
BOOK REVIEWS

Yogaku: Japanese Music in the Twentieth Century by Luciana Galliano, translated by Martin Mayes. Scarecrow Press, £52.50.

The Japanese term *yogaku* means music from beyond the ocean, i. e. Western music (including the idea of the individual composer). And, unbelievable as it may seem, this book is the first authoritative study in English on the history of Western-influenced Japanese music in the 20th century.¹ The book opens with a well-chosen epigraph from Zenrin Kushu: 'The wild geese do not intend to cast their reflection. The water has no mind to receive their image'. A short and enthusiastic foreword by Luciano Berio helps to draw attention to the demanding undertaking. The book is divided into two main parts: Japanese music before and after the Second World War. In general the first part is more valuable, as until now there has been a profound lack of accumulated knowledge on the subject. Luciana Galliano provides a clear-cut historical, sociological, and metaphysical panorama in which she embeds the musical facts.

The introduction, about traditional Japanese cultural values and Japan's transition into the 20th century, is the most important section and should be read with close attention by anyone interested in music globally. This introduction is divided in three parts: a consideration of the theory and aesthetics of traditional Japanese music; the concept of time in Japanese music; and the stratification and conservation of traditional forms of music. In these chapters Galliano proves her ability to give a convincing and comprehensible insight into this vast cultural area without either simplifying nor 'Westernizing' her topic. She has really understood that Japanese philosophy cannot simply be put into Western terminology and has found a way to convey its atmosphere, its aroma, in a kind of stream of consciousness. As a result some passages may have to be read several times to transcend what might seem to be the triviality of their surface meaning.

Next, Galliano describes the introduction of Western music to Japan, which met a completely unprepared mentality. As is described in the next main chapters – 'The evolution of a Western-style musical language in the first half of the twentieth

century', and 'A new musical world', the outer elements of the new language were absorbed with considerable speed – but of course it took some time until some composers of noteworthy originality emerged. Galliano provides us with clear, non-ideological ideas about the opposing schools of German and French origin, the first generation of the 'avant-garde' and the Shinko association of innovative composers. Almost every fairly significant composer is subject of a sympathetic description that doesn't simply follow the conventional lines. And we are offered an overview on music schools and pioneering symphony orchestras, on music journals, the 'birth of opera', and, last not least, 'Japanese society and the influence of broadcasting and recording' – all these subjects are treated critically but without arrogance. Then, with 'Nationalism and music', we come to the years that led into the war. A chapter researching 'political movements and the proletarian music league' is followed by one on propaganda and censorship.

In the beginning of the second part of her book Galliano analyses the 'cultural and social situation in the postwar period', comparing it with the European reality and pointing out the elements of continuity and change. The general explanations of every chapter are followed by biographical and stylistic observations on certain selected composers. In extensive chapters, the adventures of the postwar avant-garde are vividly portrayed (the legendary Jikkenkobo group around Takemitsu and Yuasa, the development of electronic music, the rise of the new-music life, a detailed history of the composers' associations), as are the 1960s with their diametrically opposing directions – on the one side the Cageian impact on 'happening' and performance, on the other the rebirth of traditional Japanese music, and finally the 'closing decades of the twentieth century'. This latter chapter is subdivided into 'the leading composers' (Yoritsune Matsudaira, Joji Yuasa, Toru Takemitsu, Maki Ishii, and Toshio Ichiyonagi), followed by a short overview of the most recent situation, a look at the *hogaku* composers (those who have studied and are working with traditional Japanese instruments, for example Minoru Miki or Ryohei Hirose), and at so-called 'other composers' (here I would have definitely preferred more information about Teizo Matsumura who is, as Luciana Galliano states, 'much appreciated

¹ It was originally written in Italian and issued in 1998.

as a composer in Japan') and the 'next generation'. The composer vignettes are illustrated with plentiful music examples.

