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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Dennis Earle Jones entitled "The Aesthetic of the Avant-Garde in Music and Its Reflection by Some Works in Source: Music of the Avant-Garde." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Music.

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THE AESTHETIC OF THE AVANT-GARDE IN MUSIC AND ITS REFLECTION BY SOME WORKS IN SOURCE: MUSIC OF THE AVANT-GARDE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

The University of Tennessee

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Dennis Earle Jones

December 1970

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the aesthetic within which avant-garde musicians are composing and show the reflection of this aesthetic in selected avant-garde works. Writings by and about avant-garde composers and about their works were collected and collated. Writings about the avant-garde in artistic disciplines other than music were also examined. From these writings was distilled, in the first chapter of the thesis, an elucidation and summarization of the aesthetic of the avant-garde in music.

Various compositions printed in Source: Music of the Avant-Garde were selected for examination. In the second chapter, exegeses of the works are made, vis-à-vis the aesthetic described in the previous chapter.

The main points of the aesthetic were found to be the avant-garde acceptance and use of chance and indeterminacy, the avoidance of critical judgments, the relaxed attitude toward form and structure, the concern with subjectivism (art as life and freedom in art), the use of theatricality and concomitant merging of the arts, the breakdown of the established composer/performer/audience relationship, and the consideration that the process of making music is more important than the product made.

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PREFACE

To be avant-garde is not merely to be different from what came before, but to alter radically the consciousness of the age.

---Morris Dickstein

We're all going in different directions, because there's plenty of room; we're not confined to a path; we don't have to follow someone's footsteps, even though that's what we're taught.

---John Cage

Meaning is new, or not at all, a new creation, or not at all.

---Norman O. Brown

One must guard against criticizing "a very good elephant for being a very awkward horse, or a forest for being a disorderly garden."

---Earle Brown

But what we at first considered chaos was really a new order of things.

---John Cage

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CHAPTER I

THE AESTHETIC OF THE AVANT-GARDE IN MUSIC

I. INTRODUCTION

There is today a growing body of music which may be called avant-garde music. Avant-garde music, being composed, performed, and considered primarily at American universities, contains a combination of compositional elements of, and shares a *modus operandi* with, no other type of music.

Vanguard is the literal meaning of the French term *avant-garde*. The words unorthodox and untraditional are often used to describe the activities of the group of creating artists, with similar artistic attitudes, known as the avant-garde. A broader definition of avant-garde includes "those who create, produce, or apply new, original, or experimental ideas, designs, and techniques in any field, especially in the arts."[1] Sometimes such a group is considered "extremist, bizarre, or arty and affected."[2] The group of composers considered to be the current avant-garde in music can best be defined by enumerating the creative musical activities in which

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[1] Phillip Babcock Gove, ed., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, 1966.

[2] *Ibid.*

the group engages. Simply being a contemporary composer and using particular techniques, some of which are also employed by the avant-garde, is not enough to be classed as a member of the avant-garde. The aspect of being alienated from the public, of going against the mainstream aesthetic and mainstream productions, is a necessary condition for being an avant-gardist. When one begins to receive public tolerance, his status in the avant-garde becomes tenuous; when one is accepted by the public and when one's music is often programmed at public performances separate from all-avant-garde concerts, one is no longer an avant-gardist. One must be an expatriate from the main body of fellow artists in order to be avant-garde.[3] However, an essential aspect of being a member of the avant-garde is that one does not work in isolation; one works as a member of one of the small groups into which avant-gardists congregate. Also, "for an avant-garde to exist there must be an audience which by its rigidity challenges the artist to point another way."[4] Antagonism toward audiences and the antagonisation of audiences, which have been characteristic of past avant-garde groups, e.g., the Dadaist in Zurich in 1916, are absent from the current avant-garde in music.

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[3]This situation has not always been. A century and a half ago, Henri de Saint-Simon envisioned the artist as an avant-garde leading society into a better social order. The artist was seen to have a "'true priestly function . . . marching in the van of all the intellectual faculties.'" Elenore Lester, "The Final Decline and Total Collapse of the American Avant-Garde," Esquire, 71:78, May, 1969.

[4]Ibid., p. 143.

Avant-garde music today is defined by a new, broadened aesthetic within which the composers are working, an aesthetic that allows and encourages many elements of theatricality, that removes any stigma from chance operations in either performance or composition, that redefines the entire composer/performer/audience relationship, that considers structure and form antithetically from the view of the mainstream aesthetic, and that carries within it a pervasive attitude of the untenableness of certain traditional aesthetic values.[5] The last facet--the attitude that the old aesthetic is in some ways inadequate--provides seeds for the defense of the new aesthetic, the seeds spawning an aesthetic so encompassing in what it sanctions as to encircle any attacker and leave him no longer part of the enemy, spawning an aesthetic that often quickly calls out "irrelevant" or "I am not interested in that" and thereby simply evades questions or attacks.

A biannual publication for the dissemination of avant-garde music was begun in 1967; the new genre itself has sprung up in just the last fifteen years. To date, six issues of Source: Music of the Avant-Garde have appeared (hereinafter referred to as Source). The first chapter of this thesis will examine the writings about avant-garde music--from the editors

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[5]The new aesthetic did not spring full grown into life. Avant-garde music and the new aesthetic developed and broadened concomitantly.

of Source, from John Cage (1912-) and others, from scattered chapters in surveys of contemporary American music, and from divers periodicals--in order to arrive at a statement by avant-garde composers and musicians of their attitudes vis-à-vis their work, and the ramifications of their attitudes and work.[6]

II. CHANCE AND INDETERMINACY

Avant-garde music eschews computer-like compositional control. Instead, chance and indeterminate operations are employed in large measure. The terms chance and indeterminate as they are applied to music need to be defined here. Writing in 1965, Roger Reynolds (1934-) sees improvisation, indeterminacy, and chance as methods of music production with--in the order listed--specified details of performance or composition decreasing. He says that with indeterminacy, categories of events are expected, but exactly which will occur within known limits is not determined before the fact; indeterminacy involves discrimination. Chance is viewed by Reynolds as an exceedingly general situation within the limits of which all events are welcomed equally.[7] But Reynolds' differentiations are not sufficient. In a 1967 book a conversation between Reynolds

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[6]Birth and death dates are included throughout the thesis to help the reader keep his historical perspective.

[7]Roger Reynolds, "Indeterminacy: Some Considerations," Perspectives of New Music, 4:136, Fall-Winter, 1965.

and John Cage is recorded in which Cage differentiated between indeterminacy and chance in exactly the opposite way from which Reynolds had: in chance one knows more or less what elements of the universe one is dealing with; in indeterminacy one is completely outside the known universe and literally does not know anything about what will happen.[8] Reynolds' view meets with more contradictions. Beyond chance is indeterminacy--"music whose sounds cannot be foreseen."[9] Cage's working definition is that chance determines specific things in advance, as when he tossed coins to find particular pitches in the Music of Changes. Cage said about his Music of Changes and Imaginary Landscape #4 that the nature of the works precludes value judgments concerning performance, composition, or even listening. Anything may happen in the works since the idea of relation is absent.[10] In 1951 Merce Cunningham (1922-) tossed coins to determine the order of his Sixteen

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[8]Elliott Schwartz and Barney Childs, eds., Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), p. 337.

[9]Calvin Tomkins, The Bride and the Bachelors (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1965), p. 108.

[10]John Cage, Silence: Lectures and Writings (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 59 (Hereinafter referred to as Silence).

Dances.[11] Sound and movement were independent of one another. Because of the coin tossing, no focus, climax, beginning, end, structure or form, in the traditional sense, could exist. Cunningham isolated movements, like Cage isolated sounds.[12] In 1960 The Living Theater produced The Marrying Maiden. The script was made from cutting out phrases from I Ching and letting the scraps of paper fall where they would.[13]

Cage appropriated the term indeterminacy in 1951 when Morton Feldman (1926-) began working with partially specified pitches. Pierre Boulez (1925-) added a similar word to the music vocabulary--aleatoric. His word properly applies, however, to situations in which the composer is predetermining most events. Aleatoric events then, enmeshed and surrounded as they are by specified detail, in effect become merely another controlled aspect. Actually, a precise demarcation between chance and indeterminacy is impossible. In practice the terms are interchangeable. We shall, therefore, use them synonymously.

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[11]The attitudes of the avant-gardists in the theater, sculpture, painting, music, dance, and to a certain extent poetry and writing, film, and architecture, and certainly in the theater of mixed means and Happenings, are very similar concerning the aesthetic within which they are working. Much of the development, support, elucidation, and corroboration of the statements in this first chapter comes from writings by artists who are not primarily musicians.

[12]Richard Kostelanetz, The New American Arts (New York: The Horizon Press, 1965), p. 169-171.

[13]Ibid., p. 81.

Cage sees a precedent for indeterminacy in The Art of the Fugue, in which unspecified instrumentation allows variation from performance to performance.[14] Boulez justifies chance by saying it exists anyway.[15] At the premiere of Cage's piece for twelve radios, Imaginary Landscape #4, many stations had gone off the air; the listeners heard quite a bit of static and silence. "Accident had exerted itself magnificently, and does not accident lie at the very heart of universal order?"[16]

The use of indeterminacy grants freedom from the old traditions and old forms. "Freedom is poetry, taking liberties with words, breaking the rules of normal speech, violating common sense."[17] Heretofore a composer would have had to make a decision which sent him in one direction instead of another; decisions were scarce. One had to limit oneself to one idea. Now, attitudes, experiences, and minds are changing from insisting on the best choice to acceptance of and willingness to make numerous choices, even opposing

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[14]Hans Heinz Stuckenschmidt, Twentieth Century Music, trans. by Richard Deveson (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), p. 217. This looking for historical precedent is unlike Cage and unlike the general anti-historical bent of the avant-garde.

[15]Pierre Boulez, "Alea," Perspectives of New Music, 3:45, Fall-Winter, 1964.

[16]John Hollander, review of Silence, by John Cage, in Perspectives of New Music, 2:139, Spring, 1963.

[17]Norman O. Brown, Love's Body (New York: Random House, Inc., 1966), p. 244.

choices.[18] Chance is used to forestall "any controlled literary developments."[19] "And yet the purpose of indeterminacy would seem to be to bring about an unforeseen situation."[20]

Criticism of the use of chance is rampant.[21] The chance composer is said to take no aesthetic risk, not because he is not the one who makes the final choice for or during a performance, "but because there is no way of judging whether the resulting work of art is a success or a failure."[22] Lukas Foss (1922-) finds that the freedoms and choices given performers now have an inane foolproofness. The results are safe because they are actually controlled enough to give a rather predictable, desired result (as in Alberto Ginastera's [1913-] Bomarzo [1967]) or because the composers claim to not care

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[18]Larry Austin, ed., Source: Music of the Avant-Garde, 2/2:13, July, 1968. (Hereinafter referred to as Source.) Because of the confusion between articles and editorial comment, the lack of article titles, and the difficulty of knowing who said what, authors and titles will be omitted in all footnote references to Source.

[19]Gregory Battcock, ed., The New Art (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1966), p. 246.

[20]Cage, Silence, p. 15.

[21]Statements negative to a point being presented are included for one of three reasons: (1) to elucidate the point by showing all sides of it, (2) to show the general state of flux surrounding some points, or (3) to show how a critic may speak from ignorance.

[22]Leonard B. Meyer, Music, the Arts, and Ideas (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 60.

about results, only the processes, the situations.[23] For distinctive results in indeterminate music, the composer must have brilliant shaping ideas, since no craft is available to him. (Determinate music allows the development of skill; whereas, in indeterminate music, the raison d'être is the extraordinary.) Excellence in chance composition tends to be innate, not acquired. Nothing is offered to the consumer if the work is indistinguishable from its peers or surroundings.[24] Some critics find chance a paradoxical method, a method in which seemingly the composer had no faith in his own ability to say anything and appeared to distrust himself. "All human endeavor fights against chance, realizes a purpose, avails itself of chance in the furtherance of an aim, and, if possible, to attain a creation."[25] Randomness elevated to a first principle contradicts all human aspirations and efforts. "Art has its casual fortuities. Casual fortuities never create art."[26] Morton Feldman claims that Karlheinz Stockhausen (1925-) feels chance to be a fossil aesthetic. Feldman terms Stockhausen a revisionist and says the revisionists do

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[23]Schwartz and Childs, p. 328.

[24]Roger Reynolds, "Indeterminacy: Some Considerations," Perspectives of New Music, 4:137, Fall-Winter, 1965.

[25]Adriaan D. Fokker, "Wherefore, and Why?" Die Reihe, 8:68, 1968.

