



University
of Glasgow

Heile, B. (2009) *Introduction: new music and the Modernist legacy*. In: Heile, B. (ed.) The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music. Ashgate, Farnham, pp. 1-11. ISBN 9780754662600

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/55053/>

Deposited on: 17 November 2011

INTRODUCTION

New Music and the Modernist Legacy

Björn Heile

In her ‘manifesto’ on contemporary poetry, *21st-Century Modernism*, Marjorie Perloff speaks of the ‘tired dichotomy that has governed our discussion of twentieth-century poetics for much too long: that between *modernism* and *postmodernism*. Indeed, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the latter term seems to have largely lost its momentum.’¹ Perloff sees a direct connection between the artistic experimentation of the early twenty-first century and the modernist avant-gardes almost exactly a hundred years earlier, stating in her very last sentence that ‘ours may well be the moment when the lessons of early modernism are finally being learned’.² The boldness of her claims is all the more startling if one considers that, in contrast to musicology where the term refers broadly to a movement or idea with permeable chronological boundaries, in Anglo-American literary studies, modernism is usually

¹ Marjorie Perloff, *21st-Century Modernism: The ‘New’ Poetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 1-2; italics in the original. The term ‘manifesto’ is determined by the series in which the book appeared, *Blackwell Manifestos*, and Perloff uses it in her ‘Acknowledgements’ (vii).

² *Ibid.*, p. 200.

regarded more strictly as a period encompassing roughly the years 1900-1940, so the notion of a twenty-first-century modernism is truly radical.³

Although widely accepted in neighbouring fields, the idea that postmodernism has lost momentum may come as a surprise to many musicologists. After all, the concept has only fairly recently found a home in music studies,⁴ and it was modernism that seemed dead and gone as a topic of musicological discourse not so long ago. Indeed, it is hard to dispel the suspicion that for many musicologists the attraction of postmodernism lay primarily in its seeming to offer an intellectual cover for anti-modernist sentiment: all of a sudden the familiar, basically conservative, resentment against modernism sounded fashionable, up to date and even ideologically progressive. In some ways, this has done more harm to the concept of postmodernism – which is far too complex and ambiguous in order to be reduced to either a simple chronological successor to modernism (its name alone brandishing it with the stigma of dependence and inferiority) or a crude antithesis to it – than to modernism, which would sooner or later re-emerge as a more multifaceted phenomenon than it was

³ The latter definition is used by such authoritative sources as Tim Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005) and Michael Levinson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁴ See, for instance, Joseph Auner and Judy Lochhead (eds), *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2002) and Lawrence Kramer, *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

given credit for.⁵ As the contributions to this volume, which started life as a collection of papers presented at the Fourth Biennial International Conference on Twentieth-Century Music 2005,⁶ show, times have changed, and in this sense at least, the book is part of a larger trend.⁷ What most scholars are interested in today is a historical reappraisal of musical modernism and its legacy, not a continuation of increasingly tired polemics.⁸ Rather than being a closed topic, it seems that only with a certain historical distance has it become possible to gauge what modernism really was about.

But there may be other reasons for this resurgence in interest: we live in an era of disorientation, musically speaking as well as culturally, ideologically and, indeed,

⁵ Again a comparison can be made to literary studies: see Michael Levenson, 'Introduction', *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, pp. 1-8.

⁶ The conference was held at the University of Sussex; it was generously supported by the British Academy, the *Music Analysis* Development Fund, the *Music & Letters* Trust, the School of Humanities (HUMS) of the University of Sussex and *twentieth-century music*. My own contribution is an exception since it was presented at the Third ICTCM, held in 2003 at the University of Nottingham.

⁷ See, for instance, Arved Ashby (ed.), *The Pleasure of Modernist Music: Listening, Meaning, Intention, Ideology* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004); Karol Berger and Anthony Newcomb (eds), *Music and the Aesthetics of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005) and Geoffrey Chew, 'Introduction: The Geography of Modernism: Reflections on the Theme "New Music for a New Europe"', in Chew (ed.), *New Music in the New Europe 1918-1938: Ideology, Theory, and Practice*, *Colloquia Musicologica Brunensia* 38 (2003) (Prague: Koniasch Latin Press, 2007), pp. 7-14.