All in all, no-one who lacks access to Japanese sources (almost all of them, of course, in the Japanese language) yet wishes to explore the field of Japanese music of the *yogaku* kind (music written by composers) should ignore this publication. It is simply indispensable. Some of the descriptions and evaluations in the avant-garde field may seem more conventional than the whole first part of the book, but this doesn't diminish the worth of Galliano's approach, which will be the measure for future releases in this field. The only thing I really miss probably goes beyond the intended topic, but would be worth serious consideration in the context. It might be entitled 'Western composers influenced by Japanese music'. Just to mention a prominent example: the Finn Pehr Henrik Nordgren (b. 1944) who studied in Japan with Yoshio Hasegawa, became deeply influenced by Japanese culture, and composed two quartets for traditional Japanese instruments and the fascinating *Autumnal Concerto* for traditional Japanese instruments and Western orchestra: this is, for live performance, a perfect pairing for Takemitsu's *November Steps*. Nordgren is still very closely involved with Japanese spirit. His Sixth Symphony, set to words from David Suzuki's *Declaration of Interdependence*, has been premièred with overwhelming success in Japan.

Christoph Schlären

Sing, Ariel: Essays and Thoughts for Alexander Goehr's Seventieth Birthday, edited by Alison Latham. Ashgate, £47.50.

Some measure of the scope and achievement of *Sing, Ariel* can be gained through comparison to 1980's symposium *The Music of Alexander Goehr*.² The earlier collection – 'notes towards a musical portrait', as Bayan Northcott suggested in his preface – provided a much-needed overview of Goehr's music through to the end of the 1970s. The focus on the music entailed a neglect of the man, at least in the opinion of Robin Holloway, whose critique of his former teacher concluded that 'If Goehr the generous teacher, the eloquent expounder, the sympathetic colleague, the amusing and lovable man, makes no appearance here, it is because – in my view – his music has pursued a somewhat "defensive objectivity"'.³

Twenty-three years later, Julian Anderson – *Sing, Ariel's* Consultant Commissioning Editor – offers us a different picture: one that is 'perhaps the best portrait of Goehr in that its articles and their authors encompass a wide variety of music along with other disciplines' (p. xx). Rubbing shoulders with these scholarly essays, the judicious selection of personal reminiscences and tributes from friends and family alike bear eloquent testimony to the man that Holloway felt was missing from the previous collection. Yet times – and the reception of Goehr's music – have changed, and the 'monolithic and Germanic' image of Goehr in 1980 that Holloway identifies in his contribution to *Sing, Ariel* (p. 1) is no longer as widespread as it once was. Holloway provides a welcome overview of the themes and threads that connect Goehr's increasingly diverse and varied music. Furthermore, he can now detect (or admit to) Goehr's personal qualities in his music, concluding that '*Chez Sandy*, style and man clearly are interpenetrated, each mirroring the other in self-renewal and self-transformation' (p. 6). Positioned as it is, at the end of the first essay proper, this conclusion takes on the quality of a statement of intent; and indeed, many of the contributions that follow can be read as illuminations of either style, man, or both. Acting as a counterbalance at the opposite end of the book, and a neat inversion of Holloway's *catalogue raisonné*, we have Goehr's other Cambridge composition colleague, Hugh Wood, who delivers a touching narrative of his friendship with Goehr against the background of the music.

The essays and messages that separate Holloway and Wood's contributions also resist easy classification. The seven shortest contributions – birthday greetings from Simon Rattle, Elliott Carter, Oliver Knussen, Daniel Barenboim, Steve Martland, Sue Knussen and Milton Babbitt – provide snapshots of the influence of Goehr's music, teaching and personality. Although they do not appear to form part of the main thrust of the book (the messages are not listed in the contents page, nor are the contributors mentioned in the short biographies), they encapsulate in brief the sentiments that can be detected on nearly every page. These messages – and many more passages that occur in *Sing, Ariel*, such as fascinating snippets within Lydia Goehr's tribute – go some way to making good the lack of a more complete biography of the composer.

Nevertheless, most readers will be itching to read more about the music. As an insight into Goehr's artistic concerns, influence and beliefs, and as an overview of Goehr's music post-1980, much of *Sing, Ariel* is indispensable. Some of the

² *The Music of Alexander Goehr: Interviews and Articles* ed. Bayan Northcott (London: Schott, 1980).

contributions will no doubt enter the canon of 'Goehr Studies', and the accompanying CD, Peter Donohoe's splendid account of the cycle of piano pieces ... *in real time*, op. 50, merits repeated listenings (especially in conjunction with a reading of Stephen Plaistow's essay on the work). The multifarious range of analytical approaches brought to bear on Goehr's music demonstrate the fecundity of his work. Goehr's serial-modal manner of composition is well-documented now, and no longer commands centre-stage in analysis of his early music. Thus Bayan Northcott gives as much room to the way in which concepts such as theme and variations and synthesis operate in respect to the *Little Music for Strings* op. 16, and Anthony Gilbert explores (rhythmic) proportion in the Suite op. 11. This latter analysis in particular opens up fertile new avenues in understanding Goehr's music in perceived time.

