# Darmstadt and Its Discontents

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## 1.

Just as there had been art which—before the 1970s, before Michael Asher, Marcel Broodthaers, or Hans Haacke—might have been characterised as falling within the ambit of institutional critique, so there were musical precedents in the post-war avant-garde metonymised in the name Darmstadt. The most prominent event that might be viewed in this light is inevitably John Cage's visit to the Darmstadt courses in 1958, perhaps at its zenith in his implicit criticism of any institution which might privilege theoretical reflection over listening:

> Which is more musical, a truck passing by a factory or a truck passing by a music school?
> Are the people inside the school musical and the ones outside unmusical?
> What if the ones inside can't hear very well, would that change my question?
> Do you know what I mean when I say inside the school? (Cage 1968 [1958], 41)[1]

Pointed though Cage's question may have been, his lectures also, perhaps more pertinently, blurred the line between whether they really were lectures or were, themselves, artworks. Position-taking with respect to Cage was the flashpoint for one of Darmstadt's most notorious clashes: while Karlheinz Stockhausen had implicitly shown his support for approaches which riffed on Cage's indeterminate notations, in his 1959 *Musik und Graphik* lecture series, Luigi Nono made no less clear in his presentation "The Presence of the Past in the Music of the Present"

[1] For a fuller account of Cage's visit, see Iddon 2013, 196–228.

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that, even if Cage might know what he was doing, his epigones seemed often to be using indeterminate notations more or less because performers of the quality of David Tudor seemed able to spin gold out of them (Iddon 2013, 231–52 & 255–60).

Yet for all Cage apparently caused European composers to orient themselves with respect to him, his impact in institutional terms was relatively small, perhaps by virtue of how straightforward it was to quarantine him, safely, as an outsider—an American cowboy—whose opinions regarding the infrastructure of the old country's new music scene could be regarded as entertaining but fundamentally irrelevant. That said, perhaps there was, too, an underpinning fear that he might have had a point, made visible in the unofficial ban on his presence at Darmstadt through the tenure of the second director of the courses, Ernst Thomas, for whom the sign-sound relation encoded in the score acted as a guarantee that he was not being taken for a ride (Thomas 1959). In many respects, the Contre-Festival in Mary Bauermeister's Cologne Studio in 1960, though both conceived explicitly in opposition to the International Society for New Music's annual festival, held in the same city, is similar, in the sense that it had to be undertaken outwith the institutions of new music, with almost the only contact between the officially sanctioned festival and Bauermeister's the presence in both of Tudor, who premiered Stockhausen's *Kontakte* on 11 June 1960, before a few days later, on 15 June 1960, in a sort of *salon des refusés*, performing the music of Cage, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Sylvano Bussotti, George Brecht, La Monte Young, and Christian Wolff. Other members of the broader Stockhausen circle—including Aloys Kontarsky and Christoph Caskel—ultimately performed at the atelier and Stockhausen himself attended concerts there, surely in part trying to have a foot in both camps, a part of the 'official' avant-garde, but simultaneously opposed to it (Zahn 1993).

To speak of Kontarsky and Caskel as part of the Stockhausen circle is, too, to misrepresent, at least a little: they were no less close at the time, to Mauricio Kagel. Kagel's *Sur scène* (1959–60) blurs the distinction between presentation and representation of musical performers: an actor plays the part of an audience member—largely unimpressed by either the music or the audience 'proper'—while a speaker takes on the role of critic, who delivers a second-hand collage of sources, from the pretentious to the profane; three instrumentalists play the roles of performers, such that the moments when they do play notes take on the guise not only of the performance of rehearsal, but even seem to do so in quotation marks. Though premiered in Bremen the previous year, *Sur scène* was also the closing piece of the 1963 Darmstadt Ferienkurse: Kagel's description of the piece—and particularly the role of the critic—as a "reaction to the academicism of Darmstadt" leads Heile to conclude, rightly, that its position in the programme made it seem "a distorting mirror of the whole event" (Heile 2006, 40). Yet the object of this discontent is a stark reminder that, to the extent there was criticism of the institution to be had in the 1960s, it largely went only so far as to wish that Darmstadt might be less boring, recollecting Cardew's note the following year that Darmstadt represented "an excellent Academy [where] where problems like Notation and

Electronic Sound are competently handled in a rather academic way" (Cardew 1964), or Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski's more biting 1966 judgement: "a prosaic works convention" (Lewinski 1966). In this context, *Sur scène* might be read, above all, as a complaint about how dull it was to hear senior German intellectuals deliver their (all too) serious thoughts on the subject of new music.

