonard BB/B</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birtwistle, Harrison A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bizet, Georges AB/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bolcom, William BB/BB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borodin, Aleksandr A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boulanger, Lili A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boulanger, Nadia A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen, [presumably York] B/B</td>
<td>Byrne, David B/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brant, Henry B/A</td>
<td>Chaminade, Cécile B/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Mario 0</td>
<td>Chausson, Ernest A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chen Yi BB/BA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clementi, Muzio (to 1832) B/B</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coltrane, John B/B</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crumb, George A/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Currier, Sebastian 0/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dargomyzhsky, Aleksandr A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daugherty, Michael A/B</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Davis, Miles AA/A</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissevelt, Tom</td>
<td>Dohnányi, Erno A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donizetti, Gaetano A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dukas, Paul A/B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dvořák, Antonín AAB/AA</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eno, Brian A/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erkel, Ferenc A/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evans, Gil A/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fauré, G. AAABBB/AABBB</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fibich, Zdenek A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiinessy, Michael B/</td>
<td>Finzi, Gerald 0/b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Folió, Cynthia A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foss, Lukas B/B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franck, César /</td>
<td>Franck, César BB/AB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Godowsky, Leopold B/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gounod, Charles BB/AB</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gubaidulina, Sofia AB/AB</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Haba, Alois A/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hakim, Naji B/</td>
<td>Halévy, Fromental BB/AB</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hamel, Peter Michael b/b</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Harris, Roy B/B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Harvey, Jonathan A/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Herrmann, Bernard A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haubenstock-Ramati, Roman 0</td>
<td>Higdon, Jennifer B/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindemith, Paul AB/BB</td>
<td>Hindemith, Paul AAAB/AAAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hoiby, Lee B/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holst, Gustav B/B</td>
<td>Holst, Gustav B/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honegger, Arthur B/B</td>
<td>Hovhaness, Alan B/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ježek, Jaroslav A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jobim, Antônio C. (Tom) A/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joel, Billy (pop-turned art composer) 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joplin, Scott A/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kabalevsky, Dmitry B/</td>
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<td>Kancheli, Giya B/</td>
<td>Karłowicz, Mieczysław A/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Knussen, Oliver O/O</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Kodály, Zoltán B/B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Korngold, Erich Wolfgang A/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Krenek, Ernst A/A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leoncavallo, Ruggero /B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lloyd Webber, Andrew 0</td>
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<td>Lucier, Alvin B/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lutoslawski, Wiltold BB/B</td>
<td>Lutoslawski, Witold AAB/AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MacDowell, Edward B/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malipiero, Gian B/B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mamlok, Ursula A/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

Martin, Frank /A
Martucci, Giuseppi B/B
Mascagni, Pietro /B
Maw, Nicholas B/A
Mendelssohn, Fanny A/A
Menotti, Gian Carlo 0

Merikanto, Aarre /B
Mingus, Charles B/B
Mompou, Federic B/B
Moniuszko, Stanislaw A/A

Monk, Thelonius B/A
Musgrave, Thea /B

Nancarrow, Conlon A/B
Nørågard Per B/A
Novák, Vitezslav A/A
Oliveros, Pauline A/A
Ornstein, Leo BB/AB
Oster, Slavko A/A
Osterc, Otakar A/A
Persichetti, Vincent /B
Pfitzner, Hans b/b
Piazzolla, Astor A/A

Prokofiev, Sergey A/A
Prokofiev, Sergey AABB/AAAA
Piston, Walter B/B

Ravel, Maurice BA/AA
Ravel, Maurice AAAAB/AAAAAB

Reich, Steve A/B
Reich, Steve AAAAAB/AAAAAB

Rota, Nino B/B
Rouse, C (Charlie?) A/A
Rózsda, Miklós 0/A
Rubinstein, Anton A/A
Saariaho, Kajia A/A

Saint-Saëns, Camille B/B*
Saint-Saëns, Camille B/0

Schafer, R. Murray B/
Schaeffer, Pierre A/B

Schnittke, Alfred B/
Schmidt, Franz A/A
Schnittke, Alfred AB/A
Schulhoff, Erwin A/A
Schuman, William B/A
Schumann, Clara AB/A
Seeger, Pete A/A
Serov, Aleksandr A/A
Smalley, Denis A/A
Smetana, Bedrich AB/AA
Steiner, Max A/A
Ethyl Smyth A/
Stenhammar, Wilhelm 0/A
Strauss, Johann AA/A
Subotnick, Morton B/A
Suk, Josef A/A
Tailleferre, Germaine B/B
Tenney, James B/A
Appendix 6: Composer Survey Results