Of the more recent music, Sylvina Milstein and Aaron Einbond respectively use source material to gain insight into the relationship between dodecaphony and Goehr's use of figured bass in *Schlussgesang* and *The Death of Moses*. The former is the more detailed, if less reader-friendly, and the latter in particular suffers from an inability to explain adequately the way in which Goehr's foreground is a particular elaboration of the middleground/background. (This is an analytical problem that Northcott, too, has identified in regards to Goehr's serial matrices and the resulting compositions: p. 168.) Einbond also makes mention of the text in the movements he analyses (the fifth and sixth): I see no reason why the full text should not be given for these movements since it is for, say, Jonathan Dunsby's essay on *The Law of the Quadrille*. (The complete text for *Sing, Ariel* was more relevant, given that two articles related to it.)

Goehr's relationship to his heritage – both musical and intellectual – unsurprisingly forms another theme within *Sing, Ariel*, although one that is often approached indirectly. Christopher Wintle's account of Goehr's analysis of Schoenberg's Fourth String Quartet sheds light not just on the subtleties of Goehr's musical imagination, but the way in which it relates to his past. (It would, incidentally, be intriguing to see how the concept of the 'island formation' in Schoenbergian thought – as related by Goehr – applied to the latter's own music; yet another avenue of inquiry suggested by *Sing, Ariel*.) Other writers seem to approach this topic by analogy; narratives, fantasies and tales about Busoni, Bach and Confucius all provide fresh perspectives, if no concrete detail, about Goehr's engagement with the past.

The contributions of former pupils paint an intriguing picture. Julian Anderson recounts the far-reaching implications of a couple of comments by Goehr on his own compositional approach; similarly, George Benjamin details the slow process through which Goehr's didactic use of canon came to artistic fruition in his [Benjamin's] own music. Reading these accounts, one wishes more than ever that Goehr's often-mentioned idea about a composition manual – whether an update of Stanford's *Musical Composition* or not – had been realized. Whether such a manual could communicate the same set of values that Goehr imparts to his pupils – Poole's essay reveals the social commitment in the music of both teacher and pupil – is another matter. Poole's comments seem to embody the notion that Goehr teaches 'thinking method', rather than 'technique method' (p. 39); such an emphasis explains both Goehr's own 'anti-style' stance and the characteristic diversity of his pupils.

The relationship between composer and society (such as that which Poole outlines), or more generally, the *meaning* of music, forms a central component in Goehr's writings,³ and this topic also emerges in *Sing, Ariel*. The question of what music means – or can be made to mean – is central to two essays: Simha Aron and Jean Khalfa occupy a position not unlike the 'defensive objectivity' Robin Holloway finds in Goehr's music, whilst Nicholas Cook explores the performative aspects of notation. Cook invokes the Chinese *qin* repertory as an 'other' to which Western practice can be compared and contrasted. The references are typically wide-ranging and related to Goehr's own concerns, including ethnomusicology, Corellian elaboration of ideas, figured bass, transcription and modelling, and Schoenbergian notion of ideas. Given this scope, and given that Cook's thesis will be familiar to many who know his work, it is frustrating that he doesn't relate it explicitly to Goehr's own music – one suspects that the resulting insights would have been fascinating.