## 2.

It was not tedium which led to real friction, but authority. In 1968, Thomas and Stockhausen felt the need to redact critical student responses to the ways in which Stockhausen had run his composition course that year. Against the apparently egalitarian ideas that might seem to have lain behind both intuitive music more generally and the collective approach to composition that the *Musik für ein Haus* project specifically seemed to embrace, the students felt that Stockhausen had been doctrinaire, regarding how they went about devising their intuitive scores, how those scores would be combined in collective performance, and what performers were expected (or, even, allowed) to do with them. Yet, through the ministries of senior composer and institution, those critical voices are absent from the publication devoted to the course (Iddon 2004).

The following year, it was impossible to hide away criticism of Stockhausen. His seminars that year focussed on the intuitive music of his *Aus den Sieben Tagen* (1968) pieces, performed jointly by his own ensemble and the trombonist Vinko Globokar's New Phonic Art. Globokar himself argued that, so far as he was concerned, there was little distinction of note to be made between what happened when he improvised and when he was guided by Stockhausen's texts and, moreover, that if what Stockhausen truly wanted was intuition, then the ways in which he manipulated sound at the mixing desk—highlighting, for instance, what he would like to hear more of—militated directly against this. The apparent breach of protocol—a performer taking issue so stridently with the composer whose music they were performing—may well have been related to the former Nono student Helmut Lachenmann's provocative question to Globokar: when he played these pieces, from which of Stockhausen's fingers did he hang? Globokar had little intention of being thought anyone's puppet (Cavallotti 2020).

By 1970, participants at Darmstadt had brought their discontent into public, holding open meetings not only to make clear their objections to the direction Darmstadt had taken, but also to propose concrete actions. Above all, the participants seem to have felt that the aesthetic direction of the courses was too limited, especially because of Stockhausen's centrality, and that part of the core reason for those limits was how out of touch the leadership—Thomas, that is—was with what young composers were interested in. The excessive, as it seemed, authority of both senior figures was a bone of contention. The demands appear, at this distance, rather moderate: more time spent learning to compose, in seminar and group learning contexts; in those same group contexts, a breaking down of the divisions between composition and performance and, too, between notated

and improvised approaches to both; increased diversity, especially in terms of internationalisation, both among participants and faculty; more opportunities for participants to play a democratic role in the institution. The participant meeting elected a delegation to put their suggestions for change to Thomas, which included Bauermeister and Caskel, as well Reinhard Oehlschlägel, Rudolf Frisius, Ernstalbrecht Stiebler, and Nicolaus A. Huber, whose expertise encompassed journalism in print and on radio, musicology, and composition. Huber had a personal reason to feel aggrieved since, although his *Versuch über Sprache* (1969) had been awarded a prize at that year's courses, the first time a prize for composition had been awarded at Darmstadt, it was a second prize. The implication was that the jurors felt that no composition was of sufficient quality to merit a first prize. There were rumours that Huber's principal offence was to have taken part of the text for the piece from Marx (Iddon 2006, 257–63).[2]

Contrary to the general perception of Thomas as a rather staid, unimaginative, and diffident leader, he did act, revising the structure of the courses over a 'fallow' year in 1971, before the courses took on a regular biennial pattern from 1972. Though there was no democratisation—on the contrary, Thomas instituted an advisory board of new music luminaries: Caskel, Kontarsky, and the cellist, Siegfried Palm—he did institute a new studio space for composers to develop new work, a space in which composers could work collaboratively and do so in dialogue with faculty members: in the first year, the composition studio was run jointly by Lachenmann and former Stockhausen Ensemble member, David Johnson. In previous years, the lecture-led format of the courses had created the impression that faculty members largely spoke to—or worse *at*—rather than with participants. Despite this, the three dissenters who worked most prominently as journalists of various kinds, Oehlschlägel, Frisius, and Stiebler, found themselves—in Stiebler's case, only briefly—barred from the courses, on account of having been involved in the (attempted) distribution of a pamphlet which seems to have been less scurrilous than a blanket ban would suggest. The three demanded, among other things, increased discussion of political aesthetics, a reduction in the centrality of established composers, and an elected advisory panel, to replace Thomas's *selected* one. In response, Kontarsky insisted that politics *had* been a significant focus, in lectures delivered by Carl Dahlhaus, Reinhold Brinkmann, and György Ligeti, not least, as well as in the premiere of Huber's *Harakiri* (1971) (Iddon 2006, 267–74).