⁸ That is not to say, of course, that anti-modernist rhetoric is a thing of the past: see, for instance, Susan McClary, 'The World According to Taruskin' [Review Article], *Music & Letters*, 87/3 (2006), pp. 408-15, in particular 414.

politically: it cries out for an analysis of its historical preconditions. The decline of postmodernism may be indicative of a change in the cultural and intellectual climate. It would be facile to invoke 9/11, the (second) Iraq war, the continuing or even exacerbated misery in the developing world (as well as in the darker recesses of the developed) or global warming; nevertheless, ours is a sober age, one that doesn't quite have the stomach for the kind of affirmation and celebration promoted by some branches of postmodernism. In retrospect, it seems hardly a coincidence that the latter had its heyday during the brief triumph of globalized capitalism after the fall of the Berlin wall: in this respect Fredric Jameson's analysis is prescient.⁹ What we have learned is that, although it does not provide all the answers, the dialectical critique advocated by modernism is something one gives up at one's peril.

Thus, the interest in modernism, as represented in this volume, has to do with the present situation which is both sufficiently removed from modernism's heyday as to enable historical analysis but at the same time intellectually reliant on modernism as to render such an analysis a pressing demand. Therefore, inasmuch as a common purpose can be imputed for such a collective endeavour, this book has a similar aim as Perloff's: analyzing the connections between recent music and the founding principles of modernism – with the difference that the history of modernism in music is constructed as a more continuous, albeit far from linear, trajectory than the one-hundred-year gap Perloff is at least implicitly presupposing. Furthermore, the concept of modernism that is mostly developed here is subject to historical change and

⁹ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

constant redefinition, not a monolithic entity: the last thing that is advocated is ‘neo-modernism’ or ‘retro-avant-garde’ (if there is a criticism of Perloff’s work, it would be that she is generally more precise about what links current poetry to its early modernist precursors, than on how it develops this heritage in a way that would justify for it to be regarded as *innovative*, which, surely, is the basic principle of the avant-garde; since the idea of a genealogy of stylistic traits is inimical to the very concept of the avant-garde, she runs the danger of assisting its reification).

It is no surprise that some of the contributors assembled here are primarily active as composers and performers, rather than as scholars. Furthermore, many are from a younger generation for whom the binary oppositions that have dogged twentieth-century music studies in the past, such as those between modernism and postmodernism, between conceptions of musical autonomy and of cultural contingency and between formalist-analytical and cultural-historical approaches, have become all but meaningless. While the depiction of musical modernism that emerges is on the whole more sympathetic than what has been prevalent in musicological discussions recently, this does not mean that the authors presented here are unanimous or uncritical. On the contrary, there is a considerable variety of viewpoints, including critiques of aspects of modernism, at times undertaken from positions that could be described as postmodernist. It is this kind of critical debate on modernism that the book is intended to foster.

There is no question, then, of going back to a supposedly golden age of musical modernism. Rather, what the essays in this volume endeavour is to reappraise aspects of modernist music, its strengths and weaknesses, not least in order to assess what can

be salvaged for the present and, indeed, the future. In this sense, modernism is here construed not as a closed historical period, but, as Habermas does with modernity, as an ‘incomplete project’.¹⁰ After all, the fact alone that it continues to exercise us shows that modernism is an ongoing concern, unfinished business: when have we last fought over romanticism? Saying this does not mean that all authors assembled here would necessarily share other aspects of Habermas’s analysis, not least since few would be prepared to go as far as Habermas in rejecting the lessons of postmodernism and the critique of modernism. For instance, the charge, notably made by Andreas Huyssen, of modernism’s elitism and antithetical stance towards mass culture, while not being quite as straightforward as is often claimed, particularly in musicological debates, is not without justification.¹¹ And it would be too simple to assume that we can inherit only the unproblematic traits of modernism and construe a poetics that is

¹⁰ Jürgen Habermas, ‘Modernity – An Incomplete Project’, in Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 3-15.