This grumble is one that can be raised at the book on a number of occasions: one cannot help but wish that a number of contributors had delved into the music in greater depth. Depth is also lacking in the cursory bibliography, perhaps the most disappointing aspect of the book. Its brevity can be contrasted unfavourably with the welcome inclusion of a complete work-list and discography. At the very least it would have been helpful to have a complete list of Goehr's writings, building on Neil Boynton's useful checklist published in 1992

³ See, for example, *Finding the Key: Selected Writings of Alexander Goehr*, ed. Puffett, Derrick (London: Faber, 1998).

in *Music Analysis*.⁴ At its best, however, *Sing, Ariel* is informative, stimulating and provoking, setting an agenda for future thinking, responses and research that will serve for years to come. The book is lovingly compiled, including ten illustrations and 56 high-quality musical examples. Alison Latham should be singled out for her impeccable editorial standards; the presentation on the whole is excellent. As an introduction to Alexander Goehr's music, ideas and interests, *Sing, Ariel* is to be recommended.

Edward Venn

The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky edited by Jonathan Cross. Cambridge University Press, £47.50/\$70.00 (hardback), £17.95/\$26.00 (paperback).

This new 'Cambridge Companion' to Stravinsky is a dispiriting affair. Most of its 14 chapters are flaccid – amazingly inappropriate adjective for the tingly music and its witty, self-conscious, ever contemporary composer, here dulled down into tidy pigeon-holes without a cat to disturb them. 'Who wants it, who needs it?' was Stravinsky's half-humorous, half-despairing wail at the proliferation of new music. But composition however puny is at least *trying* to attain some kind of unique and irreplaceable statement which, if it does manage to, willy-nilly becomes necessary (if not necessarily desirable). No hint can be detected here of any such urgency.

It was clear after *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions* appeared in 1996 that subsequent work on the composer would have to be regarded as 'post-Taruskin'. Since those monumental two volumes the first of Stephen Walsh's biography has arrived (1999), ably steering its own independent course. Most of the *Companion's* contributors are beholden to these recent ancestors, not always advantageously. Rather than the springboard for further explorations and refinements, they show them to hang heavy, a new orthodoxy, at first impressive, by now oppressive, setting fast into rigidity that requires to be broken up and supplanted.

The historical chapters suffer worst. The trawl through the composer's oeuvre from student mediocrity in the earliest years of last century to serial old-mastery in its 50s and 60s is so familiar that exceptional flair is needed merely to tread it over again as currently received: let alone to tweak, subvert, place at unexpected angles, cast in new lights (and their concomitant shadows) that add something of value to what already exists. A

disagreeable side-effect of T's and W's clarifications of the factual record is a mean knowingness about Stravinsky's mendacities and re-writings of history. As often before, Wagner biography and commentary come to mind. *Chez Stravinsky* too, it's just too easy! Taruskin and Walsh are generous here (notwithstanding a certain vengeful glee in unleashing the hounds of truth): *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*. But Christopher Butler's schoolmarm severity ('Stravinsky as Modernist') is unjustified by corresponding illumination, and he can get *tone* (if not *fact*) quite wrong – see his remarks on the two rag-inspired piano pieces, p.27, or, p.25, the infelicity of calling the *danse sacrale* 'yet another erotically engaging sacrifice of the female to succeed those in *Salome, Elektra*, and Schmitt's *Tragédie de Salomé*'. Though one has to suppress one's yawns at the editor's chapter on 'Stravinsky's theatres', he doesn't get it *wrong*.

Martha M. Hyde on Stravinsky's neo-classicism also has its moments, here undermined by sophomoric jejeuneness, e.g. on the *Symphony in C* or the 'potential defect' – a 'lack of irony' (Oh Gawd!) – in *The Fairy's Kiss*: and she ends up out of her depth in heavy weather over the *Rake* libretto, clutching desperately at 'Time' and *Faust*, deceptive lifelines both. No further light on her given topic, that trim little hold-all 'neo-classicism' upon which the years between the wars are posited, with Stravinsky in particular, and most other contemporary practitioners too; nor its pre-history, nor its post-war continuities and dispersals. Joseph N. Straus on 'Stravinsky the serialist' doesn't venture out of his depth, and his modest chart of the shallows has its uses. The other chapters in the book's first half – with the partial exception of Arnold Whittall's brave, sophisticated attempt to mediate the much-bloodied polarity of Stravinsky with Schoenberg – are too grey to be distinguished.