By rights, *Harakiri* ought to have been premiered earlier in 1972, but its commissioner Clytus Gottwald had rejected it. Huber's earlier *Informationen über die Töne e–f* (1965–66) reduced its material to a tiny pitch band which it exploded, revealing its interior life. By contrast, *Harakiri* exhibits a deep cynicism about the ability of musical material to *express*—"the acoustical even does not establish

[2] Although the LP release of *Versuch über Sprache* claims that it won that year's Kranichstein Musikpreis, this is untrue, since that prize was not awarded for composition until the next instance of the courses, in 1972.

itself immediately as music. In this respect it is not music. […] I made it difficult to mistake what are presented as elements of music as music itself" (Kutschke 2009, 84)—through a similar reduction: the opening ten minutes of the piece centres around an extremely quiet and unfocussed—in fact, unfocussable—drone, created via thirteen violins, playing their open A strings, detuned by over two octaves to the G-flat at the bottom of the bass staff. Throughout this whole section, the music actively performs its own inability to speak: from Huber's perspective, music's noble suicide might open up a self-reflective space in which it could, at least, reveal the ways in which listening to music *as music* prevented engagement with live political problems; to Gottwald, it looked more like a hitjob (Kutschke 2009). In this sense, Huber's music looks like a sort of prototype for precisely the sort of critique that would prove to be unwelcome at Darmstadt for the rest of the decade.

The newly instituted composition studios had presented the work of younger composers in concert, many of whom would become established over the next few years: Michaël Levinas, Wolfgang Rihm, Clarence Barlow, Horațiu Rădulescu, and Gillian Bibby among them, the last of whom would be one of the joint winners of the first Kranichstein Musikpreis awarded for composition in the same year. There were many more informal performances of new work during the studio sessions themselves, often including senior performers, as in Nicole Rodrigue's *Nasca* (1972), which involved both Caskel and Kontarsky, as well as Michel Portal, and was conducted by Globokar. The material demands of the protests having been met, perhaps it is no surprise that Kontarsky was unconvinced by the insistence that he ought to be replaced by an elected representative of the participants, not least since relatively few participants returned year after year. In combination, this suggests that though the protests were demanding things of the leadership, the only acceptable response would have to be one which originated *outside* the territory occupied by the leadership.

## 3.

Arguably, the composition studios had precisely the scope to become this space, even if that was not obvious in their first year. By 1974 it was rather better known than it had been in 1972 that intractable rifts had developed in the Stockhausen camp. Then, it would have been eminently possible to think that the studio leadership continued to mirror Darmstadt's own institutional history: Lachenmann standing for his teacher, Nono; Johnson standing for his former collaborator, Stockhausen. In 1974, Rolf Gehlhaar, himself formerly Stockhausen's assistant, took over running the studios. The usual critical press voices pointed to the ways in which Gehlhaar made use of process plans, which seemed reminiscent of Stockhausen's process plans for, for instance, *Prozession* (1967) or *Kurzwellen* (1968) (Frisius 1974). Frisius's description of this does not note, though, that the process plans Gehlhaar used were—recognisably, and not only because of the copyright notice—Feedback Studio process plans, the Cologne Feedback

Studio having been set up precisely by Gehlhaar, Johnson, and Johannes Fritsch in dissatisfaction with the direction their work with Stockhausen had been taking, especially after the inevitable exhaustion of a months-long stay in Japan in 1970 (Fritsch 2010 [1993], 40).[3] Nor does it acknowledge that part of that dissatisfaction stemmed precisely from a sense that, in a parallel with Globokar's complaints, their involvement in Stockhausen's process pieces ought, by rights, to have given them a stake in the compositional ownership of those processes.

Stockhausen's personal authority fomented more dissent in 1974. His demands for total, rapt attention to his seminars led him to suspend a participant for—accounts vary—having arrived late or seeking to leave early, perhaps because of feeling unwell or to get some water, on account of the extreme heat in the unventilated hall, or because he already had a practice room booked. In response, Gerhard Stäbler, Johannes Vetter, and Jürgen Lösche produced a pamphlet under the auspices of the self-styled Initiative for the Foundation of a Society of Socialist Makers of Art, which critiqued Stockhausen's demands for seeming absolute authority and deference, and, perhaps more devastatingly, organised a walk-out of Stockhausen's next seminar (Iddon 2008).