Tippett, Michael BB/BB
Tower, Joan A/B
Tsontakis, George B/A
Tveitt, Geirr B/A
Ustvol'skaya, Galina A/A

Vaughan Williams, Ralph B/B
Verdi, Giuseppe B/0
Villa-Lobos, Heitor B/A
Waits, Tom B/B

Weiner, Lazlar (sic., Lazar) /B
Weir, Judith B/

White, John A/B
Wolf, Hugo A/B
Zappa, Frank B/
Zemlinsky, Alexander von B/B
Zimmermann, B. A. B/B

Walton, William B/
Waxman, Franz B/B
Weber, Karl Maria von ABB/AB
Wein, Lazar (sic., Lazar) /B
Weir, Judith B/
Williams, John AB/AA
Wolf, Hugo ABBB/AB
Wyner, Yehudi /B
Zajc, Ivan A/A
Zemlinsky, Alexander A/A

6b.5. Comments on the survey from control group

Experimental composers were terse in their comments (one wrote, ‘I actually enjoyed doing it — gave me a chance to air my musical prejudices!’). However, the responses of the control group were fuller, and some of them appear below.

Respondent a:

In different types of courses, I would weight various composers more highly than I did. For instance, in a course meant to emphasize opera composers, Meyerbeer should not be left out while I feel he is of minimal influence on most of the remaining music world. Leoncavallo and Mascagni would also bear mentioning, where here I’ve added them as B composers.

Respondent b:

More popular music composers – except for Brian Wilson, Dylan and the Beatles, you have very few people born in the latter part of the previous century. Surely music history doesn’t stop at 1950? More women – you are really underrepresented in this list.

Respondent c:

A suggestion: pass your survey by a colleague in psychology or business marketing who has created a lot of surveys. Instructions and convention are keys to a successful survey. Your fascinating survey, I feel, is too novel in form
the way it stands and may lead to errors in response undetectable by you. It could be put on an online site if you have a little funding.

Respondent d:

I will try to find time to actually do your survey later, but it is hard to know what to make of a list of 100 composers that includes Harold Budd and Lord Berners but not Verdi, Bellini, or Donizetti. Luigi Ruffolo [sic.] but not Wolf. Albert Ketelby but not Prokofiev. Brian Wilson but not Ravel, etc. It seems to me that for the results of the survey to make sense, the starting list has to be more representative [It was explained that the survey was balanced in favour of a certain group and the respondent’s survey was completed and sent in].

Respondent e:

I’m currently working on your survey, which I will complete ASAP (I go through a few every time I sit down to do email). I’m not sure how much you want my prose opinion, but since you are doing research on people’s attitudes toward music, maybe you will want to hear mine.

I’m terribly disappointed that you don’t have more women on your list. Only 3 out of 100! A much larger percentage of the composers since Beethoven have considered themselves to be and have been considered by others to be composers. They will not be considered "important" unless they "influence" composers, theorists, and musicologists, but to do this we need to know about them. As educators we must try to break the cycle that keeps women out of the "canon."

You said that we could add some names at the end. I would suggest the following composers have affected at least me and my career and perhaps others as well. Perhaps some are too recent to be included in your study, though since McCartney is in there, perhaps not.

Respondent f (capitalisation the writer’s own):

Shame on you! not one single brazilian composer – not even Villa-Lobos. can you even name any others?

Respondent g:

I suspect it may have been an oversight, but I am moved to suggest that your list really ought to include the name of Gabriel Fauré, if only to more adequately reflect the contributions of French composers to Western music!

Respondent h:

Glad your response was so good – didn’t have time to answer before, and realize you don’t need a response now. Did want to point out the dearth of women in the list. Unfortunate. Looking forward to seeing results.
Respondent i:

I get the sense that this survey is measuring something else beside the perceived significance of these composers.
Take a stupid book. A reader reads aloud from it while the rest improvise. The role of reader may wander, a) through the reader presenting the stupid book to someone else, and b) by someone wresting the stupid book from the reader. A reader may attempt to terminate proceedings by ceasing to read aloud from the stupid book.

**Cornelius Cardew, Stupid Book Rite**

*Nature Study Notes*

Follow the movement of the needle on a playing gramophone (real or imaginary).

**Christopher Hobbs, Gramophone Rite**

*Nature Study Notes*
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