The second half, six more chapters, contains the mitigating portions of this curate's egg (if one can forget – I managed it easily – the pedestrian trundle through 'Stravinsky and the critics'). Nicholas Cook scrupulously records the discrepancies and mind-changes making up 'Stravinsky' – the composer as recorded down the decades under his own direction. Max Paddison's 'Stravinsky as Devil', a comparative critique of Adorno's three wishes concerning the composer – first around 1930, next in the (in)famous *Philosophy of New Music* (1949), finally the late thoughts, in some ways a recantation, under the sign of Beckett – disentangles this addled area and chimes well with Whittall earlier.

Disentangling isn't the *mot juste* for the tortuous nitty-gritty of Craig Arey's 'Stravinsky in analysis'. It begins well. But how about this?:

⁴ Boynton, Neil, 'Alexander Goehr: A Checklist of his Writings and Broadcast Talks', *Music Analysis* 11: 2–3 (1992), pp. 201–208.

The 'Lacrimosa' uses series 1 of *Requiem Canticles* divided into two hexachords. In the IR forms, which are given priority in the movement, hexachords are generated by beginning IR1a–5a with pcs 2–6 of the first hexachord (IR0a) transposed to A#, the first note of IR0a, and displaying in order the subsequent pcs at the new transposition level. Once the same principle is applied to IR0b, twelve hexachords are produced, six beginning on A# (IRa), six on G (IRb) (Table 11.12).

[Incidentally 'Table 11.12' is a whole page of 48 interrelated hexachords, that doesn't condescend to supply a single clef!]

This language persists through some 11 pages which also include elegant diagrams, one of them the complete 'Lacrimosa' itself, bedecked with row-formations etc. Long before I'm able to derive from them the nourishment they probably contain I'm wearied by the ingrown inspissation of the technical vocabulary – jib at, then resent, its brow-beating; eventually cease to feel inadequate and simply, guiltlessly, give up. 'Who needs it?' – the composer, the work, its publisher, its performers, its listeners, its students, its author, *his* publisher, the 'academic community'? It's not mere philistinism to deplore the victory of such theological assiduity over the hapless 'text'. Give the contralto back her voice; her her ululate the plangent words; listen closely to the tight spare luminous spatialized sonority surrounding and punctuating it. The

aria can be heard often enough, during the time it takes to struggle with (before discarding) the commentary, to ensure that every salient feature is absorbed. Stravinsky's ear is keen, his writing here on top form. We have learnt to trust him from *Firebird* on. Trust him again!

The *Companion's* two final items are both somewhat anomalous. First, an interview between the editor and Louis Andriessen concerning Stravinsky and the 21st century, a slack, myopic affair, best taken as inadvertent stimulus to re-read (and, O.U.P., please reissue) the Andriessen/Schönberger *Apollonian Clockwork*, a book on the composer that really said something and remains delicious in itself. The final essay is the devilled embryo in the curate's egg. Provocative, irritable, coat-trailing, it seems to belong neither to its context's prevailing blandness nor its general plan. And indeed it pre-dates its surroundings by some seven years, having been first delivered as the inaugural BBC Proms Lecture in 1996 and afterwards given widely before being written up and printed here. Richard Taruskin the author, expectation pricks up – justifiably, for the texture of thought indicates a different level of experience and saturation in the subject. But this is a *mauvais quart d'heure*. After a promising start – what has been lost as well as gained from Stravinsky's excessively formalist stance and the servile obedience with

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which commentators have thronged the indicated route – the essay shows the negative, even perverse, aspects of Taruskin's passion for outing every guarded piety. He grows so angry about the inclusion within the setting of 'Tomorrow shall be my dancing day' (in the 1951 *Cantata*) of the triplet concerning the Jews' betrayal of Christ, that he cannot see the crown for the thorns. It simply won't do to use Stravinsky's non-omission of this traditional trope as the key to unlock unacceptable attitudes of a man who despite his exceptional powers of mind over many areas other than music was also the inevitable child of his time, class, country, upbringing, with all their residue of convention in language, manners, mind-set. It doesn't make a sound argument, let alone a convincing conclusion. Yet its presence here disturbs the all-too-academic context to its advantage (by which I mean disadvantage): it's the only item, albeit tendentious and in every way partial, to open up the wider air that Stravinsky cries out for and can certainly take.

Robin Holloway

Roger Sessions: How a "Difficult" Composer Got That Way by Frederick Prausnitz. Oxford University Press, £30.00.