Stockhausen might have been to some extent perplexed by the degree to which attacks were directly at him personally. From his perspective, it may have seemed only a few years ago that he was part of the crowd kicking against institutional pricks, even if the way in which he had—in 1960's attendance at the Contre-Festival, say—tried to position himself outside, while still very much taking advantage of, the establishment surely looks, with more critical distance, cynical. It is precisely on this fracture that the events of the 1974 courses rest, including the ways in which they present a possible alternate future for new music which never came to pass.

Stockhausen's major new piece—*Herbstmusik* (1974)—in many respects feels like it is intimately in touch with the mood of disquiet. The first three of its four movement titles are literal descriptions of the on-stage events: "nailing a roof", "breaking wood", "threshing". In its last—"leaves and rain"—a tussle in the leaves between clarinettist and violist becomes apparently consensually erotic—if musically metaphorised, Stockhausen suddenly somehow bashful—in a closing duet. In the abstract, this might be thought of as a piece concretely figuring the problematics of ideas of musical autonomy, insulated against the realities of lived, and living, experience. Though Stockhausen's name was attached to the piece, *Herbstmusik* feels, too, like the devising process is still visible in performance. One way of reading the piece is that it also seeks, if a little ham-fistedly, to undo the authority of the composer through collectivity, *revealing* the collectivity that was at play in the *Aus den Sieben Tagen* performances, but which Stockhausen struggled to admit. This was certainly not the view taken by those who

[3] Fritsch points out, too, that Stockhausen endeavoured to persuade the rights agency, GEMA, to pay musicians a higher fee for performances of pieces where they had an increased level of creative involvement, on the model of jazz musicians, but was unsuccessful.

encountered the piece, though: any critique was invisible to Gustav Adolf Trumpff (1974), for whom the theatrical elements failed to obscure that the music—music and theatre apparently neatly separable in his view—was "thin", while Lewinski (1974b) cuttingly noted that the quality of the performers was rather greater than that of the composer. Hans-Klaus Jungheinrich (1974) struck at the heart of things when he noted that the final movement may well have been satyrical, but it was not satirical. He also, bitingly, observed that it was the anonymous stagehands who cleared the stage afterwards who were responsible for the most important job of work. This in combination with the student protest was the trigger for Stockhausen to be ejected from the courses, in which he had been (at least one of) the dominant figure(s) since the 1950s. The idea of an individual *so* entwined with the institution offering such a blunt critique of that institution was unfortunately—and to a pretty large extent literally—laughable. Perhaps part of the problem was that Stockhausen did not seem to think it might be funny.

The waning—if not total collapse—of Stockhausen's star definitionally opened up space for others, just the sort of space that protests against the institution had been calling for. Perhaps ironically, the most immediately obvious candidates were undertaking work explicitly critical of the institutional presumptions of new music in ways which at least touched the field occupied, unsuccessfully, by *Herbstmusik*. Arguably the best of these, one of the stand-out pieces of the 1974 Ferienkurse, was Moya Henderson's *Clearing the Air* (1974), composed and performed as a part of Gehlhaar's composition studios. As the piece began, it could have been mistaken for something almost wholly recognisably new musical: the double bassist, Fernando Grillo, seemed to be accompanied by a fixed tape part, diffused through four—at the time stereotypically—over-sized loudspeakers, which interfered with what Henderson described as Grillo's "exotic, high-pitched extravagances" (quoted in Kouvaras 2016, 90). Yet the acute listener might already have thought that the fidelity of the electronic sound was too high, that the speakers reproduced acoustic sounds too perfectly. That listener would not have long to wait to have their suspicions confirmed: the live performers concealed inside the speakers—Christina Kubisch (flute), Davide Mosconi (oboe or, possibly, mizmar), Gehlhaar (clarinet), and Henderson herself (didgeridoo)—began to cut their way out of the paper speaker cones, before advancing, threateningly, on all fours according to Herbert Henck's account, towards Grillo with the same scissors they had used to escape their electronic prisons. Just at the point at which they raised their scissors, the lights were cut and the piece ended (Reese 2021, 54).