[26]Ibid., p. 69.

not see chance as an aesthetic. The revisionists want to get chance into a technical process; they want to manipulate and formalize chance, without any aesthetic goals in mind.[27] Charles Wuorinen (1938-) claims that a small group of ill-informed people write aleatoric music.[28] (He means ill-informed concerning Milton Babbitt [1916-] and his school.) If they were not ill-informed they would embrace Babbitt's school of rigorous compositional control. Wuorinen finds indeterminacy too limiting and predictable. He says if something is left indeterminate, then, grossly speaking, there exists an infinite number of ways to perform the piece, but not an infinite number of ways to compose it. In fact, there are no ways to compose it.[29] Christian Wolff (1934-) finds music that is continually changing monotonous, for there is a sameness about it. The music is not necessarily going anywhere; it is irritating because of the monotony, not because of any emphasis or aggression in the music. And the paradoxical immobility of motion is precisely the aspect of the music which is moving.[30] The element of truth in the following statements dulls the edge of any criticism of chance methods in composition. "Chance in art is not chance. Accident in art is not accident. Spontaneity in art is not spontaneity."[31]

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[27] Schwartz and Childs, p. 363. [28] Ibid., p. 370.

[29] Ibid., p. 372. [30] Cage, Silence, p. 54.

[31] Battcock, The New Art, p. 207.

III. AESTHETIC AND CRITICAL JUDGMENTS

Criticism of avant-garde productions is rendered most difficult because a viable critical vocabulary does not yet even exist.[32] In the portion of his book dealing with formalism, Leonard Meyer (1918-) chooses to discuss, almost exclusively, total serial music. His reason for the choice is that total serial music has had its theory and practice "carefully formulated and explicitly employed."[33] Meyer implies that other music written today has not yet a set body of methods for composing it. Traditional music permits one to expect certain things. The occurrences and deviations can be evaluated. In avant-garde music, deviations from the expected do not exist, for there is no expected. There is no way of judging whether or not something is done well. The whole idea of an aesthetic's being a system of values whereby one can judge art works hierarchically is, as far as avant-garde composers are concerned, invalid. As Cage says, "Aesthetic terms have totally disappeared from our language."[34]

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[32]Richard Kostelanetz, The Theater of Mixed Means: An Introduction to Happenings (New York: The Dial Press, Inc., 1968), p. xii (Hereinafter referred to as Mixed Means).

[33]Meyer, p. 237.

[34]John Cage, A Year From Monday (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), p. 93.

One is admonished not to use aesthetic criteria on contemporary art, to use social criteria instead, since social criteria "can include action on the part of others."[35] This permits a type of aesthetic by consensus of those who experience a work, an after-the-fact aesthetic instead of a predetermined approach to an art work. The avant-garde has a "lack of reliance on an esthetic [sic] attitude even though it intends esthetic 'significance.'"[36] Cage is opposed to criticism because it is destructive to curiosity and awareness, which are people's proper business. Value judgments and criticisms waste time because they are negative.[37] He claims that "going into the unknown we have no use for value judgments."[38] Some composers feel that mistakes vis-à-vis what they are working with can only be determined by referring to a set of standards, and the set of standards does not exist.[39] The avant-garde aesthetic is described as a "nonrelational aesthetic."[40] The two words are ambiguous in their double entendre, meaning both that one

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[35] Ibid., p. 58-59.

[36] Roger Shattuck, "After the Avant-Garde," The New York Review of Books, 14:43, March 12, 1970.

[37] Richard Kostelanetz, "The American Avant-Garde Part II: John Cage," Stereo Review, 22:67, May, 1969.

[38] Ibid. [39] Source, 2/1:18.

[40] Gregory Battcock, Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1968), p. 316 (Hereinafter referred to as Minimal Art).

is hard pressed to relate the new aesthetic with the old, and that the material the new aesthetic is considering is not precisely related in, of, and to itself.

Avant-garde composers do not consider their pieces as eternal monuments, but simply as pieces people can mutually experience and then put aside, if they like. A moment of true perception in art occurs when a transitory condensation of a transitory experience is born.[41] Thus, by changing things radically--not just changing the rules of the game, but changing the game itself--the composers evade criticism.[42] Leonard Meyer says we cannot have value judgments because the art work (aesthetic experience) "involves no predictions."[43] Just five years ago the statement that "we are in the midst . . . of . . . a movement . . . in which nothing has to be proved or justified . . . " was made at a convention of The American Federation of Arts.[44] The movement is designed to (among other things) invalidate the critic and all his judgments.[45] Earle Brown (1926-) observes about his piece December 1952 that traditional methods of musical criticism are not applicable since the piece changes so from performance to performance.[46] Cage

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[41]Schwartz and Childs, p. 315.

[42]Peter Yates, Twentieth Century Music (New York: Random House, Inc., 1967), p. 338.

[43]Meyer, p. 80.

[44]Battcock, The New Art, p. 131.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Source, 1/1:5.

feels that when going from nothing to something, we have European tradition and criteria, but when going from something to nothing (as we are), there is no way of saying success or failure, "since all things have equally their Buddha nature."[47] The possibility of evaluating Happenings, that is, saying which are better than others, is not discounted, but we cannot do it yet; there is not enough information on hand to do it.[48] The dancer, Ann Halprin (1920-), simply evades the traditional aesthetic preoccupation with value judgments. Responding to the question whether she thinks any of her pieces better than others, she says no, that the question does not make sense, and that she does not evaluate other people's work.[49] Asked if a piece gained or lost by a particular change in the physical set for the piece, Robert Rauschenberg (1925-) said it only changed, that gaining or losing is a critical evaluation and that he avoided the area of criticism.[50] A breath of Biblical authority comes with Norman O. Brown's (1913-) choice of words: "Here is the fall: the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' . . . --boundaries between persons; . . ."[51] "To the extent that a work of art is original, it cannot be measured, accurately, for it does not fit existent standards."[52]

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[47]Cage, Silence, p. 143.

[48]Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 129. [49]Ibid, p. 76.

[50]Ibid., p. 91. [51]Brown, p. 143.

[52]Battcock, The New Art, p. 185.

IV. FORM AND STRUCTURE

An aspect of avant-garde music that shows considerable differences from its counterpart in traditional music is the concept of formal or structural organization. Differing definitions of form and structure exist and pragmatically cannot be separated.[53] Cage tries to separate them by seeing structure as the division of the whole into parts and form as the expressive content, the morphology of the continuity.[54] Intellectual creation or execution contains them simultaneously, however. Trying to assign specific purposes to them serves no purpose and is not necessary.[55] The avant-garde attitude toward sounds renders the distinction between form and structure superfluous. Any sound, or silence, is appropriate compositional raw material. Cage's 4'33" implies that all sounds or noises are acceptable, for implicit in the piece's silence is the fact that anything heard during that time is the music.[56] Every noise has a note.[57]

Electronic equipment has greatly increased a composer's raw materials; "the situation made available by these means is

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[53] Source, 1/1:50.

[54] Cage, Silence, p. 35.

[55] Source, 1/1:50.

[56] Kostelanetz, "The American Avant-Garde Part II: John Cage," 22:63.

[57] Source, 2/1:18.

essentially a total sound-space, the limits of which are ear-determined only . . ."[58] Cage disarmingly comments that "this brings about a change in our heads."[59] One is for the first time aware of the whole spectrum of sounds. Indeed, it is not difficult to see the necessity for the avant-garde attitude toward sounds, for if indeterminate elements are present in a work, one must be willing to accept any and all sounds that might occur. Actually, a composer needs to talk about all sounds being free and about liberating sounds only because sounds have been put into rigid structures for so long, and in such a way, that they have lost their freedom.[60] New sounds are not really developed by the avant-garde.

Including silence among the available sounds is not difficult to accept. Time, construed as duration, is an important parameter of a sound. In indeterminate situations, other parameters, such as timbre and pitch, are often of decreased import; and time remains the only parameter shared by sounds and silence.

Cage takes each single sound or noise as complete in itself, incapable of development.[61] What bearing does Cage's attitude, shared by the avant-gardists, have on their music?

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[58]Cage, Silence, p. 199. [59]Ibid., p. 9.

[60]Source, 1/1:49.

[61]Wilfrid Howard Mellers, Music In a New Found Land: Themes and Developments in the History of American Music (New York: Alfred Knopf, Inc., 1965), p. 177.

The attitude's effect is that sound events are believed to merely follow one another, related only through coexistence.[62] The whole idea of causality--of one sound's causing or leading to another--and the resultant continuity, is not relevant to the avant-gardists. Continuity means a particular continuity that excludes others. It can be rationally argued that regardless of the chronological order of events there is continuity, so non-continuity means accepting any continuity that comes along.[63] The philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) set the precedent for continuity's irrelevance to avant-gardists when he asserted that "no object implies the existence of any other."[64] Eric Salzman (1933-), speaking about the work of three avant-garde composers, Morton Feldman, Earle Brown, and Christian Wolff, says, "Intentional disassociation--statement without relationship, evolution, or process--is a fundamental, underlying idea."[65] Since the old cause and effect, or one event's leading to another, is gone, the sequence of events is meaningless, in the old sense of the word. One does not and should not feel that an event follows <u>from</u>, i. e., is the result of, what went before. It simply 'comes after.' Some professionals claim that, by working without a system, Feldman is evading,

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[62] <u>Ibid</u>.

[63] Cage, <u>Silence</u>, p. 131.

[64] Battcock, <u>Minimal Art</u>, p. 92.

[65] Eric Salzman, <u>Twentieth Century Music: An Introduction</u> (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), p. 166.

avoiding, the composer's problems. Feldman answers that he is evading their problem, which has an historical "hang-up," but not his own. He says he just cannot get excited over pitch relationships; if he is accused of destroying the relationships, he just does not care.[66] Brown, considering people acting directly in response to a described environment, as one would have with indeterminate music, holds that structure would be irrational (not mindless) in the sense of cause and effect. The structure could not be systematized before the event or traced after the event; indeterminacy would produce situations too complex and subtle for only one rationale, one predetermined structure.[67] Aaron Copland (1900-) asserts that "Earle Brown . . . posits as an ideal the creation of the work, each time anew, during its actual performance."[68] Form is denied because the existence of causality is denied. Ideas like antecedent/consequent, beginning, middle, end, and periodicity imply causal connections. "An end, or conclusion, is something caused by what went before."[69]

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[66] Source, 1/2:44. [67] Ibid., 1/1:49.

[68] Aaron Copland, The New Music 1900-1960 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 180.

[69] Meyer, p. 80.

Avant-gardists in arts other than music feel the same way. Robert Rauschenberg says that continuity has been completely eliminated.[70] Claes Oldenburg (1929-) believes that one action has no more importance, or duration, than another.[71] Gertrude Stein (1874-1946) abstracted 'the word' from antecedent and consequence. Marcel Duchamp's (1887-1968) visual ready-mades and many of Cage's works both ask the experiencer to see the object just 'in itself,' divorced from taste, memory, and desire.[72] "It is not the aesthetic purpose of most lumia to implant their complete sequence in memory." Each present moment of the lumia does "not attempt to hook up with the past or future."[73] Traditional theater has an information structure, that is, one needs information to know what is going on. New theater has compartmented structure in which units are separate from one another.[74]

If the idea of causality leading to continuity is defunct, other traditional formal and structural aspects are invalidated, namely crisis and climax. A piece of avant-garde music does not have one all-important climax; harmony and the

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[70] Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 86.

[71] Ibid., p. 154. [72] Mellers, p. 188.

[73] Michael Kirby, The Art of Time (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 254. A lumia is a creation in which colored lights play on the back of a translucent screen.

[74] Michael Kirby, ed., Happenings (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1965), p. 13.

resulting fixed relationships are avoided because an interpenetration and non-obstruction of sound are desired; if structural sections exist they have equal importance.[75] "The music, art, and literature of the avant-garde is characteristically unkinetic and unfocused."[76] Rauschenberg has a preference for no climax. He wants things to start and stop without calling attention to one thing over another.[77] Happenings have an "assymetrical network of surprises, without climax or consummation."[78] A painter claims:

> We have ceased giving our work a focus. There is no place for the spectator to be from where he can see it all happen. The spectator is not directed toward a point in the piece at which its parts are balanced . . . .[79]

Some want the elimination or minimization of hierarchical relationships of parts in sculpture and of development and climax in dance.[80] Crisis no longer means a climax to Merce Cunningham, when he states "that each thing can be and is separate from each and every other."[81] Viewed within the broadened avant-garde aesthetic, continuity is simply not a

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[75]John Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 31.

[76]Meyer, p. 78.

[77]Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 90.

[78]Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1966), p. 266.

[79]Battcock, Minimal Art, p. 198.

[80]Ibid., p. 263.