Roger Sessions (1896–1985) was ever the composer widely admired but whose music was infrequently heard. He gained his solid reputation through his colleagues' reactions to his creative work, as well as through his teaching and essays. Larger public awareness of his music was minimal.

His first major composition, *The Black Maskers* (completed 1923), he later wryly referred to as his *Firebird*. His four other major works before World War II include a violin concerto (1935) completed within a few months of violin concertos by Prokofiev and Berg. To this writer, the Sessions is as fine as the other two. Were it not for the tortured history of its lack of performances, Sessions might be much better known.

His accomplishments accelerated from the mid-1940s. In the 40 years he lived after World War II, he wrote eight of nine symphonies, other orchestral works, two of three piano sonatas, two of three instrumental concertos, his two operas, and almost all his solo, chamber, and vocal/choral works.

Since his death, his music has found no surge of interest. Although significant recordings are available, some of his big works are not recorded, and only a few are available on more than one CD – despite useful articles, theses, and books about him, plus many still-active former students.

Some substantial early works bear traces of Stravinskian neo-classicism. Then Sessions gradually moved into atonality and, ultimately, serialism as free as Berg's but going in different directions. With his constant search for ideal musical expression in a deeply human context, his outlook, aesthetic, and actual compositions are closer to Schoenberg's. In a strong sense, he is Schoenberg's American spiritual successor.

Frederick Prausnitz conducted Sessions's music on both sides of the Atlantic for several decades. That includes his largest work, the opera *Montezuma*, in New York in 1982. Sessions' Ninth and last Symphony (1978) is dedicated to him.

Prausnitz's main sources besides Sessions himself are his family, his students and colleagues in music and other fields, and many letters he wrote. The wealth of detail he produces makes this book a fruitful resource for anyone remotely interested in Roger Sessions. Noteworthy are his treatments of Sessions's early years and his environments throughout his life, whether in the USA or in Europe, e.g. Italy and Germany, which influenced him greatly between the world wars. Prausnitz makes those environments part of the composer's life, not just background filler.

He also gives attention to two composers Sessions felt close to personally, although not stylistically: Bloch as a teacher and Dallapiccola as a friend. He is most illuminating about the character of Sessions himself, letting it emerge, often through the composer's own words, without forcing points. He leaves intricate paradoxes to do their work, the principal one being Sessions's need to engage (with family, musicians, and listeners) being matched by his need to develop intense artistic independence.

The biography is gently interrupted by three chapters titled 'The Musical Idea'. In those, Prausnitz deals with some musical concepts Sessions is known for, both in his music and in his teaching and essays. He states that no technical knowledge of music theory is needed for them, which isn't really so. That is most obvious when he discusses, not quite successfully, Heinrich Schenker and Sessions's reaction to him. Still, the three chapters do emphasize the musical idea or impulse as a general concept.

There is remarkable insight in this book. One example comes at the point (1936) when Sessions and his first wife (Barbara Foster) divorced, after which he soon remarried (Lisl Franck). Prausnitz is convincing that the divorce was as much from Sessions's mother as from his wife. In addition, the few ventures Prausnitz makes into art and architecture are attractively integrated into the narrative.

The book maintains a good balance in this sense: Prausnitz himself does not intrude. But when we need to hear from him as someone connected to the composer, we do. His research is impressive; he also lets it largely speak for itself.

For all these reasons, the book is useful – potentially. There are problems in its realization. One: there is no list of works or recordings. Another: Sessions's later years are treated too briefly. The converse is that too much weight is placed elsewhere. Sessions's years in Germany, for example, are over-described, mostly because of repetition. Even an illustration may be too long, e.g. a letter from the composer to his mother that takes up five pages of small type without commensurate importance or commentary.

Certain ideas are also repeated too often. That seems a problem of integration, whose lack is felt in a different way in treatments of, for example, Dallapiccola, Krenek, Borgese (librettist of *Montezuma*), and Sessions's piano playing. Put another way: there are many loose ends and gaps.

Editing might have caught those – also some literal repetitions, whether short ('the New York Philharmonic Symphony Society of New York') or long (nine lines of quotation on page 264 reappear complete on page 265). Some awkward repetitions are referenced in endnotes, which makes them more obvious. Other mistakes don't abound but are noticeable. Xenakis gets two different spellings of his first name (neither is standard), two different birth years, and no death year. Even if not a mistake, series such as symphonies should not be indexed alphabetically by ordinal number. (Eighth Symphony precedes Third Symphony, with many works between.)