That same group was the source of no shortage of critiques of the environment and presumptions of new music. Kubisch's *Divertimento* (1974) asked five pianists—at the same instrument—to play the same, increasingly complex, material, at different tempi. These tempi were provided to the pianists via what would now seem a simple means—in-ear click tracks—but which at the time involved Kubisch in some rather complicated manipulation of physical tape and the performers with obtrusive headphones. The piece represented, as Kubisch described it, "a parody of the precise demands of new music, which often leave little scope to the performers for interpretation. In contrast was the rather absurd image of

five men at one piano, slaving away at the instrument while wearing headphones" (ibid.). One of the pianists was Davide Mosconi, whose *3 For* (1973) operates in not unrelated territory: here there are three pianists and one piano. The instructions of the third pianist ask them to move the piano in ways which make it impossible for the first to carry out the actions on the keyboard and pedals asked of them. The second pianist, having smoked a cigarette, waits in the curve of the instrument until the first pianist is inevitably unseated by the third, and then helps them off stage. Grillo's own *Itesi* (1974) was composed for double bass and dancer, performed by the composer himself and Muriel Jaer. According to one of the courses most regular reviewers, Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski, Grillo was not disturbed by the noise of audience dissatisfaction with a piece which concentrated on finding different ways to generate sound from the double bass—under the strings, on the nut, a set of "circus effects", Lewinski thought—even if one's jaw might drop to read Lewinski's assertion that it was fortunate there was so much to watch Grillo do since Jaer was "no eye candy" (Lewinski 1974a). As Lewinski's later review of the courses as a whole made clear, "music as theatrical action" should be understood as no less critical of the Darmstadt institution, no less a reaction against the status quo, than explicit protests against Stockhausen. The young composers may have been "clueless", in Lewinski's view, but the fault lay with their teachers (Lewinski 1974c).

It was Henderson who would be the principal winner of 1974's Kranichstein Music Prize. On a certain reading—since the inaugural 1972 award was split equally three ways, between Bibby, Helmut Cromm, and Martin Gellhorn—Henderson's win of the major award in 1974 brought the last, and only occasion on which an equal gender balance was achieved. This did not seem to be a cause for celebration at the time: Frisius, admittedly one of Thomas's most trenchant critics, implied that the verdict in favour of Henderson was suspect since the jury for the prize was made up of six performers and just one composer, Gehlhaar himself (Frisius 1974). No less significant was the fact that one of Henderson's co-winners—of the lesser prize of DM300 rather than the DM800, awarded to Henderson—was a composer of colour, Alvin Singleton, for his game piece, *Be Natural* (1974). Intriguingly, neither is mentioned in the *Basler Nachrichten*'s review of the courses, which awards the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis to Detlev Müller-Siemens who, like Singleton, won one of the smaller awards (Damm 1974).[4]

Grillo, Henderson, and Mosconi returned in 1976. All three appeared on the programme, in different guises. Henderson, as might be expected from the major prize winner of the previous courses, had a piece presented on the main programme: *Stubble* (1975–76) for an on-stage soprano and an unseen bass, playing

[4] The Indian composer, Clarence Barlow, would win in Thomas's final year as director, 1980. There is a decline between the first and second decade of the award: of twelve awardees between 1972 and 1980, two were composers of colour, and two were women. In the following decade, there were fifteen awards made, two to women and none to Black or Asian composers.

the role of the soprano's talking table. At that table, the soprano is making preparations for a date, preparations which become increasingly absurd and, to the same degree, increasingly pointed: she shaves her legs—recalling her mother's warning that she could be regarded as a "gorilla" if she didn't—before continuing her hair removal regime to nostrils and eyebrows, then to merkin-esque armpits, eventually drawing improbable lengths of black thread from the nipples of the fake breasts behind which the soprano has been standing. The score's dedication "to all those women emancipated in the Year of the Woman 1975" unpicks any reading that Henderson's female subject should be read as a powerless hysteric subject to the imagined whims of an absent male body, making the piece rather more pointedly critical of the ways in which second-wave feminism might be seen to have achieved *symbolic* progress at the expense of genuine societal change, neatly exemplified through the stalling of the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment in the United States, which ground to a halt after North Dakota's ratification on 3 February 1975 (Macarthur 2001, 160–64). The piece passed by largely without comment, however. Robert Rollin's retrospective—a near-lone report, which seems unfortunately to have rather misread the point—suggested that in "ridiculing" the desires of the female subject to "please", "Darmstadt's unwritten tradition of having one work involving nudity was upheld" (Rollin 1976, 22).[5] Lewinski (1976) refused even to name Henderson: his suggestion that, for some of the composers who had worked with Kagel in Cologne, their acuity of their satire was undermined by the fundamental technical flaws it concealed, nonetheless evidently had Henderson as one of its principal targets. It is, too, difficult to see a piece like Henderson's reflecting Jungheinrich's claim that the courses seemed like "dull exercises for a specialist audience of composers" (Jungheinrich 1976).