[81]Ibid., p. 280.

great concern, as Cage's question shows: "How, now, can you make a continuity, as I take it your intention is, without intention? . . ."[82]

Some composers want to formalize a piece only by its outer limits, in time. Christian Wolff suggests:

> Form in music could be taken as a length of programme time . . . . A piece as it starts and stops is indicated by the actions of its performers (even when no sounds are scored at all). Form is a theatrical event of a certain length, and the length itself may be unpredictable.[83]

The boundary between inside and out, what belongs in a structure and what does not are not clear any more, by choice of the composers.[84] Salzman finds that "the content of a work and the relationship of its parts as they unfold . . . are defined uniquely by each work as its own form or structure."[85] Wolff discusses form as a sequence of structural lengths not precisely related to material chosen for use in the form. In composing, form and material are separate.

> That form, as a structure indicated on a score, can be derived out of the nature of the sound material is, I think, illusory. So, conversely, a piece is not played to exhibit its composed structure.

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[82]John Cage, Silence, p. 17.

[83]Christian Wolff, "On Form," Die Reihe, 7:26, 1965.

[84]Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 23.

[85]Kostelanetz, The New American Arts, p. 240.

Identifying (equating) form and material (what is intended and what is given) eliminates expressive intentions. Wolff insists that the simplest view of form is as a theatrical event.[86] Indeed, there is "no problem of form or construction; form is in the method."[87] In avant-garde dance, "there is no contextual logic, no narrative sequence, no reference to any ideas or attitudes beyond the fact of the object or the movement." Thus far, "no theories of composition and no attempt to put materials into pre-established molds" have been made.[88]

John Cage, talking about how new works have no beginnings, endings, or middles, how they begin anywhere and last any length of time, says:

> They are therefore not preconceived objects, and to approach them as objects is to utterly miss the point. They are occasions for experience, and this experience is not only received by the ears but by the eyes too. An ear alone is not a being.[89]

Cage is here hinting at something that will be discussed more fully later, the idea of avant-garde music's existing not exclusively as a musical phenomenon, but also as a visual experience. Cage feels that structure is simply not included in the works now. Structure in a work only comes from the perception of a structure supplied by the perceiver himself.

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[86]Wolff, p. 30.

[87]Source, 2/1:24.

[88]Kostelanetz, The New American Arts, p. 187.

[89]Cage, Silence, p. 31.

The question of, the problem with, awareness of a structure is not relevant. Awareness itself, however, is what is possible.[90] In a most general, or perhaps a most fundamental, way, form is still linked to traditional music. ("Form will be our only constant connection with the past."[91]) The old forms will be related to the new forms "through the principle of organization or man's common ability to think."[92]

The concrete observation that one may make, culled from the jumble of writings about form and structure, is that traditional concepts of form and structure are not applicable to avant-garde music, though an individual structure for a given piece may be perceived or, in the case of a work with many chance elements, a generalized form may be expected for a given piece. Indeed, Boulez feels that the chance aspect may even help us.

> This development of chance . . . will create a universe more differentiated than before and will mark a more acute development of a renewed perception of form.[93]

One must bear in mind that, without the traditional formal guidelines, observation of structure in avant-garde music, while possible in given pieces, may be ultimately subjective. Music does not have problems like other arts--architecture's leaky roof, engineering's collapsing structure, language's

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[90] Ibid., p. 259.

[91] Ibid., p. 5.

[92] Ibid., p. 6.

[93] Boulez, p. 49.

word definitions and syntax, and painting's and sculpture's objectification--and therefore does not have to bother about proportions; the process of structuralization then becomes pure subjectivity.[94] Cage confirms the subjectivity of structure when he explains that in the Music for Piano he "affirmed the absence of the mind as a ruling agent from the structure and method of the composing means . . . ."[95] He thinks that certain compositional aspects, such as the division of a piece into parts, are controlled by the mind, but the form, the continuity of a piece, is ruled by the heart.[96] The subjective control of form can be broken down into four modes of operation: unconscious (which is not subject to analysis), arbitrary, unknowing, and chance (which identifies with no matter what eventuality and therefore calls for quite a bit of subjectivity 'after the fact,' i. e., to accept no matter what eventuality).[97] In the past, according to Leonard Meyer, three facets have combined, in variable proportions, to constitute what significance one received from music: (1) formal relationships, (2) experience of dynamic relationships (tension/repose, ambiguity/clarity, instability/stability, etc.), and (3) referential relationships, evocations of 'real,' extra-musical experience. One should take care not to confuse

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[94]Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 127.

[95]Cage, Silence, p. 27.

[96]Ibid., p. 62.

[97]Ibid., p. 35.

dynamic and referential relationships, the former dealing with changing things, the latter with more or less constant moods evoked by tempo, timbre, dynamics, accentuation, etc. Now, however, a fourth facet is being highly regarded, the sensuous enjoyment of music.[98]

V. SUBJECTIVISM; ART AS LIFE; FREEDOM IN ART

The ideas of art as life, of art as being subjective, and of freedom in art are avant-garde concerns. Artists think "we need to see more, hear more, feel more."[99] "Listening isn't enough for composers these days. They must see, feel, smell, taste, hear, experience."[100] The artists share

> an intense passion for direct experience, for unqualified participation in . . . our immediate world . . . . For them this means a kind of total acceptance; they reject nothing except our previous esthetic [sic] canons.[101]

Cage is for leaving emotions where they are in each person, for not trying to put one's emotions into someone else, since that animalizes, it 'rouses rabbles,' and seems humane, but is not. Also, he does not make constructions of relationships personally observed; he leaves the observations to everyone's different point of view.[102] Mario Bertoncini (1932-), on the other hand, claims he wants to transfer

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[98]Meyer, p. 42. [99]Sontag, p. 14.

[100]Source, 3/1:77. [101]Battcock, The New Art, p. 73.

[102]Cage, Silence, p. 250.

feelings from one person to another. Bertoncini wishes the interpreter (performer) to be free.[103] Still another view is that theater today is trying to offer both objective and subjective sides; if one wants, one can think about things or one can feel things, winner's choice.[104] "Artists have left the seclusion of abstractions . . . . When we write it is for our own purposes; if we communicate, it is out of fondness for life and mankind."[105] Cage directly contradicts the statement that "art should come from within; then it is profound." If art comes from within, it sets the one from whom it comes above the others who hear it (experience it). Instead, art should go within.[106]

Avant-gardists are divided on whether or not their music should be about something. Robert Ashley (1930-) decided that his music has to be about something, that is, it should not be abstract; then, if the piece is about music, it is involved with procedures, or else the piece has political or social ends. Ashley realizes that obsolescence may greet his pieces in a few years. Barney Childs (1926-), on the other

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[103] Source, 1/2:2.

[104] Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 179.

[105] Battcock, Minimal Art, p. 195.

[106] Cage, Silence, p. 129. It is evident that, since avant-garde music is so subjective, the performer will probably experience a particular piece more deeply than a listener. Some avant-gardists feel their reason for playing is simply to find out why they want to play. Source, 2/1:18.

hand, is directly opposed to having his work serve political or social ends, precisely because the music might too quickly become out of date.[107] Ashley amplifies by suggesting that if one goes along with doing things that have messages, one hardly needs to talk about processes; one needs "to care only about the relevance of our concerns . . . ."[108] Cage feels that "a composer is simply someone who tells other people what to do." He would rather have us bring our resources--and that means people, too--together, welcoming strangers and discoveries.[109] Some feel that in this era of ready-mades and automation, art needs to return to an amateur status of activity; technology, mixed media ideas, and collaborative creation make the return possible.[110]

While objectification requires a rational human mind, the subjective experience which the avant-gardists are touting brings one an awareness of life more quickly and trenchantly.

> Contemporary music is not so much art as it is life and any one making it no sooner finishes one of it than he begins making another . . . very frequently no one knows that contemporary music is or could be art. He simply thinks it is irritating. Irritating one way or another, that is to say keeping us from ossifying.[111]

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[107] Source, 3/2:8.

[108] Source, 2/2:5.

[109] Source, 2/1:15.

[110] Source, 2/2:42.

[111] Cage, Silence, p. 44.

The contemporary notion is that art and life are at least continuous, if not the same; art and life are not separate, distinct identities.[112] Part of the aesthetic is "to obliterate traditional categories of artistic creation and apprehension," to bring life and art into harmony and make more of the invisible environment visible.[113] "The best of the performing arts . . . should serve as stimuli which make one's life and work and experience more meaningful and flexible."[114] The dancer, Ann Halprin, says the intention of her piece Apartment Six "was to remove any separation from life and art."[115] Because of the indeterminate elements, an avant-garde work is different every performance. To a listener it may not be interesting one time; the next time it may be less interesting; the next time suddenly exciting; and the next time a disaster. Life is the same way, sometimes boring, sometimes gently pleasing, sometimes exciting, but always different.[116]

The illusory idea of freedom occurring in the aesthetic is implied by the obsession with what may happen instead of what should.[117] The feeling a composer has that fixed forms

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[112] Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 34.

[113] Ibid., p. 38.

[114] Source, 3/1:15.

[115] Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 72.

[116] Cage, Silence, p. 131.

[117] Boulez, p. 44.

are shackling, that fixed forms are tyrannical because the world of music is so complex, shows the avant-garde preoccupation with freedom.[118] The composers do not, however, have carte blanche. Their new awareness permits free choice, but the accompanying freedom requires responsiveness and carries responsibility.[119] A composition indeterminate with respect to performance is necessarily experimental; the outcome of the experiment is not foreseen. "Being unforeseen, this action is not concerned with its excuse."[120] Experimentation necessarily involves freedom. "Feet off the ground. Freedom is instability; the destruction of attachments; the ropes, the fixtures, fixations, that tie us down."[121]

The avant-garde idea of what things may be music is greatly expanded over the traditional idea because of respect for, and welcoming of, subjectivity and concern for life and freedom. The composers believe that "all possible aural sensations in any sequence and in any combination are available and of equal esthetic [sic] . . . validity as raw material."[122] Cage finds that things previously unconnected are being connected and that things previously separated are now together. The field is not just music and the problem not just accepting untraditional sounds; the field is human awareness and

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[118] Source, 2/2:45.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Cage, Silence, p. 39.

[121] Brown, p. 260.

[122] Kostelanetz, The New American Arts, p. 239.

acceptance is of our existing, at the present moment, in a limitless situation. If one has something to do, he does not question its worth, he just does it. One does not make choices unless absolutely necessary. One does not want to be pushed around emotionally or be pushed by impressive constructions of relationships. Cage wonders if one will ever again really bother to describe in words or notation the details of something that has not yet happened.[123]

> For this music is not concerned with harmoniousness as generally understood, . . . we are concerned with the coexistence of dissimilars, and the central points where fusion occurs are many: the ears of the listeners wherever they are.[124]

Even the very question whether avant-garde music is actually music is unimportant, because it functions a lot like music, teaches a lot about music (as music does, in the abstract), and, by the nature of its existence, demands one's attention and consideration.[125] Cage's thoughts typify the avant-garde feeling toward what is music and toward music as life: life is basically a cause for joy; music resembles life a lot, so avoiding it is the non-listener's loss; saying it is good or bad is useless because the work is, i. e., it exists; no sounds are discriminated against.[126] Only individual sensibility distinguishes sounds outside the performance from the

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[123]Cage, Silence, p. 215. [124]Ibid., p. 12.

[125]Schwartz and Childs, p. 335.

[126]Cage, Silence, p. 133.

performance and it is not difficult to assimilate any objects given a certain amount of experience.[127] Earle Brown feels his December 1952 deserves consideration merely because it is a musical experience wrought by a group of humanly sensitive performers.[128]

Most avant-garde composers avow that their music has no purpose. Cage wants to eliminate purpose so awareness can increase. So Cage's purpose is awareness, which comes from having no purpose; hence, he speaks intelligibly of a purposeful purposelessness.[129] In concert, Cage may perform the same indeterminate piece more than once, explaining to the audience that each performance is unique, so everybody is a listener and that the pieces are not objects for understanding, but are purposeless. The pieces are just sounds to listen to and Cage hopes the people would learn to listen to the sounds of everyday life.[130] Feldman says that if art has to be Messianic, he wants it to come through being esoteric; he admits that "whatever describable beauties may arise from this esoteric art have always been useless."[131] Theater seems to have been stripped of purpose by Happenings and no longer requires

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[127] Source, 2/1:18. [128] Source, 1/1:50.

[129] Schwartz and Childs, p. 341.

[130] John Cage, "Indeterminacy," Die Reihe, 5:116, 1961.

[131] Source, 3/2:7.

specific content. The justification for removing specific content comes from believing that "understanding via analysis and one's rational sequential perceptions is limiting."[132]

VI. THEATRICALITY; MERGING OF THE ARTS

Simultaneous but not mutual occurrences of art forms are firmly rooted in tradition. One thinks immediately of opera and ballet, both blendings of auditory and visual arts. With the dance, however, one must say that the visual portion is predominant, just as with opera the music is paramount. In music of the avant-garde, elements from other arts are not only present, but also are not expected to be subordinate to the music. Avant-garde art today simply does not make the traditional divisions, into poetry, music, dance, etc.[133]

Perhaps the most important element added to avant-garde music is theatrics, which can exist simultaneously with music on a number of different levels. Performed music has always been close to theater. That is, the whole concert hall ritual, the tuning, the bowing and applause, the required clothing, the seat adjusting, the lighting, the movements of a conductor, has been theatrical. Hardly anyone would deny that the music itself was the most important part of this first type of

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[132]Battcock, The New Art, p. 246.