The book could clearly be shorter, to much advantage. Still, its weaknesses do not nullify its strengths. Those strengths also complement rather than diminish the singular achievement of Andrea Olmstead in her three books on Roger Sessions, published between 1985 and 1992.

Now if only all this writing led to more performances and recordings ...

Paul Rapoport

Black Mountain College: Experiment in Art edited by Vincent Katz. The MIT Press, \$75.00.

On 25 September 1933, John Andrew Rice, who had been recently dismissed from his position at Rollins College in Florida, joined with colleagues to open a new college 15 miles from Asheville, North Carolina, in buildings belonging to the Asheville YMCA. The rented campus was the site

of the YMCA's summer camp, unused during the rest of the year; later, in 1941, the college moved to property bought by the school at nearby Lake Eden. Organized around Rice's goal of teaching philosophy as Socrates might have done, the 'progressive' school which they founded was owned and run by its faculty, with no governing board, and with a large degree of input from its students. There were no credits and no grades. When a student felt ready to graduate, he would request an examination which was conducted by an external examiner.

The Black Mountain College existed from 1933 until 1956. It never had more than fifty students at any one time, and it rarely had the funds to offer its faculty more than room and board. It was nonetheless a major influence on the visual arts, music, and poetry in the United States. The two major personalities of the school were first the painter Josef Alpers, recently arrived from the just closed Bauhaus, who along with his wife Anni was on the faculty from 1933 until 1949, and later the poet Charles Olson, who arrived at Black Mountain in 1948 and stayed until the school closed in 1956. Most of the important American visual artists of the 1940s and 50s were at one time or another associated with the school; these included Richard Lippold, Kenneth Noland, Ben Shahn, Lyonel Feininger, Robert Motherwell, Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Franz Kline, and Robert Rauschenberg. With Olson's ascendancy, the founding of *The Black Mountain Review*, which ran to seven issues from 1953 to 1957, and the association of a number of writers including Robert Creeley, Hilda Morley, and John Weiners, the school became a centre of alternative modernist American poetry.

The musical scope of the school was smaller, but hardly less important. In 1944 faculty member Heinrich Jalowetz, who had been one of Schoenberg's earliest pupils in Vienna, organized a summer session which celebrated Schoenberg's seventieth birthday; the participants included Edward Steuermann, Ernst Krenek, Marcel Dick, Rudolf Kolisch, and Roger Sessions. John Cage, who came to the school in the spring of 1948 and premiered his *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano, was the moving force behind two summer sessions. The session in 1948 was dedicated to the works of Satie. During the session Cage presented his talk, 'Defense of Satie', which was not only a defence of Satie and Webern, but more importantly an attack on Beethoven and Western musical aesthetics. It also featured a performance of Satie's play, *La Piège de Meduse*, staged and directed by Arthur Penn (his first directing experience), with Buckminster Fuller, Elaine de

Kooning, and Merce Cunningham in the cast, and with sets by Willem de Kooning. The whole session was the culminating statement of Cage's philosophy up to that point.

Cage returned in 1952, when he wrote *4'33"*, the celebrated and notorious 'silent work', and *Theater Piece No. 1*, generally recognized at the first 'happening'. These works marked Cage's move into indeterminacy. David Tudor, who was introduced to Black Mountain by Cage, presented recitals featuring works of Schoenberg, Webern, Wolpe, Feldman, Wolff, and Boulez. Tudor and Cage were jointly responsible for Stefan Wolpe's joining the faculty in 1953. Wolpe remained at the school until its closing. Among the works he wrote at Black Mountain were his *Enactments* for three pianos. Lou Harrison was also on the faculty from 1951 to 1953. The 1953 summer session marked the founding of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.