Davide Mosconi's *Quartetto* (1974–76) featured a harpist encased—along with her harp—entirely in close-fitting purple knitwear, a pianist hidden inside a black box, a violinist whose bow and violin are enclosed inside a purpose-built yellow steel case, and a fourth player—Mosconi in this performance—who is directed to play accordion, bandoneon, and harmonica simultaneously, while being wrapped in Scotch tape, until performance is impossible. The performance was surely striking but, as with Henderson, practically ignored, save by Gerhard Schroth (1976), who regarded Mosconi as a prime example of those young composers who remained concerned that the boundaries of music should not be drawn simply where sound or notation seemed to end, and Klaus Trapp (1976), who did seem to sense some of the critique at the heart of things: "a sarcastic vision of the end of all music or despair about there being any sense in 'composing'?".

Despite 'collective composition' having been one of the things most demanded only a few years earlier, when it was undertaken within the 1976 composition studios—again run by Gehlhaar—it received little fanfare. Although Trapp's review is entitled "Musical Olympics"—a recollection that the courses that year coincided

[5] This is, incidentally, a tradition unknown to the present author.

with events in Montreal—he filed it before the final concert, which delivered more fully on that conjunction, in a collective composition, *Laufarten* (1976), which is to say "running styles", devised by Grillo, Mosconi, Ines Klok (who had been the harpist in Mosconi's *Quartetto* and earlier a member, with him, of the avant-jazz group, the Natural Arkestra de Maya Alta), Alain Dubois, Glen Hall, and Nouritza Matossian. All were involved in the performance, supplemented by Caskel, Henderson, Gehlhaar, Michel Gonneville (the bass in Henderson's *Stubble*), and Benny Sluchin. One of the regrettably few reports of the piece recounts musicians undertaking gymnastics on the horizontal bar, according to the demands of Gehlhaar's trainer's whistle, and, more specifically, a leapfrogging Caskel and Grillo, with double bass, on the trampoline (Grabmann 1976).

Grillo's central contribution to the courses—performances of Iannis Xenakis's *Theraps* (1976) and his own arrangement of Giacinto Scelsi's *KO-THA* (1967/75)—won him the Kranichstein Musikpreis, for performance, but his compositional efforts were limited to his involvement in *Laufarten* and the promise of a return visit in 1978, specifically to develop a site-specific piece for Darmstadt's railway museum, in the suburb of Kranichstein, jointly with Mosconi: the two had spent enough time there to convince the chairman and the press officer of the museum not only to record sounds from the museum, but to provide them with floor plans so that they could sketch out where musicians and audience members might be within the space (Höfer 1976). Of this small group, which seemed to be making critical work which, nonetheless, also delivered on the demands of the protests of the early 1970s, none would return in 1978. The composition studios *had* done their work of creating a space where the institution itself could be (safely) criticised, but it required the rest of the infrastructure—both the institution itself and journalists, several of whom had pressed for change in the first place—to attend to, promote and integrate, those critiques for their force to be felt.

## 4.

Siegfried Palm had noted, of the 1974 courses, that the two major trends that could be observed were, on the one hand, the composers interested in the critical deployment of theatre and, on the other, those composers who would ultimately become gathered together under the general description of the *Neue Einfachheit*, at this time more likely to envision Müller-Siemens as its future leading light than Wolfgang Rihm (Lewinski 1974c). Lewinski, at least, felt that Rihm was struggling to shake off the influence of his teacher, Stockhausen (ibid.). By 1976, broadly the former had almost entirely supplanted the latter, whether in Frisius's withering claim that the courses were taking 'a confident step into the nineteenth century' (Frisius 1976) or the many plaudits afforded Detlev Müller-Siemens and Hans-Jürgen von Bose. The sense that tonality was very much back on the agenda was surely bolstered too by the presence on the programme of music from, first, Tilo Medek—a visitor from East Germany, perhaps most obviously in his *Eine Stele für Bernd Alois Zimmermann* (1975–76)—and, second, Cristóbal Halffter,

whose native Spain was in its transition towards democracy. His Cello Concerto (1974) was, on account of Siegfried Palm's illness, given its German premiere by Ulrich Heinen. Indeed, this coverage of the bold step forward into the past seems to be exactly that which eclipses the much more obviously progressive and radical work being undertaken by Grillo, Henderson, Kubisch, and Mosconi, notwithstanding the complaints of many commentators that what they really *wanted* was progressive, radical work.