¹¹ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (London: MacMillan, 1986). Huyssen is following the distinction made by Peter Bürger between modernism and the avant-garde in his *Theory of the Avant-garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984); perhaps unfortunately, this distinction had little impact on musicology (although it is at times reminiscent of that between experimentalism and ‘mainstream’ modernism). The argument of an antithetical relation between modernism and popular music has been forwarded by Susan McClary in her ‘Terminal Prestige: the Case of Avant-garde Musical Composition’, *Cultural Critique*, 12 (1989), pp. 57–81; arguably the most fully developed form is Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

both liberatory and inclusive, critical and popular. As infuriating as it often is, Adorno's analysis of the dialectics of modernism teaches us that it is of necessity problematic, not least since it reflects a deeply problematic age.¹²

By employing the term modernist *legacy*, rather than modernism plain and simple, in the title, I wish to emphasize that the relation between the phenomena described here, many of which are from recent decades, to early or high modernism is frequently problematic and that there is no simple historical continuity or 'grand narrative' linking the 'heroic' modernism of the early twentieth century with the post-war avant-gardes as well as their putative successors in the early twenty-first century. What is required is a conscious act of reclaiming and re-appropriating and this must of necessity involve an element of critique. Every age and movement constructs its own genealogy, and the concept of modernism that is construed in these pages traces aspects of the present in the past, thereby to an extent legitimizing the former.

One way in which this collection distinguishes itself is by shifting the focus from the modernisms of the early twentieth century and the aftermath of World War II to those of more recent decades, from the 1970s onwards. This music has so far mostly been covered journalistically or analytically. By contrast, the essays here combine socially, historically and aesthetically oriented approaches with analytical methods in imaginative ways; it almost seems as if this music is being discussed in its full historical context for the first time. Needless to say, this approach increases the

¹² Cf. Max Paddison, *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture: Essays on Critical Theory and Music* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1996) and Alastair Williams, *New Music and the Claims of Modernity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997).

range of aspects that are normally discussed under the rubric of ‘modernism’. For instance, Eric Drott and Beate Kutschke sketch (very different) ways in which composers reacted to the emergence of the New Left in the 1960s, my own contribution discusses some of the ramifications of globalization for the concept of new music, particularly in the 1970s, and David Osmond-Smith analyses how Aldo Clementi reflects on the disappearance of the bourgeois practice of domestic music-making in his work. This thematic breadth is matched by the diversity of theoretical approaches brought to bear: while the legacy of critical theory continues to play an important role (notably in the contributions by John Croft and, at least implicitly, Osmond-Smith and Ian Pace), Kutschke follows a specifically German tradition in cultural studies (*Kulturwissenschaft*) and Drott employs the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, while Lois Fitch and myself make reference to the work of Gilles Deleuze. Although there is thus some variance to the concept of modernism as it is familiar from musicological scholarship, I believe that there is enough continuity, either deliberately established by composers and critics or implicit in their practice, to justify the term ‘modernist legacy’.

The – provisional – term that I suggest as a characterization for the diverse approaches to the modernist legacy outlined here is ‘critical modernism’. Instead of a simple chronological specification such as ‘early’, ‘high’ or ‘late’, the qualification is meant to convey a *qualitative* distinction from earlier forms of modernism. In the tradition of Walter Benjamin’s ‘redemptive critique’, ‘critical’ here refers to the kind of dialectical critique of modernism which, as mentioned earlier, is required for its re-

appropriation.¹³ At the same time, it signals a commitment to the foundational principle of critique that many of the contributors seem to regard as one of the most valuable aspects of modernism and one that is most in need of salvaging and preserving. What I have in mind is nothing quite as grand as a dialectical synthesis of modernism and its (postmodernist) antithesis (if such a thing were possible or even desirable), but a contribution to the attempt to think through the aesthetic and ideological underpinnings of the music of recent decades and to clear up some of the intellectual disorientation mentioned earlier. This position is not unlike that of Bürger when he writes (in a sadly overlooked critique of Adorno, notably his aesthetics of music):

Instead of propagating a break with modernism under the banner of the post-modern, I count on its dialectical continuity. That means that aesthetic modernism must also recognize as its own much that it has until now rejected. That is, no more tabooing of tonality, representation and traditional literary forms; but at the same time distrust of this material and of the appearance of substantiality which emanates from it. The recourse to past stocks of material must be recognized as a modern procedure, but also an extremely precarious one....¹⁴

¹³ See Peter Bürger, 'Walter Benjamin's "Redemptive Critique": Some Preliminary Reflections on the Project of a Critical Hermeneutics', in Bürger, *The Decline of Modernism* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), pp. 19-31; note in particular 27: 'these efforts [of preservation] are directed towards that which alone has shown itself under critical scrutiny to be worth preserving and to this extent *the act of preservation cannot be separated from critique*' [my emphasis].