[133]Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. xiii.

simultaneity. Cage and Cunningham, as said before, permit a second type of simultaneous level of existence, in this case a coexistence, of music and dance (theatrical since it is so visual) that relegates neither art to second position; both are equally important. The productions of Cage and Cunningham rest on their belief that music and dance do not depend on each other.[134] A third type of simultaneity exists when music and theatrics have mutual recognition and mutual benefit, while remaining separable. In other words, while the music and theatrics enhance and enrich one another, they could stand alone, one just as music, the other just as theater. The fourth and last type of simultaneity merges music and theatrics in such a way that to separate them in a work would leave the work not only incomplete, but would render the parts incapable of standing.

That music is becoming more visual cannot be disputed; now people are able to describe pieces. An observer can tell what happened in a piece.[135] Heretofore, if a work were just sound, a description would be able to give but little idea of what went on. Eric Salzman even talks about "performance as gesture."[136]

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[134] Tomkins, p. 120.

[135] This statement will be made abundantly clear by the next chapter, in which several avant-garde works will be verbally described.

[136] Salzman, p. 165.

Cage has much to say about music's not existing without theater. "A sound accomplishes nothing; without it life would not last out the instant." Music does not exist, for it is an imaginary separation of hearing from the other senses; action relevant to music is theatrical.[137] An ear is not enough to stand by itself. Total theater is needed and one may focus on a particular aspect, of which music is one.[138]

> For a calculated theatrical activity I would say offhand that the minimum number of necessary actions going on at once is five. Bright people can clear up rather quickly perplexity arising from lower numbers.[139]

Cage puts a similar thought in a more mystical way: "Are people the way 'their land and air is?' If so, should they not have four or five purposes (instead of one) and let those interpenetrate with one another in some interesting way?"[140] Cage likes music best when it does not distract him from simultaneous observation of other things. "Theater takes place all the time wherever one is and art simply facilitates persuading one this is the case."[141] He says his music is, of necessity, theater. If he chooses music, he gets theater.[142]

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[137] Cage, Silence, p. 14.

[138] Ibid., p. 149.

[139] Ibid., p. 173.

[140] Ibid., p. 243.

[141] Ibid., p. 174.

[142] Ibid., p. 166. Theatrics are also often present in recent works by composers who are not members of the avant-garde, for example, Stockhausen.

Composers are admonished to avoid inspiration, to not have inspiration come up as an alternative, rather to have it exist eternally. Inspiration then is theater and music just becomes art. Theater comes near to being what music is.[143] If one does not want to use the word music, it is all right with Cage. "Protect" the word music, he says, and find another word for everything else we hear. What we are in and into is theater and we are creating it and are enjoying it.[144] Cage himself actually gets a little far afield of the avant-garde mainstream, seeing art as life and theater as life and music as theater and therefore music as life and art.

Many composers today are advocating a purely aural/oral/visual compositional procedure, termed process-perception. They are urging the merging of poetry (oral), music (aural), and drama (visual).[145] Some of the works discussed in the following chapter will demonstrate this procedure. A merging of the arts is proceeding at high speed. The frequent, almost casual, lumping together of once diverse arts implies that strong parallels exist. Statements such as this are common: "Recent artists as well as composers and choreographers have become concerned in their work with the random elements of chance."[146] Sculpture is becoming theatrical, because the

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[143] Ibid., p. 189.

[144] Ibid., p. 174.

[145] Source, 1/2:3.

[146] Battcock, The New Art, p. 231.

viewer's experience of the object comes from his situation vis-à-vis the object; what is to be had from a work is no longer located completely within the work itself.[147] Arts are spilling into other arts; "it seems apparent that insofar as Minimal Art is architectural, it shares with the Happening a theatrical quality: the activation of an environmental space."[148] When artists try to get down to the minimal essence of their art, their particular medium seems to become something else; they get to the essence by eliminating as many traditional elements as possible, e. g., Cage eliminates traditional instruments, notation, and "composition." Prose becomes poetry or music; film yields projected painting; music turns into theater; painters' shaped canvases become flat wall sculpture; simple architecture seems to be sculpture; sculpture with a lot of 'sculptureness' becomes architecture or interior design; and concretist poems turn into graphic art.[149]

A vivid example of two previously disparate arts coming together, at least visually, comes from comparing Cage's Notations with certain concrete poetry anthologies.[150]

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[147] Battcock, Minimal Art, p. 125.

[148] Ibid., p. 71. "Earle Brown has specifically stated that the impulse towards his kind of composition came from the visual arts of Alexander Calder (1898-) and Jackson Pollock (1912-)." Mellers, p. 188.

[149] Battcock, Minimal Art, p. 262.

[150] For example: An Anthology of Concrete Poetry, edited by Emmett Williams or Anthology of Concretism, edited by Eugene Wildman.

Notations contains facsimiles of scores handwritten by 269 twentieth century composers, from the Beatles, Wallingford Riegger (1885-1961), and Igor Stravinsky (1882-) to avant-gardists like Robert Ashley. The avant-garde score, prepared with great care, often almost has as an end in itself its visual artfulness. Scores will often contain pictures, diagrams, elaborate schemata, or involved verbal descriptions; photographic color slides and recordings may be included; often no traditional musical notation is to be seen anywhere on a score.

> Fixed time segments and some kind of graphic, schematic, or diagrammatic notation--newly invented or plotted for each piece--are characteristic of the live performed pieces. These notations are basically programs for activities; they renounce any specific control of actual sound results but merely define the limits of choice, the possible field of activity, and the impossibility of prediction.[151]

VII. COMPOSER/PERFORMER/AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP

The remaining aspects of avant-garde music are the increasing audience participation and spectator involvement, the breakdown of the established composer/performer/audience relationship, and the situation perhaps most threatening to traditionalists, the insistence on the importance of the process of making music more than the music produced. As it was

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[151]Salzman, p. 165.

difficult to separate theatrics from music, it is difficult to talk about greater audience involvement outside of the larger phenomenon of the changing composer/performer/audience relationship. Cage claims that most people hearing music think it does something to them, not that they do anything. He wants us to arrange our music so people realize they are doing and not having something done to them.[152] People are to be brought together "for the purpose of articulating a mutual concern."[153] Cage wants to turn each person into an artist, so there are no performances, but kinds of celebrations instead.[154]

Fontana Mix and Aria, both by Cage, were combined "to provoke the audience to audible response, to break down standard notions of performance in one dimension and an audience confined silently in another dimension."[155] Salzman talks of a situation "in which the listener becomes directly involved in an activity in which the old distinctions and relationships are meaningless."[156] "An audience can sit quietly or make noises. People can whisper, talk and even shout. An audience can sit still or it can get up and move around. People are people, not plants."[157]

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[152]Schwartz and Childs, p. 339.

[153]Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 182.

[154]Ibid., p. 59.

[155]H. Wiley Hitchcock, Music In the United States (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 244.

[156]Salzman, p. 165.

[157]Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 51.

The same idea is current in the other arts. The huge canvases in the 1950's were "designed to . . . envelop the spectator."[158] The viewer always has to participate to see a sculpture, but recent work "is an instrument for seeing rather than merely an object." The viewer is then involved even more; "sculpture as a visual instrument requires the observer to use an entirely different mode of perception from that which is fitting for traditional sculpture."[159] Some neo-Dada constructions "invite the in-group to play with them, to join in the romp."[160] Rauschenberg solicits a spectator's participation in his painting, "not by emotive brush strokes," but by including a chair or ladder in the combine.[161] This makes the spectator think of getting on or in the work, of participating in it. Object/viewer relationships in sculpture are to be established by the viewer himself.[162] Twentieth-century painting often has "an unfinished quality by which one can participate in the experience of the artist, the process of painting the picture."[163] Along the same line, Earle Brown believes that very intense communication among everyone

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[158]Sontag, p. 268.

[159]Kirby, The Art of Time, p. 226.

[160]Battcock, The New Art, p. 177.

[161]Kostelanetz, The New American Arts, p. 112.

[162]Battcock, Minimal Art, p. 125.

[163]Ibid., p. 156.

involved is possible with his music, since it is not all worked out by him, but is given in idea form and worked out by others working together (listener and performer alike).[164] Claes Oldenburg says he puts the responsibility on the individual ego; one sees whatever one chooses.[165] In theater, the observer has to use his mind to connect things because now a discontinuous series of images and events and activities is going on.[166] With Happenings, synchronization goes away, so things become discontinuous and a focal point is hard to find. Therefore the audience has to become involved.[167] "Many Happenings and related pieces have attempted to 'break down' the 'barrier' between presentation and spectator and to make a passive viewer a more active participator."[168] Oldenburg considers the audience at his Happenings an object, whose behavior is an event just like everything else in the Happening.[169] That means that no line between performers and audience exists. Happenings, actually, return an audience/performer set-up back to its original, primitive form, that of a ceremony encompassing several arts.[170] Long a part of

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[164] Source, 1/1:50.

[165] Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 152.

[166] Ibid., p. 37.

[167] Ibid., p. 8.

[168] Kirby, The Art of Time, p. 95.

[169] Kirby, Happenings, p. 202.

[170] Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 34.

non-Western music, events in which everybody is active, some singing, some dancing, some playing instruments, are only now occurring in Western music. Allan Kaprow (1927-), talking about his Happenings, admits they are solely for the participants, not for observers.[171] The implication and application of his admission is the necessity for audience participation in order for the audience to get anything out of a Happening, and if the audience is participating, it is no longer an audience.

More traditional theater is exploiting the intimacy of audience/performer relationships to increase the immediacy of the theatrical material.[172] In a play set in a prison, the audience is put in a cell and the actors in another cell. In another play, Dr. Faustus, the audience sits with the actors at a long medieval dining table.[173] Playwrights have a "desire to knock down the barrier between audience and stage"; they do it by presenting a "specimen of life" instead of a show.[174] Rauschenberg does not like the traditional idea of the audience. He wants the audience to assume as much responsibility as the performer for an interesting evening.[175] The dancer

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[171] Ibid., p. 115.

[172] Kirby, Happenings, p. 25.

[173] Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 25.

[174] Kostelanetz, The New American Arts, p. 62.

[175] Kostelanetz, Mixed Means, p. 85.

Ann Halprin wants a process that involves all the people in attendance at a production.[176] Even in the behavioral sciences people are thinking in terms of removing distinctions. This quote from Love's Body is indicative of a widespread spirit of the times: "Separateness . . . is the fall--the fall into division. . . . The conclusion of the whole matter is, break down the boundaries, the walls."[177] And so one is led to the question of the composer/performer/audience relationship.

Thus,

> It is clear in this new music that there is a breakdown of the older relationship between the audience, the performer, the sound, and the stage ritual that has brought them together. Composers now conceive music as of society rather than for society.[178]

The will and determination of the composer are reduced. "Composer, performer, and listener meet and mingle in producing the musical experience."[179] The old attitude was that a composer wrote specific notes and one had to play them the way they were; things had to be right. With the new attitude a composer is happy to let most anyone perform his music, and the reaction to what turns out though the reaction be happy or dismal, does not matter; the composer in good spirits takes a chance with the performance.[180] Naturally the aura around

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[176] Ibid., p. 74.

[177] Brown, p. 149.

[178] Source, 1/1:1.

[179] Hitchcock, p. 241.

[180] Source, 2/1:17.

the performer is dimming: "We used to have the artist up on a pedestal. Now he's no more extraordinary than we are."[181]

David Tudor (1926-) claims he likes situations where the music is not completed, in the traditional sense of a composition's being finished; he likes situations where people are trying to make music, or trying to make things into music. Composers often do not write for particular instruments any more, but for a non-specified performer following the performer's musical choices.[182] Lukas Foss feels that all composers today are searching for a

> . . . situation which will set the participants free . . . audience participation, eventual audience liberation . . . everyone is the artist . . . our art in place of my art . . . an art free of rhetoric.[183]

Roger Reynolds wants his music more accessible to all people, not just musicians; he wants the composers, performers, guests, and cooperators all involved.[184]

Performers are no longer being considered servants of composers.[185] Foss finds that the changing composer/performer relationship points in numerous directions, but the directions are so vague and full of only partially understood implications that an objective critical assessment would be premature.[186]

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[181] Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 50.

[182] Source, 1/2:2.

[183] Source, 3/2:91.

[184] Ibid., p. 9.

[185] Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 32.

[186] Schwartz and Childs, p. 226.

Many composers, caring little for virtuosity, and meeting with hostility from many performers, are turning to performance themselves.