Ernst Thomas and his advisory board *could* have brought these composers into the fold, as it were, demonstrating the openness of the institution to critique and, through that, renewing it. Yet Henderson and Mosconi would never return to the courses. Grillo, even though he had won the courses' major interpretation prize, would not be back until the accession of the next director in 1982 and, even then, there was more interest in his abilities as a double bassist than his activities as a composer; Kubisch would not return until the next director *after that* took over, in 1996. The institution instead doubled down on the other side of the equation: the opening concert featured the premieres of three new string trios, by Bose, Rihm, and Wolfgang von Schweinitz, commissioned by the courses. Elsewhere on the programme, via the composition and interpretation studios, could be found music by Manfred Trojahn, Hans-Christian von Dadelsen, Müller-Siemens, and a further piece by Schweinitz. Dahlhaus—whose lectures were often positioned as a sort of intellectual 'state of the nation' address—spoke on "the simple, the beautiful, and the simply beautiful" the link to the *Neue Einfachheit* composers rather clearer in his German title: "Vom Einfachen, vom Schönen und vom einfach Schönen", his title in any case recollecting a presentation given earlier in the courses by Bose: "The Hunt for a New Ideal of Beauty".

It was Rihm's lecture, "The Shocked Composer" however, which made clear that, at least from Rihm's perspective, his *Musik für drei Streicher* (1977) represented a very particular sort of institutional critique. New music was, Rihm argued, governed by a sort of dialectical refusal, which guaranteed its progress into the future. Yet one refusal—the refusal of tonality—had become so sedimented in new music that, if there was a manoeuvre which was reactionary, it was to continue to insist upon the absolute abhorrence of the major third and the formal possibilities implied by it. To acknowledge this might be to begin to accept what it would mean to be "free", compositionally speaking, Rihm argued (Rihm 1978). Moreover, Rihm's trio was the embodiment of his critique: the ways in which it enters directly into an evocation of Beethoven—noted by reports at the time—and also—surely more strongly, but *not* discussed in contemporary coverage—Berg, in his *Lyric Suite* (1925–26) above all, but *without* the arch, ironic quotation marks in, for instance, Medek's evocation of Mozart, speak to an active recovery of and engagement with tonality in direct fashion (Lewinski 1978a; Ely 1978).[6] It was Berg, too, who was the subject of the homage in the subtitle

[6] The relationship with Berg was, however, stressed a few years later by Christopher Fox (1982), 51.

of Klaus K. Hübler's First String Quartet (1977), a reference much more tangible in the piece than those familiar with his later music might expect. Explicitly, Rihm's critique cavilled against the institution, against what it had refused, but in a literal sense to return it to itself, to reject its own disavowal, so that music could *be music*, in a fairly clear opposition to those approaches which deployed music *against* itself, in a sort of scepticism of the possibility of saying anything at all, certainly without going *beyond* what music might have seemed to be. For all Rihm's dreams of freedom, his critique was aimed squarely at remaining *within* a particular sphere, even if extending the forms of motion possible within it.

Institutionally, Darmstadt sanctioned *this* critique, but not the other. It had done so on a programmatic level by the prominence given to composers who, by this point, were fairly securely categorised as a loose group, in the concert hall and lecture theatre. Much more potently, however, Rihm was awarded the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis for his *Musik für drei Streicher*. The norm developed since 1972 was that the prize would be awarded to a student: with a piece on the main programme and a scheduled lecture, Rihm could hardly be considered that. Moreover, his music was already, as it were, pre-approved, in the sense that Darmstadt had itself commissioned the piece, an act which also guaranteed it a rather better performance than those which could only be developed during the ambit of the 2 weeks of the courses.[7] In a sense, Darmstadt as an institution might have been seen to have been saying 'yes, critique us, but like this, not like that'. In 1978, both Caskel and Kontarsky were Kranichstein Musikpreis judges, even more implicated within the institution by virtue of having been part of the advisory board that planned the courses.