¹⁴ Peter Bürger, 'The Decline of Modernism', in Bürger, *The Decline*, pp. 32-47: p. 46. As will be seen, Bürger's call for ending the taboo of tonality will be echoed by Andrew Timms in this volume, and his cautious re-engagement with history by John Croft (if on different terms).

This is perhaps the time to introduce the term ‘new music’. Like the commitment to modernism, the term seems controversial: we are used now to speak in a slightly mealy-mouthed way of ‘concert music’ or ‘contemporary classical music’ for fear of causing offence. However, just as in the case of ‘modernism’, I think that the claims inherent in the term ‘new music’ are worth spelling out. While he did not invent the term, it was defined most comprehensively by Paul Bekker in 1919 (he did of course use the German *Neue Musik* – variously capitalized and with or without quotation marks).¹⁵ For Bekker, music was truly new if it fully reflected its own time; this he saw as something like a moral obligation in conjunction with the necessary spiritual renewal after the Great War, and he legitimized these ideas with comparisons to parallel developments in the other arts, mentioning notably futurism and cubism as examples of this ‘new intellectual movement’ [*neue Geistesbewegung*].¹⁶ While this implies a demand for constant innovation, Bekker was highly critical of the idea of artistic progress, which he regarded as an outdated element of nineteenth-century

¹⁵ Paul Bekker, ‘Neue Musik’ [I], in Bekker, *Neue Musik: Dritter Band der gesammelten Schriften* (Stuttgart/Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1923), pp. 85-118. A much shorter and probably later version appeared as ‘Neue Musik’ [II], in *Musik der Gegenwart: Eine Flugblätterfolge*, Nr. 1 (without date), 4 pages, ed. *Musikblätter des Anbruch*.

¹⁶ Bekker, ‘Neue Musik’ [I], p. 87; cf. Christoph von Blumröder, *Der Begriff “neue Musik” im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Katzbichler, 1981), pp. 36-49.

thinking.¹⁷ In common with other commentators from the time, for Bekker, the antithesis of the new was romanticism.¹⁸

Interestingly, Bekker explicitly formulated his ideas as a riposte to nationalist demands for ‘a new German music’ which (in the words of an unnamed Berlin critic) would be ‘purified’ from all the ‘unhealthy elements [which] foreign countries [*das Ausland*] have introduced into German music’.¹⁹ Writing from the front in 1914, Bekker, an active soldier, responded by stating:

[W]e expect from [‘the new German music’ – the term employed by Bekker’s opponent] that it does not narrow-mindedly proclaim any principles which, in the final analysis, are only aimed at giving the mentally challenged a free ride as ‘patriotic’ [‘*vaterländische*’] artists. We expect from it that it should not further rip open the wounds that the peoples strike one another, but that it should heal them, that it should transform the streams of blood that now flow from country to country in veins of a warm and actively pulsating vitality and transform all, victor and defeated, into new, richer human beings. For we too will and must not remain those that we have been before. The great process of amalgamation of cultured humanity [*Kultur Menschheit*], which has now started, must find us ready for change, and the arts, particularly music, are called upon to help us find the new forms of our being.²⁰

While in his earlier years such sentiments seem to have been a considered judgement almost against his own deeper instincts for Bekker, who was not immune to nationalist rhetoric (the same article features some unfortunate examples), his anti-

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁹ Paul Bekker, ‘Kunst und Krieg: Zwei Feldpostbriefe’, in Bekker, *Kritische Zeitbilder* (Berlin: Schuster & Loeffler, 1921), (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1), pp. 177-97: 178.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 182.

nationalism (and disdain for anti-semitism) became more pronounced in later years.²¹ He remained undogmatic and open-minded: for him, Stravinsky was as important as a progenitor of new music as Schoenberg, and Debussy as crucial for the precursor to new music, which Bekker termed 'modern music', as Mahler. As von Blumröder demonstrates, it is Bekker's concept of an internationalist, critical and innovative new music that nationalists and, later, the Nazis fought against, that Adorno based his theories on (which von Blumröder is highly critical of on account of their dogmatism) and that crucially informed the post-war re-establishment of new music. This concept of new music is of course largely synchronous with, if not directly dependent on, notions of modernism, but – at least in Bekker's coinage, if not in Adorno's – it manages to avoid many of the pitfalls of the latter concept. As it seems to me, the basic claims that Bekker established are as current and as valuable at the beginning of the twenty-first century as they were almost a hundred years ago; in that sense, the genealogy of the modern in music debated here is congruent with that in poetry