The MIT Press, in association with an exhibition about Black Mountain College at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia in Madrid, has published this book, edited by Vincent Katz. It features four essays commissioned for the publication: Katz discusses the history and philosophy of the college, Martin Brody writes on the college's influence on American Music, Kevin Power writes about *The Black Mountain Review*, and Robert Creeley offers thoughts on Olson and Black Mountain College. The book is magnificently well produced, lavishly illustrated with documentary photographs of people and events at the school, and full of beautiful reproductions of a multitude of paintings and drawings by the visual artists who taught and studied at Black Mountain College. These include not only those very well known, but much more obscure and wonderful artists including Robert De Niro, Emerson Woelffer, Xanti Schawinsky, Esteban Vicente, Joseph Fiore, and Pat Passlof. This book handsomely documents the history of Black Mountain College and the accomplishment of the artists who worked there as faculty and as students. It also does an excellent job of conveying the seriousness and the never-never-land intoxicating grandeur of the place and the affection and devotion which it inspired in practically everyone who was associated with it.

Rodney Lister

Fragmente zur musikalischen Postmoderne by Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman, translated from the Serbian by Vlastimir Perićić. Vol. 2 in the series *Methodology of Music Research*, ed. Nico Schüler. Peter Lang, 2003.

Mirjana Veselinović-Hofman is the incumbent of the Chair of Musicology and Ethnomusicology at the University of Belgrade, and the editor of the (English-language) musicological journal *New Sound*. Although she has been active on the international congress scene for several years and has published articles in both English and French, this is her first book to appear in a language other than her native Serbian (the original version having been published in Yugoslavia in 1997). As the title suggests, the author does not aim at any 'universal' summing-up of the phenomenon that is Post-Modernism. Rather is it an attempt to define its theoretical and practical co-ordinates. She begins with one of the best overviews of the Post-Modernist debate that the present writer has encountered, at once wide-ranging and concise. One could be forgiven for thinking that there are as many definitions of 'Post-Modernism' as there are Post-Modernists. Some maintain that it is simply that which comes, chronologically, after Modernism; some see it as, in essence, a continuation of Modernism, others as a negation thereof (as an 'anti-Modernism'). Veselinović sensibly proceeds to investigate how Post-Modernism differs both from the various 'Neo-' styles of the 20th century (Neoclassicism in particular), and from the Romantics' use of stylistic and formal musical elements from previous epochs. While in the Romantic era those elements (such as fugue) remained obviously 'historical' in expression, but changed their stylistic context to that of Romanticism itself (p. 31), most Neo-Classicalists aimed at a restorative gesture of those elements' original stylistic characteristics (p. 32). Post-Modernism, however, differs again in not being engaged in 'restoration', rather regarding what has gone before as a 'treasure trove' of material to be used as the individual composer sees fit, with today's stylistic plurality (and a tendency to quotation) the logical result thereof (pp. 72–3, 79–83). Veselinović does greater justice to the complexity of the historical process than this brief outline suggests, her impressively broad array of sources being used to convincing effect.

While Vlastimir Perićić's German too often reads like the translation it is, and while there are a number of minor typographical errors that the publisher's copy editors should have eliminated, this book is nevertheless particularly to be welcomed, not least on account of its specific geographical and aesthetic perspective. While Veselinović is obviously *au fait* with the usual suspects of Post-Modern aesthetics, both musical and otherwise (Dahlhaus, Danuser, Habermas, Lyotard and cohorts), she also refers pertinently to a host of Eastern European writers and com-

posers, thus confirming that debates of Modernity, Post- and otherwise, are not confined to Western European and American lecture halls. (Ex-)Yugoslavia has not had a good press in the past decade; but Veselinović's book can serve to remind us (as it has the present writer) that the stifling rule of Milosevic and his cronies did not manage to annul artistic endeavour or silence fruitful intellectual debate. Serbia's problems stem not least from the fact that it is in numerous ways a 'fringe' country, situated on the border between Islam and Christianity, between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy, the Germanic and the Slavic, the Cyrillic and the Latin, and between

Western democracy and the former Soviet bloc. But its geographical position has also served to generate a rich cultural heritage of which most of us, to our shame, still know relatively little. Veselinović's many references to books and articles by her fellow Serbs make the present writer inquisitive to know more of their work; and her discussion of the music and aesthetics of contemporary composers from the Balkans, in particular of Srdjan Hofman, make me wish to become better acquainted with their music. It is to be hoped that we will not have to wait too long before more of Veselinović's writings are made accessible to the Western European public.

Chris Walton