1978, in fact, looks to be the template for the European new musical sphere of the 1980s: Brian Ferneyhough, who had delivered one of the previous session's analysis lectures, was promoted to become one of the senior composers, alongside Lachenmann: the pair were the compositional representatives on the Kranichstein panel. Gérard Grisey provided an analysis lecture, his "Zur Entstehung des Klangs…", a foundational text of the nascent spectral movement. Gérard Condé's review in *Le Monde* was not mistaken in suggesting that the implicit choices to be made in 1978 were between Rihm, Ferneyhough, and Grisey, but without noting that, in certain respects, this was to suggest a choice between three flavours of Stockhausen: Rihm had, it seemed, finally sloughed off the excessive influence of his former teacher, but Ferneyhough was already starting to be seen as a sort of hyper-serialist developing the language of Stockhausen's early Klavierstücke, while the impact of *Stimmung* on Grisey's musical practice was immediately, aurally, apparent. Condé even neatly flags them as "the new Darmstadt School" (Condé 1978). The addition of Lachenmann—both Stockhausen's tormenter in 1969 and the person who handed on the composition studios to Gehlhaar, who was tainted, if unfairly, by his association with Stockhausen—to this grouping in a way

[7] The argument is briefly rehearsed in Lewinsk 1978b.

merely recalls Lachenmann's own heritage, as Nono's most famous pupil. In some respects, Lachenmann might be seen as the 'acceptable face' of the sort of critique posed by Huber, in that *his* version of *musique concrète instrumentale* is always suffused with a nostalgia for the past—sometimes seemingly literally and tangibly erased—as opposed to Huber's use of similar resources to express a scepticism that there can truly remain new worlds to be won. Ferneyhough, even, might be seen to be presenting the 'properly musical' version of Kubisch's critique, in that both tilt at what happens when the strictest demands of new music are pushed into limit cases.

This was the situation inherited, but also promoted, by Thomas's successor as director, Friedrich Hommel, from 1982. A sort of factionalism between these camps rapidly developed, as might be expected given the structural sense in which they replicated historical antagonisms. In 1984, the factions were joined by a small group of minimalists who, just as one might have half-hoped, joined in with the local internecine conflict, booing Ferneyhough's *Études trascendentales* (1983–85)—presented in not quite finished form—and, by some reports, throwing paper planes during the performance (Post 1984). Minimalism, as it were, completed the set, since from the German perspective it was ineluctably bound up with a Cageian tradition and had, in fact, first been brought to Darmstadt by Christian Wolff in 1974, in the form of Glass's *Music in Similar Motion* (1969) and Fredric Rzewski's *Coming Together* (1971). Hommel—in one sense surprisingly, though equally he arguably had little choice—suggested that he actively *welcomed* these conflicts among participants, insisting that it embodied the lively passions of young musicians, passions which it was Darmstadt's fundamental job to support and encourage (Iddon 2012).

On this reading, what may well have genuinely seemed to Christopher Fox like "almost anarchic openness" (quoted in Gronemeyer 1996, 76) appears more like an institutionally sanctioned re-run of Darmstadt's greatest bust-ups. They follow a script known since the late 1950s, a script which, for a brief time in the 1970s, looked like it might get rewritten. More, Hommel's embrace of this—his insistence both that it is a *good thing* that the participants cared enough to be at such significant odds with one another and that those disputes are matters in essence *for* the participants, but not for the institution—effectively defangs them as critiques. In short, these 'official' critiques are ones for which the endgame is already known, because they have already taken place. Not only that, but they are critiques that point entirely inwards, within and towards the sphere of compositional activity: there is no scope for the same critiques to be directed towards the institution, especially not an institution actively engaged in *enabling* those critiques.

The most potent critiques made of Darmstadt in the 1970s—or, perhaps, the ones that look most like the sorts of critique that a contemporary world would *want to have been made* of Darmstadt in the 1970s—were precisely those which sought to escape the institution and which were, in so doing, so unacceptable to it that the only option was to eject them, thinking in particular of the contrast which might be drawn between Foucault's reading of critique—not that it demands not to be governed but that it demands not to be governed like *that*—and that of Jack

Halberstam or in José Esteban Muñoz's embrace of what they term queer failure, a failure which never wanted to "win", "a way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power and discipline and […] a form of critique" (Halberstam 2011, 88). The prospect of that 1980s Darmstadt which didn't take place—one where the major figures might have been the compositional quartet of Grillo, Henderson, Kubisch, and Mosconi, rather than Ferneyhough, Grisey, Lachenmann, and Rihm—looks like a sort of utopia, the most progressive new music that could have been imagined looking forward from the 1970s, an imagined past which might still inspire the present, the potency of which derives from the fact that it did not happen. "Queer failure is", Muñoz opines, "about escape and a certain kind of virtuosity" (Muñoz 2009, 173).A future critique might very well want to lay claim to this (r)ejected territory.

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