²¹ For examples of Bekker's anti-nationalism, see his 'Die Weltgeltung der deutschen Musik' (1920), in *Neue Musik*, pp. 119-56 and his response to a chauvinist (among other things) polemic by Hans Pfitzner, 'Impotenz oder Potenz? Eine Antwort auf Herrn Professor Dr. Hans Pfitzner' (1920), in *Kritische Zeitbilder*, pp. 310-26. The nationalist rhetoric in the first letter from 'Krieg und Kunst' may also be related to censorship or the editorial policy of the paper in which the text was published. Although his position was quite clear, as Pfitzner's personal attack proves, Bekker always, even in writings such as 'Neue Musik' [I], tried to remain conciliatory and inclusive and shied away from political statements and inflammatory rhetoric.

discussed by Perloff. Here, then, is a historical continuity that is worth cherishing and worth transmitting towards the future.

* * *

Andrew Timms starts proceedings with a comprehensive, wide-ranging and revisionist critique of the equation of musical modernism with atonality in music historiography. This, Timms argues, is a convenient ideological construction that treats modernism as the end of history, thereby limiting modernist music and its appeal and playing into the hands of its postmodernist detractors.

Where Timms is dealing with modernism from a historical perspective, John Croft is primarily interested in praxis, namely in the question of how to reinvest the 'resistance to the intolerable accumulation of cultural detritus', which he regards as lying at the heart of 'the modern', with a new impetus. While he professes admiration for the position of negativity that he finds realized in the work of Helmut Lachenmann, he, in a final dialectical manoeuvre influenced by the music of Salvatore Sciarrino and the thought of Giorgio Agamben, moves beyond that and towards a utopian vision 'of a poetics beyond sign-play and sound-play in which fragments of the lost past are reinvested with a relation to lived experience' and a music which 'might discover a utopian function with regard to our relation to the past, to our bodies, to the environment and to others'.

In his contribution, Eric Drott illustrates how the spectralists, possibly one of the last self-proclaimed 'movements' in music history, consistently used the rhetoric of the New Left to set themselves against the post-war avant-garde, the latter identified with the 'Old Left' within the compositional sphere. Following this

homology they regarded themselves as standing in the same relation to the preceding generation of composers as the new social movements of the 1970s stood towards, in the French context, the communist party (PCF) and its affiliated trade union (CGT). As Drott demonstrates, the very language of their writings is, whether implicitly or explicitly, permeated with political and ideological metaphors.

Where Drott, following Bourdieu, describes the relation of music to politics in the spectralists' work as a homology, in Gerhard Stäbler's work, as Beate Kutschke demonstrates, political and ideological action to a large extent determines compositional aesthetics and praxis. While Stäbler's background in the New Left is similar to that of the spectralists, a composition such as *drüber...*, Kutschke argues, cannot be adequately understood solely aesthetically but has to be interpreted in the context of the debates held among the New Left during the 1970s, notably concerning the rediscovery of the body and the re-attainment of man's 'first' (pre-civilized) nature as well as, more specifically, the reception of Arthur Janov's 'primal therapy'.

Ian Pace argues that the terms used to speak and write about contemporary music are frequently hostage to intellectual complacency, clichés and unacknowledged assumptions and biases. While the familiar circular reasoning, whereby the aesthetic criteria derived from the music of the past are applied to the music of the present, is to a certain extent inescapable, Pace points out that the application of unreflected and inappropriate criteria for value judgement becomes doubly pernicious in the intersecting domains of state support and the cultural marketplace.

The section on 'New Music, Social Debates and the Aesthetics of Critical Modernism' is concluded by my own contribution in which, paying particular attention to the influence of Marshall McLuhan on Karlheinz Stockhausen, I investigate the impact of globalization on new music on the basis of the concept of *Weltmusik*, introduced in Germany in the 1970s. The essay is framed by a discussion of some of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas, such as 'rhizome' and 'territorialization', which might help to conceptualize the globalized nature of new music and bridge the gap between historical and geographical approaches in musicological and ethnomusicological traditions.