The avant-garde is also moving toward greater anonymity for composers and performers, not only because many relative amateurs are performing, but also because anonymity seems to accompany the idea of a debased monumentality. One healthy side effect of the developing anonymity is the obsolescence of competition.[187]

The type of anonymity Cage advocates comes via the composer's eliminating himself from his work, eliminating his self from his work, permitting the music to just happen. The composer's music and the performer become one. There is intimate identification with the performer, not with the instrument he plays; a new humanism develops.[188] "Cage's most important recent 'compositions' are conceived to deny his intentional desires as completely as possible. . . ."[189] Cage states: "The in-the-heart path of music leads now to self-knowledge through self-denial, and its in-the-world path leads likewise to selflessness."[190]

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[187]Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 32.

[188]Source, 2/2:45.

[189]Kostelanetz, "The American Avant-Garde Part II: John Cage," p. 62.

[190]Cage, Silence, p. 66.

The status of the conductor is being altered, too. "The conductor's role consists essentially in giving signals."[191]

> From that point of view from which each thing and each being is seen as moving out from its own center, this situation of the subservience of several to the directive of one who is himself controlled, not by another but by the work of another, is intolerable.[192]

There is in general more emphasis on performing than composing. Performers working together generate many forms, instead of one form's being precomposed. "A performance is composed rather than a composition is performed."[193] Art forms today have to be based on dialog, with no impartial observers; everyone must participate in the communication, or the idea of communication is contradicted.[194] Performers today have been freed from standardized instruments and techniques, creating more personal, immediate relationships between themselves, "a counterpoint of personalities."[195]

The idea of autonomous musical groups working and even literally living together has been gaining popularity since the early 1950's. Better interaction, more synergy, and opportunities to learn together are given as reasons for the rise of groups.[196] Their importance is their contribution to

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[191] Boulez, p. 52.

[192] Cage, Silence, p. 37.

[193] Source, 1/1:50.

[194] Source, 3/2:91.

[195] Source, 2/1:24.

[196] Ibid., p. 15.

the breakdown of the established composer/performer/audience relationship and their increase of composer/performer anonymity.

Admitting the variety of music in Source: Music of the Avant-Garde, the editors claim nonetheless that the composers represented share important compositional attitudes. The composers want "to include complete involvement of the performers and the audience--in short, to control the socio-musical environment."[197]

VIII. PROCESS MORE THAN PRODUCT

Many of the other avant-garde ideas point toward the tenet that the process of composition is more important than the finished product. The perceiving of a process is now a composition.[198] Numerous people have made the point in writing. "The idea is dissolved in the complexity of experience."[199] "If one takes delight . . . (in) a changing process, one moves toward new recognitions."[200] "The act of painting rather than the completed composition had become the creative focus."[201] Concerning performance artifice, what

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[197] Source, 1/1:1.

[198] Source, 1/2:3.

[199] Battcock, Minimal Art, p. 195.

[200] Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 79.

[201] Kirby, The Art of Time, p. 98.

one does is more important than the exhibition one puts on.[202] There is a "downgrading of talent, facility, virtuosity, and technique" and a "concomitant elevation of conceptual power."[203] The best new sculpture is shifting "from the question how to the question what. Much of the effort implied by the new work is not of the kind that is wrought, but rather of the kind that is conceived."[204] Even a paid advertisement from Source: Music of the Avant-Garde hails a new romanticism, new in the old basic, forgotten way: the event, not the system, is the thing.[205] "What is most important is what an artist does, rather than what he is, what the object does--in terms of response--rather than what it is."[206] "The art is concerned with what occurs, not with what should happen. . . ." Artists reject the abstract comprehending of works and substitute a desire for participation in the works.[207]

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[202]Battcock, p. 267. [203]Ibid., p. 278.

[204]Battcock, Minimal Art, p. 88.

[205]Source, 3/1:83. Poggioli points out parallels between the Romantic Era and the current avant-garde: the cult of novelty, the attitude of the public, the composers' feelings of "down with the past," and the emphasis on aesthetics and poetics. Renato Poggioli, The Theory of the Avant-Garde, trans. by Gerald Fitzgerald (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 46 ff.

[206]Battcock, Minimal Art, p. 36.

[207]Yates, p. 234.

> Art instead of being an object made by one person is a process set in motion by a group of people. Art's socialized. It isn't someone saying something, but people doing things, giving everyone (including those involved) the opportunity to have experiences they would not otherwise have had.[208]

Cage says we are not creating objects over there, outside of ourselves somewhere. We do not have ideas about what we are doing, but we do have feelings about what we are doing. Instead of objects we are making processes; our feelings are in the processes.[209] If one has made an object 'out there,' it is separate from us and we all can experience it and have some basis for judgment of the object. If instead of creating objects we involve ourselves with processes, others can only try to experience those processes as we communicate them. The avant-garde interest in notation is an aspect of composition as process. "There is no reason that an artist actually has to make the physical work himself as long as he determines its characteristics."[210] Earle Brown "has tried to create a musical 'mobile' in which control and non-control work together, 'finding' aspects of a work within the process of 'making it.'"[211] An avant-garde composer senses the growing importance of the aural tradition, as opposed to the literal. His

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[208]Cage, A Year From Monday, p. 151.

[209]Cage, Silence, p. 236.

[210]Kirby, The Art of Time, p. 49.

[211]Mellers, p. 188.

role therefore changes and he concentrates on the creation of the object, leaving the final form of it to the performer.[212]

IX. SUMMARY

The preoccupations of the musical avant-garde differ from traditional musical thought, and the musical avant-garde is akin to the avant-garde in other arts. The avant-garde backbone is the attitude toward, and use of, chance, the redefinition of the composer/performer/audience relationship, the use of theatricality, the concern with processes more than products, the relaxed conception of form and structure, and the avoidance and condemnation of critical judgments. Grasping the notion that discipline, as it applies to those who engage in avant-garde activities, no longer means simply mastery of instruments and materials, is fundamental to an understanding of the avant-garde. Awareness of possible relationships, awareness of the entire situation in which an experiencer finds himself, is requisite to fully reap any benefits avant-garde activities may offer.[213]

Avant-garde art must be created out of nothing, unburdened by structures and formulas from the past. A new 'harmony'--a process in which speakers and listeners agree to communicate--must be found.[214] Cries of "no communication"

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[212] Source, 3/2:91.

[213] Source, 2/2:45.

[214] Source, 3/2:91.

come only from a particular "attitude, mental inertia, calcification of outlook." Avoidance of coming to grips with new things is easier than examining them. "Yes is for a very young mind."[215]

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[215] Source, 1/1:50.

CHAPTER II

SOME WORKS IN SOURCE: MUSIC OF THE AVANT-GARDE

I. INTRODUCTION

The avant-garde aesthetic does not tell everything there is to know about specific avant-garde works. This says nothing negative about the aesthetic, rather, something positive about avant-garde pieces. The aesthetic lists broad considerations as stated by avant-gardists. Particular avant-garde works may complement, highlight, elucidate, and even, in some instances, supplement or contradict the aesthetic.

Avant-garde works resist pigeon-holing; each must be examined in its own right. The manner in which a particular piece fits within the framework of the aesthetic can be seen by questioning to what degree and in what way each work deals with each facet of the aesthetic, and recognizing those aspects of a work that are additional to the aesthetic. To this end, i. e., reflecting the aesthetic in specific works, eight pieces from Source are examined in this chapter. All quotations and copied material in this chapter come from the issues of Source listed here:

for Glass Concert 2, Volume 3, Number 1, January, 1969, pp. 3-10.

for Nonet, Volume 3, Number 1, January, 1969, pp. 58-71.

for Map 2, Volume 3, Number 1, January, 1969, pp. 30-33.

for Titus Number 1, Volume 2, Number 1, January, 1968, pp. 80-81.

for Remembrances, Volume 3, Number 1, January, 1969, pp. 34-41.

for A Max Sampler, Volume 3, Number 1, January, 1969, pp. 48-56.

for Probabilistic Theater I, Volume 2, Number 2, July, 1968, pp. 34-36.

for 4'33", Volume 1, Number 2, July, 1967, pp. 46-55.[1]

II. GLASS CONCERT 2

Glass Concert 2, by Anna Lockwood (1939-), first performed in 1967, is for two players. The players produce sounds by manipulating variously shaped pieces of glass against other pieces of glass. Electronic amplification of the sounds thus produced is employed when deemed necessary to make the sounds readily audible. Lighting is also used, both for its

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[1]Quotations from the score of Glass Concert 2 are reproduced with the kind permission of Source, which is published by Composer/Performer Edition, Sacramento, California.

effect while accompanying the sound-producing portions of the piece, and to create separate, integral moments in the work's continuum.

The score for Glass Concert 2 consists of forty prose passages, each describing, defining, and detailing a particular sound-producing event or specifying an event in which lights only are to be used. The descriptions detail such parameters as which performer is to be operating, the duration of the event, the location of the event (that is, on- or offstage), the type, shape, form, and dimensions of the glass involved, the particular method of bringing the specified pieces of glass into contact with something, the desirability or necessity for an event's electronic amplification, and specification of microphones. Five of the forty passages from the score are reproduced here verbatim:

1
a sheet of micro glass
(used for electro-microscopy slides)
before it has been cut into slides
shake the sheet
starting very slowly and moving into a very rapid
shivering
for slow vibration turn surface to microphone
for high vibration turn side edge to microphone
OFFSTAGE Duration 1'-1'30" Player 1

4
2 panes of sheet glass
(approximately 10" across x 12" x 1/8" and 7 1/2" x
12" x 1/8")
2 totally glass tanks
about 3" wider than panes
rectangular battery jars
old aquaria
tanks used in science departments

try for one rectangular tank and one of the old
cylindrical specimen jars
used in science museums
2 soft bass drum sticks
partly fill tanks with water and stand on small glass
platforms
rectangular tank is contact miked
the other
a boom mike
optional
rectangular tank
strike pane gently toward edge
raise and lower resonating pane
vary speed
position
etc.
cylindrical tank
likewise but strike side of jar
gently in a different place each time
to prevent breakage
the two players alternate
one stroke each time
slowly
aperiodic
LIGHT
subdued purple glow
to allow players to see by
FRONT STAGE Duration 3'-4' Players 1 and 2

7
spotlight bulb with broken filament
shake lightly to produce rustling sound
continuous sound
OFFSTAGE Duration 1' Player 1

9
glass threads
(a factory waste product
candy floss-like threads
crushed together into little chunks)
hold one chunk in each gloved hand
crush and grind together hard and very slowly over a
soft cloth
intermittent explosive crackling sounds
OFFSTAGE Duration 1' Player 1

25
LIGHT PIECE
project high speed film of glass breaking onto the set
and the white-washed
back of the set
16mm PROJECTOR Duration 2'-3'

In addition to the two players, a sound operator controls amplification and a lighting operator controls lighting. The score gives further directions, such as how and when events are to be terminated, the color and displacement of lights, the players' dress (entirely in black, wearing soft-soled, soft shoes), etc.

If all 40 events are performed, Glass Concert 2 takes about two hours to complete. A minimum length of half an hour is desired; the order of events is discretionary; a maximum of two onstage events may be simultaneous. The final sentence in the score needs to be noted:

> These instructions are suggestions, based on what has been found to give the strongest, most vivid results over twenty-six performances; nevertheless, they are considered to be flexible.

Even with all the details given, down to the exact size of the glass panes, the composer does not remain autocratic. She ultimately dictates very little to the performers, who cannot feel hemmed in when Anna Lockwood ends her instructions by saying that they are to be considered flexible. In addition to the detailed written instructions, nine photographs accompany the score, providing a performer with visual aids in arranging the equipment, realizing lighting possibilities, etc.

The composer demonstrates a rather marked interest in the actions one would find necessary before performing the work. However, though numerous specifics are given, an aura

of mere adumbration surrounds the work, permitting the players to feel free in their actions. The reason for the feeling of freedom comes from the fact that actually very few of the traditional parameters of musical composition are controlled by the composer in Glass Concert 2. Durations of sounds are unpredictable. Duration and choice of events are discretionary. Pauses and silences are not precisely indicated or predictable. So elements of chance and indeterminacy, vis-à-vis many traditionally controlled parameters, are present to a high degree.

One notices a distinction between private and public activities in Glass Concert 2, private being construed as those events which take place offstage, and thus out of visual contact with the audience, and public meaning those activities which take place onstage, in view of the audience. The audience sits in blackness. The only light is on the stage and, as pointed out, its presence is subject to chance operations just as are the sound events. The implication is that one should listen to live music divorced from sight. Also, actions performed onstage have more visual impact through their juxtaposition with offstage events.