The second section, 'Aspects of Compositional Poetics', is given over to readings of individual composers or works, thus complementing the wider-ranging approaches of the first section with in-depth case studies. Writing on the unjustly neglected (in Britain) Aldo Clementi, David Osmond-Smith continues Pace's critique of the discourse of new music, positing – in polished and stylish writing – that what he calls the 'hermeneutic itch', whereby 'token words' are expended to somehow explain man-made objects, does little justice to the enigma that Osmond-Smith finds in Clementi's work. In a critique of Benjamin's 'aesthetic of distraction', Osmond-Smith argues that enigma, by retaining distance, perhaps paradoxically creates a kind of intimacy that is the obverse of the false familiarity produced by the 'entertainment industry'. This enigmatic quality is encapsulated in Clementi's use of canon techniques, by means of which, he, according to Osmond-Smith, 'creates a theatre of our misrouted impulse toward intimacy, toward reciprocal empathy'. Canon is an intimate social game played out in front of an audience put in the position of voyeurs,

and it thus dramatizes the passivity of listening which is exacerbated by the demise of amateur music-making. Although this emphasis on loss puts Clementi in the tradition of modernist melancholia, Osmond-Smith demonstrates that he remains true to modernism's registering of the contemporary human predicament.

The relation between memory and subjectivity, which Osmond-Smith evokes with reference to Proust, is further elaborated by Catherine Laws who discusses the function of patterning and repetition in the work of Morton Feldman, Samuel Beckett and Jasper Johns, thus highlighting the inter-medial cross-fertilizations characteristic of modernist art (also touched upon by Osmond-Smith). These three artists, working in the fields of music, literature and painting respectively, were involved in dual relations that form a triangular pattern with each being individually linked to the other two (Feldman – Beckett, Feldman – Johns, Johns – Beckett). Where they coincide is in their fascination for the function of memory and its role in the formation of subjectivity.

Subjectivity is also a theme in Lois Fitch's contribution, since it represents arguably the most pressing concern in Adorno's conception of modernism which, as Fitch points out, is a crucial influence on the work of Brian Ferneyhough. Where her chapter breaks new ground, though, is in positing the equally powerful counter-influence of Gilles Deleuze. Reading the two very different philosophers against one another, she finds surprising parallels, notably in their notions of immanence. Interpreting the new-found expressivity and sensuousness of Ferneyhough's work from the 1980s onwards as an implicit critique of the limitations of Adornean

dialectics, she focuses on Deleuze's idea of the 'figural' in Francis Bacon's paintings as a valuable term for the discussion of Ferneyhough's music.

John Dack concentrates on an often overlooked aspect of the European post-war avant-garde, namely the intersection between the seemingly antithetical worlds of electronic music and open form. As he demonstrates, Henri Pousseur's electronic pieces *Scambi* and *Huit études paraboliques* are in open form and this represents an integral part of their compositional conception. In this sense, the shapes given to them by the composer are just examples, and Pousseur foresaw people creating their own versions: there is indeed a version of *Scambi* created by Luciano Berio. While this conception was somewhat utopian given the limited availability and general clunkiness of the technology at the time, it seems visionary in retrospect in the context of today's vibrant culture of digital remixing and laptop improvisation. Thus, where Osmond-Smith accused the recording industry of being responsible for the demise of domestic music-making, Dack describes how that very industry provides the tools for a new kind of amateur praxis whose roots he uncovers.

The volume is rounded off by two analytical studies which both home in on the fascination with time and rhythm in modernist music and thought. Mark Delaere sketches Harrison Birtwistle's fascination for medieval music – another recurring element of modernism – in his *Hoquetus Petrus*. As he demonstrates, Birtwistle's composition establishes an intertextual network that not only extends to Guillaume de Machaut's *Hoquetus David* but also to the dedicatee of the composition, Pierre Boulez (the Petrus of the title), as well as to György Ligeti. In contrast to Ligeti, whose use of hocket in his Violin Concerto Delaere describes as postmodernist since

it tends to efface historical distance through the use of pastiche-like procedures, Birtwistle remains true to the idea of modernist rupture by emphasizing the gulf separating his own time from that of Machaut – in ways that may profitably be compared to the ‘connection between estrangement and immediacy’ which re-orient the subject in history that John Croft speaks of.

Finally, Ève Poudrier illuminates the enormously elaborate structuring of metre, rhythm and pulse in Elliott Carter’s *90+* for piano and reflects on the role of these structures in reception, including that of pitch structure. Tracing a genealogy connecting Carter with Stravinsky, Nancarrow and Ligeti, she explicitly links their revolutionary conceptions of musical time to the fragmentation and alienation of subjective experience in modernity.