Theatrical gestures in Glass Concert 2 are certainly present. While it may be argued that an orchestra performing a symphony onstage is very theatrical, the presence of unusual glass constructions, such as mobiles constructed entirely of

glass panes suspended from glass rods by nylon strings, curtains made from numerous thin glass rods hanging closely together like a curtain of beads in a doorway, or bottle trees large as a person made from placing 50 or more soft drink and wine bottles over nail "branches" driven into a wooden trunk, produces a theatrical visual effect that, through its uniqueness, engages a viewer as much as the spectacle of an orchestra. The players padding around in sneakers and the lighting, primarily a deep purple but also green, red, and blue, contribute theatrical impressions.

An audience member routinely experiences visual and aural impressions during a live performance. Because the impressions are routine and expected, they are, in a sense, not too striking. Since they are common to all live performed music they are constants and are therefore only to be particularly noticed when absent; they are, paradoxically, conspicuous only when not present. But Anna Lockwood's piece transmits to the audience another, additional impression--a tactile impression. While the audience does not actually touch any of the glass, the very fact that glass is sharp, that it cuts and is dangerous, especially in some of the shapes in which it is used in the piece, transmits a tactile impression to viewers. One event calls for a sharp glass cutting tool to be drawn very hard over the surface of a bottle. Another asks for a broken-end base of a bottle to be rubbed

over window glass. Still another calls for a TV cathode ray tube to be exploded/imploded by throwing it into a box. The instructions for event number 30 are the ultimate in transmitting a tactile impression of danger:

> 30
> a glass eater
> microphone very close to his open mouth
> eats a wine glass
> (or whatever he likes eating in the way of glass)
> for as long as he takes to eat it
> ONSTAGE but in darkness.

The incongruity and vivid contrast between the impression of danger wrought by glass and the often thin, gentle, beautiful, melodious sounds emanating from the glass impart to the work a strange aesthetic appeal.

Formal considerations, divorced from the mechanical aspects of assembling the glass instruments, fall chiefly under the heading of determining the order of events. The idea of continuity through causality--a concept that Chapter I claimed was alien to the avant-garde--is definitely not current in Glass Concert 2. A statement from the instructions makes this idea clear: "Each sound event is a total, complex piece in itself and unrelated to any other sound event." Not only does this statement support the avant-garde contention that continuity through causality is unimportant, but it also provides the justification for arranging the 40 events in any order, for omitting or combining them at will, since each event is considered complete in itself. Linear continuity,

that is, relation of sounds from event to event through time, comes not via causality but from the relatedness of the sounds themselves.

A certain amount of inertia will result from glass' being the constant percussion instrument, but if one accepts this limitation, the subtle distinctions among types and shapes of the glass and the random electronic alterations will produce sufficient variety. As with most avant-garde music, Glass Concert 2 involves much preparation before performance, principally collecting and making the glass apparatuses, experimenting with the electronics (lighting and amplification) involved, and selecting events.

III. NONET

Barney Childs' (1926-) Nonet (1967) is scored for B^b clarinet, B^b trumpet, bassoon, percussion, piano, voice, violin, viola, and bass. The use of oboe is permitted if one of the other instruments cannot be obtained. The score for Nonet contains, by dictum of the composer, nine pages for each performer. The number of notes to be played and their pitches, dynamic markings, rhythms, performance indications (for example, hum, whisper, staccato, vibrato), and additional instructions are all dictated by the composer. They are not, however, dictated in the traditional manner.

Nonet is a work very different from Glass Concert 2, but a work riding nonetheless trimly on the waves of the avant-garde aesthetic. The essence of Nonet is, also, completely congruous with Barney Childs' verbal statements regarding his musical concerns at the time Nonet was composed. This congruity will be evident after the explanation of Nonet, when some quotes by Childs are given.

Much preparation is necessary to complete the parts from which each player is to perform. "Each player makes his own part, consisting of nine pages of events selected from the music sheet provided for his instrument." Each player reproduces nine copies of a part-page. A part-page is originally a rectangular piece of paper, blank with these exceptions: a small box in both upper corners and in the lower right corner; a small box in the middle of the left-hand vertical edge; a larger box centered along the bottom edge, consisting of twenty-seven small squares arranged in three rows of nine, the first row labeled with the letter I, the second labeled P, and the third, N. The boxes take up very little space and are confined to the extremes of the part-page; initially the majority of a part-page is blank.

The score contains, on a durations sheet, 81 duration indications (e. g., 1'14", 27"), ranging from about 1'30" to about 30". The durations are divided into groups of nine; each player selects one group. The nine durations thus

selected are written, one to a page, in the box in the lower right-hand corner of each part-page. The boxes in the upper corners receive cumulative timings: the upper right-hand box is filled with the added times of all the part-pages played plus the time of the part-page being played; the upper left-hand box contains the cumulative time of the part-pages already played, excluding the time of the page being played.

The score contains nine different event squares, each of which encloses the digits one through nine randomly arranged in a circle, with a clockwise arrow indicating the direction in which one is to read the digits. Each player selects an event square (the digits are in a different order in each square) and draws a line between two consecutive digits. Beginning with the digit next after the line, the player lists the digits, in order, one digit per page, in the boxes at the center of the left edge of each part-page. These numbers indicate the number of events to be performed on each particular part-page; one page will have one event, another will have two events, another three, etc. The total number of events for each player will be 45 (1+2+3 . . . +9=45).

Now all the boxes are filled except the 27 small squares at the bottom center of each part-page. To fill these three rows of nine, labeled I, P, N, each player must utilize an event machine provided as part of the score. The event machine consists of two color-coded discs. The discs form concentric

circles, segments of their perimeters are alternately green and black. Each perimeter contains one arrowhead. The concentric circles are mounted on cardboard discs so they may be freely rotated. A transparent acetate overlay containing two concentric circles made from numbers is placed over the rotatable color-coded discs. The inner of the numerical circles is made from twenty digits, the numbers zero through nine, each used twice in apparently random order. The outer numerical circle contains the numbers one through forty-five, listed consecutively, clockwise.

Referring to the group of durations selected from the durations sheets, each player locates two durations specially designated, one topped by a downward-pointing arrow and the letter G, the other by a downward-pointing arrow and the letter R. Quoting from Childs' instructions:

> Now take the event machine. . . . Set the inner wheel of the machine so that its arrow is under either of the two numbers similar to the digit marked with the R-arrow; set the outer wheel so that its arrow is under either of the numbers similar to the digit marked with the G-arrow.

The outer numerical circle on the overlay (numbers one through forty-five) corresponds to the total number of events each player will perform. (The player has already determined how many events are to be on each page.) He locates the number of the event on the outer circle of the overlay. (Events <u>in toto</u> are numbered consecutively, that is, if there are eight

events on part-page one, and three events on part-page two, the events on part-page two are numbered nine, ten, and eleven.) The event number is then transferred to the proper I, P, or N box according to the following rules:

> If both wheels are green below the number, write the number in the P line; if one wheel is green, and one is black, write the number in the I line; and if both wheels are black, write the number in the N line.

When this is done for all forty-five numbers and all nine pages, the player is ready to transfer the musical events to the part.

The score contains a page for each instrument in the ensemble. The page for each instrument is divided into I, P, and N sections. The I portion contains pitches, dynamics, durations, and, for the voice part, text. The P portion contains events related to the particular instrument of that page, for example, for the voice part: "any very low note, big blues-y sound, one syllable, ca. 3 seconds, f; Hiss, 5-8 seconds"; for the piano part: "Trill any minor third in fairly high register, ca. 20 seconds, ppp; Single, fairly rapid, glissando along any wound string with blade of dull knife"; for the viola part: "Any low-register pitch, large sloppy vibrato, ca. 4 seconds, mf; Rap, col legno, on C string; other side of bridge, once, ff." The N portion contains events not particularized for any instrument, audible events such as: "Shake a good number of pennies in a china cup, ca. 4 seconds; Slap leg once, ff; Whisper your birthdate (month, day, year)."

To transfer the musical event to the part, the player simply arbitrarily starts at some point in the listed events of the I, N, and P portions of his particular page and records the events consecutively on each part-page in their proper determined IPN order. There are more events than a player will need, so he has a choice of events.

Once the entire operation detailed above is completed, the parts for Nonet are completed. Out of the infinitude of musical possibilities, Childs drew up a lesser infinity--if one can speak of such a thing as a lesser infinity. From that infinity, nine players create a unique Nonet. Even after all the mechanics of constructing the parts, the pages of descriptions, are over, the players are faced with composition-like decisions. What dynamics and what rhythms should be linked with what pitches? Where in the I, P, and N portions should a player begin to select events? Childs says, "I am presently concerned with self-generating musical structures, . . . with the interqualifications of sound and silence. . . ." Nonet obviously does not belie his words. Its structure is self-generating. The events in the structure, by the definition Childs' decisions had given them and by their manner of selection, operate as single sounds in the structure. Silence cannot be neglected, recalling that one part-page may have a duration of 1'30" and contain only one three-second event.

Childs, as quickly as he tells us what concerns him, tells us what dismays him: "I am presently dismayed by cheapjack notational novelties, with letting process stand for music, with the pretentious cliches of live-electronics and total environment. . . ." Nonet, by Childs' own standards, is no cause for dismay. The notation, once it finally is recorded on the page, is conventional. The pitches are ordered on a five-line staff; dynamics are ordinary mf-pp; durations are not abnormal for contemporary music notation. (Incidentally, Childs' ordering of the pitches seems to be a random procedure. A tone row is not used. Double stops for the strings, grace notes, chords or single notes for the piano, alternate octaves, etc., seem to be arbitrary with Childs. If the singer does not have "perfect pitch," he/she is instructed to improvise the pitches.) Neither electronics nor total environment is a consideration in Nonet. As for letting process stand for music, Childs simply does not do it. Again, after the part-pages are prepared, the score is not very alien from non-avant-garde contemporary scores. The music is capable of standing, and does stand for, and of, itself.

The claims Nonet may make to fitting into the avant-garde aesthetic are numerous, however. The breakdown between composer and performer has progressed very far in Nonet due to the large number of compositional decisions left to the

players themselves. A traditional conductor is completely irrelevant. He is replaced by "an easily read, digital clock, visible to all players." Chance, even ignoring all its elements in the preparation of the part-pages, plays a big role in the final performance: one may play any time he chooses during the time allotted for a particular page, one may pause as he likes, determine subjectively durations and dynamics. Visual elements and theatrical gestures are present, from the N and P portions of the instruction sheets. Events like slapping one's leg, clapping, finger snapping, speaking, reading, whispering, humming, shaking and rattling things, blowing into cardboard tubes, preparing the piano and playing its keys with an eraser and wood dowels are all theatrical gestures and visual elements.

It is difficult to predict what different performances of Nonet would sound like, even with the meticulous preparation that goes into making the parts, and even with a complete understanding of a particular finished score. All one can say concerning form and structure--again because of the prior unpredictability of the indeterminate aspects--is that such and such an event will happen between such and such a time.

IV. MAP 2

In 1969 the attention of Jon Hassell (1937-) was "focused on the design of environments, objects, etc., whose

principle features are acoustic (Maps 1 and 2), but whose presentation is outside the usual concert situation." Map 2 is a magnetic recording in the form of a square six inches on a side. Sounds were recorded on the surface in three layers. To make the first layer, prerecorded tape was arranged in horizontal strips to form the unbroken surface of the square. Approximately 48 tracks of various sounds were used: laughter, musical excerpts, African drums, motorcycles, water, whispering, generators, crowd noises, etc. Vertical tracks were recorded on a layer above the horizontal layer. They were somewhat laboriously "written" with a hand-held recording head. Consequently fewer tracks and fewer different sounds were used for the vertical tracks. The third layer, also recorded with a hand-held recording head, has fewer tracks than the other two layers. It was recorded diagonally and consists of one repeated sound, widely spaced sine-tone "blips." Copies of Map 2 were made by an electronic process and were distributed with the January, 1969, issue of Source.

To "realize" Map 2, one moves a hand-held magnetic playback head over the surface of Map 2. The head must have "appropriate pre-amplification and power amplification." The motions and speeds one uses while moving the head over the surface will determine the resultant sounds. It is virtually impossible for any two paths traced over the surface to be exactly the same. Thus every "realization" of Map 2 will be

different. "Hopefully, each 'explorer' will discover the potential of the surface in some special way."

How does this particular work by Hassell fit into the avant-garde aesthetic? Formal considerations are not important questions in Map 2. All one can do, just as all one could do for Childs' Nonet, is relate the manner in which the piece is constructed, relate the 'form' the work is given by the composer before its performance. One can make predictions, based on knowledge of what sounds were recorded and the frequency of their recorded occurrence, as to what sounds will be heard during a performance of Map 2. Any given form will, however, be unique--produced by the vagaries and peregrinations of the hand that held the playback head. One "realization" might have readily evident linear continuity due to sameness of sound, if only a few of the recorded tracks were exploited; another might have a rondo-like repetition of the sine-tone "blips," if the hand-held head made periodic diagonal excursions.

Notation, by the nature of the work, is of no concern. The degree of interest in the directions or actions necessary before performing the work is negligible compared to Glass Concert 2 or Nonet. The degree of compositional control of the various parameters of the music is very similar to that of Nonet. Pitches, texts, durations--in short, sounds--have been selected from their infinitude by Hassell. His control

over the lesser galaxy he has created then ceases, leaving specific emphases to the performer. The composer has controlled the possibility of sounds' being combined: "The nature of magnetic recording is such that, while reading the sound in one of the three layers, the sound from the other two will be almost (or completely) inaudible." Over pauses and silence the composer has no control.

The nature of Map 2 calls some attention to visual and tactile impressions and theatrical gestures. One cannot overlook the fact that manipulation of the playback head is necessary to produce sound. But the heart of Map 2's avant-garde muscle beats in the body of private actions and audience participation, albeit an audience of one.

If one were merely to hear a performance of Map 2, not actually produce it or even see it produced, one would only hear a procession of the sounds listed above: generators, African drums, etc. The impact of Map 2 comes from personally handling the production of sound, using the word handling both literally and figuratively. The performance is a private action. The score suggests using pairs or clusters of playback heads, permitting simultaneous sounds and bringing up the possibility of more than one person's performing at one time. However, only a limited number of human hands could hover over a six-inch square at any one time, so performing Map 2 remains necessarily a personal, private experience.

Map 1, also by Hassell, is a "patchwork quilt" arrangement of audio tape, producing a magnetic recording surface larger than the surface of Map 2. The method of eliciting sounds from Map 1 is like that of Map 2. Map 1 was designed, however, "for installation in a gallery or similar situation where the realization possibilities are open to visitors." But while galleries are public places, going through one is still largely a private experience.

The presence of the composer is completely eradicated by Map 2. His self is reduced to a six-inch square of plastic. His personality as manifest in his choice of sounds for the square is subject to being revealed only by chance motions of a performer's hand. The composer is totally anonymous, almost negligible. So the relationship between composer and performer is severed. The relationship in effect does not even exist. Likewise, the relationship between performer and audience is often altered. Its alteration--occurring when Map 2 is performed in private--is through a merging of performer and audience into one and the same person, the one person who performs Map 2 for himself--when he likes, as often as he likes, how he likes, without hours of preparation and without fanfare.

V. TITUS NUMBER 1

The score of Titus No. 1 resembles a cross between a Kandinsky composition and chicken scratching, in black ink on

white paper---part straight lines, arcs, right angles, arrows, circles, dotted lines, triangles and other geometric constructions and part squiggles, blobs, scratches, and other arcane and labyrinthian markings.[2] Titus No. 1 is for amplified automobile and five to 15 performers; Robert Moran (1937-) composed it in 1967.

An automobile sits in the center of the stage; the score is projected on it. The score suggests areas of activity to the performers.

> The automobile is amplified in a variety of manners; the performers, using contact mikes, hammers, files, metal scrapers, toilet plungers, etc., move slowly under, through, on top of and around the automobile.

The stage and audience are darkened after the players have looked at the projected score long enough to determine areas of the automobile on which they will play. All exterior and interior sounds from the car are amplified "as loud as possible" and played through numerous loudspeakers surrounding the audience. The work lasts about a half hour. "What," one might ask, "about music? Is this music?" Cage would answer in the affirmative. Moran removes all doubt and Daedaliously undermines the question by requesting that a recording of "Brangäne's Warning" from Act II of Tristan and Isolde be played backstage over and over and over again, very softly, while the players operate on the car.

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[2]For a similar score, see Edges by Christian Wolff, Source, 3/1:11-13.

The composer has renounced virtually all control over the final sound of Titus No. 1. He is anonymous except for the way in which the very pictorial score reflects his personality. The audience sees the score projected on the automobile just as the players do. Therefore the audience and performers have equal opportunities to retrieve the composer from anonymity.

The effect Moran's notation will have on the performance must be considered greater than the effect of the notation in Glass Concert 2 or Map 2, both of which use only prose instructions. The notation employed for Nonet is more precise than that of Titus No. 1 (i. e., Titus No. 1's notation leaves more to subjective interpretation). It is only conjectural whether Nonet's more precise notation or Titus No. 1's less precise notation is more influential for the final sound of the respective works. The use of chance and indeterminacy, the sine qua non of the aesthetic, is obvious in Titus No. 1.

Titus No. 1 develops most highly the theatrics aspect of the avant-garde aesthetic. The sudden plunging of the stage into darkness, the players' moving around by flashlights, the incongrous tools they are using (a toilet plunger on an automobile?), the sudden eerie sounds emanating from all sides in the dark, a car sitting on a stage--and all of this going on for half an hour--contribute theatrically to Titus No. 1. Tactile elements and private actions (because of the dark)

also are implicit. Concerning formal aspects of the piece, one can scarcely say anything. When, exactly, does the piece begin: when the score is projected on the car, when the curtain opens to reveal the automobile parked on the stage, when the first sound is heard, when the Wagner begins? And when does the piece end; how do the players themselves know when each other have completed their performances? Formally, one cannot even establish in time the outer limits of Titus No. 1.

Two other avant-garde aspects of the amplified automobile work need to be mentioned. The first is that absolute amateur status is all that is required to perform the work; one need not know anything about music. Virtuosic displays are nihil ad rem in Titus No. 1.[3] The willingness of avant-garde composers to let non-musicians perform has been remarked on in Chapter I. The debunking of the myth of music's being an endeavor for an elite is constantly continued by works like Titus No. 1.

The final avant-garde aspect brought up by Moran's work concerns the titling of avant-garde pieces. The titles of many works are descriptive: Glass Concert 2, Map 2, Reed Phase (reed instruments play an ostinato in unison and then out of phase with one another), Knocking Piece (two players

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[3]The same condition is true for A Max Sampler, 4'33" (both discussed later in this chapter), Map 2, and Glass Concert 2.

hammer rhythmic patterns on the interior of a grand piano), Gospel Meeting (which features a preacher, ushers collecting money in tambourines, and prayers), and Intermission Piece (a piece to be played during an intermission). Some titles are traditional: Nonet, Etudes for Organ, and Nocturne. Avant-garde titles may be puns: A Piano: Piece or Be Prepared (during which a piano is prepared à la Cage while someone is playing a Mozart sonata on it). Numerous titles are connected with the music they title only by association: Hi-Yo Paint or Bite-Off, Ranger, Jack's New Bag, The Maze, The Wolfman, And on the Seventh Day Petals Fell in Petaluma, and Titus No. 1. Titles of this type may be considered evocative instead of descriptive. The numbers included in some titles are sometimes necessary to designate specific works, as in Map 1 and Map 2. Other times the numbers are not necessary and seem to have been arbitrarily added: Probabilistic Theater I, Glass Concert 2, and Titus No. 1.

VI. REMEMBRANCES

In the early 1950's a group of composers and performers gathered around John Cage. It included Earle Brown, David Tudor, Christian Wolff, and Morton Feldman. The members collaborated in a type of creative 'brain trust,' fertilizing one another's imaginations and creations. Inevitably, joint activities resulted and the concept of the group was born.

By 1968, numerous groups were flourishing; some were interested in group improvisation, some worked with electronic music, some were interested in intermedia activities, a few were oriented toward jazz or rock music.[4]

One of the improvisation groups was the New Music Ensemble (NME), founded in the summer of 1963. Counted among its members was Arthur Woodbury (1930-). Intending to write an article on improvisation based on his experiences in the NME, Woodbury began transcribing sections from tapes of the NME made during 1963-1966. He "became dissatisfied with one of the improvisations" and began changing pitches in the transcriptions. This led him to extending the transcriptions by composing, in the style of the NME improvisations. He reduced the number of instrumentalists from seven to three. The result was Remembrances, a trio for violin, E^{b} alto saxophone, and vibraphone (percussion). Woodbury found that the most difficult part of this particular composing process "was to capture the gloriously optimistic, overabundant, near anarchic, democracy of ideas that was such an integral part of the group's social and musical personality."

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[4]Groups active in 1968 included: Fluxus, started in New York by Dick Higgins; the ONCE Group; the Foss improvisation ensemble; Takehisa Kosugi's Group-ONGAKU in Tokyo; Jerry Hunt's Dallas Chamber Ensemble; Udo Kasemet's intermedia group in Toronto; La Monte Young's Theater of Eternal Music; the New Music Ensemble of Davis, Calif., Musica Elettronica Viva of Rome; the Sonic Arts Groups of New York City; Gruppo 70 of Florence; Joseph Byrd's New Music Workshop; Il Gruppo Internazionale di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza, organized in Rome; and Cornelius Cardew's improvisation ensemble in London called AMM. Source, 2/1:16.

The score is made from four traditional five-line staffs, percussion and vibraphone receiving separate staffs. Pitches are indicated in the normal manner; headless stems permit pitches at the discretion of the performer. Notes which appear traditional rhythmically are only to be interpreted relative to other notes with a traditional appearance, i. e., a note looking like a sixteenth note is played faster than a note looking like an eighth note, but not necessarily twice as fast. Tempo, which Woodbury calls "pacing," is taken care of by having space=time,[5] with the approximate number of seconds for the performance of each system given. The specific percussion instrument is indicated, e. g., log drum or triangle. Some special notations employed in the score are explained in the directions, e. g., wavering glissando, vibrato, or virtuosic, scale-like passages.

In many respects Remembrances is the most traditional piece examined thus far. Woodbury considers the dynamic markings very important and says they are to be scrupulously

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[5]The analogy between space and time is common in contemporary scores. It holds that a given surface area of a score is relative to the time it takes to perform that same area. Since a score having parts for numerous instruments usually retains the traditional format of placing the divers parts vertically one above the other, surface area in the analogy is often construed as horizontal distance. Thus, a portion of a score six inches across a page requires twice as long to perform as a portion three inches long, and only half as long to perform as a portion extending for twelve inches. Practical benefits from the analogy, such as ease of performance, are apparent.

followed. Cuing is necessary throughout the work. This chore falls naturally to the saxophonist since he signals the close of various sections of the piece, including the end of the work. In effect, then, Remembrances calls for a conductor. The instrumentation is not extraordinary and much more than amateur ability is required of the performers.

A definite form, or structure, in the traditional sense, can be extracted from Remembrances. It falls into three distinct sections. The beginning of each section utilizes notated pitches, rhythmic values, dynamics, special playing instructions, etc. This portion of each section leads into an improvisatory portion, after which, in sections one and two, a distinct change of mood occurs, and, in section three, the piece ends. The following statements about Remembrances are analogous to certain aspects of a traditional three movement sonata. Concerning the first section: it is the longest (notated portion ca. 110 seconds, improvised portion 30-60 seconds); the number of notes per system will produce what will seem to be a rather fast tempo; it employs all the instruments, vibraphone and percussion; it runs the gamut of dynamics, beginning softly (introductory-like) and building to forte for the improvised portion; it utilizes the NME's "avoidance" technique, "a pointillistic procedure in which we attempted to avoid each other's entrances;" the improvisatory portion which closes the first section is to be "agitated with a feeling of more and

more motion." Concerning the second section: it begins with a feeling of continuing motion produced by long phrases overlapping from instrument to instrument; it is not overpoweringly loud and the motion degenerates, volume decreases, and tempo slows into the improvisatory section, which is "almost motionless;" it is shorter than, and gives the impression of being slower than the first section (notated portion ca. 95 seconds, improvised portion 30-60 seconds). Concerning the third section: it is fast and virtuosic (notated portion ca. 50 seconds, improvised portion 30-60 seconds) with abundant notated passages "to be played as fast as possible" and headless stem groups to be played "extremely fast (virtuosic);" its volume is consistently loud, reaching and maintaining fortissimo for most of the improvised portion.

An analogy between the tri-sectioned Remembrances and a three movement sonata helps one picture and hear the work in the mind's eye and ear, but additions need to be made to the analogy. Development, in the sense of fully exploiting tonal and technical resources, goes on in all sections, not just the first. (The slow, quiet middle section has instructions like "play high soft notes behind the bridge, run mallet handle softly around cymbal, let the wood of the bow slide softly along string while doing a slow and wavering glissando, and invent similar quiet sounds.") Instead of a flashy close, after the final improvised, fortissimo, virtuosic portion,

the last section slows, decreases in volume, and reintroduces notated pitches to end the piece quietly.

Indicative of the work's traditionalism relative to other avant-garde pieces is the dedication Woodbury gives the composition: "To my friends and fellow musicians in the New Music Ensemble." (Cf. Daniel Lentz's [1942-] dedication of A Piano: Piece: "in memory, W. C. Fields.") Many of the points discussed in the avant-garde aesthetic are not present in Remembrances; there are no private actions, theatrical gestures, visual or tactile elements, or audience participation.

Remembrances can perhaps be considered an avant-garde work because of its great use of chance and the overall impression it leaves of the process of making music being somewhat more important than the product made. The performers definitely participate in the making of the composition, not merely in the performing of a completed composition. Woodbury comments that, "Although Remembrances is not an improvisation, it does program the performer and listener to experience the musical climate in which a New Music Ensemble improvisation existed."

The balance of the scales tips only reluctantly toward Remembrances' being an avant-garde work, however. The fact that the piece is published in Source lends a modicum of credibility. Nevertheless, the accumulated weight of the traditionalities found in Remembrances makes one doubt if the work should be squeezed through the door leading into the avant-garde aesthetic. The editors of Source may have published the

piece as an act of homage to improvisation groups in general. Being accustomed to anything's happening as a result of courting chance, they may not have batted an eyelash when the expected article on improvisation appeared clothed as an avant-garde composition. Perhaps, in the best avant-garde tradition, accepting whatever comes along, they published Remembrances anyway.

VII. A MAX SAMPLER

The title A Max Sampler tips off a score peruser as to what is in store for him when he confronts the "six sound oriented pieces for situations other than that of the concert hall" by Max Neuhaus (1939-). The title may be taken as a pun on the commercial box of candy called the Whitman Sampler, which contains sundry sweets. The sundry ingredients of A Max Sampler (1966-1968) are Listen, Public Supply, Bi-Product (a homonymic pun on byproduct), American Can (another pun, hinting at the slang definition of can, the buttocks?), Drive-In Music, and Telephone Access.

Source ordinarily prints, along with some biographical data on each composer represented in the periodical, a photograph of each composer. If the title of the compositions is not sufficient to make a reader wary, the photographs of Neuhaus will: three snapshots presented face forward, police line-up format. In one Neuhaus looks like a young businessman

or teacher, sharply groomed; in the second he wears glasses and is as bald and shiny-headed as a polished aluminum bowl; in the third he has on no glasses or shirt, exchanging them for encircling shaggy black hair and beard so thick as to hide much of his face.

If the reader will bear in mind the following facets of the avant-garde aesthetic, he will easily descry for himself the particulars that make A Max Sampler an avant-garde work: theatrics, private actions, visual and tactile elements, audience participation, amateur status of performers, chance and indeterminacy (lack of control by the composer over many parameters of the compositions), and interest in the process of producing the works. Listen: "An audience expecting a conventional concert . . . is put on a bus, their palms are stamped with the word listen, and they are taken to and thru an existing sound environment," e. g., Consolidated Edison Power Station, 14th Street and Avenue D, New York City, or Hudson Tubes (subway), 9th Street Station to Pavonia. Public Supply: A home audience telephones a designated radio or television station; the caller makes sounds over the line; the sounds are electronically manipulated and played back immediately over the air; while calling, the caller places his blaring radio, tuned to the designated station, within two feet of the telephone; a composition is made and immediately broadcast to the audience. "One of the most important

factors of the piece is the realization in the public's mind that they are participating in a process which is happening instantaneously over a large geographical area." Bi-Product: During the course of a concert, the concert's sounds are recorded, extracted from their context and packaged; two sounds, playable on a tape recorder, are given to each audience member; each person is instructed to mail one of the sounds to a friend. American Can: A large number of any product made or distributed by the American Can Company is placed on the ground in a large crowd of people; the area on which the product is distributed has to be covered completely with at least one layer of the product; the ground must be hard enough so that a sound is made when the product "is bounced or slid along it." Drive-In Music: Low-power radio transmitters are mounted along a mile of roadway; the areas of broadcast overlap; an auditor (performer) drives along the road, listening on his car radio to the sounds generated from the transmitters, which are sensitive to changes in temperature, humidity, light, and the presence of water. Telephone Access: "An electronic system which anyone can use by dialing an advertised telephone number;" similar to Public Supply, a sound made by the caller is transformed by the electronic system and immediately played back to the caller, who can continue the piece as long as he likes.

The only way in which A Max Sampler does not meet the qualifications of an avant-garde composition is by its not being permitted to be used by anyone who so desires. Neuhaus, in an asterisked footnote, says,

> I use these pieces as frameworks of activities for myself (the existence of a framework eliminates many of the problems of production). Only one of them, American Can, was conceived for realization--or may be realized--by anyone other than myself.

It is impossible to know exactly why Neuhaus issues this edict. Viewing it as a facetious whim would not be out of keeping with the tenor of A Max Sampler.

VIII. PROBABILISTIC THEATER I

Probabilistic Theater I, by Jocy de Oliveira, is for actors, musicians, dancers, light, and traffic conductor. It readily demonstrates the merging and combination of the arts discussed in the previous chapter. Oliveira poses to the audience the problem of organizing the work as a unit. "For the audience, as well as the performers, this is an exercise in searching for a total experience in complete perception."

The formative notion of the work is "an improvisatory action based on a study on opposite levels and their meanings to different artists . . ." working in their respective mediums. Essentially what takes place is that the groups of performers--actors, musicians, etc.--engage in full or empty events (defined below) and move between events (termed being

"on the road") in a static or kinetic manner (terms not explained by Oliveira; possible interpretations given below). The traffic conductor directs, from a score, the order and type of events, which groups are to be doing which types of events, etc.

For full events, musicians are making sounds, actors are communicating verbally, dancers are moving, and lights are on. For empty events, musicians are silent but making movements related to their medium, dancers are stationary but making sounds related to their medium, actors are silent but making movements related to their medium, and lights are off, but projectors and other light sources are being operated.

Detailed instructions defining activities during full events are given each group. With these instructions Oliveira makes more clear her statement that the piece is "a study on opposite levels and their meanings to different artists. . . ." Musicians (singers and people operating electronic equipment ad libitum are simply considered as instruments) are directed during a full event to use "only very long or very short sounds, only a mass of sounds or isolated sounds, very high sounds or very low sounds, fortissimo or pianissimo sounds, very slow or very fast sounds," and similar "opposite levels." Instructions for the other groups of performers are correlative: for actors, screaming or whispering, only very long or very short words, etc.; for dancers, very slow or very fast movements, many

movements or very few, etc.; for light, bright or dark, mass of light or isolated lights, etc. Light is an independent medium, not used to follow or spot performers. Suggested lights include spotlights, headlights, flashlights, traffic lights, warning lights, airport lights, ultra-violet lights, light painting, etc.

The score is called a score-map and is a transparent color slide. Where the slide is to be projected is not indicated. It is a map "of a symbolic town which the conductor explores in any direction, using the performers." Roads are inscribed on the score-map. Along the roads are frames divided into four squares, labeled M, A, D, or L, designating musicians, actors, etc. A white square indicates an empty event; yellow means full. Numbers in the squares indicate length of time of the event, 1 meaning a short event and 2 a long event. The roads connecting the events are to be interpreted by the performers according to the roads' being designated K or S, representing static or kinetic. What is meant by static and kinetic is not explained. Possible interpretations may equate full with kinetic and empty with static, or both terms may indicate activity on the part of the performer, static activity being a type of action that is repeated, kinetic activity being actions that are changing in type. The score-map may efficaciously be projected on an easily visible wall or on the floor of the performing area,

to be followed as Arthur Murray dance step patterns. The conductor assumes his appointed posture and interprets the score-map. The performers follow his signals (prearranged ad libitum) and create full or empty events and travel "on the road." Thus is the work performed and "an improvisatory action based on a study on opposite levels and their meanings to different artists in different parameters" carried out.

Probabilistic Theater I bristles with a plethora of avant-garde tendencies. Chance and indeterminacy are rampant; the multiplicative factor of four groups' mutually performing produces multitudinous realizations. Theater is omnipresent. The score calls for costuming; the performers are to wear black and white and use metallics and plastics; "the conductor should wear a uniform representing any high rank." The title, if interpreted to mean that Oliveira thinks works in the future will take the shape of her work, supports the avant-garde credendum of the merging and equality of the arts. The process of making music is more important than the product, in that the alternations of "opposite levels"--the juxtapositions of full and empty, static and kinetic--will be most apparent as they are transpiring in the work's procession, not as they are remembered after the completion of the work.

The dichotomy between full and empty events is a formal thread traceable through the work. The work has no climax unless a perceiver experiences one by himself. There is no

focus on any particular event. Each group and each performer within each group is independent and equal. Amateur performing status, as there are no notated musical passages, no choreographed dances, no written-out dramatic scenes, is sufficient.

The question of the performers' freedom is not completely solved. While the performers may express themselves with wide latitude, the looming conductor--he is to be located high above the center of the stage--is to "act as a god!" "He represents the complex contradiction of explicit and implicit. He has power over everything, and yet he cannot predict everything."

The scope of Probabilistic Theater I is capacious. The work is the most complex examined thus far; indeed, a catalogue raisonné of the avant-garde aesthetic can almost be made from Probabilistic Theater I. One wonders, however, why so many details are lacking in Oliveira's instructions. What do static and kinetic mean; how and to whom is the score-map to be displayed; how long does a performance of the work last? Carelessness on the part of the composer may account for the unclarity. A reason perhaps more likely--a reason in accord with the avant-garde aesthetic--is the desire to not dictate, to allow the performers as much freedom as possible and still explore the work's thesis. However, the variances from production to production (a very complex work one time, a more simple one

the next) find a safe harbor in the formative notion of the work, blown to their refuge by the favorable winds of Oliveira's (calculated?) directional imprecision.

IX. 4'33"

John Cage's famous "silent" piece, 4'33" (1952), is the oldest work published in Source to this date. (Cage himself, with the exception of Harry Partch (1901-), is the oldest composer represented in Source.) The work is a landmark in avant-garde music. It temporally delimits the beginning of current avant-garde trends and is a precursor of today's happenings.

The work may be performed by any instrumentalist or combination of instrumentalists; it may last any length of time. It is in three parts. The published score reads: I, Tacet; II, Tacet; III, Tacet. The premiere was by David Tudor. He signified the beginning of parts by closing the piano lid, the ending by opening the lid. The parts were 33", 2'40", and 1'20", respectively, the collective time equalling 4'33" and hence the title. This writer has witnessed a 5'33" version for piano, flute, and bassoon.

Why is 4'33" esteemed as an avant-garde work? The answer is that everything about the work reflects the avant-garde aesthetic, or à rebours, the aesthetic dazzlingly reflects the work. Composer anonymity, amateur performer

status, audience participation, the breakdown of the composer/performer/audience tradition, process more important than product, continuity and climax not considered, chance and indeterminacy governing every sound, theatrics and visual elements--all these are explicitly or implicitly part of 4'33". With the waggish way--seemingly backwards--Tudor indicated at the first performance the beginnings and endings of parts, through the subtle reversal of traditional relative lengths of the parts (the first "movement," usually the longest, becomes the shortest), to the guiding principle behind 4'33", viz., anything one hears is music, Cage's "silent" piece remains unsurpassed for sheer avant-garde élan, the ne plus ultra of the genre.[6]

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[6]This statement is made with the realization that the value judgment implied would be shunned by Cage himself; nonetheless, almost any book treating avant-garde music, however lightly, does not fail to mention 4'33".

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY

The eight pieces discussed have many traits in common. That they were not selected with common traits as a criterion, rather almost picked in a random manner (most, one will notice, are from the same issue of Source), only confirms the contention that a body of music conforming to the aesthetic of Chapter I does exist. Further, it is evident that the appellation avant-garde is deserved by the works appearing in Source.

It was remarked earlier that avant-garde music is holding sway primarily at American universities--a fact not remarkable in itself. What gives one pause, however, is the scope of the aesthetic. Composers' fetters have not merely been loosened, their shackles more comfortably adjusted, but their chains have been burst. One should not think for a moment that their burdens are lighter, their yokes easier. Avant-gardists in all the arts are shouldering their responsibilities. Perhaps through increased audience awareness and participation, empathy, sympathy, and genuine concern for, and between, composers, performers, and audience alike, avant-gardists are more aware of implications their activities portend. The advent of Cage (the phrase brings to mind another--

"the coming of age"), the epiphany of a host of bright young composers across the land, the recrudescence of some of the healthier strains in the body of music history (e. g., the catch as catch can performance attitude of the Renaissance, the unity of composer/performer of the Baroque, the improvisatory zeal of a Bach or a Liszt, the Empfindsamkeit of the Pre-Classic Era)--in short, appositively, all things which breathe life into the spirit of the avant-garde--combine with the avant-garde aesthetic, a lockless door permanently ajar, to augur well for the present and future of music. Euterpe, the fertile Muse of music, can but conceive when courted (one might say raped) by the avant-garde spirit.

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VITA

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From September, 1968, to April, 1969, he attended the Graduate School at George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tennessee, studying under a National Defense Education Act Fellowship. He then travelled in Europe with his wife, the former Linda Dobbs of Erwin, Tennessee, until entering the Graduate School at The University of Tennessee in January, 1970.